

*Canada's 'Civic' Nation: The Determinants of
Canadian National Identifications*

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Canada has always been a country consumed with questions of identity. Even before Confederation, Lord Durham's report to the British government declared that it would be impossible for a single nation to be forged from more than one linguistic community, both English and French. Since that time, conflicts over identity have challenged Canada's future as a country. The sovereignty referendums of Québec in 1980 and 1995 and the constitutional turmoil of the 1980s further exposed the fault lines in the foundation of Canada's national political community. As recently as 2000, the Liberal government passed the Clarity Act outlining the conditions under which the federal government would be obligated to negotiate with a province that had declared its unilateral independence, making Canada the only country in the world to legislate the terms of its own demise.

Academic writings about Canadian identity reflect the fractious political history of the country. Titles like *The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, *Two Solitudes*, *Thinking English Canada*, and *The Roots of Disunity* commonly emphasize the difficulties of a nationalist project in Canada. But has it really been such a failure? According to World Values Survey 2000 data, in comparison with other Western democracies, in 2000 only the Dutch were more likely than Canadians to pick their country as their primary identification; Canadians were even more likely than Americans to pick their country as

their primary identification.¹ These findings suggest that Canadian nationalism may not be such an elusive or problematic phenomenon to most Canadians after all.²

Considering that Canadians are more likely to identify with their country than are citizens of many other countries today, it does not make a lot of sense to continue to theorize about Canadian nationalism as an impossible project or even highly problematic. Instead, theory-making needs to be anchored in the reality that Canada is important to many Canadians. Cast in the realities of contemporary Canadian nationalism, the core questions that need to be asked become ones of how and why Canadians identify with Canada, rather than why they do not, or likely never will.

In an effort to describe the integrative characteristics of Canadian nationalism, scholars like Ignatieff refer to a Canadian ‘civic nationalism’ which comprises a “community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values” (Ignatieff 1993: 6). For Ignatieff, Bruter and Kohn before them, civic nationalism is a type of political unity based on individual, rational attachment that can be seen in countries like France, the United States and Canada. In contrast, ethnic (or ‘cultural’) nationalism is based on an individual’s emotional attachments to a community rooted in factors like language or religion (Bruter 2003).

This paper assesses the mechanisms of identity construction in Canada. If Canada is purely a civic nation, the mechanisms that would facilitate the creation of the nation would include citizens’ rational assessments of the benefits and virtues associated with

¹ 39% of Canadians and 35% of Americans picked their country as their primary identification in 2000 (WVS 2000).

² Although sovereigntist sentiments in Québec have not disappeared, levels of Canadian nationalism remains strong in Canada.

membership in the community. In a civic nation, we might also expect to find low levels of emotional, as distinct from rational, attachments to Canada.

One central theme emerges in the analysis presented in this paper: Canadian nationalism has a strong individualized, rational component to it. This is not to say that Canadians are not patriotic or that they do not *feel* something about being Canadian but rather, that when they think about their country, Canadians are more likely to think about it in rational ways rather than emotive ones. This finding is consistent with the description of Canadian nationalism as a ‘civic nationalism’ described above.

Methodology

In order to provide the most accurate portrait of the mechanisms of Canadian nationalism, this paper relies on extensive polling data on political identities and citizens’ feelings toward the nation. Quantitative data allow us to assess how individuals perceive and locate themselves in relation to their political environment. The most complete picture of political identities requires different questions that tap multiple elements of the same general concept. For this reason, this draws from several datasets that pose different questions to respondents about their political identifications. The data are taken primarily from four surveys: the Building the New West Survey administered in 2001 (BNW Survey)³, the CRIC “New Canada” 2003 Study (CRIC 2003)⁴, the Elections Canada

³ The survey was based on a random sample telephone survey of western Canadians 18 years of age or older and administered to 3,256 respondents between January and March 2001 by Accord Research on behalf of the Canadian West Foundation and the University of Calgary Research Unit for the Study of Civil Society (RUSCS). In order to allow for statistically significant analyses of each western province, as well as the West as a whole, a relatively large sample was used for each province. In the presentation of aggregate regional data, a weighting adjustment factor was applied to match each province’s sample weight to its portion of the regional population 18 years of age or over.

Survey of Voters and Non-Voters (EC 2003)⁵, and the World Values Survey (WVS 2000)⁶.

At the outset it must be acknowledged that there are limitations of working with multiple datasets. The major drawback is that it limits the kinds of statistical techniques that can be used in explaining relationships between more than two variables. Because different datasets test for different things, at times it is difficult to procure a precise understanding of how several variables from different surveys may interact with one another to shape political identifications. Despite these drawbacks, a significant benefit of using multiple surveys is that they allow for greater conceptualization of Canadian nationalism because we can tap the concept using different questionnaire techniques.

Central Hypotheses and Variable Construction

This paper differentiates between three interrelated but distinct concepts that relate to nationalism: political identifications, feelings of how important the nation is to

⁴ The survey includes a representative sample of 2,000 randomly selected Canadians who were interviewed by telephone. A survey of this size has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The survey sample includes 1,000 respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 and 1,000 respondents 31 years and older. A weighting variable was used to correct for the over-sample of youth in order to make the data representative of the population.

⁵ The sample design called for a short screening interview with a large number of Canadians (5 637) and a longer interview conducted with 960 reported voters in the 2000 federal general election and 960 reported non-voters in that election. A system of corrective weights was calculated for the dataset by Decima Research, and the weighted data is used for this study.

⁶ These surveys include responses from adults over 18 in the mass publics of sixty countries around the world. The sample size is at least 1,000 per country, representing approximately 85% of the world's population. In most countries, some form of stratified multistage random sampling was used to obtain representative national samples. The WVS data are weighted in order to incorporate the national weights but also to give each country the same weight to offset the fact that some countries used much larger samples than others, which could distort results when two or more samples are analyzed together.

citizens, and how closely citizens feel toward the nation. In this paper ‘political identity’ is defined as the way in which citizens situate themselves in relation to the political world around them, which includes political institutions (the state, governments), political communities (supranational communities like the European Union, nations, provinces, and localities), and fellow citizens as members of a shared community. Similarly, Rocher and Smith define political identity as “the way in which individuals perceive their membership in the community upon which political institutions are built” (2003: 22). National identities are those that define a citizen in relation to a specific national space. In this way, ‘national identity’ is one type of political identity.

Political identities are context-dependent and entail cognitive, evaluative, motivational and affective components, all of which are evoked in specific circumstances and situations where they become more or less salient (Risse 2004). For some, the context-dependent nature of political identities may render the concept impossible to study because it is a “moving target”, meaning different things to different people in different times and places. One of the ‘culprits’ feeding this problem is the lack of rigorous testing of the concept of ‘political identity’, as it is often used to mean several things at once, conflating concepts like national identity, attachment, sense of belonging, sense of importance, general ‘warm feelings’ for a community, and primary political identifications. For example, Graves et al. use levels of attachment and belonging to various political domains in order to make claims about political identities in Canada (Graves et al. 2001). Blais and Nadeau and Howe refer to ‘national identity’ but use questions that measure strength of attachment (Mendelsohn 2002: 7). Extrapolating into the wider realm of Canadian identity, inadequate or inaccurate empirical precision in our

measurement of identity could result in greater confusion about what ‘identity’ really means in the Canadian context. In this paper ‘political identity’ is measured by a single question asked in the BNW 2001 and WVS2000 surveys that ask: “to which geographic unit a person identifies with primarily: locality/city, region, province, nation, North America or the world.

While citizens’ primary political identifications tell us whether the nation matters to an individual’s sense of identity relative to other identity groupings (such as town, or province), it cannot tell us how Canadians *feel* about their country. In order to test for the emotive component of nationalism, we need questions that tap into citizens’ emotions about their country. ‘Feelings of importance about the nation’ is tested empirically in the CRIC New Canada survey which asks respondents how important the nation, their language, region or province, ethnicity or race, religion, and gender are to their own sense of identity. ‘Feelings of closeness’ toward the nation are tested using the Elections Canada survey which asks respondents how closely they feel to their: neighbourhood, town/city, province, Canada or North America: very close, somewhat close, not very close or not at all close.

The differences between political identities (how salient the nation is to citizens), feelings of how important the nation is, and feelings of closeness to the nation allow us to test the different dimensions of nationalism and are consistent with theories of nationalism espoused by nationalism scholars such as Anderson (1983), Smith (1995) and Carey (2002). Smith defines nationalism as an “ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute a ‘nation’” (1995: 149-150). For both Smith and Carey,

national identities include the feelings and attachments citizens have toward their nation (Smith 1995; Carey 2002). Central to the construction of nationalism then, is that individual members must identify themselves with the nation. Anderson makes this case as he argues that nationalism is created and sustained by citizens who ‘imagine’ their nation; for him, the role that individual citizens play in constructing their nation is pivotal to its existence (Anderson 1983). If it is the case that Canadian nationalism is specifically a ‘civic’ nation, we should expect to see that while Canadians identify with their country, they may not *feel* Canada is all that important in their personal lives, or feel all that closely to the nation, either.

Outside of discussions about Québécois and Aboriginal nationalisms, very little attention has been paid to the mechanisms of nationalism in Canada as a whole. One area that has captured the attention of identity researchers is identity construction in the European Union (EU) (Carey 2002; Licata 2004; Risse 2003, 2004; Bruter 2004; Hermann 2004). The questions of identity that interest researchers in the EU are of value here because they concern how political identities are constructed, and the potential role that political institutions may play in forging them. This body of literature offers several useful hypotheses about how political identities are formed and are used as a basis to begin testing the mechanisms of identity formation in Canada empirically.

The first set of hypotheses of identity formation offered by EU scholars assumes the causal arrow of identity formation points from individuals toward identity. The first tests whether individuals’ assessments of how well their political institutions represent the polity shape their political identifications. Scholars like Carey argue that support for the EU is based on citizens’ attitudes and opinions about how well EU political

institutions function (Carey 2002). Nevitte assumes that citizens may be more likely to identify with their country if they feel as though national political institutions, the political system or democracy generally function well (1996).

The 'how institutions function' hypothesis is tested two ways in this paper: first, that a respondent's dissatisfaction toward the balance of power in the federation and second, that a respondent's dissatisfaction toward how well national institutions function will both channel their political identifications away from the national level. The first set of variables relate to respondents' individual assessments of how well political institutions function. The BNW 2001 survey asks respondents about their opinions about inter-state federal arrangements (whether a citizen's province receives enough respect or power in the federation, and whether they are satisfied with the balance of power between the two orders of government) and about intrastate federal institutions (opinions on the Senate, whether the electoral system should be changed to a PR system and whether citizens ought to be able to initiate referendums).

In order to identify potential underlying patterns of variation on attitudes about how well the Canadian political system functions, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the BNW 2001 survey. Generally, factor analyses reveal which groups of variables tend to vary together.⁷ The correlation coefficients for each loading are simple measures of the strength of relationship between two or more variables and range between 1.0 (a perfect positive relationship) and -1.0 (a perfect negative or inverse relationship), where zero means that no relationship exists between two or more variables

⁷ This statistical procedure provides a more reliable measure than any single variable would because it reflects patterns of common variability and association that may underlie structures or themes uniting various individual variables.

at all. Each coefficient is a measure of the strength of connection between the original variable and the factor.

Table 1.1: Factor Analysis: Function Dimensions of Identity

	Factor 1: Federalism & Balance of Power Functioning	Factor 2: Institutional Functioning
Province enough respect	-0.792	---
Province enough power	0.754	---
Federal transfers to provinces	0.627	0.125
Balance of powers	0.469	0.288
Citizen initiated referendums	---	0.738
PR electoral system in Canada	---	0.735
Senate should be provincial rep.	0.293	0.572
Percent of Variance Explained:	32.56%	16.50%

Notes: Factor Loadings less than 0.001 not reported

KMO=0.733 Accounts for 49% of total variance

The data yield two factors with an Eigenvalue of over 1.0, explaining a total of 49% of the variance. The first factor loads four items related to how well inter-state federalism (the relationship between the two orders of government) functions. The factor includes variables that ask respondents whether their province gets enough respect, whether their province has enough power, whether the federal government has enough power, and whether the balance of power is tilted too much toward either level of

government. An index was created with two categories: 'satisfied with federalism' or 'dissatisfied with federalism'.⁸

The second factor produced a much lower percentage of variation than the first and includes three variables relate to how well institutions function: the issue of citizen-initiated referendums, Senate Reform, and electoral reform in favour of proportional representation.⁹ According to the functional hypothesis, decentralists (the 'malcontents' of interstate federalism), should be less inclined to select Canada as their primary political identification than centralists.

In their research on the determinants of an emerging EU identity, other scholars forward a utilitarian or instrumental view of identity formation (Gabel 1998; Castano 2000). In this model citizens weigh the benefits versus the costs of membership in a political community and will be more inclined to identify with it if they feel as though it is a 'winning' situation for them. In the utilitarian model, identity content is informed by

⁸ Responses from the four items in this factor were coded as follows: those responses that indicate satisfaction with the status quo were coded as "1" (province receives fair share of respect, province has its fair share of influence on important national decisions, province receives its fair share of transfer payments and the balance of power between the federal government and the provinces is about right). Responses that indicate dissatisfaction with the status quo (province does not receive fair amount of respect, province does not have enough influence on important national decisions, province receives either too little or too much from transfer payments, or that the balance of power was tilted toward either the federal or provincial governments) were coded as "2". All the responses were added up and divided by 2 to create an index of satisfaction with inter-state federalism. The index was then recoded where answers that range from 2-3 were coded as a 'satisfied' and those that range from 3.01 to 4 were coded as 'dissatisfied' responses.

⁹ Each variable was coded where 1=strongly disagree or somewhat disagree that reform is required, 2=neither agree nor disagree that reform is required, and 3=somewhat agree or strongly agree that reform to these three institutions is needed. The variables were added together and divided by three to create an index that measures attitudes toward intrastate federal reform. The 'reform' variable was then recoded where responses that ranged from 1-1.66 were coded as 'status quo', 1.67-2.33 as 'neutral', and 2.34-3 as 'reform needed'.

a citizen asking the question: how will membership in this community benefit me or my country?

This hypothesis is tested in two ways in this paper: if it is the case that financial benefits from the federal government influence and promote positive national feelings among Canadians, then we should expect to find that Canadian nationalism is more vibrant in parts of the country where equalization payments from the federal government are highest. For this variable data have been collected from the Department of Finance Canada on the major federal transfers from the federal government to the provinces.¹⁰ The data include the CHST and Equalization payments made from 2002-2003 in dollars per capita per province.

The next two research hypotheses test the extent to which institutions are involved in identity formation in Canada. The EU literature on identity outlines two models of identity construction where the causal arrow points from institutions toward identity. The first derives, again, from insightful research conducted in the EU, which is the socialization/entitative model of identity formation (Hermann et al. 2004; Risse 2003; 2004). In this model individuals come to identify with an institution (and its constituency) to the extent that the institution is salient and important in their personal lives (Hermann et al. 2004: 14). The basic principle of ‘entitativity’ as it relates to identity construction is that a certain degree of homogeneity, real or imagined, is necessary for a sense of community to exist and for that sense to foster a notion of common identity (Castano

¹⁰Transfer data collected from the Department of Finance Canada at: http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/301/fed_trans-ef/Eng/2002/oct2002/FTPTE.html. Website on February 28th, 2004. Major Federal Transfers from the Federal Government to the Provinces include the CHST and Equalization payments made from 2002-2003, dollars per capita.

2004: 42). Political institutions have a potential role in making political identities more entitative to citizens. As Herrmann et al., point out, “as individuals interact with the institution or its representatives or feel its effects in their daily experience, they are more likely to perceive it as a “real” entity that provides meaning and structure for their own lives (Hermann et al. 2004: 14). A simple calculation of provincial capital distance from Ottawa tests the socialization/entitative hypothesis of identity formation. If it is the case that increased entitativity plays a role in identity promotion in Canada, Canadians who live closest to the national capital will be more likely than other citizens to identify with the Canadian nation.

The final explanation of identity formation sees institutions as deliberate agents of identity change. In his overview of explanations of identity construction in the EU, Risse refers to this model as the ‘persuasion model’ which emphasizes the abilities of institutions to produce and maintain identities by appealing to the emotions of their constituents through tools like myths, framing or symbols (Risse 2003: 20). Regardless of whether the individual ‘rationally’ thinks being Canadian is beneficial to them, in the persuasion model emotion is used to compel individuals to identify with a particular group.

This paper tests the persuasion model by assessing whether state initiatives like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) shape identities in Canada. The hypothesis holds that the more pride in national symbols like the Charter a person has, the more they will feel Canada is important to them. CRIC’s “New Canada” survey includes questions that ask respondents how much pride they have for various symbols and symbolic events in Canada on a scale of 1 (no pride at all) to 10 (very proud). The survey questions were

split sampled: half the respondents were asked about their pride for having two official languages English and French, when Canadian airports took in American planes that were diverted in September 11th, 2001, the vastness and beauty of the land, the success of Canadian musicians or actors or artists, the Queen, and the fact that people from different cultural groups in Canada get along and live in peace (n=1000). The other half were asked how much pride they had in Pierre Trudeau, Canada's decision to not participate in the war on Iraq, the CBC, Canada's scientific inventions like the Canadarm, the United Nations ranking of Canada as the best country in the world in which to live, Canada's politeness and civility(n=1000). All the respondents were asked how much pride they had in Canada's Olympic Hockey team victories, Canada's participation in key battles of World War I or World War II, Multiculturalism, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Canada's participation in peacekeeping activities around the world and Canada's healthcare system(n=2000).¹¹ For cross-tabulations, these symbols scales were

¹¹ Question Wording: I will read you a list of things and events that some people say make them proud to be Canadian. I would like you to tell me whether each of these makes you feel proud to be a Canadian. Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 means it does not make you feel proud at all, and 10 means it makes you feel very proud. You can use any number between 0 and 10. How about Canadian Olympic hockey team victories, (split sample) Pierre Trudeau/Having two official languages, English and French, Canada's participation in key battles of World War I and World War II, Multiculturalism, The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, (split sample) When Canada decided to not participate in the war on Iraq/When Canadian airports took in American planes that were diverted on September 11th, 2001, Canada's participation in peacekeeping activities around the world, (split sample) Canadian scientific inventions, like the Canadarm/The vastness and beauty of the land, (split sample) the CBC/The success of Canadian musicians or actors or artists, (split sample) When the United Nations ranks Canada as the best country in the world in which to live/the Queen, (split sample) Canada's politeness and civility/The fact that people from different cultural groups in Canada get along and live in peace.

recoded into three categories: not very proud (0,1,2), neutral (3 to 7) and very proud (8,9,10).¹²

Two exploratory factor analyses test for underlying relationships among the political symbols. Again, because the questions about symbols were split sampled, the dataset was split in two in order to run the factor analyses and conduct more sophisticated statistical analysis amongst the variables in question: one dataset contains the group of questions asked to the first set of respondents plus the questions asked to all the respondents (listed below in the first factor), the other dataset contains the group of questions asked to the second set of respondents plus the questions asked to all the respondents. The factor analyses from both datasets produced similar results.¹³

The factor analysis yields two factors with an Eigenvalue of over 1.0 and explains a total of 46% of variance with a KMO of .860. Table 1.2 shows the rotated factor loadings resulting from the factor analysis undertaken. These loadings reveal two underlying relationships amongst the symbols: the first includes symbols that are initiatives of the Canadian state: multiculturalism, the Charter, diverse cultural groups in peace, two official languages, Canada's peacekeeping role abroad, and healthcare. This factor reflects a 'pan-Canadian' vision of Canada most strongly associated with Pierre

¹² Parkins and Mendelsohn use this coding in their report on "The New Canada" 2003: 11.

¹³ The second factor analysis conducted on the other half of the dataset yields very similar results to the first, with two factor loadings with an Eigenvalue of over 1.0. The first loading includes the following variables: Canada's stance on Iraq, multiculturalism, the CBC, Trudeau, and healthcare while the second includes: Canada's world war battles, Olympic hockey victories, Canada's U.N. rankings, scientific inventions, peacekeeping activities and Canada's politeness and civility. It explains 46% of the total variance with a KMO of .857. Because the two factor analyses produce such similar results, rather than reporting two sets of findings for the purposes of clarity and brevity the chapter reports the results from the first factor (one-half of the dataset only), unless otherwise specified.

Trudeau. In order to test the role these symbols play in shaping national identity, a ‘state enterprise’ index was created based on the results of the factor analysis by adding the responses together from all the items in the loading and dividing by the total number of items in the factor (6) to obtain a scale from 0(not proud)-10(very proud) of pride.

The symbols that load in the second factor in Table 1.2 are items that are not tied directly to state initiatives but rather, are historical or cultural symbols: Canada’s participation in World War I and World War II, Canada’s role in accepting American planes on September 11, 2001, the beauty of the land, Olympic hockey victories, the Queen, and the success of Canadian musicians and artists. Although ‘Canadian musicians and artists’ loads on both factors, it is included in the analysis with the second factor because it loads more heavily on it. Table 1.2 displays the results of the factor analysis. Since this factor loading includes symbols that are non-state related it is not used in the analysis below because it does little to help test whether institutions shape nationalist identifications.

Table 1.2 Factor Analysis: Political Symbols in Canada (Principal Components, Varimax Rotation)

	Factor 1: State Enterprise Symbols	Factor 2: Historical/Cultural Symbols
Multiculturalism	.751	.078
The Charter	.733	.122
Cultural groups in harmony	.691	.200
Two official languages	.668	.005
Peacekeeping	.613	.323
Health Care	.519	.135
World War Battles	-.035	.754
Canada on 9/11	.057	.688
Beauty of land	.204	.666
Olympic hockey victories	.201	.643
The Queen	.165	.489
Success of Canadian	.405	.438

musicians/artists		
% Variation Explained	32.1	13.5

Source: CRIC New Canada, 2003; N=1005; KMO=.860 Accounts for 46% of total variance

These four models: functional, utilitarian, socialization, and persuasion, offer concrete ways we can test the formation of a Canadian identity. To recap, these models are tested with five empirical hypotheses:

H₁: The more satisfied a person is with the balance of power in the federation the more likely s/he will identify primarily with Canada;

H₂: The less a person feels national institution reform is needed the more likely s/he will identify primarily with Canada;

H₃: The more a person's province of residence receives from federal transfer payments the more likely s/he is to feel Canada is important to them;

H₄: The closer in physical proximity to national political institutions a person is the more likely s/he will identify with Canada; and,

H₅: The more pride a person has in national political symbols the more likely s/he will feel Canada is important to them.

Findings

The findings support the position that there are multiple mechanisms of identity construction in Canada, as both individuals and institutions play a role. Between the two however, the role of individuals as they assess their political environment and make their identity choices accordingly is the most convincing catalyst of national identifications in Canada. At the individual level, citizens' assessments of how well institutions function is an important factors in whether Canadians feel nationalistic. The central question here is whether citizens' assessments of the balance of power in the federation shape their identity choices. The short answer is 'yes'. Among Canadians who are the most

dissatisfied with the balance of power between the federal and provincial government, 22% selected Canada as their primary identification. That number rises to 37% among the most satisfied with the balance of power among the Canadian population for a difference of 15 percentage points.¹⁴

¹⁴ $p < .01$, $V = .207$

Table 1.3 Functional Dimension of Identity I: Federalism

	%	Attitudes Toward the Balance of Powers in the Federation	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Primary Political Identifications	Locality/City	25	25
	Province	23	31
	Western Canada	8	17
	Canada	37	22
	North America	2	2
	The world	5	3
	Total (N)	1101	1457

Source: BNW Survey, 2001

Table 1.3 shows how Canadians' level of satisfaction with inter-state federalism drives their political identifications such that the most satisfied citizens are more likely to identify with Canada, while the most dissatisfied citizens are more likely to identify with their province, their locality, or Western Canada.

Citizens' attitudes toward intrastate institutional reform also shape their political identifications: among those who feel little to no institutional reform is required, almost one-half selected 'Canada' as their primary identification, compared to one-quarter of those who felt institutions do not function well and are in need of reform (see Table 1.4).¹⁵

¹⁵ $p < .001$, $V = 111$

Table 1.4 Functional Dimension of Identity II: Institutional Reform

	% (N)	Attitudes Toward Central Institutions	
		Reform Needed	Reform Not Needed
Primary Political Identifications	Locality/Town	26	23
	Province	28	17
	Western Canada	16	5
	Canada	24	46
	North America	2	3
	The world	4	6
	Total (N)	1562	96

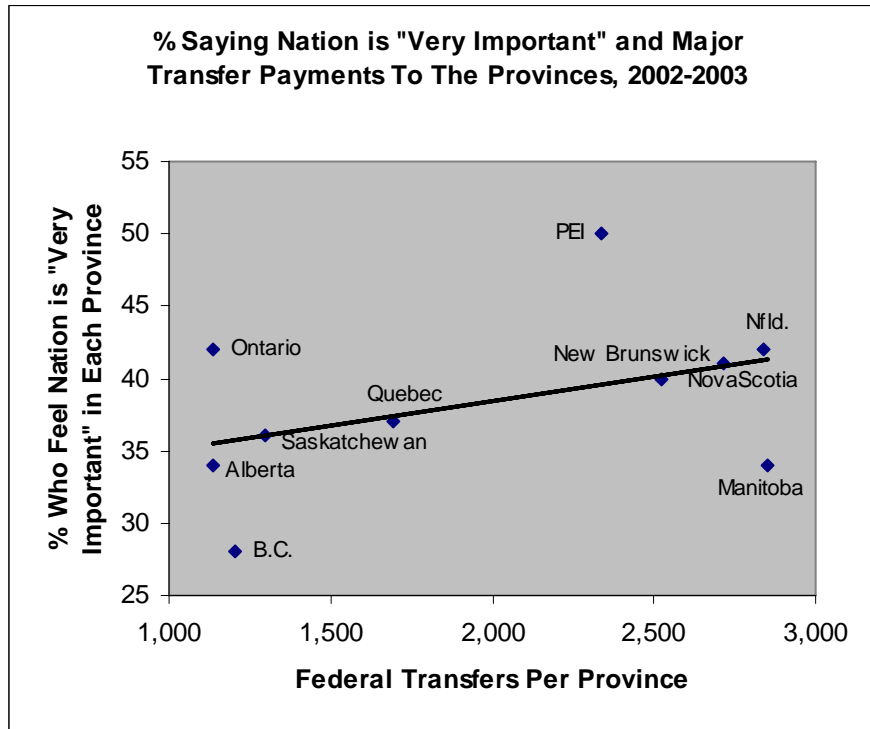
Source: BNW Survey, 2001

In comparison with the ‘non-reformers’, ‘reformers’ are more likely to identify with their province of residence or Western Canada: while 17% of ‘non-reformers’ selected their province first, 28% of ‘reformers’ said the same, while regional identifications increase from 5% to 16% from ‘non-reformers’ and ‘reformers’. Neither ‘reformists’ nor ‘non-reformists’ are very likely to identify at the supra-national level. When citizens believe reform of the central institutions is needed, they are more likely to identify at a sub-national level than they are at the national one.

But do Canadian citizens also base their nationalist identifications on the harsher ‘utilitarian’ realities of whether they will profit in exchange for their loyalties and allegiances? The evidence suggests that the answer is ‘yes’. According to the first utilitarian dimension, the more money a province receives from transfer payments, the more likely residents of that province will identify with Canada. Utilitarian concerns are

measured by comparing federal transfer payments to the provinces with how important Canada is to respondents who live in each province.¹⁶

Figure 1.1: Scatterplot of Percentage of Canadians Who Feel Canada is “Very Important” to them and Major Transfer Payments per Province, 2002-2003(dollars per capita)



Source: CRIC “New Canada” 2003; $y=0.0034x+31.732$

Figure 1.1 reveals a trend of positive sentiments toward the nation in those provinces that benefit the most from federal transfer payments: Newfoundland, which receives the most from transfer payments per capita at 2,841, has the highest percentage of those who feel the nation is “very important” to them at 42% . Considering its late entry into Confederation (1949) and its historically unique culture and identity, the utilitarian basis of identity is especially convincing in the case of Newfoundland.

¹⁶ Data from the CRIC-Globe 2003 survey.

Four provinces do not follow the regression line and suggest that alternate explanations underlie Canadians' feelings of closeness to their country : P.E.I, Manitoba, British Columbia and Ontario. P.E.I. stands out as a province that does not receive as much from transfer payments as some of the other provinces do, yet Islanders feel as though Canada is more important to them than residents of other provinces. In this case, Prince Edward Islanders are not as 'utilitarian' in how they feel about Canada than are residents of other provinces. Manitoba stands out as a province that receives more money in transfer payments relative to most of the other provinces, yet it has a low level of nationalist sentiment relative to the other provinces. One possible explanation is that Manitoban discontent with the federation is on the rise, a finding supported by a report released by the Canada West Foundation (Berdahl 2001: 31).

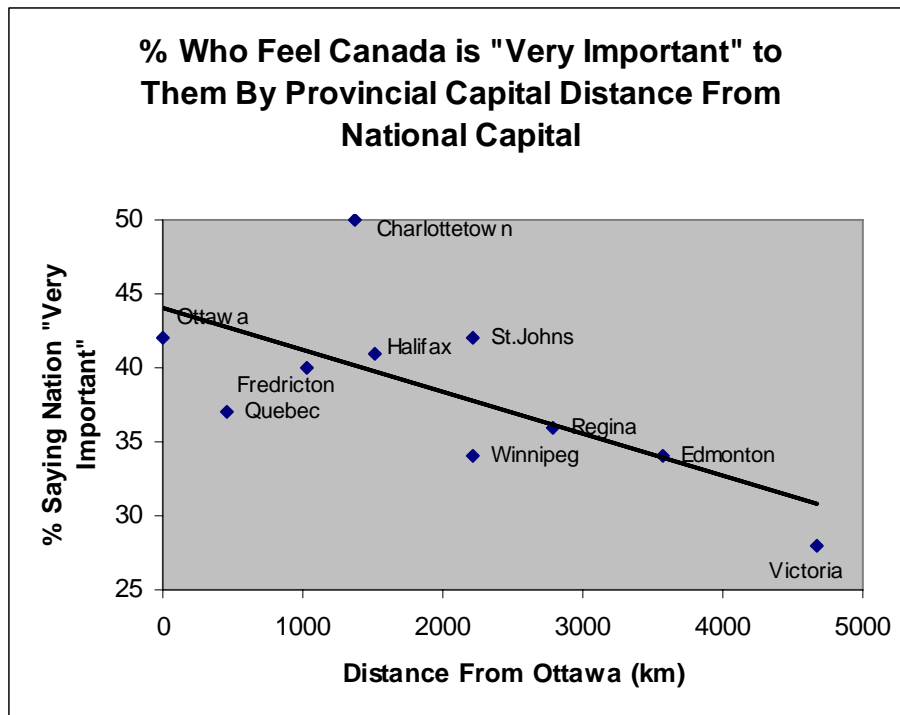
Why is it that in British Columbia nationalist sentiment is unusually low, while in Ontario it is unusually high relative to our prediction that provinces that receive the most federal money would have more citizens who feel Canada is very important to them? One possible explanation is the geographic proximity of each province to the federal government, an hypothesis that is tested in the next section of the chapter. The three outliers include B.C., which receives less than any other province in transfer payments (with the exceptions of Ontario and Alberta), and has the lowest percentage of those who feel the nation is "very important" to them at 28%. It is therefore unusually low in levels of nationalist sentiment.

The high level of Ontario respondents who said Canada was very important to them despite its low intake of transfer payments is not surprising and consistent with other survey data that show Ontarians see themselves foremost as Canadians who happen

to be situated in Ontario (Dyck 2004: 224). The close proximity to the national government, federal government employment opportunities, and the current party system that has seen the federal governing party dominate in Ontario likely provide incentives for Ontarians to identify strongly with Canada, whereas, these “perks” of membership within the national community are less obvious in a province as far away from Ottawa as British Columbia. The results presented in Figure 1.1 indicate that some Canadians are calculating when it comes to their feelings about the country, and that they are much more willing to feel warmly about Canada when the national purse strings are open wide.

How do institutions fare in shaping Canadians’ national identifications? If entitativity is a determinant of identity construction, we would expect that its effects would be observable in Canada because of its sheer geographic size which makes it more difficult for Canadians who live on opposite ends of the country to know what it feels and looks like to be a British Columbian, or Newfoundlander. Figure 1.2 confirms this suspicion for the most part: a scatterplot of those who feel Canada is ‘very important’ to them by the distance their provincial capital is to the national capital reveals that the farther away a respondent lives from Ottawa, the less likely they are to say that Canada is ‘very important’ to them.

Figure 1.2: Scatterplot of % Who Feel Canada “Very Important” to Them By Provincial Capital Distance to the National Capital (in kilometres)



Source: CRIC “New Canada” 2003; $y = -0.0028x + 44.033$

Compared to all other provinces, British Columbians are the least likely to feel Canada is ‘very important’ to them, as only 28% said that Canada is ‘very important’ to them. Ontarians tie with Newfoundlanders among Canadians who feel that Canada is ‘very important’ to them, as 42% of respondents in each province agreed. Almost all of the other provinces follow the regression line, with the exceptions of Quebeckers and Newfoundlanders. Quebeckers (who have a history of feeling ‘less close’ to Canada than other Canadians) are geographically closer to the nation’s capital than residents of other provinces yet do not feel Canada is as important to them. While Newfoundlanders are farther away from Ottawa, they feel Canada is more important to them. This response

could be due to the benefits Newfoundland receives from transfer and equalization payments, as noted earlier.

What about the federal government's deliberative attempts to foster a sense of nationalism by appealing to citizens' emotions via symbols? There are two steps needed to test this hypothesis: the first is to assess how much pride Canadians have in specific political symbols, and the second is to then test whether pride in these symbols is linked to respondents' feelings toward Canada.

By and large Canadians are quite proud of Canada's role internationally: pride in Canada's UN rankings, Canada's role in taking in American planes on September 11, 2001 and its peacekeeping role each have a mean score (where ten is a lot of pride) of 8.62, 8.32, and 8.00 respectively. Healthcare scored fairly low compared to other symbols, with a mean score of 6.66. The Queen was the least likely source of pride for Canadians with a mean score of 4.53. The highest ranked source of pride in Canada relates directly to its geography: the country's vastness and beauty of the land, with an average score of 9.04.

In Canada, conventional wisdom holds that certain symbols have come to define 'what it means to be Canadian', such as Multiculturalism and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The 'mosaic' metaphor of Canada as a nation that accommodates and promotes societal differences is often referred to by Canadians to distinguish themselves from the 'melting pot' of the United States. Yet while it is true that many Canadians feel pride in these symbols, the findings presented here indicate that the link between pride in some of these symbols and nationalism is somewhat weak.

Bivariate analysis of the state-enterprise index¹⁷ and nationalist sentiment indicates that a relationship does exist: among those who have low levels of pride in state-enterprise symbols, 30% felt Canada was very important to them, compared to 42% of those who expressed a lot of pride in these symbols who also felt Canada was very important to them.¹⁸ However, further evidence throws this finding into question. When we introduce other variables into the analysis through a regression analysis, the relationship between state-enterprise symbols and nationalist sentiment is greatly depressed.

In order to test the relationship between political symbols' capacities to evince citizens' emotional feelings toward Canada relative to other possible factors, a regression analysis using the OLS method was conducted based on CRIC-GLOBE "New Canada" data¹⁹. In order to meet the interval level data assumptions of regression, dichotomous variables were created where each non-interval level variable was recoded into a binary variable.

The dependent variable is 'importance of nation' (how important is the nation to you?). The responses of "very important" were recoded as "1" and all other responses as "0". Using the CRIC-New Canada survey we can test whether certain segments of the population are more likely to feel attached to the nation, such as visible minorities and

¹⁷ The state-enterprise scale ranging from 0 to 10 was recoded to: 0-3.32=low, 3.33-6.67=moderate, and high=6.68-10.

¹⁸ $p < .001$, $V = .155$

¹⁹ This technique was used by the Canada Election Study team in their analysis of the results of the 1997 Canadian federal election. Dichotomous variables were introduced into the model in order to meet the assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis. For further explanation about this process, see Nevitte, Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau. (2000). *Unsteady State*. Oxford University Press.

women. We can also test whether youth and education are predictors of nationalism, a hypothesis that is articulated by post-materialist scholars who suggest that national identities are giving way to cosmopolitan or ‘global identifications’ among youth and the more educated; the post-materialists (Nevitte 1996).

These and other demographic variables are coded as dummy variables in the following way: youth (aged 18-24=1, all other ages=0),²⁰ visible minorities (visible minorities=1, non-visible minorities=0), gender (male=1, female=0), education (1=completed university degree or post graduate degree, 0=else), and income (1=over 70,000 per year per household, 0=else). The state-sponsored variable remains as scales ranging from 0 to 10.

Other identity groupings were also included as independent variables in order to test the extent to which feelings toward other identity domains travel together: language (1=very important, 0=all other responses), province (1=very important, 0=all other responses), ethnicity (1=very important, 0=all other responses), gender (1=very important, 0=all other responses), religion (1=very important, 0=all other responses).

The standardized beta coefficients and standard errors are reported and show the independent effect of each predictor after the effects of all the other predictors have been controlled for. Whether the coefficient is negative or positive is an indication of the direction of its effect on the dependent variable. A perfect positive relationship is equal to 1 and a perfect negative relationship is equal to -1. Results that are not statistically significant are not reported. As well, the R-square is reported for each regression

²⁰ The survey did not ask how old the respondent was, only what age category they fell into.

equation which tells us how much of the variance is explained in each regression and is converted to a percentage.

Table 1.5 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Feelings of Importance of Nation in Canada

Independent Variables	Model: 'Nation is Important'	
	β	Std. error
Demographic Variables		
Youth	-.062**	.042
Visible Minorities	-.054***	.044
High Income Earners	-.024***	.021
Education	.086*	.016
Gender	-.045***	.030
Symbolic Variable		
State-Enterprise	.096*	.008
Identity Variables		
Language	.144	.035
Province	.138	.036
Ethnicity	.115	.039
Gendered	.108	.037
Religion	.127	.037
R²	.190	

Note: All results statistically significant at $p < .001$ except: *** = not statistically significant; **= $p < .05$, * $p < .01$. N=900

Source: CRIC New Canada Survey, 2002.

Table 1.5 reports the results from the regression analysis. Putting aside the finding that identity groupings are positively correlated with feelings toward the nation, in comparison with the other variables in the model the explanatory capacity of state-initiative symbols is much less than that of education, or than those who also feel other identity groups (ie. language) are important to them. An Environics Research Group study from 2003 supports this finding, as fewer Canadians were likely to say that the

Canadian flag, the national anthem, the RCMP, or Ottawa as the national capital are very important to the Canadian identity.²¹

There are several plausible explanations why state-initiative symbols do not seem to trigger positive nationalist sentiments amongst Canadians. First, some of these symbols have never been uniformly or warmly accepted by all Canadians. Since its inception, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been a source of angst among various regions in Canada, noticeably in Québec and the Western provinces for its capacity to cede the powers of provincial governments to individuals and groups. For this reason, it is possible that while for some Canadians there is a positive emotional response to Canada when one thinks of the Charter, for others, this is not the case.

Another plausible explanation of why state-sponsored symbols do not drive positive feelings toward the nation could be rooted in the nature of the symbols themselves: rather than promote unity, four of six are predicated upon the value diversity: multiculturalism, official languages, cultural groups living in harmony, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is possible--and somewhat ironic-- that rather than promote a unified, cohesive political community, these symbols of diversity entrench the principles of individualism and 'difference' into the national psyche, rather than actively promote the collective nation.

There is one last important finding presented in the earlier regression analysis that demands attention. Table 1.5 highlights the compatibility of feelings toward other identity groupings with feelings toward Canada and shows the 'nesting' pattern of

²¹As cited in a report prepared by Chris Baker and Jack Jedwab was prepared for the Environics Research Group entitled "Patriotism and Canadian Identity", May 2003.

feelings toward Canada: positive relationships exist between language and nation (.179), ethnicity and nation (.108), gender and nation (.087) and religion and nation (.080). The consonance of non-territorial with territorial identities (national ones) suggests that political identities travel together such that if a person thinks a non-territorial identity is important to them, they are likely to also think Canada is very important to them.

Concluding Remarks

The benchmark evidence presented in this paper raises a variety of intriguing findings about the nature of national identities in Canada. The overall story the data tell is that while Canadian nationalism is robust, its success is rooted in Canadians' thinking about their membership in the national community rationally. Canadians' satisfaction with the central institutions and whether their province benefits financially from the federation are factors that shape their nationalist identifications. Citizens' physical proximity to central institutions also seems to be a determinant of identity construction: the strength of Canadians' emotional attachments to the nation is dependent upon place.

While there is some evidence that supports the persuasion model that institutions--through state-initiated symbols-- shape identities, the evidence is not entirely convincing that there is a causal relationship between pride in national symbols and an emotional pull to the nation.

Due to the limitations of the data used in this paper, there are some possible explanations of identity formation in Canada that cannot be ruled out. One area of future inquiry needs to examine the extent to which other political symbols such as the flag or the RCMP may invoke positive emotional responses from Canadians than do the symbols used in this paper.

However, the findings presented in this paper do not preclude the explanation that Canadians may feel emotional about their country; rather, they illustrate that if Canadian nationalism is underpinned by an emotive base, it is in tandem with a rationally-minded citizen who thinks about their membership in the national community. In this sense, individual citizens in Canada play an active role in thinking through their national identifications.

In reality, Canadian nationalism exists today alongside other nationalisms: Aboriginal nations are finally starting to acquire institutional structures to represent their nationalist claims, and the sovereigntist aspirations in Québec continue to shape both national politics and politics within Québec. Yet within this environment, Canadians continue to identify with their country more so than citizens of most other democratic countries, and it is a 'civic', rationally-conceived nation they imagine.

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