

# 1905 and All That: Quebec and the Issue of Chronological Symbolism

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## Introduction

Norway's separation from Sweden a century ago took place in a peaceful manner. This is an exception in a world where the breakup of an existing political entity can be, and often is, an extremely conflict-fraught political development. Given the peaceful nature of the process and the convivial relationship that marks the present situation between the Scandinavian neighbours, it is no surprise that Quebec sovereigntists and Canadian academics alike have sometimes turned their gaze to it, with emphasis upon its irenic nature (Young 1995). This emphasis, in turn, can find its way into a more comprehensive argument, to wit that what took place in Scandinavia during the early twentieth century might have an echo in the Canada of the early twenty-first century.

It is this argument that we set out to critique in our paper. We hope to accomplish three things in our critique. First, we seek to assess the relevance of the 1905 events for a future Quebec-Canada tango. A couple of critical issues are raised in this regard: one goes to the comparability of cases in a comparative historical context; the other touches upon just how "peaceful" the 1905 process actually was.

Second, we bring into the analysis the fundamental issue of "Europe." Both Sweden as member and Norway as associated nonmember are engulfed in the transformations that have been taking place under the aegis of the European Union. If "Europe" really is to be the apple of the sovereigntists' eye, then we want to determine under what kind of circumstances may they find that in ostensibly "leaving" Canada, they will not in fact have "left"? In this section of the paper, we therefore examine in turn as possible models for a future Canada-Quebec relationship the European Union, and the special arrangement that Norway has developed with the EU (namely, the European Economic Agreement, or EEA).

Third, we discuss in our conclusion the *consequences* of separation in security terms. Here, we posit the post-separation Norway-Sweden relationship as an exemplar of a "security community" (Adler and Barnett 1998). The interesting point from the perspective of future Canada-Quebec relations concerns how, as well as the extent to which, Norway's separation from Sweden affected the development of a close-knit security community between the two – apart, that is, from converting what had been an "amalgamated" security community into a "pluralistic" one.

## Naming and Framing

Shakespeare had Juliet answer her rhetorical balcony question, "What's in a name?" with the assertion that a rose's sweet smell had nothing to do with the flower's name. That assertion sits well with our modern sense of justice but as a depiction of roses, it fails to convey that they also have sharp thorns.

In politics, naming is a key to framing (Rein and Schoen 1993). Rosa Luxemburg noted that Norway's secession from the monarchical union with Sweden had the unfortunate effect of simply restoring monarchy, albeit a *Norwegian* monarchy. From a republican perspective, she

lamented that the country's secession from Sweden was hardly a progressive act. Lenin, however, took Luxemburg to task for downplaying Norway's right to self-determination, which he regarded as very progressive, concerned as he was the national question (REFERENCE HERE).

Frames matter. If we move on to the Canadian context we of course find that the issue of Quebec separation is discussed not within a monarchical, but within a federal, context; the difference in context thus determines the frames that can be evoked. Add to this that the step from Norway-Sweden to Canada-Quebec is not only a matter of different regime contexts, but is also a significant leap in time. And this last gives rise to another question: "What's in a date?" For if context can produce different frames, so does time offer a large arsenal for the symbolic use of chronology, especially when intended, as it so often is, to score political points. It should be clear that some years have a decidedly better perfume than others. As a good example, take the renewed struggle between the two star-crossed members of the Canadian federation, Quebec and the "rest of Canada" (aka the ROC).

The closer we might come to a future, third, referendum on Quebec sovereignty, the more we might expect the two sides in the struggle over Canada's fate to have recourse to chronological symbolism: both sovereigntist and federalist forces alike will seek advantage by citing dates that are held to be pregnant with utility for their respective positions. These dates will be vested with symbolic portent, for as Michael Walzer once so aptly put it, symbols tell us "more than we can easily repeat" (Walzer 1967, p. 196). They have a way of getting us quickly to the crux of the matter.

Already we have had a foretaste of what lies ahead. Sovereigntists with long memories will remember how the symbolic use of chronology was attempted, only to fall flat, in the heady early days of Parti québécois rule. Flushed with his surprise victory in November 1976, Premier René Lévesque made an early visit to New York, where he hoped to convince American financial barons that they had absolutely nothing to fear, and indeed quite a bit to applaud, in the event of Quebec's achieving sovereignty. Lévesque, well known at home for his deep pro-American sentiments (Liséé YEAR), thought he could sway the hearts and minds of members of the Economic Club of New York by resorting to a bit of chronological symbolism, invoking 1776 in a bid to demonstrate that what Quebec sovereigntists wanted was nothing other than pure Americanism -- their own declaration of independence committing them to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The problem is that while the premier might have been uttering 1776, his audience was hearing something else: 1861. To them, what was happening north of the border held out the prospect of the sundering of federal union with implications every bit as sinister as those that attended the decision of South Carolina and other states to pursue their own fortunes, unencumbered by the constraints of federalism. After all, did not the American South style itself a nation apart, an ethnic (albeit not linguistic) entity whose so-called "Norman-Cavalier" cultural origins made it simply an incompatible long-term partner of the Northern, Yankee, "nation" (McPherson DATE)? So when Lévesque resorted to a date as a shorthand way of making a political assertion -- that Quebec should be free to pursue its own future and that its doing so was consistent with America's own political ideological origins -- his listeners similarly used a date to reiterate a deeply held conviction of their own, concerning the dangers of ethnic nationalism. The issue was not contestation over facts but over evocative frames.

By the time of the second referendum, different dates were figuring in the symbolic interrogation of Canada's future. Those who, much like the New York Economic Club audience, feared the worst in the event of a Quebec separation from Canada, availed themselves of 1992 as

an economical means of conveying the message that danger and bloodshed loomed in the event of a “yes” vote on the question of sovereignty; this time, you hardly needed a long memory to grasp the nub, for a decade ago the 1992 Bosnian civil war was fresh in everyone’s mind. But to supporters of sovereignty, 1993 was a much more comforting symbol: this was the year, after all, of the consummation of the “velvet divorce” in Czechoslovakia, an event that signalled that federations could break up so peacefully that their actual dissolution might serve to pacify, not exacerbate, inter-ethnic tensions.

Next time around, possibly as early as 2008 if recent trends in Quebec politics prevail, we might expect to encounter a new date being thrown into the symbolic hopper, 1905. This was the year in which, by parting company from Sweden, Norway began a process resulting in the creation of what political scientists like to call Europe’s (and some say the world’s) first pluralistic security community (Lebow 1994). Such a community is considered to be an arrangement between two or more states about which it can be said that the use of military force, or even the threat of such use, has credibly been banished as a means of conflict resolution within the group. Members of such a security community may, and often do, hiss and shout at each other, but the point is that their spats are taken to be simply incapable of degenerating into interstate violence. In a security community, or so it is said, everyone has reliable expectations that the only kind of change permissible is peaceful change.

Hence the allure of 1905 for those imagining not only that Canada could break up without strife, but that the post-federal status quo could be expected to be every bit as satisfactory, for both parties, as has been the past century of peaceful coexistence between the two Scandinavian neighbours. But how realistic is it to focus on 1905 for its symbolic portent? It is not just the usual problem that confronts anyone working in the field of comparative politics -- namely, the old “apples-vs.-oranges” injunction, which holds that comparisons between entities that are too “unlike” will render nugatory the entire comparative exercise.<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, the issue of comparability between these two sets of cases stops precisely when it starts to become interesting, there being no Canadian equivalent to the Norway-Sweden separation, as Canada is still intact. What happens after an eventual separation in Canada has to remain mere conjecture.

This is clearly a problem, but it really is not the principal reason to approach 1905 with caution; for chronological symbolism has to be regarded in the same way that we regard other metaphors, i.e., as figurative means of communication that attain their value precisely because of the oddness, not the naturalness, of the pairing they make. In the words of philosopher Earl Mac Cormac, metaphors must entail the “unusual juxtaposition of the familiar and the unfamiliar” (Mac Cormac 1985, p. 9).

So our purpose here is not to argue any fundamental “similarity” between early twenty-first century Canada and early twentieth-century Scandinavia: doing so would be clearly absurd, as well as unnecessary. Having said that, precisely because we talk about metaphors it is useful to look beyond the process itself and examine if the two cases and processes are cast within similar or distinctly different frames. As we showed above with the Lévesque example, a distinct event can be framed very differently, depending on audience and context.

What is more, frames vary greatly in their evocative potential. Some ways of framing an event or issue simply sit better with the mental structures or worldviews of those subject to them. Put more specifically, some frames offer greater conceptual coherence, are more persuasive in

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<sup>1</sup> This common-sensical notion ignores the *strategic use of comparison to highlight unique features of a given entity*. Charles Tilly (1984) labels this “individualising comparison.”

normative terms, and offer clearer directions for action than do other ones.<sup>2</sup> Frames are in no way oblivious to “facts” but they offer conceptual lenses for the amplification of certain facts or depictions of a situation over other ones. The issue then is whether there may remain certain “stubborn facts” or specific features of a given case that stand out across frames. If that is so, it might also have effects on our second item under investigation, the character of the Norwegian-Swedish security community. Let us put it more sharply: if the Norwegian-Swedish separation unfolded under significantly different evocative frames than those that would mark a present-day separation of Quebec from Canada, we would need to consider what implications this might have for the transferability of the notion of security community from Scandinavia to Canada.

In the following pages, we provide the groundwork for our subsequent inquiry into whether those who might wish to extract symbolic importance from 1905 actually understand why and how the process leading to Norway's separation unfolded. In other words, does the symbol really serve the chosen purpose? To answer this, we really have to know something about what actually occurred a century ago as the two Scandinavian peoples made their way toward their own pluralistic security community. We do this through considering the evocative frames that surround the 1905 context.

### **The Exceptional Union: Norway/Sweden, 1814 to 1905**

The separation of Norway from Sweden was understood as the breakup of a *monarchical*, not a federal, union. The entities that split apart in 1905 had never been federated after coming together on 14 January 1814, pursuant to the Treaty of Kiel. This pact stipulated that Denmark cede Norway (which had been joined to it since the late 1300s) to the Swedish king, as a reward for his war effort against Napoleon (and as a punishment for Denmark's having chosen the wrong side – Napoleon's!). However, shortly thereafter the Danish prince, Christian Frederick, who served as his king's governor in Norway, attempted to prevent this by having himself installed on the Norwegian throne. Christian Frederick struck an agreement with Norwegian notables, resulting in a national assembly of 112 delegates gathering at Eidsvoll in May 1814, with the purpose of drafting a democratic constitution for an independent Norway. The draft was completed on 16 May, and the Danish prince became the Norwegian king, by election, the very next day.

So Norwegians, inspired by the examples of the American and French revolutions, were able to seize upon the occasion to forge an independent, democratic country. The experiment would prove to be short-lived, as Sweden, with British help, militarily occupied Norway that summer, forcing Christian Frederick to abdicate and go into exile. Union with Sweden ensued, but did so in an instructive manner: the Norwegian State Council governed in accordance with articles 42 and 43 of the *Grunnlov* (Eidsvoll Norwegian Constitution) and came to an agreement with the Swedish crown. The Storting (Norwegian Parliament) declared on 20 October 1814: “Norway shall be united with Sweden as an independent monarchy under one king, while retaining its basic law” (Stollies 2005, p. 36). The legal framework for the new union was the Riksakt of 6 August 1815, article 1 of which recognized Norway as an independent country, which shared the king with Sweden. The act also explicitly stated that the Union would be based on the *two* countries' constitutions. The Norwegian constitution of 1814 was slightly modified so as to protect *internal* sovereignty, with much of Norway's *external* sovereignty being ceded to

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<sup>2</sup> These elements of frame analysis are taken from Rein and Schoen 1993.

the Union:

The Norwegian constitution was largely kept intact, allowing for an independent Norwegian state with its own parliament, judiciary, and executive powers. Foreign relations were, however, conducted by the king through the Swedish ministry of foreign affairs. “<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Norway-in-1905>”

Thus the Union with Sweden was foremost through the Swedish king, who ruled the two countries separately, and in accordance with their respective constitutional arrangements. Joint functions basically revolved around external relations. There was one Swedish foreign minister and a joint system of consular representation. The Union was “in the scheme of all continental textbooks -- a ‘real union’, also in the sense of international law, not a one-sided relationship of dependence in the manner of a province, a colony, or a satellite state. In essence, virtually nothing changed for Norway in terms of international law in 1905, for it had been a sovereign state throughout the entire nineteenth century”(Stollies 2005, p. 47).

Two elements of the Sweden-Norway case stand out with regard to evocative frames. First, the Union was a monarchical arrangement and had no popular sanction or backing. The arrangement as such was based on the ancient principle of absolutism, in which the king is ruler and *possessor of land*, to be disposed of as he sees fit.<sup>3</sup> However, this principle was clearly modified by the two states’ constitutions, each of which constrained the king in its respective realm. The legitimacy of the Union derived from the monarchical principle, which to constitutionalists and democrats alike was a backward-looking arrangement.

Second, the legitimacy of the Union depended on common acceptance of the monarchical principle; were it to be rejected, the Union could hardly continue to be considered legitimate. So the Union was tightly bound to the person and institution of the King. There were no common institutions to sustain it as an entity *separate* from the states that made it up. The lack of common overarching institutions prevented the Union from taking on a specific institutional hue from which a unique character and symbolism could emerge (as is certainly the case with any federal arrangement). The lack of common institutions also rendered the nation-state template the only viable context within which could occur the shaping of a Norwegian identity. When Norwegians contemplated Sweden, they saw a separate state, and not an integral part of their own land. Swedes were not integrated with Norwegians through supranational institutions, and this gave Norwegians considerable leverage in determining how closely they would relate to Sweden’s institutions and way of life. Norwegians held no special affinity for Swedes in the sense that they could be considered each a part of the other; instead, Norwegians retained their own formative institutions openly permitting them to identify themselves as Norwegians. In terms of democratic legitimacy, the Union arrangement would show itself to be at best epiphenomenal, as Norwegians demonstrated when they introduced parliamentary rule in the 1880s, clearly designating themselves as subjects of the Norwegian parliament, acting on behalf of the Norwegian people.

To sum up, if we consider the most salient evocative frames, then we find that the progressive values of constitutionalism and democracy both weighed in on the side of a distinctive Norwegian nation-state, against which stood the Union, steeped as it was in an ancient

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<sup>3</sup> Stollies (2005:40) notes that “The notion that a monarch could rule several countries and people like a property owner was still protruding into the present like a relic from the past. This old idea pervaded the unions of England and Scotland, Austria and Hungary, Sweden and Norway...”

monarchical frame. But the Union would increasingly be reined in by constitutional government, as well as by Swedish society's more aristocratic and conservative version of nationalism. During the 1800s, Norway, through its progressive-democratic national awakening and mobilization, came to find the Union an ever-more annoying constraint. Sweden itself was gradually modernizing, and as it did so it embraced these same constitutional-democratic principles that would put it also at odds with the fundamental tenets and evocative frames of the Union.

## **The Process of Separation**

The centennial of Norway's separation from Sweden was preceded by a spate of renewed historical interest in the developments that had led up to this important event. Entirely in keeping with the congenial relations between the two peoples, many of these anniversary projects were Swedish-Norwegian collaborations, including the 1905 webpage that was set up with documents, results and publications: <http://www.hf.uio.no/hi/prosjekter/Prosjekt1905/index.php>. But what the projects actually came up with went somewhat against the irenic grain, as they revealed a process that had been considerably more fraught with peril than it is remembered as having been.

The immediate background for the push for separation from the monarchical tie with Sweden was the Norwegian demand for a reorganization of the joint foreign service; Norwegians sought their own consulates and own foreign minister, whereas most Swedes wanted to retain a joint foreign service under Swedish suzerainty.

During much of its existence, the Union had operated without major conflicts. Each member was influenced by European nationalist currents, but these took on different hues. For instance, Norwegian nationalism was left-leaning and oriented toward democracy, whereas Swedish nationalism was more clearly associated with the political right and with the defence of Sweden.

A major nationalist-democratic mobilizing event in Norway occurred in 1884, when the Norwegian Storting challenged the Swedish king's ascendancy through the introduction of parliamentarianism. The Norwegian parliament prevailed, and in so doing it spawned the formation of nationwide political parties, one of which -- the liberal left party -- would become most critical of the Union with Sweden.

Norway's nationalist liberal left party sought an autonomous foreign affairs administration. This met with Swedish opposition. During the 1890s different conceptions of nationalism would fuse with different economic stances, Sweden adopting a more protectionist policy than Norway wished. This, in turn, led in 1895 to the abolition of the *Mellomrikslovene*, which had united the two countries in one open market system. This step has been labelled, with reason, a nail in the Union's coffin, for it undercut the latter's economic rationale and radicalized Norwegian opposition. This same year also witnessed a major increase in defence spending.

Norway had introduced conscription in 1876. In 1887 the army was equipped with all the relevant branches for a fighting force of its day. Norway had also constructed three lines of fortifications along the border with Sweden. According to the Norwegian historian Roald Berg the Storting was arming Norway in military anticipation of a coming break with Sweden. Both Sweden and Norway certainly increased their military spending and strengthened their armed forces during the 1890s: Swedish defence spending increased from kroner 28 million a year in 1890 to 58 million in 1901, while Norway's spending rose from kroner 9 million in 1890 to

kroner 20 million in 1901. Norwegian military spending had even soared to 27 million kroner in 1895, when the Swedish government threatened Norway with the use of military force if it would not back down on the consulate issue.

Thus it looks as if there had been a bit of an “arms race” during the 1890s, though one would not wish to overdramatize things, given that more was at work here than simply a programmatic effort on Norway’s part to separate from Sweden (an element that would, to be sure, attain more prominence from 1895 on). For on the Swedish side, at least, much of the rationale for increased defence spending derived from a perception of a growing Russian threat.

That said, both Scandinavian countries developed war plans and organized war games. Norway, for instance in 1895, initiated a trial mobilization. And the war game it organized in 1902 simulated a possible conflict with Sweden. For its part, the Swedish general staff had already in 1893 set up *fälttågsplan väst* (“field action plan west”), which was billed as a political defensive war for the maintenance of the Union through armed force, but with the explicit proviso that this had to be conducted as a strategic offensive against Norway. This plan was still effectively in force in 1905 (adapted to Swedish conscription, introduced in 1901).

What was the prospect for war between the two states in 1905 when the negotiations came to a head? The Swedish government had presented a proposal on the consular issue that the Norwegians would not accept, as it would effectively have deprived them of the prospect of their own foreign minister. The Norwegian position thereupon hardened, with government members tendering their resignations. These, the Swedish king refused to accept, claiming he lacked the authority to establish a new Norwegian government. In response, the Norwegian parliament declared the king effectively to have abdicated, since he was unable to fulfil his constitutional task of appointing a new government in Norway. On this basis, on 7 June 1905, the Norwegian parliament declared the Union with Sweden dissolved. It decided to hold a referendum on the issue of dissolution, confident that in gaining easy victory in the court of Norwegian opinion. Meanwhile, whereas the Swedish government had adopted a moderate line, the Swedish parliament dug in its heels, and refused to accept the dissolution. The Norwegian referendum took place on 13 August 1905, and resulted in the expected overwhelming majority of Norwegian voters assenting to the dissolution: 368,208 voted against Union, with 184 voting in favour. All the voters were male, but feeling transcended gender lines, as Norway’s women’s associations produced 250,000 signatures against the Union on petitions.

The situation grew tenser toward the end of August 1905. Sweden called up soldiers for its annual September repetition, a total of 50,000 men. The size of the call-up was no exception from the normal annual pattern times, but the forces this time were organized with a view to an impending conflict, Sweden sending 5,000 combat ready soldiers to the border with Norway, and deploying the rest as a reserve. Soon after, on 13 September 1905, the Norwegian government introduced a partial mobilisation of its army -- affecting 22,500 men – and placed the naval forces on a full war footing. This led Swedish defence minister Lars Tingsten to demand a vigorous response, and in this he was warmly seconded by the Swedish military establishment, as well as by other elements of Swedish society. Illustratively, earlier that summer, just after the Norwegian dissolution declaration, the head of the Swedish general staff, Axel Rappe, said at a secret meeting of the government committee set up to deal with the Norwegian problem that “militarily speaking it would be right to strike down Norway.”<sup>4</sup> The general wanted action soon, as he feared a possible two-front war with Norway and Russia.

How close to war did they get, then? In a recent book, journalist Roy Andersen argues

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<sup>4</sup> SOURCE

that it was very close. He notes that the head of the Swedish coastal fleet was ordered to prepare to attack the Norwegian panzer-boats that were in Melsomvik on the West bank of the Oslofjord. Plans for such an attack were already in place, and if there were a breakdown in the negotiations, the Swedes would commence the attack. It was felt that if they lost these boats, the Norwegians would be forced to return to the negotiating table. But the Swedish government decided to give the Norwegians one last chance before military strikes were ordered – and this decision passed by a *single* vote.

Historians give different assessments as to how close to the brink the two countries actually came. What is clear is that in September the Swedish Prime Minister Lundeberg refused to succumb to his defence minister's demand for Swedish mobilization. The Norwegian Prime Minister Michelsen similarly ordered the Norwegian forces to stall, and an agreement was reached to keep the respective forces one kilometre away from the border, while the two prime ministers negotiated. The Swedish condition for further negotiation was for Norway to dismantle its border fortifications. Norwegian strategists were at the time divided on the military values of the fortifications, but historians have since underlined that most of these were very weak and would have been unable to stall an attack. The fortifications, however, carried great symbolic weight, such that the Norwegian negotiators' grudging acceptance of the Swedish demands generated considerable tension within Norway. The crisis unfolded for five days, until 18 September. The dénouement came on 9 October, when the Norwegian parliament acceded to the Swedish demand.

Why was there no war? Roald Berg notes that “many were certain that war was close to tak[ing] place in 1905.” We have already touched on the restraint shown by the two countries' political leaders. But there were also military reasons for the peaceful outcome. One such possible reason consisted in the large differences in military strength. At the time of the dissolution of the Union, the Swedish army and navy were much stronger than their Norwegian counterparts. In 1905 Sweden disposed of 170,000 soldiers, whereas Norway had only 76,000. Some historians have argued that the Norwegian armed forces were better equipped than their Swedish near-foes, but that would hardly outweigh the numerical discrepancy. Sweden's military superiority did not conspire to persuade Swedes to fight, though. Sweden could likely have scored a victory, but its military was afraid of Norwegian guerrilla resistance, something it had tasted before, at Moss in 1716, Kvistrum in 1788, Frangen in 1808, and Skotterud in 1814. In overall terms the *will* to fight was not that pronounced on either side. Retention of the Union was not of great importance to the military, as there never had been a joint military system with a common career system. Further, the Union context had to some extent created the first inklings of a pluralistic security community through tight links between the officers of the two countries' military forces. This also served to dampen whatever appetite the military might have had for war, even though it must be said that the military were every bit as nationalistic as their respective countries' populations.

The international context was marked by several conflicts – including one great power contest, the Russo-Japanese war -- and was generally tense. Still, the international climate afforded no licence to war in Scandinavia. Many great powers sided with Sweden, including Germany, whose emperor declared that the Swedes should “strike down with iron fist” the rebels to the west. In the early summer of 1905, at a royal wedding event in Berlin, the Swedish-Norwegian crown prince sounded out Europe's royal families as to how they would relate to a dissolution of the Union. Despite differences, the message was clear: “Europe expects that Swedes and Norwegians speedily and peacefully resolve their disagreements”(Åselius 2005, p. 57). Worth noting here is that at this time, British and German geostrategic interests were



focused on the Baltic Sea and not, as they would later be, on the Norwegian coastline; given the outsized importance the latter littoral would assume to both the British and the Germans, this was hardly a trivial point.

### **The European Union as Panacea?**

Quebeckers interested in sovereignty have referred often over the years to the European Union as a possible model for a future Canada-Quebec relationship. If we go back to the Union's founding (albeit under a different name from the one it currently bears), we see an obvious link, for as Ian Urquhart explains,

“Sovereignty-association” is one manifestation of Quebec separatism. It calls for political independence and an ongoing economic partnership with Canada. Conceptualized by René Lévesque, “sovereignty-association” was the centrepiece of the Parti québécois’ (PQ) secessionist platform during the years Lévesque led the party (1968-85). “Sovereignty-association” was intended to increase the strength of the independence movement by calming fears that a political divorce from Canada would deliver tough economic times to the people of Quebec.... In a 1979 position paper the PQ stated that sovereignty-association should include free trade between Canada and Quebec, common tariffs against imports, and a common currency. New joint Quebec-Canada political institutions were proposed to govern these economic arrangements.<sup>5</sup>

This notion of partial co-existence has a clear resonance to the thinking about the European Union. To illustrate this but also to point out differences, let us briefly consider the Union's founding rationale and the logic underpinning its development, so as to establish whether there is any point in drawing upon the European Union as a relevant reference for a future post-separation Canada-Quebec arrangement.

Once it became clear in the early 1950s that it would be impossible to forge a European Defence Community, the founders of the European Community opted to concentrate even further upon economic integration. The assumption was that under certain conditions cooperation within limited issue-areas would generate a self-reinforcing dynamic, through “spill-over.” Spillover was seen to occur when “imbalances created by the functional interdependence or inherent linkages of tasks can press political actors to redefine their common tasks” (Nye, cited in Keohane and Hoffmann 1991, p. 285. Functional spillover, thus, refers to the interconnection of various economic sectors or issue-areas, and assumes that integration in one policy dimension will likely be replicated in others.

However, and despite their emphasis upon economic integration as the *deus ex machina* for Europe's future, we should never lose sight of the reality that the European architects had an explicit strategic and political motive, namely to prevent further wars on their historically very war-torn continent; this would be done by tying the potential aggressors together in the close embrace of mutual interdependence. This was to be effectuated not only through functional spillover; equally important was political spillover, which refers to the expectation that supranational organizations will tend to generate a self-reinforcing process of institution-

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.law.ualberta.ca/ccskeywords/sovereignty.html>

building. From its inception the initial European Economic Community was equipped with a set of supranational institutions that could and did provide a modicum of leadership over, as well as an arena for, a burgeoning transnational society. The idea was that dynamic interaction among a set of supranational institutions and increasingly interlinked transnational societal actors would generate a self-reinforcing dynamic wherein a new type of polity would emerge.

Indeed, such a process has unfolded, but through a more complex -- and far more uneven and contested -- developmental pattern than what the so-called “neofunctionalists” had initially envisaged.<sup>6</sup> The result has been a political entity with a supranational parliament, a European Court, a kind of executive (the Commission), an autonomous administrative system, and a plethora of regulatory bodies. These arrangements, moreover, are steeped within a *material* constitution,<sup>7</sup> which contains basic rights and is founded on two central legal principles: supremacy and direct effect. The specific description of this system in polity terms may be and often is disputed; however, what is beyond doubt is that this entity has progressed far beyond that of a “normal” international organization. However it be labeled, it is a polity in its own right, one that actively contributes to the transformation of the member-states (and affiliated states) in Europe into a whole that is much more than the sum of its parts.

The EU system is still based on two distinct yet overlapping decision-making systems, each of which resonates with a union of citizens and a union of states. These principles are imprecisely reflected in what are generally referred to as the *community method* and the *intergovernmental method*, respectively. The community method (which basically operates within pillar one of the Treaty of the European Union [TEU]) assumes that only the Commission (an appointed body) can initiate legislative and policy proposals. The main legislative body, and in power terms, the most important, is still the Council, which consists of member-state representatives. Each such representative is accountable to his/her legislative assembly but not to the whole population of the EU. The European Parliament (EP), from 1979 directly elected by the electorates of the member-states, was initially a consultative body only but has gradually obtained the power of co-decision with the Council in the EU lawmaking process in a wide range of policy fields. Over time, the EU has moved in the direction of the parliamentary model of governance. There are constraints built into the community method itself but even more so because of the strength of the *intergovernmental method* (which marks pillars two and three of the TEU). This method is based on national representation, with each member-state having the power of veto. Here the Council is the central body and the EP, the Commission, and the Court of Justice are on the sideline.

We can trace the development of this entity in terms of the vocabulary used to depict it: from European Economic Community, to a complex blend of European Community and European Union. The realm of EU competence has expanded greatly, today far transcending economic issues (which were assumed to be under TEU pillar one, or what is generally referred to as the Common Market). This means that to invoke the European Union as a possible model for a future Canada-Quebec relationship would not be to locate Quebec as an equivalent to the “rest of Canada” (the ROC) within a two-state union. For if we do use the EU as the analogy, here is what we would expect to see transpire: Quebec as a state would enter as a member-state.

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<sup>6</sup> Note that Ernst Haas, the most famous functionalist analyst, in 1967 revisited his theory. He pointed out numerous weaknesses and revised it so as to include better the political component and the contingency of political action. (Haas ...)

<sup>7</sup> For this term see Menendez 2004. The Union’s constitutional status is widely recognized. See in particular Weiler 1999; Eriksen et al 2004;

But Quebec's core presupposition for a future relationship with Canada *à l'européenne* is that it will be able to retain its sovereignty, something that is precisely *not* the case within the European Union. Quebec as "member-state equivalent" would be in the same position as are today's EU member-states: subject to supremacy and direct effect of EC law within the areas under EC competence, and constrained by both the other members and a set of supranational institutions in Brussels. Ironically, an EU-style arrangement to regulate a future independent Quebec's relationship with the ROC would be at least as constraining -- perhaps even more constraining -- on Quebec as the present federal Canadian arrangement. Note also that the EU's quest for an independent source of democratic legitimacy -- through direct appeals to citizens (European citizenship, the Charter, etc.) -- means that there would be an entity actively competing with Quebec for citizens' allegiance and support.

### **Is Affiliated Status a More Attractive Option?**

It is important to note that the European Union has not absorbed all the Western European states. Norway has twice applied for membership. Twice most of Norway's political establishment has found the time ripe to ask the EU for access to membership; twice the EU has said yes and twice a small majority of Norwegian citizens have turned down the membership option.

Prior to the second application, in 1989, the Brundtland government -- in cooperation with Jacques Delors -- sought to include Norway more directly in the emerging European market (which arose out of the 1992 project and was entrenched in the Single European Act of 1986) by means of the European Economic Agreement (EEA). The aim was to ensure for Norway and the other EFTA countries proper access to the vast European market. To Brundtland, there was also a political motivation: to ease Norway's transition to member country by tying it down in Union obligations. The logic might have been similar to the functionalism referred to above. When Norway said no to membership in the referendum of 1994 -- as the only applicant country to do so -- it was stuck with EEA membership in a greatly reduced arrangement, which shrunk to just itself, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

Given this in principle *economic* arrangement with the Union, the contemporary Norwegian situation may be more relevant to Quebec than the one of 1905, precisely because Norway's relation to the EU is regulated through the EFTA-based EEA. Norway has for political reasons decided not to become a member of the EU and has opted instead to become associated with the EU through ensuring full access to the Common Market, without the political ties and obligations that membership entails.

What we find is that the EEA has proven to be highly dynamic, premised as it is on a *common market*. More and more issues have come under it, and since the EU seeks legal homogeneity within the entire EEA area (EU and EEA included), the EFTA Court, which oversees the arrangement, echoes the EU Court of Justice. The net effect has been a strong Norwegian integration into the EU, with Norwegian political authorities (parliament) taking on the role of rubber-stamper of legislation rather than of legislator proper. Hence, EU legislation today covers a much wider range of issue-areas than was initially envisaged. Some Norwegian analysts have started to describe Norway's situation in terms parallel to those used to describe the relation Norway had when it was in the Union with Sweden! (lydrike – Graver Dagbladet 05.07.1999).

## Conclusion: Life after Separation

So what “lessons” might the Norway-Sweden example have for a possible future breakup of Canada? We have argued that it is unwise to analogize too closely between what happened in Scandinavia a century ago and what might come to pass in northern North America in the twenty-first century. The context within Scandinavia in 1905 was very different from that of Canada today, and to those (especially in Quebec’s sovereigntist ranks) who like to push the presumed analogy even further and envision an EU-style post-Canada, we say “be careful what you wish for, because you might get it.”

Still, there is a ray of sunshine to be glimpsed in our analogical sky, and it is to be found in the nature of the interstate relationship experienced by the two former Scandinavian partners after they split. For what Norway and Sweden accomplished with their peaceful (though not friction-free) breakup was to usher into the world of international relations the first modern “pluralistic security community.” In so doing, they gave reason for analysts and policymakers alike to challenge the conventional wisdom that holds “anarchy” as simply another word for describing a war that has not yet taken place.

This suggests to us that, if only to *this extent*, there may well indeed be some relevance in the Canada/Quebec and Scandinavia comparison, for few can take very seriously the notion that somehow the North American pluralistic security community would be imperiled by a yes vote in a future Quebec referendum. To be sure, today’s international context *is markedly different* from that of 1905. And as we have sought to demonstrate, these differences matter to the evocative frames that cases are expected to carry. Key to the difference between Sweden-Norway and Canada-Quebec are: 1) the status of Norway as a basically internally sovereign country with the monarchical union with Sweden; 2) the union’s direct anchoring in the Swedish king, and hence its justification rooted in a modified notion of absolutism; and 3) the process of dissolution, with came close to degenerating into armed conflict.

Withal, Norway and Sweden were able to establish a pluralistic security community. This initial Norwegian-Swedish security community notion has spread to all of Western Europe, so that war between states there is today unthinkable. Still, the relevance of 1905 to Canada-Quebec has to be somewhat modified by two factors. First, Norway had its own armed forces while it was part of the Union with Sweden; hence the pluralistic security community has roots in the Union with Sweden itself. Second, Norway’s much higher degree of independence from Sweden *during* the Union years permitted them to coexist and adapt to each other *while still united*. Hence the Union frame looks to have served as an invaluable classroom, wherein both entities learned to mutually adapt to each other; they did not have to learn this afresh, as presumably would be the case for Quebec and the ROC.

## REFERENCES

To follow