

# Quebec sovereignty movement



Quebec Sovereignty Movement The separation movement of Quebec has been a constant headache to Canadian government for decades of years. As Quebec's main resident population speaks French, there are inevitably many clashes between French and English cultures. Historically, Quebec was not first colonized by British immigrants but the French, and claimed as French territory in 1608. In 1663, under the reign of Louis XIV, it became French royal colony, and named as New France.

In order to firmly seize this piece of land, French and British militaries fought with each other for quite a long time until 1763, ending up in the victory of Great Britain and France's surrender. However, Britain's military success failed to repel France's influence away. People there still kept living in French traditions. Considering these factors, Quebec is more than an ordinary province in Canada. From the angles of history, language, culture and tradition, it remains a relatively independent part of Canada.

Inheriting the custom from France, Quebec is already like a foreign country with its own language, culture and civil laws. The French in Quebec do not like the English. Even those French who will vote " no" in the referendum are not true federalists. They are motivated only by economic considerations or fear of change. So a great many French descendants clamor for independence from Canada to be totally a nation of French culture. Since the blood of French nationality refuses to be mixed with Anglo-Canadians, the issues of Quebec have become serious problems for Canadian authorities.

Canada adopts a unique politician system, which is named as West Minister Mode, combining American federalism and British parliamentary system.

Before Canada became an independent country in 1982, it had no rights to establish its own constitution or make amends to it. All written laws used as constitution were the heritage from British parliament. Besides, according to Canadian constitution, the head of the state is the sovereign of England; all citizens of Canada have the responsibility to be loyal to British sovereign. Throughout its history, Canada took part in several overseas wars to help England, including Korean War in 1950.

These facts undoubtedly annoy Quebec. It sounds sort of ridiculous that French posterities should obey the rules made by British Queen! As few bonds of affection exist between Quebec French posterities and British descendants, more and more unsatisfactory were raised among Quebec people. Before 1960s, although more than eighty percent of the people in Quebec were French descendants, the government imposed English on the people there as the dominant language, kindling French-speaking people's anger with the worries of being assimilated.

Such oppression from English culture led to Quebec's action of Sovereignty Movement, and more and more preference to be independent. Because of such conflicts between two cultures, both French and English posterities find it hard to reconcile with each other, especially the French-speaking citizens are unwilling to accept the colonial characters in Canadian constitution, which is enacted by British king or queen. In 1960s, the Quiet Revolution happened in Quebec as the prelude of further movements.

Separatists in Quebec argue that Canadian constitution was made by British Parliament in 1876, not born through democratic discussion of Canadian

natives, neglecting minorities' interests, especially Quebec's. The population in Quebec is one third of total Canadian population while they seldom get benefits from government's policies. The Quiet Revolution in Quebec brought widespread change in the 1960s. Among other changes, support for Quebec independence began to form and grew into wider circles.

The first organization dedicated to the independence of Quebec was the Alliance Laurentienne, founded by Raymond Barbeau on January 25, 1957. On September 10, 1960 the Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale (RIN) was founded, with Pierre Bourgault quickly becoming its leader. On August 9 of the same year, the Action socialiste pour l'indépendance du Québec (ASIQ) was formed by Raoul Roy. The "independence + socialism" project of the ASIQ was a source of political ideas for the Front de libération du Québec (Quebec Liberation Front) (FLQ).

In 1968, separatists founded Parti Québécois (PQ), which publicly supports Quebec's independence. In PQ's decrees they clearly tell the world that they are planning to procure Quebec's separation from Canada, and later govern it. In November 1976 PQ officially took the control of Quebec, quickening the pace of sovereignty movement. Quebec City, the capital city of Quebec Province, is the ninth largest city in Canada, and the province ranks the second largest one in the whole country. It also enjoys a high level of economy, and has a large portion of GDP of Canada.

In Quebec City, 680, 000 citizens use both English and French as official languages while ninety-five percent of them only speak in French. No matter how strong the separatist movement is in Quebec, it is impossible for

Canadian government to easily grant Quebec's requests of being independent because of the importance of Quebec. In October 1979, Patti Quebecois advocated establishing a new relationship with Canada, namely politically independent while economically belonging to Canada. A referendum was held on such "independence + socialism" project in 1980. The result is 40.44% of all voters agreed to it while 59.6% disagreed. The first referendum on Quebec's independence ended up in failure. After the first referendum, the Prime Minister made a series of promises to try to redeem the situation, claiming that Canadian constitution would be cornered more about ethnic minorities, and never be affected by British parliament. However, except for adding Chapter of Human Rights and Freedom, Canada nearly made no other changes. Thus, Separatists was not satisfied with Canadian constitution, refusing to sign on the 1980 edition of Canadian constitution and still leaving the blank for its signature.

So most French descendants in Quebec think that the current constitution is still made by Anglos, not approved by Quebec. Quebec still exists outside Canada. Throughout the recent two decades, Quebec tried to negotiate with Canadian government about remaking the current constitution while these issues are all stranded with no development. In 1995, unsatisfied people in Quebec held the second referendum on independence. 49.42% of all the voters voted for it while 50.55% vetoed. Federalists once again won, though it was just a lucky victory.

Undoubtedly, Quebec Sovereignty Movement has greatly influenced Canada. From PQ's establishment in 1976 to the first referendum in 1980, almost 100,000 Anglos moved out of Montreal, together with many companies of <https://assignbuster.com/quebec-sovereignty-movement/>

British descendants, negatively effecting Quebec's economy. However, at the same time, Quebec Sovereignty Movement, in a large sense, improved the situation of democracy, urging Canadian government to flexibly adjust its policies to deal with domestic deputed and diplomatic issues.

Presently, the Prime Minister of Canada, Steven Harper, approves Quebec as a special region in Canada, agreeing that Quebec joins UNESCO as a nation. Harper once made a clear announcement that " Our position is clear. Do the Quebecois form a nation within Canada? The answer is yes. Do the Quebecois form an independent nation? The answer is no and the answer will always be no. " So Quebec is a nation within a nation, a nation between provinces to country.