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The Concept of Political Discourse and Its Uses in Canada:
The Case of the Rise of the Parti Qubcois in Quebec

by

Catherine Dauvergne

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

Carleton University
OTTAWA, Ontario

September 1988

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"THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND ITS USES IN CANADA:
THE CASE OF THE RISE OF THE PARTI QUEBECOIS IN QUEBEC"

submitted by Catherine Dauvergne, Hons. B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

The term political discourse now appears with increasing frequency in Canadian political science. The objective of this thesis is to survey the variety of ways in which this concept is being used and to clarify the meanings which accrue to this term. Following these specifications, an assessment is made of what this term can contribute to the conceptual arsenal of Canadian political scientists. One of the new ways in which political discourse is used is as an alternative to ideology. The two terms are, therefore, compared and contrasted to fully explore their similarities and differences. Finally, political discourse is used to interpret the rise of the Parti Québécois in Quebec. This analysis focusses on the evolution of political discourse in Quebec between 1960 and 1976. Through this application of the concept political discourse, its interpretive capabilities are explored. Throughout this analysis, political discourse and ideology are contrasted to see more clearly the differences between the two terms.

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J.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page #
CHAPTER ONE: THE HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE	1
Proliferation and Confusion	3
The Importance of Language to Political Scientists	6
The Emergence of Political Discourse as a Conceptual Tool	10
Conclusion	29
CHAPTER TWO: A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY USES OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE	26
Development of a Classification Scheme	27
Category One - Ordinary Language Usages	29
Category Two - Political Discourse as a Way to Measure	33
Category Three - Political Discourse 'In and Of Itself'	41
Conclusion	51
CHAPTER THREE: POLITICAL DISCOURSE AS AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT TO IDEOLOGY	52
The Evolution of the Concept of Ideology	53
Empirical Issues and Ideology	59
Other Alternative Concepts	62
Ideology in a Canadian Setting	65
Conclusion	68
CHAPTER FOUR: POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND THE PARTI QUEBECOIS	70
Roots of the Independence Movement in the Political Discourse of the Quiet Revolution	76
<u>The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and The Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec</u>	85

	Page #
Evolution of Meanings: 'Québécois' and 'Sovereignty-Association'	93
Political Discourse in Literary Form	99
The Political Discourse of the Parti Québécois	106
Conclusion	111
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

Chapter One

The Historical Underpinnings of Political Discourse

Since about 1980 the term political discourse, or simply discourse, has been appearing with increasing frequency in Canadian political science writings. It is impossible, of course, to date the appearance of this term to a specific text at a specific time because the word discourse is a part of everyday English language in a way that other terms frequently used by political scientists, such as ideology and political culture, are not. It is therefore conceivable that an examination of all writings deemed part of the body of political science literature would turn up the word discourse, or even the phrase political discourse, in many and varied locations. What is unique about the current situation is that the term is being used more and more frequently and that its meaning is expanding far beyond the standard dictionary definition which would most likely cover all the possible ways in which the term was employed up until about 1980¹. This definition would also encompass many of the

¹ According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language 2nd ed Unabridged (1987) discourse is:
n.1. communication of thought by words; talk; conversation;

instances where political discourse now appears.

In the most powerful sense which political discourse is used today it is a way of understanding and looking at things which helps shape political meanings and identities and draw the parameters around what will be considered political and what will be excluded from the political realm. Because it can shape understandings, meanings, and identities, political discourse is also a way of talking. Discourse has a symbiotic relationship with the society in which it exists; it constrains what is possible in that society while at the same time growing out of the matrix of societal relations in which it functions. Political discourse is part of a broader societal discourse. It is intrinsically neither a dependent nor an independent variable though it can function in both of these roles. Discourse is not just a way of talking which represents certain values, attitudes, beliefs, and power relations but, rather, a way of talking which embodies these values, attitudes, beliefs, and power relations as they exist in a society. For many of those who use political discourse as a conceptual tool, the discourse itself is the crucial factor; they do not search for another factor which could underlie it. This definition will be elaborated as its historical underpinnings are examined in this chapter and will be

"earnest and intelligent discourse" 2. A formal discussion of a subject in speech or writing, as a dissertation, treatise, sermon etc. 3. (Linq) any unit of connected speech or writing longer than a sentence. v.i. 4. to communicate thoughts orally; talk; converse. 5. to treat of a subject formally in speech or writing. v.t. 6. to utter or give forth (musical sounds).

further elucidated through a series of examples in Chapter Two. Chapter Three explores the use of political discourse as an alternative concept to ideology. In the fourth chapter, political discourse is used to interpret the rise to power of the Parti Québécois in Quebec.

Proliferation and Confusion

The emergence of this new more powerful understanding of the term political discourse seems to have affected the usage of this term by political scientists in several ways. First there are those who are exploring the new depth of the term. Second there are those who are using the term in accordance with its standard definition, but much more frequently; and finally there is a group of writers using both of these approaches concurrently. The result is, understandably, somewhat confusing. Political discourse does not yet appear in dictionaries of political science terminology². Although it is therefore not yet 'officially' part of the working vocabulary of political scientists it is now almost impossible to read contemporary works in Canadian political science without encountering it. A number of examples will illustrate this point.

² Dictionaries of terms in which neither the compound political discourse nor the word discourse were found include: McMenemy (1980) The Language of Canadian Politics; Chandler (1982) The Public Administration Dictionary; Plano (1982) The Dictionary of Political Analysis; The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought (1987); and The Dictionary of Political Science (1964).

In his 1987 book The Federal Condition in Canada Donald Smiley writes of "The Use of 'Region' in Canadian Political Discourse", saying that "in political discourse we would do well in Canada to banish the term region from our vocabulary and speak instead of province" (Smiley 1987:23). He also refers to his book in his introductory remarks as "the following discourse" (1987:3). Alain Gagnon and Brian Tanquay's forthcoming collection on Canadian political parties is entitled Canadian Parties in Transition: Discourse, Organization and Representation. In their introduction, discourse is said to be "the language of politics" (Gagnon and Tanquay 1988:12). They link discourse to theoretical considerations in the organization of their collection. Chapters by Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson and by Duncan Cameron use political discourse in their theoretical framework. One of the subjects addressed in Jon Pammett's 1986 paper "A Model for the Comparative Analysis of Elections Across Time and Space" is "the subjects of electoral discourse" (Pammett 1986:2). Reg Whitaker uses discourse in "Federalism, Democracy, and the Canadian Political Community" which appeared in 1984 and Bakvis, in 1981, refers to "popular political discourse" (Bakvis 1981:41). Garth Stevenson uses "political discourse" in his discussion of "the meaning of federalism" (Stevenson 1982:3) and Richard Simeon uses the term political discourse as early as 1975 in a discussion of how regional identity and consciousness are shaped in Canada (Simeon 1975:499).

We can see, therefore, that political discourse is indeed a part of the academic vocabulary of some of Canada's most prominent political scientists. In some instances cited above, however, discourse is a neutral everyday word which appears in passing and is not a focus of analysis. This is the case with Smiley's work. Simeon, Stevenson, and Whitaker take political discourse somewhat further than the Random House dictionary and, by adding the modifiers "electoral" and "popular", Pammett and Bakvis indicate that their use of discourse is more precise and particular. Brodie and Jenson associate political discourse with language, definitions, and meaning systems, thereby linking it to a different kind of discussion and to an analytical framework. In none of these texts, however, is political discourse the central focus of analysis as it is in Duncan Cameron's "Political Discourse in the Eighties" (1988).

The title of Cameron's paper announces to the reader that here will be found a clear understanding of how political discourse is being used. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Although much of what Cameron says sounds familiar to an observer of the Canadian political 'scene', close attention to his use of language makes it impossible to see precisely what he means. The 'political discourse' of his title is at times compared to political platforms, at times political agendas; alternately it concerns consensus and argument. Sometimes discourse is about language, sometimes worldview. Even political culture manages to slip into the discussion. Liberalism is sometimes an ideology,

other times a discourse. The term political discourse is ubiquitous, appearing "at the level of the party", and as "broader political discourse". There is a "public sector discourse", a "popular sector discourse", and a "popular sector agenda". There is even, and perhaps this is the most confusing given the history of the word ideology, an "ideological discourse".

The point here is not, however, simply to criticize Cameron, for we can, in an imprecise way, see his point. As political discourse is related to all of the terms Cameron uses, his paper is an important example both of the need to make an effort to clearly grasp the emerging meaning or meanings of the term political discourse and of the myriad of terms which political discourse may be compared to and distinguished from. These tasks are the foci of the first three chapters of this paper. To begin, this chapter will examine the historical roots and recent emergence of this term linking political discourse to broader theoretical trends in the social sciences. To understand the proliferation of this term in contemporary Canadian political science literature we must examine two parallel trends; first, the concern with language in political science which predates political discourse and second, the emergence of the term itself.

The Importance of Language to Political Scientists

Political discourse is about language. The word discourse, in its everyday sense, means a speech or a text, a conversation

or a debate. No matter which particular meaning is associated with political discourse, its use draws language into the discussion. However, even before this concept became prominent, language was important to political scientists. Some examples of this concern with language will be looked at briefly here. Most of these texts date from the 1970s and hence precede the proliferation of political discourse throughout political science literature. Many of these authors are using language in the same ways that more contemporary texts use political discourse--either as a way to measure something else or as the essential phenomenon in and of itself. These authors, then, show that they recognize the importance of doing what is now being done with the conceptual tool 'political discourse' but they are not using a new term in their analyses.

David Bell, in his 1975 book Power, Influence and Authority: An Essay in Political Linguistics, presents "a redefinition of politics in terms of language and communication". He stresses that words and concepts are the "perceptual lenses" through which we see the world (Bell 1975: ix), approximating the new powerful conception of political discourse as a way of talking and a way of understanding. Bell is critical of political science, believing that it is the conceptual paucity of political science which prevents it from being properly attentive to the powers of language. In opposition to the Easton-inspired definition of politics as "who gets what, when, and how", Bell defines politics as "talk". Because "politics is talk", talk is what political

science must study (Bell 1975: 7-12)².

Brodie and Jenson's discussion of the "definition of politics" predates their use of political discourse. In their work we also see an expression of the complex relationship between language (or political discourse) and societal patterns; "With change in social forces and with the development of new organizers of these social forces, the definition of what politics is in the electoral realm grows out of previous rounds of electoral competition." As such, this definition is a product of societal forces; however, this definition then also limits what will be possible in the future (Brodie and Jenson 1980: 2). Definitions and limits often play a part in discussions of political discourse.

Others who have written about the importance of language to political science also use a vocabulary which is seen in analyses relying on political discourse. Writing about continuing poverty in the United States, Edelman focusses on "language and symbols that justify acceptance of inequality/poverty and tolerance of chronic social problems". For Edelman, language is "an integral facet of the political scene: not simply an instrument for describing events but itself part of events, shaping their meaning and helping to shape the political role officials and the general public play" (Edelman 1977:2-4). In this discussion, language is bound up with identities or roles, and meanings,

²See also Bell's appendix: "The Poverty of Political Science Concepts".

factors which are important in discussions using political discourse. Liden is another analyst who focusses on language, to grasp "the meaning behind language" which is of crucial importance (Liden 1975:510-511). In a discussion of the role of language in colonization, O'Neill states that "silence is the ultimate tragedy of language" (O'Neill 1974:53). Feminist theorists in particular use political discourse to gesture towards the silence which accompanies oppression. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz also speak of language, meanings, and identities, arguing that gender, class, and ethnicity are "communicatively produced" (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982:1-2).

These authors show us that the concern of political scientists with language predates the use of the concept political discourse. Meaning, identities, definitions, and silences had drawn analytic attention before this term came into use. This raises two questions: where did this term come from and does it do something which 'political language' or Bell's 'talk' cannot? An assessment of the contribution which political discourse makes or can make to the conceptual vocabulary of political scientists is one of the primary goals of this paper; at present the discussion will take up the first question - where did the term political discourse come from?

4 This kind of colonization argument has been made about the situation in Quebec prior to the 1960s. See, for example, Denis Monière, Ideologies in Quebec: The Historical Development (1981).

The Emergence of Political Discourse as a Conceptual Tool

Discourse emerged as a conceptual tool for social theory from several avenues at approximately the same time. The move in social theory to "accord a fundamental role to language, and to cognitive faculties in explication of social life" constitutes what Giddens calls the "linguistic turn" in social theory (Giddens 1984:xvi, xx). The emphasis on language is, for Giddens, one of the points that unites the diverse trends in social theory which have followed the demise in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the "orthodox consensus" about how social theory should be approached (Giddens 1984:xvi). The emergence of the term political discourse is linked to this shift. To understand how political discourse is being used in contemporary political science, we must look at three trends in social theory. Giddens' desire to account for human agency and knowledgability is one of these. In addition we must look to those who first use the term political discourse and explore how and why this term is used. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s two distinct groups of thinkers used the new concepts discourse and political discourse to try and understand social realities. These two groups were post-structuralists, beginning with Michel Foucault, and feminist theorists. These specific cases will be looked at before moving to a consideration of the broader linguistic turn in social theory.

Post-structuralism emerged in France in the latter half of

the 1960s. Michel Foucault, whose name is often linked to discourse used as a conceptual tool, is associated with post-structuralism and its immediate predecessor, structuralism (Anderson 1983:39). Structuralism draws its concepts and its theorization of the relationships between them from the type of linguistics set underway by Ferdinand de Saussure at the beginning of this century. In Levi-Strauss' structuralist anthropological studies, kinship systems become kinds of languages. In Lacanian structuralist psychoanalysis, the unconscious is structured like a language. The shift from structuralism to post-structuralism occurs when language is no longer perceived as a factor which limits or structures possible interpretations and the field of interpretation is therefore infinite. Truth as a correspondence to reality disappears, for reality has no existence outside of these interpretations (Anderson 1983:40-45).

Foucault is the most important figure classed under the post-structuralist rubric in a discussion of discourse for this concept is central to his works. Furthermore, Foucault's name is linked to linguistics, history, philosophy, and Marxism, making him an important touchstone for discussions of the linguistic turn in social theory. He is perhaps most important to the use of political discourse in contemporary Canadian political science in a symbolic way. It would be impossible to argue here that the use of political discourse in Canadian political science, or even in post-structuralism more broadly, is precisely Foucaultian.

Foucault is, however, primarily responsible for taking the word 'discourse' out of both everyday French and the vocabulary which linguists everywhere inherited from Ferdinand de Saussure (where a discourse is a spoken or written enunciation - see Baylon and Fabre 1975: 46-51) and extending its meaning in such a way that discourse could become a conceptual tool first for French-speaking academics and then for those in other linguistic groups. Although Foucault was well known in France in the late 1960s, widespread translation into English of his work did not occur until somewhat later. Anderson considers The Order of Things Foucault's "first important work" (Anderson 1983:53). It was published in 1966 and translated into English in 1970. Foucault is also known for his histories of the penal system, of sexuality, and insanity². These histories rely on Foucault's conception of discourse and discursive practices.

What, then, is discourse for Foucault? The analysis of discursive practices is, he tells us, "a distinctive level of investigation among all the approaches which permit the analyses of systems of thought". The analysis of discursive practices...

... discloses a systematic organization that cannot be reduced to the demands of logic or linguistics. Discursive practices are characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories. Thus, each discursive practice implies a play of prescriptions that designate its exclusions and choices. (Foucault 1977: 199).

Accordingly, discursive practices cannot be reduced to the realm

² Discipline and Punish: History of Sexuality; Madness and Civilization

of linguistics from whence the term discourse comes. Discursive practices are about delimitation and definition, legitimacy and norms, exclusions and choices. Discursive practices are also "not purely and simply ways of producing discourse". They are much broader or deeper than this for they are "embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (Foucault 1977: 200). It seems, then, that discursive practices are woven into all of society and are self-reproducing. Discursive practices are the rules for the acquisition of knowledge. As such, they limit who will have knowledge, what knowledge will be, and what knowledge will do. For Foucault, whose inspiration is Nietzschean, the will to knowledge, which his histories of discursive practices attempt to trace, is one manifestation of the will to power. Power, therefore, is controlled, delimited, and legitimated by the same discursive practices which control knowledge..

In keeping with this Nietzschean inspiration, Foucault rejects the notions of subjectivity, of origins, and of uniform causality. His histories do not, therefore, look for beginnings and sequences of events. Instead he seeks to find for a given society in a given period of time:

1. The limits and the forms of expressibility: what is it possible to speak of? What has been constituted as the domain of discourse?...
2. The limits and the forms of conservation: what are the statements destined to disappear without any trace?...

3. The limits and the forms of memory such as it appears in the different discursive formations: which are the terms which everyone recognizes as valid or questionable, or definitely invalid?...

4. The limits and forms of reactivation: amongst the discourse of previous epochs or of foreign cultures, which are the ones to be retained, which are valued, which are imported, which one tries to reconstitute?...

5. The limits and forms of appropriation: what individuals, what groups, what classes have access to such a kind of discourse?... (Foucault 1978 [1968]: 14-15)

Foucault also tells us that there are three great systems of exclusion governing discourse; the first of these is prohibited words; the second is the distinction between the sane and the mad; and the third is the distinction between true and false (Foucault 1971:21). The construction and functioning of these distinctions is one foci of his studies.

Feminist theorists arrive by a different route at the use of political discourse as a way to understand the world. If Foucault begins by trying to analyze systems of thought, feminist theory can be said to take a much more down to earth path. Following the tremendous upsurge of women's movements in Western liberal democracies in the 1960s came a wave of theorists trying to understand and interpret the experiences of women and of the women's movement. One of the most important insights of feminist theory of this period is that the 'personal is political'. Kate Millett's Sexual Politics (1972) pronounced that the personal realm was indeed political and launched a major redefinition of politics on behalf of radical feminism. The personal needed to be made political because so much of women's lives, so many of

the power struggles women encountered, so many of the issues which were important to women (for example, abortion and contraception) were considered to be private. If women wanted to deal with these issues in public, to make them political, a new definition of the political had to be found. Only through such a redefinition would women be able to talk about their concerns in public and to be heard in public. As long as issues of sexuality and reproduction contributed to women's oppression and were confined to the private sphere - something one could not talk about in public -, women's oppression was invisible and silent. It was outside the political realm so that political remedies could not be found or offered for it.

Feminist theorists were confronting a problem of definitions, of silences, and of invisibilities: This vocabulary, which is familiar from the texts of those political scientists who focussed on language, often surrounds discussions of discourse. Political discourse becomes a theoretical concept for feminist writers through the realization that women have traditionally been 'invisible' because of their silence. In Public Man, Private Woman, Jean Bethke Elshtain reinterprets the history of Western philosophy based on the distinctions made between private and public. The private is the realm of silence and invisibility; "those silenced by power whether overt or covert - are not people with nothing to say but are people without a public voice and space in which to say it" (Elshtain 1981:15). Elshtain calls for the construction of a new discourse

for women, a new way for women to speak, to be visible, to be politically relevant:

We need to be able, cogently, to articulate the bases and steps in the creation of female identity, public and private. We need a way to explore female speech and language along public and private vectors. We need to create a mode of political thinking that helps women redescribe social reality from a vantage point that allows for, and sustains, critical reflection (Elshtain 1981: 302).

Silence, identity, and definition are all seen through this conception of discourse.

In Elshtain's discussion of just war theory we see more clearly what she means by political discourse and the power she accords it. Cultural images of men and women are rooted in part in just war discourse (Elshtain 1985:45). When feminists use this discourse to make arguments (for example, about the right of women to have combat positions or the 'purification' of politics through women's suffrage) they share in and help proliferate these images. For Elshtain "war and the discourse of war are imbricated, part and parcel of political reality":

To take up war-as-discourse compels us to recognize the powerful sway of received narratives and reminds us that the concepts through which we think about war, peace, and politics get repeated endlessly, shaping debates, constraining considerations of alternatives, often reassuring us that things cannot really be much different than they are... (Elshtain 1985:54-55).

Elshtain also warns against "granting a self-subsisting autonomy of discourse". The dominant discourse is strong, she argues, but it can be altered (Elshtain 1985:55).

Sonya Michel in "American Women and the Discourse of the Democratic Family in World War II" writes of how this discourse,

as a "system of meaning", limited the options available to women during and after World War II (Michel 1987:156). For Michel, discourse is something which influences society and the way people function in it. Discourse is something which "dominates"; dissent occurs at the margins of discourse (Michel 1987: 160-165). For Jane Jenson as well, discourse is something which determines events or actions in society. Therefore she can say; "The discourse and the notions about women that continued throughout the war and Liberation [World War II in France] meant that no rights for women as women were guaranteed in the process of consolidating new social programs" (Jenson 1987: 273). Jenson also emphasizes the capacity of discourse to exclude or "inhibit" and to control through definitions' (Jenson 1987: 283). Like Elshtain, Jenson does not accord complete autonomy to political discourse. The discourse arises out of specific social and economic situations and the discourse which will dominate in a given setting is related to the particular actors involved (Jenson 1986: 30-42).

The introduction to the Behind the Lines collection where both Michel's and one of Jenson's texts appear gives us further insight into how political discourse has been conceptualized in "feminist theory. "A gender system consists not merely of a set of social rules but also of a discourse that gives meaning to different roles within a binary structure" (Higonnet et al 1987:4). New ideas which emerge as the result of changing social circumstances - in this case "total war" - are not created out of

nothing but are "grounded in previous social and cultural sources" (Higonnet et al 1987:5). To understand social and discursive change, then, one must consider not only 'what happened' but also how it was talked about or "discursively encoded" (Higonnet et al 1987:7). In War in the Nursery Denise Riley is also concerned about the effects of war on images of and discourses about women. Her argument is that "invocations of motherhood at this period effectively rendered invisible the needs of those working women with children" (Riley 1983:7). Because of what Riley terms the "British pronatalist discourse", "the possibility of speaking politically about women's needs became obscured by a passing rhetoric of their maternal function" (Riley 1983:152).

For feminist theorists, the advantage of the term political discourse lies in its ability to gesture towards the unsayable and the invisible by making explicit the systems of meaning which account for this 'unsayability'. Foucault arrives at his conceptualization of discourse by pushing the logic of structuralism to an inevitable conclusion; feminist theory is rooted in trying to understand and theorize the experiences of women. Two divergent conceptions of political discourse result from these starting points. For Foucault there is no agency because agents or subjects are the products of discursive formations. Feminist theorists, however, use the idea of human agency in their accounts of discourse. Hence Elshtain urges the creation of new discourses and Jenson talks of the importance of

the various actors involved. When theorists talk of discourse in this way, discourse is put in a unique analytic position, being sometimes a dependent variable and other times an independent variable. In this way, discourse is used to give an account of the tension between social circumstances and human agency.

This contrast between feminist theory's conception of political discourse and post-structuralism's use of the term returns us to Giddens' work. Both feminist theory and post-structuralism are part of what Giddens calls the "linguistic turn" in social theory. Giddens' own reformulation of social theory, "the theory of structuration", is also part of this turn. With this theory Giddens wished to give an account of human action which takes into account the capability of human agents as well as "analysis of...[action's] unanticipated conditions and unintended consequences" (Giddens 1982:7-9). Giddens strives for a "hermeneutically informed social theory" which will take language into account as a way, but not the only way, to understand social realities (Giddens 1982:5). The subject-object dichotomy must be recognized as a duality. Sometimes human action changes society; sometimes society constrains human actors. As we have seen in the works of some feminist thinkers, political discourse can be used to give an account of this subject-object duality.

Philip Abrams expresses a similar conception of social reality in his discussion of historical sociology. Abrams urges the reconstituting of history and sociology into a single

discipline because at the heart of both is a common concern. This concern with what Abrams calls "structuring", how societies are structured, is linked to the dilemma of human agency. "When we refer to the two sidedness of society we are referring to the ways in which, in time, actions become institutions and institutions are in turn changed by action". In this two sided world "we are both the creators and the creatures, both makers and prisoners; [it is] a world which our actions construct and a world that powerfully constrains us" (Abrams 1982:2). In Abrams' estimation it is the element of time, and conceiving of our world as a series of processes which occur over time, which can allow us to understand the world. This accounts for the merging of history and sociology. As Giddens' tells us and feminist theorists show us, an attention to discourse is one way to try and express the enigma of human agency.

The linguistic turn which Giddens talks of and out of which his work grows is indeed widespread. Furthermore, as Abrams' work suggests, this shift in emphasis has caused the boundaries between disciplines to become obscured and outdated. Looking at linguistics itself, history, and sociology a new kind of analysis is visible - just as in political science - which uses discourse as a powerful conceptual tool. The discussion will now examine the linguistic turn in these other disciplines and how the use of discourse as a conceptual tool is related to this trend.

In linguistics, where discourse was a conceptual tool long before post-structuralism, feminist theory, and the desire to

account for agency, used it, the term has taken on new meanings, as has 'discourse analysis' which was its partner. In his introduction to the collected papers of the 1974 University of Toronto Colloque sur l'analyse du discours Pierre Léon speaks of the problems of defining discourse:

... le concept de discours que l'on cherchait à définir n'aura sans doute pas été cerné avec la précision que l'on espérait. Mais cette rencontre pluridisciplinaire de linguistes, philosophes, psychologues, semiologues et théoriciens de l'analyse littéraire, aura du moins permis de mieux dégager les grandes lignes d'une problématique de l'analyse des discours (Léon 1976:7)

The disciplines represented at this conference (no political scientists in 1974) attest to the ubiquity of the term discourse - especially when used without its 'political' modifier. Léon also notes the influence of post-structuralists (he, however, cites Derrida rather than Foucault) and feminist theorists in shaping the new expanded conception of discourse.

In her paper delivered at this same conference, Régine Robin criticizes historians for always looking behind discourse for something else, as if the discourse were transparent. Furthermore, as a linguist, Robin challenges the traditional linguistic understanding of discourse and offers a Foucaultian definition instead (Robin 1976:139). She also challenges sociolinguistics, which she claims posits two parallel universes - a social universe and a discursive universe.

Since, in fact, Ferdinand de Saussure's Cours de linguistique générale given in 1906-1907, 1908-1909, and 1910-1911.

Pour notre part, il ne s'agit pas de deux univers parallèles puisque les discursives sont des éléments fondamentaux d'une formation sociale, et nous ne pouvons nous satisfaire au plan épistémologique de l'hétérogénéité des concepts mis en oeuvre (Robin 1976:140).

Although for Robin social formations have "hegemonic instruments" and "ideological formations", discourse is the crucial focus of analysis and those who do not regard it as such are harshly criticized.

Robin's criticisms of both history and socio-linguistics are perhaps meted out too quickly, for in both of these disciplines we can trace the linguistic turn and the emergence of new conceptualizations of discourse. Bouwsma tells of a new kind of history - the history of meaning - which is the "remnant chiefly worth saving from intellectual history". He talks of a series of new histories which are virtually impossible to classify in terms of conventional categories but which "come into focus as studies in the construction of meaning" (Bouwsma 1981:283). Although Foucault's histories are not among the many examples which Bouwsma cites, they could be classified in this manner as Bouwsma notes "...an increasing concern with the location, the description, and perhaps the explanation of what passes for meaning in a variety of historical situations" (Bouwsma 1981:284).

Bouwsma predicts that along with this new trend in history will go an increasing emphasis on both cultural anthropology and linguistics. In speaking of linguistics, Bouwsma leads us back to the terrain of discourse, although he does not use the term.

He speaks instead of language because "the operations that bring this human world into existence in consciousness and endow it with meaning are comparable to such basic rhetorical transactions as division and comparison, or metonymy and metaphor" (Bouwsma 1981:290). The trend which Bouwsma speaks of runs parallel to the proliferation of the term discourse. In his concluding remarks, Bouwsma is optimistic about the new importance of language as it makes studies in what used to be called intellectual history quantifiable in a way they were not before. This observation will become relevant in the upcoming discussion of the merits of the term political discourse.

Fisher and Todd classify their analysis of discourse and institutional authority as a series of socio-linguistic studies. In their book, socio-linguistics responds to Robin's criticisms. As Fisher and Todd recount the story, socio-linguistic research is the outgrowth of a longstanding debate in linguistics between language and context. This debate parallels the structure/agency dilemma which Giddens and Abrams discuss. The solution offered by Fisher and Todd - a turn to language - is the same as that found by Giddens and Abrams. In sociology, language is now being used as the critical link between social interaction and social structure, between macro- and micro- sociologies (Fisher and Todd 1986:xi). Focussing on language, communication and discourse, Fisher reaches an unsurprising conclusion in the debate concerning whether macro- or micro- level phenomena take precedence. Rather than proposing that one level (i.e. macro-

social structures) determines the other (i.e. micro - social interactions) she proposes a "contextual web" of mutual interdependence (Fisher and Todd 1986:xiii). As was the case with Giddens duality is preserved. This conclusion is also similar to that made by feminist theorists; political discourse is neither exclusively a dependent nor an independent variable. Using discourse to bridge the gap between language and context, socio-linguistics overcomes the two parallel universes which Robin criticized⁷.

In history and socio-linguistics, then, the linguistic turn and corresponding use of discourse are apparent. Burton and Carlen add literary criticism, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and Marxism to this list (Burton and Carlen.1979:15). Our own study shows that political discourse is now being used to different and expanded ends in contemporary political science. As discourse has been taken up by various disciplines its meanings and usages have been altered. One example of this is the use of political discourse as a measurement of some other concept in political science. However, as we have seen, there are many commonalities in the way discourse is being used in these disciplines. For example its links to meanings and definitions and its position as neither a dependent nor an independent variable are present in most cases.

⁷ It must be noted that Fisher and Todd's book was published twelve years after Robin's paper was delivered.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the historical underpinnings of the emergence of a new more powerful conceptualization of the term political discourse. The proliferation of this term is a sign of what Giddens has termed the linguistic turn in social theory. Two of the principal streams of this linguistic turn are post-structuralism and feminist theory, both of which had their major impact on North American academic circles in the 1970s. In each of these theoretical groups, political discourse is the most important focus of analysis. Discourse is also linked to the desire to give an adequate account of the enigmatic relationship between human agency and social structures. The linguistic turn touches many disciplines, resulting in many variations in the usage and meaning of political discourse. The second chapter will return to the specific domain of political science and an examination of how political discourse is being used.

Chapter Two

A Survey of Contemporary Uses of Political Discourse

The first chapter discussed the origins of the term political discourse. Its emergence was traced from three theoretical bases; post-structuralism, feminist theory, and the desire to adequately account for human agency. However, as the first chapter also showed, the term political discourse has been used in Canadian political science where none of these three areas is the principle concern. Furthermore, the use of political discourse in contemporary political science is rather inconsistent. The objective of this chapter is to classify the different ways in which political discourse is currently being used and to substantiate this classification / scheme by examining a number of examples. This will help clarify the meaning of political discourse and its potential contribution to the conceptual vocabulary of political science in Canada. The overview presented here is not intended to enumerate every instance in which the term appears. Such a task would be nearly impossible because of the number of uses of the term and the

variety of fields in which it is used¹. With these limitations in mind, this chapter presents a sampling of the meanings which political discourse has in contemporary texts. These texts are chosen to be broadly representative of Western political science. Canadian texts introduced in Chapter One are classified after using the broader sample to establish the classification scheme. The limitations of this survey are alleviated by the fact that many meanings of political discourse are seen in these works and the classification system constructed based on these texts encompasses most possible meanings of the term.

Development of a Classification Scheme

Meanings which accrue to this concept fall into three broad categories. In the first category are usages of the term which correspond to its meanings in everyday language. Here political discourse often means a political speech or a political debate. Understandably, this is the most straightforward, easily comprehended category. When used this way political discourse is not an analytic tool but a description; the adjective 'political' describes the goal or setting of the discourse. The second and third categories, both of which are easily distinguishable from the first, are closely linked. In both these cases, discourse can be described as a way of talking or

¹ Also, as political discourse is not officially recognized as a term (i.e. by the Library of Congress index system) it often does not appear in either titles, abstracts, or as a key word which makes tracking down its every appearance difficult.

thinking about things. The words with which we talk and think are sometimes the focus of these texts and thus discourse in this sense is occasionally akin to vocabulary. However, often the writer is concerned not just with which words are used but also with which meanings or definitions they are given, the context in which they are used, who uses them, and the resulting restrictions on ways of thinking and ways of talking. This description is closely akin to the introductory definition which, called political discourse a way of understanding or looking at things.

The distinction between the second and third categories is based on the role which political discourse is accorded in a given text. In the second category political discourse is used to tap or measure something else. Discourse is seen as a representation of another concept such as ideology or political culture. Political discourse is examined in order to be able to make statements about something else. In the third category, it is the discourse in and of itself which is most important. In a sense, political discourse is used as an alternative to concepts like ideology and political culture. The question of how to measure other factors no longer exists because the focus is on political discourse and discursive formations as the primary factors which shape and limit behaviour and identities. Within this third category, which can be termed "discourse in and of

The idea of an alternative concept will be discussed at length in Chapter Three.

itself", we find two kinds of texts. Although all of these writers regard discourse as the fundamental concept to be grappled with, they vary in their reasoning as to why this is so. On the one hand we find a group of writers whose analysis is rooted in or related to feminist theory. The other group of writers have come to the "discourse in and of itself" position through the move towards post-structuralism.

As can be seen from this outline, the new usages of political discourse are found in the second, "discourse as a way to measure", and the third, "discourse in and of itself" categories. The first category, however, cannot be excluded. Political discourse is often used in this most straightforward sense, perhaps increasingly so as the concept becomes more widespread and, hence, topical. Furthermore, as an analysis which is concerned with debates, speeches, and political texts is concerned with language on at least one level, the first category is not as far from the second and third as it may initially appear. The task now at hand is to examine an assortment of texts and determine how they fit into this scheme.

Category One - Ordinary Language Usages

The first group of writers in this category are those who are using discourse to refer to a speech or series of speeches made during an election campaign. These analyses focus on the content of the speeches or, alternatively, use "political discourse" as a simple equivalent for the word "speech" and use

another term, such as ideology, to express the link between the text and societal factors. Finkel and Norpoth (1984) fall into this category. They analyze campaign speeches from the 1980 American presidential campaign. Although they speak of the "ideological discourse" of campaigns, discourse is simply a tangible quantity in their text. Their study examines the ideological content of speeches. Lapham, who writes about speeches from the same presidential campaign, also uses political discourse in this way, speculating on the true impact of campaign rhetoric. "Any platform that any candidate may construct the voters know to be a house of straw. What they look for in political discourse is not a program of specific action but a tone of voice (Lapham 1980:8).

Under the title "The Context-Embeddedness of Political Discourse: a Re-evaluation of Reagan's Rhetoric in the 1982 Midterm Election Campaign" Rowland and Payne provide an analysis of how "political rhetoric is constrained by context" (Rowland and Payne 1984:501). Like Finkel and Norpoth, these authors are conducting the type of analysis in which political discourse might be used as an organizing concept. However, as was the case above, Rowland and Payne use political discourse as a synonym for speech. Fitzgerald (1986) also uses political discourse in this way while writing about the use of traditional mythology in a 1975 Chinese government campaign.

It is important to note that not all studies of campaign speeches fall into ordinary language usages of political

discourse category. When the focus of analysis is not the content of the speech or speeches but, rather, what the speech reveals about the time and place in which it occurs, the analysis is classed in the 'discourse as a way to measure' category. In the ordinary language usages category we also find texts in which political discourse is a synonym for some concept other than speech. Vincent Ostrom's 1985 text is one example. The political discourse Ostrom writes of is The Federalist, a text rather than a speech. Ostrom is concerned about how to interpret the meaning of language in a given historical setting. He studies how the terms 'confederation' and 'federal' are used. For him, however, discourse is not a way of talking which contains certain meanings but the text in which these words are found.

In each of these cases, although political discourse has not been extended beyond the standard dictionary definition, the concern of the study is language. Even when used in its ordinary language sense, political discourse can be linked to a linguistic turn in social theory. There is also, however, a group of writers who use political discourse in a consistent straightforward sense which is part of everyday talk but who are not concerned with language per se. This subgroup of the ordinary language use category are liberal democrats concerned with the process of debate and exchange which is crucial to democratic theory.

Forester writes that administrative planners can and ought

ethically, to work to foster true political discourse, dialogue, and the possibility of genuinely democratic politics. He tells us that "democratic discourse" is "political discourse openly suggesting, testing, and arguing for alternative action" (Forester 1981:185). Rob Kroes employs a similar understanding of the term when he talks about the "atrophy of political discourse" which results when "discourse along party lines no longer reflects major concerns" (Kroes 1986:586). Anastaplo and MacDonald are also talking about public political debate when they discuss the influence of television on the decline of political discourse in America (1986:26). Hanson too links political discourse to public, democratic debate. He tells us that public " - which is to say political - " discourse is not simple partisanship or a willingness to express preferences but requires education (Hanson 1979:473). When political discourse is used in this way, as a synonym for dialogue or debate, the author is concerned with democratic theory rather than language and meaning. This subgroup, therefore, is less thematically linked than the campaign speech group to 'discourse as a way to measure' and 'discourse in and of itself'.

Donald Smiley's usage of the term 'political discourse' also falls into the "ordinary language usage" category. His text, however, requires careful attention because political discourse is not used as a synonym for speech, debate, or text, as is the case with other writers in this group. Smiley subtitles his note at the end of his first chapter "The Use of 'Region' in Canadian

Political Discourse" (1987: 22-23). Political discourse must be understood broadly; Smiley provides the equivalent phrase "Canadian political debate and analysis". What separates Smiley's use of this term from those we will find in the second and third categories is the place political discourse has in his analysis. Smiley comments on the ambiguous and ubiquitous use of the word "region" not in an effort to understand how or why this might be so but rather to prescribe the elimination of region in favour of the less ambiguous term province. Political discourse is not subject to analysis; it is not seen as a way to get at some underlying phenomenon as is the case in our second category.

Category Two - Political Discourse as a Way to Measure

The writers in this group use discourse as means of getting at something else. Here the definition of discourse is expanded from references to speeches, texts, or debate to a way of talking or establishing meaning. The ways of talking or systems of meaning are, however, often seen through the same speeches, texts and public debate that the first category was concerned with.

François Furet provides an analysis which shows the most-comprehensive possible use of discourse in this category. He uses political discourse to interpret the French Revolution. The French Revolution "invented a type of political discourse and practice by which we have been living ever since" (Furet 1981 [1978]: 46). In Furet's book, an ideology is a "system of

political representations" (p.29) and discourse is a way of seeing this system. Furet examines the Cahiers de doléances (lists of grievances written in March or April 1789) and finds that the language of the Revolution is not used in these texts. "The Cahiers did not speak the language of democracy, but that of the jurists of the Ancien Regime". Based on this analysis Furet refutes historians who have cast these texts as being moderate precursors of revolutionary tracts. Furet also uses several other terms which are frequently found in close proximity to political discourse. He links discourse to identity saying that when Robespierre had to win a seat he ~~became~~ Robespierre by inventing the discourse of equality. He talks of the particular "~~definition~~ of citizenship" which is associated with the end of the Revolution. He links discourse to interpretation saying that the birth of the revolutionary ideology needed both the availability of power and "the chance to appropriate for its own benefit the interpretation of what was meant by the 'people's will'" (Furet 1981 [1978]: 43).

Harvey and Olsen, who discuss how computer technology can be used in the analysis of political discourse, are interested in discourse in the same way Furet is. They want to contribute to the avenue of historical studies which is exploring the relation between change in language structures and social, political, or ideological changes. (Harvey and Olsen 1988: 450). Changing political discourse is, thus, a sign of other changes.

Berg and Ross also speak of discourse as an indicator of

broader societal phenomena. "The language of political discourse is pragmatic in the sense that the terms used commit actors to views and positions which transcend specific utterances" (my emphasis). "Actors, through discourse conducted in the public forum, construct the shape of controversies..." (Berg and Ross 1982: 237). They speak of "competing" and "tacit" frames of reference. Fischer also speaks of political discourse as a reflection of something else. For Fischer, the response to political science's search for a new methodology (1982:10) is to be found in a new framework which will incorporate "everyday discourse" and an "ordinary language framework" in order to "undermine the technocratic conception of knowledge on its own terms" (1982:28-29). Political discourse for Fischer is the way of speaking which is specific to political science. The problem he sees is the specific ideologies (scientific objectivity, expertise, and professionalism) which, in his analysis, the political discourse embodies.

Beinin uses the concept as a measure as well. He shows how the terms of political discourse in Egypt affected the fate of the Egyptian/Communist party. "The communist intelligentsia made the nationalist and anti-imperialist struggle its priority, and therefore conceded that political discourse should be conducted in these terms" (Beinin 1987: 584), a concession which cost the Egyptian communist party a great deal. This type of analysis, which focusses on how discourse can be confining or limiting resembles others placed in this group and in the 'discourse in

and of itself' category. Beinin's work is placed here as the political discourse of his title appears only rarely in the text. He formulates his argument in other terms, speaking of 'Marxism's failure to develop an adequate theory of nationalism.

There are a number of writers in this category for whom political discourse is linked to political speeches, as it was in the 'ordinary language' group. Here, however, analysts look for a single discourse which is found in a series of texts and they use this discourse to point to a broader societal phenomenon. These texts can be arranged progressively in accordance with how much emphasis is placed on the text or texts as structures in comparison to how much emphasis is placed on whatever it is which the texts are gesturing towards. In "The Structure of Signification in the General Secretary's Address: A Semiotic Approach to Soviet Political Discourse", Michael Urban conducts a structural linguistic analysis of "Soviet political discourse" or official statements. In his concluding remarks he moves beyond this analysis to hypothesize that there is a link between the "deep structure" of this discourse and the "Soviet social contract" (Urban 1987: 203-204). Exoo's analysis is similar; he compares "public political discourse" (campaign speeches and inaugural addresses of mayors) in two cities with contrasting ethnic compositions and looks in these discourses for reflections of ways of thinking and ways of knowing (Exoo 1983: 79, 88).

Frank Reeves' study of British political discourse about race also looks at speeches of politicians but his formulation of

the problem is different than Urban's and Exoo's. Reeves is interested in discourse analysis. Political discourse is a subset of a broader discourse. In contrast to Exoo and Urban, Reeves shows his relation to a discourse analysis school through extreme caution in his own use of words. Racial discourse is different from discourse about race or discourse relating to race. Reeves also differs from the previous two analysts in that he discusses the theory of ideology in detail in order to use this term to provide the link between what is said and what it reflects. His discussion of ideology is itself linked to political discourse in important ways. Because ideology is his principal theoretical concept, Reeves defines discourse narrowly as "publicly expressed language capable of being used in communication between two or more persons" (Reeves 1983: 28). This definition is close to both the 'text' or 'speech' and the 'debate' definitions which were termed ordinary language usages. Reeves' definition contains the possibility of a "way of talking" interpretation (his use of the word capable is key) and he uses discourse to get at ideology.

Shapiro calls the language of the 1984 primary campaign "mainstream political discourse in the United States" (Shapiro 1987: 178). Like Reeves, Shapiro uses ideology as a central concept and speaks in Gramsci's terms of an "ideological war of

³ This discussion will be examined in more detail in the third chapter where ideology and political discourse are compared and contrasted.

position'" (p.189). Discourse plays the same role here as it does in Reeves' text. In comparison with Exoo and Urban both of them spend more time discussing societal phenomena than linguistic structures.

Burghart examines the evolution of the concept "nation-state" in Nepal. "Governmental discourses" - a term used quite broadly to refer to all sorts of official statements - are examined. This seems to be a subset of political discourse, as Burghart cites other possible "political discourses" as "roads not taken" (Burghart 1984:113). Burghart's focus is on the evolution of vocabulary rather than a limited number of specific texts as was the case with Reeves, Urban, and Exoo. Like these others, however, Burghart is using political discourse to understand underlying societal phenomena.

...the fact that Nepal was situated on the periphery of a powerful colonial regime obliged the government to legitimate the basis of its polity in a way that made sense not only to its subjects but also to the British, and, subsequently, to the government of the Republic of India. Successive redefinitions did not "lead" to the formation of the concept of nation state, but they became so by an accumulation of some redefinitions (Burghart 1984:121-122).

Burghart speaks of meanings and definitions. These concepts are often associated with political discourse because, political discourse makes these things visible.

Some of the Canadian texts mentioned in the introductory remarks fall into the 'discourse as a way to measure' category. Simeon, like Donald Smiley, comments on the use of region in Canadian political science. "'Region', 'regional', and

'regionalism' are three of the most common terms in Canadian political discourse, whether academic, governmental or journalistic. Yet the meanings and significance of these terms remains confused" (Simeon 1975: 499). However, instead of proposing the elimination of 'region', Simeon investigates what different senses of region may mean. For example, he considers that thinking of regionalism as differences between provinces leads to comparative politics style analysis while thinking of national politics in terms of an interplay between regions leads to the study of federalism itself (p.500). Simeon's remarks on political discourse serve to introduce his argument; the argument itself does not rely on discourse. Although he rarely uses the term and it is not central to his argument, Simeon uses political discourse to point to something else, in this case the importance of institutional characteristics in shaping Canadian politics.

For Stevenson, political discourse is a vocabulary relating to politics. Some parts of the vocabulary are easily defined (for example "legislature" or "bureaucracy"); other terms provide more problems (for example "democracy", "liberalism", or "socialism"). The easily defined terms are not, for Stevenson, signals of any underlying significance; the more difficult terms, however, are difficult precisely because they are "too intimately associated with past and present ideological controversies to be defined in a manner that satisfies everyone" (Stevenson 1982:3). Accordingly, for Stevenson, some parts of political discourse do

reflect societal situations, while others do not. Whitaker also uses political discourse as an approximate equivalent for political vocabulary and thus, like Simeon and Stevenson, talks about specific terms. Whitaker's statement that "the nation and the state were not coterminous in Canadian discourse" (Whitaker 1984: 80) uses the meaning of these terms to call attention to a specific social reality.

Jon Pammett's use of political discourse also falls into the "discourse as a way to measure" group but in a different way than the other Canadian analysts cited here. Pammett suggests that by making the "subjects of electoral discourse" part of the comparative analysis of elections we may reach more meaningful conclusions than are found through the comparative study of electoral structures (Pammett 1986: 2). Pammett's analysis shows that "electoral discourse" includes more than just issues but also ways of talking about issues (i.e. ideological or non-ideological) and identities associated with issues (i.e. small particular groups versus large demographic groups). In this analysis, discourse is one of several elements used to "measure" the dynamics occurring during elections. Although it is not the principal concept of Pammett's paper, it is much more important to his work than to Simeon's, Stevenson's, or Whitaker's.

As we have seen, a great diversity of texts can be classed in the 'discourse as a way to measure' group. In some, discourse is associated with political speeches, in others with a vocabulary used to talk about politics, while in still others no

such synonym can be suggested. In some cases discourse is an organizing concept in the text, in other cases it appears once or twice and then the author 'talks around' it. Furthermore, we can see that discourse is associated with identities, definitions, meanings, and interpretations. In all of these texts, political discourse is used to tap some underlying factor. In the following group we will see some texts that resemble the more complex examples cited above but where discourse plays a different role in the analysis.

Category Three - Political Discourse "In and Of Itself"

As was the case with the preceding group, there are a number of different types of texts which fall under this heading. In each of these cases, however, political discourse has an important place in the text because it is essential to the argument. The writers who arrive at this position via the considerations of feminist theory often present analyses which are closely akin to those who begin with post-structuralism. Sometimes it is easy to group texts according to this "origin"; at other times their vocabulary must be closely scrutinized. Increasing prominence of political discourse in both of these camps has, of course, helped legitimate the term for the use of others so that these texts can no longer always be categorized according to these two possible origins.

First we shall examine instances where political discourse is related to trends in post-structuralism and is hence used in

conjunction with a specific kind of vocabulary and often associated with methodology which initially comes from linguistics. In 1979 Burton and Carlen's study of British Royal Commissions entitled Official Discourse was published. "This book analyses the form, transmission and manipulation of the elements and relations realized in official discourse and theorizes this signifying practice as a technology of ideological closure" (Burton and Carlen 1979:13). Although terms like ideology and hegemonic domination are present in the text, Burton and Carlen use them to help express their understanding of discourse. Specifically they tell us that "discourse analysis, in displacing epistemology, has also replaced ideology" (Burton and Carlen 1979:19). The method of Official Discourse puts this text in the post-structuralist group. They call their study "discourse analysis" and engage in "discursive deconstructions"; they trace their understanding of discourse from Foucault. Burton and Carlen also help to clarify our understanding of discourse. The concept of "ideological closure" refers to how political discourse lets some things in and shuts others out. Burton and Carlen also tell us that official discourses are important because by linking state functionaries with the lay intelligentsia they become part of the constant renewal of hegemonic domination (Burton and Carlen 1979: 8).

Mulkay's discussion of scientific discourse is interesting in this context for several reasons. Scientific discourse is the means "whereby scientists attribute meaning to, and thereby

constitute, their social world" (Mulkey 1985:3, my emphasis). Discourse actually makes up the world. Mulkey is interested in scientific discourse because of its dominion over other discourses; "both laymen and the objects of study are deemed incompetent to challenge the scientist's authoritative discourse on political matters" (Mulkey 1979: 14). The authority of this discourse is akin to that of the official discourses above. Mulkey links discourse to both interpretation and meaning. His text is particularly interesting because of his attempts to challenge the textual constraints of writing a book. His experiments with the form of the text link his work to the post-structuralist group.

Ray Nichols uses discourse as the organizing concept in his history of Julien Benda's life. "Focusing on discourse, we focus on both concept and society in and through a distinctive and distinguishing medium" (Nichols 1978: 16). Nichols notes the defining power of discourse:

... 'delimitation' is not neutral: the defining of 'politics' is itself a political act of one kind or another, drawing boundaries, joining and distinguishing matters, establishing publicly authoritative structures, both conceptually and socially (Nichols 1978: 188).

Discourse is important in and of itself because of this delimiting function; conceptual reality is social reality. Nichols' work shows its links to post-structuralism when he speaks of, for example, the "long multivoiced tradition of discourse" (Nichols 1978: 192).

Walker inscribes herself in this group as well by citing

Foucault and . Gadamer. Her discussion of health care policy in the United States provides an interesting illustration of the use of political discourse as a way to measure versus the use of political discourse in and of itself. One way to discuss the current series of health care cutbacks in the United States is to "conceptualize the political discourse as a representation of competing values, interests, and ideologies supported by opposing groups. Successfully legislated policies simply appear to be the achievements of pluralistic groups..." (Walker 1986: 1237). Walker rejects this presentation of political discourse as a way to measure saying that the resulting analysis is superficial. Rather than competing conceptions of medicare Walker sees only the "free market model"; all competing interests use the same language. The dominant discourse creates "limited space" within which liberals and conservatives can disagree; "it organizes, defines, and limits political analysis, speech and action and proscribes alternative methods of organization" (Walker 1986: 1238, my emphasis). Walker also calls our attention to the importance of silence in understanding the role of political discourse. In this case it is publicly produced health care which falls outside the limits of discourse, is not mentioned, and therefore cannot become an alternative.

Paul Chilton writes of the necessity for modern linguists to confront the political realm as both "the production and reception of text meaning is dependent on the distribution of power in industrial and post-industrial societies" (Chilton 1985:

iv). In his collection Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate all contributors share the view that discourse is the relevant unit of analysis and speak of language itself as a "form of social action, not merely of expression and exchange", and of "the possibilities for resisting dominant discourses" (Chilton 1985: xviii, xxi). By introducing the notion of, resistance, Chilton accords a role to human agency and distances himself from the post-structuralists. Chilton distinguishes between macro- and micro- discourses in an effort to accommodate the understanding of discourse associated with traditional linguistics. Macro discourses are "abstract structures postulated in order to account for regularities across a range of semiotic behaviors"; micro discourses are "the local organization of talk and writing" which "highlight certain meanings and obfuscate others" and organize identities in such a way that "those roles endorse the distribution of power and status" (Chilton 1985: xvi). The effort to distinguish between various understandings of discourse is certainly appreciated. Nevertheless, Chilton's distinction seems opaque, perhaps because of its linguistic roots. His attempt is noteworthy here as some stricter delineation of political discourse will be necessary if we are to apply the term consistently.

Glyn Williams has another solution to the problem of differentiating between discourses. He speaks of the numerous discursive formations within the "overall interdiscourse" (Glyn Williams 1984: 138). Although Williams speaks of ideology,

discourse is the predominant term. "...There is no knowledge outside of discourse, and ... there is no discourse outside of language." Williams speaks of identities, meanings, and silences:

The formulation of the subject [individual identity] is interwoven with the formulation of meaning. However, there are also silences in the sense that there are certain things which cannot be said within a given discursive formation. The production of meaning arises in the relationship between a concrete discourse and a discursive formation; words, expressions and propositions have no meaning other than in their usage within a determinate discursive formation (Glyn Williams 1984: 141).

Because identities are formed in discourse, writes Williams, there is no intrinsic reason that, for example, class struggle should dominate struggles based on gender or ethnicity. Williams' study of the political discourse of the Wales referendum campaign resembles Walker's work as he concludes that the space for debate was limited. His use of the term 'discursive formation' closely resembles Foucault's and for that reason he is grouped with the other post-structuralists. In spite of this his formulation of important questions is not markedly different from that which we will turn to now.

As we move from a look at texts which were inspired in some way by poststructural conceptions of discourse to those which are more related to feminist theory, we will see many similarities. This is, of course, why these two groups are found together in the 'discourse in and of itself category'. In fact, some texts, like Denise Riley's analysis of British pronatalist discourse after World War II, can be classed as post-structural feminist

theory. Riley's discourse is a modified Foucaultian concept. Riley's primary caution in using a post-structuralist conception of discourse is its incapacity to account for human agency. "This could run the risk of producing only a sociology of language... - a linguistic reduction to oust those older forms of biological or sociological reduction in which the sexual was all nature or all society" (Riley 1983:14). The role of human agency was one of the chief differences between post-structuralist and feminist conceptions of political discourse. Texts by Elstain, Jenson, and Higonnet et al examined in Chapter One all used discourse's unique situation as neither dependent nor independent variable to point up the dilemma of human agency.

Vali and Zubaida, in their discussion of Iranian contemporary politics, talk about political discourse in a way which resembles the discussion in feminist theory. They "examine the formation and deployment of political vocabularies and discourses in the pursuit of the struggles [factional struggles within the Islamic Republic]" (Vali and Zubaida 1985: 144). Political discourse constructs and determines meaning. In this case, the secret Hujjatiyeh society was made into the enemy, "constructed as a political category" in the factional discourse". What is of interest to them is "the part the entity 'Hujjatiyeh Society' has played in the construction of political discourse" (Vali and Zubaida 1985: 147, 167).

Nimer's analysis of South African politics also uses the concept in this way. Underlying the turmoil in South Africa is

the struggle to control the meanings of the key terms of discourse - race, nation, apartheid and socialism - by which the conflict is characterized..." Nimer tells us that political discourse shapes identities by controlling terms "in which positions are not only presented to others but understood by the presenters" (Nimer 1986: 313-314). This parallels the concern in feminist theory with the inability of women to express themselves in male language.

In their 1980 book Crisis, Challenge, and Change, Janine Brodie and Jane Jenson talk of how the prevailing "definition of politics" in Canada has, over time, kept Canadian electoral politics from being organized along class lines (Brodie and Jenson 1980:11). In their 1988 piece on the same subject they use the term political discourse in their discussion of meanings, definitions, and identities. "When such a language of class is absent from the political discourse of any society, then classes are much less likely to form politically and class-based political practices are not apt to develop" (Brodie and Jenson 1988:38). Furthermore,

... as a meaning system, the definition of politics has an important influence over the identification of those aspects of individual and social experience which will be considered political as well as over interpretations of how politics should be conducted, what the boundaries of political discussion most properly may be, and which conflicts can be resolved through electoral process (Brodie and Jenson 1988:37).

Political discourse is used to conceptualize the perplexing absence of class politics in Canada. If class is excluded from the prevailing political discourse, if there is no way to talk of

class, class issues are silenced and thus invisible in the political realm.

What we see in Brodie and Jenson's analysis is the same vocabulary seen in the group which shares a link with feminist theorizing, and, in fact, with the entire 'discourse in and of itself' group. The words meaning, definition, identity, and silence are woven into this analysis and help us to understand what political discourse is taken to mean and why the term is used. In the 'discourse in and of itself' category meanings, and the identities derived from them, are woven into the discourse itself. Political discourse has a direct link with political reality; verbs like **construct**, **constitute**, and **determine** are used to show the power of discourse. Political discourse is used by many of these authors to highlight silences or absences - things which are unsayable. Terms like ideology and political culture have a lesser role or are themselves absent in these analyses as the need for an intermediary between what is said and what **exists** diminishes with this conception of political discourse.

Before concluding the discussion of this category, however, we must touch on the issue of the autonomy of discourse and the enigma of human agency which was introduced in the contrast between post-structuralism and feminist theory. A discourse can construct or constitute reality; it can marginalize dissent; it can silence some voices. Political discourse does, however, change. According to some theorists, it also can be opposed, and it can be influenced by certain situations or particular actors.

Discourse is not always or only a determining factor or independent variable. Extra-discursive actions sometimes prevail.

Rowland and Payne (category two, see page 30) spoke of this balancing act when discussing presidential addresses. "In some cases the President may have little chance of changing the attitudes of the audience no matter how persuasive he or she may be. In other instances, the events of the day and public opinion of the people [sic] may create a situation in which even an inept rhetorical act will succeed" (Rowland and Payne 1984:501). In Crisis, Challenge and Change Brodie and Jenson survey Canadian history, looking for moments when the prevailing definition of politics was vulnerable to change and exploring why more substantial changes did not occur. Williams (see page 45) expresses the position of political discourse this way; "while there may not be a social practice which is not social, material, and discursive there is a non-discursive order which constrains the possibilities and effectivity of discursive practice while simultaneously being constantly re-defined and transformed through such practices" (Williams 1984:139). It is thus that political discourse has a symbiotic relationship with reality, sometimes constraining what is possible, sometimes being altered, expanded, or narrowed by events. It is also because of its ability to express this symbiotic relationship that political discourse is important for theorists like Giddens and Abrams who seek an adequate expression of agency and action.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence that political discourse is now being used in ways which extend far beyond the ordinary language meanings of this term. Political discourse is now being conceived of both as a way to measure other concepts such as values, attitudes, ideologies, and cultures and as an embodiment of, or a replacement for, these other concepts. In both these cases political discourse is a way of talking and understanding; however, the literature differs on the place which political discourse is accorded in the analysis. In those cases where discourse is used as a powerful conceptual tool, the analysis focusses on meanings, identities, definitions, and silences. Where political discourse appears 'in and of itself' it is used as a replacement for concepts like ideology, political culture, and hegemony. The next chapter will examine the relationship between political discourse and these concepts, ideology in particular, to assess what political discourse offers political scientists as an alternative concept.

Chapter Three

Political Discourse as an Alternative Concept to Ideology

The proliferation of a new concept in a given discipline presumably corresponds to the need to express some idea or set of ideas which existing concepts do not adequately formulate. As any student in an introductory political science class will attest, the working vocabulary of the political scientist is already, even before the addition of political discourse, somewhat mindboggling. Many of the concepts which are part of the working vocabulary of political scientists defy simple definition, or, in some cases, have a variety of complex definitions. In order for political discourse to be a meaningful addition to the conceptual arsenal of political science it must, therefore, both fill a conceptual gap and be susceptible to definition. In this chapter political discourse will be contrasted with ideology, the term to which it is most akin. Hegemony and political culture will be examined more briefly as they have both been offered as alternatives to ideology at some point.

The Evolution of the Concept of Ideology

Ideology is one of oldest terms in use in contemporary political science. Its appearance predates the discipline itself, going back to the time of Napoleon who labelled the philosophers who opposed him "idéologues" (Mannheim 1936:71-72). Frank Reeves, who uses political discourse as a way to get at ideology, begins his discussion of ideology by stating that ways of studying ideology are preoccupied with seven closely related issues: (1) problems of defining ideology and of operationalizing these definitions; (2) questions of the historical genesis of ideology; (3) questions of the ontological status of ideology (i.e. the base versus superstructure debate); (4) questions of its function; (5) questions of its truth; (6) questions of its relation to some group's interest; and (7) questions of its content. Following such a list, it is easy to see why, in addition to being one of the oldest terms in political science, ideology is one of the most maligned. Reeves undertakes sorting out each of these factors so as to be able to use the term coherently. As responses to each of these criteria can and do vary, there are many understandings of ideology. In Riley's words, the term ideology has been "severely overstrained" to the point that "its invocation often serves to deepen the confusion it aims to alleviate" (Riley 1983:9).

In Studies in the Theory of Ideology John Thompson divides the many understandings of the term ideology into two basic

types. The first is a neutral conception of ideology as a "system of thought" or of "symbolic practices" which is present in every political program. Such a system or set of practices can belong to any group or class in society. Thompson uses 'neutral' in this case because in this group, ideologies are not seen as universally negative and may be 'positive' for one but not all parts of society. The second is a negative or critical conception which views ideology as somehow linked to the process of sustaining asymmetrical relations of power in a society (Thompson 1984:4). Both of these conceptions need to be discussed in order to compare political discourse to, and perhaps distinguish it from, ideology.

The negative or critical conception of ideology is rooted in the classical Marxian formula of ideology as false-consciousness (Thompson 1984:75). Although this was not Marx's only formulation of ideology, in discussing what ideology means today it is more relevant to examine what has been passed down from Marx rather than to grapple about what Marx actually meant. According to this interpretation, ideology, which occurs as part of the superstructure resulting from a system of oppressive economic relations, is used to justify the status quo to the oppressed class or classes. Mannheim, who explicates this negative understanding of ideology, makes further distinctions within the term. However, both his "particular" and his "total" ideologies are rooted in an "attitude of mistrust" which, through a series of developments, becomes "false consciousness" (Mannheim

1936:55-56, 65-70). The lack of "true" understanding of their situation which ideology imposes on the oppressed classes is what keeps them from revolution. In his discussion of ideology, Mannheim's emphasis is on this "untruthfulness". Ideology in this sense is a system which can be identified as false. It is something solid and nameable which exists in certain areas of society. It can be articulated and explained.

Closely related to this Marxian conception of ideology as false consciousness is the traditional liberal belief that ideology is something to be feared. Liberalism views -isms, like communism, fascism, and totalitarianism, as ideologies so that ideology is conceptualized as not-liberalism.

The negative conception of ideology was that of classical Marxism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:19). However, in response to a growing crisis in Marxism brought on by a failure of the traditional analysis to interpret actual historical events a 'neutral', 'broader', or more 'autonomous' understanding of ideology appeared in Marxist theory, beginning with the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's work on the Marxist theory of ideology aimed to address the inadequacy of the 'false-consciousness' based traditional framework, which privileged exclusively the economic arrangements of a society. This understanding was unable to explain fully the vital transformative moment in history. It failed to take into account the constantly changing and reciprocal nature of the relationship between the superstructure and the economic base. The political

and cultural level did, after all, seem important (Boggs 1976:36-37). To address this problem, Gramsci developed the notion of hegemony.

In creating this new term Gramsci tried to get at the complexity of power relations in society. He wanted to talk about domination which goes beyond coercion or economic supremacy. Gramsci identified two types of political control; domination or direct physical coercion, and hegemony, or 'direction', which is based on consent or an 'ideological contract' (Boggs 1976:38). Hegemony is, accordingly, "the permeation throughout civil society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality etc that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests which dominate" (Boggs 1976:39). It is this later form of control, argues Gramsci, which is 'normal' in post-feudal societies, especially capitalism (Femia 1975:31). In discussing hegemony, Mouffe places the emphasis on "intellectual and moral leadership" (Mouffe 1979:184).

This concept of hegemony is much broader than the negative conception of ideology as false consciousness. It is something which permeates all levels of society; it is constantly changing (Mouffe 1979:194, Boggs 1976:40, 53); it cannot be expressed as a static and total system. Gramsci uses the terms hegemony and ideology together to describe the importance of the superstructure. Hegemony is not thought of as 'false' and, in fact, the working class needs to develop a counter hegemony to

combat this subtle form of domination. His analysis is linked to the transformative moments in history because it is only at certain "historical conjectures that hegemony becomes decisive, either in maintaining or destroying the existing order [despite changes in the base], depending on which class ideology prevails" (Femia 1975:37, my emphasis). In Gramsci's thought hegemony complements ideology rather than replacing it. He reshapes the meaning of ideology by using this new term and extends both ideology and hegemony to be potential weapons of all classes, not just the bourgeoisie.

The negative conception of ideology is passed down from Marx and Mannheim; the neutral one from Gramsci. These two conceptions vary significantly and they cannot be compared to political discourse as though they were one and the same. The negative conception of ideology is easily distinguished from discourse. Discourse is not 'false'; it is not easily articulated; it is not part of the superstructure - resulting from the economic base - but rather it permeates society, sometimes acting dependently, other times independently. To compare political discourse to Gramsci's notion of ideological hegemony is much more complicated. They both refer to a means of subtle control; they both concern power relations; they both permeate society. When Thompson characterizes the neutral understanding of ideology as a "system of thought", he approaches our definition of political discourse as a way of talking and of understanding.

Thompson and Reeves offer similar resolutions in their attempts to define ideology, both within the purview of neutral or 'non-negative' conceptions of ideology. Thompson calls ideology "meaning mobilized for the maintenance of relations of domination" (Thompson 1984:5). Reeves calls it "discourse which serves to justify political action" (Reeves 1983:36). Both look to language and discourse analysis to get at ideology. (i.e. They use discourse as 'a way to measure'). For Thompson the analysis of ideology is the study of language in the social world "since it is within language that meaning is mobilized in the interest of particular individuals and groups" (Thompson 1984:73). For Reeves the study of the content of ideology "must involve an interpretation of the meaning of discourse as intended and understood" (Reeves 1983:42).

With their emphasis on language, meaning, interpretation, and even discourse, Thompson and Reeves create definitions of ideology which are equivalent to political discourse in the 'in and of itself' category. However, some uses of discourse 'in and of itself' include a notion of agency and others do not. Ideology and hegemony, with their roots intertwined in Marxian theory, have not developed the notion of human agency. The advantage of using political discourse as an alternative to ideology in cases where their meanings are equivalent is that the linkage of discourse to language is captured more clearly and political discourse carries only two decades of interpretation with it, not two centuries, making the process of definition much

easier.

Empirical Issues and Ideology

As Reeves' list of preoccupations in the study of ideology indicates, however, problems of definition are not the only issue which confronts those who wish to use the term. Those who approach political science from the empiricist tradition have encountered their own difficulties with ideology.

Philip Converse's study of belief systems or ideologies published in 1964 initiated intensive questioning of the nature of these systems. Converse speaks of belief systems rather than ideologies because the term ideology has been "thoroughly muddled". In spite of this, he uses ideology in his text when it is appropriate for "aesthetic relief" and there is an "obvious overlap between the two" (Converse 1964:207-209). What Converse seeks to avoid is the negative conception of ideology. He investigates the extent to which ideologies or belief systems are in fact systematic. The notion of constraint is used to indicate the extent to which elements of belief systems are binding on one another. Converse's results put the use of ideology in empirical studies into question. He finds that only 2.5% of the 1956 sample show sufficient constraints to be classified as "ideologues" and only 9% as "near-ideologues". People do not have the same systematic beliefs that elites have, although elites assume masses to hold such beliefs. Converse also found that the ideological labels liberal and conservative are not

conceptual tools for most people. Even among those who used these labels many did not know what they meant (Converse 1964:213-223). The problem for empirical studies is that if people do not have systematic beliefs and do not understand ideological labels, their behaviour cannot be summarized using such labels. If, as Converse concludes, "large portions of an electorate do not have meaningful beliefs", ideology cannot be used meaningfully.

Converse's pioneering study has generated much follow up research. In addition to those who support his thesis, others have hypothesized that since the time of Converse's study ideological awareness has increased in the United States and that it was more important in Europe to begin with (Niemi and Weisberg 1984:322). Converse's own follow up study contradicts these statements, finding a 1972-1976 presidential elections panel to be "nearly a carbon copy" of the earlier one (Converse and Markus 1984:333). Furthermore, those who wish to assert the importance of ideology in the American electorate must make elaborate clarifications. For example, Conover and Feldman claim that liberal and conservative labels are meaningful, provided we understand that this meaning may differ from one individual to another and that we cannot assume these labels to be related to issues (Conover and Feldman 1984:356-357). Given these two substantial qualifications, the terms are severely limited in empirical studies for they cannot be used to summarize anything that unites individuals. The argument in this literature

revolves around the question of whether or not these labels are meaningful.

Another issue at stake for empirical studies is how to operationalize the concept ideology, once it is assumed to be meaningful. As empiricist political scientists often operationalize such terms through a series of survey questions, either oral or written, discourse is involved. Here, as in the case with Reeves and Thompson, discourse becomes a way to measure ideology. A controversy develops in this area between the definition of discourse as a way to measure and the understanding of discourse as essential in and of itself. If ideology can only be tapped through language, can it be said to exist independently of political discourse? On the other hand, those who believe that political discourse in fact constitutes reality no longer need ideology to express reality. However, empiricists who try to use political discourse as something other than a way to measure will be confronted in constructing indicators with formulating a concept which alternates between being a dependent variable and an independent variable. Certainly political discourse exists to be measured in a way that ideology does not. Nevertheless, in order to be useful in empirical studies what is being assessed must be clarified - be it some underlying factor or the 'indicator' itself - and the appropriate theoretical links must be drawn.

Other Alternative Concepts

Political discourse is not the first concept to be posited as an alternative to ideology. Hegemony and political culture have both been presented as attempts to resolve some problem with the prevailing understanding of ideology. Laclau and Mouffe orient their Hegemony and Socialist Strategy around an understanding of hegemony which reaches far beyond Gramsci's. The gap in Marxist theory, into which Gramsci put hegemony, has expanded to the point where the theory of Marxism can no longer hold. "It is no longer possible to maintain the conception of subjectivity and classes elaborated by Marxism, nor its vision of the historical course of capitalist development nor, of course, the conception of communism as a transparent society from which antagonisms have disappeared" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:4). Laclau and Mouffe posit "the expansion and determination of the social logic implicit in the concept of hegemony" as a way to orient contemporary social struggles, to give direction to the Left following the demise of Marxist theory (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:3). Hegemony is conceived of as a "discursive surface", making the link between political discourse and hegemony which was visible in Gramsci, explicit. Discourse and discursive formations, in fact the entire Foucaultian vocabulary, are used to articulate the notion of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe stop short, however, of using political discourse as an organizing concept in and of itself. As was the case with Foucault, Laclau

and Mouffe can give no account of agency because "the logic of hegemony, as a logic of articulation and contingency, has come to determine the very identity of hegemonic subjects" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:85).

Almond and Verba's comparative study of political beliefs and attitudes in five countries, The Civic Culture, was the first work where culture, and the cluster of terms that accompany it (i.e. subculture, socialization), were borrowed from sociology, anthropology, and psychology and brought into the vocabulary of political science. The term political culture "refers to the specifically political orientations - attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the system". "The political culture of a nation is the particular distribution of patterns or orientations toward political objects among members of the nation" (Almond and Verba 1965 [1963]:12-13). The civic culture itself refers to a specific constellation of beliefs, attitudes, and values which foster democracy (Almond and Verba 1965 [1963]:5).

The study, and the political culture concept which it relied on, were rooted in a post World War II sense of crisis. The civic culture assumes that some countries (France, Germany, and Italy) are more susceptible than others (the United States and Britain) to totalitarian regimes. Reflecting on this bias in 1980, Verba notes that recent history has seen "a steady erosion of confidence in the government" in both Great Britain and the United States, which puts the assumptions of the Civic Culture

into question (Verba 1980: 399). Some of the harshest criticisms of the Civic Culture derive from the Anglo-American bias (i.e. Pateman 1980: 58-62) and the concept of political culture remains linked to this bias, requiring some of the same kinds of clarifications as ideology does if it is to be 'neutral'.

Almond and Verba do not use political culture as an alternative concept to ideology. They arrive at this term by assessing the explanatory power of other social sciences and by borrowing from them. Furthermore, the liberal bias of their study indicates that they most likely share liberalism's opinion of ideology as something that is not-liberal. In the Canadian context, however, Bell and Tepperman make the link between political culture and ideology explicit. They use political culture instead of ideology "to avoid the too-narrow Marxist connotations of class conflict and the weight of intellectual baggage that an old term, like ideology, is always made to carry" (Bell and Tepperman 1979:19).

Bell and Tepperman go on to define political culture as follows:

Political culture consists of the ideas, assumptions, values, and beliefs that condition political action. It affects the ways we use politics: the kinds of social problems we address and the solutions we attempt. For political culture serves as a filter or lens through which political actors view the world; it influences what they perceive as social problems and how they react to them. (Bell and Tepperman 1979:246).

This definition has less psychological terminology than Almond and Verba's but is essentially similar. In this definition political culture also resembles political discourse as it is

cast as a way of talking and understanding. However, political culture is presented as an independent variable; it affects and influences political actors but no account is given of how it changes. In this analysis of Canadian history, political culture emerges as something enduring which changes relatively slowly. Political culture becomes the backdrop against which politics in a given society is played out.

Political discourse can be distinguished from political culture based on the way it changes and the place it has in analysis. Some theorists believe political discourse to be influenced by actors and events. Accordingly, it can sometimes change relatively quickly. Therefore we could say that against the backdrop of a single political culture, many political discourses can emerge. Also, political culture is presented by both Almond and Verba and Bell and Tepperman as an independent variable. Political discourse, on the other hand, has a symbiotic relationship with its societal setting. Furthermore, this definition of political culture is linked to perception but not to language and thus would face problems of operationalization similar to those of ideology. As was the case with ideology, the pedigree of political culture makes its meaning somewhat problematic.

Ideology in the Canadian Setting

To conclude the discussion of ideology we will look briefly at the problems which this particular term has encountered in the

Canadian context. Canadian society is often described as predominantly liberal and shares with liberalism a distaste for ideology as something not-liberal. But this is only one very superficial reason for the failure of ideology to 'catch on' in Canada. Another reason why ideological labels have not fit well in Canada has to do with Canadian electoral behaviour. Ideology is often linked with class, perhaps because of the importance of both terms to Marxism. Canada's lack of class-based voting has perplexed analysts of political behaviour for many years. Whether or not a 'brokerage party' analysis of the Canadian electoral arena is accepted the absence of class voting is rarely contested. Furthermore, despite the labels Liberal and Progressive Conservative, the two major Canadian parties have more commonalities than divergences. Even the NDP differs only slightly from the two mainstream parties. These two factors, absence of class voting and of ideologically based parties, mean that electoral behaviour - perhaps the most indisputably political act - is not susceptible to ideological labels.

Louis Hartz's fragment theory, which relies on a neutral conception of ideology, has been applied by McRae and Horowitz to the Canadian context. Hartz accounts for characteristics of new societies by tracing the European ideological fragments which are represented in them. For example, American society grew out of a liberal fragment, Australian society from a socialist one. Whether or not Canada is seen as a classic "two fragment" society (McRae) or as liberalism with a "tory touch" (Horowitz), broad

societal characteristics are described in ideological terms as conservative, socialist, or liberal. The debate over the type of fragment society which Canada actually was indicates that these labels are not a perfect fit, despite the widespread influence of the fragment theory in Canada. Bell and Tepperman base their discussion of Canadian political culture on Hartz's ideological analysis and thus do not manage to get completely away from ideological labels.

Christian and Campbell attempt to revitalize the concept of ideology as it applies to Canadian political parties. However, their analysis at times comes closer to demonstrating the absence of ideologies than their presence. Christian and Campbell argue that there are four ideologies in Canada: liberalism, toryism, socialism, and nationalism. In contradiction to such a classification scheme; all three major political parties believe in liberal values, and no Canadian party is ideologically pure - with the Progressive Conservative party and the NDP being more heterogeneous than the Liberal party (Campbell and Christian 1983:6-8). Furthermore, Canada's fourth ideology, nationalism, has been grafted to the ideologies, or ideological hybrids, of each of the three major parties as the occasion demanded (Campbell and Christian 1983:9). In addition, while people do not quickly switch ideologies (Campbell and Christian 1983:15), Canadian voters are notoriously lacking in loyalty to political parties (Clarke et. al. 1984:56). In the final analysis, Christian and Campbell come surprisingly close to presenting the

kind of brokerage style analysis which they begin by criticizing.

Marchak has also written on ideology in Canada. However, in the 1987 edition of her Ideological Perspectives on Canada, she states that liberalism and socialism belong to a kind of society which is already in decline and that a new ideology, presumably the same throughout the country, is growing up around our new technologies and corporate empires. If this is the case, ideology is seriously impaired as a concept for it can no longer make necessary distinctions. In her preface to this third edition of her work she says she now believes the neo-Marxist ideologically based analysis which she had previously carried out needs serious revamping.

Thus it is both because of suspicion surrounding the term and because of its poor fit with social and political reality that 'ideology' has never sat comfortably in the Canadian setting. Perhaps, then, political discourse can provide an alternative here both because it is less negatively charged and because it feasibly explains Canadian electoral behaviour (see Brodie and Jenson 1988). These two factors, in addition to its expressed link to language (because of the ordinary language meanings of the word 'discourse') and its accessibility to measurement (dependent on adequate theorization) make political discourse in and of itself a possible alternative to ideology.

Conclusion

This chapter compared and contrasted political discourse and

ideology. As political discourse in the 'discourse in and of itself' sense is often an alternative concept to ideology, the chapter looked briefly at political culture and hegemony - two concepts which have been proposed as alternatives to ideology at various times. Political discourse parallels some current understandings of ideology but has the advantage of carrying less historical baggage. In addition, though political discourse shares much with political culture, it can be distinguished based on the ways it changes and its place in analysis. Furthermore, political culture is rooted in an Anglo-American bias originating with The Civic Culture. When political discourse is used as a way to measure it is somewhat more problematic. Its focus on language makes it easily accessible but its links to terms which underlie it appear to be insufficiently explored. In the Canadian setting ideology has most often been linked with a liberalism, socialism, conservatism vocabulary. Furthermore, because of various characteristics of Canadian political behaviour, ideology has not 'fit' particularly well. With these factors in mind, the discussion moves to an interpretation of the rise of the Parti Québécois in Quebec which uses political discourse as its key concept and contrasts this interpretation with a more traditional one using ideology.

Chapter Four

Political Discourse and the Parti Québécois

This chapter tests the conceptual abilities of the term political discourse by using this term to interpret the rise to power of the Parti Québécois. Political discourse is used 'in and of itself' as this is the category with the most comprehensive understanding of the term. The political discourse 'in and of itself' category is the furthest away from ordinary language usages. Furthermore, it is when used this way that political discourse becomes a substitute for ideology. The adoption of this conception of political discourse, as opposed to discourse 'as a way to measure' has the most far-reaching consequences for political scientists and therefore it is the most important category to examine and test. The discussion pauses at several intervals to contrast the accounts given using political discourse with those that can be given using ideology.

The Parti Québécois, under the leadership of René Lévesque, was elected to govern Quebec on November 15, 1976. The fifteen years which preceded this election in Quebec had been a time of

social, economic and particularly political change. To understand how and why the Parti Québécois came to power in 1976 these changes must be examined. The relationship of a political party to the setting in which it exists makes this situation ideally suited to a case study on the interpretive powers of political discourse. As Brodie and Jenson tell us, "parties are products of history and are 'both influenced and influencing'" (Brodie and Jenson 1988:3). Pelletier formulates the same analysis as Brodie and Jenson; "les partis politiques, en effet, ne constituent qu'un phénomène partiel à la fois dépendant et indépendant des ensembles politiques et sociaux où ils se trouvent" (Pelletier 1980:329). Focussing on the Parti Québécois we can use political discourse to see both how the dominant discourse of Quebec society influenced the party and how the political discourse of the Parti Québécois influenced society. We can test the ability of this term to give an adequate account of agency by looking at what it can tell us about the party's mixed dependence on and independence from its broader social and political context.

Beyond the position of the political party in a society, the Parti Québécois, at this particular juncture in its history, is appropriate for an examination of political discourse for other reasons as well. The changes in the 1960s in Quebec have been labelled the "Quiet Revolution". Although many analysts use this label, its precise boundaries are unclear; some consider it to have occurred in the first half of the 1960s, some, the entire

decade, some associate its end with a specific event in 1964 or 1966'. Its contents are also difficult to pin down for many of the changes of the 1960s can be shown to be logical outgrowths of changes which had been happening in Quebec since the end of World War II. However, even those who wish to refute its existence entirely must confront this label¹².

The Quiet Revolution does exist, therefore, because this is how Quebec's history is talked about. This is important here for two reasons. First, we can look at how the events of this time were talked about, at what made the label stick or how this meaning was constructed. Second, revolutionary situations have a unique relationship with discourse. Connolly notes that by focussing on "the connection between conceptual revision and political change" one can gain insight into both political science and political life (Connolly 1983:4). Harvey and Olson, following Furet (see page 33 above), tell us that "revolutionary situations accelerate changes in language and dramatically demonstrate the cleavages and contradictions of existing political language" (Harvey and Olsen 1988:451)¹³. As language does have this link to revolutionary situations, political discourse may help us understand why this period of time is known

¹² See for example McRoberts and Posgate (1980:94); Coleman (1984:94); Dion (1976:144).

¹³ Daniel Latouche, (1974) "La Vrai Nature de la Révolution Tranquille" CJPS September.

¹⁴ As a corollary to this, they add that changes in vocabulary are much more common than changes in grammar or syntax. Such changes will be seen in this chapter.

as the Quiet Revolution.

Finally, the ascendance of the Parti Québécois is an appropriate subject for an assessment of the conceptual powers of political discourse because of the importance of language to politics in Quebec. In Quebec, language has been at the centre of many political controversies. Some of the most controversial legislation in Quebec has been language legislation and the contestation of appropriate language law for Quebec, which began in the 1960s, continues to this day. Political discourse, because it points to the relationship between language and politics, lends itself ideally to this situation. The only danger here is the oversimplification which can result. By associating political discourse with the politics of language it is too easy to assume that the term is only valuable when language is at issue. This must be guarded against to make a clear assessment of the value of this term.

This chapter looks at the period of approximately fifteen years which preceded the rise of the Parti Québécois. During this time Quebec nationalism, which has been a continuing aspect of Quebec's politics, changed in such a way that a party which advocated Quebec's independence from Canada could be elected. Political discourse will be used to interpret both the changes in Quebec society and the growth of the party which made this possible. In order to see a full range of subjects which political discourse allows us to talk about, many different sources of political discourse are considered. These include

statements of position of political parties and social movements, commentaries of intellectual observers, statements of influential opinion leaders, and the official discourses of both the federal and provincial states in the form of Royal Commission reports. In addition, political discourse will be tapped by looking at the politics of language, at the evolution of the terms 'Québécois' and 'sovereignty association', and at the ways in which Quebec society—and individuals within it are talked about in literature of the time period. Each of these different kinds of discourse is political in some way. Each reflects the constraints of the society it functions in. As we shall see, groups or individuals who do not speak in the terms society understands are rarely listened to, while at the same time, those in positions of power are heard by many, making their discourses more influential. By comparing what different voices say with what happens in a society we can have a picture of the power relationships in that society.

The chapter is organized both thematically and chronologically. Political discourse is examined in four different contexts: discourses of parties, political actors, and social movements; discourses of the state; discourse reflected in the changing meanings of some words; and discourse reflected in literary output. These topics are organized in approximately chronological order so that the evolution of political discourse from 1960 until 1976 can be seen. To accommodate the thematic grouping of types of political discourse, the chronology

sometimes overlaps.

Roots of the Independence Movement in the Political Discourse of the Quiet Revolution

According to McRoberts and Posgate, the term 'Quiet Revolution' was coined by an English-Canadian journalist (McRoberts and Posgate 1980:94). Nevertheless, the term was quickly taken up by the Quebec elite to describe what was going on in Québec in the early 1960s. Premier Jean Lesage speaks of Quebec's "peaceful revolution" in 1963 and Pierre Trudeau writes of revolution in Quebec in 1964. To the new leaders of Quebec, the term 'revolution' was a positive one. It emphasized the distinctive break that they were making with the past. Labelling their actions both peaceful and revolutionary highlighted the changes made and the way in which they took place. (In French the label is 'la Révolution tranquille'. 'Tranquille' captures the sense of both 'quiet' and 'peaceful'.) Although this label was, therefore, advantageous to those in power, the changes made in the early 1960s showed strong continuities with postwar trends, and therefore were not truly 'revolutionary'. Nevertheless, key political actors can often substantially influence the prevailing discourse.

By 1960, Quebec was an urbanized, industrialized society. However, on a political scale, following many years of the conservative nationalism of the Duplessis regime, Quebec's development was not on a par with governments of other

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modernized' societies. Although it is probably an exaggeration to call Quebec's political regime at this time a "nineteenth century fiefdom" as Coleman does (Coleman 1984:6) or to say, with Murray, that the Quiet Revolution transformed Quebec "overnight" into a welfare state (Murray 1976:14), the Lesage government elected in 1960 did make significant changes in the administration of Quebec society. Education and health care which had been primarily under the control of the Catholic church were brought into provincial state organizations and the state took a more interventionist role in the economy through the 'nationalization' of Hydro-Québec and the establishment of the Société générale de financement to bolster French-Canadian enterprises.

As a result of these measures the political discourse surrounding the role of the state underwent major changes. The Lesage Liberals announced this redefinition of the role of the state in their 1960 election campaign, promising an inquiry into public administration under the previous Union National regime⁴ and to assure "le bon fonctionnement de la démocratie" by reforms to the civil service, the electoral system, and public access to National Assembly debates ("Manifeste de la Révolution tranquille" 1960 [1979]:18-19). In 1963 Lesage called the reforms which his government spearheaded "a vast project of national renewal". (Lesage 1963b:24). André Laurendeau, as editor

⁴ A commission of inquiry was established under Elie Salvas and reported in 1963.

of Le Devoir at the time, wrote that Quebec was in the process of reassessing the role of the state. For Laurendeau, this process began with the death of Duplessis and the subsequent takeover of the premier's seat by Paul Sauvé. -- "...The task in hand was to establish a clear distinction between the State and the party-in-power so as to make the state embody and serve the common good" (Laurendeau 1963:41-42). The provincial state "is the best instrument we can use to further our common interests and our collective thinking" (Laurendeau 1963:43). Laurendeau urged the people of Quebec not to fear the state but to use it. Even Daniel Johnson, the leader of the Union National opposition in the early 1960s began giving "the State of Quebec" a central role in his demands for further government action (Johnson 1963:31).

This change in the way of perceiving and talking about the state was the most revolutionary element of the Quiet Revolution. Accounts of this period of time which rely on ideology as an organizing concept tend to over estimate the actual changes made at this time. For example, the account given of this period in Quebec's history by Léon Dion focusses on the shift in the kind of nationalism which predominated in Quebec. In this account, socialism and social democratic nationalism begin to appear in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in contrast with the previously dominant conservative nationalism (Dion 1976: 145). This analysis overlooks important continuities in this period and harbours the assumption that the Lesage reforms were a step towards social democracy, which is not necessarily the case.

Monière speaks of an ideology of 'rattrapage' or 'catching-up' during this period (Monière 1981:250-251), calling these changes a "renovation of the superstructure". However, using 'rattrapage' as an ideological label results in further confusion about the meaning of ideology.

The new discourse surrounding the state made possible the reforms carried out by the Lesage government. Furthermore, it changed the nature of political demands which could be made. Quebec had long been seen as the protector of French Canadian interests. With the new role for the state, French Canadian identity came more and more to be associated with the provincial boundary rather than with cultural roots. One of the results was that Lesage could demand fiscal autonomy from the federal government because Quebec needed to control her own education, health, and social welfare projects in order to protect her culture (Lesage 1963b:21). Daniel Johnson made similar arguments saying that because the state of Quebec is "alone responsible" for the protection of a particular culture it needs more power than other provinces (Johnson 1963:31-33). A potential role for the federal government or for other provincial governments in protecting the interests of French Canadians outside of Quebec is excluded from this discourse. Nor, of course, can Quebec autonomy in education and social services be said to protect the culture of these other French Canadian groups.

Another kind of demand emerged along with this newly defined state. As the state rather than the church was now seen as the

protector of French Canadian culture, traditional nationalist discourse became 'electoralized'. The state became the object of aspirations for a new kind of nationalist movement which was no longer allied with the church. In 1960 two social movements advocating the new independentist nationalism, L'Action socialiste pour l'indépendance and the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN), were created. In 1963 the RIN became a political party, bringing the independence option into electoral discourse. Prior to the 1966 election the more conservative Ralliement nationale formed and entered into the electoral arena. By relating these developments to the new discourse surrounding the state we can explain why they occur more completely than ideologically based accounts can. Dion's account focusses on a merger of nationalism and socialism at this time (Dion 1976:112). This cannot, however, fully explain why these demands were made when they were. Understanding the new way in which the state was perceived allows us to see why these actors would choose to formulate their demands as political parties at this particular point in time.

In 1960, the RIN introduced a way of talking about Quebec which was to become very influential among indépendantistes. "À l'époque actuelle, où dans le monde entier les peuples s'affranchissent du joug colonial et les nations revendiquent leur pleine indépendance le Canada français ne peut pas accepter de demeurer sous la tutelle économique et politique de l'étranger" (Manifeste du RIN 1960 [1979]:25).. This political

discourse of liberation was associated with the national independence gained by many former colonies in the period following the second World War. This way of talking links the events in Quebec to the political situation in the rest of the world, serving as a reminder that the transformed discourse on the Quebec state was only one of several reasons for the emergence of these new social movements and political parties at this time.

Adaptation of this discourse of liberation to the Quebec situation had a powerful impact on both independentist and leftist discourse. For example, the Parti socialiste du Quebec was founded in 1963 following a split in the Quebec NDP party over the nationalist issue (Séguin 1982:5). This split on the left cannot be clearly perceived in ideological terms as the factional groups both saw themselves as 'socialists'. Furthermore, as both Dion and Campbell and Christian note, nationalism alone does not function as an ideology, but must be grafted onto some other ideological foundation (Dion 1976:112, Campbell and Christian 1983:9). In the case of the Parti socialiste, the ideological component divided based on different perceptions of the nationalist element.

Up to this point, changing the political discourses examined have all focussed on the French Canadian collectivity. There was, however, also an influential discourse which centred around the individual. The most influential actor who carried this discourse was Pierre Trudeau. Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier had

founded the intellectual review Cité Libre in 1950 as a voice in protest against the dogmatism of the Duplessis regime. Cité Libre did not publish after 1966 but it was an important voice, during the first half of the 1960s, primarily because of the powerful influence of people like Trudeau and Pelletier. "Cité Libre a toujours combattu pour la promotion, l'épanouissement culturel et la libération humaine du Canada français....Mais les prémisses qui inspirent ce combat sont personalistes et Cité Libre a toujours refusé de centrer son action sur l'ethnie, de considérer la nation comme la valeur première et le point de départ de sa pensée et de ses entreprises" ("Pour clore un incident" 1964:2). In 1964, Cité Libre published a "Manifeste pour une politique fonctionnelle" over seven signatures, one of which was Trudeau's". This manifesto was addressed to "tous les Canadiens" and called for a rationalized, highly planned, politics for Quebec and Canada. It rejected "l'Etat du Québec" and any constitutional framework smaller than Canada, speaking of the 'modernizing' trend towards universalism rather than nationalistic particularism. "Il importe, dans le contexte politique actuel, de révaloriser avant tout la personne, indépendamment de ses accidents ethniques, géographiques, ou religieux" (Breton et al 1964:37).

The consequences of this individual centred political discourse for Quebec politics are indeed far-reaching. The

The others were: Albert Breton, Raymond Breton, Claude Bruneau, Yvon Gauthier, Marc Lalonde and Maurice Pinard.

French Canadian, culture is a collective phenomenon. Within this discourse such collective phenomena have a secondary place; rather, individuals have the right to their own culture and language and the corresponding right not to be discriminated against. "L'avenir d'une langue dépend surtout du dynamisme des groupes qui l'utilisent" (Breton et al. 1964:44). There is, consequently, no basis within this discourse for the kinds of claims made by Lesage and Johnson, nor for those of the nationalists and independentists. Yet the personal success of Trudeau and those who shared his views and their positions of power and influence made this individual centred discourse an important influence on political options in Quebec. At this juncture we see the influential role which agency can sometimes play.

Furthermore, despite this major divergence, the demands for a rationalized, centrally co-ordinated politics contained in this discourse are parallel to the goals of the Lesage regime and as we shall see, the goals of the Parti Québécois. Hence, the distinction between the two cannot be called ideological. Traditional ideological distinctions are broader and influence a wide range of policy options. Each of these groups advocated similar economic and social policies. To apply labels such as liberal and socialist, or even social democratic, exaggerates the differences between them. The tension between the individual and the collectivity continues to be a characteristic of Quebec

political debates at the present time; political discourse allows us to 'see' this nuance.

Another characteristic of the Quiet Revolution period was the beginning of a new discourse about language. At the time of Confederation culture was associated with religion. The provisions of the BNA Act which were designed to protect the cultural integrity of the French and English groups are cast in religious terms. However, with the secularization of both French and English Canadian society, these provisions became less and less meaningful. Instead of culture being linked to religion a new political discourse emerges which links culture to language. Lesage in 1963 proclaims that "French Canadian culture is not just the spoken language, it is also the overall mentality and the behaviour of the whole group" (Lesage 1963a:16). Religion, however, is not mentioned. This discourse is indeed new, for in the 1956 Tremblay Report commissioned by the Union National government, religious background distinguished French and English Canadian cultures.

The new discourse about language has many components. In 1960 Jean-Paul Desbiens anonymously published Les Indolences du Frère Untel which opened the debate. Frère Untel is a priest and teacher who laments the state of spoken language in Quebec and of the education system which he believes is responsible for this state. The language he attacks is called joual, a spoken Quebec

* i.e. Opposition to emphasis on the individual is one basis for Quebec's opposition to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, (Gagnon and Garcea 1987:12).

dialect which relies on elisions of traditional French pronunciations and the incorporation and adaptation of English vocabulary. According to Frère Untel, "cette absence de langue qu'est le joual est un cas de notre inexistence, à nous, les Canadiens français....Le langage est le lieu de toutes les significations. Notre inaptitude à nous affirmer, notre refus de l'avenir, notre obsession du passé, tout cela reflète dans le joual, qui est vraiment notre langue" (Desbiens 1960:21). Les Insolences du Frère Untel opens the door for a debate which is broader than the debate between French and English and focusses instead on ~~which french~~ should be the language of Quebec.

For the independence movement the debate surrounding language becomes bound up with the political discourse of colonialism. Bilingualism is seen as a result of colonization which leads to linguistic impoverishment. "Celui qui grandit dans un milieu de bilinguisme, fait l'expérience continuelle de la confusion mentale, de la lutte de deux langues à l'assaut de son cerveau" (Ouellette 1964:93). For Ouellette, there is no "coexistence" in a bilingual milieu; the language of the majority is always the aggressor (Ouellette 1964:103). Similarly for Hubert Aquin, "dans toute situation où deux langues sont parlées, l'une des deux est dominée, l'autre dominante" (Aquin 1964:114). Within this discourse on language, bilingualism is seen as a danger, not as a solution which can allow two linguistic groups to live together. This strong independantist position was not necessarily the majority opinion in Quebec but represents one

kind of discourse which can give English Canadians some insight into the politics of language in Quebec. The opening of this kind of political debate on language in Quebec was one of the aspects of the Quiet Revolution.

The most revolutionary aspect of the Quiet Revolution remains, nevertheless, the new political discourse about the state that emerged from it and the various demands made on the federal and provincial governments to which it was linked. As a result of both this discourse and these demands, the federal government and, more slowly, English Canada as a whole became increasingly more aware that something needed to be done. Partially as a result of the new importance of the link between language and culture in prevailing political discourse, the major federal government response to a growing sense of "crisis" (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Preliminary Report 1965:15), was the establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec

The political discourse of Royal Commissions has a particular kind of official status. Royal Commissions are established and given a mandate by the government in power, usually in response to a 'crisis' which has a high public profile. A Royal Commission, formally, exists at a certain

distance from the regime. This distance supposedly helps to inspire public confidence and, accordingly, to diffuse the public's sense of crisis. In many ways, however, this distance is fictitious. In addition to establishing the mandate of the commission, the government also finances the activities of the commission and chooses the commissioners. Furthermore, such commissions are most remembered for those of their recommendations which are acted upon, giving the federal cabinet to which they report more control over their discourse. Burton and Carlen, who write of the official discourse of such commissions (see above Chapter Two p. 42), state that these inquiries serve to "link state functionaries with the lay intelligentsia and [therefore] become part of the constant renewal of hegemonic domination" (Burton and Carlen 1979:8). Looking at the discourses of the two Royal Commissions established in the 1960s to deal with the politics of language we can see how closely they are linked to the regimes which established them and how these links serve to accord their discourse a powerful position. Royal Commissions are unique, powerful actors.

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established by the federal cabinet in 1963. It submitted a preliminary report in 1965 and tabled its six volume report between 1967 and 1970. The mandate of the commission was to:

inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop

the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution (Volume I, Appendix I).

The specific tasks which follow this preamble all emphasize the "basically bicultural" character of Canadian society. In the report language takes precedence over culture even though "in certain respects the problem of cultural duality is even deeper"; "language is the most evident expression of a culture" (Book I 1967:xxx). The recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism included declaring French and English the official languages of Canada; establishing a federal Official Languages Act; re-ordering the nation's capital; making Ontario and New Brunswick officially bilingual provinces; and creating 'bilingual districts' throughout the country.

The political discourse of the Report by-passed the way many Quebecers were beginning to formulate their own grievances. Furthermore, by making André Laurendeau a co-chairman of the commission, a strong and influential voice which had spoken positively of the state in Quebec was co-opted. This curtailed Laurendeau's critical capacity while at the same time strengthening the authority of the Commission in Quebec. Already in the Commission's mandate a way of talking about politics which favours a federalist position emerges. Instead of setting out to assess whether or not bilingualism and biculturalism exist the Commission assumes they do and should. Undoubtedly many Canadians would have been surprised to find in 1963 that their society was

"basically bicultural". Furthermore, the mandate speaks of an "equal partnership", precisely what some Quebecers were challenging at the time of the Commission. Bilingualism, biculturalism, and equality are all asserted in the discourse of the commission, effectively silencing debate within the Commissions Report over either their existence or their desirability.

The Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission was established in response to widespread questioning of the status quo within Quebec. In the discourse of the Commission Reports, however, this status quo is affirmed and valorised. It is "obvious and uncontrovertible", rather than investigated, that Quebec is not "a province like the others" (Book I 1976:xlvi). Quebec is praised for respecting the linguistic rights of its English minority. Indeed, "linguistic equality will exist in Canada only if Francophones are treated in other provinces as Anglophones now, are treated in Quebec" (Book I 1967:145). Furthermore, the new discourse surrounding the state of Quebec is also circumvented by focussing on the position of Francophones outside Quebec. Rather than confronting the political discourse of the Quiet Revolution, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism seeks to diffuse tension by asserting a new way of talking about politics in Quebec and hence offering an alternative to this discourse.

The extent to which this Commission was able to assert its discourse is evident in the number of its recommendations, which

have become fixtures of Canadian federal policy. This in turn reflects the powerful role of such an actor. The Commission proved a highly effective mechanism for establishing the terms of its mandate as the dominant political discourse on language and culture in Canada. The Commission travelled through Canada for six years speaking the language of its mandate. It was, therefore, somewhat naive for one of the commissioners to observe that as the work of the Commission progressed "more Canadians seemed to be viewing our country as we viewed it and coming to similar conclusions" (Frith 1973:iv). Changes in the perception of language politics in Canada are not sufficiently far-reaching to be considered ideological in the usual sense of the word; nevertheless, such changes are important to understanding what happens in Canada as a whole and in Quebec.

The response of the Quebec government to the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission was the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec in December 1968. This Commission, established by the Union National government which won power in the 1966 election, is known as the Gendron Commission after its chief commissioner Jean-Denis Gendron. The Commission handed its three volume study to Robert Bourassa's Liberal cabinet in December 1972. The mandate of the Commission was to make recommendations to guarantee:

- a) the linguistic rights of the majority as well as the protection of the rights of the minority.

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b) the full expansion and diffusion of the French language in Quebec in all fields of activity. (see preface to each volume)

Like the previous Commission, the Gendron Commission put language ahead of culture, aiming to produce "people who are users of the French language whatever their cultural background" (Book I 1972:289). The Gendron Commission contains two sets of recommendations, one to be implemented immediately and another to be implemented in five years time if desired results were not forthcoming. The initial set recommends that French be proclaimed the Official language of Quebec and French and English be proclaimed the two national languages; that government legislate to make French a useful and necessary language in commerce and industry; that vertical mobility for French Canadians be assured; and that students in English schools be required to acquire a mastery of French as early as possible (and vice versa for French students). The more forceful second set of recommendations require Constitutional entrenchment of language rights and strict provisions for both education and immigrants in Quebec.

The discourse of the Gendron Commission concerning the status quo in Quebec contrasts starkly with that of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission. The starting point of the Commission is several key societal factors: the historically demonstrated inferiority of French-Canadians on the economic plane in Quebec; the negative conception of French-Canadian claims to equality of opportunity by the English speaking

economic élité; the obligation of French Canadians working to possess a more or less advanced knowledge of English; the propensity of immigrants to choose English as their language of usage; the minimal utility French has traditionally had for Anglophones; and, finally, the failure of Quebec education to create enough technically sophisticated, managerially skilled, French Canadians (Book II 1972:10-11). These starting factors parallel the Commission's findings. As was the case with the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission the starting point of the inquiry closely parallels its outcome, showing how the way in which these questions are posed shapes the possible answers to them. Considerations such as this are highlighted by speaking in terms of political discourse.

The political discourse of the Gendron Commission tells a different story than that of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission. Here is a language of majorities and minorities rather than of equal partners. In the Gendron Report majority rights are at stake rather than minority rights. Quebec governments are chastised for their lack of legislation to protect French in the work place rather than praised for their treatment of minorities. This discourse also parallels the way the state was talked about during the Quiet Revolution, according to it a powerful, positive role. Bilingualism is spoken of as something which is forced upon French-Canadians rather than as a beneficial outcome for everyone. The divergence in the political discourses of these two reports shows the extent to which the

Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, did not address the concerns of Quebec's provincial political elite. However, the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission is important to political discourse in Quebec at this time as its measures were implemented by Trudeau's government which was certainly as popular, if not more, in Quebec as elsewhere in the country. The extent to which the Gendron Commission captured the discourse of Quebec's political actors is shown in the number of its recommendations which were implemented. The more far reaching recommendations were eventually made law by the Parti Québécois government.

Using the concept political discourse to look at Royal Commission reports allows us to see that issues are formulated such that certain outcomes are excluded from the scenario while others become "obvious and uncontroversial". We see also how Royal Commissions can be used to communicate a perception of social reality which serves those who established the commission. We can see the federal government and the government of Quebec talking past one another at this point in time by attributing vastly different meanings to the same situation. However, although this kind of powerfully backed official discourse is important to the political outcomes of this era, changes in the way ordinary Québécois talk about themselves and their politics are also related to the transformation of the broadly conceived political discourse in Quebec at this time.

Evolution of meanings: 'Québécois' and 'Sovereignty Association'

During the fifteen year period which preceded the rise of the Parti Québécois, the words ordinary Quebecers used to talk about politics in Quebec also underwent changes. Two of the new words which came into usage at this time, 'Québécois' and 'sovereignty-association', are now familiar to Canadians throughout the country. Although these words were not coined in Quebec at this time they were used in new ways and more often; hence, they are part of the political discourse of this time. Widespread use of the term 'Québécois' did not begin until after the Quiet Revolution dissipated around the mid-1960s. In a 1964 collection of texts by prominent Quebec political actors representing a wide range of Quebec political opinion, Quebec States Her Case, the term Québécois does not appear. Rioux and Sévigny, surveying Quebec youth about their ethnic self-identification in 1965, asked if survey respondents considered themselves ~~firstly~~ as Canadian? ~~firstly~~ as French-Canadian? or ~~uniquely~~ as Canadian? or ~~uniquely~~ as French Canadian? (Rioux and Sévigny 1965:22-23). Today such a survey would have to include 'Québécois'. In the latter half of the decade, when the Parti Québécois itself emerged, the term is more widely used, undoubtedly partially because of the influence of the party itself.

When francophones who live in Quebec shift from talking about themselves as French Canadians to calling themselves

Québécois it symbolizes a change in self-identity. This change parallels the new way of talking about the state which accompanied the Quiet Revolution. Québécois is a label which is connected to a specific geography; the boundaries of this self-identity are the borders of the province of Quebec. As the state rather than the church becomes the primary focus of people's cultural aspirations a way of identifying oneself which corresponds to that state emerges. This discourse makes a distinction between the largest group of French Canadians in the country and the other French Canadians living outside Quebec. The Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission's proposal to establish bilingual districts in areas where a relatively large number of francophones live, was; in a sense, a proposal to give these people a geographic understanding of their identity as well. In René Lévesque's 1968 Option Québec he defines québécois this way:

Nous sommes des Québécois.
Ce que cela veut dire d'abord et avant tout,
et au besoin exclusivement, c'est que nous
sommes attachés à ce seul coin de monde où
nous pouvons être pleinement nous-mêmes, ce
Québec qui, nous le sentons bien, est le seul
endroit où il nous soit possible d'être
vraiment chez nous. (Lévesque 1968:19).

The term québécois is also important for understanding the independence movement, for without a geographic identity separation is an impossibility².

This shift in self-identity which an analysis of discourse

² It is to be noted that more recently the term 'Québécois' is being extended to include all French Canadians.

helps us to see, lets us partially explain one way in which the nationalism of the 1960s was different from the nationalism which had always characterized politics in Quebec. The independence movement and the new discourse about the state needed a geographic base. This geographic shift adds an important dimension to ideological analyses which talk about the shift at this time from conservative nationalism to socialist nationalism. Furthermore, the predominance of nationalism in ideological accounts tends to obscure actual changes taking place. In Quebec politics nationalism has been a constant. Although many analyses discuss the nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s in Quebec, nationalism alone cannot be used to chart change. To tell us, as Latouche does, that "nationalism and socialism are now the major themes of Quebec political culture" (Latouche 1976:28) amounts to saying that socialism is the new theme but that it does not fully explain Quebec politics, which remain profoundly influenced by Quebecers' sense of identity, or, nationalism.

In 1967 René Lévesque left the Quebec Liberal Party and founded the Mouvement Souveraineté Association (MSA), a first step towards making sovereignty-association a key term in Quebec politics. The term has a unique position in the political discourse of Quebec. Some confusion has existed between the terms 'separatiste', 'indépendantiste', and 'nationaliste' in Quebec. It is possible to be a nationalist without being either a separatist or an independentist but the reverse is not true. Furthermore, the label independentist is preferred to the

separatist label because of its more positive connotations. Finally, both separatism and independentism are often associated with heightened nationalism. Sovereignty-association allowed Lévesque to bypass some of the confusion and connotations associated with these other terms. Nevertheless, the political opponents of the Parti Québécois always labelled them separatists.

Sovereignty-association was a useful term in many ways for Lévesque and the Parti Québécois. In Option Québec, Lévesque talks about sovereignty-association in a way which evokes the European Economic Community (Lévesque 1968:167-165). This links Quebec with a broader political discourse which is perhaps closer to the experience of Quebecers than the discourse of colonial liberation. In Lévesque's text the European Economic Community and colonial liberation are evoked at the same time, showing a desire to tap all possible sources of mobilization. Here already the term is used to smooth over sources of conflict and bring Quebecers together. Another reason to link independentist aspirations to the emerging European organization is to counter the charge made by Trudeau and his co-authors in the "Manifesto for a Functional Politics" that separatism would be a retrograde action at a time when world politics are tending increasingly towards universalism.

The term 'sovereignty-association' helped to distance the Parti Québécois from the negative connotations of separatism. This distance was an important factor in the party's electoral

success. One reason that sovereignty-association creates this distance is the high degree of confusion about the meaning of the term. Quebecers were surveyed about their understanding of this term both before and after the 1980 referendum - thirteen years after the MSA - in which they were asked to make a choice about sovereignty association. Asking questions before the referendum took place, Pammett and his co-authors found that many people (25%) had no response to an open ended question about the meaning of sovereignty-association, and a wide variety of answers were given by those who did. As the referendum approached people developed clear opinions about sovereignty-association but not a clearer understanding of what it meant (Pammett et al 1983:332-334). Hamilton and Pinard find a similar confusion in their Referendum survey. Asked whether sovereignty-association meant that Quebec would remain a Canadian province, forty (40) percent responded 'yes' and forty-four (44) percent responded 'no'. Furthermore, Pinard and Hamilton state that neither the ~~OUI~~ nor the ~~NON~~ Referendum campaigns made any effort to reduce the lack of information which led to the confusion. This confusion may, however, have benefited the Parti Québécois. Therefore, because the party and its sympathizers made up that part of Quebec's political elite which controlled the meaning of this term (those who were not sympathetic simply equated it with separatism), there would have been no reason to make it more easily understood. Here an important link between discourse and agency is revealed.

One of the ways in which the Parti Québécois tried to manipulate this term was to move from the 'sovereignty' pole, linked to independence, to the 'association' pole, linked to continuity. In their early party programmes, the emphasis was on what would happen ~~after~~ independence was achieved. However, in Quebec-Canada: A New Deal which appeared in 1979 and was the basis of the Referendum ~~NOI~~ campaign, the emphasis is on association. A new formula is needed for Quebecers who "do not want to destroy Canada or to be completely separate from it" (Gouvernement du Québec 1979a:47). The Quebec Liberal Party, which led the ~~NON~~ forces, campaigned by linking sovereignty-association closely to its older independence meaning. "Supposing that Quebecers answered 'Yes' to a question asking them whether they were in favour of sovereignty-association, their reply would be interpreted by the present government of Quebec as a mandate to achieve the independence of Quebec" (Parti Liberal du Québec 1979:90). The Liberals also announced that the Parti Québécois was using ambiguity to help its own campaign. In the end, the Liberal strategy worked. Pammett and his co-authors, as well as Hamilton and Pinard, found that most Quebecers perceived the Referendum question as one about independence and voted accordingly. This shows that while the Parti Québécois could influence Quebecers to some degree, they could not reverse entirely their earlier rhetoric. The prevailing discourse was about independence and no campaign could shift it from those terms. Using discourse to focus on meanings

we can see how the term sovereignty-association was used by the Parti Québécois and also the limits of its success. While the term helped deflect discourse from the independence issue for a time, this shift was short term. The entry of 'Québécois' and 'sovereignty-association' into Quebec's political discourse are linked to the changing nature of politics in Quebec during the 1960s and early 1970s. 'Québécois' gives a reformed self-identity to many people, and makes ideas like separatism easier to talk about. Sovereignty-association with its confused meaning allows those who use it to move around behind it, using it as a strategic tool. Political discourse allows us to talk about such meanings and identities as politically significant and allows us to see how human actors both influence and are influenced by these meanings and identities.

Political Discourse in Literary Form

The new way of talking about Quebec and politics in Quebec which was emerging in the 1960s and early 1970s is also reflected in the literature of the time. This is important as it signifies that the new discourse is not simply the substance of political debates and protest movements but that it has been taken up by those who speak a different kind of language and have a different kind of authority. The political discourse of fiction is more deeply embedded; it becomes woven into the stories that are told, whether or not these plots are overtly political. In Bouwsma's discussion of the new kind of history - 'the history of meaning'

- which is now being written, he notices that many of these histories focus on artistic expression as "the arts have always been a primary vehicle for the expression of meaning" (Bouwisma 1981:284-285). Joanna Russ writes that plot patterns are "dramatic embodiments of what a culture believes to be true - or what it would like to be true - or what it is mortally afraid may be true" (Russ 1972:4). Writing of the literature which surrounded the social upheaval the First World War, Gilbert argues that literature has a role in challenging the status quo and opening up a new mythic space which is associated with changes in a society (Gilbert 1987:209).

The presence of different patterns in literature serves to communicate the new ways of understanding and talking about things to people who have no contact with the political realm. In this sense, literature here is being taken as a proxy for other forms of artistic output and popular culture which could be examined. Accordingly, texts which are examined here are chosen because of their success, in terms of popularity and lasting impact, rather than because of the politics of their authors or the explicit political content of the books themselves. Furthermore, an effort has been made to choose texts which reflect a range of political discourse rather than examining only the work of the most independentist of Québec's artists, the quality of their work notwithstanding. It must be noted, of course, that an analysis of literary discourse is more far reaching and complex than the presentation which follows here.

This presentation looks briefly at the **political discourse** contained within certain **literary discourses** which merit detailed analysis in their own right in a different framework.

Michel Tremblay is one of Quebec's best known contemporary authors. His play A toi pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou was first performed and published in 1971. The play is presented through two dialogues with all four characters always present on stage. The parents, Léopold and Marie-Louise, are having a Saturday morning argument set in 1961. Occasionally the time frame shifts and the daughters become younger eavesdroppers on their parents' argument. The two conversations intersect masterfully. Marie-Louise and Léopold, along with their young son, Roger, were killed in a car accident just after the argument in the play. Since their parents' deaths, Carmen has become a successful Western singer on Montreal's sleazy Main Street. Manon has remained in the family home which is still cluttered with her mother's religious icons, praying and living with her parents' ghosts. The question of whether or not the 'accident' was deliberately caused by Léopold is left unanswered in the play.

The central tension in Tremblay's play is between the past and the present. Marie-Louise and Léopold live defeated lives. He is a cog in his factory's machinery, drinking alone after work; she is terrified of her own sexuality and her husband, wrapping herself in the protection of her religion. They are poor, unhappy, and stagnant. Their daughters belong to a different generation and the past-present tension is portrayed in

their own stories. Manon clings to the past, hearing her parents' voices around her and praying to avenge her mother. She blames Léopold for the accident and is full of anger. For Manon the ten year interval which the play spans has been spent fixated on that moment in 1961. Carmen has left the past behind. She does not need to know how her parents' deaths were caused; she has put that event in the past. Her success is not one of fame and fortune but rather of freedom and of action. In fact, on the stage, Carmen is the only character who actually **moves**. She has left behind the religion of her mother and is at ease with her sexuality. For these characters, the values of the past are stifling and stagnant; only living in the present makes action, and the freedom that comes with it, possible. Although Tremblay's characters do not make explicit political statements, the message of the play is clear. The traditional world of the past has been shattered.

Unlike Tremblay's play, Gratien Gélinas' Hier... les enfants dansaient does talk about politics. Although the play was published in 1968, it does not belong to the body of nationalist-separatist political literature which is associated with this period. The play's characters are the upper-middle-class Gravel family; its setting is their home. M. Gravel senior, a successful lawyer, has been offered a Liberal Party nomination in the upcoming federal election which would mean guaranteed election and a cabinet post. Before formally accepting this offer, Gravel calls a family council. Here the eldest of his two

sons reveals that he is the leader of a group which has been staging terrorist attacks on monuments representing English oppression. When made public this involvement will, of course, hamper his father's political ambitions. The intricacies of André's planning make it impossible for the family name not to be implicated in the terrorism and Gravel senior's political career is ruined before it can begin.

In Gélinas' play, the tension is that which predominates in Quebec's political discourse at this time; everyone wants to make changes in Quebec but there is disagreement as to the best route to follow. As in Tremblay's piece, the tension is organized along generational lines. However, unlike the previous scenario, here the parental generation is the voice of moderation and wisdom. André's terrorist actions lead him not to mobility and freedom, but to the confinement of prison. Gravel senior, who has travelled to Toronto to state Quebec's case, would have been a strong voice for Quebec in federal politics. Instead, because of André's actions, neither Gravel can speak for Quebec. The Gravel family, however, is not typical of French-speaking Quebecers at this time; wealthy and successful, they belong to the elite minority. André himself, because of his education, is typical of young independentists. The title of the play, Hier, les enfants dansaient, echoes André's mother's lament that her children no longer dance but protest and are imprisoned. The case made here by Gélinas supports a federalist Quebec where motivated individuals become part of the elite.

Marcel Dubé's play Florence was first performed in 1957. However, Dubé continued to revise his work and the definitive version of the text was published in 1970. Florence is set in working-class Montreal where the heroine of the title lives with her parents and works as a receptionist at William Miller Advertising to help pay for her younger brother's education. The story is that of Florence's revolt against the pressures of tradition which are pushing her to follow the life pattern of her mother. Florence breaks her engagement with boring Maurice and applies for a job as a bilingual receptionist in New York City. Her actions, including a fleeting relationship with her sleazy boss, bring her family to a point of crisis. Her father decides to take an active role in the union being organized at work and her brother decides to take his own risk and audition for a school play. Florence's mother, however, can no longer change or dream, having lived her life rooted to a tradition which guards against change.

Aside from the father's engagement in labour politics, which is a brief part of the plot, the 'political' content of Dubé's play is submerged in the drama, as was the case with A toi pour toujours, ta Marie-Lou. The characters in the play who are happy are those who make personal decisions to move, to change, and to risk. They look towards the future rather than the past. Here again a spatial dimension is important. Florence, whose decision is to leave Quebec altogether and use her French language as an advantage rather than a disadvantage, is the play's central

character. Again, like M.Gravel, her success comes from personal motivation.

None of these three texts belong to the myriad of Quebec literature which presented more far reaching political challenges during this period. However, each of these authors is well known in Quebec literature, which gives their voices authority and makes their discourse more influential. Each plot promotes change. Successful characters are those who move and risk. The values linked with the Catholic church are portrayed as vestiges of the past which keep individuals rooted in place. Many avenues of change and mobility are presented here; only André's, which leads in any case to the confinement of prison, is rejected. The themes and plot patterns of these works contrast sharply with the frequently repeated refrain of earlier literature in Quebec: "rien ne bouge et rien ne change" and "je suis né pour un petit pain". In this literature a new way of talking about Quebec is heard. The call for changes which was coming from many sectors of Quebec society at this point in time echoes and reverberates through this writing. Having seen that a new way of conceiving of and talking about the world is reflected in the lexicon, the official discourse, and the literary discourse of this time, we can now turn to look at the political discourse of the Parti Québécois itself and see how it worked to change the predominant discourse as well, as how it was constrained by broader societal conceptions.

The Political Discourse of the Parti Québécois

The Quiet Revolution ended in disillusionment for many who felt that the changes made by the Lesage regime had gone neither far nor fast enough. A Union Nationale government was elected in 1966, and in 1967 René Lévesque, who had been the Liberal minister responsible for the nationalization of Hydro-Québec, left the Liberal party and formed the MSA. In October 1968, the MSA merged with the Ralliement National (RN) to form the Parti Québécois. Two weeks later the RIN, which had not been able to agree to terms for a merger with the new party, disbanded and its members were urged to join the new party on an individual basis (Murray 1976:19-21). With the more conservatively based RN, the left oriented RIN, and Lévesque and his associates who favoured a technocratic management of the state, the new party had many elements to integrate into its own discourse.

Lévesque's Option Québec was the earliest document of the party and subsequent party programmes relied on it heavily. Here the notion of sovereignty-association was elaborated, stressing the economic feasibility of the proposal.

...ce Québec que nous bâtirons, il sera infiniment plus efficace, plus prospère, plus juste, plus ouverte aux autres et plus sûr de lui que celui d'aujourd'hui et que tout cela, le régime actuel ne lui permettra jamais de le devenir (Lévesque 1968:196).

The emphasis on efficiency, justice, and openness to outside influences does not differ markedly from either the initial campaign proposals of the 1960 Lesage Liberals or the manifesto

of the Cité Librists. The differences between these discourses are, however, more subtle than ideological differences. In fact, Lévesque, who was an important voice in the Lesage government, states that the Quiet Revolution was a good start on several fronts but that those beginnings must be followed and advanced (Lévesque 1986:25). Option Québec makes a strong appeal to the Québécois identity. Rather than emphasizing a break with the past, the continuity of Quebec's spirit of preservation is highlighted. Lévesque writes of "la volonté de continuer, et l'espoir tenace de pouvoir démontrer que ça en valait la peine", saying that "tout cela se trouve au fond de cette personnalité qui est la nôtre. Quiconque ne le ressent pas au moins à l'occasion n'est pas ou n'est plus l'un d'entre nous" (Lévesque 1968:20). However, in Lévesque's text we also see that, as was the case with the Commissions of inquiry, the French language has become the essential feature of Quebec's identity. This is one reason that language politics in Quebec have been so contentious. "Au cœur de cette personnalité se trouve le fait que nous parlons français. Tout le reste est accroché à cet élément essentiel..." (Lévesque 1968:19). In contrast with the Cité Librists, this discourse is oriented towards the collectivity of the nation.

The Parti Québécois contested its first election in 1970 with a platform based on Option Québec and set out in 1970 under the title La Solution. The campaign was organized around the independence option with the slogan "Yes, on April 29, let's vote for Quebec". The party won 23% of the of the popular vote and

seven seats, becoming a force to be taken seriously (Hamilton and Pinard 1976:3).

October of the same year brought the October Crisis. The terrorist group the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped Pierre Laporte and James Cross and killed the former; the Trudeau government responded with the War Measures Act. The October Crisis effectively forced a new delimitation of politics in Quebec. The FLQ's actions were widely condemned, making it clear that terrorist acts were not to become part of 'normal' politics in Quebec.

As the Parti Québécois was linked to the independence option, the October Crisis quickly resulted in a public clarification of the party's alliance strategies. In a "Manifeste" issued by the 1971 party congress, the Parti Québécois declared itself against violence "et même tout flirt ambigu avec elle" (Parti Québécois 1971:51). This document also served to establish a distance from the extreme left with its "ultra gauchisme doctrinaire et désuet qui n'a jamais mené qu'au fascisme de gauche" and from organized labour. "Avec les syndiqués et leurs organismes; nous partageons un objectif fondamental qui est celui de changer et d'humaniser la situation sociale et économique". But the means of operation of the party are different from those of the unions, "leur démarche demeure essentiellement revendicatrice si la nôtre est essentiellement persuasive" (Parti Québécois 1971:50,52). In 1971, the party also voted by a narrow margin not to publicly support striking la

Presse workers.

The Parti Québécois is sometimes ideologically considered a social democratic party, but most such parties (i.e. the NDP in Canada) either have or wish to establish alliances with labour. Although the programme of the party advocated "un syndicalisme démocratique et québécois" and access to unionization for all, a formal alliance was never established. This is partially due to the role labour played as an actor in Quebec politics at this time. As labour had never been a major factor in Quebec electoral politics, its positions on many issues were more extreme than any electoral contender could afford to be. The Parti Québécois already had enough to deal with to make its discourse acceptable in the electoral arena.

In the 1973 election the Parti Québécois increased their share of the popular vote to 30.22% but won only six seats. The thrust of their election campaign was reassuring Quebecers that the Quebec economy would not collapse after independence and the political programme still closely resembled Option Québec. Hamilton and Pinard find that in this election the vote polarized around the independence or separation issue which was perceived as a choice between Bourassa's Liberal party and Lévesque's Parti Québécois, effectively squeezing out other contenders (Hamilton and Pinard 1976:741).

By the time Bourassa called the next provincial election for November 1976, the Parti Québécois had both changed its electoral strategy and overhauled the party programme. In his preface, to

the party's 1975 statement of programme (following the 1974 Congress), Lévesque announces this shifting of goals:

La souveraineté nationale, voilà un de ces principes moteurs auxquels le parti ne saurait renoncer sans se trahir. En cours de la route, la démarche qui nous y mène peut avoir à s'ajuster plus adéquatement aux exigences de l'opinion publique. Rien là que normal, puisqu'il s'agit d'un tournant que le Québec ne prendra jamais qu'avec l'assentiment majoritaire et non-équivoque des Québécois eux-mêmes (Lévesque 1975:3).

Also, already in this preface Lévesque launches an attack on the Bourassa government. This attack formed the basis of the party's 1976 campaign. In this round of electoral competition, the Parti Québécois no longer focussed on what would happen after independence. The elaborate discussion of the constitution and organization of the independent state which had been part of previous party programmes was gone from the 1975 edition. During the campaign party members avoided the independence issue as much as possible, responding with the idea of a referendum when asked direct questions. The focus was a critique of the Liberals' economic performance, Claude Morin's notion of *étapisme*, and the slogan "ça ne peut pas continuer comme ça". "On a besoin d'un vrai gouvernement. Votons Parti Québécois, le parti des Québécois" (Parti Québécois 1976 [1979]:273).

This reformed electoral discourse proved effective for the Parti Québécois which won 41.4% of the vote and 71 seats. As the Parti Québécois was no longer speaking in terms of immediate independence or sovereignty-association, the electorate could not

polarize around this issue¹. This shift in strategy was a major change for the party, putting electoral victory over **eventual** independence. However, by making this shift they brought their discourse more in line with the prevailing political discourse in Quebec at the time. Speaking of the inadequacies of the Bourassa regime, the party made more sense to the disgruntled electorate. Although the Parti Québécois helped legitimate the independence or sovereignty-association option in Quebec and voiced the demands of many Quebecers, independence was never the word of the day for the majority of Quebecers, at least not at any time which coincided with an electoral occasion to make such a choice.

Conclusion

In the fifteen years prior to the formation of a Parti Québécois government, predominant political discourse in Quebec underwent major changes which helped to facilitate both the formation and the success of the party. The most revolutionary aspect of the Quiet Revolution was the new understanding of the state that emerged at this time. Many changes were related to this redefinition: new demands were made of both the federal and provincial states; new aspirations focussed on the state; a new 'Québécois' identity emerged. The political voices of the Liberal party of Quebec, the Parti Québécois, and Trudeau's

¹ Hamilton and Pinard (1978) found only 15% of voters felt that independence was the important issue in this election. The Liberals won 26 seats, the Union Nationale 11, and the Crditistes 1.

federal Liberal party, all demanded a 'modern' secular efficient state for Quebec at this time. Because these demands were so similar and led to similar proposals for economic and social policy, ideology does not allow an understanding of the nuances of debate in Quebec politics at this time. One of the consequences of the new discourse was that language became a proxy for culture in political discourse as culture in Quebec was associated with conservatism, the Church, and the land. It was unclear what a modernized Quebec culture would look like, but certainly it would be French-speaking.

Divisions in the political discourse arose over the best way to achieve this efficient state and protect the French language at the same time. Those whose discourse is oriented towards the Quebec collective identity tend to favour independentist solutions, whereas those whose focus is the individual and his rights and freedoms, like the provincial Liberal party² and the Cité Libristes, favour a federalist solution. In addition the links between these discourses and powerful individuals like Trudeau and Lévesque cannot be overlooked. As all of these actors consider themselves supporters of the French language and culture, we see that calling nationalism an ideology masks important differences. As was seen in examining two Royal Commission reports, these two discourses bypass each other, speaking in completely different terms. The Parti Québécois, which was important to legitimating the independence option in

² see 1972 statement of ideology

Quebec political discourse by making it electorally viable (unlike the RN and the RIN) and decidedly non-violent (unlike the FLQ), eventually found itself constrained by prevailing discourse so that it had to alter its electoral strategy to become a governing party. Since 1976, the Parti Québécois has continued to modify its position in response to changes in the prevailing discourse, and the individualist versus collectivist contrast has remained central to political discourse in Quebec.

Political discourse allows us to talk about shifts in meanings and identities which ideology ignores. In the case of the period of time preceeding the rise of the Parti Québécois, actors, both individuals and political parties, are seen to have influenced the way politics are talked about in Quebec. Talking in terms of political discourse allows us to account for the roles of these actors in a way which ideology, coming from a tradition which has no role for individual actions, does not. The Parti Québécois controlled what sovereignty-association would mean and was caught only by its own shifting position. Ideological accounts also do not explain the most revolutionary change of the Quiet Revolution which was a new understanding of the state. For these reasons, political discourse is seen to be not just an equivalent substitute for ideology but a concept which offers a rich and different analysis in and of itself, pointing up factors which ideology passes over.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The concept political discourse proliferates in contemporary Canadian political science. Its appearance in this literature can be traced to three sources. Post-structuralism, which first appeared in French academic circles in the 1960s and became known to North American academics in the 1970s, is one of these. Secondly, feminist theorists, seeking to conceptualize the experiences of the women's movement, turned to language and discourse to understand subtle oppression. Although these two bodies of theory use political discourse in different ways, both participate in what has been termed the 'linguistic turn' in social theory. This shift in emphasis evident throughout the social sciences is the third link to the current proliferation of the term in Canadian political science. Principal accounts of this shift state that the emphasis on discourse results from the desire to account for constrained agency, for the fact that human beings have some but not complete control over the historical circumstances which surround them.

It is clear, then, that the appearance of political

discourse in Canadian political science is not an isolated phenomenon. However, looking at Canadian texts using this term, we noted that the concept political discourse is used in several distinct ways. These formed the basis of the categorization scheme established in Chapter Two. A first group of analysts uses political discourse as a synonym for debate, speech, text, or conversation related to politics. These ordinary language uses of the term do not depart from the standard dictionary definition of discourse, yet even uses which fall into this category are becoming more common. In both the second and third categories, political discourse is understood as a way of talking about, understanding, and perceiving the world which shapes political meanings and identities. It embodies a society's values, attitudes, and beliefs. It draws boundaries around the political realm, thereby determining which issues will be considered political and amenable to political solutions and which will not be discussed. The distinction between the second and third categories is based on the place which political discourse is given in the analysis. In the second category, political discourse is seen as a way to get at or measure some underlying concept such as political culture or ideology. In the third category, discourse 'in and of itself' is the crucial focus of analysis. Political discourse is perceived as what constitutes political reality and there is no longer a theoretical need for a concept which links discourse to an underlying conceptual level.

Within each of these categories, a wide variation in usage was discovered. Furthermore, these categories do not correspond with the three historical sources of the term but represent an even broader range of meanings. Although political discourse is now being used as a conceptual tool by many Canadian political scientists, it is impossible to say, speaking in discipline wide terms, that there is a consensus as to its meaning. For a concept to be ultimately useful for political science, its meaning must be more stable and agreed upon than is currently the case with political discourse in Canada. For this reason it is important at this time for Canadian political scientists to clarify the meaning or meanings which will be accorded this concept.

Those who have gone farthest in taking discourse out of ordinary English and making it into a complex and powerful concept use political discourse 'in and of itself'. These analyses discuss how meanings and identities are constructed, how definitions function as boundaries, and the reasons for and consequences of silence. When it is used in this way, because the role of discourse in the analysis makes it unnecessary to speak in terms of some underlying concept, political discourse becomes an alternative to other concepts like ideology, political culture, and hegemony. Of these terms, ideology has the longest pedigree. Both political culture and hegemony have been used to address perceived weaknesses in the concept ideology. The thesis examined the possibilities for using political discourse as a similar substitute term. There are two broadly defined

understandings of ideology, a negative understanding and a neutral understanding. The second of these, in which ideology is a system of meaning, closely approximates political discourse 'in and of itself'. Recent theoretical discussions of ideology, which have focussed on its links to meanings and language, bring it even closer to political discourse. In Canada, where discussions of ideology are most often still linked to liberalism, socialism, and conservatism, it is relatively difficult to confuse these two terms. Nevertheless, some definitions of ideology are so close to understandings of political discourse that the chief advantage of the latter term is not its conceptual content but, rather, the fact that its meaning is less weighted down with former usages.

The rise of the Parti Québécois in Quebec was interpreted to further examine the conceptual capabilities of political discourse. This analysis focussed on the period from 1960 to 1976. Political discourse was found to be capable of sophisticated subtleties of interpretation. The Quiet Revolution, a label which has been regarded as misleading and problematic, not to mention self contradictory, can be explained using political discourse. Firstly, we can understand how this label was advantageous to political actors in Quebec. Secondly, and most importantly, we can see that the most revolutionary changes associated with the first half of the 1960s were changes in the political discourse about the state. This new discourse meant that new concerns entered the political realm and new

political identities were formed during this time.

Throughout the discussion of the rise of the Parti Québécois, the interpretation using political discourse was contrasted with interpretations which rely on ideology. One characteristic of ideologically based interpretations is an emphasis on nationalism. Although nationalism is always combined with another ideological label, its presence is pervasive. One of the consequences of this is a limited ability to specify changes, for nationalism has been a continuing feature of Quebec politics. Furthermore, the changes of the 1960s in Quebec are often characterized as a shift to socialism or social democracy. This analysis is misleading as the administrative changes of the 1960s in Quebec were very similar to those which were taking place or had already occurred in places such as the United States and English Canada which are usually labelled 'liberal democracies'.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the new emerging identity often leads to a description of the Parti Québécois as a socialist or social democratic party (see for example Létourneau 1977:200). This exaggerates the differences between the Parti Québécois and other political actors in Quebec at the time. All groups were demanding a rationalized, technologically efficient, modern politics in the name of the future of Quebec. All were nationalist in that they felt their demands would bring the best future for the people of Quebec. The differences between the Parti Québécois and other political actors were more nuanced,

relating primarily to varying emphasis on the individual versus the collectivity. The strategic choice of sovereignty-association was cast in terms of its economic efficiency and its similarity to a number of 'modern' economic associations between nations.

In the case of the rise of the Parti Québécois, political discourse made possible an analysis which offered greater depth than traditional uses of ideology have been able to provide. However, the potential value of this concept to Canadian political scientists is not limited to this situation, nor simply to cases where language is highly politicized. Political discourse could be profitably applied to an analysis of the territorial understanding Canadian politics. The discussion initiated by Simeon and Smiley about 'the uses of 'region' and 'regionalism' could be followed through using discourse 'in and of itself' as a conceptual tool. Political discourse could also be used to interpret electoral politics in Canada, following the path set by Brodie and Jenson, to further explore the kinds of issues which dominate the electoral arena and the absence of concrete policy proposals in this arena. In addition, political discourse, with its links to the construction of meaning and identity, could be used to interpret the much debated question of Canadian national identity. If meaning of this term can be clarified and agreed upon, it can become an important tool for Canadian political scientists.

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