Autumn of the Maple Leaf:
A Post-Theoretical Analysis of the Canadian Sponsorship Program

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A Thesis

In

The Department

of

Political Science

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Policy and Public Administration at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 2007

Canada

ABSTRACT

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As the Quebec referendum on separation approached during the autumn of 1995, the federal Liberal government engaged in several tactics in order to revive the federalist sentiment throughout all of Canada, but more specifically within Quebec. One of these tactics was the federal Sponsorship Program, which, scandal aside, was designed to increase the visibility of the federal government. The program operated under the implicit assumption that national unity *could* be promoted through the silent distribution of Canadian symbols, a presumption that forms the starting point of this analysis by evoking two questions. First, why did the federal government believe that symbols alone could silently unify the country? And secondly, can national symbols, when implanted silently, produce a predictably positive effect, specifically the effect of national unity promotion?

Through an exploration of the evolution of Canadian visual identity policies beginning in the 1960s, it was determined that the Sponsorship Program is demonstrative of the federal government's reactive tendency to produce identity policies when faced with rises in Quebec separatism. Furthermore, by evaluating the Sponsorship Program through the understanding of the political imagination, semiotics, and rhetoric, it is argued that while the Canadian symbols utilized within the Sponsorship Program were aesthetically sound symbols of nationhood, the program itself was fatally flawed since symbols, when distributed silently, cannot consistently communicate a specific message because their interpretation rests on the uncontrollable contents of the political imagination.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the many good people in my life who have encouraged me to grow, celebrated with me my successes, and who have given me a little nudge up the hill when it was needed. Specifically, I thank my momma for offering me her endless support in every way. I also thank David, my siblings – Suzanne, Clarence, Lori, and Benny – and their families, for their friendship, support, and love. For continuously offering me strength and laughs, I thank some very good friends, namely Lisa, Megan, Carrie, Moo, Noemie, and Jay. Lastly, for always being up for countless "thesis discussions", pep-talks, and loving hugs, I would like to thank Kris.

I extend a special acknowledgement to Dr. King, who inspired me to delve into this piece and whose creativity, time, patience, and insight proved invaluable time and again. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Bilodeau, whose perspective proved to be both helpful and refreshing.

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INTRODUCTION

During the autumn of 1994 Quebec separatism was once again on the rise with more fervour than ever before. Jacques Parizeau led the Parti Quebecois into provincial leadership and was quick to announce plans for an impending referendum on Quebec separation. As 'Parizeau's' 1995 Quebec referendum approached, it became clear to the federal Liberal leaders that the Canadian government was waning in its effort to promote national unity.[1] Consequently, the federal Liberals, led by then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, embarked on a rigorous mission to decrease the separatist sentiment in Quebec.[2] One element of this mission, the Sponsorship Program, sought to promote Canadian unity by increasing the federal government's symbolic presence within Quebec,

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[1] Alan Cairns speaks extensively about the unifying role of the Canadian federal government. See: Alan Cairns, "The Embedded State: State-Society Relations in Canada," in Douglas E. Williams, ed., *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship & Constitutional Change* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1995), 31-61.

[2] Jean Chrétien, in his Gomery Commission testimony, stated that the Sponsorship Program was one of ten elements of a rigorous plan to promote unity. The ten-point plan was supposedly suggested by a commission conducted by Marcel Massé as part of the referendum response. However, neither the Massé retreat nor Chrétien's testimony highlight this 10-point strategy. Rather, throughout his testimony Chrétien highlights a 7-point strategy that was summarized as follows: "We passed a resolution on Distinct Society. We passed a law concerning constitutional vetoes. We transferred control of labour market training to the provinces. I brought in new ministers from Quebec. We made a reference to the Supreme Court on the issue of secession. We passed the *Clarity Act*. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we undertook to raise the visibility of the Government of Canada in Quebec. It was an urgent situation." One could argue that items outside of this list were part of the unity strategy as well. Due to the limited scope of this paper, and to the opaqueness on precisely what should be included in the "unity strategy", we have opted to solely examine the use of federal visibility and to evaluate this strategy on its own terms. Thus our conclusion that the Sponsorship Program was a weak identity strategy is based on the components of identity promotion, rather than on situating the program in the context of the many federal initiatives that could be conceived of as nation building. For more on Chrétien's testimony, see: Jean Chrétien "Opening Statement" *Gomery Inquiry,* (Retrieved Online September 2005): http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/groupaction/chretien_statement.html, 12627, and Chapter 2.

and to a lesser extent within the rest of Canada, by silently distributing the aesthetic symbols of the state, specifically the national flag and the 'Canada' logo in association with major sporting events and other advertisements.

The Sponsorship Program came to a halt in December of 2003, thereby ending its nine years of existence at the hand of Paul Martin's Liberal government.[3] The 2003 Report of the Auditor General demonstrated that funds allocated for the unfolding of the Sponsorship Program were mishandled, conclusions that were verified by the Martin-appointed commission of inquiry headed by justice Gomery. It was the creation and design of the program that forms the starting point for this project since the program itself seems to have operated on the principle that Canadian symbols can be positive vehicles for Canadian unity within Quebec. This implicit assumption evoked two questions. First, why did the federal government believe that symbols alone could silently unify the country? And secondly, can national symbols, when implanted silently, produce a predictably positive effect, specifically the effect of national unity promotion? The response may be shocking: reactionary identity policy is a game that the federal government has been playing for years, and, while some of these reactionary identity policies emerged from thorough research and sought to modernize the federal identity to the standards that emerged as a result of the pressures of technological advancements on modes of communication, the Sponsorship Program constituted a theoretically dangerous and uncontrolled use of the symbols of the state.

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[3] Gomery Commission, "History of the Sponsorship Program", Phase 1 of the Gomery Commission Report, (Retrieved Online October 2005): http://www.gomery.ca/en/phase1report/summary/ES_history_v01.pdf.

The "state of the art" on the evolution of federally initiated Canadian unity

programs was relatively limited, particularly in the case of the Sponsorship Program.[4]

Thus much of this theoretical inquiry is dependent upon a direct analysis of the historical

evolution of these programs. To evaluate the unifying potential of Canada's national

symbols as utilized within the above programs, I explored theories on the political uses of

symbols. Yet because this stream of academic inquiry is relatively underdeveloped, I

evaluated the applicability of theories on communications,[5] corporate branding,[6]

semiotics,[7] and rhetoric,[8] while substantiating these theories by my conceptualization of

the political imagination. Through a critical evaluation and integration of these theories,

this paper arrived at a more clear understanding of the impact of symbols in the political

realm and the theoretical success of the aforementioned Canadian programs. By

uncovering the theoretical limits of the symbols under analysis and comparing this

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[4] While the Gomery Report that resulted from the commission of inquiry focuses solely
on the Sponsorship Program, it is more concerned with the maladministration of the
program than it is with the theoretical limits of the program's strategy. However, the
commission does recommend that the government develop a more narrow definition of
"advertising" in line with popular strategies. Nonetheless, the recommendations do not
delver deeper into that matter. See: Gomery Commission, Fact Finding Report, Phase II,
161. Available Online: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-
bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-03-
06/www.gomery.ca/en/phase2report/recommendations/CISPAA_Report_Chapter9.pdf
[5] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Massachusetts:
MIT Press, 2001).
[6] On corporate branding, we explore primarily the work of Wally Olins because he was
said to be the most influential corporate identity strategist (see Chapter 2) and the federal
Manual on Corporate Identity incorporates some of Olins' views, specifically. See
Wolff/Wally Olins, The New Guide to Identity: How to Create and Sustain Change
Through Managing Identity (Aldershot and Vermont: Gower Publishing Limited, 1995).
[7] See: Rudolf Arnheim, Arts and Visual Perception, (Berkeley: University of California
Press, 1974); E.H. Gombrich, The Essential Gombrich, (London: Phaidon Press, 1996),
and; J.L. Austin, How to Do Things With Words, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
1975).
[8] George Lakoff, don't think of an elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate
(White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004).

theoretical knowledge with actual case examples, it became possible to present critical recommendations for the use of flags and logos within the context of Canada and the Canadian Sponsorship Program, such as the recommendation to pair symbol use with active rhetorical *frames*.

The first chapter narrates the evolution of federal identity policy in Canada. It first begins by engaging the communications theory of Marshall McLuhan, highlighting the impact of technology on media, and of the challenge of communicating effectively through the now noisy communicative channels. McLuhan's theory fertilizes the argument that the federal identity policies of this timeframe, which were set up in reaction to augmentations in Quebec separatism, failed to utilize the most effective and far-reaching communication media that existed at the time. To demonstrate this argument, this paper briefly sest the stage of the creation of the Canadian Unity Council (CUC), the Canadian maple leaf flag, and the Canada Unity Information Office (CUIO) with the rises in Quebec separatism that preceded each reaction.

Building on the concept that Trudeau was attuned to the power of identity in shaping perceptions, Chapter 2 explores how the federal government attempted to rectify the problems of the CUIO. To this end, the Federal Identity Program (FIP) was designed in the 1970s to promote a consistent federal visual identity, informed by the work of a special Task Force that was published in a report entitled *To Know and Be Known*.[9] The FIP remained relatively latent until 1990, when its symbols were modified and a more

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[9] Government of Canada, Task Force on Government Information, "Part 1" in To Know and Be Known (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1969).

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rigorous manual guiding its integration was established.[10] Essentially, the need for the FIP was well researched and comprehensively documented, and the program demonstrated that the government successfully adapted its visual identity to the times by incorporating a popular corporate branding strategy. However, the reliance of the FIP on corporate branding strategies constitute a weakness since, as Wally Olins' manual stipulates, it is not understood *why* these strategies work, it is merely understood *that* they do work. This criticism carries itself over to the Sponsorship Program since it also relied on the visual symbols of the FIP.

While the first two chapters shed light on the answer to the first question of "why" the federal government invested in the Sponsorship Program – which, scandal aside, is essentially because it was a learned reaction rather than a reasoned response – the last embarks on an exploration of literature on semiotics, the political imagination (as informed by the political culture of the participant), and rhetoric to gain insight into whether the Sponsorship Program, and the previous identity programs, held the theoretical power to attain their goal of unification. Through the lens of these theoretical works Chapter 3 argues that symbols *can* be powerful tools of unification *because* their syntactical structures act as communicative shortcuts to the brain, bypassing the necessity for reasoned deconstruction. Essentially symbols gain their power largely from their emotive capabilities, and this emotional reaction is shaped by the political imagination, which is informed by the political culture. Because it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine precisely what exists within the political imagination of each individual, it is difficult to predict how the individual will respond to a given symbol.

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[10] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0: Management Guide to Corporate Identity, 20.

While the Canadian symbols proved to be syntactically sound when evaluated with the use of semiotics theories, without pairing these symbols with positive rhetoric, their meanings can be overtaken. Therefore it is necessary to pair the symbol with, what George Lakoff calls, rhetorical *frames*, in order to enhance the likelihood that a specific message will be attached to a specific symbol. None of the identity programs explored in this paper adequately incorporated a strong combination of both symbols and rhetorical frames. Thus in response to the second question, this paper argues that the symbols as silently used in the Sponsorship Program did not have the potential to generate a positive and predictive effect.

The concluding chapter explores the implications of our argument and argues that the federal government should focus less on being reactionary, and more on being continuous in its visual promotion and specifically in its efforts to unify the nation. Particularly during this denouement of the Sponsorship Scandal upheaval within the Quebec political climate, which has witnessed the provincial decline of the Parti Quebecois, it seems that now would be an ideal time to sway Quebeckers to the federalist cause because now is a time where the "guard" is down and separatist sentiments are at a quiet simmer rather than a bubbling boil.

In short, the federal government's reaction to Quebec separatism in the 1990s demonstrated an aspiration to unify the nation through the promotion of its iconic visibility, but this aspiration could not theoretically be effectively carried out through the silent sponsorship strategy. Because the communicative spectrum has broadened as a result of the technological extensions of human beings, to borrow from McLuhan, the modes of communication have been altered thereby greatly emphasising the need for

utilizing the most optimal communicative forms. Symbols, by virtue of their syntactical nature, are cognitive shortcuts and carriers of meaning and are therefore a superior form of communication when paired with rhetoric, which ensures that a consistent meaning is being attached to that symbol. No federal strategy under examination herein adequately incorporates strong visual identity with consistent *value frames*.

CHAPTER 1

Whispers in Noisy Channels: Early Attempts at Unity Promotion

"This dismissal of symbolism underestimates the extent to which, unavoidably,
people understand the world through symbols. Nations and states, in particular,
are entities which cannot be perceived or represented except in symbolic form."

– Ewan Morris[11]

In response to the dividing tensions between the English and the French on Canadian soil, the federal government has continuously attempted to forge a unified identity through the promotion of the federation. The first instance of this trend addressed herein was the federal government's support of the Canada Unity Council (CUC), a "non-governmental" association created in 1964 with the mandate of unifying the federation through the dissemination of information. Next was the creation of the national flag in 1965, a moment that surely defined the nation visually, but despite the milestone that such a creation represented, the flag itself remained without consistent and continuous attachment to federal operations. This lack of flag policy was inadvertently highlighted by the advertising component Canada Unity Information Office (CUIO). The CUIO was an information-driven program directed at national unity promotion and it utilized very basic advertising that relied heavily on visually inconsistent federal icons. While the Canadian government was making attempts at incorporating a visual strategy to promote a sense of nationhood during a time when factions within were engaging in an identity struggle, technological innovation was continuing to transform communications media in

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[11] Ewan Morris, <u>Our Own Devices: National Symbols and Political Conflict in Twentieth-Century Ireland</u> (Dublin & Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2005), 4.

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Canada, and throughout the world, creating a need for strong and concise visual identity paired with a clear message. The information-focused programs indicated that the federal government maintained a half-century's hope in the ability of information distribution through rhetoric and basic advertising to alter its publicly perceived image. These programs were inadequate for the time because as the communicative medium expanded, the reach shortened, and the need for consistency and clarity in presentation and message – both visual and rhetorical – arose.

To demonstrate the above argument, we will first present Marshall McLuhan's thesis that technological advancements have permanently altered communication. McLuhan's work is befitting the timeframe since it was during the 1960s that he emerged as a leading Canadian theorist with close ties to then Prime Minister Trudeau. We will then build on McLuhan's argument by arguing that these advancements necessitated a movement toward the use of symbols as communicative forms.[12] Next we will take up the three governmental unity strategies in turn, the CUC, the maple leaf flag, and the CUIO, as they were created in response to increased tension between the English and the French.

1.1   Identity Communication Channels Transformed

Marshall McLuhan emerged as a leading Canadian academic specializing in communications and media during the 1960s, equipped with striking insight into the unconscious and conscious impact of multimedia on the human sensory system. The overall argument to be taken from McLuhan's work is that the message is completely dependent on the medium, which is dependent upon contextually based technological

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[12] an argument that will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3,

alterations. While McLuhan's argument is complex, we will address three underlying and intertwining themes that serve to illuminate his message: technological advancements transform communicative media; these media are either hot or cool, and; human beings are becoming less conscious of these media. McLuhan's work effectively demonstrates the distinction between medium and message and the need for continuous adaptation to the technological changes in media use in order to ensure that the desired effect is obtained. This becomes relevant to our project in that the federal government, during the 1960s and 70s – at a time when a critical understanding of media was emerging – failed to adapt its national unity promotion policies in a competitive and communicatively strategic fashion.

McLuhan offers a narrative of the "evolution" of technological innovation suggesting that mass production was the key innovation that transformed communication for modern times. McLuhan argued that, "[a] new medium is never an addition to an old one, nor does it leave the old one in peace. It never ceases to oppress the older media until it finds new shapes and positions for them."[13] Through McLuhan's lens we witness the transformations of communicative media, beginning with the development of mass printing devices which led to an increased emphasis on typography, thereby making print an aesthetically visual stimulus. Next, McLuhan claims that the radio gained popularity and minimized the importance of print and the visual by relying solely on auditory stimulation. Replacing the popularity of the radio was the television, which placed a newfound emphasis on the visual and auditory sensory realms, wedding them in the

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[13] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), 174.

process.[14] The Internet is the most recent technological alteration to communications, further reflecting this fusion of sight and sound. Essentially, the means of message conveyance were and are being continuously transformed.

Perhaps the most significant impact on communications, however, has been a result of corporate competition in a neo-liberal market place: namely advertising. Advertising is a unique mode of communication intended to quickly capture the senses and leave an imprint on the viewer. However, not all stimulants are able to leave such an imprint. McLuhan touches upon the relationship between interpretation and media differentiation in his distinction between hot and cool media: A hot medium contains a clear message whereas the message in a cool medium is more difficult to uncover.[15] Some media are so hot in that they have clear and relatively unambiguous messages. Whereas a cool medium requires a varying degree of interpretive participation to flesh out the contours of the message, in other words a cool medium requires imagination. The cooler the medium the more important the viewer's input.[16]

While extensions of human beings in the form of transformations in technology define the nature of media, and these stimuli vary from hot to cool, the receiver of these increasingly numerous inputs has become less receptive. The recipient is receiving multiple messages and the pathways to communication are becoming saturated and

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[14] The wedding of sight and sound is the eighth thunder taken from McLuhan's War and Peace in the Global Village (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1968), 46.

[15] McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 7.

[16] McLuhan offers a list of mediums and defines whether they are "hot" or "cool" in Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. We are reluctant to include such a list since technological advancements change and alter the nature of previous media. For example, McLuhan suggested that television was a cool media yet television is no longer a cool media since the nature of the programming has come to rely more on nuggets of hot advertising and less on the monotone monologues of newscasters.

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noisy.[17] In other words, the widening of the spectra of communicative media has concomitantly displaced the audience creating a more shallow reach. Therefore even hot media have increasingly narrow audiences. Alternatively, as Terranova suggests, the message can become lost, "The larger the mass and the more crowded the communication milieu, the more likely the possibility that the message might either disappear in the black hole of the mass or be subjected to transformations and recombinations that might alter its value."[18] Thus the high exposure to multiple media stimulants poses a threat to the certainty that a specific message will be effectively communicated, and therefore effectively received, through a specific medium. Therefore a clear and concise medium must be utilized in order to communicate effectively with the viewer.

Neuroscience suggests that symbols, defined as abstractions of reality holding meaning, are the most effective tools of communication. Symbols act as short-cuts to the brain as they are easily identifiable and, providing that their specific meanings have been effectively understood, they do not require deconstruction in order to interpret their meaning.[19] Terranova touches upon this natural proclivity,

> It is not by chance, then, that the social engineering of communication favors repetition and the short slogan or even the iconic power of the logo as an effective way to open a channel and get the message through—shortcutting their way to the receiver by using the shortest possible route in the shortest possible time.[20]

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[17] For more on "noise" see: Tiziana Terranova, "Communication beyond Meaning: On the Cultural Politics of Information" in Social Text 80, Vol. 22, No. 3, Fall 2004. (Duke University Press), pp. 51-73.
[18] Terranova, 58.
[19] For more on neuroscience see: Terranova, 51-73; Rudolf Arnheim, Arts and Visual Perception (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 18, and; George Lakoff George Lakoff, don't think of an elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004), 17. Also, this concept of natural proclivity towards symbolic forms of identification is further elaborated upon in Chapter 3.
[20] Terranova, 58.

However, symbols too have been transformed by communicative processes; symbols are no longer the outdated obsessions of ancient texts and iconography, rather as John Fraim suggests, symbols have become part of the "fabric of the present" weaving their way through brands, media, entertainment and culture.[21] Fraim pushes this further, arguing that the consumer practices of advertising and branding have become a new source of power in America, which he calls "soft power," where symbols are purposefully used as "hidden persuaders" rather than visible explainers.[22] Yet, in order to have this "soft power", the communicator must succeed in attaching a specific message to that symbol. A symbol is only 'hot' when a specific meaning has been attached to it within the minds of the viewers in a specified context. The symbol may be so aesthetically pleasing that it is able to attract attention and evoke a sensory response, yet if a specific message has not been rhetorically attached to that symbol, the symbol will come to have numerous meanings and thus be rendered less potent as a tool for hot communication.

Symbols naturally involve a high level of abstraction, and are interpreted in both the conscious and unconscious. It is this new mass production of symbols that renders them a dangerous tool for persuasion since symbols are not always distributed with a clear message, a danger that allows for ambiguity and variation in the uptake of their intended meaning. With potential for mass production and spread of national symbols, it is necessary to keep in mind that the lack of intersubjective discourse or information received by the interpreter of the symbol promotes the development of a plethora of individual philosophies and associations to the symbol. In these cases, the symbol may

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[21] John Fraim, Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media (Switzerland: Daimo, 2003), 40-45.
[22] Fraim, 38.

make a permanent impression on the individual and have an associated meaning but that meaning may be inconsistent with the communicator's intended meaning. In other words while symbols may be visual shortcuts to the imagination of the viewers in a communicative act, their variant uptake necessitates that they are paired with rhetoric if they are to transmit a specific meaning thereby allowing them the potential as politically powerful tools of mobilization.

With this in mind we turn to the evolution of Canadian federal identity policy, specifically the CUC and the CUIO. The CUC (1960s) was mainly experience-based while the CUIO (1970s) was directed primarily at information dissemination. The next section will demonstrate that neither policy was adequate as neither program embarked on a sensory-directed strategy aimed at evoking a reaction in both the visual and auditory realms. Specifically, the practices of the CUC and the CUIO, that are solely focused on information through basic acts of rhetoric and loose federal promotion, are inadequate since they thrive on the assumption that a message is easily and effectively communicated between communicator A and B, an assumption that has been shown to be untrue. The implication is that because the message is contextually more difficult to transmit, it was vital to evolve the Government of Canada's communication techniques in order to effectively communicate the federal presence in attempts to attain the goal of national unity promotion.

1.2   Capturing and Cloaking Quebec: The Canadian Unity Council

Tension between the French and the English, or more specifically between Quebec and the rest of Canada, is both an historical fact and a present issue on the

Canadian political scene. The territorially unified identities share a long history of unrest stemming from the short battle on the Plains of Abraham. As Cook notes, "Defeat, something shared by Amerindians and *canadiens*, is a central part of the French-Canadian historical experience."[23] This battle between the French and the English is referred to by Quebeckers as "The Conquest," and its spirit has continued to live on.[24] The remembrance of being "*maitre chez nous*" was never put to rest but was instead transformed into a political goal.[25] Quebec's goal has not always been secession, nor is it entirely the goal today. It was rather the goal for federal recognition of difference or Quebec distinctiveness that became a prominent feature of Quebec politics. This desire highlights the fact that the English continued to dominate the francophones politically

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[23] Ramsay Cook, Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1986), 50-51.

[24] The following excerpt from the Quebec Government's policy development paper paints a vivid picture of the reaction of the French to their defeat, while implying that this pain is very well remembered:
"Then the Conquest came. A small population having had at its disposal a relatively brief time to implant itself firmly on its territory, the original Canadians had to turn in on themselves and assure themselves of the foundations of their survival and of their development in a country firmly taken in hand by another people whose language, religion, laws, political institutions and genius were foreign to them. A conquered group, politically and economically dominated, the Canadians little by little developed the sentiments of a minority and became progressively marginalized in a country which was formerly theirs, but whose commanding heights had quickly escaped them. Regrouping themselves, chiefly in the rural areas, they clung to the soil, to their language, to their religion, to their way of life. As a result of the Conquest, they became isolated as businessmen from the great North American trade and have thus been rendered rather impermeable to the great revolutions of the Western world they have been satisfied to endure, anchored in the solid realities which form the basis of peasant life." See the "Conquest" passage from the Quebec Government's 1978 statement of policy on Quebec cultural development: Government of Quebec, La politique Quebecoise du developpement culturel (Quebec: 1978), 50-51.

[25] For more on the concept of difference, from the standpoint that the difference is self-propagated more than it is a reality, see: Michael Ignatieff, "The Narcissism of Minor Difference" in Clash of Identities: Essays on Media, Manipulation, and Politics of the Self Ed. James Littleton. (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: Canada,1996), 47-53

after the defeat, a reality that was made clear at confederation. According to Creighton, the idea that Canada was founded on a bicultural framework is a common myth, suggesting that "bicultural" was not a term used in 1867. Nonetheless, from the onset, the federal government granted Quebec special status vis-à-vis the other provinces with hopes of promoting a unified relationship:

> A variety of solutions were tried in the attempt to stave off disintegration. Quebec was permitted to retain its civil law, the status of the French language was eventually recognized despite initial attempts — based on Durham's recommendations — to make unilingualism the order of the day, and cabinets were constructed so as to include representation from both cultural groups. In addition, Quebec governments were headed by two party leaders, one from each section, rather than by a single Prime Minister, and separate attorneys-general were also provided.[26]

Though steps were made to combat Quebec's desire to separate from the rest of Canada, and, although probably necessary, these steps did not prove sufficient.

The 1960s witnessed the 'Quiet Revolution' in Quebec, which further intensified the English-French divide in Canada and encouraged the development of the Canadian Unity Council (CUC) in 1964.[27] Although Quebec federalists initially created the CUC (under the title 'Canada Council') as a private organization working towards the promotion of Canadian unity, and although the CUC claims to be an independent and private institution, the CUC's heavy reliance upon the federal government for financial support has granted the federal government some measure of control over its procedures. Indicating the grip that the federal government has over the organization, in answer to the self posed question "Why solicit support from the private sector?" the CUC website

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[26] Wolfgang Koerner, "The Foundations of Canadian Federalism" Canada Depository Service: Political and Social Affairs Division (Canada: Government of Canada Depository Service, http://dsp-psd.communication.gc.ca/Pilot/LoPBdP/BP/bp187-e.htm (Retrieved Online: 12 December 2007).
[27] Guy Lachapelle, Gerald Bernier, Daniel Salee, and Luc Bernier, The Quebec Democracy: Structures, Processes & Policies (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1993), 38.

responds: "It is obligated to do so by virtue of its funding agreements with the federal government, which believes that the private sector must not be indifferent to Council initiatives that seek to build a sense of belonging to Canada that transcends regional differences."[28] Like many "conditional" and "unconditional" fiscal transfers that are allocated by the federal government to the provinces, the CUC is a stellar example of a situation whereby the federal government gains control over the mandate of an external organization. In essence, the CUC can be viewed as an organization to which the federal government contracted out its national unity promotion.

The overall strategy of the CUC is to promote knowledge through experience. The CUC's declared mandate is "to inform and to engage all Canadians in building and strengthening Canada."[29] They attempt to do this by fostering dialogue between Canadians at conferences and roundtables focused on the topic of Canadian unity. The majority of the CUC's programming is focused on youth; several exchange programs aimed at developing leadership, using both official languages, and experiencing the "otherness" of much of Canada have been under operation. Indicative of the federal government's impact on the CUC, the official languages exchange program was first set in motion by MPs from the House of Commons.[30] While the CUC may be successful in promoting a sense of Canadian identity by promoting real relationships between Canadians, it is solely information and education based and it impacts only those

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[28] The Canadian Unity Council, "Development" http://www.cucweb.ca/en_html/develop.html (Retrieved 3 January 2007).
[29] The Canadian Unity Council, "The Council's Mission" http://www.ccu-cuc.ca/en_html/mission.html, (Retrieved 3 January 2007).
[30] Extending its role beyond youth, the CUC created the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC) in 1996 to promote the spread of information on Canadian politics.

fortunate enough to be directly and positively addressed, particularly the youth. That is to say that the unifying message that the CUC aims to relay is experience oriented and is therefore very limited in terms of the total affected population.

1.3　The Visual Trigger: The Birth of the Maple Leaf Flag

While the CUC was at work, attempting to promote real relationships between Canadians at arms-length from governmental operations, the federal government was working on its visibility. In 1965 Quebec separatism was once again on the rise urging the federal government to promote unity. Thus after a great debate between Pearson and Diefenbaker, where Pearson argued that the old red ensign flag inherited from Britain was unable to represent the Quebec people within the federation and Diefenbaker disagreed, Pearson – then the Prime Minister – won. On February 15, 1965, Canada's Maple Leaf flag came into existence and Pearson's position was clear: as recollected by Ross, "The sole motive of this exercise over symbolism, at least in Pearson's mind – and in my own – was to bind our divided nation into one."[31] The new flag was selected over its competitors because it flag aimed for visual neutrality: it was not markedly "French" or "English."

The creation of the maple leaf flag surely indicated that the federal government had an understanding of the ability of national symbols to unite (which implies an ability to create difference). Despite its timely and seemingly insightful creation, the flag was not put to consistent and regulated use as an identity promoter for several more years to

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[31] John Ross Matheson, Canada's Flag: A Search for a Country (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1980), 5.

come. In the meantime, separatist sentiments rose again with the emergence of the Parti

Quebecois (PQ) in 1968, which gained great popularity in Quebec in contrast to the more

"radical" parties at the time: "Not only did the PQ insist upon a legal, constitutional road

to independence, it was also at pains to adhere to an ethnically inclusive definition of the

Quebec nation as a *territorial* jurisdiction."[32] Soon, René Lévesque led the PQ to its first

victory in the 1976 provincial election with the stated goal of sovereignty association.[33]

Trudeau was motivated to respond but without a fully developed strategy the maple leaf

symbol remained cast in a small supporting role.

1.4   Information & Inconsistent Imagery: The Canada Unity Information Office

Indicating some understanding of the need to meld the auditory and visual sensory

realms, yet being primarily information-driven with a weak advertising component, the

Trudeau government responded again to separatism in the years preceding the first

Quebec referendum. Trudeau was seemingly attuned to the potential of information

through media as a political motivator, an understanding that was perhaps informed by

McLuhan, who was a leading communications guru and close friend to Trudeau at the

time.[34] In turn, Trudeau's politics were said to be informed by some of McLuhan's

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[32] Reg Whitaker, "Sovereign Division: Quebec Nationalism Between Liberalism and Ethnicity" in Clash of Identities: Essays on Media, Manipulation, and Politics of the Self, Ed. James Littleton, (Canada: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1996), 78.

[33] For a more in depth account of the evolution of Quebec politics from 1960-1985 see Guy Lachapelle, Gerald Bernier, Daniel Salee, and Luc Bernier, The Quebec Democracy: Structures, Processes & Policies (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1993), 38-47.

[34] McLuhan analyzed Trudeau's public persona, personally describing Trudeau as "more cool" when he grew a beard, and predicting the "hot" public attention he received when the beard was shaved. See Derrick de Kerckhove, "Marshall McLuhan: What if He Is Right?" on CBC Radio, November 17, 1980.

insights, McLuhan's work with hot and cool media may have served to influence the

shaping of Trudeau's CUIO and eventually the Federal Identity Program (FIP):

> Moreover, the very existence of a "McLuhan" or a "Trudeau" as the locus of the Canadian discourse discloses the indelible character of Canada, not just as a witness to empire, but, perhaps, as a radical experiment in the working out of the intellectual and political basis of the technological imagination in North America. Canada is, and has always been, the most modern of the New World societies; because the character of its colonialism, of its domination of the land by technologies of communication, and of its imposition of an "abstract nation" upon a divergent population by a fully technological polity, has made of it a leading expression of technological liberalism in North America.[35]

Both the CUIO and the Federal Identity Program could very well have constituted some

of these "projects," since they came into existence at the peak of both Trudeau's and

McLuhan's popularity. McLuhan's work on media versus message shows an

understanding of the relationship between the message and the carrier of that message. In

turn, Trudeau's proclivity towards understanding the potential of rhetoric as a persuasive

tool is seen when he spoke in the House of Commons in 1977 about his fear that Radio-

Canada was promoting, through its various broadcasted programs, a separatist standpoint

in Quebec and was not offering a more politically balanced perspective.[36] Furthermore,

Trudeau himself wrote that a "national image must be created that will have such an

appeal as to make any image of a separatist group unattractive." To attain this goal,

"resources must be diverted into such things as national flags, anthems ... [and] film

boards."[37] This indicates that Trudeau was aware that people could be politically

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[35] Arthur Kroker, "Digital Humanism: The Processed World of Marshall McLuhan" in CTHEORY, 5 June 1995. http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=70, (Retrieved: 10 January 2007).

[36] Trudeau, Hansard (Ottawa: (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, February 1977), 3420. Radio-Canada faced a conundrum; as a media group it was journalistically responsible for covering both sides of an argument yet as a public (governmental) organization, it supposedly held its priority in the unified nation.

[37] Pierre-Elliot Trudeau, "Federalism, Nationalism and Reason" in Federalism and the French-Canadians (Toronto: McMillan, 1968), 182-203; 193 See also Richard Handler,

persuaded through relatively cool and abstract media, such as radio and print and that therefore the federal government had an interest in its rhetorically propagated image. However, this shrewd understanding was not wholly incorporated into the creation of the CUIO.

In July of 1977, Trudeau created the Task Force on Canadian Unity as a feedback function designed to inform government of the public's opinion. The mandate of the Task Force was to uncover and publicize the mood of Canadians.[38] The Task Force conducted qualitative public opinion polls on how Canadians perceived government and other research from which it informed government. The Task Force completed a commendable task: it qualitatively measured Canadian public opinion from coast to coast thereby offering insight into the political imagination of Canadians. The Task Force sought to explore: how to reach Canadians, how Canadians viewed the discussion of a constitution,[39] how Canadians perceived the federal government through its symbols as well as through direct experience.[40]

Further indicating Trudeau's interest in the promotion of government through various media as a means of quashing separatism, Trudeau's government created the

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Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 97.

[38] The Task Force on Canadian Unity, A Future Together: Observations and Recommendations, (Hull: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979), 3.

[39] For more on public opinion regarding the constitution, see: The Task Force on Canadian Unity, Coming to Terms: The Words of the Debate, (Hull: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979).

[40] The interpretations of what constituted a national symbol included: (debate over the importance of) the Queen, the flag, shared heritage and traditions, and the anthem. For more see: The Task Force on Canadian Unity, A Time to Speak: The Views of the Public, ((Hull: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979).

CUIO in August of 1977, which was principally targeted at promoting federal unity.[41]

The CUIO had the following functions:

> The mandate of the Canadian Unity Information Office was to gather, develop and distribute information regarding Canadian federalism and federal programs and services; to respond to requests from individuals and non-government organizations for information and documentation about Canada; to guide and advise groups on projects promoting national unity; and to work in close cooperation with federal departments and agencies of government and assist them in coordinating components of their information programs relating to national unity.[42]

Trudeau's government thus produced a reaction package to promote the federation that was almost completely information-oriented, where the visual promotion of the federal government was part of the functional strategy taken to compliment message.

The CUIO produced numerous documents aimed at increasing federal visibility. Canadians were encouraged to request information on government services, Canadian wealth, and the nature of Canadian federalism.[43] The CUIO produced several written advertisements, in the form of pamphlets and information booklets, such as *The Government of Canada at your service*, *It's all ours*, and *Did you know that...* . Included on some of the documents was the Government of Canada logo, although it had yet to be officially adopted and consistently applied.[44] Others were marked with federal identity symbols that are currently out of use. Thus the "advertising" done by government through the CUIO attempted to communicate the services of government as well as the virtues of

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[41] The Office continued to attempt to fulfil these functions until its mandate was terminated in 1984, and it was officially closed in 1985.

[42] Library and Archives Canada, "Canadian Unity Information Office sous-fonds" [1950-1985] http://mikan3.archives.ca/pam/public_mikan/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem &lang=eng&rec_nbr=396& (Retrieved Online: 3 February 2007).

[43] See pamphlet: The Government of Canada, "The Canadian Unity Information Office", 28-B (1-81).

[44] While the Federal Identity Program had loosely come into existence at this time with the mandate of promoting a consistent federal image, it was not until the 1990 that the program was effectively implemented.

the federation through the spread of information in print by pairing with an inconsistent presentation of visual identity. Paper pamphlets were not the most strategic advertising choice in an era that was able to connect through a multitude of media outlets.

Outside of the direct functions of the CUIO program, the Trudeau government went to great lengths to frame the CUIO as a much needed and positive program for the Canadian public. According to a government memo, the federal government aimed at avoiding the public perception that a solution was being provided for a problem that did not exist.[45] To prevent this from occurring, the government paired their advertising initiative with acts of rhetoric: "Advertising campaigns provided the vehicle to reach mass publics but this was complemented by having Members of Parliament and Senators sell the federal government's programs in Quebec using an exhaustive data base of federal programs and expenditures in that province."[46] Part of Trudeau's rhetoric aimed at prefacing the creation of the organization with the claim that national unity was an issue of importance for the nation, and was not the limited concern of a particular government. Through these efforts, Trudeau's government was able to marry the program with the image that the program was a positive and necessary creation.

The Trudeau government was seemingly on the right track in that it attempted to inform the public, advertise the cause, and positively frame the program's intent. However, the advertising initiatives implemented through the CUIO had a very narrow reach in that they were focused on print. Additionally, the advertisements were visually

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[45] For more see: Morgan, Alan. (N.d.). "Memo to Dan Gagnier." National Archives of Canada, RG 137, Acc. 84-85/574, Box 6, File 2510-1, ``Quebec Newspaper Insert," 1.
[46] Jonathon Rose, "Government Advertising in a Crisis: The Quebec Referendum Precedent" in Canadian Journal of Communication Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993), Available Online: http://www.cjc-online.ca:8044/viewarticle.php?id=166&layout=html (Retrieved 18 October 2007).

inconsistent thereby undermining the impact of their message on the publics that they did manage to reach. Due to the limited reach of the programs, and the inconsistent presentation of visual identity they likely did not generate a great negative impact. However, with a wider and more salient communicative reach, consistent and continuous visual identity would become necessary.

The overall impact of the CUIO in terms of curbing separatism is questionable. A Gallup public opinion poll indicated that the desire on the part of Quebecers to separate descended from 20 percent in 1977 to 12 percent in 1978, rising again to 18 percent in 1979.[47] When the first Quebec referendum Question was posed in 1980, the result was 40 percent in favor of separation, 60 against.[48] Clearly the federation could not put its trust in the CUIO as the sole means of quashing Quebec separatism. If even such a quest could be accomplished by a federal identity strategy, it would not be accomplished by a visually weak strategy.

The CUC and CUIO were weak identity strategies in that they did not utilize a strong symbolic strategy to combat in the communicative channels that were beginning to

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[47] Gallup Poll, "Slim Majority of Quebecers Oppose Outright Separation" The Gallup Report: Canada's Only National Opinion Poll with Publicly Recorded Accuracy May 5, 1994.
Question: "there has been quite a bit of talk recently about the possibility of the province of Quebec separating from the rest of Canada and becoming an independent country. Would you, yourself, be in favor of separation or opposed to it?"
[48] The referendum question posed on 20 May 1980: "The Government of Quebec has made public its proposal to negotiate a new agreement with the rest of Canada, based on the equality of nations; this agreement would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make its laws, levy its taxes and establish relations abroad — in other words, sovereignty — and at the same time to maintain with Canada an economic association including a common currency; any change in political status resulting from these negotiations will be effected with approval by the people through another referendum; on these terms, do you give the Government of Quebec the mandate to negotiate the proposed agreement between Quebec and Canada?"

be congested with advertisements, radio, newspaper, magazines, and television. Rather, they respectively embraced experience and print strategies that, in principle, are unable to reach large masses. Therefore the methods used by the CUC and the CUIO were (and are in the case of the CUC) out-dated methods of national legitimatization since they only weakly incorporated rhetoric and visual stimulus with technological innovations. In other words, while the function of national promotion has continued to be directed at legitimizing and unifying the state, the methods of promoting the nation have been transformed. Thus information-based rhetoric may have been an adequate means of promoting nationalism in days passed, but technological extensions of human life have transformed the channels of communication, creating ample opportunity for multiple actors to attempt to communicate their messages and symbols to the public thereby necessitating a strong visual and rhetorical strategy. What these programs lacked was a strong visual identity in the form of consistently presented nationally identifiable symbols and a consistent means of communicating this identity. Despite the creation of the maple leaf flag, which was indeed a symbolic milestone, the flag was not instituted in a consistent and continuous way, which was reflected in the advertisements of the CUIO. Perhaps reflective of Trudeau's McLuhan-informed insight, the federal identity policy that soon followed resulted in a continuous and consistent federal visual identity in various mediums.

CHAPTER 2

Visual Identity in Abundance: A Potentially Powerful Choice

"Looking back, what is best remembered of that federalist rally, and even more so of the love-in that followed in the streets of Montreal, were the flags: maple leafs as far as the eye could see, small, medium, large and gigantic. The Canadian flag was clearly the central point of attention and the symbol of the federalist cause."
— Antonia Maioni on the Quebec 1995 referendum[49]

"Sponsorship Scandal!" media headlines shouted once the 2003 Auditor General's Report identified the misappropriation of funds within the Canadian Sponsorship Program. The program was the Chrétien government's reaction to the rising separatist sentiment that led to and culminated in the 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association. When Martin was sworn in as Liberal prime minister in 2003, he quickly ended the Sponsorship Program and requested the commission of its judicial inquiry in an attempt to quell the media-cultivated uproar of the scandal. The inquiry, headed by Justice Gomery, confirmed the preliminary findings of the 2003 audit that the program lacked transparency, rules and regulations outlining its procedures, and a mandate. What received less immediate media attention was the fact that the program was established as part of a unity strategy aimed at unification: it involved the promotion of national symbols in tandem, for the most part, with popular sporting events. While the Sponsorship Program may have indicated that the federal government was finally on the right track in terms of adapting to the times and incorporating visual iconic referents of

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[49] Antonia Maioni, "Showing the Flag – the Origins and Consequences of the Sponsorship Scandal" in <u>Policy Options</u>, June 2005, pp.22-25; 22.

the state in its unity promotion through multi-media, the silent sponsorship strategy

dangerously omitted the rhetorical recommendations by blindly incorporating the

undertheorized visual strategy of an already existent identity policy that was established

by the government years earlier: The Federal Identity Program (FIP).

2.1   The Sponsorship Program Was Born

Quebec's political climate in 1994 indicated that separatist sentiments were once

again on the rise, and the tumultuous climate encouraged the Chrétien government to

develop its hushed sponsorship strategy. On 12 September 1994, the PQ rose to power in

Quebec under the leadership of premier Jacques Parizeau. Days later, Parizeau, eager to

"hold *his* referendum,"[50] announced that a referendum on Quebec sovereignty was

immanent. Thus, when Parizeau announced one year later that the referendum was to be

held on 30 October 1995, few were taken aback. "For thirty days in October, Quebecers

and Canadians from the other provinces were caught up in a campaign marked by

spectacular reversals and emotional extremes."[51] When Parizeau presented the

referendum question,[52] criticisms that it was too vague and confusing arose

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[50] Mario Cardinal, Breaking Point: Quebec/Canada – The 1995 Referendum (Montreal: CBC/Bayard Canada Books, 2005), 37.

[51] Cardinal, jacket blurb.

[52] The Question posed at the 1995 referendum was as follows: "Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership within the scope of the bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?" For more see: Canada, Intergovernmental Affairs, "The Constitutional File and the Unity File", Government of Canada Privy Council Office, Retrieved Online: http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/aia/default.asp?Language=E&Page=consfile&Sub=ReferendaQuestionsandRes 1 February 2007.

immediately.[53] Notwithstanding, the question was put to the people of Quebec, and both the campaign and the subsequent referendum results shook the nation. For Quebeckers, the impacts of the campaign were often visceral:

> For months, feelings seemed more detached and people less engaged; no one wanted the vote to damage personal relationships, as happened so often last time. But the close polls and the intensity of the debate have slid a chill into families and friendships, between colleagues and acquaintances, no less icy for being familiar. The stakes are too high for primal emotions to be suppressed.[54]

The tensions were not only felt between the English and French in Quebec; Cree and Inuit Quebec residents were upset by the idea that a simple majority could result in Quebec separating from Canada, and they held their own referendum on separation during October 1995, voting against Quebec sovereignty. The effects were also felt by citizens from the rest of Canada (ROC) who demonstrated their belief in unity and their fear of separation during the last days of the referendum campaign when hundreds of Canadian flag-wavers from coast to coast saturated Montreal in an effort to sway Quebecers to vote "No". The polls closed at 50.58% "No" to 49.42% "Yes", "It was a result that took away from the federalists any desire to celebrate, and from the sovereigntists any temptation to give up."[55]

Canadians were not alone in their anxiety; officials representing France, Britain, and the United States showed their interest in the referendum yet were officially adamant

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[53] Chrétien argued that the question was too vague, later passing the Clarity Act (Bill C-31.8), which maintained that the question must be clearly posed, and that there must be an undisputed majority in favour of Quebec independence if such a request is to be honoured in the future. The Act also implied that Quebec could not secede on its own will alone and that secession would involve amending the constitution. See: Department of Justice Canada, "Clarity Act", Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada website: http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowTdm/cs/C-31.8///en, 1 February 2007.

[54] Graham Fraser, "Plus ca change…: 1980 and 1995 Referendum/ The themes echo down through the years, but this time families and friends on opposite sides feel a chill" in The Globe and Mail 30 October 1995, A8.

[55] Cardinal, 7.

about not interfering. Nevertheless, France once again came to the support of Quebec sovereigntists while Britain and the United States were seemingly more interested in a "united" Canada. In fact French officials had been quick to state support for Quebec's independence during the referendum campaign as well as afterwards: "France pledged to strengthen ties with Quebec on Tuesday, masking disappointment at the failure of the French-speaking province to break free from Canada."[56] On the other hand, the majority of British newspapers demonstrated favouritism towards the federal cause, yet sympathy for Quebeckers.[57] Officials from the United States (US) were quick to assert that they did not wish to meddle; yet their economic interests were in a unified Canada, and this therefore put them implicitly on the side of the federalists. This did not stop Quebec from attempting to unilaterally strike deals with the US.[58]

Considering the range of emotions felt at home and abroad and the narrow federalist victory, it was no surprise that the Chrétien government felt that something ought to be done to combat Quebec separatism immediately. Chrétien asserted in his Gomery commissioned testimony, "I was not prepared to be guilty of inaction"[59] and

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[56] Alister Doyle, "France to strengthen ties with Quebec after vote" in <u>Reuters News</u> 31 October 1995. For more on France's support of Quebec see: "French politicians urge greater say for Quebec" in <u>Agence France-Presse</u>, 31 October 1995.

[57] Winnipeg Free Press, "French say Oui, British say No" in <u>Winnipeg Free Press</u> 30 October 1995, B2.

[58] Then-president Bill Clinton, after meeting with the "No" camp in Washington, openly opposed Quebec separation in attempts to swing the referendum pendulum in favour of unity. See Ben Barber, "Quebec rejects independence by tiny margin Turnout at polls tops 90%" in <u>The Washington Times</u>, 31 October 1995, A1.

[59] Jean Chrétien, "Testimony – Public Hearing: February 8, 2005, Volume 72" in <u>Restoring Accountability – Phase 2 Report</u>, Available Online: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-03-06/www.gomery.ca/documents/transcripts/en/2005/03/20053410586.pdf, Original Version, p.12503.

went on to list seven points that his government took in reaction to the separatist

sentiments:

> We passed a resolution on Distinct Society. We passed a law concerning constitutional
> vetoes. We transferred control of labour market training to the provinces. I brought in new
> ministers from Quebec. We made a reference to the Supreme Court on the issue of
> secession. We passed the *Clarity Act*. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we undertook to raise the
> visibility of the Government of Canada in Quebec. It was an urgent situation.[60]

These seven points formed the core of the post-referendum federal "unity strategy," and

while they all made their mark on the Canadian political scene in one way or another one

of these seven resulted in a scandal that served to counter the goal by awakening

separatist sentiments, if only for a while: the "visibility" or "Sponsorship" program.

The timing of Pearson's maple leaf flag, Trudeau's CUIO, and Chrétien's

Sponsorship Program indicate that Liberal federal governments have a history of creating

reactionary federal-promoting policy in the face of escalating separatism. While the

Sponsorship Program did lack official documentation detailing its mandate and creation,

its budget reflects that the program was created prior to the referendum in correlation

with a perceived rise in separatist sentiments. Keeping in mind that the program's budget

was derived from two sources, official federal fiscal expenditures and the federal unity

fund, it is possible to chart its initial existence back to Parizeau coming into power.

During the 1994-95 federal fiscal year, Public Works and Government Services Canada's

(PWGSC) Advertising and Public Opinion Research Sector (APORS) was assigned 2

million dollars out of the federal budget for "sponsorships."[61] When Parti Quebecois

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[60] Mr. Serge Roy quoting Jean Chrétien in: Jean Chrétien, "Testimony – Public Hearing:
February 8, 2005, Volume 72", 12627.
[61] Kroll Lindquist Avey Report, "The Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship
Program and Advertising Activities" Commissioned by Justice Gomery, (May 18, 2005),
Retrieved Online 10 January 2007:
http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/groupaction/kroll-report.pdf, 9-10.

leader Jacques Parizeau announced official plans for the 1995 Quebec referendum, Guité's public works group gained more significant import. At this point "substantial sums" were "disbursed through APORS as well as by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the PCO."[62] Part of these funds were dispersed from the Unity Reserve – a special source of funding established by the Trudeau government which allows the Prime Minister to authorize the distribution of up to $50 million without approval from any other actor. The lack of a proper budget at this time suggests a 'quick response' to what was perceived as a pressing need for government action.

However, while Trudeau's CUIO ran more like a campaigning tool, since it was fully functional prior to the referendum, the Sponsorship Program received greater attention only *after* the narrow federalist victory of the 1995 referendum. Expenditures by the PWGSC for the Sponsorship Program for 1995-96 increased by $20 million from $2 million the previous fiscal year (not including special transfers from the Unity Reserve made in 1994-95).[63] For the 1996-97 fiscal year the budget allocated $17 million for the Sponsorship Program while an additional $35 million was dispersed from the prime minister's Unity Reserve. The following fiscal year saw the Sponsorship Program's budget rise to $40 million while transfers from the Unity Reserve decreased to $9 million.[64] The budget for the Sponsorship Program remained at $40 million a year until it came to an official and final close in 2003 at the hands of then Prime Minister Paul Martin. To sum up the expenditures succinctly: "From 1994 to 2003, the amount

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[62] John Gomery, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 66.
[63] John Gomery, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 11.
[64] John Gomery, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 98.

expended by the Government of Canada for special programs and sponsorships totalled

$332 million, of which 44.4%, or $147 million, was spent on fees and commissions paid

to communication and advertising agencies."[65]

The reactionary link between the CUIO and the Sponsorship Program cannot be

denied since Chrétien's reaction to separatism in 1994 was largely fed by his experience

at Trudeau's side during the 1980 referendum. Chrétien's political history allows us to

argue that the advertising initiatives taken in the Sponsorship Program were simply

Chrétien's learned reaction to rising separatist sentiments. The Gomery Report asserts

that the program gained purpose as part of the response strategy developed at the January

1996 Massé retreat, a retreat focused on developing a post-referendum unity strategy.[66]

Massé notes (in his Gomery testimony) that ministers present at the retreat had concluded

that the party made two mistakes in dealing with the separation issue:

> First of all, we had not systematically refuted arguments from separatists in a
> manner that reached the public, in words that people could understand. In other
> words, our communications were not effective. Secondly, Quebec ministers and
> members of the Liberal caucus were not sufficiently present in regions outside of
> their ridings.[67]

However 'pure' the Sponsorship Program's intent may or may not have been the fact

remains that it was retroactively assigned a mandate to visually promote the nation

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[65] John Gomery, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the
Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 14.
[66] The strategy report was presented to Chrétien in Parliament on February 1st and 2nd,
1996. The Gomery Report considers the Massé report to be the official commencement
date of the Sponsorship Program because it is from this point that the program operated
under the pretence of a program, launching "a series of projects and initiatives." See:
John Gomery, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the
Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 56.
[67] Marcel Massé, "Testimony – Public Hearing: January 27, 2005, Volume 64" in
Restoring Accountability – Phase 2 Report, Available Online: http://epe.lac-
bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-03-
06/www.gomery.ca/documents/transcripts/en/2005/02/2005249211.pdf, 11194.

through the implantation of federal symbols and there is no indication that the federal government had adequately researched the implications of the program at this time. Thus although one may be inclined to rejoice in the evolution of the federal government's adaptation of visual media to carry the message of federal unity, the lack of thought that was put into this particular policy is only the first of a series of raised red flags warning of its potential downfall. The Sponsorship Program constitutes an exceptionally weak federal program since it ignores the limited knowledge that government had earlier exhibited with regards to visual identity.

2.2   Laying the Partially Forgotten Foundations: The Federal Identity Program

The Sponsorship Program was not the first federal visibility program to hit the Canadian political spectrum. While, as we have suggested in chapter one, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a relatively weak and inconsistent use of Canada's maple leaf flag and there were no visual policies dictating the visual presentation of Canada during this time period, by the late 1970s it became evident to the Trudeau government that it was time to strengthen the government's visual representation. Thus, following the CUIO, the 1970s witnessed the introduction of the Federal Identity Program (FIP), which sought to create a visually consistent federal identity, however it was not unanimously and effectively implemented until 1990 with the publication of the FIP manual. Indicating the federal government's ability to eventually adapt to the times, the FIP adopted branding strategy techniques employed by private sector businesses, yet the inherent flaws of common corporate branding strategies render the FIP theoretically unsubstantiated as a visual identity policy.

The FIP was conceived as a "corporate identity program" with a very clear mandate: "It helps project the government as a coherent, unified administration and enables Canadians to recognize at a glance their government at work for them. It facilitates access to government programs and services through clear and consistent identification."[68] Correcting the visibility problems of the CUIO, the FIP was designed to dictate when and how the Canada wordmark logo and government of Canada signature were to be used, as part of both external and internal governmental communications. By setting the standard for government symbol use the FIP was naturally implicated in any federal program seeking to visually promote the federation, such as the Sponsorship Program.

The timing of the FIP indicated that it, like the CUIO and the Sponsorship Program, was a reactionary identity program. One distinction must be made from the beginning however: the FIP aimed at promoting a consistent visual identity with the federal government. Unlike the CUIO or the Sponsorship Program, it did not purport to be a unity program, nor did it suggest that unifying the nation could be attained through its procedures. The FIP manual itself stipulates: "An identity program is not a "quick fix" to a problem of corporate communications, nor should it be seen as a cosmetic that can represent something the institution is not."[69] Nonetheless, the timing of the program suggests that it was a reaction to separatist sentiments.

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[68] Government of Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Federal Identity Program," Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada Website: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fip-pcim/index_e.asp, 13 November 2006.
[69] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Management guide to corporate identity" in Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0, Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada Website: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fip-pcim/man_pdfs_e.asp, 4 August 1990, 4.

Several factors came into play in the years preceding the creation of the FIP that acted as federal motivators for identity promotion in Quebec. In his article on the FIP, Large suggests that Expo '67 in Montreal served to focus "attention on national identity while giving a powerful boost to the development of Canadian design."[70] Large also points to the 1969 Official Languages Act as a motivator for increasing the consistent bilingual image of the federal government, a deficiency that was directly addressed by the FIP. The 1969 act itself was "a direct response to growing separatist sentiment in Quebec."[71] It is perhaps not coincidental either, Large suggests, that the FIP was proclaimed while the 'October Crisis' erupted in Quebec.[72] Also strikingly correlated, the FIP implemented the Canada wordmark logo in 1980, which was the same year that Quebec held a national referendum.[73] While these events may constitute nothing more than provocative coincidences, it remains the case that the FIP did not seek as its mandate to directly address the conflict in Quebec, but rather sought to consistently promote the central government's visibility throughout the country. What can be gathered from the timing of this program is an affirmation that a symbolic battle over the hearts and minds of Quebeckers was occurring long before 1994, when the Sponsorship Program was initiated.

Unlike the Sponsorship Program, the FIP was a program through which the federal government put verifiable thought and focus into the creation of its visual

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[70] Large's conclusions are supplemented by interviews with governmental officials associated with the design and administration of the program. See Michael Large, "The Corporate Identity of the Canadian Government" in Journal of Design History, Vol. 4, No. 1. (1991), pp. 31-42; 34.
[71] Large, 34.
[72] Ibid, 34.
[73] Ibid, 34.

identity. Preceding its creation, Trudeau established a Task Force on Government Information in 1968 to prepare a report entitled, *To Know and Be Known*, which was completed in 1969. "The Task Force was asked to make recommendations to improve the co-ordination of federal activities in information; to ensure effectiveness in the diffusion of official information; and, thus, to lead to the public's gaining a better understanding of the operations of the government than it has now."[74] The breadth of questions posed at the onset of the Task Force inquiry indicates the scope of the research base. Some of these questions include, "How aware are Canadians of their federal information services, and what do they think of them?", "How great is the public's need for government information?", and "Have new social and political pressures changed the relationship between government and the people, and at the same time, changed their ways of communicating with each other?"[75] The report itself is extremely transparent: Separated into two parts, totalling approximately 460 pages, Part 1 of the report summarizes key areas of inquiry and makes recommendations while Part II consists of the various papers and research materials that led to the conclusions made by the Task Force.

An examination of the conclusions and recommendations made *To Know and Be Known* allows a direct connection to be made between this report and the corporate identity policy instituted in the FIP. The report concluded that the federal government lacked a uniform information policy, which meant that it was portraying itself as fragmented, self-conflicting, uncoordinated, and opaque.[76] Further, it identified the fact that the federal government's inconsistent and weak use of its visual icons caused its

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[74] Government of Canada, Task Force on Government Information, "Part 1" in To Know and Be Known (Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1969), 1.
[75] Ibid, 1.
[76] Ibid, 46.

services to become confused with those of private organizations or provincial governments.[77] Ultimately there was an absence of any iconic referent that would allow a citizen to recognise the government's involvement in governance outside of Ottawa. Indeed Michael O'Keefe suggested that this poor communication has been and is still (in 2006) a major federal weakness leading the citizens to remain unaware of the many services that the federal government offers.[78] Although not all of the recommendations of this report are dealt with in this paper, those that are relevant to the FIP are categorized under "Regional Information," "Federal-provincial Information Relations," and "Advertising"[79] The first two recommendations are relevant in that they respectively stipulate that information must be presented to all citizens so as to make Canadians "aware of the role and activities of the Federal Government," and to grant "greater attention" to federal participation.[80] The last recommendation is especially relevant to our thesis in that it not only stipulates that the government should develop advertising policies, it suggests that this should only be done with the help of external advertisers. It recommended that:

> An independent board be established consisting of leading advertisers, representatives of the media and other advertising professionals free from any conflict of interest who should review government needs and the capacity of advertising agencies and recommend to

[77] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Appendix A, Federal Identity Program" in Management Guide to Corporate Identity (1990) Online. Retrieved from the Government of Canada website: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fip-pcim/man_1_0_e.asp, 20 December 2006.

[78] Michael O'Keefe, Senior Policy Analyst – Official Languages, Government of Canada Privy Council Office. Personal Interview, January 2006. At the time (late 1960s to early 1970s) federal buildings in Quebec had no hint of a visible and symbolic federal presence, which would likely decrease citizen awareness of federally operated services. For more see also, Canada, Task Force on Government Information, "Part 1" in To Know and Be Known, 28.

[79] Canada, Task Force on Government Information, "Part 1" in To Know and Be Known, 70-71.

[80] Ibid, 70-71.

departments and agencies, on the basis of merit, the agency or agencies capable of undertaking their particular government advertising assignment.[81]

The many recommendations made by the Task Force are easily addressable through corporatist identity strategies, thus it is understandable that the FIP would rely so heavily upon such strategies.[82]

Although the FIP received a mandate in 1970, it took many years to evolve into a suitable program that could attain its goals. The Treasury Board created a manual for implementing the FIP in 1978, yet technical layout alterations and the incorporation of new federal symbols resulted in an entirely new program by 1987.[83] Major alterations included the official incorporation of the Canada wordmark logo in 1980 and the Canadian flag in 1987.[84] Both symbols existed long before their official incorporation into the FIP and were used inconsistently since their creation in 1965. While the origins of the maple flag have already been discussed, the Canada wordmark was originally designed as a logo for tourism Canada. It was only with the publication of a manual in 1990 that Canada's visual identity became legally consistent.

A manual published in 1990, which continues to govern the FIP, indicates that the FIP has evolved to incorporate five policy objectives:

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[81] Ibid, 70.

[82] In Part II of the report, which details the research behind each recommendation, budgetary comparisons to private sector advertising practices are made, highlighting private sector effectiveness and investment alongside the public sector's ineffectiveness and lack of investment. See: Task Force on Government Information, "Part II" in To Know and Be Known, 323.

[83] The FIP was under the jurisdiction of Information Canada until 1974 when the Treasury Board was assigned the responsibility of creating an identity manual for its implementation. The Treasury Board only received full responsibility for the program in 1978.

[84] The reason for the change was quite simple: the government intended for the 'one bar maple leaf' logo to be paired alongside departmental titles to complete the image of the flag, however layout problems arose due to the bilingual specifications and the desired full-flag image could not be generated. See: Large, 36.

to enable the public to recognize clearly federal activities by means of consistent identification; to improve service to the public by facilitating access to programs and services; to project equality of status of the two official languages, consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Official Languages Act (1988);* to ensure effective management of the federal identity consistent with government wide priorities, and to achieve savings through standardization; to promote good management practices in the field of corporate identity and information design.[85]

The government relied completely on corporate identity policies for developing its understanding of symbol use within the FIP and these strategies are inadequate, to the extent that they do not know how or why symbols work. That begs the question: how can the government promote "good management of information design" if the designers of its identity cannot identify why the identity practices work?

The 1990 FIP manual offers concise regulations on Canada's visual identity and even suggests that the government utilize rhetoric in order to generate a greater and more successful impact. The manual strengthened the FIP's application and purpose: "This guide is intended to shift FIP from a compliance/coordination function to one that is management and results oriented."[86] Arguing that every organization has a corporate identity and that both private and public sectors benefit from a well-managed public image, the manual "is based on the premise that key publics must perceive an organization clearly and accurately if management objectives are to be achieved."[87] The goals of communication and consistency in visual representation are attained with the aid of several specifically defined tools: nomenclature, graphic elements, typestyle, formats, and colour. The 1990 report also suggests that government ought to engage in formal acts of rhetoric with the public that serve to clarify the institutional image. However, as will

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[85] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0: Management Guide to Corporate Identity, 20.
[86] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0: Management Guide to Corporate Identity, Part 1 of 23.
[87] Ibid, 4.

be shown by the government's creation of the Sponsorship Program, the manual is simply

a guide and does not guarantee that such rhetoric will be present. Had the ensuing

Sponsorship Program relied strictly on the FIP principles, I argue that the result would

have been a more strongly framed presentation of Canada's national symbols.

2.3   Adapting to the Times: Branding Strategies on the Rise

The FIP constituted a necessary development of the application of Canada's

symbols since the branding rage had transformed symbol use within a variety of Western

institutions, political and commercial, as a result of neo-liberal market competition.

Wheeler argues,

> Competition for recognition is as ancient as the heraldic banners on a medieval battlefield. No longer limited by physical terrain, managing perception now extends to cyberspace and beyond. As feudal domains became economic enterprises, what was once heraldry is now branding. The battle for physical territory has evolved into the competition for share of mind.[88]

Wheeler is not alone in making this claim. Fraim suggests symbols have long since

moved from their relatively elite place in the earliest forms of religious iconography to

the more popularly accessible theories of Freud and Jung. Now that we have become

irrevocably implicated in the world of commercial competition, symbol use has been

transformed. Through their use in brands, media, entertainment and culture, they have

now indelibly woven their way into the "fabric of the present."[89]

The neo-liberal marketplace and the attendant pressures of globalization, most

strongly felt first in the 1970s, have created a situation whereby not only the private

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[88] Alina Wheeler, Designing Brand Identity: A Complete Guide to Creating, Building, and Maintaining Strong Brands (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 1.
[89] John Fraim, Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media (Switzerland: Daimo, 2003), 40-5.

sector but also the bureaucrats in the public sector have begun to adapt themselves to the prevalent practices of successful corporations.[90] Rondinelle and Cheema assert that the quick-paced changes prevalent in a globalized society create the need for government to continuously "reinvent" itself by redefining its goals, policies, and standards.[91] By the late 1990s, as predicted by Balmer, corporate branding became the common marketing practice of most competitive companies.[92] With the increase in competition, corporations needed symbols to promote their product identities and to develop a loyal consumer following.[93] Of paramount importance was the necessity to develop a consistent and conscious visual label in association with the brand. The need for government to adapt itself to the identity practices prevalent in global marketplace could not be ignored and the aptitude that private corporations displayed in successfully promoting their visual identities likely influenced governments to follow suit. Perhaps overstating the case, Silk, Andrews and Cole suggest, "In this scenario, the locus of control in influencing the manner in which the nation and national identity are represented becomes exteriorized

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[90] For the development of sports identity, see Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole, "Corporate Nationalism(s)? The Spatial Dimensions of Sporting Capital" in Sport and Corporate Nationalisms eds. Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole (Oxford; Berg, 2005), 3; for the practices employed by the church, museums, and schools, see James B. Twitchell Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College, Inc., and Museumworld (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).

[91] Dennis A. Rondinelli and G. Shabbir Cheema (eds.), Reinventing Government for the Twenty-First Century: State Capacity in a globalizing Society (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 2003), xiii.

[92] Balmer succinctly summarizes his previous predictions in: John M.T. Balmer "The Three Virtues and Seven Deadly Sins of Corporate Brand Management", in Revealing the Corporation: Perspectives on identity, image, reputation, corporate branding, and corporate-level marketing eds., John M.T. Balmer and Stephen A. Greyser, (London: Routledge, 2003), 299.

[93] Wolff/Wally Olins, The New Guide to Identity: How to Create and Sustain Change Through Managing Identity (Aldershot and Vermont: Gower Publishing Limited, 1995), xiii.

through, and internalized within, the promotional strategies of transnational corporations."[94] While crediting corporations with shaping national identity may be stretching the reality, it does indicate that governments felt some impacts of corporate competition and strategies. In effect, nations were left in a position where they had no choice but to evolve their methods of communicating their identities in order to maintain a strong visual presence alongside private corporations who are so effective at communicating their presence and products that a government's services and presence is often forgotten.

Although many how-to design manuals on corporate identity exist, one is said to have produced the largest impact in the field; Baker argues that Wally Olins is the author who has garnered a great, if not the greatest, degree of influence in the evolution of the corporate identity concept.[95] Olins rapidly became the continent's most influential auctor on corporate branding during the 1980s and firms were quick to follow the 'map to success' that his principles produced.[96] Olins is eager to note the expansion of corporate identity to "non-corporate" sectors: identity:

> We live in a world in which opera companies, orchestras, charities, universities, film companies and football clubs all have identities too. In addition, in an increasingly nationalistic and in some ways fragmented era, the city, the region and the nation are developing full-scale identity programmes, partly to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem and partly to attract inward investment and tourism.[97]

Indicating Olins' influence on the Government of Canada's visual identity, it should also be noted that the bibliography of the 1990 FIP manual cites Olins.

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[94] Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole, "Corporate Nationalism(s)? The Spatial Dimensions of Sporting Capital" in Sport and Corporate Nationalisms eds. Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole (Oxford; Berg, 2005), 7.
[95] Steve Baker, "Re-Reading "The Corporate Personality"" in Journal of Design History, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1989), pp.275-292; 275.
[96] See Baker, 275-276.
[97] Olins, xii.

Olins' strategy proposed that the fundamental concept behind a corporate identity program was to obtain consistency in purpose, performance, and appearance.[98] The FIP succeeded in attaining this common "corporate identity" goal, making outward consistency contingent upon internal consistency. The FIP manuals clearly identify that the involved symbols must be used consistently, in both internal and external affairs. The result is that an appearance of internal consistency is created, thereby making it possible for the government to be perceived as a cohesive unit in conducting its external affairs. The FIP signatures (consisting of the Canadian flag and the title of the department) tailored to each department speak to the purpose of the organization, while the actions undertaken in tandem with the government's visual presentation assert its performance.

Next, the corporation needs a name and a symbol. Olins offers a list of criteria to help in the selection of the name. Ideally, the corporation should try to incorporate as many of the following principles as possible. The name should:

> be easy to read; be easy to pronounce, preferably in any language; have no disagreeable associations, preferably in any language; be suitable for use as the organisation expands into different activities; be registrable, or at least protectable; not date; if possible, relate to the activity of the company, be idiosyncratic; be something with which a powerful visual style can be associated; have charisma.[99]

The "name" utilized by the FIP is the 'Canada' wordmark and there was arguably little room for negotiation on this point. Olins again emphasizes the applicability of a private-sector identity program to the public sector when he builds his case for the importance of a corporate name. Listing several countries that have changed their name in order to respond to internal changes, Olins links the importance of naming a nation to the importance of naming a corporation, "Companies, like countries, change names when

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[98] Olins, 10.
[99] Olins, 57.

circumstances make it difficult or impossible for them to sustain their existing name."[100] Olins goes so far as to link corporate identity to the natural inclination of human beings to form groups suggesting that, "Corporate behaviour is what results when people get together to form such a group." He goes on to suggest that national character is "plain" and therefore a nation's identity is much more "obvious" since each nation (he lists America, Italy, and Germany) has a unique character. However, Olins' simplistic view of nationalism ignores the complexity that is involved in forging a national character, particularly in a relatively young and heterogeneous nation such as Canada. Rather, in such a diverse nation with an abundance of *noise* interfering in communicative acts, what exactly a "Canadian" is is something continuously debated and consequently infinitely malleable. Thus if the Canadian government wishes to shape Canadian identity, it should do so with purposeful rhetoric that does not undermine the variances within the nation but rather promotes the commonalities and perhaps even rejoices in the differences.

The FIP follows Olins' corporate identity practices: it incorporates symbols, a name, and seeks to be consistent in internal and external practice. Yet while Olins' manual stipulates what to do, it generally fails to explore how to do it or offer any theoretical evidence as to why such procedures work, thereby leading us to question the potential drawbacks of the application of such a program to federal identity. In his examination of the 'evolution' of Corporate Identity theory, Baker attacks Olins on this point. While Olins claims to understand precisely how to create a powerful Corporate Identity, Baker argues that his inability to identify precisely why the syntax of certain images generates specific effects prevents Olins from having a holistic theory. Baker

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[100] Olins, 55.

suggests that so-called successful corporate identity procedures simply follow the status quo; the concept of aiming to visually represent what the company is, continues to be an "appropriate design." Baker calls for a mechanistic understanding of such design, suggesting "If the imagery of corporate identity programmes comes to be more widely understood to depend on differential or oppositional meanings, it becomes altogether easier to imagine how sophisticated and persuasive design schemes might effectively be *countered* visually by those who oppose them."[101] While behavioural studies have emerged which link different colours and shapes to positive human perception, these have merely described the development of a practice that works. In short, for Baker the historical evolution of corporate branding has theory following practice.

Wheeler offers a more thoughtful approach to national symbol use, by providing insight into the process of interpretation. Like Arnheim and Olins, Wheeler identifies the power of the visual symbol yet she uniquely defines the process of visual interpretation: "The brain acknowledges and remembers shapes first. Visual images can be remembered and recognized directly, while words have to be decoded into meaning."[102] Accordingly, shape, colour, and content are important components of visual symbols of branding, in that order. Distinctive shapes make the quickest imprint on the memory and are therefore key in symbol design. Thus, the stylized maple leaf utilized in both the Canada wordmark and the flag generates a quick identification with Canada, as does the fleurs-de-lis with Quebec. "Color," Wheeler asserts, "can trigger an emotion and evoke a brand association. Distinctive colors need to be chosen carefully, not only to build brand awareness but to

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[101] Baker, 290.
[102] Alina Wheeler, <u>Designing Brand Identity: A Complete Guide to Creating, Building, and Maintaining Strong Brands</u> (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 7.

express differentiation."[103] In this sense the colour red becomes branded with the Canadian nation. Provocatively, the Liberal party of Canada, a typically dominating political party in federal politics, has also had as their symbol, since the 1960s, variations of the maple leaf flag and the colour red with white. Therefore the visual identity of the federal government is potentially associated with the Liberal party of Canada. This may also explain why the Sponsorship Program came to be associated with the federal Liberals rather than the federal symbols they controlled. The issue remains alive today, since the newly elected Conservative party of Canada has recently changed the website created by their Liberal predecessors from red and white to blue, their own branding colour.[104] Wheeler places rhetorical content last since language is more difficult to visually deconstruct, which would suggest that the letters constructing the Canada watermark are visually less powerful than the flag positioned over the final 'a'. As Wheeler asserts, "The best wordmarks imbue a legible word(s) with distinctive font characteristics, and may integrate abstract elements or pictorial elements."[105]

Both Olins and Wheeler speak to the importance of a uniform meaning behind the brand, stressing the point that the brand must stand for something.[106] In the case of Canada, the brand stands for the federal government of Canada. What exactly 'Canada' means beyond that is slightly abstract, changeable, and subjective. This subjectivity

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[103] Wheeler, 7.
[104] This insight was also made by Brooke Jeffrey, Associate Professor, Concordia University, Personal Interview, 17 January 2006. Perhaps this action was also directed at subconsciously pleasing Quebeckers, whose provincial or "national" colour is also blue. It is reasonable to argue that if branding colour played no significance, this alteration would not have been made.
[105] Wheeler, 46.
[106] Olins, 3; Wheeler, 20; also see: Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0: Management Guide to Corporate Identity, 15.

allows for divergent views and identities to be gathered under the same logo, depending on the cultural perspective of the provincial viewer. If the government wishes to foster a more uniformly positive identification with the meaning and the symbol, rhetoric is required. Corporations seek to do this and if this positive perception is lost for any reason, the corporation changes names or the visual symbol is reinvented.[107] The CUIO provided rhetoric yet it is unclear to what degree it was able to impact Canadians. On the other hand, the Sponsorship Program operated in silence, and was therefore unable to "add" anything to the most basic sense of unity offered by the FIP symbols used within the program.

What becomes striking is that, aside from these differing goals, the federal government did not commit to furthering the development of their visual identity policy as stipulated by the FIP in order to meet the goals of the Sponsorship Program. In short, the Sponsorship Program relied on the principles of the FIP to attain the goal of unity, a goal that the FIP warns that it could not attain symbolically when it stated, as was shown above, that an identity program should not be used as a "cosmetic" to falsely represent the institution.[108]

The underlying tensions in Canada established the necessary motivation for the creation of the FIP and it adequately fulfilled the government's goal of creating a unified and consistent national image, perhaps marking a new type of nationalism at play. This insight is best articulated by Silk, Andrews, and Cole, "The *context* then and the

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[107] This is a very common marketing practice, whereby visual changes are utilized to promote sales. Examples include Levi's "tab" advertisements, Wolf Blass wine label alterations, and the abbreviation of Kentucky Fried Chicken to KFC.
[108] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0: Management Guide to Corporate Identity, 4.

processes through which national cultures are produced and reproduced are being transformed."[109] The FIP certainly adapted the government's visibility to the times; the FIP manual suggested that acts of rhetoric are to be carried out in various mediums, such as television, radio, and later even the Internet. McLuhan might argue that this new type of nationalism is an instance whereby technological extensions of ourselves served to quite literally change the way we are governed. The intense stimulus that is transmitted through television, a hot medium since no interpretation is required to complete the message, has altered human perception; creatures of habit, we have become more attuned to being stimulated yet less attuned to the stimulus that causes it.[110] Thus stimuli have had to evolve in order to reach their subjects with the intensity that they once did.

While the FIP has helped to regulate the Government of Canada's visual identity, limits inherent within the corporate identity approach to branding – namely a lack of theoretical appreciation for 'how' it works – render it a flawed program for promoting national unity. The corporate identity literature indicates that it is difficult to predict the strength and success of the symbols used within the programs. An examination of Olin's work makes one inclined to argue, as Blake does, that there is in fact little understanding as to why corporate identity works under any specific circumstances. In addition, Wheeler's more advanced understanding of symbols still does not allow insight into why certain symbols hold more power than others. Olins ends his manual by stating that there is no sure way of knowing that a symbol will obtain a positive response. Once the

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[109] Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole, "Corporate Nationalism(s)? The Spatial Dimensions of Sporting Capital" in <u>Sport and Corporate Nationalisms</u> eds. Michael L. Silk, David L. Andrews and C.L. Cole (Oxford; Berg, 2005), 7.
[110] McLuhan argues that television is a cool medium, see: McLuhan, <u>Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man</u>, 308-337. While perhaps television was a hot medium at the time he wrote, it certainly is not now.

identity names, colours and symbols have been selected, Olins suggests that it may be helpful to research the items independently.[111] This is a post-facto guide to symbol creation. Although he does not identify exactly what techniques could be used to do so, it can be inferred that the testing seeks to question a sample audience's reaction to each stimulus.

If it is unknown why Canadians react positively or negatively to Canada's symbols, it was a dangerous assumption that merely decorating the nation with these symbols, as was done during the Sponsorship Program, would generate a positive predictive response. The Sponsorship Program's creation should have been informed by not only the principles and guidelines of the FIP, but by the information residing within the theoretical gaps derived from short-sighted branding strategies that continue to underpin the principles of the FIP. In order to be predictably effective these theoretical gaps must be filled by literature on semiotics, the political imagination, and rhetorical frames.

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[111] Olins, 73.

CHAPTER 3

Symbols & Framing: A Necessary Relationship

"By stirring emotions and directing them round certain ideas and values,
a symbolic message can push and direct people to action in pursuit of particular goals or,
as often in the political context, against other people.
This is why symbols are always present in politics."

– Zdzislaw Mach[112]

The previous chapters have demonstrated that the Canadian government, while under Liberal leadership, invariably reacted to rises in Quebec separatism with either information or symbol-based public policy. While all the approaches (CUIO, Sponsorship Program, and the FIP) sought to boost the federal presence, all but the FIP were said to be unity driven. The timing of the creation of each policy corresponds with rises in separatism, thereby indicating the federal government's tendency towards reactionary identity policy. We have suggested that neither information nor symbol-based programs are adequate identity promoters on their own. Rather, an incorporation of the two is the optimal method of communication. The reason for this is that the physical characteristics of symbols allow them to evoke an emotional response from the viewer and this allows symbols the potential to be political unifiers. However, if the process of interpreting the symbol and assigning meaning to that symbol is uncontrolled, their positive interpretation relies on the political imagination as informed by the political culture of the viewer. Thus in order to control the uptake of the symbol, the symbol must, to borrow a phrase from

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[112] Zdzislaw Mach, Symbols, Conflict, and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology, (Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993), 36.

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Lakoff, be *framed* through thoughtful rhetoric to be effective. Any identity program aimed at unifying the nation must utilize symbols and frame the symbols with unifying rhetoric, and the last federal extension of identity policy under review, the Sponsorship Program, fails to adhere to these criteria.[113]

We will demonstrate the above argument by first situating the political imagination within the political context. This will shed light on the inherent strengths and difficulties of symbol communication and interpretation. Next we will discuss the syntactical limits of symbols, which shape the success of a given symbol as a powerful communicative tool. After analyzing the syntactical structures of the Canadian symbols that were utilized during the Sponsorship Program, we turn to rhetorical methods, which are able to accommodate for some of the limits of symbolic communication. It is through this constructed lens that we are able to evaluate the Sponsorship Program and to make recommendations for future visual identity promotion.

3.1   The Political Imagination

Political Culture and the Imaginative Context

The human desire to understand the world and to derive knowledge from such understanding is reflected in the creation and development of ideologies. Thomas Kuhn elaborated the assumptions underlying this concept through his theory of paradigmatic evolution wherein the paradigm represents a broadly articulated ideology. "The decision

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[113] I do not suppose that identity promotion alone could successfully result in a unified nation, I simply argue that if unifying efforts of this type are to be enlisted, the most effective and controlled means of communicating this effort would be through a blend of rhetorical and symbolic methods.

to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another."[114] In this sense, human beings are continually attempting to fit their world into frameworks of analysis from which understandings of human behaviour and the world can be derived. These ideological models of the world are, as Isaiah Berlin suggests, dependent upon cultural practices and concepts.[115] That is to say that these understandings are dependent upon a subjective interpretation of forms in the world and a necessarily subjective assignment of meaning to these forms. In this sense political culture forms the imaginative context through which any given individual's political imagination is filtered.

The concept "political culture" emerged as a lens of political inquiry for a short time in the 1960s and re-emerged again in the 1980s partly on account of surges in nationalism and the impacts of mass-communication on political behaviour.[116] While the approaches of the 1960s viewed politics and culture as separate and non-intertwining entities,[117] the two began to be seen as interacting, or at least as being involved in a mutually influential and complicated relationship. A commonly accepted definition of political culture during the 1960s was offered by Almond and Powell as "the "set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about politics current in a nation at a given time" affecting "the conduct of individuals in their political roles, the content of their political demands,

[114] Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions 2nd ed. Enl. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 77.
[115] Richard J. Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1976), 110-111.
[116] See: John Street, "Political Culture – From Civic Culture to Mass Culture" in British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 24, No. 1. (Jan., 1994), pp. 95-113; 96.
[117] See: Gabriel A. Almond and S. Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

and their responses to laws."[118] In this sense "culture" is given a significant role in shaping political outcomes, when and if adequate opportunity structures are in place.[119]

However, because politics and culture are in continuous dialogue, it is not possible to simply operationalize culture, as Almond and Powell or Merelman suggest one should, in order to understand its impact on politics.[120] As Polletta argues, "The point is that separating the spheres of "politics" and "culture" and treating only the latter as the source of mobilizing meanings obscures those meanings' relations to, and in some cases, sources in, political structures, institutions, processes, and macrohistorical changes."[121] Pateman agrees with Polletta, arguing that culture is shaped and affected by political institutions, and therefore political behaviour cannot be viewed as the pure outcome of political culture.[122] Determining precisely *which* cultural components *directly* impact political behaviour is therefore somewhat difficult since culture is embedded in politics and vice versa. In addition, it is a mistake to assume that all elements found within the 'culture' that the individual is situated within will translate into political preferences since, as Laitin and Beetham suggest, individuals are selective and preferential with

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[118] Gabriel A. Almond, and G. Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics: System, Process, and Policy, 2nd ed. (Boston, Little, Brown: 1978), 25.

[119] "Culture", Polletta suggested, is only able to impact the political world if actors are given structural opportunities. See: Francesca Polletta, "Snarls, Quacks, and Quarrels: Culture and Structure in Political Process Theory" in Sociological Forum, Vol. 14, No. 1. (Mar., 1999), pp. 63-70.

[120] Merelman was one of the first writers on 'political culture' and he initially argued that political behaviour could be understood as being directly shaped by political culture. See a more recent work: Richard Merelman, Partial Visions: Culture and Politics in Britain, Canada, and the United States, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 55.

[121] Francesca Polletta, "Snarls, Quacks, and Quarrels: Culture and Structure in Political Process Theory" in Sociological Forum, Vol. 14, No. 1. (Mar., 1999), pp. 63-70; 70.

[122] Carole Pateman, 'The Civic Culture: A Philosophic Critique', in Almond and Verba, Eds., The Civic Culture Revisited, pp. 57-102; 66-67. Also see: John Street, "Political Culture – From Civic Culture to Mass Culture" in British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1994), pp. 95-113; 105.

respect to the types of 'cultural' elements that affect their choices.[123] On the other hand, some elements *are* able to impact the individual subconsciously, escaping the constraints of reasoned thought.

Perhaps the most obvious route to uncovering political culture is to explore the elements that are able to influence what is contained within a particular societal context at a specific point in time, since there is no one static 'political culture' definition. First we need to give this culture a context, in the case of the Sponsorship Program, the context is Quebec since this is where a majority of "sponsorships" were awarded. In accordance with cultural theories, a variety of elements serves to influence, stimulate, and shape Quebec's culture: the media,[124] intellectuals,[125] public policy and specifically nation-building symbols and rituals conducted by the government and the citizenry.[126] What this translates to is that national symbols and acts of ritual are able to influence the context within which political preferences are shaped, and the context, as was seen in Chapters 1 and 2, shapes the way that national symbols are utilized. If we view 'political culture' as the political and territorial context within which various exogenous elements shape the individual's perspective as well as public policy, understanding the process whereby the individual interprets and assigns meaning to the world may offer insight into how and which elements impact and shape the individual's preferences.

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[123] See: David D. Laitin and Aaron Wildavsky, "Political Culture and Political Preferences" in The American Political Science Review, Vol. 82, No. 2 (June, 1988), pp. 589-597; 59, and; D. Beetham, The Legitimation of Power (Basingstoke, Hants: Macmillan, 1991), 106.
[124] For more on media see: Nayda Terkildsen and Frauke Schnell "How Media Frames Move Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women's Movement" in Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 4. (Dec., 1997), pp. 879-900.
[125] See Street, 111.
[126] See Laitin and Wildavsky, 592-3.

The Fundamental Uncertainty of Symbol Reception

In their analysis of individual and group perceptions of geography, Gould and White conclude that people form geographical mental maps out of a number of value based life experiences. These mental maps are then applied to individual/group interpretations of the geographical world thereafter.[127] According to the symbolically sensitive Carl Jung, assignment of meaning to the world can take place in both the unconscious and the conscious.[128] Essentially experiences beginning in early childhood, when memory perceptions begin to implant themselves, shape the way in which an individual views the world – these experiences can be solitary or shared – and they factor into perceptions of self and the world. These built-in perceptual biases make it unlikely that a group of individuals who have not shared identical life experiences will have similar perceptions of any given stimuli. That is to say that if an individual's perception of the world is based upon the imprints of unknown and uncontrollable stimuli, it is theoretically quite difficult to control both an individual's and a group's reaction to a widely (rather than individually) distributed stimuli. The authors emphasize that it is extremely difficult to change mental maps once they have been formed, as the individual is often unaware of their own personal biases.[129] Because 'mental maps' cause a variation in the interpretation of symbols, dependent upon the variety of parochial contexts within which individual maps are formed, the spread of symbols within the context of the previously presented identity programs cannot guarantee a unified uptake.

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[127] Peter Gould and Rodney White, Mental Maps 2nd ed., (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986).
[128] Jung would later develop this duality of consciousness into the heart of his theory. See: Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious" in Man and His Symbols, ed. Carl G. Jung, (New York: Dell Publishing Co.: 1968), 4-5.
[129] Ibid, 134-140.

Building on the insights offered by McLuhan in chapter 1 regarding the two-dimensional act of interpretation, the problem for actors wishing to sway individual political behaviour through initiatives like the Sponsorship Program is that individuals assign meaning to the world consciously and unconsciously, and the political imagination is shaped by a wide variety of uncontrolable elements.[130] In order to fill-in-the blanks of understanding, the individual, according to Adam Smith, uses philosophy:

> Philosophy, by representing the invisible chains which bind together all these disjointed objects, endeavours to introduce order into this chaos of jarring and discordant appearances, to allay this tumult of the imagination, and to restore it, when it surveys the great revolutions of the universe, to that tone of tranquillity and composure, which is both most agreeable in itself, and most suitable to its nature. Philosophy therefore may be regarded as one of those arts which address themselves to the imagination; and whose theory and history, upon that account, fall properly within the circumference of our subject.[131]

Thus in order to shape the understanding of an abstract symbol, imagination, along with all the philosophical, iconographic, narrative and scientific elements that seek to interpret it, are often necessary in order to understand the world, particularly when the stimulus is, to borrow again from McLuhan, a *cool* medium.

Subjectively interpreting the world promotes the creation of words or images as symbolic representatives of forms in the world and utilizing these symbolic referents as part of a vernacular implies an accepted meaning and understanding of these forms.

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[130] Extending Gould and White's conception of mental maps, the political imagination is the subjective and intersubjective process whereby the individual or group interprets and assigns meaning to the political world. It is basically understood as a place where the formation of myth, ideology, norms, beliefs and behaviours occurs, which in turn come to influence public political life. This place becomes one where meaning is consciously and unconsciously developed. See: Edgar Litt, The Political Imagination: Dialogues in Politics and Political Behaviour (Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1966), i.

[131] Adam Smith, "The Principles which lead and direct Philosophical Enquiries; illustrated by the History of Astronomy," in Adam Smith, Essays on Philosophical Subjects. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 1982), 45-46.

Human interpretations become symbolic objects – symbolic in the sense that they represent abstract realities – and these objects become manoeuvrable objects for thought: "And just as it is imagination which drives us on and on, so it is imagination which creates images for what, in its true essence, is beyond any imagination – symbols which we both respect and surpass since they both reveal and conceal the Highest, symbols which will be heightened with our higher grasp."[132] If each individual is limited by their own interpretive capabilities, which are shaped by previous experiences or mental maps, each individual will interpret a given stimulus in a unique way, particularly if no rhetoric is paired with the presentation of that symbol. The necessity for rhetoric has nothing to do with the willingness of human subjects to "uptake" the visual message. It's the fluidity of meaning in the image when promulgated without rhetorical support that causes the problem.

Stylized literature and symbols are persuasive tools of rhetoric. Not only is the relativity of objects to any particular context inescapable, but the rational processes are dependent upon the senses, and the visual senses allow for the most intelligible type of perception. One cannot think analytically in terms of smell and taste whereas "In vision and hearing, shapes, colors, movements, sounds, are susceptible to definite and highly complex organization in space and time. These two senses are therefore the media *par excellence* for the exercise of intelligence."[133] Along this vein, Chelkowski and Dabashi begin with the premise that human beings seek symbolic representation of their world:

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[132] Ibid, 372.

[133] Rudolf Arnheim, Arts and Visual Perception (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 18. It is important to note that although Arnheim makes this statement, the evidence that he offers in support of his claim that vision is the most intelligible of the senses needs development.

"Symbolically predisposed, man is more responsive to the visual than to the verbal. Even verbal stimuli must become visual interpretants before they can reach their vast public constituency."[134] In other words, human beings are naturally inclined to seek symbols as representatives of verbal dialogue, and the visual symbols are more powerful than the mere verbal utterance of these symbols.

This natural proclivity towards visual symbolic forms as extensions of identity is seen through the development of national symbols where symbols are utilized for their legitimizing and unifying qualities. Considered as tools for rendering social cohesion, national symbols have their roots in tribal clan development, in the form of totems, as well as in royal ruling families, as a means of social control.[135] Originally, national coats of arms acted as iconic referents of state, yet these arms were quickly simplified to more abstract images, allowing for quick identification and higher visibility. As visual shortcuts to greater meaning, symbols are able to represent constructed dialogues and can therefore act as centralizing rallying points. It is the human tendency to seek visual referents and assign these icons with meaning that grants symbols unifying potential,

> The flag is the emblem of a coherent group identity that in principle expresses the shared values of that group and distinguishes it from all others. Theoretically, the claim for the universality of these values is encapsulated in the reductive symbolism of the flag. The ability of human beings to endow material objects with meaning is especially seen in the signifying functions of flags. Flags are symbols through which independent countries proclaim their identity and sovereignty, and they can inspire soldiers to sacrifice their lives for the glory and honour of their nation.[136]

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[134] Peter Chelkowski and Hamid Dabashi, Staging A Revolution: The Art of Persuasion in the Islamic Republic of Iran (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 34.
[135] Karen A. Cerulo Identity Designs: The Sights and Sounds of a Nation (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 12; and also see, Albert Biome, The Unveiling of the National Icons (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 20 and 12.
[136] Biome, 20.

National symbols became key tools in the legitimization of the state through the requirements of nationalists to concretize the ideology of nationalism. Franks has argued that the relationship between state and nation is an exhibit wherein the state is the mannequin, the nation is the dress, and the state actors the grand designers: "Modern political analysts have concluded that, to the contrary in fact, nations do not create states, but rather states create nations. A political entity comes first, and it moulds the people into what we know as the nation part of a nation-state. The process demands the creation of myths about the nation and national origins."[137] National symbols are therefore elite constructions that were originally intended to enhance nation-building functions. The myths are often represented by the creation of simple symbolic forms in the public consciousness, examples include the bluenose ship found on the Canadian dime; the beaver engraved on the Canadian nickel, and; the maple leaf imposed on the flag, the penny, and various provincial coats of arms. These symbolic *shortcuts*, while they are representatives of myths and historical stories, remain fluid in their potential for meaning and only come to take on additional (and more fixed) meanings through rhetorical support.

While national symbols were originally elite-designed tools of social cohesion, their power is derived from the public's adherence to them. Cohen takes this even further by suggesting that "Social relationships develop through and are maintained by symbols."[138] That is to say that not only are symbols reflectors of the political culture, they are shapers of it as well. Cohen goes on to say that, "we 'see' groups through their

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[137] C.E.S. Franks The Myths and Symbols of the Constitutional Debate in Canada (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1993), 34.

[138] Abner Cohen Two Dimensional Man (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 30.

symbols." [139] In her analysis of the national symbols of 180 Nations, Cerulo pushes the point even further suggesting that, "By blending subject and object, national symbols move beyond simple representation of nation. In a very real sense, national symbols become the nation."[140] What Cohen and Cerulo are suggesting is that these symbols are not merely elite creations; they have come to represent vast numbers of people. That is to say that somehow, these elite-created symbols have come to resonate with the public as publicly owned and therefore unifying symbols of nationhood.[141] Their popularity grants these symbols greater power when they are used as public mobilizers.

3.2 The Syntactical Restraints on Visual Extensions of National Identity

However, not all national symbols can carry on these unifying and legitimizing functions; their potential for carrying these functions is largely dependent upon their syntactical structure. The evolution of Canadian and Quebec national symbols demonstrates that the syntactical structure of national symbols impacts the symbol's ability to carry a message and, to a certain extent, determines what type of message can be carried by that symbol. Semiotics literature substantiates these findings and accounts for what the branding literature lacked, i.e. specific syntactical criteria for symbols to meet in order to be politically effective. However, the evolution of Canadian symbols also demonstrates that syntax alone cannot predict whether a national symbol can carry a specific message, since abstract representatives can be imbued with specific meanings.

[139] Cohen, 30.

[140] Cerulo, 4.

[141] For more on legitimization and unity promotion see Eric Hobsbawm and Elzbieta Halas, "Public Symbols and Polish Identity. Change and Ambiguity of Meaning in State Holidays Calendar of the Third Republic of Poland" in Studies in Sociology: Symbols, Theory and Society Vol. 1, ed. Elzbieta Halas (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 86-87.

Therefore national symbol design must take syntactical principles as well as social context into consideration.

The syntactical characteristics of symbols determine in part the longevity of the symbol and what type of message can be carried by that symbol. According to Rudolf Arnheim's principles, the Canadian symbols of national identity that were used within the identity programs were syntactically sound symbols of nationhood. Arnheim distinguishes between three general functions pertaining to images: *picture*, *sign* and *symbol*.[142] Each is described in relation to abstractness. A picture is more abstract than what it represents, a sign abstractly represents a concrete something, and a symbol "portrays things which are at a higher level of abstractness than the symbol itself."[143] In describing these signs, Arnheim proposes that their features are purposefully selected to suit their function. The Canadian and Quebec flags and the Canada wordmark are symbols and signs, but they are not pictures. The flags and logo are signs in the sense that they abstractly represent concrete territories – but concrete in only the basic physical sense and even the physical "concreteness" of Canada may have to change if such threats as Quebec secessionism come to fruition. The flags and logos are more accurately described as symbols because they refer to abstract notions of Canada and Quebec. Canada and Quebec represent many things – people, culture, art, education, technology, industry, government, etc. – and these things can change but the flag and the logo will continue to represent the relevant territory. Therefore the flags and the logo are symbols of the values that constitute that territory.

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[142] Arnheim, "Chapter 8: Pictures, Symbols and Signs".
[143] Arnheim, 136-9.

But not all flags and logos are able to carry abstract meaning. Arnheim distinguishes between *part-time* and *full-time* symbols. He suggests that very realistic images may discourage identification since these realistic images could be restricted to time and space.[144] This would make the image *part-time*. Arnheim offers as an example the image of a train and describes how it is perceived differently from generation to generation. By maintaining a certain level of abstraction, it is more likely that the symbols that are placed together on a national flag can continue to represent the nation throughout time. It is through this abstract quality that the symbol becomes a *full-time* symbol. But abstract symbols rely on explanatory context: "It is the context that will decide whether a cross is to be read as a religious or an arithmetical sign or symbol or whether no semantic function at all is intended, as in the crossbars of a window."[145] So, although abstract images may be longer-term symbols, they are reliant upon the context and rhetoric to ensure this longevity.

Even very abstract images may need to alter in order to signify great changes within the nation. Therefore phonetic symbols do matter in terms of their phatic meaning and even seemingly full-time abstract symbols may have limitations. The United Kingdom's flag had to alter slightly to accommodate for the change within the Empire, which without alteration, would visually undermine the inclusion of Ireland. The Canadian flag also had to alter in order to create a symbol that aesthetically represented the French. The predecessors to the red and white maple leaf flag were short-term and deviant symbols since they represented the historical dominance of the French by the

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[144] Ibid, 140.
[145] Ibid, 143.

English.[146] The Quebec flag had to evolve to remove the image of the sacred heart since the heart was a strong symbol of Catholicism, and one that no longer represented the Quebec majority. As such, the phatic success of a national flag is contingent upon the recognition that some symbols can become short-term when they come to represent certain ideologies that are no longer accepted by those whom the symbol is to represent.

Yet no symbol is guaranteed longevity in meaning if no message is successfully attached to that symbol. The relationship between syntax and meaning is best understood through J.L. Austin's syntactical lexicon.[147] Austin suggested that the application of language be distinguished between the *phonetic,* the *phatic,* and the *rhetic* acts.[148] These terms also serve to usefully define the text of the symbol. A phonetic act is simply "the act of uttering certain noises," a phatic act "the uttering of certain vocables or words," and a rhetic act "the performance of an act using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference."[149]

To use this lexicon to evaluate the Sponsorship Program, we must apply it to flags and logos since both were utilized within the program. With respect to flags, phonetic symbols are the basic shapes and colours, absent of meaning. For example, when

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[146] Deviant symbols "fail to meet the anticipated strategies by which their audiences communicate. Thus, deviant symbols distort the symbolic grammar common to the groups represented by the symbols." For more see: Cerulo, 120-121.

[147] While Austin wrote ostensibly about language, due to the minimal theorizing found on the political uses of symbols this study extends and applies J.L. Austin's understanding of the syntax and meaning behind language, which are symbolic constructions, to the national symbols that are built upon them

[148] J.L. Austin, How to Do Things With Words (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 94-95.

[149] Ibid, 95. To Austin's lexicon we add that a symbol's meaning can be overtaken through active rhetoric paired with rhetic acts.

speaking of the Canadian flag, phonetics would refer to the red and white, the shapes, and the cloth that these symbols are placed upon. This is the text of the flag. A phatic act represents how all of the symbols join together to represent a particular meaning. Phatic meaning is dependent upon the text, intent, and context of the flag. A rhetic act occurs for symbols when the meaning attached at the phatic level is accepted and then that phatic symbol is applied in different contexts. For example, the use of the Canadian flag in the Olympics to represent the nation of Canada. The Government of Canada's wordmark 'Canada', which was created as part of the FIP and applied in the Sponsorship Program, utilizes the 'd' as a flagpole to mount a Canadian flag above the last 'a.' Phonetically speaking, the 'Canada' logo refers to the letters, colours, and the abstract shapes of the wordmark, absent of meaning when isolated. Phatically, the shapes and letters of the logo come to represent the Government of Canada. The rhetic act refers to the employment of the logo, as defined by the FIP.

The tortured relationship between syntax and meaning is easily demonstrated through the historical evolution of Canadian and Quebec flags. Not all were in agreement with Pearson's rationale that a new flag was even necessary. Talk of putting the old red ensign to rest sparked great controversy and debate – those who favoured the red ensign rallied under Diefenbaker's leadership while those opting for change followed Pearson.[150] Diefenbaker believed that the red ensign already signified Canada while Pearson felt that the flag, as historically constituted could not adequately represent the people of Quebec if they were to be included as equal partners. 20-20 hindsight suggests that Pearson was on the mark; the red ensign was in fact too English for the Quebec people to identify with.

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[150] John Ross Matheson Canada's Flag: A Search for a Country (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1980), 5-10. Also see chapter 1.

Carrying on the symbolic war between the French and the English (rooted in the more palpable battles fought between the English and French founders), French Quebecers reacted negatively to the red ensign, spawning the provincial government's adoption of Quebec's current fleurs-de-lis as a national flag (1946), which is tellingly similar to the original French flag that touched Canadian soil. While English Canada has become more deliberately unity-focused over the years, Quebec has used the predominance of the French language to maintain their cultural and political independence. It is then not surprising that the syntax of the Canadian flag needed to accommodate this new focus since the previous flag did not allow for an asymmetrical federal identity, nor is it surprising that the Quebec flag has changed very little given the relative lack of development in the basic grounds for francophone independence.

Conversely the English speaking parts of Canada required several syntactical shifts to accommodate the rapidly evolving conditions of the British as well as their own federation. The first English flag to touch Canadian soil was the St. George's Cross (a red cross on a white banner) carried by John Cabot in 1497. In 1760 the Royal Union flag (Union Jack) became Upper Canada's flag. Changes to the composition of the United Kingdom resulted in the syntactical modification of the Union Jack in 1801 and this required a modification of the Canadian flag: The Union Jack was modified symbolically to include Ireland (by the addition of St. Patrick's Cross) who joined UK members Scotland and Britain.[151] In 1870, the Red Ensign, which was the British Merchant marine flag, was adopted in Canada, which included a small Union Jack in the top left corner and

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[151] Canada, "Canadian Heritage", Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada Website: http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm ((Retrieved 1 April 2005).

a shield that continuously altered with the inclusion of additional provinces to the federation until 1924 when the shield was replaced with the Canadian coat of arms.[152] The flag that replaced the Red Ensign and the one that is in current use today is the red and white maple leaf flag, which was adopted in 1965.

The history of the Canadian flag demonstrates a strict association with Canada's British heritage. These flags were either completely or in part borrowed from the motherland. The creation of the maple leaf flag in 1965 marks a distinctive and purposeful movement away from an overtly British national symbol to represent Canadian identity, despite the reality that Canada had gained independence as a nation many decades earlier. Naturally, the English symbols (the St. George's Cross and the Union Jack) that were the basis of the Canadian national flags prior to 1965 represented Great Britain's implicit Conquest of Quebec's past. As a nation that has difficulty in forgetting (illustrated by the motto "je me souviens" on Quebec license plates), it was very unlikely that the Quebec people would somehow "forget" that the British stole their independence. By 1965 it was apparent that the federal government would have to alter the visual syntax of the symbol of the state to better accommodate Quebec within the federation. This alteration marked the moment a new type of nationalism was brought to bear; no longer would the Canadian symbol imply a message of English dominance.

While the syntax of the maple leaf flag was purposefully selected by the government as an already extant "Canadian" symbol, the maple leaf and the abstract red bars that form the Canadian flag were not on their own popularly associated with Canadian national identity until the government promoted it as such. According to the

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[152] Ibid.

government of Canada website, the maple leaf was selected because it was an already

established symbol of Canada; it had been recorded as a bi-partisan symbol of Canada as

early as 1700.[153] The maple leaf was viewed as a national unifier since maple trees

scattered the lands of both French and English Canada.[154] The rhetoric on the Canadian

government's pamphlets and website even tries to cast the syntactical net to pre-date the

two founding solitudes by asserting that Aboriginal peoples used the maple sap for its

dietary qualities.[155] In addition, the coat of arms of Canada (1924), Ontario (1868),

Quebec (1868), and Saskatchewan (1906) contain maple leaves.[156] Considering the maple

leaf flag was created on February 15, 1965, the fact that the maple leaves were part of

these heraldic symbols prior to the creation of the flag indicates that the maple leaves did

have some historical weight within Canada. However, a distinction must be made

between the intention behind a symbol, and the way it is perceived.[157] Thus even if the

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[153] "In 1834, Ludger Duvernay is reported to have proposed the maple leaf as an emblem of Canada when the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste was founded on June 24 of that year. In 1836, *Le Canadien,* a newspaper published in Lower Canada, referred to it as a suitable emblem for Canada. In August 1860, at a public meeting held in Toronto, the maple leaf was adopted as the national emblem of Canada for use in the decorations for the Prince of Wales' visit. In 1867, Alexander Muir, a Toronto schoolmaster and poet, composed the song *The Maple Leaf Forever.* In 1914, many Canadian soldiers wore the maple leaf on their military badges, and it was the dominant symbol used by many Canadian regiments serving in the Great War (World War I). In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, numerous Canadian troops once again used the maple leaf as a distinctive emblem, displaying it on regimental badges and Canadian army and naval equipment." Canada, "Canadian Heritage", Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada Website: http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm, (1 April 2005).
[154] Ibid.
[155] Canada, "Canadian Heritage".
[156] Government of Canada, Canadian Heritage, *Symbols of Canada* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2002), 22.
[157] See: Canada, "Canadian Heritage". This same Government of Canada Website declares that, "Time and again in history, red and white are found as the colours of France or of England." So too is the color blue, however, which managed to stay out of the Canadian symbol and is also Quebec's national colour.

presence of maple leaves in Canadian history is a not overstated by the federal government, the leaf on its own did not resonate as a symbol of national identity until it was abstracted and rhetorically imbued with national meaning. Thus while the national symbol is an extension of national identity, it required national unity rhetoric to gain the meaning of unification.

While the federal flags were markedly "British" until the creation of the red and white maple leaf, which evolved with the federal government's need to transmit a unity-slanted message with the nation's flag, the evolution of Quebec's flags suggests a more consistent syntactical focus paired with an even more consistent message. The first French flag to touch Canadian soil was the fleurs-de-lis (golden fleurs-de-lis on a blue banner) carried by Jacques Cartier in 1534. King Louis VII was the first to use the lily as a national icon of France. Although Quebec's flags have fluctuated throughout time, they have always been syntactically French. Two other very French symbols were employed for a short time: The Carillon, a huge banner displaying the icon of the Catholic Virgin Mary, and; a flag of three horizontal stripes of color – green, white, and red – both held ground in Lower Canada for a short time. The latter flag gained popularity with its association with the Jean Baptiste Society.[158] Then, when France's current flag was established in 1854, "It served as the flag of all French-speaking Canadians and Americans until the early 20th century."[159] However, by the beginning of the 20th century, Quebeckers' desire for a new flag began to emerge to replace France's tricolor with a flag

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[158] Claude Paulette, "The Fleurdelisé flag," Online, Retrieved from the Quebec Government Website: http://www.gouv.qc.ca/wps/portal/pgs/commun/portrait/drapeausymboles?lang=en, (1 December 2005).
[159] Ibid.

that said "French" rather than "France." At this time, the fleurs-de-lis came back when, in 1902, Father Elphège Filiatrault created a new Carillon flag. This flag was quite similar to the current Quebec flag; the main difference being that the fleurs-de-lis were set diagonally. In 1903 this same flag, except with a sacred heart placed at the centre, was accepted in Quebec City "as the national emblem of French Canadians."[160] As a delayed reaction to the Red Ensign, which was not viewed with favor amongst Quebeckers, 1948 witnessed the creation of the version of the Quebec flag that is seen today, with the simple removal of the sacred heart from the previous flag.[161] While both the syntax and the message of the federal flag altered significantly over time, the syntactical message of the Quebec flag remained constant despite the utilization of France's tricolor flag for half of a century. Quebec's movement back to its original flag is in line with the *"je me souviens"* mindset whereby Quebeckers keep in touch with their original roots.

Syntactical abstractness, which is first contingent upon its lack of meaning or at least on the neutrality of its uptake absent of rhetoric, was a necessary feature for Canada's national symbol since it allowed the symbol to carry on new meaning and to better represent the diversity within Canada's borders, specifically within Quebec. One might conclude that the syntactical abstractness is precisely what is needed in Canada since it is a very diverse nation. That is to say that symbols that are free of negative meaning are more likely to maintain their longevity and fulfil their nation-building roles. Aberbach and Walker suggest that diverse political movements tend to choose very vague

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[160] Claude Paulette, "The Fleurdelisé flag."
[161] Ibid.

and abstract symbols to carry on the meaning of the group at large.[162] Therefore syntactical abstractness allows for a basic sense of identification and a broad range of interpretation. Or in David Kertzer's terminology what is obtainable through abstractness is "solidarity without consensus."[163] While the symbol may have a basic territorial or national meaning, individuals can associate a broad range of positive or negative emotions and values with it. However, symbols used in such diverse societies must be selected with caution since what constitutes a "neutral" symbol is contextually based and varies with the contents of the political imagination.

A certain level of symbol abstractness is necessary, Arnheim asserts, to permit the evocation of an emotional response. Because the emotional response is shaped by the parochial cultural contents of an individual's political imagination, an emotional response can be powerful yet difficult to control since it is hard to determine precisely what is held in the political imaginations of a large and diverse public. The relationship between abstractness and emotion is also easily understood through the lens of McLuhan's *hot* and *cool* argument, where an abstract symbol remains *cool* (necessitating viewer participation) if it is not paired with rhetoric. The symbol is able to, as Mach suggests, "inspire" emotion, and this emotion is in turn applied to the completion of the message.[164] Yet the inspirational power of nationalist emotions does not rest solely on the phonetic nature of the symbol, it can be enhanced and empowered through nationalistic rhetoric. Morris contends: "The strength of emotional response to a symbol is, like its meaning,

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[162] Joel Aberbach and Jack Walker "The Meaning of Black Power: A Comparison of White and Black Interpretations of a Symbol," in <u>American Political Science Review</u>, June, 64: 367-388, 1970), 367.
[163] David Kertzer in Morris, 4.
[164] Mach, 28.

highly contextual and individual."[165] To bring clarity to both, and to shape the uptake of

the symbol, it is vital to frame the symbol in such a way that the message cannot be

ignored.[166]

The stylized nature of both the maple leaf and of the fleurs-de-lis may militate

towards their longevity as symbols as long as their rhetic usages and the rhetoric paired

with those applications solidifies their specified meanings. Coincidentally, Arnheim

refers specifically to the maple leaf when theorizing about visual images:

> Identification can only be obtained by what the men in the trade call "Strong
> penetration," that is, insistent re-enforcement of the association of signifier and referent,
> as exemplified by religious emblems (Cross, Star of David), flag designs (Canada's
> maple leaf, Japan's rising sun), or the Red Cross.[167]

Strong penetration indicates that a specific message is continuously associated with or

attached to a symbol. To push Arnheim's conception of penetration further, where this

penetration is not adequately achieved, the symbol can come to mean something other

than what was intended. Specifically, a symbol's meaning can always be vulnerable to a

new meaning by re-framing its rhetic uses with rhetoric. This concept runs counter to

E.H. Gombrich's suggestion that form always follows function.[168] Gombrich's theory

implies that a symbol will only come into existence when there is a function for it. To

challenge Gombrich's assertion, one could claim that it is possible for a form to exist as

one function but then be adapted to a new function. In this case, function would follow

form. For example, the swastika was said to be a symbol of peace associated with

Buddhism, but the Nazi party was able to capture this symbol to represent the Nazi cause.

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[165] Morris, 5-6.
[166] For more on the emotive capacities of symbols, see Charles D. Elder and Roger W. Cobb, The Political Uses of Symbols (New York & London: Longman Inc., 1983), 116-118.
[167] Arnheim, 145.
[168] E.H. Gombrich, The Essential Gombrich (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 375.

But perhaps Gombrich's theory is not incorrect in this case, since the Buddhists were not successful in attaching the peaceful meaning to the symbol in such a way as to render it immune from symbolic reallocation. In order to solidify the meaning behind any one symbol, it is vital to actively use that symbol and pair it with widespread rhetoric that continuously reinforces the desired message. Widespread rhetoric is necessary in an increasingly interconnected world since the increased visibility of symbols requires that the subjective assignment of meaning to that symbol be unified in order to obtain "strong penetration." Rhetoric paired with rhetic acts of that symbol can challenge and overtake the phatic and rhetic meaning of a symbol if no strong penetration is attained.

3.3   Beyond Abstraction: Framing the Symbol's Uptake

While the phonetic and phatic nature of national flags has been shown to be vital but not sufficient for the longevity and penetration of a national flag, the rhetic uses of the flag are key to it becoming associated with the state and therefore with the state's goals. To ensure that a particular message or emotion is communicated with the symbol, strong nationalist rhetoric needs to be paired with these rhetic acts. Building on George Lakoff's conception of *framing*, I argue that while symbols and rhetoric are respectively good tools of communication, a powerful pairing of strong symbol syntax and deliberate symbol framing through rhetoric will result in an optimal use of visual identity communication, particularly in an era saturated with a multiplicity of media. However, while the role of rhetoric is necessary, it is not alone a sufficient condition of symbolic uptake by the citizenry. Indeed the problems inherent in the use of rhetoric have been discussed since at least Plato's time.

W.T. Mitchell argues that meaning in the world is contingent upon the strength of rhetoric within inter-subjective deliberation. The word is made manifest through, what Mitchell calls, synthetic discourse; discourse is created and rhetoricians must either be knowledgeable or able to persuade or promote discussion framed around their perspectives.[169] However, rhetoric as a communicative tool has gained a negative stigma, typified as a manipulative tool of persuasion, as far back as Plato who claimed, "He who would be a skilled rhetorician has no need of truth."[170] Plato addressed the role of rhetoric and leadership claiming that a rhetorician is deceitful and is only able to construct myths based upon his skills rather than his knowledge of the truth. Social constructivist theorists also seek to deconstruct the rhetorical frames created by leaders in order to identify the power that they hold over shaping the ideas and values that govern society. In attempting to derive how particular social beliefs come about, social constructivists have concluded that there are certain key players in society who are able to influence the way that a vast majority of individuals view their world. Joel Best refers to these key players as "claims-makers".[171] These claims-makers, typically high profile individuals, are able to typify issues by emphasizing certain points and omitting others. Among these claims-makers are high-status individuals such as doctors, professors, and government officials who garner power by virtue of their titles. John Johnson, also a social constructivist, outlines tactics that are used by claims-makers to shape ideas. Some of these tactics are: evoking a negative emotional reaction, disembodiment of interaction (where the story told is one-

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[169] W.J.T. Mitchell, Picture Theory (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 220-9.
[170] Plato, "Phaedrus" (Retrieved Online 10 January 2005): http://classics.mit.edu//Plato/phaedrus.html.
[171] John Johnson in Images of Issues: Typifying Contemporary Social Problems (ed. Joel Best), (New York, Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 1995), 18-35.

sided yet made to seem as typical), decontextualization (where an anomaly is made into a generalization), and reliance on official sources (using auctors to gain validity).[172] Rhetoricians use tactics to shape issues and mould public perception. Due to its negative stigma some political actors have shied away from a reliance on rhetoric and while there might be excellent philosophical reasons for doing so, omit its use altogether, particularly in association with symbols. This is a very poor strategic choice since, Plato's concerns notwithstanding, rhetoric remains a potentially powerful tool for persuasion and communication. In Murray Edelman's words, "Through language a group can not only achieve an immediate result but also win the acquiescence of those whose lasting support is needed. More than that it is the talk and response to it that measures political potency."[173] Therefore the federal government's ability to generate a positive language will determine whether it is able to promote a positive affiliation with the federal government and with national unity.

Language as a symbolic construction owns some of the same emotive-evoking capabilities as the national icons described above, only it operates on a more cognitive plane since a successfully communicated message through language requires cognitive deconstruction in order to be understood. Language is a powerful symbolic tool that operates in the aural, oral, and visual sensory realms. Phatic language is inherently symbolic since the words come to represent something else. Language can also be both phatically and rhetically political. Clearly some aspects of language can have direct political phatic meaning, such as the words "secession," "federalism," and "referendum."

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 114.

Language is rhetically powerful as a consequence of how the words are put together, which words are emphasized, and who is speaking the words. It follows then that rhetic language is also symbolic since it relies on phatic language.

Gerald Mast's "On Framing" details how framing is a cinematic art whereby the still frames or photos are pieced together then edited and spliced before sound is added. Through this process, an entirely unique artwork is produced; the end product results in a new frame.[174] Applying this cinematic template to the political realm, because politics truly can be a "production", it is possible to see how the piecing together of certain ideas or themes and the omission of others paired with the articulation of a specific message may serve to shape the worldview of the targeted participants. The link between cinema and politics is not coincidental, since the various media forms are said to have a great influence on the public's perception of the world, and in turn savvy political actors are able to capitalize on this reach through media control.[175] Theories on agenda setting, priming, and framing demonstrate the impact of ideas in the media on shaping public political perceptions.

Lakoff brings something unique to the issue of symbolic syntax: he describes the need to speak a language of values through frames in order to ensure political uptake of complex issues. In his analysis of the rhetorical strategies of the Republican and Democratic political parties in the United States, he suggests that the Republicans have

[174] Gerald Mast, "On Framing" in Critical Inquiry, Vol. 11, No. 1. (Sep., 1984), pp. 82-109.
[175] See: Stephen P. Nicholson and Robert M. Howard, "Framing Support for the Supreme Court in the Aftermath of Bush v. Gore" in The Journal of Politics, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Aug., 2003), pp. 676-695, and Nayda Terkildsen and Frauke Schnell, "How Media Frames Move Public Opinion: An Analysis of the Women's Movement" in Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 4. (Dec., 1997), pp. 879-900.

been more successful than the Democrats at *framing* their ideas. Lakoff uses his analysis as a general guide intended for "progressives" who are seeking to understand and combat the conservative stronghold on America. His "guide" is useful when applied to the federal goal of national unity since it teaches "how to" convince the citizenry to side with your worldview. Considering for a moment the Canadian case, polling data indicates that only approximately 20 percent of Quebeckers are strict separatists, in that they always respond "yes" to Quebec sovereignty questions. Meanwhile the largest percentage of voters polled remained "undecided."[176] It is this bracket of undecided voters that are, or should be, the target of federal unity identity programs since it is they who will vote for or against the unity of the nation in the next referendum, if such a referendum is to come. From the federalist perspective there is a serious need to persuade this public to view the nation in line with the local federalists in order to attain unity. That is to say that Lakoff's work is applicable since the desire on the part of the "progressives" to combat the conservative stronghold over the minds and hearts of the American public is similar to the desire of the federal government to combat the separatist sentiments within the minds and hearts of the Quebec people.

Lakoff argues that this is attainable through proper framing, which is essentially a game of perception, or a type of rhetoric: "Framing is about getting language that fits your worldview. It is not just language. The ideas are primary – and the language carries

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[176] This is according to 1997 data, yet the numbers also reflect the average of a 7 year sample (1991-1997). See: Canadian Opinion Research Archive, "Sovereignty: Quebec – National Support for Independence" in Select Public Opinion Trends Series Online: www.queensu.ca/cora (10 January 2007).

those ideas, evokes those ideas."[177] Ideas and values are primary to Lakoff's model, although conventional rhetoric does have a deciding role to play. In attempting to rally political support, framers must utilize a clear and consistent language of values.[178] The power of framing lies in continuously and consistently addressing the world through *your* rhetorical constructs: constructs that are designed to trigger positive emotions towards your value perspective. While the FIP created a federal visual identity that was consistent and continuous, it did not create a value-based language under the same criteria. Similarly the CUIO sought to promote Canadian identity yet it failed to promote the idea of unity in a technologically far-reaching way. Perhaps the current Canadian Heritage advertisements that seek to promote Canadian values and a Canadian identity are closest to being on the right track to developing this language of ideas and values since they do pair Canadian symbols with positive Canadian rhetoric. Nevertheless these advertisements alone do not create a sufficiently strong language imbued with nationalistic value-laden meaning since they are limited in their scope and reach.

Framing works because it creates a language with the public that is sensitive to both the immediate impact of verbal markers as well as the more diffuse but potentially overwhelming power of emotional symbolism. This language works to decrease the ambiguity and difficulty of connecting with the more difficult to decipher political imagination. Like semiotics authors, Lakoff lends credence to his framing argument by crediting neuroscience;

> Neuroscience tells us that each of the concepts we have – the long-term concepts that structure how we think – is instantiated in the synapses of our brains. Concepts are not

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[177] George Lakoff, don't think of an elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004), 4.
[178] Lakoff, 100-107.

things that can be changed just by someone telling us a fact. We may be presented with facts, but for us to make sense of them, they have to fit what is already in the synapses of the brain.[179]

In other words, framing works because it creates a value-laden language within the public that is easily accessible thereby allowing a message to be easily and positively interpreted. Once this language is established, the citizenry relates to the ideas that it carries much more readily.

Lakoff suggests that it is necessary to base your arguments on your party's frames rather than on those of your opponents. In the Canadian case this requires the federal government to create and consistently promote its own terms as opposed to those used by Quebec separatists. When debating topics of national unity, the Canadian government ought to always frame the topic as a "unity" topic rather than a "secession" topic since "If you keep their language and their framing and just argue against it, you lose because you are reinforcing their frame."[180] While Lakoff does not specifically detail the potential of symbols to reinforce frames, because symbols are cognitive short cuts and have the ability to promote group identification, they are optimal tools for helping to solidify the federal framing language within the minds and hearts of Canadian citizens. Symbolic forms become extensions of the national unity frame and when the symbols are used, they reinforce that frame.

Symbols and frames are two very influential approaches to the problems inherent in political communication. The multidimensional nature of mass media necessitates strong visual identity policy since the influx of exposure to symbolic forms requires the

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[179] Lakoff, 17.
[180] Lakoff, 33.

political actor to be consistent and rigorous with her symbol's presentation. Branding practices offer some insight on how to use symbols effectively, particularly in visual competition with the private sector whose number of symbols far exceeds that of the federal government. Yet symbols alone cannot effectively communicate a specific message since an abstract symbol is a *cool* medium necessitating a degree of interpretation that evokes an emotional response in the political imagination. Symbols *are* able to act as unifiers, but the creation of national unity also implies the need to confront and accommodate difference. However, the use of national symbols as a representative of "unity" also symbolically excludes some potential citizens. In Litt's words, "The shared symbols, interests, affection, and real or imagined traits which draw some men together into the group or community are the walls that separate those men from others."[181] Therefore Canadian national symbols utilized in the context of federal "unity" promotion in Quebec, where upwards of nearly half of the population have voted not to be a part of the Canadian federation are likely effective only to those who already feel unified within the federation. The danger arises when the internal factions within the nation do not subscribe to Canadian national symbols; it is possible for them to utilize these symbols to promote the differences between themselves and the centre.[182] The autumn of maple leaf flags that landed in Quebec during the course of the Sponsorship Program was able to

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[181] Edgar Litt, Ethnic politics in America: beyond pluralism (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1970), 4.
[182] Such was the case during the Iranian revolution where the American flag and other American symbols, such as Uncle Sam, were artistically manipulated to resemble snakes, communist symbols, and guns. For examples of these images, see: Chelkowski and Dabashi, 74, 79, 89, and 92.

provoke the now famous "red rag" comment from Bernard Landry.[183] More comments of this sort in a consistent and rigorous manner may have resulted in an overtaking of the federal symbol's meaning within the Quebec consciousness, specifically for those "undecided" Quebeckers who have not taken a clear stance on the issue of a unified Canada. Because the Sponsorship Program silently promoted the federation, the door was left open to negative stigmatization of Canada's national symbols. That is to say that symbols alone are vulnerable to reconversion of their meaning and the meaning behind Canada's symbols could have been negatively overtaken if more credence was given to Landry's comment.[184]

Incorporating Lakoff's framing strategy in tandem with principles of the corporate branding method is essential since, by actively attaching a specific message with the symbol, the symbol becomes *hot* thereby creating a more controlled uptake of that symbol in line with the views of the political actor. If the framing language is one imbued with the value of national unity, every rhetic act will support and strengthen the goal of unity. Certainly since rhetoric and symbols alone could not bind a divided nation, the federal government would have to, as Lakoff suggests, attempt to reflect a Canadian identity that is acceptable to all Canadians rather than simply blanketing on a federalist-centric or "English" identity perspective. No visual identity program should embark on the visual promotion of Canada without being paired with effective, value positive

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[183] BBC News, "Maple leaf 'rag' remark sparks row" in BBC News: Americas, Online, 24 January 2001, Retrieved from BBC News Online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1135490.stm (14 March 2007).

[184] To gain clarity on how conscious the leadership was of the need (and/or opportunity) to neutralize the federal government's use of the flag as a unifying symbol during the referendum, it would be helpful in future works to interview PQ operatives who were politically involved during the Sponsorship Program's operation.

rhetoric. No rhetorical program, Lakoff suggests, will be successful if it is operated under principles of deception.[185]

3.4 Theory Meets Practice: Evaluating the Sponsorship Program

The Sponsorship Program was a theoretically flawed reaction-driven program. The program sought to utilize national symbols as a silent strategy for promoting the nation in the politically unstable and emotionally exhausted context of the 1995 Quebec referendum. While symbols can be powerful unifiers and tools of state legitimization, the instability of their interpretation, as influenced by the contents of the political imagination, prevents a consistent uptake of their interpretation. Thus silently utilizing the symbols of the state to promote the nation, particularly when these symbols had been the "No" rallying symbols during the Quebec referendum was a very poor choice. As was shown above, one way of perhaps "skirting" a negative symbol interpretation as dictated by the contents of the political imagination is to *frame* the symbol. These active rhetorical frames enhance the attachment of a particular message with a symbol, thus if the federal government wished to promote unity with state symbols, active rhetorical language frames should have been paired with their distribution. [186]

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[185] Lakoff, 101.

[186] It must be noted that the Chrétien government did in fact take other non-visual initiatives at the time that the Sponsorship Program was established, such as bringing back the CUIO (under the same department that was responsible for the Sponsorship Program), but only with a new title: Canada Information Office (later renamed Communication Canada), which continues to exist. The Canada Information Office was clearly an amalgamation of Trudeau's CUIO and the Task Force on Canadian Unity, which is indicated by its mandate: Communications Canada is supposed to inform government of public perceptions, while also informing the public of government's services. Massé offers some insight regarding the program's new title.

Although the Sponsorship Program lacked an official mandate, it is possible to infer from comments made by its "designers" that the silent strategy was purposeful. In the wake of the 1995 referendum, Massé argued that utilizing "unity" in the title of both the strategy and the office was a counter-productive move: "I remember that I didn't want the word "unity" to be used because it would raise a red flag to nationalists in the province, and I believed that it should be a communications or information office for all of Canada, which we would use to improve communications in Quebec."[187] Massé understood that the term "unity" would evoke a very strong, and in some cases negative, public reaction and was therefore a dangerous segment of rhetoric to be paired with a unity strategy. The government understood that the strategy could evoke a negative political reaction and therefore wanted to keep the program silent, which is demonstrated by Guité's assertion, "We didn't want the Parti Quebecois to know what we were doing."[188] Trudeau's government, on the other hand was quite adamant about communicating a clear message to Canadians that the federal presence was purposeful, that unity was necessary, and that the government was eager to understand Canadians. Or, as Rose puts it, "Though it sometime appeared in the guise of information, i.e., balanced and non-partisan, the images of the CUIO were carefully crafted to ensure that,

[187] Marcel Massé, "Testimony – Public Hearing: February 8, 2005, Volume 72" in Restoring Accountability – Phase 2 Report, Available Online: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-03-06/www.gomery.ca/documents/transcripts/en/2005/03/20053410586.pdf, Original Version, "Testimony – Public Hearing: Volume 64, in Restoring Accountability – Phase 2 Report, 11196.
[188] "Ex-civil servant was told to fight separatism with choice ads: Globe and Mail" in The Canadian Press, 3 October 2002.

to paraphrase Walter Lippmann, 'the world outside matched the pictures in our heads'.[189] In keeping with Massé's strategy of silence, the Sponsorship Program focused on silently, or indirectly, promoting the federation through the nation's iconic referents, under the assumption or hope that the symbols themselves would be interpreted positively.

On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the silence of the program was part of a strategy to reward federal Liberal supporters rather than a strategy of unity-promotion. The Sponsorship Program's creation and mandate emerged from a thick manufactory fog and its production was only slightly more transparent. The Gomery commission concluded that sponsorships were in fact granted along political lines: Agencies were awarded contracts on the basis of being "federalist-friendly", a disposition that was proven through "political contributions" to the Liberal Party.[190] The Gomery Report credits the government's failure to properly develop the Sponsorship Program's purpose and procedures for the improper disbursement of funds. Essentially, the Sponsorship Program lacked transparency, was poorly administered, and was not following appropriate guidelines and procedures for contracting out.[191] This information led the Gomery report to add that the program was being used for goals other than national unity.[192] If the program actually was intended to be a pay-off mechanism, the

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[189] Jonathan Rose, "Government Advertising in a Crisis: The Quebec Referendum Precedent" in Canadian Journal of Communication, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1993). Available Online: http://www.cjc-online.ca/viewarticle.php?id=166&layout=html

[190] John Gomery, "Communication Agencies: Principals, Contracts and Interactions" in, Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), 46.

[191] The other 44.4 percent paid for commissions and production materials. See: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Chapter 3 – The Sponsorship Program," 1.

[192] Gomery Commission, "Major Findings" in Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 3 (Summary).

resulting "silent" symbol distribution was a result of a careless bureaucracy. However, the historical tendency of the federal Liberal government to react to Quebec separatism with identity policies may suggest that the Sponsorship Program was intentional as well as reactionary, and the grave nature of the internal division between English and French would explain the need for a quick response and the resulting failure to provide a proper mandate. All things being considered, what remains is that funds were applied to the silent distribution of national symbols, and, intentional or not, this silent distribution was a dangerous move since, without rhetorical framing the symbols were left to be interpreted by the political imagination as informed by the political culture, and the political culture during this time was intensely in tune with the national divide.

Notwithstanding the scandalous nature of the program, the fact remains that 66.6 percent of the 332 million dollars allocated to the program in total were dispersed to various agencies for the purposes of promoting the federal government and, appropriate to its retroactively ascribed purpose of promoting unity, most of the contracts were awarded for advertising in Quebec.[193] That is to say that the program was not entirely scandalous, but it was nonetheless perceived as such. Since no government measures were in place to ensure that the government was receiving adequate value for its money, the Gomery commission conducted audits on each of the contractors to determine how said funds were spent.[194] Confirming Chrétien's claim that the sponsorships were used to

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[193] Gomery Commission, "Section Six: Detailed Findings – Special Programs and Sponsorship Contracts" in Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 2 (Forensic Audit), 60. For details on each of the contracts, see also "Appendix F."
[194] "Chapter VII: Audits and Investigations" in Who is Responsible: report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 1 (Fact Finding Report), p.211.

promote the federal government in association with popular events, sponsorship contracts

were awarded to activities such as: amateur and professional sports, auto racing, fairs,

and festivals.[195] In addition, sponsorships were paid to crown corporations and public

opinion polling companies (between 1994-1995 and 1998-1999 only).[196] Details of the

expenditures of Groupe Polygone and Expour, one of the largest ($44.8 million)

beneficiaries, shed light on precisely how this promotion was carried out.[197] The

companies variously promoted the federal government on the radio by attaching the

slogan "brought to you by the Government of Canada," after recreational information

segments; by posting banners at and funding hunting and fishing shows as well as first

Nations ceremonies; and in newspaper and television, by presenting the federal logo or

mentioning the federal government in association with popular non-governmental

programming.[198] Aside from the radio, the bulk of these promotional materials involved

the Canada wordmark logo, and consequently the Canadian flag.[199]

The symbols utilized within the Sponsorship Program were borrowed from the

FIP and were therefore aesthetically sound yet lacked theoretical substantiation. That is to

say that the assumptions on which the visual aspects of the Sponsorship Program rested

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[195] Jean Chrétien, "Testimony – Public Hearing: February 8, 2005, Volume 72" in
Restoring Accountability – Phase 2 Report, Available Online: http://epe.lac-
bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-03-
06/www.gomery.ca/documents/transcripts/en/2005/03/20053410586.pdf, Original
Version, 12511.
[196] For details see: Gomery Commission, "Appendix F" in Who is Responsible: report of
the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities,
Volume 2 (Forensic Audit).
[197] The two companies are viewed as one legal case since they share an owner.
[198] Gomery Commission, "Appendix F" in Who is Responsible: report of the Commission
of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, Volume 2 (Forensic
Audit), 252-255.
[199] Ibid.

were sound, but not on account of any documented governmental research. As was shown earlier, Canada's national symbols are adequately abstract in that the maple leaf was not negatively associated with English dominance, like the previous state symbols, and was therefore more able to represent the diversity that exists within Canada's borders, particularly the French. Yet this is not to suggest that their meanings can never be overtaken. Rather, the likelihood that they will be overtaken increases when no active rhetoric is paired with their presentation. Additionally, the unifying capacities of symbols, which are derived from their emotion-evoking uptake, allow them to be "short-cuts" to the political imagination of the public. Yet only if these symbols are framed effectively can they become more predictive emotional and cognitive referents of unity.

As we have noted above, contrary to Gombrich's assertion, *form* does not always follow *function*. That is to say, if the uptake of a symbol's message is not properly received, the symbol or *form* can develop a new *function*. Had Landry or others overtaken Canada's iconic referents during the course of the Sponsorship Program, and negatively stigmatized these symbols as being representatives of a manipulative state for example, it is quite possible that these symbols could have been used against the federalist unity-promoting cause.[200] The unifying nature of symbols implies an ability to promote an outsider, and particularly because the federal symbols had been symbols of the "No" camp while the Quebec flag had been the symbol of the "Oui" side during the 1995 referendum, it is quite possible that Quebeckers, specifically separatists such as Landry,

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[200] Even if unity-promotion was only a retroactively assigned purpose for the Sponsorship Program, national unity is, as Alan Cairns points out, the central function of the federal government. See: Alan Cairns, "The Embedded State: State-Society Relations in Canada," in Douglas E. Williams, ed., Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship & Constitutional Change. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1995).

may have viewed the scattering of maple leaf symbols across Quebec as offensive and purposefully manipulative.

Despite the program's potential setbacks, quantitative data demonstrates that separatist sentiments in Quebec continuously declined after the 1995 referendum until the Sponsorship scandal erupted. A Leger poll questioning whether Quebeckers would vote for sovereignty demonstrates that Quebeckers averaged 51 percent for sovereignty from 1996 to 1998, when the desire diminished to 42 percent, with minor fluctuations until 2004-2005, when the desire rose again to 54 percent.[201] Operating on a slightly different curve, funding for the Sponsorship Program reached its peak in 1996-1997, totalling 52 million (allocated from the budget and the Unity Reserve) and remained at 40 million until it was disassembled in 2003. On the one hand, a strong correlation between sovereignty support and increased sponsorship spending is readily visible, as well as a correlation between sovereignty support and the cessation of the program, and yet the Sponsorship Program was only one of many steps taken to promote unity, therefore it is not possible to make the claim that the Program was solely responsible for the decrease in Quebec separatist sentiments.

While it is not possible to make the theoretical claim that had the Sponsorship Program been carried out without scandal it would have succeeded, it may come as a

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[201] Leger Marketing "Quebec Survey" prepared for *Le Journal de Montreal* and *the Gazette* Press Release Publication Date May 14, 2005. Methodology:
'This Leger Marketing poll was conducted among 2,008 respondents throughout Quebec with 1,500 adults representative of the Quebec population, 300 respondents between the ages of 18 to 24 years old and 200 allophones, between May 4 and May 8, 2005. The maximum margin of error for a sample of this size is ± 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The response rate stands at 61.2%. Sensitive questions were asked in rotation and so were answer categories to these questions. Using the most recent Statistics Canada data, final results were weighted according to gender, mother tongue and region to ensure a sample representative of the Quebec population.'

surprise that Quebeckers' overall discontent for the federation did not decrease more

significantly post-scandal. In fact, the most recent Quebec election displays a drop in

votes for the Parti Quebecois, the party that led the previous referendum. While the

methodical study of political scandal is quite underdeveloped, Markovits and Silverstein

suggest a template that all government scandals in liberal democratic societies tend to

follow that is applicable to the Sponsorship Program:

> Despite the existence of a specific victim, political scandals rarely produce martyrs
> because the transgression is redefined as against the public interest rather than as
> individual's private interest. The result is that the transgression must be punished for
> violating the public trust despite claims that the scandalous acts were simply the means to
> lofty goals. Completing the cast is the purifier who may discover or investigate the
> scandal and thus assumes the role of the public's defender.[202]

Thus regardless of the precipitating factors for a "scandal", which in the case of the

Sponsorship Program were the misappropriation of funds and the opaque creation and

handling of the program, the denouement, according to the authors, follows a general

trend. While the Sponsorship "scandal" was initially presented as a purposefully

dishonest rewards program at the hand of Guité and Chrétien, Gomery was assigned the

roll of "purifier" protecting the public's interest. Initially, there was great uproar and

negative sentiment towards the federal Liberals in general yet because Gomery

pinpointed key actors responsible for the "scandal', the overall image of the Liberals in

the long term will be salvaged as the "transgression" against the public is corrected.[203]

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[202] Andrei S. Markovits and Marks Silverstein, "Introduction: Power and Process in
Liberal Democracies" in The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal
Democracies (eds.) Andrei S. Markovits and Mark Silverstein (New York: Holmes &
Meier Publishers, Inc., 1988), 3.
[203] For more on the methodical study of scandal see: Betty A. Dobratz and Stephanie
Whitfield "Does Scandal Influence Voters' Party Preference? The Case of Greece during
the Papandreou Era in European Sociological Review, Vol. 8, No. 2. (Sep., 1992), pp.
167-180; 167, and Andrei S. Markovits and Marks Silverstein, "Introduction: Power and

Much evidence exists in support of the argument that the Liberal party, rather than the federal government, was assigned blame for the Sponsorship "Scandal". This is likely explained by the fact that the Chrétien government failed to do what the Trudeau government was cautious of: Trudeau embarked on a mission to understand the Canadian public and communicated to the citizens that there was a need for federal, not Liberal, presence. One Leger poll demonstrates that voting intentions in Quebec from 2000-2005 placed the federal Liberals at their peak in popularity in 2003 with 62 percent in support, descending to 31 percent in 2004 and continued its plunge to 2005.[204] One poll suggests that, "The commonly held view that the Conservatives' tiny lead is Gomery-driven is supported by evidence from the Survey itself."[205] And yet another poll demonstrates that voters across Canada were less likely to vote for the Liberals and more likely to vote for other parties after the Gomery revelations.[206] Rather than exhibiting an upheaval towards federal governance in general, Quebeckers disapproval of the scandal was focused on the

Process in Liberal Democracies" in The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies (eds.) Andrei S. Markovits and Mark Silverstein (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1988), 1-2.
[204] Leger Marketing "Quebec Survey" prepared for Le Journal de Montreal and the Gazette_Press Release Publication Date May 14, 2005. Methodology:
'This Leger Marketing poll was conducted among 2,008 respondents throughout Quebec with 1,500 adults representative of the Quebec population, 300 respondents between the ages of 18 to 24 years old and 200 allophones, between May 4 and May 8, 2005. The maximum margin of error for a sample of this size is ± 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The response rate stands at 61.2%. Sensitive questions were asked in rotation and so were answer categories to these questions. Using the most recent Statistics Canada data, final results were weighted according to gender, mother tongue and region to ensure a sample representative of the Quebec population.'
[205] Compas Inc., "Canadian electorate and the Gomery Inquiry: A Compas Survey for the National Post, CanWest Newspapers, and Global TV News" in Compas Inc. Public Opinion and Customer Research Online: www.compas.ca (April 15, 2005), 3.
[206] Environics Research Group, "Focus Canada: National Results October 2004" in Environics Research Group News Online: http://erg.environics.net/news/default.asp?aID=569, (22 December 2004), 7.

Liberal party, which would suggest that the symbols of state utilized within the Sponsorship Program were either associated completely with the Liberal party or their use went unnoticed altogether by Quebeckers.[207]

While one must be wary that media coverage may be value-laden and may typify issues in a specific, sensationalized, fashion, it is worth noting that a vast majority of Sponsorship Scandal media coverage focussed specifically on the program's misappropriation of funds rather than on the program's silently placed symbols. Thus it comes as no surprise that the public focused on those actors involved in the improper distribution of funds rather than on the practices employed by the program. The effect was that the public blamed the corrupt actors rather than the symbols employed. And so Canada's symbols likely remained unscathed by the poorly contrived and improperly executed Sponsorship Program.[208]

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[207] The public, particularly the Quebec public, lost trust in the government of the day; a Leger poll demonstrates that 76 percent of polled Quebeckers felt betrayed by Chrétien and the Liberal Party of Canada. See: Leger Marketing "Quebec Poll" for The Globe and Mail and Le Devoir. Publication Date: April 27, 2005. Methodology:
'This Leger Marketing poll was conducted among 1,008 respondents throughout Québec between April 20 and April 24, 2005. The maximum margin of error for a sample of this size is ± 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Using the most recent data from Statistics Canada, final results were weighted according to gender, mother tongue and region to ensure a sample representative of the Quebecois population.'
[208] While no (obtainable) quantitative data exists which systematically measures Quebeckers opinions of Canada's symbols, it is unlikely that effective polling could be retroactively taken that would allow insight into the subtle perceptual changes over time. However, a more direct poll could be conducted asking Quebeckers whether their interpretation of the federal symbols of the state was altered post-Sponsorship "scandal."

CONCLUSION

At the onset of this inquiry I posed two puzzling questions that were derived from the federal government's assumption that investing in the silent distribution of the symbols of state within the context of the Sponsorship Program would produce the effect of promoting national unity. The first question sought to understand why the federal government may have thought it to be a strong strategy while the second question aimed at uncovering the theoretical limits of symbols as national unifiers. In response we have uncovered that federal identity policy is a typical reaction to escalations of Quebec separatism and that in the case of the Sponsorship Program, no research into the implications of such a silent strategy was conducted and no mandate was present at the time of its inception. We therefore conclude that the Sponsorship Program was in fact a learned reflex, which fell short of incorporating the knowledge of identity programs past. To answer the second question we paired theoretical semiotics with an evaluation of the Canadian symbols at hand and determined that while the maple leaf flag and the Canada wordmark are syntactically strong symbols of national identity and they constitute necessary communicative adaptations of federal identity promotion, using these symbols without rhetoric is theoretically faulty because one can not silently guarantee the uptake of a message.

I therefore assert that the CUIO, the FIP, and the Sponsorship Program all fall short of being powerful federal identity policies. The CUIO may have had a strong rhetorical component, but its advertising segment was weak and inconsistent. To accommodate for this weakness, the FIP developed a strong Canadian visual identity

informed by popular corporatist identity strategies, but it merely recommended rather than guaranteed the incorporation of rhetoric, since operationalizing such knowledge is the responsibility of civil servants. The inability of bureaucrats to foresee the importance of this rhetorical element explains how the Sponsorship Program was permitted to evolve. While the Sponsorship Program relies on the visibility strategy of the FIP, which was in part undertheorized, I have provided a theoretical outline that suggests *how* and *why* the visual strategy works. Predicting how symbols will be interpreted is a difficult task, as Olins' suggested, and we have reasoned that this is due to the complexity of the political imagination of any large group of citizens. Because the contents of the political imagination are difficult to predict and they create variance in the interpretation of symbols, by incorporating strong rhetorical *frames* an actor can be more confident that a particular message will be attached to that symbol. For the medium to become the message, the medium's meaning must be understood. With this knowledge it can be asserted that the Sponsorship Program was a dangerous creation. The policy implication of the presented thesis urges the federal government to develop an identity strategy that relies on outwardly visual symbols while promoting a unity-directed value *frame*.

The federal government's practice of implementing reactionary public policy when faced with surges in Quebeckers' desire to separate must also be called into question. Rather than merely being reactive, I suggest that an identity policy would have more effect if it were continuously seeking to promote the federation. Not to suggest that promoting federal unity through a rhetorically enhanced visibility strategy would alone decrease separatist sentiments, but that *ceteris paribus*, a continuous strategy that pairs the language of unity with the nation's symbols would be more effective at promoting

unity than a strategy which is suddenly set in place when Quebeckers are contemplating their place in the federation and are therefore likely to be more aware of the symbolic differences between themselves and the rest of Canada.

Although it may seem painfully logical, we suggest that for a national unity visibility strategy to garner great success it will need to reflect actual efforts at promoting this sense of unity. As the FIP rightly points out, no visibility program should be used as a "cosmetic" seeking to masquerade the differences within under a fabricated disguise.[209] In this vein, Lakoff argues that his framing strategy ought not be based upon fabricated truths since these falsehoods, when uncovered, will serve to destroy the value frames' potency.[210] The current Conservative federal government's move to assign Quebec the status of a "nation within a nation" may be a very positive move in the direction of promoting a symbolic partnership between the French and the English, particularly in the context of the aftermath of the Sponsorship "scandal" which generated the highest level of Quebec separatist feeling since the 1995 referendum.[211] The rise in popularity of the provincial political party Action Democratique du Quebec, whose policy is to push for greater Quebec autonomy within the federation vis-à-vis the decline of support for the Parti Quebecois whose goal is to push for yet another referendum, would suggest that the Harper government may be speaking the language that the Quebec people want to hear:

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[209] Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Management guide to corporate identity" in Federal Identity Program Manual Section 1.0, Online, Retrieved from the Government of Canada Website: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/fip-pcim/man_pdfs_e.asp, 4 August 1990 4.
[210] George Lakoff, don't think of an elephant! Know your Values and Frame the Debate (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004), 101.
[211] CBC News, "Poll finds sovereignty support rising in Quebec" in CBC News Online, 27 April 2005, http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/04/27/sovereignty-poll050427.html Retrieved 29 April 2007.

Quebec's distinction within the federation. Harper's "nation" rhetoric may have served to establish the appropriate frame on which to symbolically and visually bind the nation.

While I was unable to obtain the appropriate data to test our theory, further study in this area could seek to test my proposed theory by examining the public's perception of federal unity when exposed to the federally slanted symbols of the state, when not exposed to these symbols, and when exposed to these symbols paired with framing rhetoric. We do not suppose that retroactively measuring the public's opinion of the federation during the inception of each of our analyzed programs would be an attainable goal since the data would be faced with the impossibility of isolating policy reactions alongside the inescapable inaccuracies of the collective and individual memory. Yet measuring the public's range of opinions to federal visual identity initiatives would be a positive pursuit in the future.

A final yet significant contribution of this work is to make the case that the academic study of symbols is an essential area for further inquiry. Symbols constitute a far-reaching medium for public influence and as such are quite capable of influencing public opinion. Thus I argue alongside Zdzislaw Mach, Ewan Morris and Murray Edelman (in their respective works) that symbols and their political uses should gain greater ground within academic realms.[212] As Fraim suggests, symbols have long left the world of strict iconic referents and have now come to gain use in everyday communication. Fraim goes as far as to suggest that they constitute modes of *soft power*,

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[212] Edelman, Murray. The Symbolic Uses of Politics. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1967.), Zdzislaw Mach, Symbols, Conflict, and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology, (Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993), and Ewan Morris, Our Own Devices: National Symbols and Political Conflict in Twentieth-Century Ireland (Dublin & Portland: Irish Academic Press, 2005).

which allow leaders to persuade public opinion in a less direct way.[213] Yet perhaps it is

their existence on the periphery of these academic realms that decreases the perception

that they are powerful persuaders thereby allowing them to fulfil that *soft power* role.

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[213] John Fraim, <u>Battle of Symbols: Global Dynamics of Advertising, Entertainment and Media</u> (Switzerland: Daimo, 2003), 40-5.

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