A Comparison of Peaceful and Violent Separatist Movements

William Dorsey Pieschel

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The Comparison of Peaceful and Violent Separatist Movements

by
William Dorsey Pieschel

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College.

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Approved By

Advisor: Professor Timothy Nordstrom
Reader: Professor Charles Ross
Reader: Professor Mark Alan Healey
Abstract

WILLIAM DORSEY PIESCHEL: The Comparison of Peaceful and Violent Separatist Movements
(Under the direction of Professor Timothy Nordstrom)

The following work is an attempt to understand why separatist movements become violent. In any given region of the world under any given state, there will always be a group of people who are not content with the present order of government. If this group is large enough, it will most likely try to alter the structure of the government, which often takes the form of separatism. I want to understand the methods of these separatist movements and specifically, why some resort to violence and others do not.

The first part of my thesis analyzes different separatist movements. I chose four to study: Quebec, Scotland, Eritrea, and Chechnya. These four examples vary widely in terms of geographic region, political culture, economic development, population, etc, etc. However, the cases of Quebec and Scotland were sufficient examples of peaceful separatist movements while Eritrea and Chechnya contrast for their violence. The last chapter is an attempt to understand how separatist movements develop and most importantly, why they become violent.
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Introduction

Separatist movements have existed for nearly as long as nation-states. The French Revolution challenged the previously held theories of state-rule, such as divine right. Instead, self-determination began to gain popularity.¹ The urge for national autonomy increased dramatically again after the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and then again at the end of the cold war. However, separatist movements range from the relatively peaceful such as those in Scotland and Quebec to the much more violent movements in Chechnya and Eritrea. In this thesis, I analyze different separatist movements in order to determine what causes the movement to become more violent or more willing to compromise with the central government.

I define separatism as any general movement attempting to gain more autonomy for a group. This autonomy can range from anything to a regional government having more control over education to an outright secessionist movement for independence. However, the international legal basis on when more autonomy is justified is unclear. Basically, the case rests on three major principles: minority rights, indigenous rights, and the right to self-determination.² These rights are very

difficult to define in reality and legislation, despite the United Nations Charter including self-determination as a fundamental human right.\(^3\)

Inextricably tied into claims for separatism and autonomy is nationalism. Not only is the nationalism of the region that is pushing for autonomy relevant, but also the nationalism of whatever country the region wants to separate from. Nationality is also hard to define specifically because of the ebb and flow of ethnicity, which is “explicable on a variety of social and economic factors.”\(^4\) For example, religion is losing salience in some places while gaining it in others in terms of defining ethnicity. One catalyst for ethnic consciousness that occurs often is “oppression by the state or the majority community.”\(^5\) Stalin was infamous for using this method when he was trying to create a common Soviet nationality.

According to economist Milica Z. Bookman, fragmentation and secession are always poor ideas. Not only does the separating region lose the advantages of being in larger heterogeneous communities such as economies of scale and extended markets, but numerous financial details must be worked out as well. Some of the difficulties in secession include readjusting tax payments, working out national and foreign debts, possibly relinquishing subsidies, and so on. However, many separatist movements are not satisfied with anything less than full independence. This shows that separatist movements are not necessarily rational entities that are concerned with the economic bottom line. Rather, each movement has its own particular grievances with the central state, and then the movement decides with the state if it can work out its differences peacefully or not.

\(^3\) Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 113.
First, I will analyze the current secessionist movement in Chechnya to examine the societal and political situations that can lead to violence. Chechnya has a history of brutal repression by Russia, but the secessionist movement was not completely polarized until after the fall of the U.S.S.R. However, it does not easily fall into the category of post-Cold War breakups, as Chechnya has been a part of Russia since the 19th century, well before the inception of the U.S.S.R. In spite of this long political relationship, a secessionist war broke out in 1994 in which between 50,000 - 100,000 Russians and Chechens were killed. Some point to the economics of oil leading to the bloodshed, while others think individuals are to blame, namely Yeltsin and Dudaev. There is also a high level of Islamic radicalism in Chechnya, which was probably catalyzed by the first war, and a large armed contingent wants to carve out an Islamist state in the region. Whatever the reason, the secessionist movement is still active and violent as evidenced by the recent take-over of a Moscow theatre by Chechen rebels during which over 100 were killed.

Eritrea is another example of an extremely violent secessionist movement. The civil war between Eritrea and Ethiopia lasted for 30 years. As in Chechnya, the Eritrea-Ethiopian conflict is characterized by an unyielding central Ethiopian state. In addition, the personality of Haile Selassie, the Ethiopian emperor until 1974, plays a key role in the initial violence. However the role of intergovernmental organizations or military aid from both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. might be more to blame for the prolonged violence. Eritrea was eventually granted its independence, only to find itself in another war concerning border disputes with Ethiopia a few years later.

At first glance, Quebec’s separatism appears to have all the makings of an equally violent movement. The Québécois speak French, not English, are for the most part Catholic, not Protestant, and were for many years excluded from a mostly English-speaking business class. However, with the exception of an isolated act of terrorism in 1970, the Quebec movement has been very peaceful. The Parti Québécois has had as its central tenet the secession of Quebec from Canada since its beginnings in the 1970s. It forced the first referendum on Quebec independence when it took power in the province in 1976. Quebec’s secessionism has been very detrimental to Canada’s central government, which has been forced to make concessions to all of the provinces, and not just Quebec. In 1995, Canada was severely threatened when a referendum for Quebec independence failed by less than 1%.

As another example, the secessionist movement in Scotland might be the quintessential case of cooperation between a very unitary government of the United Kingdom and a nation clamoring for more autonomy. The Scottish movement also stands in great contrast to the actions of the Irish Republican Army, which has similar goals, but very different means. Instead of resorting to violence, Scotland has successfully used political parties, campaigns, and referenda to obtain its first Parliament since the abolition of the old one in 1707. Scotland does have many advantages over separatist movements in other parts of the world. First of all, less than 1% of the Scottish population speaks Gaelic, the original language of the Scots. Also, Scotland doesn’t have a major religious difference with the UK. Most
importantly, Scotland does not have the level of abject poverty that breeds fanaticism and extremism which exists in Chechnya and especially in Eritrea.

These four examples provide cases of the extremes of separatism, both peaceful and violent. Many governments dealing with separatism are faced with relatively small numbers of armed contingents using terrorism, while others deal with more or less violence. However, if what turns a separatist movement violent can be reduced to a few precipitating causes, both separatist groups and central governments should be much better able to use this knowledge to avoid casualties and fatalities.
David vs. Goliath: The Violence of Chechnya’s Separatism

On October 27, 1991, General Dzhotkhar Dudaev was elected president of Chechnya in an election that saw a turnout of only 10-12 % of the total population. Dudaev received the most votes of three candidates, and one of his first acts in power was the declaration of sovereignty of the Chechen Republic. However, The Russian parliament declared this act illegal on November 2, 1991, and Boris Yeltsin dispatched troops to Chechnya to keep it from separating. The military means for declaring the state of emergency necessary to use force against Chechnya was still under control of the Soviet Union and Mikhail Gorbachev. The Gorbachev-Yeltsin rivalry, which would culminate in the destruction of the Soviet Union, was just
beginning to intensify, and this fact might be the main reason that Gorbachev
hesitated to use force.\textsuperscript{7} Regardless, Dudaev and his supporters appeared to have
stood firm against Russia and the Soviet Union, and Yeltsin would lose his best
opportunity to prevent a war during which 50,000-100,000 were killed and the
population of Grozny reduced from 400,000 to 200,000.

Russo-Chechen antagonisms are rooted in the 1830s when the tsar of Russia
was initially trying to conquer the region. Whatever bad feelings Chechens had
towards Russia were greatly exacerbated when Stalin ordered mass deportations of
Chechens from the regions in 1944.\textsuperscript{8} Under the accusation of conspiring with Nazi
Germany, “about 500,000 people were rounded up, starting in the middle of the night
of February 22-23, 1944, and packed into trains.”\textsuperscript{9} Many died on the harsh journey
and even more succumbed during the harsh winter at Kazakhstan, leading to about a
quarter of the deported population perishing within five years of their arrival. Thus
the Chechens would be noticeably disturbed with the Russian dominated Soviet
Union. Nonetheless, many Chechens began to make their way back to their U.S.S.R.
dominated region, especially in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev’s administration
allowed the deported groups to return to their homeland.\textsuperscript{10}

Furthermore, Chechens were never well assimilated into the Soviet Union.
Again, the deportations undoubtedly had a major role in this lack of assimilation. In
spite of the deportations, the Chechens were able to retain both their own culture and

\textsuperscript{6} Matthew Evangelista. \textit{The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?}
\textsuperscript{7} Evangelista, \textit{The Chechen Wars}, 20.
\textsuperscript{8} Victor Kogan Jasnyi and Diana Zisserman-Brodsky. “Chechen Separatism,” in Metta Spencer (ed.)
206.
\textsuperscript{9} Evangelista, \textit{The Chechen Wars}, 14.
The Soviet Union allowed the development of local institutions that taught indigenous languages and encouraged native culture. Evangelista describes this system as a "'hothouse' of nationalism." Thus, in the last census in 1989 before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Chechnya had a population of 1,084,000, of whom 715,000 were unassimilated Chechens. By 1996, the total population would be reduced to 850,000 from the first war. Thus, the demographics and historical relation of Chechnya to Russia make separatism seem very plausible.

Furthermore, the unique style of Soviet federalism created local political institutions and nominally recognized a large degree of local autonomy, but the "superimposition of various overlapping administrative structures" took away most of that autonomy. This situation made it very easy for Dudaev to take control, as he did not need to create new governmental institutions from nothing, but merely had to seize the existing ones.

In 1916, V.I. Lenin argued for the self-determination of all peoples, but his goal was to promote the breakup of empires. After the Revolution failed to spread world-wide and the Communist state was firmly in place, the long-term goal of Soviet Communism was changed to not merely bring the "nations together but to bring about their merger." However, a major problem was that the many nations were being merged not towards a neutral Soviet nationalism, but rather merged more under a Russian hegemony. The most conspicuous example of this was illustrated by Stalin's

11 Iasnii, "Chechen Separatism," 213.
13 Iasnii, "Chechen Separatism," 207.
administration in the 1930s, which enforced the anti-Islamic and “Russifying compulsory Cyrillicization” of Arabic writing. Thus, after the Soviet bureaucracy was firmly in place, social mobility “was more rapid for those who adopted Soviet ideology and the Russian language.”

The most obvious reason for the outbreak of war in Chechnya can be attributed to Boris Yeltsin never meeting with Dudaev face to face even once in the years leading up to the war. Yeltsin could have possibly been attempting to bolster his approval ratings in taking a hard line stance against the Chechens. This plan would have involved stirring up patriotism among Russians to make his administration appear more legitimate. Another possible cause is that Yeltsin wasn’t in his right mind during those years. Evangelista gives a couple of examples of Yeltsin being very drunk at an official state function and one where he missed a meeting with the Irish prime minister because he was too drunk to function.

To understand why Yeltsin’s, and later Putin’s, ratings were boosted because of their taking a hard-line stance against Chechnya, one must first understand the stereotype Chechnya had in the Soviet Union and in Russia in particular. Seely likens the Chechen stereotype in Russia to that of the Sicilian bandits in southern Italy: “poor, proud, and armed.” Furthermore, “among Russians of all backgrounds and classes, Chechens are somewhat distrusted, sometimes indeed actively loathed.”

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17 Sakwa, Soviet Politics, 251.
18 Evangelista, The Chechen Wars, 4.
21 Seely, Russo-Chechen Conflict, 185.
general, all Caucasians are distrusted by them, and their darker skin and wider noses make them phenotypically conspicuous to the Russian type.

Like all stereotypes, this stereotype of Chechens as criminals might be inaccurate for the majority of Chechens, but Dudaev's regime in all probability had many criminal connections. Chechnya was already a hotbed of organized crime activity in the 1980s. After Dudaev came to power, many of these groups used Dudaev's regime to refine oil illegally in Chechnya before exporting it at world, not Russian, prices. Furthermore, allegedly many Soviet weapons were sold for private profit through Chechnya to Yemen, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. A common fraud was to claim that arms from a military base had been stolen, when in reality the commanding officer would have sold them to the highest bidder. Thus, Dudaev was not simply a benign leader vying for more autonomy for his oppressed people. His constant use of mob rhetoric and his coterie of criminals left him with a very negative public image.

However, his advisors should be held as much at fault as Yeltsin, in assuring him that a war would be quick and decisive. The Russian military might have been yearning for its more glorious days of the Soviet Union and therefore its leaders were over-anxious for war. On the other hand, the Russian military advisors could have underestimated the strength and motivation of the Chechen fighters, while overestimating the poorly paid and unenthusiastic Russian troops. Furthermore, the precedence for violence had already been established in 1993 when Yeltsin dismissed parliament and proceeded to shell them inside the White House.23

22 Seely, Russo-Chechen Conflict, 189.
23 "Hearing on Chechnya," 16.
As much credit for war should be given to Dudaev as anyone else for the hard-line, extremist positions that he adopted from the beginning. Because he succeeded in driving out the Russian army and seizing their weapons, full-scale war became almost inevitable. By either buying the arms from unconcerned Soviet soldiers or outright seizure of them, Dudaev amassed an arsenal of "40,000 automatic weapons and machine guns, 153 cannons and mortars, 42 tanks, 18 Grade multiple rocket launchers, 55 armored personnel carriers, several training aircraft and helicopters, and 130,000 grenades."\(^24\) One would not think that Dudaev would need this type of arsenal if he were going to settle the matter of Chechen independence diplomatically. However, Dudaev might have also realized that the only way the Russian administration would take him seriously would be if he had a formidable military threat.

Dudaev made a serious error when he overestimated the economic and strategic benefits of an independent Chechnya. Chechnya is a landlocked region, but it does have oil, which "has been the most important factor in the region’s economy for a long time."\(^25\) But it is not the actual oil reserves that are important, but rather Chechnya’s significance as an oil refiner.\(^26\) Thus, much of Chechnya’s economic advantages came from its being a part of the Soviet Union’s and later Russia’s larger economy. Therefore its economic importance was greatly diminished after its separation from Russia. This is evidenced by Russia’s ability to build a new pipeline in 1997 that cut “Chechnya completely out of Russia’s Caspian oil affairs.”\(^27\)

\(^25\) Iasnyi, “Chechen Separatism,” 207.
\(^26\) Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict*, 197.
\(^27\) Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars*, 53.
Thus, the causes for the first Chechen war can be attributed to Yeltsin and Dudaev decisions, as much as anything. If Russia had a more democratic government, Yeltsin’s aggression might have been prevented. Then again, if Dudaev had not been so rash in declaring Chechen independence, Yeltsin and his administration might have been much more willing to discuss the situation instead of opting for the use of force. However, the Chechen government did seem to have as legitimate a cause as did the other republics in the former Soviet Union who declared independence. Whatever reason was most to blame for the onset of the first war, one would think that the atrocities resulting from that war would be enough to prevent a second. However, Vladimir Putin would send in troops to Chechnya again in 1999.

Chechen retained de facto independence when Russia pulled its troops out of Chechnya in 1996, but it also gained a much bigger problem: religious extremism. This extremism would take the form of radical Islam, and some of the radical leaders would come to dream of an Islamic state encompassing Chechnya and Dagestan, which had access to the Caspian Sea. After Russian forces killed Dudaev, Aslan Maskhadov was elected president of the very weak Chechen government. Maskhadov envisioned “a nominally independent Chechnya working in close economic and political cooperation with Russia,” but Yeltsin reneged on almost all of the fifty provisions that Russia agreed to after the peace agreements in 1996. Thus, with the Chechen economy in shambles and radical Islam increasing, Maskhadov was forced into the transition to Shariah law in February of 1999.

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28 Evangelista, The Chechen Wars, 50.
29 Evangelista, The Chechen Wars, 51.
The precipitating cause for Putin’s invasion of Chechnya in 1999 was the invasion of Dagestan by Chechen rebels with the intent of establishing an Islamist state. Citing the need to quash terrorism, Putin no longer recognizes Maskhadov as president and begins the second invasion of Chechnya. Again, Russian nationalism is stirred up as terrorist attacks in Moscow give Putin greater public support for this war.

There are many viable precipitating causes that could have begun either or both Chechen wars. However, what is of special significance is that the Russian public supported both Yeltsin and Putin in their wars against Chechnya. This distinct Russian distaste for Chechnya might also partly explain why such force was used only against Chechnya and not Tatarstan, which was in a similar predicament. For whatever reason, Chechnya is still not independent from Russia; however, on March 23, 2003, Chechens supposedly approved a new draft constitution from Moscow, with 96% of voters supporting it. Putin claims that “the last serious problem in relation to Russia’s territorial integrity has been solved,” even though the referendum took place while the war that started in 1999 is still continuing.30

Eritrea: The Role of Outside Influences in an Armed Separatist Conflict

The Eritrean secessionist war stemmed directly from colonialist tendencies. However, the colonialism was not that of a European power extending hegemony over an African nation, but that of an African nation extending over a territory. The ancient kingdom of Abyssinia expanded three fold in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in what is now Ethiopia. Haile Selassie, who became emperor in 1930, continued to extend Ethiopian rule, as well as to modernize Ethiopia. His progressive government and expanding bureaucracy “forced the many regional races to either oppose him treasonably or join him with their support.” Eritrea was, in this respect, very similar to many other regions that had been subjected to Ethiopian rule, but it did not join Selassie with support. Eritrea consists of nine distinct ethnic groups, and its
nationality comes from “an entity constructed from the encounters with Italian
colonialism, Ethiopian hegemony, and the post-1945 international state system.”

Ethiopia was only under European control from 1937 to 1941 during the time
in which Mussolini was attempting to establish his fascist empire in Africa. During
Italian colonialist expansion, not only was Eritrea supposed to become the industrial
backbone of Mussolini’s East-African empire, but “Italian rule [also] brought all of
the inhabitants of Eritrea under the rule of a single power for the first time in the
territory’s history.” Upon Mussolini’s defeat in Africa and Selassie’s return from
exile in Britain, Ethiopia continued to expand its empire. Selassie was able to do this
by the use of international statesmanship via the United Nations as both Britain and
the United States supported a federalist government that included both Ethiopia and
Eritrea.

Because Eritrea consisted of basically a territory with no dominant majority
nation of peoples to coincide with that territory, Ethiopia first became joined to
Eritrea in a federalist system by a United Nations backed charter on December 2
1950, after being a protectorate of Britain in the post-War years. More specifically,
“the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 390 A(V) to federate Eritrea with
Ethiopia as ‘an autonomous unit…under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown.’
This federal system that Britain devised with the U.N. was the first evidence of
Ethiopia’s extending its power over Eritrea. The “sovereignty of the Ethiopian

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32 Iyob, Ruth. The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-
33 Pateman, Roy. Eritrea: Even the Stones are Burning (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc.,
1998), 41.
34 Iyob, The Eritrean Struggle for Independence, 82.
Crown part" caused chafing for Eritreans under the Ethiopian empire on two different levels. This was not only the continuation of an imperial patronage of Eritrean leaders who enacted policies beneficial to the empire, but also the "manipulation of the legal provisions which guaranteed the autonomy of the Eritrean government over its internal economic, social, and political affairs."\textsuperscript{35}

On some level, the Ethiopian government can be described as simply trying to extend the state throughout Eritrea, but actual Eritrean involvement in the expanding state and bureaucracy was limited. In this manner, Selassie was able to chip away at Eritrean sovereignty over until 1962, when it was officially annexed. Before this act, the Eritrean Liberation Force commenced its armed struggle on September 1, 1961. Official Ethiopian action against the ELF began in December, 1962.\textsuperscript{36} This struggle would last for thirty years and decimate the economies and societies of both regions.

Ethiopia would not have been able to carry out such a prolonged armed struggle without the sustained help of outside providers. This help came with not only the lack of action from the U.N., who considered the matter to be internal even after it had created the country only a few years earlier, but also with help from both the United States and the Soviet Union. One critic believes that it was mainly through the incapacity of the U.N. that the separatist movement became an armed struggle.\textsuperscript{37} By limiting its role to "damage control" in Africa, the UN has focused more on the impact of conflicts as opposed to the conflicts.\textsuperscript{38} However, there wasn't much else that the UN could do, as Eritrea could not be defined as a colony and there

\textsuperscript{35} Iyob, \textit{The Eritrean Struggle for Independence}, 82.
\textsuperscript{36} Pateman, \textit{Eritrea}, 96.
\textsuperscript{37} Iyob, \textit{The Eritrean Struggle for Independence}, 33.
\textsuperscript{38} Iyob, \textit{The Eritrean Struggle for Independence}, 31.
did not exist a “people” of Eritrea. Besides, there was just as good a chance that whatever regime took control of an independent Eritrea would be just as brutal, non-democratic, and repressive as that feared in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, Selassie and his efforts at keeping Eritrea were supported by the Organization for Africa Unity after its conception in 1963. A good idea in theory, the OAU was designed to be an inter-governmental entity conceived for the prevention of war and strife, with a purpose very similar to the UN’s. Unfortunately for the Eritreans and many other minorities, the OAU was staunchly opposed to acquiescing to any separatist movement. One of the main reasons for this firm stand is that “the heads of state who attend the OAU summits are, in the main, military dictators, or men who have a tenuous power base, dependent upon the support of ethnic minorities.”

Ethiopia was also very adept at negotiating assistance from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the cold war. The U.S. supported Selassie’s regime until its overthrow in 1974 by the military, which proclaimed itself Marxist. Between 1952-1975, “United States military assistance to Ethiopia was worth some $275 million.” This assistance involved everything from a squadron of F-5 fighter jets in 1964 to M-60 tanks in the mid 1970s. Ethiopia was even able to receive aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union for a period immediately after the Dergue, the military regime, took control. The first shipment of Soviet tanks arrived in 1977; however, the U.S. donated $109.4 million during the same year.

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39 Pateman, Eritrea, 4.
40 Pateman, Eritrea, 128.
41 Pateman, Eritrea, 128.
Ethiopia initially received a significant amount of support from Israel after convincing the Israeli government that the separatist movement was Arab in nature. This position was based on a belief that Eritrea's population had a Muslim majority; however, there had never been a comprehensive census to support this belief. Also, in 1954, before the hostilities had escalated to armed conflict, Ethiopia had signed a secret security pact with Israel.\textsuperscript{42} Israel was then instrumental to the Ethiopian government in training soldiers and police officers in counter-insurgency action.

The ELF did come to rely on Middle Eastern powers for training and arms. However, this fact can be attributed to Ethiopia's global propaganda campaign against Eritrea. Since the beginning of the Eritrean independence movement, "the Eritrean liberation fighters have been variously characterized as bandits, extremists, Muslim separatists, Marxists, ultra-leftists and a host of other epithets."\textsuperscript{43} The ELF can be criticized for resorting to violence, but it was left with almost no choice as Ethiopia removed any political means of reconciliation. Also, the Eritreans became understandably embittered as Ethiopian Amhara Christians were occupying an unproportionally large share of the most profitable government and bureaucratic positions in Eritrea.

Ethiopia could have not possibly carried out an armed struggle against the Eritreans on such a scale for thirty years without substantial outside aid. However, the countries that aided in the form of arms only contributed to the strife. The Eritrean liberation army might have only started as small contingents using guerilla warfare tactics, but with captured Ethiopian arms, Eritrea soon had a formidable

\textsuperscript{42} Pateman, \textit{Eritrea}, 95.  
\textsuperscript{43} Pateman, \textit{Eritrea}, 93. 
army. Furthermore, the outside influences make future skirmishes and armed conflict even more likely by continuing to send aid in the form of arms. In 1998, only five years after Eritrea gained its independence with a referendum, war broke out again over sparsely populated land during which both sides lost thousands of soldiers. This war ended in June 2000, but a violent precedent has already been created.
Quebec: Secession for the Protection of Culture

I was discussing the issue of Quebec’s relative autonomy with a history professor, when he told me an anecdote of a man who moved to Montreal to run a hardware store. The man spoke English, but he was later forced to change the sign for his business to French, despite having managed the store there for years. Under the constraint of new law, he thus changes the name of his store from “Lou’s Hardware” to “Lou’s matériels.” Lou was then fined for his incorrect use of French grammar. This illustration shows to what extent the French-speaking Quebec nationalists have come to control their own region in mostly English speaking Canada. However, this control of francophone Québécois over their government has come with almost no bloodshed. There have been no armed contingents seizing
governments, little terrorism, and no overzealous government crackdowns. Over the past 50 years, Quebec has gained so much sovereignty that the very existence of the federal Canadian government has been threatened, and a referendum for Quebec sovereignty in 1995 lost by less than 1%.

The French colony of New France came under conquest of the British in 1759, with “the military defeat of Montcalm’s forces by Wolfe’s English troops on the Plains of Abraham above Quebec City.” In 1837-8, a violent uprising occurred in Montreal and in what was then Upper and Lower Canada, with the goal of forming a republic. The British were able to quell this uprising, and in 1867, Canada became a highly centralized federation when the British North America Act united Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick in the Dominion of Canada.

The early 1960s was a very important period in the evolution of Québécois nationalism and is referred to as the Quiet Revolution. During this period, “the state, traditionally viewed as a second-class institution in a province where most social services were controlled by the Church and where government was associated with crass patronage, became the focus of nationalist energies.” Before 1960, the Union Nationale, which had dominated Quebec politics since the end of World War II, believed that welfare should be a matter for private charity and the Church. Thus, during the Quiet Revolution, many social functions previously controlled by the

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44 Doran, Charles F. Why Canadian Unity Matters and Why Americans Care: Democratic Pluralism at Risk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 71.
45 Profile: Canada on BBC News Online, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1198865.stm
Church came to be controlled by the State. Furthermore, many Québécois gained the right to opt-out of many national policies during the 1964 Constitutional Amendment talks. Instead, Quebec would receive fiscal compensation and increased tax points in exchange.

The first real gains of the Quebec sovereignty movement came in 1963 with the creation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. This commission created a fair amount of controversy, but further autonomy gains were made in 1969 with the Official languages act. This act enshrined French as the required language in the public institutions while also calling for the bilingual labeling on all products sold in Canada. However, these gains were not enough for many Quebec separatists, so the Parti Québécois, which is still officially dedicated to separatism, was formed in 1970. This year also saw a small amount of bloodshed when Quebec separatists kidnapped a British trade official and murdered a Quebec minister. In 1976, the PQ ascended to the provincial level, and in 1980, the first referendum was held on a form of “sovereignty-association” for Quebec. It reads as follows:

The Government of Quebec has made public its proposal to negotiate a new arrangement with the rest of Canada, based on the equality of nations; this arrangement would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make its laws, administer 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; no change in political status resulting from these negotiations will

be effected without 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? Yes. No.\textsuperscript{51}

This is obviously not simple, straight-forward wording asking the voter if he or she wishes to remain a part of Canada. The wording stresses how Quebec would remain connected to Canada as much as it would gain in sovereignty. Regardless, the bill fails by a margin of 59.6% to 40.4%. The 1995 referendum is even more cryptic and arcane:

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 Québec and of the agreement signed on 12 June 1995? Yes. No.\textsuperscript{52}

Again, this wording was in part an attempt by the PQ and other separatists to assail any fears that soft nationalists might have of independence. They did such a good job of assailing those fears that “many Yes supporters even believed that after independence they would continue to elect representatives to the Canadian Parliament.”\textsuperscript{53} It almost seemed as if the PQ and the separatists were attempting to sneak independence past the citizens of Quebec. This referendum also failed, but only by 50.6% to 49.4%.

In 1982, René Levesque, the premier of Quebec, refused to sign the Constitution Act of 1982, which granted Canada complete autonomy from Britain.
This refusal was for the most part irrelevant, for Quebec still was legally and technically a province of Canada. However, this refusal to sign would lead to the Meech Lake Accord in 1990, which was designed to obtain Quebec’s signature. Quebec wanted further autonomy from Canada before it would sign. This attempt would become a fiasco and annoy not only many anglophone Canadians but also many francophone Quebeois.

The Quebec sovereignty movement is very similar to other sovereignty movements in western industrial societies, with the exception of its “strength and persistence.” This strength and persistence is especially puzzling when one examines the goals of the separatists. It is true that around 6 million of Quebec’s 7 million citizens speak French instead of English, but there is no major economic gap or widespread animosity between Francophones and Anglophones. Nationalistic fervor against English business might be a cause, but there is “no evidence remaining of the historic injustices that drove the nationalist impulse a couple of generations ago.” Furthermore, small and medium-sized businesses are protected by Quebec, Inc. The economic argument for secession is basically null and void as “the proposition that Quebec is a net-loser in federal-provincial transfers is quite flatly untrue, even if widely believed by credulous Quebec voters.”

Thus, instead of the typical secessionist arguments of economic inequalities or government abuse, most of the secessionists in Quebec have a very neo-liberal argument for secession, which Whitaker refers to as a sovereignty about “the

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55 Whitaker, “Quebec,” 282.
symbolism of recognition." Thus, for the referendum in 1995, pro-secessionists focused on what would remain the same after secession, for example, Quebec’s inclusion in NAFTA. Quebec would even keep the Canadian dollar as its official currency. Another key argument for secessionists involves the decline of nation-states with globalization. If the nation-state is becoming less and less important with intergovernmental organization, why doesn’t Quebec go ahead and start its own country?

The reason the Quebec secessionist movement has remained relatively non-violent thus far could possibly be because very little would change in the day-to-day lives of Québécois if they had an independent country. Even when Lucien Bouchard stirs voters with “nationalist eloquence into an emotional response”, the average rational citizen is still not likely to grab a weapon and risk his or her life for merely a different flag. However, what is important for many separatists is not the day to day issues, but the survival of French-Canadian culture, the “distinct society” over generations.

Quebec is unique in the western hemisphere in that it was able to develop and sustain its own culture and did not assimilate into English, Spanish, or Portuguese. However, without sufficient protection for the enclave of 6 million francophone Québécois in the middle of 300 million allophones, French Canadian culture would disappear after a few generations. This is because as the population of francophones

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57 Whitaker, “Quebec,” 297.
58 Whitaker, “Quebec,” 299.
59 Whitaker, “Quebec,” 298.
60 Whitaker, “Quebec,” 299.
decreases, the “cultural industries” of the language, e.g. newspapers, films, television, would gradually disappear. A comparable situation is the gradual disappearance of Yiddish, despite the presence of 2.5 million of Jews in and around New York. Thus, as “people generally think about their own language, like their health, only when it is threatened,” an outsider might easily underestimate the volition and determination of people with a threatened language.

One of the first pieces of legislation that the Parti Québécois enacted upon assuming provincial power was the Charter of the French Language in 1977, commonly referred to as Bill 101. After the passage of this bill, the Quebec government began promoting French as a common language. This goal of French as a common language is incompatible with the bilingualism of French and English, as evidenced by the enforcement of all commercial signs having to be in French. Furthermore, the bill required that all immigrants coming to Quebec must send their children to French-language schools, in order to ensure the renewal and continuation of the language in the region.

Thus, it is the survival of the distinct society, which was defined in the Charlottetown accord as “a French-speaking majority, a unique culture, and a civil law tradition” which drives the support for Quebec sovereignty, not economic inequalities or government repression. But, is the threat of cultural extinction enough to drive a society to violence? There has been almost no bloodshed in this separatist movement; however, the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1991 for Quebec to

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63 Richards, “Language Matters,” 86.
64 Richards, “Language Matters,” 100.
come to an agreement with the rest of the provinces hardened the positions of both French and English speaking Canadians. Richards draws a parallel between the failure of the Meech Lake Accord to the defeat of Gladstone’s Irish Home Rule Bill in the United Kingdom in 1886.\(^{66}\) Even though the Irish Home Rule Bill was designed to make concessions to Ireland so that separation from Great Britain was not necessary, the failure of the bill caused both sides to hardened their stances. As compromise became less and less plausible, widespread violence broke out and lasted for many years before Ireland was officially granted sovereignty.

The federal Canadian government is in a very awkward position with respect to Quebec. Even though the 1995 referendum on sovereignty failed, an estimated 60% of francophones still support separatism. Further complicating matters is the conflict that the Bill 101 creates with the Canadian Charter of Rights, which guarantees “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression.” The Canadian Supreme Court decided that Bill 101 violated the charter in 1988, and commercial signs can now include English.\(^{67}\) Furthermore, even though there has been relatively little violence, precedence for violence has already been set with the kidnapping of a British trade official and the murder of a Quebec minister. Thus, widespread violence for secession might seem improbable, but the possibility always exists.

\(^{67}\) Richards, “Language Matters,” 114.
Scotland: Devolution from a Unitary State

On July 24th, 1997, plans for a new Scottish Parliament to be held in Edinburgh starting in 1999 were published. This devolution of power created a Scottish Parliament that would be the first real evidence of Scottish home rule since the old Scottish Parliament voted for its own abolition in 1707. Furthermore, this devolution was also obtained without a drop of blood being spilt.

Scotland was officially adopted into Great Britain with the Act of Union of 1707. This wasn’t all that abrupt of a change, because the two kingdoms had been under the same monarch, the Stuarts, for most of the previous century. Some Scots viewed this union with dismay, possibly as an expansion by England, as the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh voted itself out of existence. However, the union did give
the Scots a very important economic concession: “free trade with England and throughout the empire.” Union with England also assimilated Scotland further into a common “Britishness,” so that today, less than 1% of the Scottish population speaks Gaelic, the original language of the Scots.

There were four main routes to the Scottish parliament: (1) the creation of Home Rule Pressure Groups (2) the establishment of constitutional conventions (3) the use of petitions and referenda (4) the creation of a political party to campaign for constitutional change. Scotland already had a large measure of independence from England as it was able to retain key aspects of its civil society, e.g. its church and the educational system, after the Act of Union. Thus, the independence movement was more for political Home Rule, than for any other separatist cause.

The movement was also in part fueled by nationalistic fervor that would make the Parliament a Parliament of the Scots, and not just one of mere regionalism. In comparison to other European Union countries, the government of the United Kingdom gained its unitary control much later. The German Länder have a very large amount of power in comparison to the federal government; Italy began the push for regionalism in the 1960s, and France even has a substantial amount of power controlled by its regions and departments. However, these examples show governments giving power back to regions and not to nations, as is the case with Scotland.

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The movement for Scottish independence existed for over a century before the parliament was actually established. The first real evidence of a separatist movement was evidenced by the creation of the Scottish National Party in 1934, whose goal was full independence. The party developed from the Scottish Home Rule Association, but it did not have a large, cross-class support base. The SHRA had organized the first Scottish National Conventions during this time as well. Because of the lack of widespread support, the first referendum was not held until 1979, and it merely included the question of whether Scotland should have its own parliament. 51.6 per cent of a voter turnout of 63.6 percent voted Yes. However, a stipulation that required 40 per cent of the electorate, not the voters, caused the referendum to fail.

In 1989, the Scottish Constitutional Convention set out with the purpose of creating a solid proposal for devolution. It was also an attempt to iron out differences before the next referendum in 1997. The 1979 referendum was marked by deep inter-party divisions, which can be partly blamed for the failure of the referendum. This third Scottish Constitutional Convention also attempted to generate cross-class support for devolution. The Scottish Constitutional Convention's final document proposed a "129-member Parliament, with seventy-three constituency and fifty-six list members, as well as proposals for tax powers, devolved responsibilities, relations with local government, and public participation in the Parliament's activities."

The 1997 referendum on the creation of a Scottish Parliament passed with 74.3 percent of a voter turnout of 60.2 percent. Prime Minister Tony Blair of the

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70 Lynch, Scottish Government and Politics, 10.
71 Lynch, Scottish Government and Politics, 11.
British Labour Party did not require the referendum to have a 40 percent approval rating of the electorate, thus the referendum had a much better chance of passing. A second question on the referendum involved the powers of taxation, which also passed with 64.3 percent of voters supporting them. However, the Scottish Parliament effectively has no fiscal autonomy, as it operates through a block grant from Westminster. This leaves the Scottish Parliament with a limited source of revenue even when compared to other regional governments: “Canadian provinces have provincial sales taxes, Spanish income tax in the 1990s, [and] the three Belgian regions also receive a share of locally-raised income tax.”

Despite the work by independence movement supporters, the new powers of parliament would eventually include the control of rather mundane powers, such as the train schedule and environmental policies. Policies concerning “control of the constitution, defense, foreign affairs, social security, taxation, company regulation, and management of the economy” would still be controlled through Westminster. The Parliament would have only a 3p margin of adjustment for taxation, so nearly all of its funds would come through a block grant from Westminster. With these sorts of stipulations, the parliament seems like a very small gain for the overall independence movement. However, one major characteristic of the Scottish Constitution is that the Scottish Parliament is only told what it cannot do. This fact was accomplished by reserving the specific powers of the United Kingdom to Westminster. Therefore, control of future policies goes to Edinburgh, not Westminster. Thus, one critic

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believes that devolution has “placed Scotland on a motorway without exits leading to independence.”

One of the reasons that the Scottish independence movement intensified was because the Parliament in Westminster was ruled by members of the Conservative Party and Margaret Thatcher, even though this was the minority party in Scotland. This same problematic situation was occurring in Wales as well. The unitary nature of the British state created further friction. Thus, devolution did not only go to Scotland. However, Scotland did receive more autonomy than Wales, which only was granted a National Assembly and not a Parliament. It is possible that Scotland would have had a much more difficult time achieving any sort of devolution if it had been the only region clamoring for more powers.

Also, many Scots felt that their views and interests were being overlooked when it came to policies concerning the European Union. Due to the setup of the EU, national governments have somewhat increased their powers as they are in a better position to control EU policy. For example, originally, Scottish authorities would have had to lobby the United Kingdom’s government so that it would push for policies in its favor in the EU’s Council. Thus, the central UK government would indirectly have control over policies concerning the environment or fisheries, areas over which Scotland should have control. However, with devolution, Scotland holds a place in the EU’s council of regions.

When analyzing the path to Scottish devolution, I was surprised to find that it had been so peaceful. This is probably because I had read and heard so much about the violence in Northern Ireland. However, Scotland doesn’t have the religious

75 Lynch, Scottish Government and Politics, 4.
differences that Northern Ireland has with England. It also does not have as recent a
title of violence, either. So far, Scottish devolution appears to have set the
example of how a separatist movement should evolve peacefully.
When Separatists Movements Turn Violent

The first difficulty in trying to analyze the violence in a separatist movement is that most of the movements fall somewhere on a continuous spectrum between no bloodshed at all and prolonged war. For example, if this spectrum were written out as a number line with Peace on the left and Violence on the right, Scotland would fall to the extreme left and Eritrea would fall on the extreme right. However, Quebec has been peaceful, but there have been isolated instances of terrorism. The movements in Northern Ireland and in the Basque regions of Spain have seen a great deal of bloodshed, but no outright wars. Chiapas in southern Mexico falls somewhere closer to the right with Biafra in Nigeria, but not as far to the right as Chechnya. Despite this problem of having no set instance or definition for when a movement is “violent” or “peaceful,” much can be learned from comparing different separatist movements’ relative positions.

Before a separatist movement is at the point where it can become violent or peaceful, nationalist tendencies from a group of people must develop. Hechter defines nationalism as “collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit.” However, there is still difficulty in defining what actually constitutes a nation. Barash and Webel pithily

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76 Hechter, Containing Nationalism, 7.
describe nations as “ethnic groups writ large.” In this context, nations are the ethnic groups that have been more dominant in the past and thus have grown faster or for a long period of time.

Barash and Webel go on to describe the beginnings of European nationalism as when “peoples became increasingly aware of the existences of other peoples who were similar to themselves, as well as others, generally farther away, who were quite different.” This would have been around the time when the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 ended in Thirty Years War in central Europe and was catalyzed by improvements in communications and travel. Gunpowder also made castles penetrable, which lessened the power of smaller local leaders.

Outside of Europe, colonialism disrupted this process of nation-building, and many countries’ situations are currently much more volatile than might have been without outside interference of the colonialists. With colonialism and later imperialism, boundaries were drawn which were not ethnically sensitive or were different from what might have otherwise evolved. Thus, after many of the former colonies gained independence some time after World War II, national and ethnic divisions were a common source of wars and violence. In the case of Eritrea, the peoples occupying that region of land have had no common ties outside of boundaries drawn up by colonialist Italy and those arising from the oppression by the central Ethiopian government. Thus, the Eritrean rebel fighters had a difficult time developing mass support and even became split themselves. At one point, there

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existed two Eritrean rebel contingents and the Ethiopian military, all fighting each other. Eritrea is more exceptional for its lack of nationalism in comparison to most other separatist groups.

Often, a common culture already exists before the nationalism becomes more salient. This is true in Scotland, which still has its own international sports teams, and especially so in Quebec and Chechnya, whose culture is supported by a differing language and religion from the central government. Within this common culture, a part considers the protection of the national culture to be a private good, directly affecting their welfare. This group might consist of teachers, priests, and entertainers, who would all lose their livelihood if their culture was directly threatened.\(^80\)

One formation of nationalism in a modern setting involves elite action and is supported by Delanty and O’Mahony. In this way, “the national question, initially marginal, becomes dominant as a result of the ability of nationalist elites to forge a coalition between the most important groups.” \(^81\) These are most likely the elites whose livelihoods were threatened by the extinction of their culture. For whatever reason the nationalism of a particular separatist group or region developed, what is important for the central government is that the nationalism is not patriotism for the central state. One important component of nationalism is that it is often combined with antagonisms for other nations.\(^82\)

There must also be some advantages or incentives for the masses if they are going to consider themselves a part of the nation, especially if it means that they are

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\(^{80}\) Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 123.


\(^{82}\) Barash and Webel. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 160.
not a part of the central state. Barash and Webel talk about “the emotional appeal of belonging, of shared deeds, and of extending the boundaries of one’s self to compromise a larger and seemingly more glorious whole.”\textsuperscript{83} This might be a reason for someone who wants to volunteer for a movement if he or she has nothing better to do, but many others who join separatist movements feel forced to the periphery or feel neglected by the central state.

When the group has decided that it is united in nationalism, that group often feels the need for more autonomy or self-determination. Self-determination is often cited as a situation where “people always prefer to act on the basis of their own desires rather than those of others.”\textsuperscript{84} To some extent, the region has a great deal to gain from being in a country of a large size as opposed to being independent. There are the advantages of being in a possibly larger, more diverse economy along with being in a better position for defense. However, if that region is already in a free-trade zone, such as NAFTA or the EU, size is not important.\textsuperscript{85} Thus, one of the points of the Quebecois secessionists before the 1995 referendum was that Quebec would still be a part of NAFTA even after it seceded. Furthermore, even though the UK has a very small chance of being invaded, if Scotland were to secede, it could still join a regional defense group such as NATO for its protection.

The policies of the central state can often exacerbate the nationalism and separatist tendencies. One of the most quickly cited problems by peripheral nationalist elites is that the central government’s policies are hampering the economic growth of the region. Some Scots believed that Scotland would profit more from its

\textsuperscript{83} Barash and Webel, Peace and Conflict Studies, 159.

\textsuperscript{84} Hechter, Containing Nationalism, 115.
reserves in the North Sea if it were a sovereign state. However, Irish nationalists used similar rhetoric before its independence, but “the Irish economy stagnated under protectionist policies that held sway until the 1990s.”

It is this point at which the group determines its options for obtaining more autonomy. One way would be to organize pressure groups and then try to force a referendum on independence or more autonomy from the central government. However, if the government does not allow opposition parties or is particularly autocratic, these peaceful options might not be possible. Thus, the group often resorts to violence.

There are many different terms used to describe the intra-state warfare that would ensue from a group violently attempting to gain further autonomy: insurgencies, coups, revolutions, terrorism, small wars, limited wars, internal conflicts, low-intensity conflicts, etc. However, there exists no obvious criteria for distinguishing among those terms. Furthermore, terms used to describe movements or conflicts often reflect the political stance of the observer. For example, referring to the conflict as a rebellion or insurgency often removes the political legitimacy of the faction vying for more autonomy and buttresses the incumbent government, while civil war implies that all sides have rational goals, which also might not be the case.

The first evidence of what might turn into a pro-longed violent conflict usually comes from what the central government calls terrorists, for “the framework

85 Hechter, Containing Nationalism, 117.
86 Hechter, Containing Nationalism, 113.
88 King. Ending Civil Wars, 19.
for much modern terrorist action is ethnic or nationalist.\textsuperscript{89} This terrorist action could range from the attention-getting, high-profile kidnapping of a governmental official as happened in 1970 in Quebec, to armed contingents seizing government buildings in a regional capital, as was the case with the EZLN in the southern state of Chiapas, Mexico in 1994. What are terrorist activities also have much to do with the central governments wishes. For example, Dzhokar Dudayev won a presidential pole in Chechnya before declaring independence in 1991. This did not stop the Moscow administration's thickening up their rhetoric against him with terrorist accusations.

The scale of the terrorist attack corresponds more to the abilities and organization of the extremist faction group carrying out the action as opposed to the overall public support of the movement. Thus, a movement with relatively little support might have an unproportionately large effect on the central state if its extremists are organized and militant enough. In this same line of thought, the act of terrorism itself might in part be an "attempt to preserve or 'reawaken' the national spirit."\textsuperscript{90} This effort is partly accomplished by forcing the central government to possibly take a sterner stance, further galvanizing all sides.

Often an influential leader plays a key role in initiating violence or continuing it once it has begun. One notorious example is Vellupillai Prabhakaran, who is head of the LTTE in Sri Lanka. His extremist faction will stop nothing short of full independence for the Tamil controlled northern parts of Sri Lanka and is infamous for violent attacks against other, more moderate Tamil leaders interested in compromise.


\textsuperscript{90} Townshend. \textit{Terrorism}, 76.
Furthermore, those leaders often have personal interests in continued war after violence has already begun, including the risk of wrath from the victorious power. In terms of inciting the initial violence, a leader often partakes in what Figueiredo and Weingast refer to as “gambling for resurrection.” In this scenario, “leaders use violent conflict as a means of transforming politics from an issue on which they are likely to lose power into one on which they can retain power.” The leader has such an interest in this scenario because it is the citizens and civilians who actually bear the costs of the conflict, and not the leader himself.

After the initial instance of terrorism, the separatist movement can be considered violent. This is especially the case if the main goal of the terrorist action was to generate attention for a particular movement. Much of the public will come to associate the movement with violence, especially if it is the public’s initial exposure to the cause. Thus, after the first fatality occurs through an action of a part of the movement, the state can be considered to be in civil war. “Civil War” might seem like an over-exaggeration for just one fatality; however, there is “no objective measure of the magnitude of violence in civil wars as compared with other forms of sub-state violence, for levels of conflict wax and wane in the course of any single dispute.”

Therefore, under this definition of civil war, Canada was at war with the Quebec separatist movement when the Quebec minister was murdered in 1970 by

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91 King. *Ending Civil Wars*, 32.
separatist extremists. However, Canada’s war is obviously not comparable to either that of Chechnya’s or Eritrea’s. One reason could possibly be that Canada has a lower tolerance for violence than other places. Thus, the extremists’ actions possibly created more public disgust and outrage than actually generated support or strength for the cause.

The central government is put in a very difficult position after the initial act of violence. If it decides to take a firm stance against the movement and its aggressors, it would possibly have to use force against its own citizens. This is especially problematic as the violence progresses, and as the distinction between civilian and combatant is blurred. This situation creates further difficulty for a state that is not as established or is still trying to develop legitimacy. This is especially true if the government publicly denounces the movement or labels it “terrorist” or “criminal,” because the government then “gives up any chance of gaining legitimacy with that element.” If the central government goes the opposite way of violence, it is often viewed as being weak by third parties or by other regions wishing for more autonomy.

The prevention of “Balkanization” is what central governments have more recently been citing in order to support harsh policies against giving a region any leeway at all. This refers to the area in the former Yugoslavia and its violent break-up after Croatia initially declared its independence. After Croatia, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Montenegro followed suit, with innumerable atrocities of ethnic cleansing occurring against the respective minorities of the newly formed countries.

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Thus, the central government might even incite a previously peaceful separatist movement to resort to violence with its overly-stern denial of cooperation.

For when there have been previous violent confrontations between the state and a separatist group, a myriad of problems continue in the ensuing "peace." One major difficulty in this situation is the nature of the paramilitary groups that often constitute the violent factions of any separatist movement. Paramilitary groups are very complex entities that often have no single, uncontested leader. This is why Darby believes that "cease fires are never unanimous." In Chechnya, the Russian military killed Dudayev in April of 1996 in a missile strike; however, the organization, or lack thereof, of the Chechen paramilitaries has allowed fighting to continue to this day. Most of the paramilitary now live in the mountains and operate in small groups at night, striking with either rocket-propelled grenades or assault rifles from automobiles. This type of violence could possibly continue indefinitely, regardless of any cease-fire.

Years of violence often produce a stockpile of arms in regions that have already experienced continued violence. In Angola, the price of an AK-47 is roughly equivalent to the price of a chicken. This not only makes the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons difficult, but also leaves the society with a surplus of guns for everyday criminal activity. Exchange programs are often offered after some sort of peace arrangement has been made, but to many, "decommissioning smacks of surrender." 

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When a state is attempting to prevent further violence in a region, it often resorts to stationing more soldiers or other security forces in the region. Just the presence of these soldiers is often reason enough for extremists to resort to action. Thus, when the state is trying to reform the police and security forces in a region, some group is still left that is dissatisfied.

One of the most notable differences between peaceful and violent separatist movements is that most violent movements occur in third-world, or developing, countries. Most African countries, beyond the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict, have experienced some sort of violent separatist movement. Besides Biafra, southern Sudan has been in lengthy rebellion that rivals Eritrea’s, and the Ivory Coast, most recently one of the most prosperous countries in West Africa, has been battling an armed contingent in its northern regions since 2001. Do these nations resort to violence more just because their economies are not as developed? Most likely not.

The first characteristic that might entice a separatist group to resort to violence could be the weakness of the central state that accompanies many third-world countries. If a region’s economy is not fully developed, there is not as much commerce for the central government to tax to fund itself. For example, Ethiopia’s government and military were much weaker at the beginning of Eritrea’s struggle before receiving aid from the United States and later the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the central government’s presence might be concentrated in the capital or only the major cities, leaving the rest of the country more open to sedition. However, this reasoning alone cannot explain the violence in Northern Ireland or the Basque regions of Spain.
Accompanying the weakness of the central state is the lack of education in many developing countries. Again, if there is no commerce to tax, the government has no money for public education. Even worse, religious groups may fill this role, teaching students the glory of dying for causes or other extreme measures. However, with a well-educated, literate society, groups wishing for more autonomy for their region are more likely to use methods of democratic institutions than resort to violence. A better educated population is also less susceptible to the rants of demagogue seeking followers to aid a violent cause.

Another possible catalyst leading to armed conflict is a country’s having a recent history of violence. To some extent, most countries’ boundaries have been carved out in war, but some countries have a more recent history of violence. For example, if the last major change that occurred for a government was a Henry Kissinger backed military coup, a separatist movement interested in more autonomy is much more likely to resort to violence as opposed to developing political parties or waiting around for referenda.

The history of the central government in dealing with regions that call for more autonomy is also important. For example, Chechnya’s leaders might have resorted to seizing Russian arms instead of attempting to use the new Russian parliament. because the Russian state does not have a history of peaceful compromise. Russia’s idea of compromise was made lucidly clear when Boris Yeltsin had the parliament building shelled in 1993, killing over a hundred people. On the other hand, fourteen other former regions of the Soviet Union declared their
independence peacefully during its collapse. However, these regions were for the
most part not a part of Russia before the 1917 revolution.

Religion also plays a key role in many movements. In Chechnya, the
existence of Wahhabism or possibly another extremist Islamic sect, might be fueling
much of the fight against Russia. Some of the leaders might be attempting to
establish a fundamentalist Islam state in the region north of the Caucasus. Thus, they
have been able to convince some of the militants that the fight against Russia is part
of the larger jihad.

For a state that is already experiencing separatist violence, the prospects of
future peace are typically not very encouraging. The longer the violence continues,
the more extremists that are created who are willing to continue violent actions for a
cause. However, a glimmer of hope might be found in Darby's describing violence as
a possible catalyst for peace. This idea stems from a "body of atrocities that ...
sparked a public sense of outrage and became the catalyst for negotiations."\textsuperscript{100}
However, one wonders just how much more atrocious some of the conflicts could
possibly become.

\textsuperscript{100} Darby. \textit{The Effects of Violence}, 96.
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