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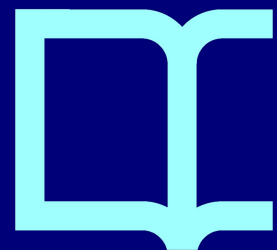
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The National Question and Electoral Politics in Quebec and Scotland: Democracy, Diversity, and Citizen Engagement, by Éric Bélanger, Richard Nadeau, Ailsa Henderson and Eve Hepburn. Montreal and Kingston, London and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018, 292 pp., \$34.95 paperback

Reviewed by Nùria Franco-Guillén

Aberystwyth University

Since Urwin and Rokkan's seminal publication on peripheries in 1983 we have witnessed an increasing number of academic works that examine substate political movements from a variety of perspectives. The field has contributed to a greater understanding of the mobilization of territorial interest, mostly (but not only) in Western democracies, and for good reasons. Contrary to the prediction of several scholars and political commentators of the 20th century, stateless nationalism and regionalism has become more prevalent. Relevant movements and parties have had electoral success and diversified the scope of their demands. The independence referendums in Quebec, Scotland and Catalonia are a testimony to their relevance and capacity to mobilize around their nation-building projects. Yet, a plethora of questions regarding their role within the center-periphery dynamics remain partly unanswered. In this book, Éric Bélanger, Richard Nadeau, Ailsa Henderson and Eve Hepburn address the 'national question' as an electoral issue that matters to parties and voters in Quebec and Scotland.

The first part of the book looks at the strategic behavior of political parties in Scotland and Quebec regarding the 'national question'. Political stances on the latter are classified along three main dimensions: the constitutional question (referring to the mutual relations the regions have vis-à-vis the State), national identity, and regional interest. By means of content analysis, the authors examine the discourse of the main political parties during substate and state elections. The results of the analysis are used to test hypotheses related to issue saliency and stance. Interestingly, the authors' findings reinforce recent suggestions that the 'national question' is by no means a 'niche issue'. Rather, all parties enter the electoral competition for ownership of the issue, which in some instances becomes a 'valence issue.' The two regions are different when it comes to the relative importance of identity (which is greater in Quebec than in Scotland) and regional interest (which is greater in Scotland than in Quebec). The authors attribute these differences to contextual characteristics of the two regions.

In addition to these findings, the authors' efforts to conceptualize the 'national question' is particularly noteworthy. By subdividing the national question into the three above-mentioned dimensions that make up the centre-periphery cleavage, then measuring the direction of statements found in party manifestos, in opinion surveys, and through interviews based on these dimensions, lets the authors draw reliable conclusions about issue ownership and stances. However, the items included in making a determination about the direction of statements are debatable. For example, when it comes to identity and language, a centralist direction is determined based on a party's "scaling down some accomplishments in linguistic matters." Doing so implies that only partisan reference to (regional) language is regarded as an indicator of a 'centralist' statement on identity issues, possibly ignoring other components of national identity.

The second part of the book looks at voter behavior in the two regions, and how individuals' preferences regarding the three dimensions of the 'national question', along with other characteristics, determine their vote. To do so, the authors analyze the results of a survey implemented in both regions, which asked questions related to identity, self-government, and constitutional arrangement along with questions about general political attitudes and values, while including demographic and socioeconomic variables. Interestingly, the survey relies on multiple questions to measure each dependent variable in order to fully grasp the voters' positions. For example, national identity is not only measured by the classical Linz-Moreno question (a scale commonly employed to study ethno-territorial claims and conflicts) but combined with other measurements. The quantitative analysis reveals that, in substate level elections, the national question becomes a 'super-issue' that influences voters' choice in Quebec, whereas in the case of Scotland left-right positions codetermine voter behavior.

Overall, as the authors argue, the book offers conclusions that shed light on our understanding of electoral dynamics in two comparable stateless nations. The finding that the national question shapes party competition and voting behavior raises doubts concerning two preconceptions that often accompany the study of territorial politics: its niche-ness, and the idea that substate elections are second-order. The research's findings and design lend itself to being applied to other cases. In fact, what makes Scotland and Quebec comparable also makes them unique. Thus, one wonders whether similar conclusions would be reached if this study were applied to cases with differing contextual and historic characteristics, such as cases with less politicized and/or less polarized center-periphery dynamics than those found in Quebec and Scotland. Finally, as the authors acknowledge, the study does not provide a longitudinal examination of the national question. Instead, it focuses on a period in which the national question was highly politicized in both Quebec and Scotland, making it difficult to tell whether some of the findings may be affected by such politicization. This in itself is not a reason to dismiss the results. The politicization of the national question is in fact an essential characteristic of politics in stateless nations; but a longitudinal perspective would offer the possibility of contrasting the findings with periods of less unrest around the issue.

In conclusion, this book is a relevant and interesting contribution to the study of stateless nationalism. By refining definitions of nationalism, examining partisan considerations surrounding the national question, and analyzing the determinants of related individual voting behavior, the volume offers conclusions that should inform any reader interested in the broader field of territorial politics.