

What Are the Impacts of Pursuing National Self-Determination?



Chapter

10

- Why do you think nations and nation-states pursue self-determination?
- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing national self-determination?
- Share your response with others in your class.

Chapter Issue

How is national self-determination pursued?

Recall that while the concept *nation* usually refers to a nation-state, it also refers to nations within nation-states. Québec sovereignists, for example, see themselves as being involved in a struggle for national self-determination. The goal for many Québec sovereignists is to establish a French nation within North America. How does their pursuit affect other Canadians?

In this chapter you will explore the various ways that nations and nation-states pursue self-determination. The following inquiry questions will be used to guide your exploration:

- What is self-determination? (forms, processes, and expressions)
- How do Indigenous peoples pursue self-determination within a nation-state?

This chapter will conclude your exploration of the Main Issue for Part 2 (chapters 6–10): ***To what extent should national interests be pursued?***



Figure 10-1

Why do nations pursue self-determination? Depending on the needs and the goals of a nation, the results of pursuing self-determination can be diverse.

Understanding Self-Determination

Question for Inquiry

- What is self-determination?

The question of what exactly self-determination is—and who should have this right—is complex. Why do you think that throughout history, revolutions have been fought by people who were determined to achieve self-determination? Do you think self-determination is a basic right of a people? Consider the following United Nations declaration on self-determination.

Article 1

1. *All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*
2. *All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.¹*

In considering the UN article, what can you see as the benefits of pursuing self-determination? Which of the rights described in the UN article do you currently experience or assume are available to you and your society? Which may not be available?

To whom does the right to national self-determination apply? Is it important for established nations and nation-states to recognize the existence of a new nation? Once it has been recognized, who gives the new nation its sought-after right to self-determination? According to a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) panel, the following criteria define a people or a nation:

- a common history
- racial or ethnic identity
- cultural homogeneity
- linguistic unity
- religious or ideological unity
- territorial connection
- national self-identification

What implications do these UNESCO criteria have for determining *who* has the right of national self-determination? Why does “national self-identification” present a problem?

¹ “The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” 16 December 1966. http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ceschr.htm.



Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the link to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) website to view the list of its 63 member nations. UNPO is an international organization whose members include Indigenous groups, occupied nations, minorities, and independent states or territories who seek to protect their rights, preserve their environments, and find non-violent solutions to conflicts that affect them.

patriation: bringing legislation under the authority of the country it applies to

Ideas and Opinions

According to a 1998 report by UNESCO, recognizing a people's right to self-determination leads to peace.

“The right to self-determination is a specific contribution to building a culture of peace. The world is tired of violence and wars. There is growing recognition that war is a poor means indeed of resolving conflicts. We aspire to something better. Therefore it is not utopian to believe that in a few decades we might abolish war, in the same way that at other moments of human history we have rejected slavery, fascism and totalitarianism.”²

—M. van Walt and O. Seroo, eds., “The Implementation of the Right to Self-Determination as a Contribution to Conflict Prevention”

Fast Facts

According to the UN, there are 16 non-state territories yet to be decolonized: Western Sahara, American Samoa, Guam, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, Tokelau, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Gibraltar, Montserrat, Saint Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.³

Is this the only list of criteria that might determine a nation's right to self-determination? Might there be situations that do not fit this list of criteria but still represent a legitimate claim to national self-determination?

Not all nations that seek self-determination are ethnic nations. For example, in 1982, Canada **patriated** the Constitution Act from Great Britain, as a means of self-determination.

Simply put, the right of national self-determination is the right of allowing a people to determine their own destiny. Self-determination means the nation can choose its own political status and determine its economic, cultural, and social development. The outcomes of self-determination can range from political independence to full integration within a nation-state.

Forms of Self-Determination

Self-determination has different meanings for different nations. Some nations achieve self-determination by acts of revolution or war, while other nations exist within a larger nation-state. Forms of self-determination can also be achieved through decolonization, successor states, by referenda, and by third-party processes.

Decolonization

When nations grant independence to their colonies, the process is called *decolonization*. Decolonization dates back to the 19th century—Canada's independence from Britain is one example. Decolonization is also a contemporary phenomenon.

India and Pakistan

Decolonization is a process by which a nation can achieve national self-determination. In 1947, India was decolonized. Most of India had come under direct control of Britain as the British Indian Empire by 1857. By the end of the Second World War, former empires—such as Britain—found that the cost of maintaining colonies was no longer in their national interests. For nearly 100 years of British rule, there were rebellions, mutinies, and protests by Indians seeking self-determination. In 1947, Britain decided to create two independent states through the **partitioning** of India.

There were two dominant ethnic nations within the British Indian Empire—Muslims and Hindus—and many minority ethnic nations. The efforts of Mahatma Gandhi to promote independence for India

² Report of the International Conference of Experts held in Barcelona from 21 to 27 November 1998. UNESCO Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace and Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, 1999. From: <http://www.unpo.org/content/view/full/446/83>.

³ “Decolonization United Nations Success Story, albeit Unfinished One, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Special Committee.” 22 February 2007. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gacol3151.doc.htm>.



Figure 10-2

What current nation-states were included in the British Indian Empire? What problems do you think were created when Britain ended its colonial rule of this region?

Ideas and Opinions

As a British-educated lawyer, Mahatma Gandhi was both the political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement. Gandhi urged Indians to resist the rule of the British through non-violent civil disobedience. He greatly opposed partition and continued to focus on Hindu–Muslim peace and unity, even after the partition.

“ My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines ... India does not become two nations because it has been cut up into two sovereign States ... ”

—Mahatma Gandhi, on

www.navajivantrust.org/publications/mydream-frame.html.

Gandhi’s words reflect a concern about self-determination outlined earlier: What happens when a people does not agree with the outcome of self-determination? If the outcome of self-determination creates hardship for a nation, should it still be pursued?

led to talks in London to respond to the demands. Britain’s solution was to create two nations, India and Pakistan, one for each ethnic nation. The impact of the decolonization of India has led to continuing conflict on the Indian subcontinent.

As a result of the partition, India was primarily a Hindu state, and East and West Pakistan were primarily Muslim states. Once the new

PAUSE AND REFLECT

How can self-determination strengthen or weaken the economic power of nations?

Figure 10-3

In this photo from 2004, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims are shown joining in a celebration of the beatification of Mother Teresa, in her home of Kolkata, India. Efforts to establish harmony between the three groups are ongoing.



Fast Facts

The partitioning of India resulted in a migration of nearly 15 million people. This mass movement led to the breakdown of law and order. As a result of the partition, massacres were committed by both Muslim and Hindu sides. Reports at the time indicated that more than 500 000 people were killed and 12 million were left homeless. Is political self-determination worth the cost of human lives? What are the lessons for nations contemplating national self-determination? Should the benefits and costs of pursuing national self-determination be considered and analyzed before beginning?

boundaries of these states were created, there was a massive migration of people from India's Muslim areas to East and West Pakistan, and of Hindus and Sikhs from the Muslim states to India. The partition of India created long stretches of border that were never properly surveyed. This resulted in many conflicts between India and China and between India and Pakistan. The conflict between India and Pakistan has resulted in a nuclear arms buildup that from time to time threatens to engulf the area.

Mozambique

Like much of Africa and Asia, Mozambique was colonized by a European nation-state and granted independence following the Second World War.

In the 1500s and 1600s, Mozambique, in southeast Africa, became a stopover for the Portuguese trading in India and the Far East. Portugal was involved in lucrative trade and colonization elsewhere, and did little to develop the colony of Mozambique. Between the 1700s and the early 1900s, private companies developed gold mines, plantations, and a railway line. The industry was designed to benefit Portugal and Portuguese immigrants, with little attention paid to the Indigenous population. In the early 1900s, Mozambique was seen as a land of opportunity, and immigration to the colony soared.

By the 1960s, there were calls for Mozambican independence, and several anti-colonial political groups engaged in an armed struggle for self-determination. These groups were not widely supported and made little progress. Instead, a coup in Portugal resulted in a strong shift in political will to begin decolonizing all of Portugal's colonial possessions.

Figure 10-4

What opportunities does the location of Mozambique provide? Why might it have been a desirable location for a colony? How might Portugal have benefited from having a colony surrounded by British colonies?

Even those colonies with little interest in decolonization were cut free. Mozambique, one such nation, was declared independent in 1975—self-determination was essentially thrust upon the people. It took years of negotiations and peacekeeping through the United Nations before a peaceful resolution and free elections were possible in Mozambique.

How did the Indigenous people fare? When independence was declared, 90 per cent of the expatriate settlers (Portuguese immigrants) left Mozambique. This left the nation with few skilled workers. Some engineers stayed to carry out construction or maintain the infrastructure (roads, sewers, electrical system, water, and ports). Educating Mozambicans was a low priority. At the time of independence, there were only 33 college-educated Mozambicans in the entire country.

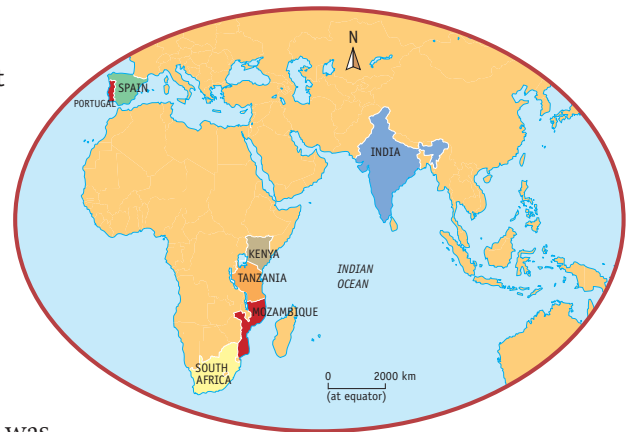
Departing workers abandoned 2000 estates, which had been the main source of agricultural products for export. No transitional government was established, resulting in a long civil war. An estimated 1 million Mozambicans died, and an estimated 1.7 million became refugees in neighbouring countries.

Peace talks eventually ended the civil war in 1992. The newly created constitution called for a multi-party political system, a market-based economy, and free elections. By mid-1995, refugees flooded back to Mozambique and approximately 4 million internally displaced people returned to their homes. What problems do you think this could cause?

The government acted to resolve many problems, bringing about low inflation and high economic growth. Still, Mozambique faced problems like poor infrastructure, low foreign investment, a greater rate of imports than exports, and a large portion of uncultivated land. Other countries, such as Japan, have helped Mozambique achieve economic self-determination by cancelling the commercial debt owed to them by Mozambique. Yet more than 30 years after achieving self-determination, Mozambique is struggling with problems that threaten its stability. Do you think that the people of Mozambique would have sought independence if they knew what hardships they would face? Is it better to be financially secure or politically and culturally free? In a struggle for self-determination, who gets to make those choices?

Figure 10-5

Made from weapons handed in after the civil war in Mozambique, this “tree of life” was the transformation of arms into art. What other military or cultural expressions of the pursuit of national self-determination can you think of?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Why did it take years of negotiations and peacekeeping to bring about a viable nation in Mozambique?



INVESTIGATION

Mozambique

Something to Think About: Is the story of Mozambique really about national self-determination? How is this story different from the story of Indian independence?

What is a realistic price to pay for self-determination? If violence is used, are casualties acceptable? What if peaceful methods are used? Is it acceptable to remain a colony if doing so provides a higher standard of living? Is attaining self-determination the ultimate goal, even if it results in great poverty for most of the people?

An Example: It is likely that most people who struggle for national self-determination rarely think they will be worse off economically upon gaining sovereignty. Mozambique, however, is an example of a nation where the economic and social consequences of decolonization and self-determination have not been in the best interests of the people. Steps are being taken to change the effects of decolonization on Mozambique, but what price has already been paid, and for how long must it continue to be paid?

Point of View of the President of the Mozambique Liberation Front: American-educated Eduardo Mondlane, a former shepherd, is considered by many to be the father of Mozambican independence. Mondlane was elected president of the Mozambican Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, or FRELIMO), an organization made up of smaller nationalist groups opposed to Portuguese rule. In 1969, Mondlane was assassinated.

*Liberation is to us not simply a matter of expelling the Portuguese: it means reorganising the life of the country and setting it on the road to sound national development.*⁴

Point of View of the President of Mozambique: Although controversy surrounded his election in 2005, Armando Emilio Guebuza, a wealthy businessman, was elected president of Mozambique. Promising to continue economic reforms and end corruption, Guebuza spoke at one of the most prestigious institutes in the world seeking help in the fight against poverty in Mozambique. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, also known as Chatham House, is a London-based, non-profit **non-governmental organization** (NGO) that seeks to research, analyze, and promote the understanding of major international issues and current affairs.



Figure 10-6 ▲

People living in poverty in Mozambique search through the town dump outside of Hulene, in Maputo, for goods they can use or sell. The dump exposes them to diseases, including respiratory problems and cancer, both from infectious agents and from toxins released when garbage is burned.

⁴ Eduardo Mondlane, quoted in "'The Right Not to Be Poor Is a Human Right'—President Guebuza," *Mozambique News Agency, AIM Reports* no. 331, 18 December 2006. <http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/newsletter/aim331.html>.

*The affluent countries will eventually be confronted by the massive numbers of people who live in despair, famine, disease, by those who are denied opportunities to participate and earn their share in the world's prosperity ... Such a state of affairs would become an ideal ground where armed conflicts, terrorism, illegal immigration, crime, disease and environmental disasters would flourish. These would impact negatively on the stability of the world and on the survival of humankind.*⁵

- 1 What should be the main responsibility of a newly sovereign state—removal of people who oppose them, meeting the economic needs of the people, or meeting the cultural needs of the people?
- 2 How can ending poverty contribute to sovereignty in places like Mozambique? Can national self-determination be achieved if a country is continually confronted with political, economic, and social issues?

Successor States

When large nations like the former Soviet Union break up, the states that result are called *successor states*. When the Soviet Union broke up, the 15 Soviet republics simply declared themselves new independent states. The global community officially recognized these new states by establishing diplomatic relations with them.

Ukraine as a Successor State

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 was generally peaceful. In Ukraine, 90 per cent of the citizens voted in a referendum to support Ukrainian independence or self-determination. The first years following Ukraine's independence saw a drop in its economy, but over time the "breadbasket" of the East has begun to regain its stature.

When Ukraine declared its independence, the country claimed sole right to command and control 780 000 troops and many nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian soil. (The nuclear weapons were all returned to Russia by 1996). In addition, it claimed possession of all resources within its borders and the right to sell its resources as it saw fit. However, the country had no way of getting compensation for the resources it had contributed to the former Soviet Union or for the cultural destruction it suffered under Stalin.

Fast Facts

A new, independent Ukraine boasts a population made up of over 77 per cent ethnic Ukrainians, of which 67 per cent claim to speak their native language. Although most school instruction is still in Russian, a growing number of schools give instruction mainly in Ukrainian.

⁵ Armando Guebuza, quoted in "The Right Not to Be Poor Is a Human Right"—President Guebuza," *Mozambique News Agency, AIM Reports* no. 331, 18 December 2006. <http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/newsletter/aim331.html>.

Figure 10-7

In August 2004, Ukrainian cadets march in the annual military parade in Kiev to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day. In what ways do celebrations like Independence Day or Canada Day strengthen national bonds? Can you think of any government-sponsored events or activities in Canada that might be considered *Canadianization*?



Throughout the long history of the region, Ukraine faced challenges, including many wars, a genocidal famine, and significant oppression. Independence has provided many opportunities for the people of Ukraine to build a new future. Self-determination offered Ukraine the opportunity to regain its culture, which had been oppressed under Communist rule. Not only was Ukrainian ethnicity strengthened, the country gained political sovereignty and financial independence. To encourage ties with their former homeland, Ukrainians around the world were given the right to vote in the 2004 presidential election, even though they no longer lived in the country.

After independence established a free Ukraine, it too had to deal with the aspirations for self-determination of minorities within its borders. Ethnic Tartars, Hungarians, and Crimean Russians all pose challenges to the integrity of Ukraine. In some regions, such as those where ethnic Hungarians live, some autonomy provides a level of self-determination within the Ukrainian nation. Other groups have yet to achieve this level of self-determination.

Chechnya as a Successor State

The region called Chechnya declared its sovereignty from Russia in 1991, following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Russia rejected this claim and, in 1994, invaded Chechnya to assert Russia's claim to the territory. The rebel forces and Russian army fought each other for two years, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Chechen civilians. During this time, thousands of Chechens fled to neighbouring republics. In 1996, Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya; they invaded again in



Figure 10-8

Ideas and Opinions

“The lessons of the Chechens ... should serve as important lessons to other Indigenous peoples and nationalities. If the international community has a choice between the legitimacy of Indigenous peoples' claims for territory, treaty rights, economic sustainability, or self-determination, versus the claims of a state, any state, for continued survival, Indigenous peoples can be virtually certain that the state's claim will be supported consistently.”⁶

—“Indigenous Self-Determination and U.S. Foreign Policy,”
Fourth World Bulletin, Fall 1994/Winter 1995. Fourth World Center for the
Study of Indigenous Law and Politics, University of Colorado at Denver.

Is it necessary for foreign nations to recognize a nation's efforts for self-determination within another nation? What challenges can a lack of recognition create? What challenges can recognition create?

2000, and the war continues to this day. In 2007, the Russian Federation took direct control over Chechnya. The former Chechen government is now considered an outlaw rebel government in exile by the Russian Federation.

When comparing the two former Soviet Union territories of Ukraine and Chechnya, you can see that the efforts of a people to achieve self-determination can have both positive and negative effects. In some cases, the results are destined to support a national culture. In others, war and persecution can lead to bloodshed, poverty, and only the faint hope of eventual self-determination.

Using Referenda to Pursue Self-Determination

Québec

In 1980 and 1995, Québec sought sovereignty-association with Canada through referenda. In this, there was an effort to create a politically independent nation that was still tied to Canada economically. But in each referendum, a majority of Quebeckers voted to remain a part of Canada. Do you think that a sense of Canadian nationalism was expressed in the outcome of these votes? At the time of the referenda, *sovereignist* was the same as *separatist*—those who wanted a sovereign Québec also wanted to separate from Canada. Do you view Québec today as a distinct society within Canada?



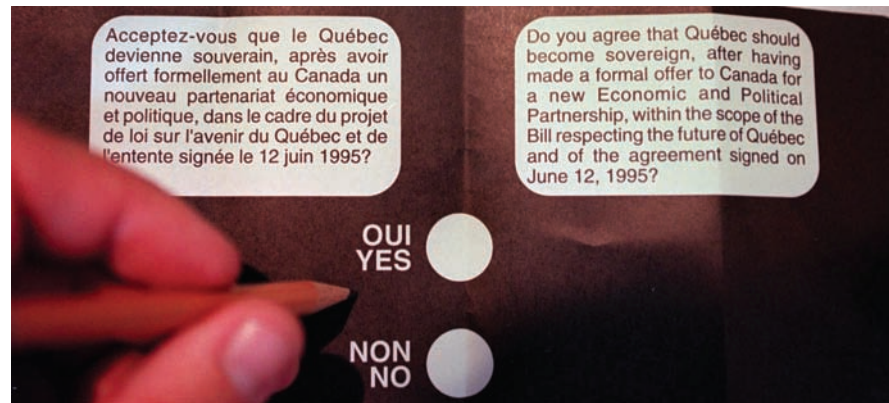
Figure 10-9

These Russian soldiers are patrolling through Grozny, the Chechen capital. The struggle for self-determination can result in violent rebellion. What does this tell you about the power of the concept of *nation*? What does it suggest about the relationship between the nation that is struggling and the nation that controls it? Under what conditions, if any, is violence acceptable?

⁶ From: <http://carbon.cudenver.edu/public/fwc/Issue9/commentary.html>.

Figure 10-10

This photo shows the 1995 ballot that was used for the sovereignty referendum in Québec. On a referendum ballot, the wording is extremely important. How well do you understand the wording on this ballot?



Ideas and Opinions

Gilles Vigneault is a poet and singer from Québec whose work has spread Québécois culture to other nations. In this excerpt from “My Country,” he wrote:

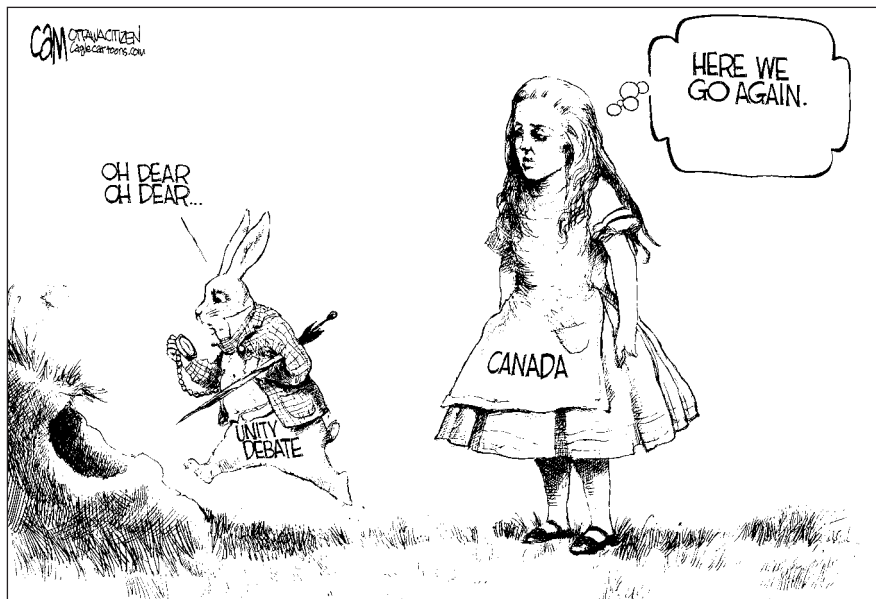
“
*My country isn't a country, it's winter
My garden isn't a garden, it's the plain
My path isn't a path, it's the snow
My country isn't a country, it's winter*

*In the white ceremony
Where snow marries the wind
In this land of blizzards
My father had a house built
And I'm going to be faithful
To his ways, to his example
The guest room will be such
That one will come, from the other seasons
To build beside it ...⁷*”

—“Mon Pays,” by Gilles Vigneault,
translation by Matthew and Pascale Shaftel.

Vigneault penned these words (in the original French) for the film *La Neige a fondu sur la Manicouagan*. Many Québécois have taken up the song as an anthem for Québec. Might the sentiment of these words be shared by the rest of Canada, too?

⁷ From: <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~mshaftel/vigneault.htm>.



◀ **Figure 10-11**

What is the creator of this cartoon saying about Québec's efforts to achieve self-determination?

Ideas and Opinions

“The tension, and often the conflict, between ... the territorial and ethnic or cultural conceptions of the “self”, is at the root of much of the recent political conflict as well as philosophical debate regarding self-determination.”

— Igor Primoratz and Aleksandar Pavkovic, *Identity, Self-Determination and Secession* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), p. 8.

The above quotation by Primoratz and Pavkovic forms part of an argument in their book that ethnic or cultural groups are increasingly seeking some degree of political autonomy from the nation-state in which they are situated. How might Canada be affected if greater self-determination for nations within Canada was promoted?

The Québec referenda can be seen as an indicator of the *will of the people*. The 1980 referendum on sovereignty sought an independent Québec retaining an economic association with the rest of Canada. However, when the premiers of several Canadian provinces publicly stated they would not negotiate an economic association with an independent Québec, the referendum failed.

The 1995 referendum was much closer, with 50.56 per cent of respondents voting “No” to the question of whether to separate and 49.44 per cent voting “Yes.” Even though 82 per cent of Québécois are Francophone, sovereignty-association once again was rejected.

What should the Canadian government do in the face of referenda seeking change? Should self-determination rest solely on the results of a referendum? What makes a majority? Faced with unrest in Québec, the Government of Canada passed the Clarity Act, which outlined the conditions under which the federal government would recognize a vote by a province to become independent.

East Timor

While East Timor's history is very different from Québec's situation, both hoped to reach independence through referenda. In 1999, B.J. Habibie, the President of Indonesia, allowed the people of East Timor to vote on whether to remain a part of Indonesia or become independent. East Timor became a fully independent country on 20 May 2002, by referendum. You can refer back to pages 135–136 for details of the East Timor situation.

How is giving Québec or East Timor the right to hold a referendum on sovereignty a way of granting self-determination?

Web Link

Follow the link on the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website to read about the Clarity Act.

Figure 10-12 ▶

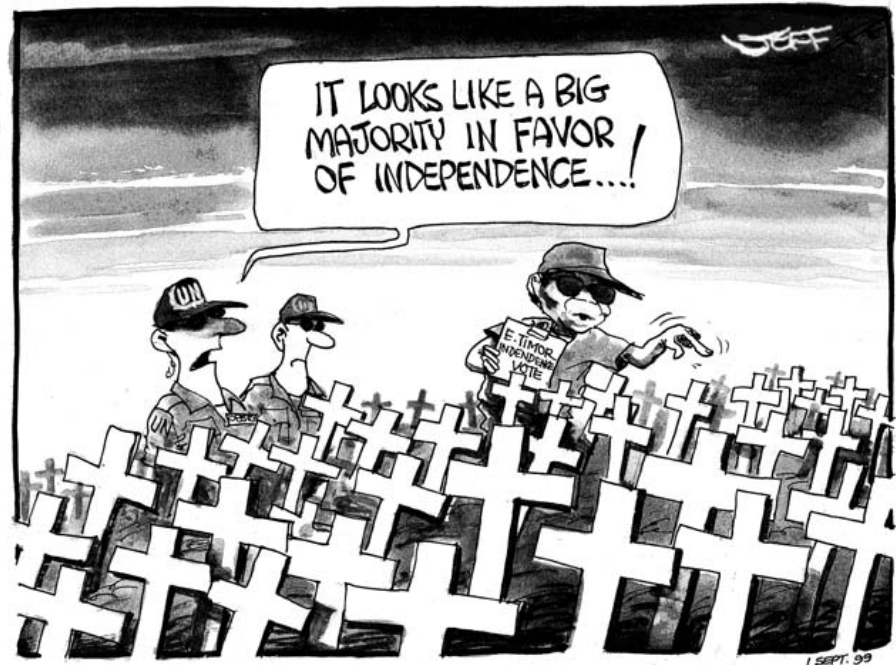
Is national sovereignty and self-determination worth the price?

Web Link

Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website to find more information about East Timor's independence.

Web Link

Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the links to obtain background information about the conflict in Western Sahara. As well, read more recent accounts of this conflict at ARSO, the official website for those seeking a referendum on self-determination for Western Sahara.



Third-Party Involvement in Self-Determination

Negotiation, dialogue, and the creation of legal agreements through consensus are viable ways of achieving self-determination. Third-party involvement, such as by the United Nations or the International Court of Justice, can result in agreements for a process of national self-determination between sides. However, because the process rarely has international force or a proper system for resolving the matter, conflict often arises. In Western Sahara, for instance, the UN has been continually frustrated in its attempts to hold a referendum on self-determination for the Sahrawis, the Indigenous population. Morocco invaded the former Spanish colony in 1975, and has blocked attempts to create a sovereign Sahrawi country. Morocco has been accused of enticing settlers to settle in Western Sahara to ensure a referendum would support the Moroccan position.

SKILL PATH

Communicating a Position Effectively

Throughout Part 2 you have developed a more refined approach to researching, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from the sources you are examining. In this Skill Path you will communicate to express a point of view. Use the following steps when working through this inquiry question: To what extent should a nation pursue national self-determination? Communicate your position in a presentation to your classmates.

Step

1

State Your Purpose

Is your purpose to inform, persuade, or both?

Step

2

Align Your Research with Your Purpose

Identify the criteria to help you choose your information. Ensure that the information will serve your purpose.

Purpose: To inform

- Is the information sufficiently factual and relevant to support the accuracy and validity of your position?
- What information will appeal to the need of your audience to be informed?

Purpose: To persuade

- Is the information sufficiently factual and relevant to support the accuracy and validity of your position?
- What information will appeal to the need of your audience to be informed?
- Does the information support your position sufficiently and effectively?
- Which information best persuades your audience to your position?

Step

3

Consider Your Audience

In the process of informing or persuading your audience, determine if you are

- presenting ideas that are new to your audience
- asking your audience to look at the ideas in a new way
- asking your audience to respond to the ideas in a new way

Step

4

Choose Your Information

Keep your audience in mind. Different types of information may be used to inform or persuade, such as graphics, graphs, charts, statistics, audio, video, and quotations.

Step

5

Be Creative

When putting together a presentation to share your research and conclusions with others, present your ideas creatively. Try to use a metaphor or a novel way to present your position. For example, you might use a well-known story, changing the names to represent aspects of your position.

Practise It!

Follow the steps of this Skill Path to develop a way to present your position that will inform or persuade your peers about your position.

Explore the Issues

- 1 To what extent is violence an acceptable way to pursue national self-determination? Consider the following points of view:
 - Violence is never acceptable.
 - Violence is acceptable only after all other means have been attempted.
 - Violence is acceptable any time a people's demands are not accepted.

In a small group, conduct an informal debate on this issue. The groups will then present their conclusions to the class. A class discussion will follow the group presentations and focus on the differences between the conclusions.

Debate rules:

- Each group is to have a chairperson, a recorder, and a presenter.
 - Group members must be recognized by the chair before speaking.
 - Each group member must contribute before anyone is allowed to speak for a second time.
 - Debate ends when the allotted time is up. **SKILLS**
- 2 Create a T-chart to compare both Ukraine and Chechnya to the criteria of self-determination established by the United Nations (see page 205). Do you think it is likely that the Chechen people will achieve self-determination in the foreseeable future? Why or why not?

- 3 Consider the following quotation:
*Self-determination ... must yield to self-determinations and selves-determination—that is, to permission for more than one nation to find expression within the border of a single state and to permission for individuals and groups to claim multiple identities.*⁸

Do you think it is reasonable to have nations within a nation-state? Develop a list of recommendations that you think governments should follow when confronted with a group that seeks self-determination. Examine Canada's Clarity Act for some ideas.

- 4 In a small group, select one of the nations discussed in this section and investigate
 - what makes them a nation
 - their issues and goals
 - what self-determination would look like for this nation
 - what impact the pursuit of self-determination might have on the nation

Develop a poster on the nation and present your information to the class. Your poster should help your classmates broaden their understanding of possible answers to the Chapter Issue: **How is national self-determination pursued?**

- 5 The following is an English translation of the 1980 referendum question on sovereignty-association:
The Government of Québec 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 only be implemented with popular approval through another referendum; on these terms, do you give the Government of Québec the mandate to negotiate the proposed agreement between Québec and Canada?

—Graeme Hamilton, "A party's tongue-tied tactics," *National Post*, 15 March 2008.

In pairs, take a position on the 1980 referendum question. Using its description of sovereignty-association, predict potential outcomes of a successful "Yes" vote. Use the Skill Path process to develop a persuasive plan to explain your position (positive or negative) on this form of self-determination to your class. **SKILLS**

⁸ Johnathon Schell, "The Unconquerable World," *Harper's Magazine*, June 2003, p. 53.

Self-Determination and Indigenous Peoples

Question for Inquiry

- **How do Indigenous peoples pursue self-determination within a nation-state?**

For many Indigenous peoples, self-determination is not just about political status—it is also tied to a sense of cultural vitality and respect for the bond between the people and the earth.

The destruction and over exploitation of the earth and its resources not only damages the living environment, but destroys the ability of the earth to sustain future generations and violates our duty to protect and care for Mother Earth and her natural resources ... At the same time, the human security need of indigenous peoples always includes proper guarantees concerning ownership, possession or control over the land and natural resources ... which is at the core of their diverse cultures.⁹

Self-determination is a complex idea. It is an action that has significant political, social, economic, and cultural implications. For many Indigenous peoples, the right to make political decisions furthers the control they are able to exert over the way their environment is managed.

All understandings of nation have, at their core, the sense of collective identity. This unique identity creates a bond between the members of the nation. Associated with this bond is a sense of nationalism and a desire to be in control of the destiny of the nation—a desire for self-determination. Yet this desire of a nation to be free of outside influences and control of its future is not without problems. There are challenges associated with national self-determination.

Consider, for example, the way the territory of Nunavut has addressed links between territorial sovereignty, nationalism, and self-determination. Territorial sovereignty is important, but cannot be regarded as permanent. For instance, the territorial structure of Canada has changed greatly since Confederation and can continue to change.

Nunavut: Self-Determination within a Nation-State

The people of Nunavut have achieved self-determination while remaining within the political structure of Canada. Now that they have their own territory, do the people of Nunavut have more control over their economic, social, and cultural development?



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Do you think that self-determination that is focused on territorial independence is likely to meet with greater resistance than calls for cultural autonomy?

⁹ M. van Walt and O. Serro, eds., "The Implementation of the Right to Self-Determination as a Contribution to Conflict Prevention," report of the International Conference of Experts held in Barcelona from 21 to 27 November 1998. UNESCO Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace and Centre UNESCO de Catalunya, 1999. <http://www.unpo.org/content/view/446/83>.

Figure 10-13

Nunavut separated from the Northwest Territories in 1999. What challenges and opportunities are associated with the creation of Nunavut, for the territory as well as for all of Canada?



Web Link

Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the link to the website of the Government of Nunavut. What aspects of Inuit control and self-determination do you find?



Nunavut: Defining Its Future

The Honourable David Simailak, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation and Minister of Finance, asserts that since becoming a

territory, Nunavut has greater control of its economic infrastructure.

We are optimistic about the future of our economy in Nunavut.

There are many opportunities for our people in mining, tourism, fishing, and the cultural industries. Sustainable economic growth depends on many things—protecting our land and resources, educating and training for our people, strengthening our communities, and building essential infrastructure.¹⁰

What about social and cultural development? In Nunavut, the government has a say in this as well. According to the Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, the Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, his department aims

to preserve and enhance Nunavut's culture, heritage and languages, and to provide healthy active living opportunities for Nunavummiut.¹¹

1 Do you think the Inuit of Nunavut are directly benefiting as residents of this territory?

¹⁰ From: <http://www.edt.gov.nu.ca/english/about/about.htm>.

¹¹ From: <http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley/home/english/index.html>.

The Government of Nunavut's Department of Environment has the lead responsibility for ensuring the protection, promotion, and sustainable use of natural resources in Nunavut by supporting the management of the environment, wildlife, fisheries and sealing, and parks. The department also manages a number of commitments under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

Does the Government of Nunavut have complete control over its natural resources? Can it freely dispose of the territory's natural wealth and resources? Within the mandate of a Canadian territory, the Nunavut government does have some say in this area, but not exclusively. The territories, like the provinces, have governmental control over local matters like education, health, and social services; unlike the provinces, however, they do not have control over land and natural resources. Much Nunavut land is still controlled by the Crown.

In each province and in Yukon Territory, there are political parties that nominate candidates for government elections. The people who form the governments of the Northwest Territories and of Nunavut do not belong to political parties. Each elected representative acts independently. The cabinet is selected from and by all the elected members, as is the premier.



Figure 10-14 ▲

Framed in an old wheel hub, blasting charges are used at the Jericho Diamond Mine near Carat Lake, Nunavut in 2006. The Jericho Mine was Nunavut's first, and Canada's third, diamond mine. The economic development of Nunavut will be tied to natural resources such as diamonds.

Explore the Issues

- 1 With a partner, research an Indigenous movement in the world. Your investigation should
 - include a map to show the location of the Indigenous struggle
 - explore how the group expresses or would like to express self-determination
 - determine the position of the government on self-determination
 - uncover what action has been taken by the Indigenous group
 - use a graphic organizer to show the consequences of the group achieving self-determination

Express your findings in a creative manner.

- 2 Visit the *Perspectives on Nationalism* website and follow the link to the CBC Archives piece on the 1992 Dene opposition to the proposed boundaries for Nunavut. Have the Inuit in Canada been successful in their quest for self-determination? Describe the positions of those who opposed the potential

boundary lines for the new territory of Nunavut. How were the boundaries established for Nunavut? Why were the Dene opposed to the boundaries as decided? Should the Dene's claims be given equal weight to the claims of the Inuit? Explain.

- 3 What should be the obligation of the government of Canada to the Inuit of Nunavut, now that Nunavut has self-determination? What benefits arise for Canada's government now that Nunavut has self-determination? Have the Inuit people of Nunavut benefited from the creation of this territory?
- 4 Politically, Nunavut is a living example of national self-determination within a nation-state. Create a slogan, a poster, or write a paragraph that communicates your position on Nunavut's success as a territory that has achieved self-determination. **SKILLS**



Reflect and Analyze

Prior to this chapter you explored the pursuit of national interest from a primarily nation-state perspective. In this chapter the investigation has focused on *nation* as a *people*. Over the last century, there has been a constant struggle by nations to assert their sovereignty, despite the control of larger nation-states. Since the Second World War, the creation of separate nations based on ethnicity, culture, and religion has caused both the successful development and preservation of some unique cultures and the near extermination of others. You should have sufficient information now to respond to the Main Issue for Part 2: ***To what extent should national interests be pursued?***

To resolve this issue you have explored a variety of ways in which self-determination can be expressed. However appealing self-determination appears to a nation, people should realize that there are challenges as well as opportunities that must be addressed before and after self-determination has been achieved.

Respond to Ideas

- 1 Select a country that has gone through the process of decolonization. Develop a country profile by researching and answering the following questions:
 - a) Of what country was this nation a colony?
 - b) What natural resources did it possess?
 - c) How was it controlled by the imperial power?
 - d) In what year did it become independent?
 - e) What were its reasons for pursuing self-determination? What key events led to independence?
 - f) Since independence, what has happened to the quality of life and standard of living of the people in the country?

- g) Do you think that achieving self-determination was mostly negative or mostly positive for the country?

Present your position to the class in a creative way. **SKILLS**

- 2 In a small group, discuss the features that bind Canada together as a *civic nation*. Suppose the government granted self-determination to all groups within Canada who sought it. Individually, create a cause-and-effect chart to consider the effect this could have on Canada.
- 3 In a small group, consider how self-determination can be achieved in a multitude of ways. Full independence is one way, but there are others—though less complete—that allow for a nation to exist and thrive within a greater nation-state. How can a nation within a nation-state succeed in achieving self-determination?

Respond to Issues

- 4 Suppose you are representing a nation seeking self-determination. You know the following:
 - By remaining a nation within a nation-state, you will maintain a high standard of living and quality of life, but many aspects of your culture will be eroded.
 - If you achieve self-determination, your culture will be strengthened but there will be a heavy financial burden placed on your people.

A referendum is planned to vote on self-determination. Prepare a statement explaining to your constituents how you plan to vote, and why. **SKILLS**

- 5 Myanmar is a country in which the people are struggling for democracy and self-determination. It is run by a military dictatorship that strictly controls many activities within the country. Those who do not recognize the dictatorship as a legitimate government, including the United States and the United Kingdom, continue to use its traditional name, Burma. Conduct research on Myanmar by investigating
- how the military dictatorship came to power
 - why the democratic movement feels they are the legitimate rulers of Myanmar, and how this reflects the pursuit of self-determination
 - the response of nations around the world to the situation in Myanmar
 - the economic and political relationship between Canada and Myanmar
 - minority groups within Myanmar who consider themselves a nation

Develop a position that you think is an appropriate role for Canada to take in its relationship with Myanmar. Should Myanmar seek self-determination?

- 6 *Self-determination* has different meanings for different nations. Review the various examples in this chapter of nations that have achieved self-determination. Are there common factors that shaped the choices these nations made about the type of self-determination they wished to pursue?

Recognize Relationships between Concepts, Issues, and Citizenship

- 7 In a small group, brainstorm a list of nations—either within Canada or internationally—that have shown an interest in either seeking or expanding their nation’s self-determination. Use the Skill Path process to create an effective communications plan to support this nation’s efforts. **SKILLS**
- 8 Some people believe that, because imperial powers engaged in colonialism, those powers have a responsibility to help their former colonies achieve political and economic independence and stability. Conduct a horseshoe debate on the question: Once self-determination has been achieved, to what extent are former imperial powers obligated to help their former colonies?