

What If? Quebec Separation

Twice in Canada's history we have come close to losing our country as we know it. The **1980 Quebec referendum** was the first referendum in Quebec on the place of Quebec within Canada and whether Quebec should pursue a path toward sovereignty. The referendum was called by Quebec's Parti Québécois (PQ) government, which strongly favoured secession from Canada. The final results, although not that close numerically, scared many Canadians – 59.4% voted NO and 40.6% voted YES.

The **1995 Quebec referendum** was the second referendum to ask voters in the Canadian province of Quebec whether Quebec should secede from Canada and become an independent state, through the question "Do you agree that Québec 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 June 12, 1995?".

The 1995 referendum differed from the first referendum on Quebec's sovereignty in that the 1980 question proposed to negotiate "sovereignty-association" with the Canadian government, while the 1995 question proposed "sovereignty", along with an *optional* partnership offer to the rest of Canada.

The referendum took place in Quebec on October 30, 1995, and the motion to decide whether Quebec should secede from Canada was defeated by a razor-thin margin: 50.58% "No" to 49.42% "Yes".

Here are some questions for you to consider...if Quebec was to become an independent country...

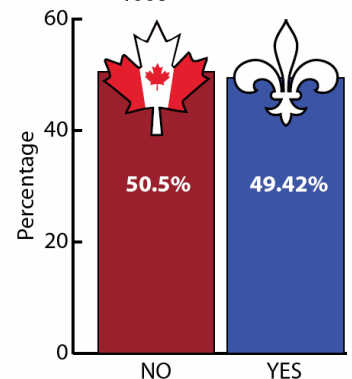
How would the rest of Canada be affected?



How would the new nation of Quebec be affected?



Figure 3-9 Québec Sovereignty Referendum Results, 1995



What is your perspective on the issue of Quebec separation?

