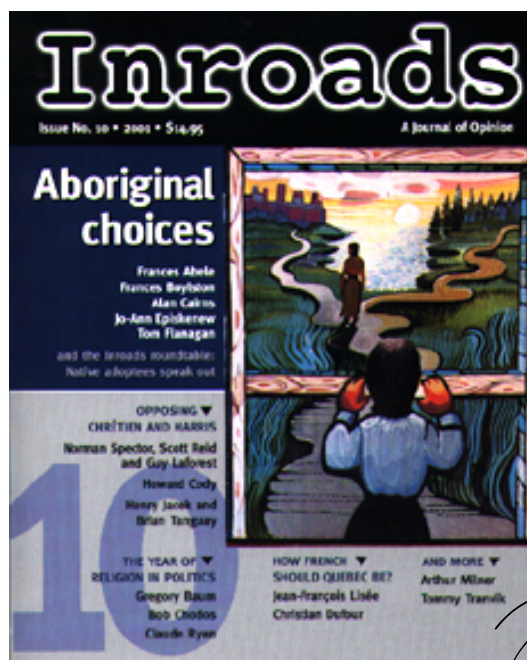


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A WORD ABOUT PRINTING THIS ARTICLE: These pages are intended to print on legal (8.5 x 14 inch) paper, two pages per sheet, in a horizontal landscape. Pages can also be printed onto letter sized paper, vertically, at a reduced size.

Were one to choose a single characteristic to describe the Quebec of today and tomorrow, to define Quebec's distinct society within Canada or North America, it would be the following: *c'est cet endroit où le français est prédominant* (it is the place where French is predominant). In a sense, everything is contained in that statement. If we can assure that it remains true, Quebec's future will remain open. That future includes sovereignty, at the moment an illusory option but one that may again become possible, even necessary, in some different context difficult to predict today.

— Christian Dufour, *Lettre*

PRÉDOMINANCE DU FRANÇAIS

- ▶ Jean-François Lisée
Invest in Quebec's uniqueness 167
- ▶ Christian Dufour
An appeal to sovereignists and to federalists loyal to Quebec 187
- ▶ **Books about Quebec** 193
Alexander Craig: The comfort and the difference
Gary Caldwell: How an Anglo-Irish aristocrat saved Quebec
Richard L'Heureux: Redeeming a hero of the anti-fascist movement
John Richards: Remembering Kierans

Jean-François Lisée

Jean-François Lisée is author of five books on Quebec politics and Quebec-American relations, one of which was awarded the Governor General's prize for non-fiction. He has been a journalist and foreign correspondent in Paris and Washington. He served for five years as political advisor to Quebec premiers Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard. In 1999, he resigned to publish *Soixie de second*, a book that broke with sovereigntist orthodoxy and proposed new ways out of Quebec's political impasse.

How to resolve the language dilemma

Invest in Quebec's uniqueness

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LISÉE EMBRACES WHAT he – and most Quebecers – see as the basis of a linguistic equilibrium: predominance of the French language, a vital and numerically secure anglophone community, and diverse allophone communities that strengthen Montreal's cultural position on the continent. Preserving that equilibrium is an objective that could, for the first time, draw support from all communities.

But the equilibrium is in jeopardy, both for francophones on Montreal Island and for the anglophone community. He proposes reforms to enhance the security of the linguistic communities, to draw them closer through a shared identity and to stem Quebec's looming demographic decline.

Martin Lubin and John Richards undertook the translation.

WHATEVER THEIR POLITICAL OR LINGUISTIC LOYALTIES, MOST QUEBECERS VIEW the current linguistic situation positively. What concerns them is not the linguistic reality of today, but fears about tomorrow, fears growing out of a triple feeling of insecurity.

Insecurity exists among francophones due to their minority status in Canada and, even more dramatic, their minority status viewed from the perspective of North America. This insecurity is exacerbated by both a generalized misgiving over the long-run impact of economic and cultural globalization, and by the more immediate fear of becoming a minority on the Island of Montreal. In sum, francophones fear losing the linguistic gains painfully realized over the past 30 years.

A second insecurity exists among the anglophone community, which has experienced a significant exodus since 1960. Many of its members continue to depart, especially among the young. This community fears for its long-term vitality. It fears that each and every new provincial linguistic initiative will curtail its language rights still further.

The third insecurity is that of the allophone communities, those with neither French nor English as mother tongue. They are doubly minorities, torn between their own complex identities and the contradictory expectations of the Quebec and Canadian host societies. They must manoeuvre in a peculiar – not to say confusing – political and linguistic context.

Insecurity has blinded us to a remarkable linguistic reality

These insecurities are real and justifiable. But they have obscured the remarkable reality that reigns as the new century commences. Throughout Quebec, in the Montreal metropolitan region and on the Island of Montreal itself, the current equilibrium allows Quebecers to enjoy a unique, fruitful, creative and generally harmonious linguistic experience.

- French is successfully establishing itself as the predominant language. What Robert Bourassa's Bill 22 declared in 1974 to be the official language of Quebec is now the "public language" (a concept used in recent language studies) used by over half of all allophones. And, according to a recent study, allophone children educated in French are speaking French among themselves on

Montreal playgrounds (McAndrew et al. 1999).

- At least in the Montreal region, the anglophone community possesses a critical mass sufficient to support many dynamic institutions and has plans for new ones (for example, construction of a new anglophone, super-hospital enlargement of Concordia University).
- Allophones are sufficiently numerous to contribute to the metropolis in ways that are neither dated nor folkloric. In the words of Marco Micone (1999), Montreal is “a model of cosmopolitan harmonious cohabitation, midway between integration and the affirmation of ethnicity, where the notion of host society is as hazy as that of the culture of origin of immigrants.”

Quebec is the most bilingual society in North America. Half of its active population is able to communicate in French and English, a proportion that rises to 63 per cent in Montreal. Quebec is also twice as trilingual as is the rest of Canada, which makes it one of the most open societies in existence, and puts it in an enviable position to participate in the new knowledge economy.¹ Montreal has undergone a veritable linguistic *métissage*. The number of mixed couples has exploded in the last quarter century: more than a third of anglo-Quebecers are currently living with either francophone or allophone partners. This is two times the rate of 25 years ago (Canada 1999, 76, 83).

Relative to Quebec in the mid-20th century, or even in the years leading up to Bill

101, these trends have increased the complexity and volatility of Quebec’s linguistic reality. We must think anew about language; we must decide what we want to achieve linguistically. In my view, it is a matter of identifying the appropriate balance between French, the official and dominant public language, and the other languages, first and foremost English, doing so in the context of political and economic globalization whose “lingua franca” is English.

For the foreseeable future, Quebec cannot submit its linguistic fate to the North American linguistic market place. We know what outcome the language market entails for *la francophonie hors Québec*. However, Quebec cannot and must not seek to become as French as Ontario is English, a formula that some advocate. That reflects neither who we are nor, for most of us, what we want to be. Quebec must not try to persuade all allophones to use French as their home language. The presence of a reasonable proportion of individuals who retain their mother tongue – in addition to using our common language, French – is a social, cultural, and economic asset. That applies equally for speakers of aboriginal languages, whose rate of mother tongue retention is higher in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada.

As Charles Taylor recently wrote, instead of striving for an illusory security in the text of “a sacred language law,” defence of the French language requires finding

the necessary equilibrium, always open to modification, between a public dominant language [i.e. French] and other inseparable languages in a polyglot society open

to a world whose lingua franca is not our common language. Instead of searching for an illusory security in the text of a definitive language law, we would do better to admit that our situation will forever pose a series of dilemmas that we shall have to confront with great creativity. (Taylor 2000, 353-54, translation by J. Richards)

The predominance of French – a concept both realistic and potentially unifying

Quebec needs signposts for the future, signposts that are comprehensible and able to rally majority support. In addition to reaffirming that French is the official common language of Quebec, the government should adopt “predominance of French” as the general rule to guide its language policy. French in Quebec is, and must remain, the com-

The remarkable reality that reigns allows Quebecers to enjoy a unique, fruitful, creative and generally harmonious linguistic experience.

mon language, occupying a central place. But it must coexist with other languages, principally English.

Christian Dufour (2000, 54), of l’École nationale d’administration publique, cogently summarizes all this in the quotation at the beginning of the section: “If we can assure that [French is predominant], Quebec’s future will remain open.”

Remaining open is equally relevant for our economy: the extraordinary success of

Quebec products on the anglo-American continent – Quebec exports there more than half of all that it produces – and its status as employer of thousands of anglophones from English Canada and the United States – 320 Quebec businesses employ directly more than 60,000 U.S. citizens – make English an indisputable component of the economic life of Quebec.

Quebec’s linguistic equation now provides it with the originality necessary to compete with the most innovative societies. Montreal’s rebirth as a New Economy metropolis (the sixth most important in North America, according to Wired magazine) is due in part to the large number of teachers, researchers and technicians who have simultaneous access to both franco-European and anglo-American research and innovations. The level of daily exchanges, in all fields, between Quebec and France – itself a conduit for European developments – is simply unfathomable for non-Quebecers. No two societies, separated by an ocean, enjoy this level of communication. Furthermore, Quebec’s dual connection with Europe and America has encouraged the development of government social and cultural policies more original and often more generous than those elsewhere on the continent.

The predominance of French permits this creative mixture. On the one hand, French unilingualism would place roadblocks to adoption of anglo-American concepts, hence a fall in competitiveness. On the other hand, loss of French predominance would gradually deprive Quebec, and Montreal above all, of its comparative advantage because it would reduce the flow of franco-European ideas, methods and products.

“Predominance of French” has the merit of being embedded in reality, of affirming that the vitality of a minority French society in North America requires that French be and remain in a dominant position on its territory. The concept also implies the existence of minority communities and endorses, in its very wording, the will of Quebec society to preserve the existence of minorities. We cannot expect significant support by non-francophones for the language policy of Quebec unless it is absolutely clear that the marginalization of other linguistic groups is not the logical end point.

On the contrary, the concept of the predominance of French signals that Quebec relies upon all its linguistic strengths. It is a concept consistent with the application of almost all provisions of la Charte de la langue française (Bill 101). There will inevitably be disagreements over interpretation of the concept, but it is a concept that can serve simultaneously as guide and as basis for bringing people together.

To ensure linguistic security tomorrow, maintain the equilibrium of today

No state should seek to regulate the language that citizens speak at home. But it can influence behaviour. Indeed, the linguistic future of Quebec rests upon the ability of the government to exercise influence over language choices.

The current linguistic equilibrium achieved in the 1990s is, I believe, nearly optimal. In coming decades, Quebec should measure its linguistic success in terms of preserving this equilibrium – in Quebec as

a whole, in the metropolitan region and on the Island of Montreal.

The language most often spoken at home (the “home language” census measure of language use) is a crucial measure of the intergenerational success of a language. It is more real than the first language spoken and still understood (the “mother tongue” census measure of language use). The latter is a signal from the past and does not account for language transfers during the lifetime of the respondent. Also, it ignores shifting realities: more than one of seven “home language” franco-Montrealers lacks French ethnic roots; almost three of four anglo-Montrealers lack British roots.

We know that variables other than linguistic shifts – such as urban sprawl – have played a role in eroding the francophone share of those living on Montreal Island. Currently, they are no more than 55 per cent, and could fall below 50 per cent 15 years from now. Francophones will still remain the most important group, a reason why some say this decline will not matter much. Yet we cannot argue with Marc Levine, the principal American observer of Quebec’s linguistic evolution, when he states that it “is difficult to imagine, given the fragility of the linguistic dynamic in Montreal, how the decrease in the number of francophones could have a beneficial effect upon the future of the French character of the city” (Levine 1997).

Simple prudence should lead us to maintain at least a modest francophone majority on the Island of Montreal. To achieve this may require tax incentives and other measures of general application to reduce migration to the suburbs, a migration in which four out of five are francophones.

It follows from the above that it is in the collective interest of Quebec that, within a reasonable margin of error:

- the overall proportion of francophones, as is the case presently, remain above 80 per cent, that in the Montreal metropolitan census region (MMR) it remain about 70 per cent, and on the Island of Montreal it remain above 55 per cent;
- the overall proportion of anglophones not fall below its present level of 11 per cent and that in the MMR it remain near 20 per cent, thereby assuring the dynamism and vitality of English-language institutions;
- a significant proportion of allophones, including about 10 per cent of the MMR,

In addition to reaffirming that French is the official common language of Quebec, the government should adopt “predominance of French” as the general rule to guide its language policy.

continue to be part of the linguistic mosaic, to perpetuate the cultural diversity of Quebec;

- that the aboriginal nations in Quebec retain, pass on and develop their own languages and cultures.

To fix linguistic objectives for Quebec such as these would have a beneficial effect. Each linguistic group could recognize its respective interests, could contribute to public discussion, and offer proposals aimed at maintaining its own vitality – in full knowledge of the overall policy goal, namely maintenance of the present equilibrium.

Immigration and the maintenance of the linguistic equilibrium

Quebec’s linguistic future will be played out against the backdrop of imminent demographic decline. (The total population will begin decreasing after 2030 and, already, an important demographic decline exists among young people.) The variable with the greatest potential to affect language is immigration, whose effect is compounded by the fact that immigrants have a significantly higher birth rate than other Quebecers. The only growing segment of the Quebec population is that of allophones: they were 16 per cent on the Island in 1991, and are projected to become 35 per cent by 2041. The distribution of linguistic transfers between French and English among allophones who do transfer linguistically is an essential factor in preserving the present linguistic equilibrium. Here it is not a question of teaching these newcomers French as a second language, a task largely accomplished, but of assuring a sufficient proportion adopt French as their home language.

The future linguistic choices of allophones is a subject of debate among Quebec demographers, editorialists and politicians. Not surprisingly, federalists think that the future is bright and warrants little action; sovereignists think it bleak and in need of urgent change. I prefer not to predict the future, but to look closely at what happened in the 1990s, after two decades’ experience with the major policy changes of the 1970s (such as Bills 22 and 101 and an important shift in immigration policy). It is still a bit too early to tell how the most important change – the obligation, since 1977, of new

immigrants to send their children to French schools – will ultimately play out. But enough evidence is available to know whether we are on the right path.

How might we assess the success or failure of the attempt to integrate allophones? A logical benchmark is the present distribution of anglophone and francophone populations. In the rest of Canada, 99.6 per cent of allophones who linguistically transfer do so to the majority language, English. Some think that the same measure should be applied in Quebec for French. Others argue to use the linguistic distribution of the aggregate Quebec population, which, removing allophones from the calculation, gives a distribution of 88 per cent francophones to 12 per cent anglophones.²

I propose a lower, more attainable, benchmark. We can maintain the present equilibrium in the MMR if allophones who make a linguistic transfer do so in accordance with the prevailing ratio of francophones to anglophones: in metropolitan Montreal about 78 per cent to French, and 22 per cent to English; on the Island the required ratio is about 69 per cent to 31 per cent.

Ten linguistic indicators are available (see Table 1). Where they reveal behaviour respectful of our present equilibrium, the resulting deviation is zero. Where there is a gain for French, the deviation is shown as a positive number; where a potential loss exists, the deviation is negative.³

1. Linguistic distribution at the time of arrival

This first indicator refers to the distribution of language among immigrants who already have French or English as home language upon their arrival. In this case, the deficit

for French, in percentage points, is 13 in the MMR. In the case of immigrants settling on Montreal Island (results not shown in the table), the analogous statistic of French as home language is 52 per cent. Relative to an equilibrium of 69 per cent, the deficit is 17 points. The deviation has tended to diminish over the last decade (Termote 1999, Table 4).

2. Primary and secondary education

This indicator measures the direct impact of Bill 101. The data refer to the entire MMR. The deviation is nil in the MMR, and probably positive for French on the Island. The trend over the last decade has been positive.⁴

3. Language of instruction at the CEGEP level

At the post-secondary level, allophones have freedom of choice in language of instruction. They are choosing English in significant numbers, and the proportion doing so has risen during the 1990s. Overall, in the MMR the deviation from the equilibrium value is substantially negative; furthermore, the trend is negative.

4. Language of instruction at the university level

Freedom of choice at this level also illustrates a deficit from the perspective of French. Unlike the corresponding CEGEP statistic, this negative deviation is stable.

5. Language of work

This statistic refers to the proportion of those who speak French at least 60 per cent of the time at work. Use of French is below the equilibrium value for the MMR by 34 points. The trend is unknown due to absence of longitudinal data (see Béland 1999).

Table 1: An unstable equilibrium – language indicators in Montreal^(a)

Metropolitan Montreal, all figures are percentages

	Where we are	Equilibrium goal	Deviation	Trend in the 1990s
1. Proportion whose home language is French, among immigrants whose home language is French or English at time of arrival in Quebec ^(b)	65	78	-13	Positive
2. Proportion in French language K-12 schools, among children from allophone families in metropolitan Montreal	78	78	0	Positive
3. Proportion attending French-language CEGEPs, among allophone CEGEP students ^(c)	43	78	-35	Negative
4. Proportion attending French-language universities, among allophone university students ^(c)	48	78	-30	Stable
5. Proportion using French as principal language of work, among allophones	44	78	-34	Unknown
6. Proportion using French as “language of public use”, among allophones ^(d)	58	78	-20	Unknown
7. Proportion with French as home language, among mixed couples in which one spouse is an allophone				
... among spouses	37	78	-41	Stable
... among children under 18	54	78	-24	Stable
8. Proportion identifying as “Canadians first” as opposed to identifying as either “French Canadian first” or “Quebecer first,” among allophones ^(c)	37	78	-41	Negative
9. Proportion with French as home language, among allophones having switched their home language to either English or French	37	78	-41	Positive
10. Proportion with French as home language, among Quebecers emigrating from metropolitan Montreal and the Island of Montreal to another province	15	78	+63	Negative
(Notes and sources next page)				

6. Language of “public use”

Language of “public use” is a composite statistic prepared by the Commission de la langue française. It attempts to measure the language used in public. Public use of French is below the equilibrium value for the MMR by 20 points. Again, the trend is unknown due to the absence of longitudinal data.

7. Language of use among mixed couples

After language of work, the language of mixed couple is by far the biggest factor in

linguistic transfer. Exogamy among allophones, judged by the standard of home language usage by mixed couples in which one spouse is an allophone, displays a disadvantage for French of 41 points in the MMR. The figures are slightly better when we consider language usage among children (less than 18 years of age) of mixed couples. With this measure, the deficit for French is 24 points in the MMR. By both measures, the trend is stable (Canada 1999, 76, 83).

Notes to Table 1

- All data are in percentages or percentage points. The metropolitan Montreal area includes data for the Island of Montreal. The table is built around what is needed to maintain Montreal’s present distribution between French and English as home languages. The current share of French as home language is used as benchmark: 78 per cent in metropolitan Montreal, 69 per cent on the Island of Montreal. Figures in the deviation column show differences between adjacent percentages. A positive value implies that the indicator in question is contributing to maintenance of the francophone majority status; a negative value implies that the indicator is contributing to erosion of the francophone majority status. The trend column indicates whether, in the 1990s, the evolution of the data was positive, negative, or stable in terms of maintaining French predominance. A positive value implies that the indicator in question is pushing the linguistic equilibrium in favour of French; a negative value implies that the indicator is pushing the equilibrium in favour of English. In education, where data are available for each year, the 1995-2000 trend is used. In a few cases, data are only available for the whole of Quebec. Hence, some results slightly overestimate the strength of French.
- A person’s “home language” is the language spoken most often at home by that person at the time of the census. This is a question posed by the Statistics Canada census.
- These figures refer to the relevant allophone population throughout Quebec, not to the subsets in metropolitan Montreal or on the Island of Montreal.
- Based on survey results, “language of public use” is a composite statistic prepared by the Commission de la langue française.

Sources

For indicators 1, 9 and 10, see Termote (1999, Tables 4 and 5).

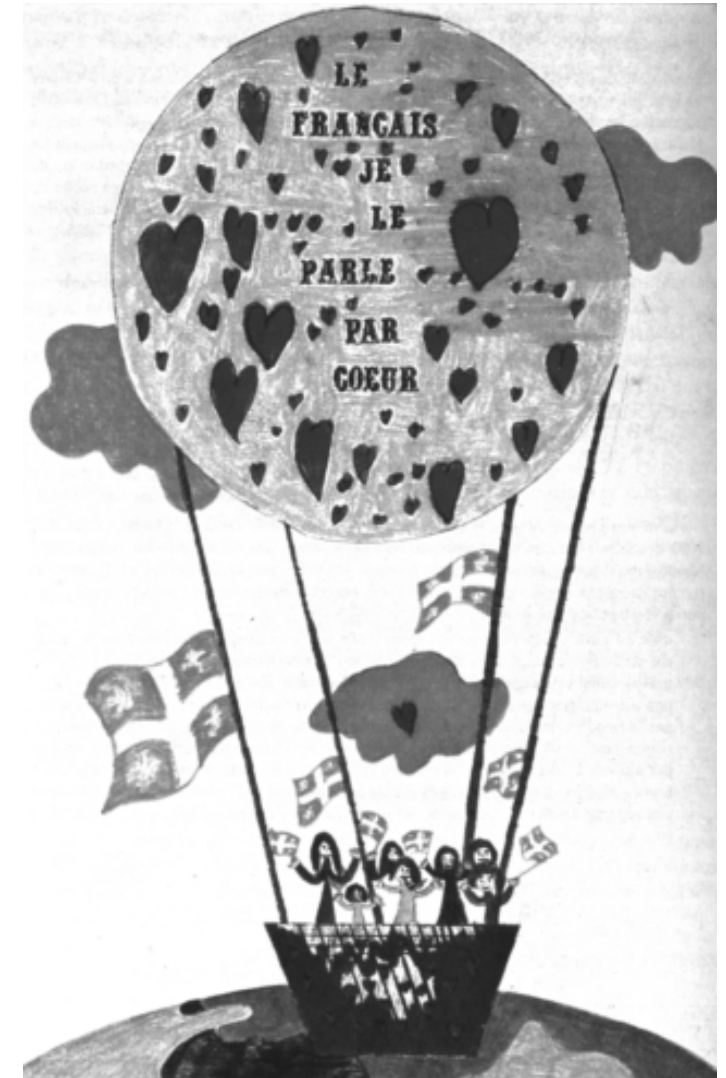
For indicators 2, 3 and 4, see Maheu (2001).

For indicators 5 and 6, see Béland (1999).

For indicator 7, see Marmen and Corbeil (1999).

For indicator 8, see Lisée (2000, 184-189). These results are drawn from polls conducted by Michel Lepage.

This poster figured in a Quebec school campaign in 1979, shortly after passage of Bill 101.



8. The role of identity

There is a strong correlation between the choice of English as language of home use and primary identification as a Canadian [“I am first of all Canadian”] and, on the other hand, the choice of French and identification as either “French Canadian” or “Québécois.” Among those having linguistically transferred to English, 91 per cent are “Canadians first” whereas a majority (53 per cent) of those who have transferred to French are “French Canadians” or “Québécois” first. The proportion of allophones identifying as “Québécois” or “French Canadian” in Quebec is 41 points below the equilibrium benchmark for the MMR, 32 points below the corresponding value for Montreal Island. The trend has been negative for French during the decade (see Lisée 2000, 184-89).

9. Language transfers

Ultimately, most allophones transfer their home language to either French or English. Among those having made such a transfer,

French experiences a deficit of 41 points in the MMR. On the Island, the analogous statistic is 31 per cent, implying a deficit of 38 points (31 per cent minus 69 per cent). The trend over the 1990s has been slightly positive from the perspective of French.⁵

10. The linguistic impact of emigration

The large deficit in linguistic transfers would lead to a quick unravelling of the present equilibrium were it not for the impact of

emigration. Each year, the anglophone community is losing one per cent of its numbers due to emigration to the rest of Canada. Some of these anglophones are in fact allophones who made a linguistic transfer to English before packing their suitcases. This final indicator shows the proportion of francophones among emigrants between 1986 and 1996. That only 15 per cent of emigrants from the MMR were francophones yields a 63 percentage point advantage to French. The comparable statistic for emigrants from the Island yields a 2 point advantage (i.e. 67 per cent of emigrants from the Island have French as home language).

From all of the above, we can now draw some conclusions.

- The linguistic orientation of immigrants matters. "Francotrope" immigrants, those coming from Romance-language countries or from regions formerly under French influence, are much more likely to make a linguistic transfer to French than are "anglotropes," those coming from elsewhere in the world. Yet, despite having shifted immigration patterns in favour of francotropes, current patterns of allophone linguistic integration are not consistent with preservation of the linguistic equilibrium.
- After 30 years of effort there have been real improvements in the status of French in Quebec, but the forces tending to anglicize allophones remain greater than those tending to francize them.
- Maintaining equilibrium over the 1990s depended upon constant departure of sizable numbers of old stock anglophones and newly anglicized allophones. Nothing indicates an end to this migra-

tion pattern. In other words, the Montreal region works as a machine to anglicize immigrants, then export them to the rest of the continent.

- This anglophone exodus is eroding the proportion of anglophone Quebecers who have the right to primary and secondary education in English. In time, it will jeopardize the viability of these basic anglophone institutions.
- Urban sprawl is reducing the proportion of francophones on the Island, thereby calling into question the predominance of French in Montreal and foreshadowing a further reduction in the ability to integrate allophone immigrants to French.
- This situation is triply unhealthy: for the francophone majority which is not attracting an adequate share of allophones; for the anglophone minority, whose vitality is not served by this hemorrhage; for the allophone communities, caught in this linguistic tug of war, which cannot and should not carry the burden of maintenance of the linguistic equilibrium.

More immigration, but better planned

There is a way simultaneously to increase immigration to Quebec, thereby offsetting our demographic decline, and to attract a larger share of allophone immigrants to French. To do this, we must turn to our post-secondary education institutions. Already, they have begun to suffer the effects of a decline in the number of young

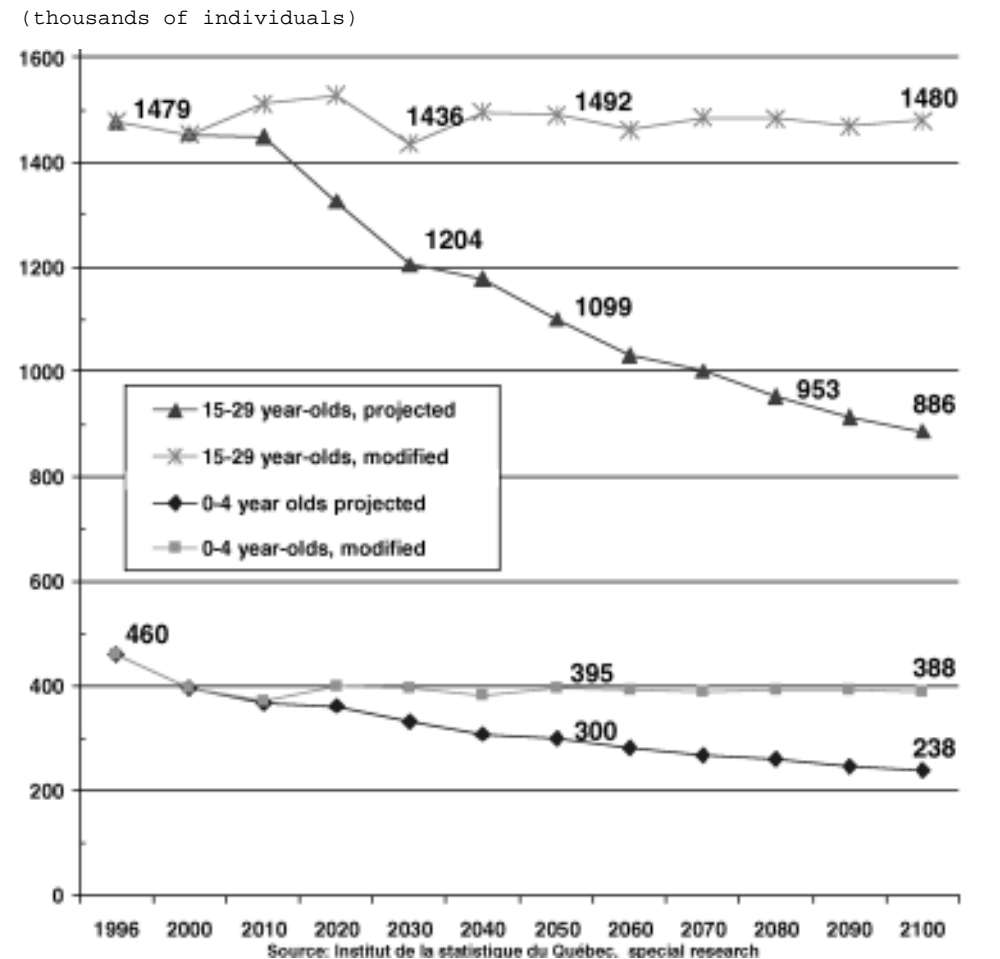
Quebecers. In 30 years, these networks will have an estimated 150,000 vacant places. This problem should be converted into an opportunity.

The post-secondary education network is an excellent integrator of immigrants. It transmits contemporary values and knowledge. And immigrants are at the stage of life when they are forming permanent personal and social bonds. Finally, francophone

education establishments generally link students with francophone employment channels.

The Quebec government proposes to increase the number of immigrants by 15,000 from now to 2004, without a substantial shift in the selection process. I propose a slower but more substantial increase in young immigrants combined with an offer to them of a post-secondary education.

Figure 1: Impact of a new wave of young immigrants on the projected decline of youth in Quebec (0-4 years/15-29 years)



At my request, the Institut de la statistique du Québec simulated the impact on Quebec demography of a gradual increase in the number of foreign students, by 2,500 per year from 2003 to 2012, beyond which date a stable level of 25,000 would be admitted annually. The assumption was that they be between 17 and 24 years old and that three out of four stay in Quebec after completing their studies (which is roughly the current retention rate of immigrants in Quebec). As well, the Institut simulated the impact of this infusion of young people upon the number of Quebec births, postulating an unchanged birth rate.

No doubt a strategy of accelerated immigration involves considerable public costs and political energy, but its impacts are large and beneficial in terms of maintaining Quebec's linguistic equilibrium and economic dynamism. The economic, social and political costs of extrapolating present linguistic and demographic trends are much greater.

A vast campaign of recruitment, selection, integration, and retention of foreign students with the intent of their becoming Quebec citizens is the best investment that we could make on behalf of maintaining the present dynamism of the province. If the

distribution of these students between francophone and anglophone post-secondary education and job-training networks is done in a manner respectful of our linguistic equilibrium, we could substantially modify the distribution of language transfers without imposing major new constraints upon those currently living in Quebec.

Plainly, it will be necessary to find financial incentives if Quebec is to attract and retain a large share of this annual flow of 25,000 young immigrants. We could, for example, introduce a new regime of tuition fees for new immigrants – and for all Quebec students. Students would pay full cost of tuition (which implies higher than present fees), but they would receive a tax credit equivalent to 1/12 of cumulative tuition costs for each of the subsequent 12 years of work in Quebec. Alternatively, students could pay present fees (which are low relative to other provinces and states and cover only a portion of total costs), with an obligation to work in Quebec for 12 out of the first 20 years of their careers. In this second option, graduates could always change their minds, pay the unpaid balance of tuition costs over fees and move permanently to Connecticut if they so wish. On the whole, such measures would also bolster retention of young anglophones and bilingual francophones, all the while respecting their individual liberty.

This strategy poses the question, where would these youthful immigrants come from? An active recruitment policy could considerably augment the number of foreign students who are francophones by home language or second language. To reach the immigration levels proposed, it

would be necessary to target a Latin clientele, notably young people from Latin America. Finding the anglophone share (about 2,500 students per year) is less problematic.

Education: Rethinking linguistic borders and bridges

College-level education has become a key to maintaining the predominance of French.

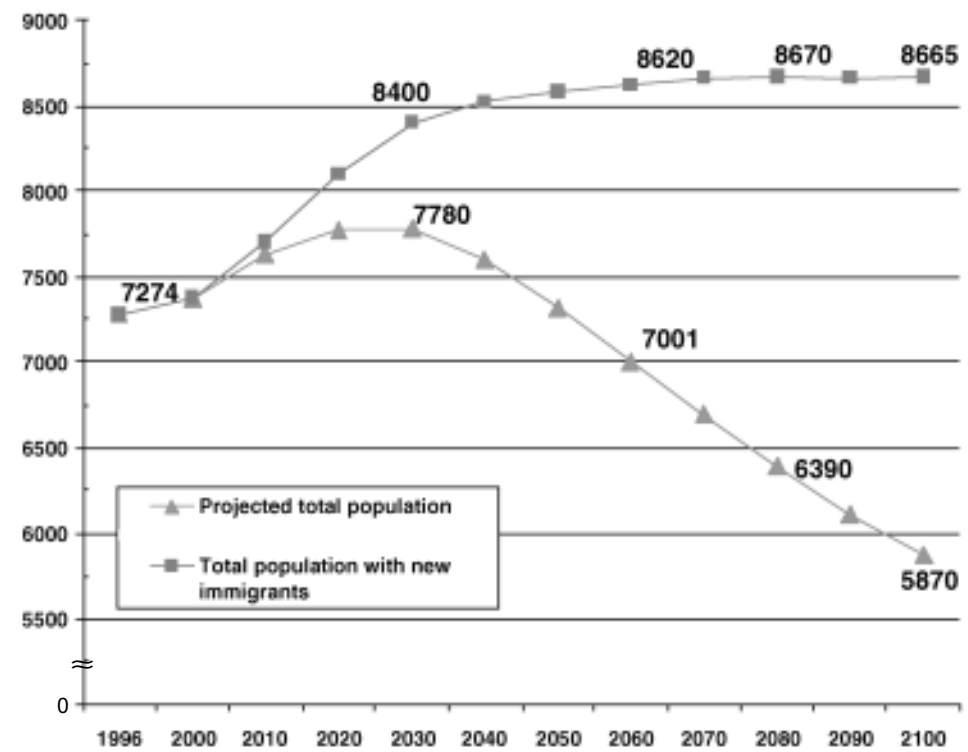
The data are clear: having completed secondary education, Quebec allophones are increasingly adopting anglophone college education. They are not alone. One quarter of those enrolled in Quebec anglophone CEGEPs are francophones. One implication of this is the desire among students to acquire a thorough knowledge of English. The francophone elementary and secondary system is not providing adequate instruction of English.

This desire for English fluency is legitimate, but the shift to anglophone college-level instruction is detrimental. First, collegial study is the most important time for linguistic transfers. During K-12 education, 31 per cent of allophone students undertake a linguistic transfer. During collegial education, this statistic rises to 88 per cent (Maheu 2001). Second, collegial studies take place at a moment when couples are formed, an important factor influencing linguistic transfer. Third, an allophone undertaking studies in a francophone CEGEP is more likely to be hired in a francophone work setting which, in turn, will have an influence on linguistic choice.

Extending Bill 101's K-12 provisions to CEGEPs would affect those allophone students who received French-language K-12

Figure 2: Impact of a wave of young immigrants on the total population of Quebec

(thousands of individuals)



Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec, special research

education and have chosen English CEGEPs (43 per cent of those with French K-12 schooling). It would affect 35 per cent of all allophone CEGEP students (the 8 point difference arises because some allophone students are eligible for access to English K-12 education). No other measure would have such a structural effect on as many allophones, on the best educated among them, on the potentially most influential within their communities.

In thinking about this, we have to be careful to combine two imperatives: the desire of francophones and allophones to master English well, and the necessity of using the collegial years to induce a higher linguistic transfer to French.

We must modify the teaching system of francophone CEGEPs so that francophones and allophones graduate with a real command of spoken and written English. That could be done by means of a complete semester of teaching of English plus instruction in English of part of the program, followed by a summer period of internship/immersion in the student's own field of study.

A similar system should be introduced in the anglophone CEGEPs to allow effective command of French. These initiatives would contribute to making Quebec a veritable linguistic bridge, and should quench the thirst of non-anglophone students for competence in English. It would probably be necessary to phase in such changes over, say, five years, beginning with pilot projects. This would allow time for planned reforms aimed at improving English instruction in French K-12 institutions to take hold.

A bolder, more problematic – and ultimately better – option would be to merge

the French and English CEGEP networks into a single one, in the Montreal area. What I here envision is that three quarters of the education be given in French, one quarter in English. This option would require considerable effort to improve the English-language skills among francophones and the French-language skills among anglophone students at the time of admission. In a Quebec with French predominant, this would

A campaign of recruitment, selection and integration of foreign students with the intent of their becoming Quebec citizens is the best investment for maintaining the present dynamism of the province.

ensure, at the post-secondary level, a real acquisition of French and English by all, a better integration of allophones into the French majority and a better knowledge of French and of francophone society by young anglophones, which in turn would encourage them to remain in Quebec. It would further open francophones to the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Montreal area, would give a common experience to the most educated strata of Quebec society and would foster cross-linguistic bonds and networks for the next generations, bonds that have been sorely lacking in the recent past.

This “French predominant CEGEP for all” would be an assertion of civic nationalism, of the breaking down of walls, of convergence, of métissage. It would contribute to the blending of franco-European and anglo-American influences that give today's Quebec what I like to call the “dividends of originality.”

University: strengthening the Europe/America duality

Under my proposals, linguistic free choice would begin at the university level.

I would like to see the Quebec government strongly encourage, in studies during the first and second university cycle, the Europe/America double anchor that contributes to Quebec's creativity. Many more Quebec university students could incorporate into their studies a session or an internship – both in francophone Europe and in anglophone America.

Ideally, an engineer from New Delhi or San Diego arriving in a pharmaceutical or

This “French predominant CEGEP for all” would be an assertion of civic nationalism, of the breaking down of walls, of convergence, of métissage.

aeronautical laboratory should quickly take into account that his colleagues show an intimate knowledge of both French and English, and that the French they use is not merely that of translated anglophone concepts. He or she will realize that ignorance of French is a real handicap to participating in the creation of new ideas, technology, science, and marketing.

To achieve this ideal, Quebec must remain a pivotal point between francophone Europe and the anglo-American continent, not become a cog in an anglophone Canadian or North American research and industrial endeavour.

Primary and secondary English language education: beyond dogmatism

We have noted the problem posed by the anglophone exodus on the number of children who have the right to an education in English. If we wish, through immigration, to integrate an adequate number of young allophones to French, it is also necessary to consider the role of immigration in maintaining the anglophone community. In 2000/2001, 10.6 per cent of Quebec children were educated in English, slightly below the level required for maintenance of the linguistic equilibrium.

The education provisions of Bill 101 apply both to allophones and to non-Canadian anglophones who establish themselves in Quebec – even though the probability of linguistically integrating into French young people from Liverpool or Milwaukee is extremely low.

In 1993, the Ministry of Education counted the number of primary and secondary school students from a country whose official language was English but who did not have the right to attend Quebec English schools. The number was 8,188 – which is still fewer than the 10,000 Quebec children who have the right to English schools but voluntarily attend French schools. If this additional 8,188 all chose English schooling, it would put English-Quebec's share of K-12 education precisely at the proportion required to sustain its current vitality, no more, no less.

Some argue that this change poses insurmountable legal difficulties. The Cana-

dian Charter of Rights accords the right to English-language schooling to Canadian children whose parents received primary education in English in Canada. I propose extending this provision to all children whose parents received primary education in English – wherever. To simplify application of this rule, we would assume it to apply to immigrants coming from countries or states with English as the language of public schooling. The Supreme Court would be hard pressed to find this distinction unreasonable, or use it as pretext for knocking down the core provisions of Bill 101 controlling access to English-language schools: indeed, why would the Court want to stop Quebec from relaxing access to the schools for an official language minority? To introduce such a change would be politically difficult but, if combined with the proposed modifications for college-level study, it is doable.

The Quebec linguistic balance: the responsibility of the Canadian government

I am a sovereigntist. I firmly believe that Quebec's access to sovereignty would give it the framework necessary for maintenance of its linguistic equilibrium. But Quebec remains, for the time being, part of Canada, and some relevant linguistic arrangements fall to Ottawa. It is time that the Quebec government clearly indicate what it expects from the federal government in terms of language policies.

In Quebec, about 10 per cent of businesses and employees come under federal

jurisdiction and are exempt from provincial legislation. This includes banks with a federal charter, telecommunications firms, and interprovincial transport companies such as Air Canada. These firms are subject to federal official languages legislation. A few make it a badge of honour to respect the spirit of Bill 101. However, systematically, provisions of Bill 101 are violated: francophone software is not offered to employees; manuals and instructions are not translated, etc.

Quebec must ask the federal government to respect the principle of the predominance of French and apply la Charte de la langue française on Quebec territory. Ottawa should apply, on its own billboard signage in Quebec, the principle of the predominance of French, a principle acknowledged by its Supreme Court. More generally, Quebec should ask Ottawa to delegate the relevant part of its regulatory power over enterprises under federal jurisdiction to Quebec authorities.

Ideally, the principle of the predominance of French in Quebec should be constitutionally entrenched, which would shield Quebec against any future Parliament or court attempts to standardize linguistic legislation *ad mari usque ad mare*.⁶

The threat of external intervention is not unfounded. Not too long ago, a University of Montreal political scientist called for constitutional protection of Quebec's power to legislate, to guard against a pessimistic scenario he described as follows:

One may think that the survival of [Quebec language] policies is secured. In fact, nothing is less certain. The decisions of

one group of judges may be overturned later by their successors. A Supreme Court might decide some day that denying the right of a new immigrant or of a francophone to go to an English school, when English speakers have such a right, is contrary to the Charter of Rights; the Court could invoke to this effect Article 15 prescribing legal equality of all citizens. Such a judgment may seem unlikely today, but who knows for the next generation? The French presence will decrease as a democratic reality outside Quebec, and Quebec's weight will decline in Canada.

The author of this dire warning? Professor Stéphane Dion (1992, 119-20). The threat is worse than Dion feared back in

For the time being, some linguistic arrangements fall to Ottawa. It is time the Quebec government clearly indicate what it expects from the federal government in terms of language policies.

1992. A judge of the Quebec Superior Court ruled in December 2000 that the clauses on language of education of the Canadian Charter of Rights had to be interpreted in a manner such that any citizen, having had several weeks of primary education in English, can bypass the basic provisions of Bill 101 concerning francophone education. Another decision, from a Quebec circuit court, interpreted the Charter of Rights to mean the predominance of French on signs is unconstitutional. The decision was over-

turned on appeal. But it is only a matter of time before the Canadian Supreme Court draws similar conclusions that insist on governments treating the two official languages equally throughout Canada, ergo outlawing anything that blocks the nonexistent potential expansion of French, and anything that blocks the very real potential expansion of English.

In fact, some participants in Quebec's linguistic debate are so fearful of future rulings of federal courts that they warn against any changes whatsoever in Quebec's language laws, however beneficial they may be, for fear that these changes give federal courts an opportunity to further erode Quebec's ability to legislate in this field. That concern is not without merit. For all these reasons, Quebec should gain a constitutional right to legislate on language, on the basis of French predominance, so as to shield it from the very real threat of federal regulations based on a restrictive interpretation of the Charter.

Were Quebec to adopt the measures that I am proposing, notably on immigration, it would need federal cooperation. To target 25,000 students per year and to increase the francotrope share of Quebec immigrants would require that Ottawa coordinate its immigrant recruitment services with Quebec much more than today. In a certain number of its embassies, Canada would have to make room for specifically Quebec applicants; it would need flexible rules to give foreign students in Quebec the ability, for example, to work with no more restrictions than Quebec students, and to process their citizenship applications without their having to leave Canadian territory.

To solidify Quebec's identity: Quebecois citizenship

My final recommendation is to create an internal Quebec citizenship, conferred upon all Canadian citizens residing in Quebec and all immigrants becoming citizens on Quebec soil. This recommendation, though symbolic in nature, would in my estimation have an immediate and profound impact on Quebec society and on the shared identity of all its citizens. It would denote in a formal way the existence of a singular territory in North America and in Canada, one in which French predominates, but one that leaves ethnic considerations behind.

Such an internal citizenship would not be the first in the West. Finland, a country with two official languages (Finnish and Swedish) has permitted the Swedish minority with a distinctive history on the island of Åland to create on its own territory an Åland internal citizenship, added to Finnish citizenship. It is not necessary to adopt the totality of Åland's arrangements; they go very far.⁷ However, if Quebec remains in the Canadian federation, a Quebec citizenship would contribute to the cohesion of its linguistic and civic collective life.

Such an internal citizenship would send a message of inclusion to all Quebec residents, whatever be their country of origin. It would be a way of saying officially: you are Québécois, all of you. It would equally send the message that there exists here a different way of being North American. More than a figment of the imagination, it would be a reality inscribed in the citizenship itself. We would be telling ourselves – and others – the meaning of their choice by

becoming a citizen of this particular corner of North America. It would powerfully clarify the expectations of the host society.

Like the predominance of French as a principle, the idea of a Quebec citizenship linked to that of Canada corresponds to reality: more than anywhere else in Canada, people here define themselves by their attachment to their province. Moreover, a majority of Québécois feel themselves “Québécois and Canadians” – it would be a matter of rendering official that which is for the moment intuitive. ■

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Notes

1. Quebec ranks fifth among the world's economies in terms of its propensity to export (exports as a share of GDP).
2. Quebec's population comprises 83 per cent francophones, 11 per cent anglophones and 6 per cent allophones. If we

want to determine the appropriate linguistic transfer among allophones to maintain linguistic equilibrium, we must determine the relative share of francophones and anglophones: 88 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. The analogous exercise is used to determine the 78 per cent francophone benchmark for the MMR and 69 per cent benchmark for the Island of Montreal.

3. For a complete version of the data which follow, the reader can refer to the memorandum filed by Jean-François Lisée with the Commission des États généraux, sur la situation et l'avenir de la langue française, at www.vigile.net/auteurs/l/liseejf.html
4. All the data on education are from Maheu (2001).
5. Data for indicators 9 and 10 are drawn from Termote (1999, Tables 4 and 5).
6. Recently, Christian Dufour has resurrected and modernized the proposal of entrenching a constitutional power to Quebec over language. This recommendation dates back at least to the Pepin-Robarts Commission (Canada 1979, 121-22).
7. For more information, see the official website: www.aland.fi/virtual/fransk/frame.html To be an Åland citizen, it is necessary to have Finnish citizenship, to have a good knowledge of Swedish and to have resided in Åland at least five years, or to have been born there. Only the holders of regional citizenship can vote in elections. Åland enjoys much governmental autonomy, including specific powers of international representation, and has, on its territory, only one official language, Swedish.

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