

THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES
ON QUEBEC'S FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

by

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DEDICATION

There is great value in being bilingual, especially in Canada, where both French and English are recognized as official languages. Nevertheless, people often comment on my accent, ask me if I speak “real French,” or if I am a separatist (meaning that I support the independence of Quebec from Canada). These preconceived ideas about Quebec are deeply rooted in the history of Canada and still have an impact on today’s politics, culture, and financial systems. Thus, my identity as a Quebecker has served as inspiration for this thesis. I have learned that people tend to be stubborn and struggle to comprehend unfamiliar and uncomfortable ideas. That is why I believe in approaching life with a sense of curiosity and respect. I dedicate this thesis to anyone who has experienced prejudice, and to Quebec, the home that I take pride in.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For long-time residents and newcomers alike, it is important to recognize that, for generations, the region today familiar to us as the State of Montana has been populated and stewarded by unique, distinct, and flourishing groups of Indigenous peoples. Colonization, invasion, and dishonesty have resulted in the displacement of these people from their ancestral homelands and the lands reserved to their sovereign rule by treaty. Today, eight federally recognized Tribal Nations that comprise 12 different tribes exist in Montana: the Blackfeet Tribe, the Chippewa Cree Tribe, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, the Crow Tribe, the Fort Belknap Tribes, the Fort Peck Tribes, the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. These are not the only Indigenous peoples that have inhabited the Montana region and I acknowledge those tribes as well. Montana State University is on the ancestral lands of the Apsáalooke [ap-saw-loo-kay], Tsésthó'e [sto-ey], and Séliš [SAY-lish] peoples. I recognize that I am a guest on these lands.¹

The concept of cultural assimilation² is oppressive and imperialist in nature. I believe that integration is a far more suitable term for the incorporation and introduction of different cultures into the lives of individuals in any country. In taking over New France, the English wished to culturally assimilate the French. I recognize that the French living in North America were not assimilated with the same aggression and brutal force that the Native Americans endured. Neither the French nor the British have the rightful possession of these lands, since they invaded as imperialist colonizers. The conversation and issues addressed in this thesis do not include the Indigenous experience. My intention is not to ignore or exclude that perspective. I only offer insight into that which I have experienced as a white woman living in Quebec. My hope is to explore the impact of the cultural assimilation that the French endured on the contemporary relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada. I believe that English and French-speaking Canadians should seek to better understand one another in order to alleviate the tension that has been brooding over the last few centuries. While this issue pertains to me, I realize that we can all make a serious effort to recognize and appreciate the role of Indigenous peoples in our lives.

¹ The content of this Land Acknowledgement was inspired by the work published at <https://mtcompact.org/wp-content/uploads/large/sites/70/2021/02/Full-Land-Acknowledgement.pdf>.

² According to Encyclopedia Britannica, cultural assimilation is: “the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society.” Definition retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/assimilation-society>

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NOMENCLATURE

Quebec is often referred to as “French Canada,” or “the French part of Canada” by non-Canadians. While those living outside of Canada may see the population as solely composed of “Canadians,” those of us residing within the country see each other in terms of language.

The terms “English” and “French” are used to refer to English and French-speaking Canadians, whose respective heritages are linked to England and France.

Francophones are people living in Canada whose primary language is French. It is understood that the majority of these people live in the province of Quebec.

Anglophones are people living in Canada whose primary language is English. It is understood that the majority of these people live outside the province of Quebec.

I deliberately alternate between the terms “Quebecois” and “Quebeckers” throughout this thesis in an attempt to promote bilingualism. Both these terms refer to people from Quebec.

It is important to note that not all people residing in Quebec are French speakers. However, it is assumed that, in general, all people from Quebec scorn English-speakers and vice versa. For the sake of this thesis, we will assume that “Quebec” and “the Quebec people” share this discernment.

ABSTRACT

There is a long-standing cultural clash embedded into Canadian society, which has caused Quebec to be its own socio-political entity, meaning a body that is distinguished from the rest of Canada with regard to social and political factors. The tension caused by linguistic distinctions, as well as the financial strength of Quebec, has led to a desire on the part of nationalists to become an independent state. French-speaking Canadians are often subject to social sanctions, such as being ridiculed for their accents and accusations of being separatists, due to their assumed connection to Quebec. This phenomenon further exacerbates the province's nationalist tendencies, which are heavily reflected in its financial policies and artist community. The goal is to understand Quebec's contemporary political and financial relationship with the rest of Canada. The focus of this research is on the impact of cultural differences resulting from the historical context upon which Quebec was founded.

METHODS

This project offers an in-depth study of Quebec culture and society. The focus is on the impact of cultural differences and historical precedence of modern politics and economic engagement in the province of Quebec. This research evaluates the impact of the political relationship between Quebec and Canada. This thesis is divided into three respective sections: Language & Culture; Politics; and Economic Engagement. Each is representative of the three fields of study of my Directed Interdisciplinary Degree (French, Political Science, and Finance). Each subject will be presented with examples exploring Quebec's unique culture that has affected its continuing abrasive stance towards Canada. The first section presents an analysis of popular culture through case studies in film, music, and literature as a way to deepen the exploration of this tension. Research methods for the two subsequent sections include empirical analysis, literary review, dissection of scholarly articles and texts, opinions based on personal anecdotal-experience as a bilingual Quebec resident, interviews with former Quebec politicians, and data analysis evaluating Quebecois prime ministers' performance based on fiscal budgeting and gross domestic product (GDP).

PREFACE

I am a senior at Montana State University (MSU) in the Honors College Directed Interdisciplinary Studies Program, which has allowed me to combine my interests in Finance, Political Science, and French into a personalized degree. This unique combination directly reflects my lived experiences and identity as a bilingual Canadian citizen. Over the past four semesters, I have been conducting independent research that draws together my three fields of interest into this cumulative thesis.

Throughout my primary and secondary education in French, I have become increasingly interested in literature and the power of rhetoric, especially in politics. Studying an extensive list of novelists and philosophers has piqued my curiosity and encouraged me to further my education in this line of studies by selecting French as one of my three majors. I believe this field is vital to my research on Quebec culture and society. The interactions between political actors and the institutions upon which we rely to order society are of great interest to me, hence the selection of political science. As for finance, I am fascinated by the intricacies of global economies because of how trade among and within nations shapes responses to changing capital markets and increasing volatility.

I have always been intrigued by the dynamic between the province of Quebec and the rest of Canada. This topic is personal to me as I have witnessed firsthand the effects of prejudice on both sides, as a Francophone and as an Anglophone. Having a bilingual identity as a resident of Quebec living in Canada poses social challenges on a daily basis. I completed my primary and secondary education (grade 1 to 11) at French institutions in the heart of downtown Montreal. I attended Collège de Montréal, which was the first high school in Montréal, founded in 1767. After which I attended a pre-university program (grade 12 equivalent) at Lower Canada College, a private English school. Collège de Montréal prides itself on its legacy of high-achieving figures in Quebec history, from Émile Nelligan, a renowned poet, to Martin Lapointe, a famous hockey player. During my time at Collège de Montréal, I gained an affinity for the French language and culture. Through my studies at both institutions, I became aware of the tenuous relationship between Francophones and Anglophones in Canada. Because of my bilingualism, Anglophone people see me as primarily French, and Francophone people claim that I am English. This strange dynamic, and the inability to conform to one set of social standards, has an impact on my identity, hence my interest in this topic. I believe that there are many underlying causes of this unspoken tension. My goal in studying this topic is to provide insight on the issue in order to inspire positive, lasting policy changes that foster cohabitation of Canada for both Anglophone and Francophone citizens.

INTRODUCTION

The fact that Quebec and the rest of Canada have distinct language laws, legal systems, and consequently different cultures demonstrates the level of dissociation within the country. The goal of this thesis is to provide a better understanding of the root causes of the existing, underlying cultural differences exhibited between Quebec and Canada that have led to the strained relationship, at a nation-wide scale and at an individual level among citizens. To that end, there remains today cause for dispute among the population of Canada. In this thesis, I argue that the relationship between Quebec and Canada is complicated largely due to a lack of proper communication.

The tension explored in this research has historically been openly asserted in the discourse of Quebecois politicians. The general sentiment of the French population regarding its history can be described as sorrowful. Much of the popular rhetoric among Quebecois artists, politicians, and other public figures is representative of the pain that was endured with regard to cultural assimilation. Marcel Rioux, the well-renowned Quebecois sociologist and author offers an astute example of this sentiment in his book *La question du Québec (Quebec in Question)*:

Why in a country so vast, so rich and so advanced from many points of view, do we find so much anxiety and frustration? [...] Essentially, because the majority of Quebec's inhabitants benefit only marginally from this industrial and commercial development, and because their culture is constantly menaced by the groups that dominate their country economically and politically. Their language and culture suffer the fate reserved for subjugated, colonized nations. (Rioux, 7)

This anxiety is appropriate and evident simply by looking at the differences in law between the two provinces. Seeing as Quebec is the only province in Canada that follows Civil Law rather than Common Law,³ it can be expected that legal as well as political challenges arise frequently when

³ Common Law follows the tradition that precedent is set by the decisions made on past cases, meaning that the law can evolve over time, while Civil Law follows a specific set of codes that remain unchanged, but open to interpretation.

administering relations between the provinces. The distinction between the two systems does not play a significant role in the daily lives of citizens; however, the persistence of Civil Law traditions in Quebec complicates federal cases, as the Supreme Court of Canada follows a Common Law system. The fact that there are two legal systems operating within one country poses many challenges to the flow of business between Quebec and other provinces. Many legal scholars and current/former justices argue that the country as a whole would benefit if the lines between the two legal systems were less abrupt. Indeed, to quote the words of Justice La Forest, “a universal principle such as we are dealing with here affords an excellent opportunity for cross-fertilization between Canada's two legal systems” (Gonthier, 330). Were there a single, universally accepted legal principle established across Canada, there might not be such a tenuous relationship between the provinces. This legal barrier greatly increases the difficulty of navigating policy issues. As a result, Quebec often feels left out of federal level decision-making.

All Canadians are granted what is referred to as a “medical insurance card,” a form of identification which varies in appearance by province, that entitles one to medical care free of charge upon entry to an emergency room. Injuries and illnesses outside of Quebec while holding a Quebec medical insurance care is burdensome. Normally, the provincial government is billed for the medical expenses that one endures. Quebeckers must pay the upfront costs out of pocket if they are injured outside of the province, after which they must file a claim with the provincial government in order to get a full, or in most cases partial, reimbursement.

The difference in educational systems (K-12 followed by four year undergrad as opposed to K-11 followed by two years of Cegep then three years of undergrad) between Quebec and the rest of Canada has aggravated and worsened the tension felt among citizens. Additionally, the cost to attend French private school (about \$5000 CND in tuition per year) is far less than to attend English private

school (about \$20,000 CAD in tuition per year). Students are incentivized to remain within the province for university studies, especially since there are no entirely French-speaking post-secondary institutions outside of Quebec. The cost of university tuition in Quebec is also far below the national average.

Quebec's premiers are often dismayed by the fact that the other provinces rally against them by overtly favoring policies that hinder the interests of Quebec. There is a collective sentiment among the Quebecois people and their political leaders that Anglophones are disrespectful of Francophones, applying populist rhetoric to the way Quebec approaches much of its relations with the rest of Canada. The hatred that arose so long ago is now widely present in cultural, political and economic competition. The characteristics that make Quebec unique go unnoticed by those Canadians whose identity is not put into question by their fellow citizens. In this thesis, I shall attempt to explain the underlying tension with examples and case studies from each of the three sections: Language & Culture, Politics, and Economic Engagement.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The French colony, New France, that occupied the land currently known as the province of Quebec, was formed in 1534. The city of Quebec was founded in 1608 by Samuel de Chaplain. Upon the declaration of independence of the 13 U.S. colonies, a group of British “Loyalists” who opposed autonomy from Britain moved north and settled adjacent to New France. The British seized Quebec in 1759, following the “Bataille des Plaines d’Abraham,” a decisive moment in the Seven Years War, which was a worldwide scale conflict between France and England that occurred from 1756-1763. The takeover of Quebec took less than 60 minutes, and left the French completely devastated. This historical event has tainted the attitude of the French towards the English. The modern-day Quebec license plates read “Je me souviens” (“I remember”) as the province’s motto. This is a reference to the pitiful battle mentioned above that changed the fate of the French colony. This motto serves as a reminder of the unique distinction between French and English culture: overcome with pride, the French refuse to be assimilated and will never cease to remember their lineage. In fact, the Quebec identity has ultimately been shaped by this event.

Given Quebec’s history, with the peculiar conditions of domination and colonization, that have characterized it and to a large extent still do, we have a right to wonder what use it would make of its greater autonomy or independence. [...] There does not seem to be a historical or sociological model which would help us predict the evolution of the Quebec community. (Rioux, 126-127)

Indeed, since its founding, Quebec has evolved immensely and undergone several cultural shifts, but one aspect remains central to its identity: French language and culture.

The implementation of the Constitutional Act of 1791 separated Quebec into two regions: Upper Canada, for English settlers, and Lower Canada for the French. This separation caused a dramatic, heart-felt dread on behalf of the French settlers. This subtle yet markedly divergent

difference in the names attributed to each territory had an implicit meaning: the English are ranked above the French. Following their victory, the English further asserted their dominance by imposing their mode of living upon their newly conquered land. “The hope was that the conquered French would eventually accept and internalize the values and way of life of the British civilization. Immigrants were also expected to adopt the culture of the Anglo-Saxon group” (Breton, 88). The French settlers that inhabited New France, and later Canada, felt an intense attachment to the land that they worked hard to cultivate and populate at the request of the French empire. When this was taken away from them so quickly in a war that lasted less than 60 minutes, it is no wonder that they felt humiliated and thus resented the people who conquered them. “French Canadians did not favor the idea of English settlers invading their homeland, nor were English Canadians enthusiastic to venture to a land where they might be denied the customary rights of Englishmen. It was precisely when French and English Canadians came into contact that trouble began because of their divergent customs” (Laslovich, 2). Given that the French and English had been rivals across decades of war and imperialism, the French were reluctant to abide by their enemy’s standards.

The way in which the British asserted their likeness unto the French was harsh and dismissive. “The ideal envisaged was the coincidence of culture with political boundaries in Canada. It is not an accident that the document that became the country's constitution was called the British North America Act” (Pahner, 1976). This overt segregation of the masses based on language led to the ever-present tension within Canada. This has inevitably led to the current political climate in which the nation operates today. Indeed, due to the British’s insistence on adopting their mode of living, the French felt unwelcomed in a land that had once been their own.

What really led to the ever-present tension was the fact that the British had promised to incorporate the French into their way of life as equals.

With time, several problems and obstacles to the construction of an ethnically British society were encountered. There was in particular a growing tension between that conception of the cultural character of the society and the composition of the population. (Breton, 89-90)

Subsequently, a nationalist movement arose in response to the pressure to Anglicize. Indeed, efforts to assimilate Quebec were not well received, and only acted to further accentuate the differences among both cultures. It is important to recognize the main factors that distinguish the formal rule which governed either entity. As the historian Hudson Meadwell writes,

There are three central elements of this pattern of political incorporation. (1) The Canadian state was built on the earlier military conquest of the French. (2) The accommodation between English and French was federalist. (3) Canadian confederation also established a tacit and informal concordat between the state and the French-Canadian Catholic church. (Meadwell 219)

Religion played an important role in the development of New France. A seigneurial system was initially implemented in New France. This system incorporated the Catholic church into the organization of society and allocation of the land. Seeing as the dominant religious doctrines of France and England are different, the question became one of Catholicism versus Protestantism which further accentuated the differences between the French and English values and culture. Everything that the French had come to know of life in North America was utterly changed and abolished. The subordinating experiences of long ago remain an issue today.

LANGUAGE & CULTURE

It is not difficult to see the underlying cause of cultural and linguistic tension when closely analyzing the meaning of popular Quebec films, music, and literature. The power of rhetoric must be considered in how the long-standing Quebecois identity is reflected in and used by art as a means to make sense of the world and bring people together over their mutual understanding of a specific ethos. The French language is at the core of Quebec's culture and deeply informs Quebec art. In an attempt to understand the problem posed by cultural and linguistic differences between Quebec and Canada, we shall analyze the way in which it has been expressed by the people through art. According to Richard Handler, professor and director of the Global Development Studies program at the University of Virginia,

American culture and the English language are sometimes seen as irresistible in their power to seduce individuals away from their natal traditions and to invade the national territory itself, corrupting the Québécois people against their will. Furthermore, *indépendantistes* believe that continued adherence to the Canadian Confederation constitutes a compromise of the collective self that carries the same implications for annihilation as cultural and linguistic assimilation, and even federalists are not unaware of such dangers. With respect to all these issues, what is feared is a dilution and eventual loss of national identity, a negation of boundaries and distinctions and, in the end, the disappearance of the Québécois nation. (Handler 49)

At the intersection of language and culture is born an artistic movement centered around expressing the resentment that has been felt by French-speaking Canadians. Certainly, art is a powerful, non-violent means of demonstrating the discontent of a populace. Art is, in and of itself, a means of protest and preservation. Indeed, when one's identity is threatened, art is an effective tool for demonstrating the necessity of diversity. In the case of Quebec, "The main threats perceived were cultural; they were posed by groups whose cultures were deemed to be either inferior to or incompatible with the values and ways of life of the ethnic group attempting to establish its cultural ascendancy" (Breton, 89). Thus, the natural response was a flourishing artist community.

The language issue has been so potent a vehicle for mobilization precisely because it can elicit support without alienating activists. Language use combines expressive and instrumental concerns since language symbolizes elements of collective identity and at the same time is cultural capital²⁴ that determines access to positions in the public and private sectors. The issue of language provides a basis for broader support without alienating activists. However, the party has been subject to internal factionalism whenever the leadership has sought to increase or maintain its level of support by weakening its commitment to independence. (Meadwell, 212)

The French and English have always been competing for the dominant language and culture within Canada. A common national identity seems impossible, given that the main sentiment by which members of the Quebec community identify themselves is in direct opposition to Canada. Much of Quebecois art is representative of the heart-felt grievance for the loss of dignity in the light of the British takeover. The severity of this feeling is thus deeply imbricated with Quebec popular culture. There exists a certain mystique evoked in the art of all Quebecers, one that is undoubtedly unique from what is represented by other Canadian artists. Recurring themes of sorrow and dread make for a sentimental attachment to the art of Quebec; a sense of pride is universally felt across those Quebecers who recognize the role of art in society.

The study of art in a variety of mediums is essential to the overall comprehension of the Quebec identity. Seeing as national identity is the root cause of the underlying conflict between Quebec and Canada, we must look to art in order to derive meaning. We will explore three case studies that I have deemed particularly representative of the Quebec ethos because of how they encapsulate the intersection of language and culture and its role in the creation of the Quebec identity.

Cinematic Case Study

The Quebec film industry is an essential contributor to the global understanding of what constitutes the Quebec identity. Having received global recognition, many Quebecois films are successful abroad as well as at home. It is important to note the significance of language in the Quebecois film industry:

Most audiences around the world watch US made films in their native language, after a delay of several months for dubbing purposes. In Quebec, a recent law stipulates that the English original cannot be shown if the French version is not made available within the next 60 days, so that Francophones have a reasonable chance to see the movie in their own language. (Pasquero 630)

The Quebec film industry is separate from Canada in that most of the films produced in Quebec are primarily Francophone. Much of the socio-cultural factors implied in the storyline and setting of popular Quebecois films are indicative of the Quebec identity and zeitgeist. *Les invasions barbares* directed by Denys Arcand was chosen for its representation of particular aspects of life that were sought to be highlighted in this thesis.

Les invasions barbares, Denys Arcand 2003

Director Denys Arcand is known for his strikingly emotional films portraying a particularly difficult aspect of Québécois society: the generational conflict that arises between father and son, representative of the cultural dispute between French and English speakers residing in Québec. The main character Rémy, follows a rather existentialist narrative, one marked by melancholy and nostalgia. This rhetoric is not uncommon among Québec art but is especially prominent in films. Denys Arcand uses his artistic prowess to divulge current issues by portraying reality in a tragic yet beautiful way, allowing the audience to feel connected to the characters.

Les invasions barbares deals with the family complications that arise in light of the death of Rémy, the main character, making the narrative somber and real. This film has a lot of philosophical implications, namely an emphasis on existentialism as it relates to the failed separatist political movement vouching for the emancipation of Quebec through independence from Canada. As noted by the Quebecois film critic Georges Privet “[...] Denys Arcand would transform this failure, along with the accompanying retreat into nationalist ideas on identity [...]” (Privet, 2021). It is apparent that the director’s intention was to show just how ugly life is, yet there is a certain beauty in accepting this outcome. The relatable characteristics of the film ultimately adds to the way the viewers interact with it, especially thanks to the many Montreal specific references making it realistic. Indeed, the intensity of cultural references allows the Quebec audience to relate to the film on a personal level. For the non-Quebecois viewers, however, it can be difficult to identify the importance of this film and its message. Indeed, *Les invasions barbares* was not widely understood and did not have as much success in Europe or the rest of Canada as it did in Quebec.

The plotline of *Les invasions barbares* was set along a short timeline; the bulk of the denouement was within a few weeks of the start of the film. The film was shot in such a way that the audience felt they were present for the events that took place rather than feeling like an outsider looking in. This adds again to the realness of the film. At the end of the movie, for instance, when Rémy was preparing to die and watched the video recording sent to him by his daughter wishing him farewell, it is impossible to view this scene without thinking of one’s own familial relations. One larger aspect that stood out was the fact that Rémy did not speak English, and his son, who he resented, was bilingual and lived abroad in London. “Through the symbol of the hospital, an appropriate location for conveying social values (Rémy refuses to go to the United States for treatment), and through the animated conversations of the group of friends, Arcand shows us the

decline of great ideals about society, education, relationships, and history” (Fontaine & McIntosh, 2009). The scene in which Gaëlle meets with a priest to go over a collection of religious art that she hopes to bring back to London to sell, which turned out to be a bunch of worthless junk, was representative of the decay of social values seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Rémy. This scene has a deeper meaning: it exposed the clash between the old and the new generations, it showed that the old values which once reigned are now lost and forgotten. This is an overwhelming reference to Québec history which ties well with the social context of the film. Indeed, the generational and moral clash between father and son was central to the plot. The main character, Rémy, states: “My son is an ambitious and puritanical capitalist, while I have always been a sensual socialist” (Scott, 2003). This is reflective of an inherently Québécois socio-political battle between generational ideologies: separatists versus nationalists.

It was beautiful to see a complicated family put their differences aside to come together in happiness one last time for Rémy as he faced death. This film reminds us that no matter how complicated familial relationships are, our families are those who love us the most. This can be seen as a larger allegory for the Québec populace, where Rémy represents Quebec, and his son represents Canada. “The force of dissemination, the playful force of Arcand’s art, moves along a trajectory where dangerous elements mingle with the power of caring, tender love. Through this contradictory, ambivalent world, the film travels toward the mystery that can never be reached, but whose consequence changes all lives that are touched” (Imboden, 52). This somber beauty is indicative of Arcand’s films. What distinguishes this Québec film from the popular American (and Protestant Canadian) ethos of “happily ever after” is the director’s refusal to smooth over the blemishes of life.

Musical Case Study

Artists use music as a tool for addressing social issues by advocating for change, and communicating a collective sense of pain and loss with regard to identity. This angst is reflected in the lyrics of popular music in Quebec. “Mon pays” by Gilles Vigneault was selected due to the strength of the message it conveys. This song is a cornerstone of the Quebecois ethos that is explored and analyzed in this thesis.

Mon pays, Gilles Vigneault 1964

Original Lyrics

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver
 Mon jardin, ce n'est pas un jardin, c'est la plaine
 Mon chemin, ce n'est pas un chemin, c'est la neige
 Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver

Translation⁴

My country isn't a country, it's winter
 My garden isn't a garden, it's a plain
 My trail isn't a trail, it's snow
 My country isn't a country, it's winter

Dans la blanche cérémonie

In the white ceremony

Où la neige au vent se marie

Where the snow and the wind get married

Dans ce pays de poudrerie

In this powderous country

Mon père a fait bâtir maison

My father build a house

Et je m'en vais être fidèle

And I will be loyal

À sa manière, à son modèle

To her ways, to her model

La chambre d'amis sera telle

The guest bedroom will be so

Qu'on viendra des autres saisons

That visitors will come from other seasons

Pour se bâtir à côté d'elle

To place themselves near to her

⁴ The translation of *Mon pays*, Gilles Vigneault 1964 was done entirely by the author.

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver
 Mon refrain, ce n'est pas un refrain, c'est rafale
 Ma maison, ce n'est pas ma maison, c'est froidure
 Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver

My country isn't a country, it's winter
 My chorus isn't a chorus, it's the gust
 My house isn't a house, it's the frost
 My country isn't a country, it's winter

De ce grand pays solitaire
 Je crie avant que de me taire
 À tous les hommes de la terre
 Ma maison, c'est votre maison
 Entre ses quatre murs de glace
 Je mets mon temps et mon espace
 À préparer le feu, la place
 Pour les humains de l'horizon
 Et les humains sont de ma race

Of this solitary country
 I scream before I am silenced
 To all men on Earth
 My home, is your home
 Between these four walls of ice
 I spend my time and space
 Preparing the fire, the place
 For humans of the horizon
 And the humans are my race

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver
 Mon jardin, ce n'est pas un jardin, c'est la plaine
 Mon chemin, ce n'est pas un chemin, c'est la neige
 Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver

My country isn't a country, it's winter
 My garden isn't a garden, it's a plain
 My trail isn't a trail, it's snow
 My country isn't a country, it's winter

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'envers
 D'un pays qui n'était ni pays ni patrie
 Ma chanson, ce n'est pas ma chanson, c'est ma vie
 C'est pour toi que je veux posséder mes hivers

My country isn't a country, it's the opposite
 Of a country that was neither a country or a state
 My song is not a song, it's my life
 It's for you that I possess my winters

Linguistic tensions, dating back to the colonization of North America, remain a source of unrest among the population of Canada. “Mon pays” is a quintessential song for those who identify as Québécois. The reference to the harshness of winter symbolizes Quebec’s sharp distinction from the rest of Canada; “Vigneault speaks of winds, cold, snow and ice, establishing the weather of Northern Québec as a metaphor for its cultural isolation” (Thomas, 2015). The repetitiveness of the chorus serves as “An ode to the bareness of the windswept, ice-covered wilderness of Quebec’s North and to the solidarity of the Québécois spirit, the political underpinnings of Mon Pays brought many to regard this song as a true ‘Quebec anthem’ in spite of the songwriter’s protests that he had never been out to compose a national anthem” (Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, 2018). The goal of this song is to demonstrate that, while the land that comprises Quebec might be barren and frigid, it certainly does not lack life and culture. When listening to “Mon pays,” one is overcome with a sense of sorrow that has become innate among those Québécois who recognize the suffering that has been endured over generations of being culturally excluded and misunderstood. This dread has thus been passed on from generation to generation, weighing down upon the shoulders of French speakers who do not feel welcome in their own country, Canada. Thus, this group of seemingly culturally excluded Francophones have adopted Quebec as their nation/country, hence the lyrics referring to “my country”.

Literary Case Study

Quebecois literature is marked, first and foremost, by the language in which it is written: French. However, what distinguishes Quebecois literature from Canadian literature goes beyond the basis of language. Much of the Quebecois literary canon is rich in themes and symbolism alluding to the nature of the relationship between French and English Canadiens. What makes Quebecois compositions that much darker and harsher in content is the link between current cultural sentiments and history that has been marked by the oppression of the French language.

This is not necessarily negative; for Quebec it is a question of existence, of survival. Unlike American literature that can-can, not necessarily does-enjoy political innocence because the culture is stable, Quebec literature cannot, because Quebec is not, and never will be, in a political vacuum. (Rodia, 162)

Much of the ethos explored in Quebecois literature is heavily influenced by the Catholic church held over the province since its founding. Much of the popular writings are marked by melancholy and issues of national identity and provincial pride. The popular rhetoric conveyed by authors from Quebec is closely linked to the issue of language. There is also an exceedingly explicit sexual nature in the compositions of Quebeckers compared to that of Canadian authors.

Les Têtes à Papineau, Jacques Godbout 1981

Published shortly after the 1980 referendum proposing the withdrawal of Quebec from the Canadian federation, this novel tells the tale of a two-headed man struggling with his identity. This novel was written in a familiar Québécois dialectic language. The story takes place in a period of questioning of religious power, which led to major changes at the socio-cultural level.

Inspired by the adage, ‘cela ne prend pas la tête à Papineau,’ or, ‘It doesn’t take a genius,’ this rambunctious narrative chronicles the lives and times of François and Charles, [...] each coordinating with the other even to breathe — but speak primarily French and English, respectively. They grow up in relative harmony despite markedly different personalities and pursuits [...]. (Berberi & Flaugh 129)

The Papineau brothers embark on a journey towards a metamorphosis from monster to man by undergoing an invasive surgery to sever one of their two heads. Each head, without question, is meant to represent either side of the referendum: the French (who voted yes) and the English (who voted no). The two-heads in question, parallel their past, their present and their future, which is held in the hands of Doctor Northridge (clearly meant to symbolize the elite English population inhabiting Quebec), the surgeon responsible for their transition to normality. Charles and François have a brief love affair with Irma Sweet, an American starlet. Her character is meant to represent the seduction by English popular culture that has taken over much of Quebec. The plot of this novel aims to expose the newly acquired freedom brought by the era of experimentation and relaxation that transformed the culture and identity of Quebec. With increased cultural freedom, many French-speakers feared that English would now take over. Thus, the Quebec identity was put into question with the referendum of 1980.

Conclusion

Understanding what comprises the culture of Quebec is analogous to understanding the tension that has marked the province's relationship with the rest of Canada. Quebecois art is marked by rich, dark, humor and nostalgia. Much of the art created by Quebeckers is indicative of the persistent cultural battle to preserve Quebec's unique culture. "[...] What is feared is a dilution and eventual loss of national identity, a negation of boundaries and distinctions and, in the end, the disappearance of the Québécois nation" (Handler 49). The development of such a rich artistic canon can be attributed to the repression that was imposed by English-speakers. Historically, "The hope was that the conquered French would eventually accept and internalize the values and way of life of the British civilization. Immigrants were also expected to adopt the culture of the Anglo-Saxon group" (Breton 88). Thus, much of the art symbolizes the decay of social values and the clash between the old and the new, or the French and the English. The goal of this artistic analysis is to contribute to scholarly and popular discussions about the strength of the Quebec identity by showing how art has been used as a means of expressing the pain of feeling dismissed.

POLITICS

Having now examined the Quebec identity through the consideration of history, language, and culture as expressed through film, music and literature, we are in a better position to grasp the ways in which Quebec interacts with the rest of Canada. The implied hatred of one another is rooted in the history of colonization that plagues the nation; each colony (the French and the English) desired to overpower and dominate the other culturally, politically and economically. The persistence of either side in refusing to compromise or yield is the cause for the continued tension in contemporary politics within Canada. The reason the French and the English continue to struggle to cooperate today is due to the failure of the dominant English culture to recognize the unique needs of the French people and their desire to maintain a certain level of independence in light of the British takeover that occurred so many years ago. Quebeckers respond defensively to the stigma they face simply for belonging to a specific group-identity that English-Canadians perceive as separate from their own. “Understandably, French Canadians interpreted almost any action of their English conquerors as motivated by contempt, superiority, or malice towards them. This unfortunate heritage of misunderstanding is the heaviest cross that Canada has had to bear and is one source of the current separatist movement” (Laslovich, 2). The reason Anglophones are critical of the Quebecois people is due to the rigidity and defensiveness with which they are met by Francophones on the subject of national identity. I argue that the issue lies in the failure of Quebec to adequately communicate its needs and desires, and the rest of Canada to recognize and accommodate them.

Following the conceded defeat of New France to England, the British allegedly allowed for the continuation of French laws and customs (as we can see with Civil Law remaining in practice in Quebec, and French remaining the official language). This led to increased levels of resentment on

either side: the Anglophones asked why these people wouldn't want to adopt a new uniform lifestyle, while the Francophones asked why these people would seek to oppress our unique identity. The imposition of cultural assimilation was taken as a threat to the Quebec people, who then responded with protectionist and nationalist policies as a means of further distancing Quebec from the rest of Canada. This can be interpreted as ethnic and cultural competition. As Sarah Bélanger and Maurice Pinard note in their assessment of "Ethnic Movements and the Competition Model," "[...] if ethnic conflict - or conflict in general - often involves competitive striving for scarce goods (e.g., economic goods, status, or power resources), it can also result from disagreements over the desirability of certain goals, e.g., the maintenance of cultural differences" (448). Quebec has retaliated in response to the ethnic competition it faces with innovation manifested in the many policies and political interactions over the course of Quebec's history. Such reactionary policies have been enacted in an attempt to preserve French traditions, in the hopes of maintaining that last bit of dignity and identity that remains following the "Bataille des Plaines d'Abraham" in 1759.⁵

The decision to recognize both French and English as the official languages of Canada⁶ was undoubtedly strategic. In an attempt to validate the unique role of French-speaking citizens in Canada, the federal government offered a sort of symbolic compromise. While this move was widely appreciated, it did not suffice. Given that language is strongly linked to identity, the ambivalence or negative feelings expressed towards French-speakers on behalf of English-speakers, and vice versa, is undoubtedly inherent in nature. According to Richard Bourhis,

⁵ The "Bataille des Plaines d'Abraham" is recognized as being the most pivotal moment in Quebec's history, marking the beginning of the French-English divide. The Quebec license plates which read "Je me souviens" (I remember) are in reference to this battle. Much of the history taught in primary French schools stresses the importance of this event, and even encourages a hatred of the English for having so viciously taken the land away from the French.

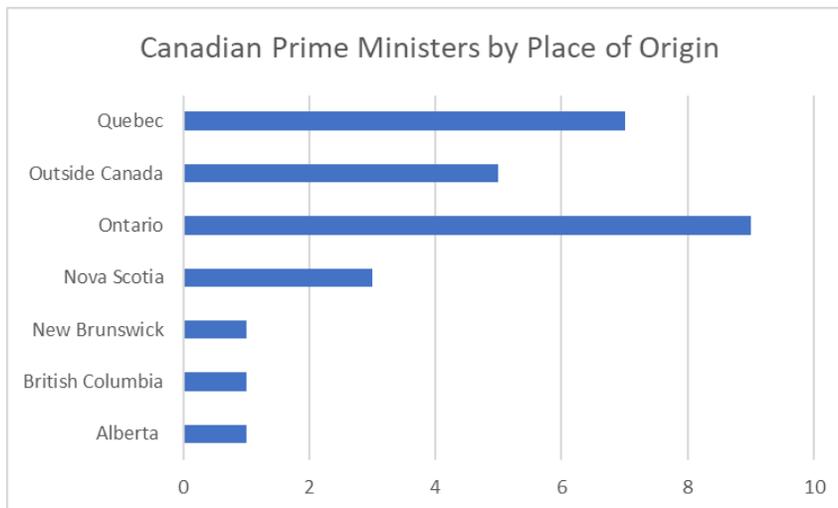
⁶ As written in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada" (The Constitution Acts, 51).

Language planning can be quite a controversial enterprise when it involves the promotion of a single language as the only official language of a society of a nation-state. Status language planning in favor of language communities which tends to exclude the recognition of other language communities has been found to foster intergroup tension and conflict [...]” (174).

In this section, I endeavor to depict the way in which this particular national identity has served as a guiding principle of politics in Quebec. We will first look at a number of influential politicians that have marked Canadian history, including two personal accounts from former Quebecois politicians. We will explore contemporary issues that illustrate the complexity of maintaining the Quebec identity, and policies that are indicative of Quebec’s resentment for the rest of Canada.

Influential Politicians

Much like the president of the United States, the prime minister of Canada serves as the head of state. Unlike the United States, however, the prime minister acts as a representative of the Crown and there are no limits on the number of terms one can serve. While Canada sought its independence in 1982, following the Queen's approval of the Canadian Constitution, the country remains to this day a member of the British Commonwealth. Thus, it may be surprising to know that a high percentage of Canadian prime ministers have been Quebecois (see Graph 1 below). This is a significant piece of data, demonstrating that, despite the tension, many English speakers still chose Quebecois leaders. This disproportionate success can be attributed to their ability to convey a specific message that appealed to the wider masses, beyond French-speakers.



Graph 1: Canadian Prime Ministers by Place of Origin⁷

A premier⁸ is essentially the same as a prime minister but acts only at the provincial (10) or territorial (3) level. This role can be compared to that of a state governor in the US. There have been several premiers of Quebec who had an exceptional capacity to acknowledge and account for those

⁷ Data for this graph was retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_prime_ministers_of_Canada_by_date_and_place_of_birth

⁸ There exists an idiosyncrasy with the French language with regards to the distinction between Prime Minister and Premier: “premier” in French means first, thus there is no difference between “Premier Ministre du Canada” and “Premier Ministre du Québec”.

unique characteristics that constitute the Quebec identity. Quebec has an illustrious legacy of eloquent political leaders. Certainly, the efficacy of politicians in advocating for the needs and desires of the Quebecois people is essential to their success seeing as the relationship between Quebec and Canada is negotiated by these selected leaders.

The following politicians from Quebec embody the Quebec identity and purpose, and thus serve as representative examples for the consideration of how the needs and desires of the Quebecois people have been perceived and advocated for by the leaders they have chosen.

Maurice Duplessis, Premier of Quebec (1936-1939, 1944-1959)

The 19 years that Maurice Duplessis spent in office are referred to as “La Grande Noirceur” (The Great Darkness). His time in office is remembered as such because of the brutality of his reign. As a separatist, Duplessis’s ultimate goal was to isolate Quebec from the rest of Canada. He applied authoritarian policies in response to the economic turmoil that followed the Great Depression.

Jean Lesage, Premier of Quebec (1960-1966)

“La Révolution Tranquille” (The Quiet Revolution), occurred while Jean Lesage was in office. This is significant because it marked the end of the Catholic Church’s influence on the personal and social lives of Quebecers. This was a time of sexual liberty and expression, a sort of cultural renewal following the oppressive Duplessis regime.

Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada (1968-1979, 1980-1984)

Pierre Elliot Trudeau (Justin Trudeau’s father) is one of the most favorably remembered politicians in Canada, serving a total of four terms. His kind disposition and eloquence set him apart.

He boldly worked towards unifying the country with regard to national identity. “Pierre Trudeau has consistently opposed anti-Canadian versions of French-Canadian nationalism since his days as a political journalist and academic among the tiny group of Quebec progressives publicly critical of the Duplessis administration” (Handler, 94). His efforts in advancing the Quebecois cause were crucial to evading the ever-so polarizing question of Quebec sovereignty.

René Lévesque, Premier of Quebec (1976-1985)

René Lesvesque is renowned for implementing “Loi 101” (Bill 101), enacted in 1982, requiring all businesses in Quebec to display their signs in French twice as large and above the English title. All consumer goods must have labels⁹ in French and English. Immigrants arriving in Quebec are required to first learn French, and send their children to French schools. Additionally, anyone who attended French school as a child is required to enroll their children in French school¹⁰.

The Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) making French the only official language of Quebec has received much criticism in the Anglophone popular press of both Quebec and Canada. [...] To many Anglophones in Quebec and Canada, Bill 101 remains the most controversial and most negatively perceived legislative act ever promulgated by a Quebec Government in recent years. In contrast, for most Québécois Francophones, Bill 101 remains one of the most popular and most favorably perceived legislative measures ever adopted by the Parti Québécois since it came to power in November 1976. More than anything else in recent years these contrasting perceptions of a single act of Parliament attest to the linguistic conflict that has so long characterized relations between Francophones and Anglophones in both Quebec and Canada (Bourhis, 1).

René Lesvesque founded the Parti Québécois, whose premise was to advocate for the sovereignty of Quebec. The protection and preservation of the French language remains at the forefront of many of

⁹ This law restricts the amount of goods that are available for sale in Quebec from outside the province. An anecdotal example would be the late arrival of Lululemon, a Canadian brand, who had stores outside the country before arriving in Quebec simply because of the added cost of including a French translation with the English labels.

¹⁰ Both of my parents attended English schools, but chose to enroll me in French school. Thus, if I have children and reside in Quebec, they will have to attend French schools as well.

the Parti Québécois's policies today. There have been two referendums held in Quebec alone on that subject, the first, in 1980 occurred under Lévesque's leadership. Neither were successful, yet there has been general animosity against Quebeckers, regardless of their answer, on behalf of Anglophones outside the province.

Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada (1984-1993)

Brian Mulroney is among the minority of English-speakers from Quebec. His time in office was marked by his campaigning efforts that proved successful in gaining widespread approval of both French and English Canadians. "Despite having been elected at least in part because he was seen to be able to address the 'Quebec problem,' Brian Mulroney moved slowly and carefully in the direction of constitutional renewal" (Bryden, 214). Mulroney attempted to unify the nation with the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords¹¹, but was ultimately unsuccessful. He is remembered to this day as one of Canada's most brilliant prime ministers.

Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada (1993-2003)

Jean Chrétien represented the Liberal Party. During his term, he administered the legislation required for the legalization of same-sex marriage. Chrétien worked endlessly to oppose the separation of Quebec from Canada.

¹¹ Mulroney set up the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, two meetings that brought together all provincial leaders, with the hopes of getting Quebec to agree to the 1982 Constitutional Act.

Interviews

The purpose of these interviews was to gather empirical evidence that validates the idea that cultural differences resulting from the historical context upon which Quebec was founded have had a significant impact on its contemporary political and financial relationship with the rest of Canada. The following set of questions were asked in an interview-style conversation with two former politicians from Quebec:

1. When were you an active member of government in Quebec and what was your role?
2. What were the most pertinent issues you dealt with as a politician?
3. Did you notice a certain tension between French and English-speaking Canadians (across Canada and/or within Quebec)?
4. What is unique about Quebec?
5. What, in your opinion, constitutes the Quebec identity?
6. Has this identity influenced policy making and political action?
7. What is the biggest challenge to fostering cooperation within French and English-speaking Canadians in government?
8. Is there hope to remedy the issue?

What follows is the biographies of both politicians along with the edited and translated transcripts of the interviews. These are verbatim excerpts from the hour-long interviews that I conducted. The content itself, though excerpted, is partially edited in order to clarify meaning that was lost in translation.¹²

¹² These interviews were approved by the Institutional Review Board at Montana State University as exempt from the requirement for full committee review due to their being ethical. Both interview candidates consented to having their words reproduced for the purpose of this thesis.

Yves Duhaime

Figure 1

Originally from Chicoutimi, in the Saguenay region of Quebec, Yves Duhaime served as a regional leader to the Parti Québécois. He obtained his legal license from McGill University and a masters of International Relations from the Political Science Institute of Paris. Duhaime later served as chief counsel to the Bank of Canada¹³ for two years during which time he resided in Montreal.¹⁴

Transcript: Thursday, April 14, 2022 2:00 pm MST via telephone

Let's talk about the biggest challenge: the fundamental issue. My deep conviction about Canada is a very long story, but what we have here is one country, with two nations and one of those nations is being left out. And we have been, since let's say the 1960s and on, trying to build a democratic majority and explain to our people that we would be better off to leave Canada, and make a proposal that the two nations could come together, a sort of Canadian Union by which each of the two handles its own business, similar to the model that is already in place in Europe where you have twenty-six or twenty-seven countries, each country in Europe is still independent. Let's say they will have a common market and only one border for all of them. Great Britain walked in and walked out¹⁵.

¹³ The Bank of Canada serves as a central bank to the federal government of Canada.

¹⁴ I credit the National Assembly of Québec as my source for the photo and biography of Yves Duhaime

¹⁵ Yves is using Britain as an example of a (more or less) successful departure from a union, thus pointing to the fact that Quebec could potentially leave Canada.

The point of this issue is: in this federal system in which we're currently living in, neither the Canadians or the people in Quebec, or Quebeckers, were called to approve a constitution. Under Mulroney, they issued a proposal and there was a referendum that was defeated all across Canada. So, the Constitution that is in place is actually agreed upon by nine English Canadian provinces and it is still in place today since 1982. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms was not approved by Quebec. You cannot talk about a country when you have a fundamental disagreement on the basis of it, which is the Constitution. That's the problem.

I will give you one simple example because it derives from a misunderstanding between English Canadians and French Canadians. When I was a member on the board of the Bank of Canada [central bank], I was also on the executive committee of that bank for a couple of years with Mulroney. At the time I was ex- finance minister, they asked me if I could go there, "we needed a strong speaker over there and so on and so forth." It was not to say I'm a federalist or not. I'm not a federalist. Everyone knows that. At our bank meetings, we would start at 8:00 am sharp. During my first meeting there, a gentleman came to talk to me during a break. He was a lawyer from Vancouver. He spoke to me in English and I replied to him in French. And he said, "Why don't you speak English? You went to graduate school in English, you're fluent." I said, "why do you ask me that, you're Canadian you say? Why don't you speak French?" I refused to speak English at the bank; I was there for two and a half years. I never spoke one sentence in English. I'm not quite sure that I was understood all the time when I was talking in French, but you know, this is the kind of situation that we see in Montreal for instance even today.

My own comprehension of the situation is that, as long as you have this old form of government, you can be sure that this problem will keep coming up. You could ask yourself: is there still a trend for sovereignty in Quebec? The first thing I want to say to you is that the game is not over,

the issue is smoldering: after a forest fire, the debris is still burning, but you don't think it's burning, but it is. We're living in this situation today. Since the Montreal Surrender decree of 1760, Quebec has been governed by five successive statuses up to the British North America Act. Forty years ago, in 1982, the constitution was amended and repatriated, with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In all these situations, both nations were not consulted. This is probably the biggest challenge in your life that you are encountering, but I'm not discouraged. We may find a deal somewhere like we almost had with Mulroney, I don't know. Of course, we feel this tension in (I don't know how many) ministers' meetings, whether it was Tourism ministers, or Fish and Game ministers, or Natural Resources, Industry and Commerce, or Finance, it's the same thing. I will never accept the Constitution that governs Canada today.

We used to call the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada “les deux solitudes” (the two solitudes). At one time I was chairman of the Sovereignty committee for the 1995 Referendum, this was 27 years ago. I've been quiet since that time, take my word. We wanted to make the rules of the game. We are fully democratic and we want a full democratic process through referendum to build this new country. I don't know if it is still possible. I don't know how many years will last until we can make it happen. We can try it again. It still makes sense!

What is unique about Quebec? The expression of its culture. The culture is influenced by the lives of all of our people marked throughout history. We're just symbolically a part of Canada. Why is there tension and why French-Quebecois and English-Canadians do not get along? Well, this relationship is very complicated from a historical point of view. There is much difference today between people living in Quebec and people living in Canada today. There were descendants of British citizens and French citizens years ago. That is why we have two prevailing cultures and two languages. From the same events, we have two histories. When you look at the numbers [the financial

situation] the larger part of the money that the federal government is cashing is returned to the provinces. As far as Quebec is concerned, we don't need that. We don't need another government at all. We can manage on our own. If you want to do business with us, we could investigate, we could agree on a defense system, for instance. We don't want to have a central bank for Quebec. We can keep the same currency, the Canadian dollar, as they do in Europe with the Euro. You see, when we were debating during the 1995 referendum, federalists were saying this is impossible. They worry that we will cost them money in the process...

We have a new Governor-General. I respect her, but I will say one thing: She is at the head of a country, representing the Queen of England, who is also the Queen of Canada, and She doesn't speak French fluently. The constitution in which you and I are living in has been translated into French, but not yet enacted forty years later, even if it states that both languages are our official languages. Some of the judges appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada do not speak French. Mr. Rousseau, chairman of Air Canada said recently: "Don't worry about languages. I spent all my life in Montreal and there is no need to speak French." This is the clearest example. He was a guest speaker at the French-speaking Chambre de Commerce de Montreal and he made his speech in English and that's the result. So this is very sensitive! The dossier is still open. I'm not trying to plead a case to you; I'm not trying to convince you of anything. What I'm sharing is what I have witnessed.

Canada as a bilingual country, with French and English as official languages, does not exist, never did exist, and will never be. That is a dream!

Robert Benoit



Figure 2

Robert Benoit studied finance and worked for Dominion Securities before he became a member of the National Assembly of Quebec, serving as a representative of the Quebec Liberal Party from 1985 to 1989. Under Robert Bourassa’s leadership, he served as parliamentary assistant to the prime minister. Benoit was also a professor at the University of Sherbrooke for the Masters of Business Administration program.¹⁶

Transcript: Friday, April 15, 2022 10:00 am MST via Zoom.

It all started in 1980, René Lévesque promised a referendum to get Quebec out of Canada. About two years before the referendum, I had never touched politics. [I got involved] and we did a good job here in the [Knowlton] riding¹⁷ just before the referendum. Every riding had a member of the national assembly. There was no real organization in Knowlton. So, we organized a ‘kitchen meeting’ with 800 people: we had a full school and, in every class, a speaker.

¹⁶ I credit the National Assembly of Québec as my source for the photo and biography of Robert Benoit

¹⁷ A “riding” in Canada is the equivalent of a congressional district in the US. According to Merriam Webster: “an administrative jurisdiction or electoral district in a British dominion (such as Canada).” Definition retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/riding>

We had supper between a group of friends a few weeks before the election. At that time, [before he ran for premier of Quebec, Robert Bourassa] was still a member of the opposition. There were about 20 people around the table, everybody was telling him that we were going to win the election. I told the future prime minister, Mr. Bourasa “Well, I’m happy to see that everybody thinks that we’re going to win the next election. That’s true. We still have a hell of a problem. Many ridings are not financed properly. Some don’t have members and some aren’t organized. Some don’t even have a candidate at this point. And I’m sorry, but as long as [I] will be sitting near you, I will tell you as it is: you have to fix this situation.” As we were leaving later that night, he looked at me and said “We will be talking tomorrow morning.” I was sure he wanted me to be a candidate for the election, which I didn’t want. But sure enough, at 10 o’clock the next day I got a call from the future premier of Quebec.

I became parliamentary assistant to the premier of Quebec. Whenever the premier cannot attend an event, he will delegate you to take account of the meeting minutes. So my office is near the premier, and I’m involved with the cabinet’s decision making process, but I do not sit in the cabinet. I was responsible for the youth, because in Quebec at that time, we did not have a ministry of the youth. We have a ministry of education, who obviously worked with the youth. We have a ministry of health, and so on and so forth, but there was not one for the youth, an organized group that made sure the voice of the younger people was being heard.

So again, my title is parliamentary assistant to the premier of Quebec, responsible for the needs of the youth. We were experiencing high inflation at that time and the labor unions were asking for increased wages. So, all the smart people in Quebec City [the politicians] decided that we were angry. We weren’t going to increase the salary of older people, and we could not increase the salary of the

youth because the labor was controlled by the older people. So I stood up against that. It was discriminating against the youth.

That was my job. At this point, we didn't have an independent party, but the current prime minister [Pierre Elliot Trudeau] was from Quebec. There was a separation issue going on and on and on, all the time. Quebec still wanted to separate after [the 1980 referendum]. So there was a movement, even in ridings like mine, near the United States. And I had to deal with these issues, even if they weren't in my riding, even if they didn't vote for me. I was paid by Quebec to serve everybody. So when they walked into my office, I didn't want to know if they were communists or capitalists. They paid my salary and they got the same quality of service.

In Quebec, the majority is French and minority is English, the opposite is true in the rest of Canada. So we wanted to preserve our language across Canada. We wanted to preserve the French language in North America. It's a duty that we have and very few people will ever understand that. We have the TV in English. We get the radio in English. We get the world report in English. We have translated everything we have to offer. We offer services in Quebec in both languages. Then [the English claim that we are] out to protect the French structure, the French language, the French institution.

The French never got adopted with the rest of the country in the [1982] Constitution. So that's the ongoing battle. It's never going to be solved. This is the case in many countries, to some extent. But, they learn to live with it. The English in Canada complain that there's too much French. It's a non-winning battle. Under the current financial situation in Quebec we have less people working and more people [living off of] pensions. Say you're going to pay more for the older people. You know, they want children, they want to buy a house. Their job does not pay well. So you cannot tell the young people you have to pay the pensions of the elderly.

People would drive to the United States to purchase groceries. We were losing the economy because people, not just in my riding, all along the border, even people from Montreal would drive to the United States. So, at one point, we decided to open stores on Sundays. It [seemed] very simple. It didn't [quite go that way]. The church got involved. We had to do it very slowly. Today, it looks so simple. Everything is open on Sundays, but it took years before we achieved this.

Pierre Trudeau's mother was English and his father was French. He studied abroad in France and England. He was an international guy. So, when he got elected, there was a common notion that the French and English could coexist. If you want to be elected as a member of the cabinet, in Ottawa, you have to be bilingual. Even if the English didn't speak perfect French, at least they were making an effort to speak both languages. And in my mind, if you want to be a cabinet minister in this country, before you get elected, you better learn a second language, whether that be French or English. If you don't speak the two languages, it will be tough.

There's an ongoing debate now: can we elect judges at the Supreme Court of this country if they don't understand your language, you cannot have a fair case. So, this is a technical, but complicated issue. Every country has their big issue. So, I will say overall, the greatest efforts have been made, but why would anyone in Vancouver ever learn French? I have fantastic friends who are English. They laugh at me all the time and I laugh at them all the time, but there is no such thing as perfection. As we move into the future, I think we are becoming more accepting. I think that's the new world we're living in. And I'm very pleased with that. You have to have an open mind. You have to read a great deal, not read just one paper, you know, in your language. And you have to have a better understanding of this thing that is going on, to be a better leader. So, a good leader will not try to divide like Mr. Trump has in the US. Leadership has lots to do with it. We tried to minimize the language issue and brought the pendulum just about at the proper place.

Interview Analysis

The content of these interviews serves as proof of the extent to which the Quebecois people are dissatisfied with the way they are treated by their fellow Canadians. Both Yves Duhaime and Robert Benoit alluded to the lack of willingness on behalf of English-speakers to understand the Quebec identity. After conducting these interviews, it would seem that the issue is not overly complicated: Quebecers are unique and desire to be recognized as such. As Benoit said, the issue lies in the deliberateness of political leaders in advocating for the rights of the Quebecois people. Indeed, English-speakers are dismissive of the issue that has become taboo. Some audiences might interpret the words of these politicians as spiteful or even radical. I would caution readers not to do so. The defensiveness that is expressed by French-speakers is a natural response to the cultural assimilation they have faced. As Duhaime mentioned, the implicit tension between French and English-speaking Canadians only works to further aggravate both sides of the issue.

Identity Politics

Why is nationalism so strong in Quebec? It can be said that this is true of any group of people who feel their identity is being threatened. Thus, nationalism would appear to be a natural response to the oppression of a group's identity: an attempt to preserve and maintain that which they believe to be sacred. As Handler writes,

As we have seen, the most basic assumptions of nationalist ideology concern the existence of a geographically, historically, and culturally unique nation. That nation is believed to be 'born of' and indissolubly linked to a bounded territory and a particular history; those links are conceived to be natural, not arbitrary. [...] An outsider's denial of national existence can thus be interpreted as a challenge. (Handler 154)

Identity is central to the formation of one's political beliefs. The reason then, that Quebecers are so fervently attached to what sets them apart from other Canadians, is due to their desire to be recognized as so. Indeed, "if they also identify themselves politically primarily as Quebecois and only secondarily as Canadians, then spiritual secession has already occurred" (Carens, 14-15). This spiritual secession is evident by the way Saint Jean Baptiste Day (June 24th), is celebrated as a national holiday symbolizing pride and unity within Quebec. However, Canada Day (July 1st), does not bring about nearly as many festivities as does the provincial holiday in Quebec. The distinction between these two holidays is an example of the strong sense of community that ties people to their collective identity, and the desire to reject that which they feel symbolizes the oppression of their beliefs.

The disconnect between national and provincial identity stems from a lack of understanding on behalf of English-Canadians. Although it might be clear to the Quebecois people, they are not adequately conveying that which they need from Canada: recognition, acceptance, and acknowledgement. Thus, the desire to separate stems from Canada's failure to fully acknowledge Quebec in its Constitution. Therefore, the desire for Quebec sovereignty attempts to resolve just that.

This nationalism is committed to sustaining the existence of the national identity of the Quebecois nation with its distinctive culture and institutions, including, very centrally, and as a

necessary condition to preserve the rest, the French language surrounded in North America by a sea of English. (Nielsen 42)

English-Canadians fail to realize the extent to which being included in the Constitution is paramount to the tension that is still felt today. This explains why Quebeckers do not feel a strong attachment to Canada, and prefer to remain culturally and physically isolated.

Multiculturalism

Canada prides itself on its openness to all cultures and ethnicities, yet there seems to be a deficiency with regard to French speakers. Failure to acknowledge the importance of language and the role it plays in the country's unique history equates the seemingly aggressive way in which French-speakers resent their English counterparts. There remains a strong prejudice toward Quebecers because they refuse to abide by English popular culture. Language is fundamental to one's cultural identity. Thus, it is not surprising that Quebecers feel deeply threatened when their language is dismissed and made to seem futile. Multiculturalism is resented by Quebecers simply because, "[...] some commentators, particularly in Quebec, have supposed that multiculturalism was adopted as part of a Machiavellian strategy to attack Quebec nationalism, by encouraging Canadians to think of the Quebecois as just another immigrant group rather than as a distinct nation" (Kymlicka, 3). It is believed that Canada has adopted multicultural policies as a means of washing out the Quebecois desire to be recognized as a unique people. As noted in Jack Citrin and David O. Sears's book *American Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism*,

The proposition that national minorities should have special rights is contingent on there being more than one 'nation' in the state. If so, each should have a claim to self-rule. Quebec, the home of many descendants of the French military defeat at the hands of the British in Canada in the eighteenth century, is a clear current example. Secession is one option for these national minorities: a less drastic choice is being granted broad rights within a federation. (Citrin & Sears, Chapter 1)

Anglophones living in Quebec are aware of the existence of French culture, and rarely engage with it. Francophones distrust the cultural practices of the English, especially in the northernmost regions of the province, and avoid interacting with them. The prejudice towards the English stems from the deeply rooted connection of the French language to the identity of the Quebecois people. The issue of

secession is thus taboo, because to be a separatist is to be considered a radical who does not love their country.

[The] case for secession in Quebec can be made almost entirely in terms of legitimacy of collective self-realization, of establishing a fit between the collective identity of the majority of people living within a jurisdiction and the primary political community to which they belong. (Carens 14)

There appears to be a collective understanding that all English speakers are associated with the loss of the land that occurred in 1759. The oppression of French culture is inherently felt as a direct attack on the identity of Quebecers. The refusal to accept and celebrate the differences among French and English Canadians is thus detrimental to the union of the country. Citrin and Sears use Canada as an example of the value of mobilizing mutual respect and appreciation for a common national ethos. In particular, they argue that, while Canada might have served as a leader in recognizing diversity, there still exists an underlying tension within Canada between French and English-speaking citizens unrelated to race.

Canada coined the term multiculturalism and became the poster child of the movement by officially defining itself as a multicultural nation. The demographic catalyst again was immigration, which by the early twenty-first century had transformed the country such that the majority of the population no longer had the traditional British or French heritage and an increasing percentage identified as ‘visible’ (i.e., nonwhite) minorities. Beginning in 1971 with a pronouncement by (Prime Minister) Trudeau, Canada breathed ideological and institutional life into its new demographic reality. It proclaimed that the country was committed to multiculturalist ideals of equality and mutual respect among the country’s ethnic cultural groups and that cultural heterogeneity was beneficial and would be supported by the state. When Canada repatriated its constitution from Britain in 1982, the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms stipulated that the rights laid out in the document were to be interpreted in a manner consistent with multiculturalism. (Citrin & Sears, Chapter 1)

However, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that was implemented in 1982, failed to adequately include or recognize the needs of the Quebecois people. Despite French and English being dubbed the two official languages of Canada, the populous still struggle to respect the legitimacy of either language. Hence the aggravation that plagues so many Quebecers. Prime Minister Pierre Elliot

Trudeau attempted to reconcile the issue with the drafting of a new constitution while in office. However, René Lévesque, the provincial leader of Quebec at the time, refused to agree on the terms and conditions that were presented. To this day, Quebec has not formally accepted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and thus its people remain excluded from the national identity, identifying more strongly as Quebecois rather than as Canadian.

Immigration

All immigrants to Quebec must meet a certain level of French language proficiency. Obtaining permanent residency is in fact contingent on one's ability to speak French. The idea then is to promote the preservation of the French language. This policy actually allows for priority to many immigrants from French speaking nations (e.g., Algeria, Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Haiti, Senegal, etc.). As political scientists Joseph H. Carens writes,

Immigrants do not have to prove their loyalty to Quebec by proclaiming an attachment to its symbols or an identification with its history, though Quebec seeks to promote both of these attitudes [...]. They can be full members of society even if they look and act differently from the substantial segment of the population whose ancestors inhabited Quebec and even if they do not in any way alter their own customs and cultural patterns with respect to work and play, diet and dress, sleep and sex, celebration and mourning, so long as they act within the confines of the law. On this account, given the commitment to pluralism, Quebec's distinct society becomes identified, almost exclusively, with the French Fact. That is, its distinctiveness consists essentially of the fact that it is a society situated in North America in which the vast majority of the population speak French (whether as a first or second language) and in which French is the language of public life (Carens 65).

Indeed, all that is required of immigrants to Quebec is to learn the language of the land. Surely this is not so grand of a feat. Yet, many Anglophones refuse to engage in the adoption of a language other than their own. There is hypocrisy in this notion: how can a country be so accepting of the culture and languages of immigrants, but refuse to do so of the French who have resided in the country since its founding? This is a large contributor to the resentment that Quebeckers feel towards non-French speaking Canadians.

Conclusion

Understanding the Quebec identity is paramount to understanding the politics that have dictated the province's relationship with the rest of Canada. Much of the behavior manifested in the policies that have been implemented over the course of Quebec's history are indicative of the way the Quebecois people feel they have been treated by English-speaking Canadians. Canada is said to be one of the most progressive and inclusive countries in the world when it comes to cultural diversity. Why then, is the struggle to cooperate between French and English-speaking Canadians still so prevalent today?

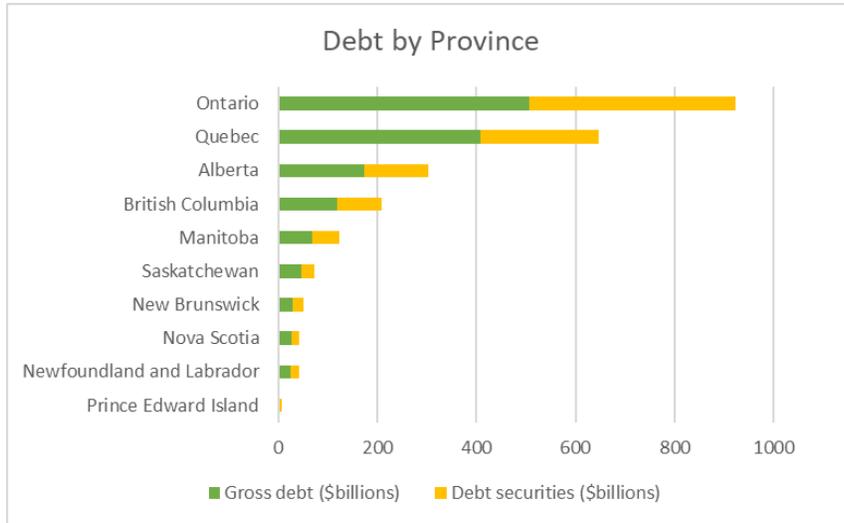
Some of the steps I believe would help remedy the issue are as follows. I believe that the federal government of Canada as well as the Crown should officially recognize Quebec for its unique role. Until Quebec formally agrees to the terms and conditions of the Constitution, I see no hope of reconciling the relationship between French and English-speaking Canadians. All government employees should be bilingual (provided that the government would offer the means to educate them). For the younger generations, this is becoming less of an issue: as the population becomes increasingly bilingual and urbanized, the taboo of language is disintegrating. However, there remains significant work to be done before a perfect union can be achieved.

ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

We have explored the way in which the Quebec identity has been expressed in the politics of the nation. We will now seek to understand how the trade relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada has been negotiated. The role of economic engagement in Quebec is largely a result of the cultural and political unrest that exists within the rest of Canada. Indeed, the driving force of much of the fiscal policies that navigate trade in Quebec are influenced by direct competition with the rest of Canada.

Quebecois prime ministers have historically made severe changes to fiscal policy because it was commonly felt that Quebec needed to prove its value to the rest of Canada. Thus, addressing issues of national debt became a way to demonstrate the economic strength and ambition of the Quebecois people. “In the mid-1990s, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien introduced important fiscal reforms, and gross debt began to decrease until the 2008 recession [...]” (Hill et. al, 7). Quebec remains one of the most indebted provinces in Canada (see Graph 2 below). The debt structure of Quebec differs greatly from that of Canada, namely that it comprises a greater portion in debt securities than all provinces but Ontario.

Interestingly, the level of engagement between Quebec and Canada concerning trade is increasing, especially due to Canada’s dependence on Quebec’s large supply of hydroelectricity. Quebec’s scope and influence on the global scale is significant even as an independent financial actor.



Graph 2: Debt by Province¹⁸

In order to achieve a better understanding of the role of the Quebec identity in determining fiscal behavior within the province, we will consider government spending, prominent Quebecois companies, trade within Canada, and trade outside Canada.

¹⁸Data for this graph was retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_public_debt

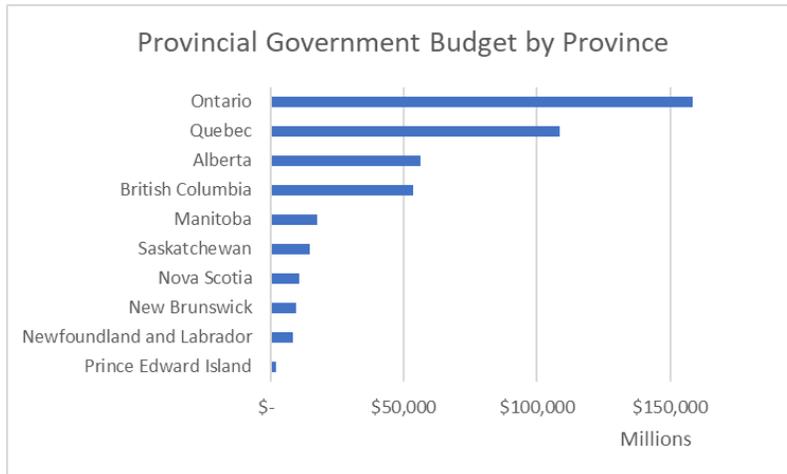
Government Spending

Canada is typically recognized as a socialist-leaning country, allotting much of government revenue towards social programs such as universal healthcare and high-quality public education. The debt structure of each province is reflective of its desired political outcomes. Some of the government offices unique to Quebec include the “Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes” (the secretariat of Quebec relations with Canada), and the “Secrétariat à la promotion et à la valorisation de la langue française” (the secretariat of promotion and valorization of the French language). These two commissions are perfect examples of the cultural and linguistic tension discussed in this thesis. The fact that there are offices committed to overseeing and advising political leaders on the subject of the relationship between Quebec and Canada as well as on the importance of the French language speaks to the gravity of the issue.

Quebec is ranked second out of the ten provinces in terms of the size of its provincial government budget (see Graph 3 below). Unlike the US government, both the federal and provincial governments in Canada play an active role in the flow of capital inside and outside of the country. Government spending and the allocation of funds to different social programs remain at the forefront of decision making by political leaders in Canada. Tax rates are much higher, but the benefits to society are far more widespread. Quebec is no different in that its motives regarding government spending are ultimately altruistic in nature. This is evident in the main issues that Quebec is hoping to combat in its 2022 fiscal budget: rising cost of living, health care, education (including higher education), economic prosperity, climate change, and community relief.¹⁹ Quebec university tuition is the lowest among all provinces. Indeed, “Fees cover less than 20% of expenses and most of the

¹⁹ Details of Quebec’s 2022 fiscal budget can be retrieved at http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/2022-2023/index_en.asp

remainder comes out of an annual government subsidy” (Pasquero, 631). Emphasis on investing in future generations is without a doubt the focus of Quebec’s government spending trends.



Graph 3: Provincial Government Budget by Province²⁰

²⁰ Data retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_governments_in_Canada_by_annual_expenditures

Prominent Quebecois Companies

The scope of a nation's political influence is heavily related to the abundance of their economy. Quebec prides itself on the diversity and strength of its many industries. Because Quebec's land mass is the largest of the provinces (not including the territories), several of Canada's most successful companies are headquartered in Quebec. These companies and industries include manufacturing, hydroelectricity, mining, forestry, and agriculture.

As Quebec aims to fortify its global financial might, companies have adopted nationalist approaches to their governance. Indeed, Quebecois companies seek to go beyond simply creating value for shareholders. The success of a Quebecois-identifying company is regarded as success for the entirety of the province. This phenomenon can be recognized as economic assertion.

Economic assertion is a form of nationalism. It consists mainly in a voluntary effort led conjointly by the public and private sectors to modernize the economic institutions of Quebec and secure an acceleration of economic development by gaining a greater control of the main economic instruments of the province. (Pasquero 625)

The structure of most publicly traded companies aims to limit the impact of shareholders' influence so as to maintain clear goals that align with the province's cultural objectives. As noted by renowned political scientist Michael Keating, "Quebec companies are also particularly prone to have a dual share system in which only one type of share has voting rights, so allowing a small minority of shareholders to resist takeover" (Keating, 117). This is significant because it demonstrates the extent to which the Quebec identity is truly inherent to the way in which business is carried out. The prevalence of Quebecois goods and/or services abroad is essential to creating a worthwhile economy so that, given the chance, Quebec could become its own country, independent from Canada. I have conducted two case studies in order to demonstrate the economic prowess of the province.

Case Study 1: Hydro-Quebec

The greater part of the northern half of Quebec is uninhabited and thus provides ample land for mining, forestry, and most notably hydroelectricity. Hydro-Quebec owes the second wave of its industrial development and subsequent success to Quebec premier Jean Lesage, who spent the majority of his tenure towards the development of large, sustainable dams in northern Quebec.

This fusion of nationalism and modernity has produced a familiar pattern of state-led economic modernization. Hydro-Quebec is a perfect illustration of this fusion. Originally established as a Crown corporation in 1944, Hydro-Quebec broadened its scope by nationalizing private hydroelectric companies in 1963, an initiative led by Rene Levesque, then a minister in the provincial Liberal cabinet. In the early 1970s the corporation embarked on a huge hydroelectric project in northern Quebec. This project simultaneously expressed a commitment to industrial growth, greatly strengthened the Francophone engineering and construction sectors, and complemented the theme in French Canadian history and culture of the colonization of the North. Hydro-Quebec is now politically contested in ways that reveal the tensions within the national project in late modernity. (Meadwell 219-220)

Nationalization of large service providers such as Hydro-Quebec is not uncommon in Canada. The success of Hydro-Quebec is a statement about the efficiency of government-led investing in the province. According to Jean Pasquero, professor at the University of Quebec in Montreal, “[...] unlike the US where it is defined largely in individual terms, in Quebec business ethics is tightly linked to one central issue, the preservation of a ‘national identity.’ Therefore, understanding the obligations of business people and firms requires to put them within a societal context” (Pasquero, 621). The adoption of renewable energy sources speaks to Quebec progressive and innovative nature. Hydro-Quebec provides millions of Canadians with affordable electricity every year.

Case Study 2: Bombardier

Bombardier was originally founded in 1942 as a snowmobile manufacturer. Bombardier now specializes in private and corporate jets. Its products can be found in 12 countries. Bombardier plays a significant role in the job market of Quebec, having established a pool of highly skilled and bilingual workers with access to specialized training.

The legacy companies that form Bombardier Aerospace have made significant contributions to the advancement of the aerospace industry. The influence of this early innovation is apparent in Bombardier Aerospace's latest aircraft designs. Bombardier Aerospace maintains its competitive edge by using powerful computer hardware and software to reduce design cycle time and permit first time quality. (Goritschnig et al. 2003)

The fact that a Quebecois company can compete on the global level in an industry as highly technologically developed as aerospace proves the economic power of the province.

Trade Within Canada

It is important to consider the impact of the cultural and linguistic tension between Quebec and Canada on market behavior, or, in other words, on the way in which consumers, businesses, and the stock market react to current issues and events. Indeed, the Quebec identity has shaped the outcome of the Canadian economy. That is certainly the case here. Because of the implicit need to prove to English-Canadians that the French population contributes equally if not more to national prosperity, Quebecois investors typically behave in a more aggressive, bullish²¹ way. Quebec's political climate has made for a decisively aggressive approach to its fiscal policy, thus making the capital market of Quebec highly competitive.

Culture and minority languages also provide a means of social integration in the face of the disintegrating effects of the market, they may help instill common values, and encourage collective action and the production of public goods, sustaining the new models of development. (Keating 56-57)

Quebec has been a strong proponent of free trade, which might seem counterintuitive to what would be expected of a protectionist state. The way in which Quebec interacts with the rest of Canada is indicative of its battered relationship with the non-French speaking population.

The argument can be stated plainly: Quebec did not endorse free trade in spite of its nationalism; it endorsed free trade largely because of its nationalism. Because nationalism is the core issue of partisan competition in Quebec, parties define their position on secondary issues in terms of how outcomes can affect their nationalist goals. For the partisans of Quebec sovereignty, the expansion and institutionalization of continental trade relations can reduce the anticipated costs of transition to independence and help to insure the economic viability of a sovereign state. (Martin 2)

The extent to which Quebec refuses to cooperate with Canada can be interpreted as a direct response to the cultural alienation it has faced on behalf of English-speaking Canadians. There is no denying that both actors need each other to survive and prosper financially.

²¹ In finance, bullish refers to a more aggressive investing approach based on the belief that market conditions will improve and thus present high returns. Conversely, bearish refers to a more conservative investing approach based on the belief that market conditions will deteriorate and thus present high losses.

Quebec is closely integrated into the economies of Canada and North America as well as the world trading system. Total trades amount to 70% of its Gross Domestic Product, of which a little over half is with the rest of Canada. [...] It is not surprising therefore that the issue of trade dependency has molded the debate on national development and independence. (Keating 115)

Establishing financial dominance and independence is thus a means to achieve greater recognition within the country. Despite this, Quebec still feels it has not received due praise from the federal government for its efforts in fueling much of the country's economy.

Trade Outside Canada

Quebec is a beneficiary of international trade and foreign investment. Quebec's geographical position, bordering the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the US to the south, makes it an ideal trading post. Quebec's trade policy with international actors is distinguished by low tariffs and ease of access. Indeed, access to the ocean through several ports makes Quebec an ideal exporter. "In November 2021 Quebec exported C\$9.04B and imported C\$7.54B, resulting in a positive trade balance of C\$1.5B" (OEC, 2021). This is a much better return than most provinces who tend to import more than they export. Much of Quebec's trade policies are aimed at outperforming the rest of Canada. Quebec has direct access to international markets by virtue of free-trade agreements.

Because of the massive presence of US investment in the Quebec economy, and because most of Quebec's foreign exports are directed toward the United States, one would expect a core of business support for free trade among US-owned subsidiaries and domestically owned exporters to the US market. The large size of these industries is also a major asset in the contest for political influence. (Martin 9)

Establishing a strong trade relationship with other countries is essential to advancing the Quebec cause. "As it re-defines its national identity, Quebec is seeking not to retreat from the world markets but to carve its own position within them" (Keating 117). While Quebec does engage heavily in trade outside of Canada, the province still depends on Canada in terms of negotiating the legality of trade partnerships. Indeed, "NAFTA does not enable Quebec to operate independently, as all trade agreements must first go through the national government" (Keating, 59). This of course is one of the more decisive reasons that has held Quebec back from achieving sovereignty. Fiscal incentives, including the research and experimental development tax credits have made Quebec a trade powerhouse.

Conclusion

Quebec's unique history is undoubtedly reflected in the province's approach to financial matters. Given that the Quebecois people feel dismissed by their fellow Canadians, they have adopted nationalist policies that act to further isolate the province. The economic strength that has been cultivated over the many decades since Quebec's defeat to the English attests to the resilience of its people. As with politics, much of the strained relationship explored in this thesis were evident in the financial institutions that make Quebec. The fierce economic competition between Quebec and the rest of Canada can be attributed to a collective desire to prove the value of the Quebecois nation in contributing to the strength of the country. Evidently, this is not conducive to national unity. In order to reconcile Quebec's relationship with Canada, Canada needs to openly acknowledge the important role that the province plays in the country's flourishing economy. Full economic recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic is contingent on increased cooperation and collaboration between Quebec and the rest of Canada. Of course, this will not be possible if the federal government does not first address the longstanding cultural and linguistic tension that has impacted the country for so long.

FINAL CONCLUSION

The long-standing cultural clash between Quebec and the rest of Canada is attributed to the context under which the English persisted in conquering the French. This tension is evident in every aspect of the Quebec identity, manifested culturally, politically, and economically. The distinction between French and English-speaking Canadians is rooted in the context in which Canada was formed. The social sanctions, namely being ridiculed for their accents and accusations of being separatists, that plague Quebecers are undue. Nationalism, overtly expressed through film, music, and literature, is thus a natural response to cultural assimilation. “Je me souviens,” painted across the license plates of Quebecois people seems fitting given the extent to which Quebecers had to fight for their language and identity since the “Bataille des Plaines d’Abraham” in 1759. Quebec’s approach to investing is markedly aggressive and aims to assert dominance above Canada. Understanding Quebec’s contemporary political and financial relationship with the rest of Canada is central to fostering unity and cooperation within Canada.

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