



Language Policy and Minority Community Vitality Quebec 1977-2018

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The conference

- “Bill 101 at 40: The Charter of the French language and Quebec’s English-speaking communities, 1977-2017”
- May 10-11, 2017, at the annual Acfas congress, McGill University

Conference presenters:

- Guy LACHAPELLE (Concordia)
- Jonathan GOLDBLOOM (JGA Strategic Relations)
- Juan-Carlos QUINTANA (QCGN)
- Julius GREY (Lawyer)
- Martin PÂQUET (U Laval)
- Pierre-Olivier BONIN (U Toronto)
- Michael BERGMAN (Bergman & Associés, Avocats)
- François BÉRARD (U Montréal)
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Pre-101 Context

- Dominant position of English-speaking elite in Quebec society
- Demographic projections of French-language decline
- Social unrest

Language Legislation

- Official Languages Act (1969, federal, Liberal)
- Bill 63 (1969, provincial, Union Nationale)
- Bill 22 (1974, provincial, Liberal)
- Bill 101 (1977, provincial, Parti Québécois)

Court Challenges to Bill 101

- 1984, increased access to schools
- 1988, 1993, more bilingualism on public signs
- 2000, more difficult for municipalities to obtain bilingual status
- 2002, restrictions on private schools as a back door into English-language public schools, largely overturned in 2010

Some Fundamentally Positive Outcomes

- Quebec is less segregated along linguistic lines
- A generation of bilingual English speakers
- Language-based economic inequalities have been levelled with time
- Ultimately, linguistic and social peace?

Methodology/Approach of our presentation

- Synthetic & analytical: look at what scholars are saying about Bill 101 and English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ)
 1. Demographics
 2. Law
 3. Education
 4. Community Vitality
 5. Excluded Voices

Demographics

- Exodus of ESCQ: myth or reality?
 - Increase in out-migration; 1976-1981 \cong 94,000
 - Quebec out-migration is no greater than some other provinces
 - ESCQ population increase since 2001 and into future
 - Decrease in ESCQ vitality, including outmigration of educated English speakers

Underlying political agendas influence how the data is parsed.

The Law

- Language planning occurs throughout Canada, not just in Quebec
- Challenges to the Charter by English-speakers have been more successful from the perspective of individual rather than collective rights

Dichotomies of legal thinking:

- Individual rights vs. Collective rights
- Liberalism vs. Republicanism

Education

- Decline of Quebec's English-language school system
- Rise in no. of rights-holders in French-language system
- Addressing decline by:
 - Expanded, new models: immersion, Community Learning Centres
 - Proposing changes: let in some immigrants; alternatives to binary linguistic school boards
 - Call for leadership
- Language=lever to change power relations
- Education=lever to get at language

Community Vitality

- Can be measured and developed
 - Challenges: unemployment, poverty, access to services, decline of institutions
 - Changes: “translanguaging;” institutions as site for development of identities/ connections/ collaboration
 - Interventions: historical narratives to build vitality
- Is the main vitality issue institutional, not language loss?
- Does focusing on vitality work against promoting integration?

Excluded Voices

- For some groups, language is not the (only) issue. Other power dynamics and perspectives must be considered: Black, Jewish, Indigenous communities
- Perception of the meaning and centrality of language differs depending on groups + situation: utilitarian, identity-forming, colonial

One person's positive integration is another person's loss.

Conclusions

1. Discourse: dichotomies emerging in our analysis

- Language function: identity-forming vs utilitarian
- English Liberal vs French Republican traditions
- Individual vs collective rights/freedoms

Range and complexity of Bill 101 and of language itself seen in these dichotomies

Conclusions

2. Discourse: dichotomies declining in our analysis

- From a two-language model to single “language system”
- Decrease economic inequalities between language groups
- Promotion of bilingual, immersion, dual-language board education systems

The pre-101 English speaker is gone or transformed. Rise of “Anglophone 2.0”?

Conclusions

3. Priorities for the post-101 ESCQ

a) Address vitality issues

- Poverty and unemployment, especially of Blacks
- Outmigration including of educated people
- Decline of institutions despite their increasing importance
- Education: need for:
 - leadership in universities
 - more students
 - more institutional responsiveness, and inter-level collaboration

Conclusions

3. Priorities for the post-101 ESCQ, continued

b) Adapt research strategies

- Post-colonialist analysis to include marginalized groups
- Include language as element in intersectional analyses
- History narrative tools to build community identity
- Vitality indicators to capture nuances of community realities

Thanks to our conference partners



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