NOTES ON THE DEMOLINGUISTIC VITALITY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC

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ABSTRACT

Thirty years of language planning in favour of French (Bill 101) can be credited for ensuring that the knowledge of French is shared by 94% of the Quebec population and maintaining 82% of its population as users of French at home. The law also contributed to increasing francophone control of the Quebec economy, from 47% in 1960s to 67% today. While anglophone bilingualism increased from 37% in 1971 to 69% in 2006, this minority remains under-represented in the Quebec public administration. The out-migration of highly educated Québécois anglophones contributed to the demographic and institutional decline of this national minority in the Province. Developing the institutional vitality of Québécois anglophones offers a positive benchmark for improving the vitality of francophone minorities in the rest of Canada.

In Quebec, the 'two solitudes' often speak at cross purposes when we consider their respective fate in the Province: while francophones feel most concerned about the fate of their own language relative to the spread of English, anglophones feel most concerned about the decline of their own community relative to the francophone dominant majority. Thus francophones have tended to focus on the prestige and drawing power of the English language relative to French in both Quebec and North America, while ignoring the decline of the anglophone community as a national minority in the province. Conversely, anglophones have focused on the dominant position of the francophone majority in the province while asserting that French is no longer threatened as the majority language in Quebec.

LANGUAGE POLICIES AND THE VITALITY OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC

The group vitality framework was originally proposed by Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (1977) to analyse the Quebec context at a time when sociolinguistic research was developed to guide the crafting of the Charter of the French language (Bill 101) adopted by the Parti Québécois government in 1977. Group vitality was defined as that which makes a language community likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within multilingual settings. The more vitality a group was assessed to have, the more likely it was expected to survive collectively as a distinctive linguistic community within its multilingual environment. Conversely, groups that had little vitality would be expected to assimilate more readily and eventually disappear as distinctive linguistic communities. The vitality framework was originally developed as an analytical tool to assess the position of Quebec's French language majority relative to the English-speaking elite of the day in three socio-structural domains: demography, institutional support, and status.

In the 1970s, four factors were identified as undermining the future vitality of the francophone majority in Quebec: 1) the decline of francophone minorities in the rest of Canada (ROC); 2) the drop in the birthrate of the Quebec francophone population from one of the highest to

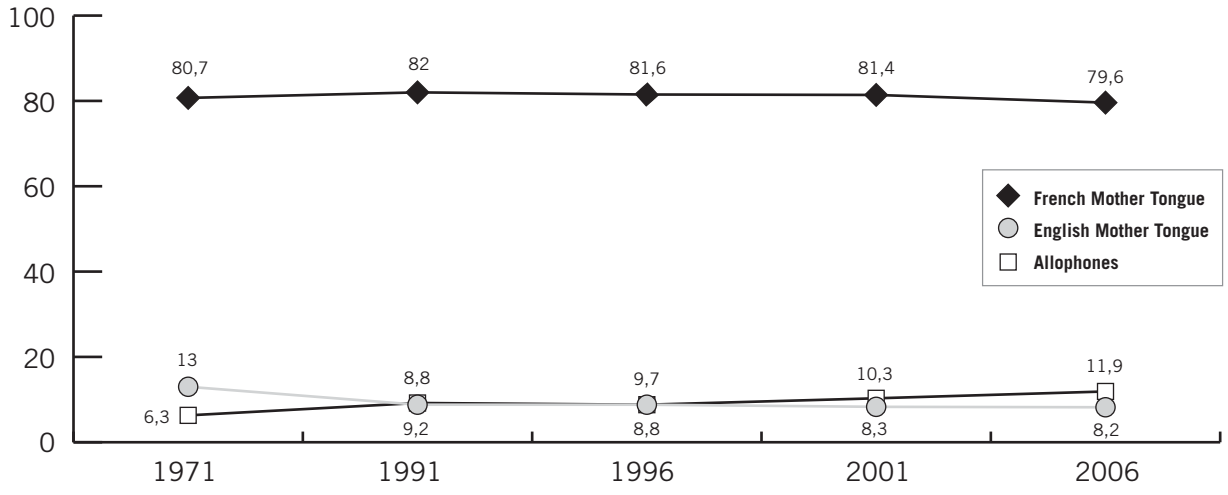
one of the lowest in the Western world; 3) immigrant choice of the English rather than the French educational system for their children; and 4) anglophone elite domination of the Quebec economy. Successive Quebec governments promulgated a number of language laws designed to address each of the above factors undermining the long-term prospects of the French language in the province.

Bill 101 was the major legislative tool designed to address most of the perceived threat to the French language relative to English in Quebec (Bourhis, 1984). During the three decades following the adoption of Bill 101, many studies acknowledged its success in increasing the status and use of French relative to English in the Province (Bourhis, 2001). However, many Québécois francophones including language activists, separatist party militants and academics consider that the law did not go far enough and has been unduly diluted by Quebec and Canadian Supreme Court rulings, thus claiming that French is still threatened in Quebec (Corbeil, 2007). Numerous analyses are devoted to assessing the effectiveness of current and proposed language laws designed to more firmly establish the predominance of French in Quebec against a backdrop that highlights the increasing presence of Allophone immigrants (who have neither French nor English as a first language; Georgeault & Pagé, 2006). Numerous government commissions must also report on the health and status of French in the province, thus keeping the language debate topical in the media and amongst various factions claiming that the French language is more or less threatened in the province. However, it is only recently that attempts were made to assess the impact of Bill 101 on the vitality of the English-speaking communities of Quebec (Bourhis 2001, 2008; Jedwab, 2004; Johnson & Doucet, 2006).

THE DECLINING DEMOGRAPHIC VITALITY OF ANGLOPHONES IN QUEBEC

The fundamental variable likely to influence the vitality of language groups is the demographic factor. Demographic variables are those relating to the number of individuals constituting the language community, as well as the number of those who still speak the language and their distribution throughout a particular urban, regional, or national territory. The number component refers not only to the absolute number of language speakers, but also to their birth and mortality rates, endogamy/exogamy, and patterns of immigration/emigration. Furthermore, the distribution component includes such variables as the numeric concentration in various parts of the territory, the proportion of group members relative to that of other

FIGURE 1: Mother Tongue (L1) Population in Quebec: Canadian Census: 1971 to 2006



	1971	1991	1996	2001	2006
◆ French MT	4,860,410	5,585,645	5,741,435	5,802,020	5,916,840
○ English MT	788,830	626,195	621,865	591,380	607,165
□ Allophones	390,415	598,445	681,285	732,180	866,000

PS: Mother Tongue (MT): *First language learned at home and still understood at the time of the census.*

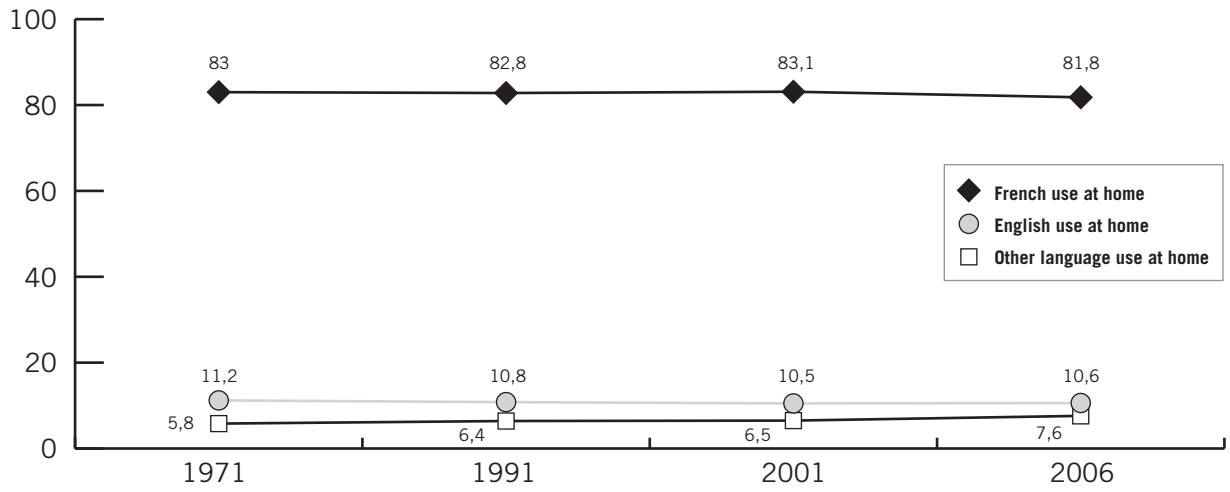
linguistic groups, and whether or not the group still occupies its "ancestral" or "national" territory. In turn, 'strength in numbers' legitimizes the institutional support of language communities in domains such as education, health, business and mass-media (Harwood, Giles & Bourhis, 2004).

What impact did pro-French language laws have on the demographic vitality of the francophone and anglophone communities in Quebec? The immediate reactions of many francophones to Bill 101 were quite positive, given the law was seen as being effective in securing the linguistic future of the French language in the province (Bourhis, 2001). As seen in Figure 1, while the number of French mother tongue speakers increased by over a million from 1971 to 2006, the proportion of French mother tongue (L1) speakers in Quebec remained stable from 1971 (80.7%) to 2006 (79.6%). The one percent drop in the proportion of French mother tongue speakers during this period was due mostly to the increase in the proportion of Allophones in the province from 6.3% in 1971 to 11.9% in 2006.

However, in the Montreal metropolitan region, the proportion of French mother tongue speakers (L1) dropped from 68.1% (2, 255,610) in 1996, to 65.7% (2,356,980) in 2006. This decrease reflects the fact that Quebec francophones have tended to move to the outer suburbs of Montreal during the last decades, while more than 85% of immigrants to Quebec settle in Montreal, a trend reflected in the growing proportion of Allophones residing in the Montreal region, which rose from 27.7% (484,970) in 1996 to 32.6% (594,525) in 2006. *"Nous perdons Montréal"* is the reaction of many French nationalists who fear that Québécois francophones will lose their majority city in the Quebec metropolis.

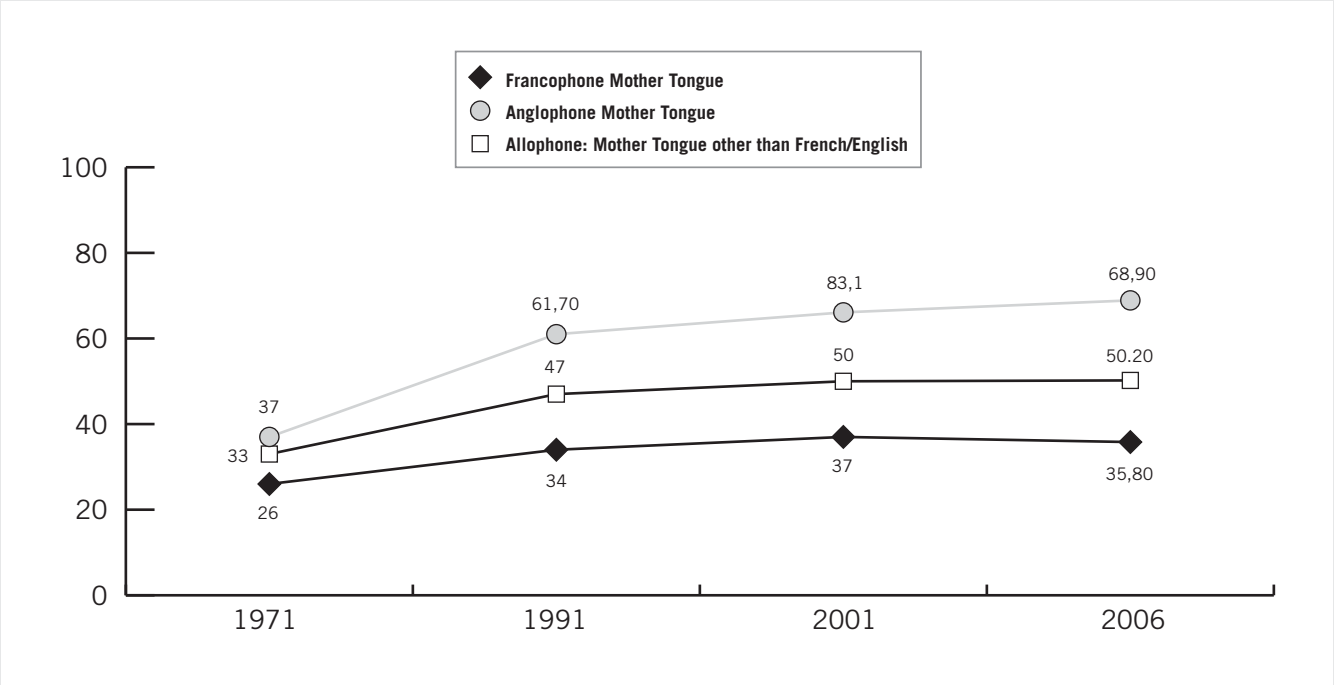
Bill 101 sought to ensure knowledge of French as the public language of all citizens. Language use at home is a private matter beyond the reach of the State. Thus language use at home (HL) should *not* be used as an indicator of the success of Bill 101 in promoting the French language. However, language use at home, when contrasted with mother tongue, can be used as an indicator of linguistic assimilation, especially for language minorities. Overall, the majority of Quebec residents have used mostly French as the language at home during the last three decades: 80.8% in 1971, 83% in 1991, and 81.8% in 2006 (see Figure 2). Taken together, trends in mother tongue and home language use suggest an increasing intergenerational transmission of French from 1971 to 2006 in Quebec. For instance, more residents reported using French at home (HL) than the number of French mother tongue speakers (L1): in 1991: L1: 5,585,645 vs. HL: 5, 651, 790 = + **66,145** (+1%); and more so

FIGURE 2: Language used most frequently at home in Quebec population: Use of French, English & other languages Canadian Census: 1991 to 2006



	1971	1991	2001	2006
◆ **French use at home**	5,651,790	5,830,085	5,918,390	6,085,155
○ **English use at home**	761,805	762,460	746,895	787,885
□ **Other lang.**	396,690	452,540	460,295	562,860

FIGURE 3: French – English Bilingualism in Quebec: Francophones: French L1; Anglophones: English L1; and Allophones: L1 other than French or English. Canadian Census: 1971 to 2006

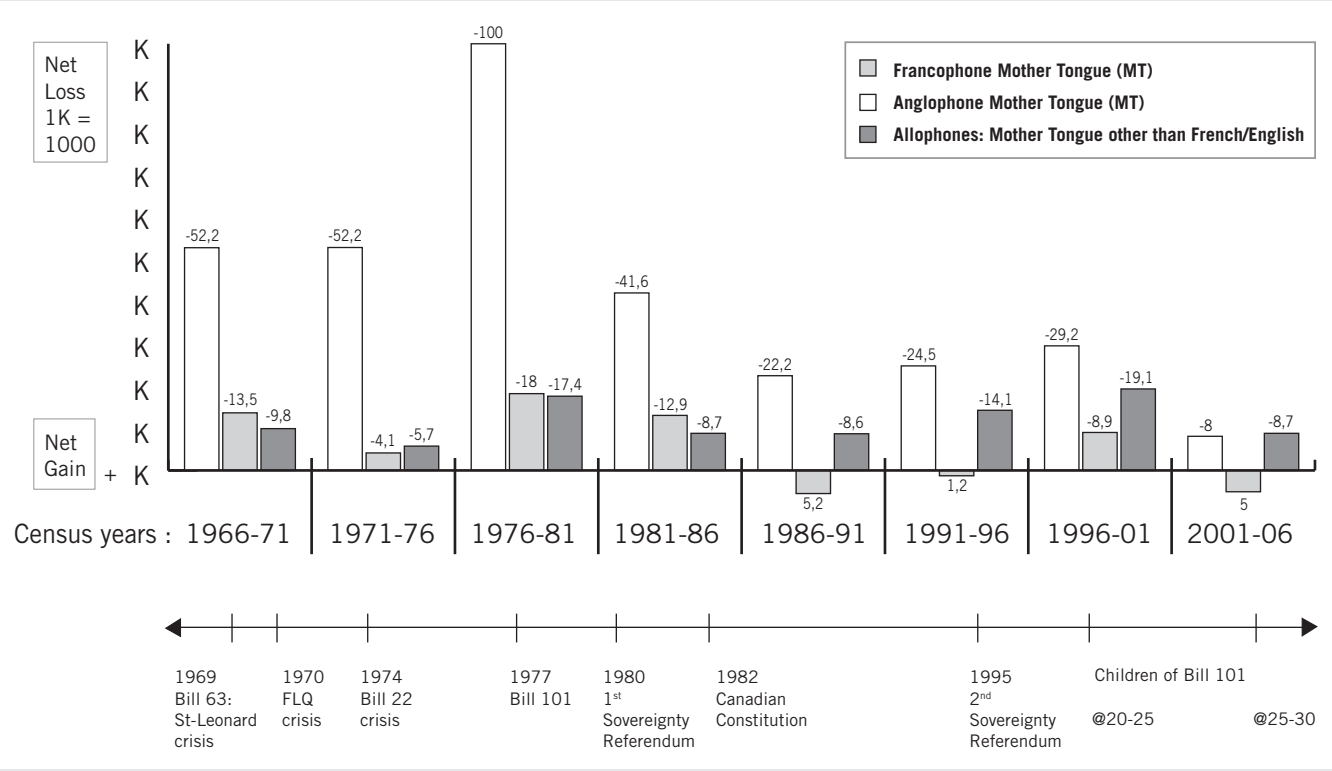


in 2006: L1: 5,916,840 vs. HL: 6,085,155 = + **168,315** (+ 2.2%). Thus, compared to the drawing power of French as the home language in 1991, the 2006 census results suggest a doubling in language shift in favour of French. Of course, French activists are most interested in the drawing power of French relative to English during this period.

When comparing scores presented in Figures 1 and 2 for English mother tongue (L1) and English use at home (HL), the following trends in private language use emerge. More Quebec individuals reported using English at home than the number of English mother tongue speakers in 1991: L1: 626,195 vs. HL: 761,805 = + **135, 610** (+21.6%); and in 2006: L1: 607,165 vs. HL: 787,885 = + **180,720** (+ 30%). Though in absolute terms, almost as many individuals switched to French as their home language (168,315) as those who switched to English (180,720) during the 2006 census period, the relative drawing power of English (+30%) remained much greater than that of French (+ 2.2%) during this period. However, it is noteworthy that English language use at home in the Quebec population dropped from 14.7% in 1971 to 10.5% in 2001, and remained at 10.6% in 2006 (Figure 2). Even if the majority of anglophones declared using English at home (85.7%) in the 2001 census, 12.5% declared using French, thereby attesting to the rising "drawing power" of French among Quebec anglophones. While these trends could be seen as encouraging for those who wish French to increase its drawing power as the home language, French language activists remain outraged as they consider it abnormal that the language of a minority such as Quebec anglophones should have more drawing power than French as the home language in the Province. Such concerns ignore the role of English as the *lingua franca* of business, technology and culture in North America for all Quebecers.

As seen in Figure 1, Allophones increased from 6.3% of the population in 1971 to 11.9% in 2006, reflecting increasing immigration to the province. When contrasting mother tongue (L1) and home language use (HL) of Allophones in the province, one notes a steady loss in the transmission of heritage languages in the 1991 to 2006 census. In 1991, the loss in heritage language transmission in the home was: L1: 598,445 vs. HL: 396,690 = - 201,755 (- 33.7%). In the 2006 census, heritage language loss was greater: L1: 866,000 vs. HL: 562,860 = - 303,140 (-35%). Census results also showed that Allophones who declared using English as the language of the home dropped from 61% in 1996 to 49% in 2006. Conversely, Allophones who declared using French as their home language increased from 39% in 1996 to 51% in 2006. Thus by 2006, Allophones were assimilating as much to French as to English at home, though such

FIGURE 4: Net Interprovincial Migration of Anglophones, Francophones & Allophones in Quebec
Arrival – Departure = Net loss in thousands (K). Canadian Census: 1966 to 2006



language shifts represent a net loss of multilingual and multicultural diversity for Quebec society.

The growing integration of Quebec francophones within the North American economic and cultural mainstream is implied by the rise of French-English bilingualism amongst francophones especially from 1971 to 1996. As seen in Figure 3, whereas only 26% of French mother tongue speakers reported being French-English bilingual in 1971, this proportion had increased to 34% in 1996, but reached a plateau at 37% in 2001 and 36% in 2006. Thus, only a minority of francophones bother to learn English in Quebec, a trend found for other dominant language minorities in the world. In the last century many francophones who learned English experienced "subtractive bilingualism": their acquisition of the second language (L2) was achieved at the cost of losing fluency in L1 and often resulted in cultural assimilation to English. However, francophones learning English today are more likely to experience "additive bilingualism": a type of bilingualism contributing to greater cognitive development and a broadening of cultural horizons without undermining mother tongue skills and cultural attachment to the ingroup culture (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

As seen in Figure 3, an increasing proportion of anglophones have become French/English bilinguals since the adoption of Bill 101: a rise from 37% in 1971 to 69% in 2006. For anglophone communities concentrated in the western sectors of Montreal who benefit from health, education and mass media institutions in English, this bilingualism is more likely to be 'additive' than 'subtractive'. However, for declining anglophone minorities residing in isolated regions of the province, this bilingualism may develop to be more 'subtractive' than 'additive'.

As seen in Figure 3, Quebec Allophones have become increasingly bilingual: from 33% in 1971 to 50.2% in 2006. This trend reflects in part the cumulative effect of the Bill 101 provision requesting children of international immigrants to attend French rather than English primary and secondary schools in Quebec. As seen above, Allophones have suffered more than a 30% loss of heritage language use at home, an assimilation trend suggesting the effect of "subtractive bilingualism".

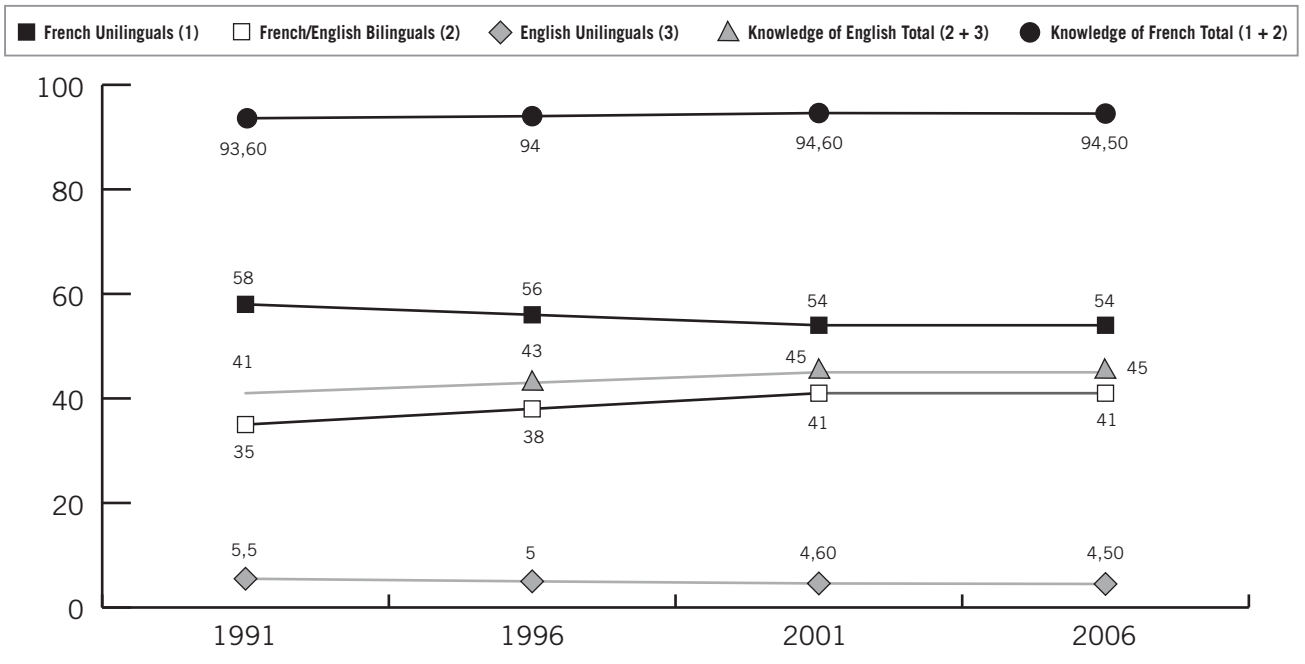
Though the English language is not threatened in Quebec, Bill 101 did have the intended effect of eroding the demographic vitality of the English-speaking minorities of the Province. Anglophone reactions to Bill 101 were largely

negative because the law was seen as threatening the traditional elite status of the English minority in the province (Stevenson, 1999). It forced many anglophones to see themselves as a low status minority rather than as individuals belonging to a dominant elite. Following the election of the pro-sovereignty Parti Québécois in 1976, many anglophones, dissatisfied with Quebec's language laws and fiscal policies, emigrated to Ontario and other provinces of Canada. Emigration from the province and a low fertility rate were key factors that contributed to the erosion of the demographic vitality of Quebec anglophones.

As seen in Figure 4, the outmigration of Quebec anglophones was particularly important in the decade following the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 and the adoption of Bill 101 in 1977. However, note that anglophone out migration in the 1966 to 1976 decade coincided with the linguistic tensions surrounding the adoption of Bill 63 in 1969 and of Bill 22 in 1972. Census results showed a decline of 12% in Quebec's English mother tongue population between 1971 and 1981. This net loss of English L1 speakers occurred among the more qualified and economically mobile elements of the anglophone community, a trend still very much in evidence in the 2001 and 2006 census (Floch & Pocock, 2008). By this century, these outmigration trends took their toll on the proportion of anglophones in Quebec. As seen in Figure 1, while English mother tongue speakers made up 13% of the population in 1971, this proportion dropped to only 8.2% by 2006, a net drop of 181,835 anglophones in the province. English mother tongue speakers also dropped in the metropolitan Montreal region, from 13.6% (451,855) in 1996 to 12.5% (448,325) in 2006. Expressed as provincial retention rate, Quebec born anglophones had a retention rate of 69 % in 1971 which dropped steadily to 50% in 2001. In contrast, the retention of Quebec born francophones was a steady 96% during the 1971 to 2001 census periods.

The out migration of many unilingual anglophones, combined with more anglophones learning French, had an impact on the proportion of anglophones who declared having knowledge of French as a second language in the province. Thus for anglophones who stayed in Quebec, the percentage of bilinguals increased from 37% in 1971 before the adoption of Bill 101, to as much as 68.9% in 2006 (Figure 3). The 2006 census also showed that as many as 80% of young anglophones (between 15 and 30 years of age) were bilingual in Quebec. However, according to Magnan (2004), this high rate of bilingualism among young anglophones was not sufficient to prevent their exodus from the province. Magnan's study revealed that it was their feeling of not being accepted by the francophone majority,

FIGURE 5: Knowledge of French and English in Quebec Population: Canadian Census: 1991 to 2006



"Group vitality was defined as that which makes a language community likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within multilingual settings. The more vitality a group was assessed to have, the more likely it was expected to survive collectively as a distinctive linguistic community within its multilingual environment."

especially in the workplace, that forced many anglophones to emigrate from Quebec. A study by the *Quebec Human Rights Commission* showed that whereas Quebec anglophones made up 8 % of the provincial working population, their presence as employees in the Quebec government public service was less than 2%, a trend obtained after controlling for French language skills, number of anglophones applying for Quebec government jobs, and years of experience in the Quebec workforce (CDPDJ, 1998). Surveys also revealed that political uncertainty due to the separatist movement, pro-French language laws, and more promising economic opportunities in the ROC remain important reasons for the outmigration of young anglophones. In their recent analysis based on the 2001 census, Flock & Pocock (2008) showed that anglophones who left Quebec were almost as likely to be bilingual (61.4%) as those who stayed (70.7%), suggesting that lack of French-English bilingualism is not the main reason for the dearth of anglophones in the Provincial Public Administration or their exodus from Quebec.

Despite an optimal rate of intergenerational transmission, it is clear that the Quebec anglophone minority is experiencing a sharp decline on more fundamental indicators of demographic vitality such as absolute and relative group numbers, outmigration, and fertility rates. With a declining fertility rate from 3.3 children per woman in 1961 to only 1.4 in 2001 and few prospects for a substantial immigration from Anglo-Canada, Quebec Anglophones have recognized their growing dependence on the linguistic integration of Allophones and international immigrants who settle in the province. However, Figure 4 also shows that Allophones have also been steadily leaving Quebec since Bill 101, including the children of Bill 101 in 1996–2001 (-19,000) and in 2001–2006 (-8,700).

Growing linguistic tensions between the francophone and anglophone host communities put added pressure on Allophone minorities to openly "take sides" in the Quebec linguistic debate (Bourhis, 1994). One response of Allophones was to learn both French and English. As seen in Figure 3, the rate of French-English bilingualism amongst Allophones increased since 1971 with as many as 80% of young Allophones (age 15-30) declaring they were French-English bilinguals in 2006. With the knowledge of their heritage language, as many as 50% of Quebec Allophones can be considered trilingual, thus creating a linguistic and cultural capital that contributes to the diversity of Quebec society, especially in Montreal.

A key role of Bill 101 was to promote the conditions necessary to ensure the widespread knowledge of French as the shared public language of Quebec society. Figure 5 provides data on the knowledge of French and English amongst the population of Quebec based on the 1991 to 2006 Canadian census. Figure 5 shows there are still some English unilinguals in Quebec, though their share of the provincial population dropped from 5.5% in 1991 to 4.5% in 2006. Most English unilinguals are older anglophones who did not leave Quebec and a number of recent Canadians from the ROC, as well as some new Canadians recently established in the province. In contrast, more than 50% of the Quebec population can afford to stay unilingual French in the province: 58% in 1991 and 54% in 2006. French-English bilingualism in the general population of Quebec is slowly rising from 35% of the population in 1991 to 41% in 2006. The knowledge of English is also rising in the province: from 41% of the population in 1991 to 45% in 2006. However, the greatest success of Bill 101 has been its role in ensuring that the vast majority of the provincial population knows French: a steady majority of 93.6% in 1991 and 94.5% in 2006. Taken together, these trends show that Bill 101 had the effect of improving the demolinguistic ascendancy of the francophone majority in Quebec.

THE ECONOMIC ASCENDANCY OF QUÉBÉCOIS FRANCOPHONES

In an interview a year before his death, Camille Laurin, the architect of Bill 101, stated that: *"The ultimate goal of the Charter of the French language was to insure that more and more francophones seize power in business, that they become the directors and CEOs, and that the Quebec economy be at last controlled by them."* (Picard, 2003, p. 247-248). This ascendancy was largely achieved as is evident in the growth of ownership of Quebec's economy by francophone firms, from 47% in the 1960s to 67% today.

Based on census data, a recent study used the labour income of unilingual francophone men to calculate the percent advantage of being unilingual or bilingual in the Quebec workforce from 1970 to 2000, and this by controlling for level of education, years of work experience in Quebec and number of weeks in paid employment in the

province (Vaillancourt, Lemay & Vaillancourt, 2007). While a unilingual anglophone had a 10.1% income advantage over a unilingual francophone in 1970, by 2000 it was the unilingual francophone that had an 18.1% income advantage over unilingual anglophones. While bilingual anglophones had a 17% income advantage over a unilingual francophone in 1970, this advantage was reduced to a zero advantage by 2000. In contrast, bilingual francophones maintained their income advantage over unilingual francophones: 12.6% in 1970 and 12.2% in 2000. The income position of Allophone men relative to francophone unilinguals declined substantially from 1970 to 2000 in Quebec. While English-speaking Allophones had zero advantage in 1970, they suffered a **-30%** income disadvantage relative to francophone unilinguals in 2000. While French-speaking Allophones contribute to the French fact in Quebec, they gained 0% income advantage relative to francophone unilinguals in 1970, and were suffering a **-33.9%** income disadvantage relative to francophone unilinguals in 2000. Finally, while French-English bilingual Allophones enjoyed a 6% income advantage over francophone unilinguals in 1970, such trilingual Allophones were suffering a **-11.8 %** income disadvantage relative to francophone unilinguals in 2000. Despite these economic trends in favour of unilingual francophones, survey results and testimonials during the 2007 Commission on 'Reasonable Accommodation' showed that many Québécois francophones still felt somewhat threatened and ambivalent about the presence of 'others' in the province, including Quebec allophones and anglophones (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008).

CONCLUDING NOTES

The demographic decline of the anglophone population undermines the institutional vitality of the English speaking communities of Quebec (Bourhis, 2008). The closure of English schools and hospitals in the last decades attest to this institutional decline. Maintaining and developing the institutional vitality of Quebec anglophones may reduce youth out migration, thus improving future overall vitality on the demographic front. Developing better prospects for Quebec anglophone institutional vitality provides a positive benchmark for improving the vitality of francophone minorities in the rest of Canada. Despite the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian society, the future of Canadian unity still rests on the vitality developments of its two national minorities: the English-speaking communities of Quebec and the francophone communities established in the rest of Canada.

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