

Modern Québec

London Journal of Canadian Studies

Volume 32

Autumn 2017

General Editor

Tony McCulloch, UCL Institute of the Americas

Guest Editor

Hector Mackenzie, Carleton University, Canada and Global Affairs Canada

UCL Press
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Available to download free: www.ingentaconnect.com/content/uclpress/ljcs

Text © Contributors, 2017

ISSN 0267-2200 (print)
ISSN 1475-1674 (online)

Printed by Formara Print

Contents

Contributors	v
Introduction Author: <i>Hector Mackenzie</i>	1
Modern Québec Author: <i>Christos Sirros</i>	2
Conservative Crossroads: Anti-Americanism and Anti-modernism in French Canadian Intellectual Discourse, 1891–1945 Author: <i>Damien-Claude Bélanger</i>	4
So Near and Yet So Far: The 1995 Quebec Referendum in Perspective Author: <i>Nicholas Bayne</i>	24
Quebec's Economic and Commercial Linkages with the United States, 1994–2017 Author: <i>Earl H. Fry</i>	41
Pink, Cirque and the <i>Québécoisisation de l'industrie</i> Author: <i>Charles R. Batson</i>	67
The Quebec Election of April 2014: Initial Impressions Author: <i>Christopher Kirkey</i>	85

**'Silent Revolution': The Transformation of the Québécois
Identity**

96

Author: *Jocelyn Létourneau*

Contributors

Charles R. Batson is Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Union College, Schenectady, NY, where he also won the Stillman Award for Excellence in Teaching. He is the author of *Dance, Desire, and Anxiety in Early Twentieth-Century French Theater* (Ashgate, 2005), co-editor of a 2012 special double issue of *Contemporary French Studies* and co-editor of two recent issues of *Québec Studies* devoted to a Queer Québec. He co-edited with Louis Patrick Leroux a compendium of essays on Québec's contemporary circus called *Cirque Global: Québec's Expanding Circus Boundaries* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016) and he is co-leading, with Karen Fricker and Patrick Leroux, a series of research encounters in the new field of inquiry they are calling *Circus and Its Others*.

Sir Nicholas Bayne KCMG was a British diplomat for 35 years. He served as Ambassador in Kinshasa, UK Representative to the OECD and Economic Director General at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was British High Commissioner to Canada from 1992 to 1996. He now teaches a graduate course on 'Economic Diplomacy' in the International Relations Department of the LSE. He is the author, with Stephen Woolcock, of *The New Economic Diplomacy* (third edition 2011). He has also written three books on the G7/G8 summit (*Hanging Together*, with Robert Putnam, 1987; *Hanging in There*, 2000; *Staying Together*, 2005) and a volume of memoirs (*Economic Diplomat*, 2010).

Damien-Claude Bélanger is an Associate Professor of Canadian history at the University of Ottawa and the co-founder of *Mens: revue d'histoire intellectuelle et culturelle*. A graduate of the Université de Montréal and McGill, his research interests include French Canadian

intellectual history and Canadian-American relations. He is the author of two monographs, *Prejudice and Pride: Canadian Intellectuals Confront the United States, 1891–1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2011) and *Thomas Chapais, historien* (Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, forthcoming) and is currently working on a history of loyalism in French Canada.

Earl H. Fry is Professor of Political Science and Endowed Professor of Canadian Studies at Brigham Young University. He previously served as Special Assistant in the Office of the US Trade Representative and has been a Fulbright Professor at the University of Toronto, University of Helsinki and the Sorbonne. He has written extensively on Canada-US relations and NAFTA including, with Rafael Velázquez Flores and Stephan Paquin, *The External Relations of Local Governments in North America after NAFTA: Trends and Perspectives* (2015). Another recent work was *Revitalizing Governance, Restoring Prosperity and Restructuring Foreign Affairs: The Pathway to Renaissance America* (2014). His most recent article is entitled 'The Role of U.S. State Governments in International Relations, 1980–2015' and is published in *International Negotiation*, Volume 22, Number 2 (2017).

Christopher Kirkey is Director of the Center for the Study of Canada and Institute on Quebec Studies at State University of New York College at Plattsburgh. His recent works include (co-edited with Michael Hawes) *Canadian Foreign Policy in a Unipolar World* (Oxford University Press, 2017); a second edition (co-edited with Gervais and Rudy) of *Quebec Questions: Quebec Studies in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford University Press, 2016); the co-edited June 2016 special issue (with Stéphane Paquin and Stéphane Roussel) on 'Quebec and the World' of the *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Volume 46, Number 2); the Winter 2015–2016 special issue (co-edited with Gervais and Rudy) of *Québec Studies*; the co-edited Winter 2015 special issue on Quebec (with Cheryl Gosselin) of the *Journal of Eastern Townships Studies* (Volume 45 Fall 2015).

Jocelyn Létourneau is Professor in the Contemporary History of Quebec, Laval University, Quebec City and currently Visiting Research Associate, UCL Institute of Education. He is an award-winning author and conducts research in three main areas: the construction of collective identity; the public and political uses of history; and the formation of historical consciousness among young people. He is a Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton amongst other places and

has been a Fulbright Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley and at Stanford University. He has also been a visiting professor at the University of Geneva, the University of Western Brittany, the University of Paris-13, SUNY-Plattsburgh and the University of Rosario amongst other institutions. He is also a member of the Royal Society of Canada.

Hector Mackenzie is a graduate of the University of Toronto and Oxford University, from where he received his DPhil in Politics (International Relations) on Anglo-Canadian economic relations in the Second World War. After teaching at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, he joined the Department of External Affairs as an historian. He has been the Senior Departmental Historian of what is now Global Affairs Canada since 1991. He is an adjunct professor of history at Carleton University, where he frequently teaches courses in Canadian history, and a past President of the Association for Canadian Studies. He has also published extensively on the history of Canada's international relations. The views expressed in the Introduction are his alone, not those of Global Affairs Canada or the Government of Canada.

Christos Sirros served as the Agent-General for Quebec in London from December 2014 to October 2017. Prior to that he was the Agent-General for Quebec in Brussels. A graduate of McGill University, Mr Sirros had a long and distinguished service as a Liberal Member of the National Assembly of Quebec from 1981 to 2004, before embarking on a diplomatic career. During his time as an MNA he held posts as Minister of Indian Affairs, Minister of Natural Resources and First Vice-President of the Assembly. He retired in October 2017 at the same time as the *LJCS* issue on Modern Quebec was due to be published.



Introduction

Hector Mackenzie

It is a privilege and a pleasure to serve as guest editor for this special issue of the *London Journal of Canadian Studies*, with all of the contributions emanating from distinguished scholars who have given lectures on various aspects of Modern Quebec at the UCL Institute of the Americas over the last five years. It is a privilege because the journal has contributed significantly to our understanding of Canada and the Institute has been the venue not only for these talks but also for many stimulating and congenial events on Canadian and other topics. It is a pleasure because I have enjoyed reading these diverse articles – and I am confident that others will agree and that we will all learn more about these subjects, the ultimate test of a scholarly paper (and a journal). The diversity arises not only from the matters considered but also from the perspectives of the authors, all of whom are well qualified to enlighten us – just as I am sure they informed (and, dare I say it, entertained) those who attended the events at the Institute when they delivered their presentations.

All of us owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the Institute, its director Professor Jonathan Bell and its superb professional services staff, who have always made us feel welcome and who have dealt with various needs and obscure demands with friendly efficiency. Students of Quebec and Canada are also grateful for the tremendous work of my friend and frequent collaborator, Dr Tony McCulloch, Senior Fellow in North American Studies (whose North America includes Canada, as he has been responsible for Canadian Studies at the Institute since his arrival), who has made my transition from contributor to guest editor painless, much as he has eased passages for so many participants in events and publications associated with North American subjects.

Modern Québec

Christos Sirros

It is my pleasure to write a few opening remarks for this issue of the *London Journal of Canadian Studies* (LJCS), which is devoted to Modern Québec. I am particularly glad that, thanks to its online publication, this issue will be widely available to academics – and indeed, members of the general public – who, in Britain and throughout the world, are interested in Québec and Québec Studies.

Over the past three years, I have had the honour of representing Québec as Agent-General in London. I became quickly aware of the close links that unite Québec and the United Kingdom, and of the interest that Québec generates in British cultural and academic fields in particular. Through the sterling work of institutions such as the British Association of Canadian Studies (BACS), the Institute of the Americas at University College London (UCL) and the Centre for Quebec and French Canadian Studies at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London, the reality of Québec is becoming better known.

By reality I mean that Québec is not only ‘the place in Canada where French is spoken’, but that it is also a modern, pluralist, inclusive nation with a strong sense of self. It boasts a prosperous economy (think of Bombardier and Hydro Québec), a rich culture (think of Cirque du Soleil and Robert Lepage) and an array of world-class universities with outstanding talent. Indeed, Montréal is home to several of Canada’s highest-ranking academic institutions, and Université Laval in Québec City is the oldest francophone Higher Education establishment in America.

2017 is a year of celebrations. Montréal’s 375th anniversary first, but also the 50th anniversary of Québec’s *Ministère des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie*, which played a large part in

giving Modern Québec its rightful place on the international scene, in its fields of jurisdiction, and which has recently published a new international policy (http://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/content/documents/en/PIQ-2017-Sommaire_ANG_BR.pdf).

This is also the year of the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Federation, in which Québec holds a unique place: we are Quebecers, and this is our way of being Canadian, as the recent policy on Québec Affirmation and Canadian Relations explains (<https://www.saic.gouv.qc.ca/secretariat/publications-en.asp>).

As I prepare to leave London to start a new life as a retiree, I would like to thank Dr Tony McCulloch, Senior Fellow in North American Studies at UCL and former president of BACS, for his continuous interest in Québec and Québec Studies. The initiator of the UCL Annual Québec Lecture, which the Québec Government Office in London has supported over the years, Tony has invited prominent academics to take part in this yearly event, several of whom have contributed to this issue of the *LJCS*. I am glad to add that Tony was also twice the recipient of *Les Prix du Québec* – this is no small feat – a distinction awarded every year at the annual BACS Conference.

I would also like to thank UCL Press for giving the *LJCS* its online platform and wish the contributors to this special issue all the best.

Conservative Crossroads: Anti-Americanism and Anti-modernism in French Canadian Intellectual Discourse, 1891–1945

Damien-Claude Bélanger

Abstract

America has generated a great deal of thought and writing in Quebec, but this commentary has never possessed the obsessiveness and anxieties that have characterized English Canadian writing on the United States. Yet both English- and French-speaking Canada share a vigorous and long-standing anti-American tradition. Indeed, from the eighteenth century to the present day, leading French Canadian writers and intellectuals have offered sweeping condemnations of American society. This apparent continuity masks a fundamental shift in the underpinnings of anti-American rhetoric in Quebec: primarily a left-wing idea today, anti-Americanism was essentially a right-wing doctrine until the postwar years. This paper explores the nature and origins of anti-Americanism in French Canada before 1945 and finds it tied to notions of anti-modernism on the part of French Canadian intellectuals.

Introduction

As a model or as a *bête noire*, America has never ceased to fascinate intellectuals. This is especially true in Canada, where the American presence looms especially large. For English-speaking Canadians, Canada's relationship with the United States possesses existential characteristics. Intellectual discourse on the nature of the Canadian experiment has long been preoccupied with the United States and the extent to which Canada should embrace or resist its neighbour to the south.

In French-speaking Canada, discourse on the United States has never been fully existential. America has generated a great deal of thought and writing in Quebec, but this commentary has never possessed the obsessiveness and anxieties that have characterized English Canadian writing on the United States. Yet both English- and French-speaking Canada share a vigorous and long-standing anti-American tradition. Indeed, from the eighteenth century to the present day, leading French Canadian writers and intellectuals have offered sweeping condemnations of American society. This apparent continuity masks a fundamental shift in the underpinnings of anti-American rhetoric in Quebec: primarily a left-wing idea today, anti-Americanism was essentially a right-wing doctrine until the postwar years. This shift occurred because America projected a different image before 1945. Intellectuals often highlighted America's revolutionary heritage and noted that the nation had embarked on a number of progressive experiments, including the New Deal. Moreover, until the advent of the Cold War, America was rarely associated with reaction or militarism, at least in Quebec.

American actions and policy have historically intensified or lessened French Canadian hostility, especially among the masses, but they have never proved fundamentally causal to elite anti-Americanism. This was particularly true after Confederation. Certainly, American expansionism did threaten Quebec before the Great War, but it had been a mitigated menace since the 1871 Treaty of Washington. Besides, American forcefulness has never upset all French Canadian thinkers – there has always been a group of continentalist intellectuals willing to forgive America for even its most serious misdeeds.

So what lies behind anti-Americanism? Before 1945, anti-American rhetoric reflected the intellectual's reading of modernity. Indeed, in early French Canadian discourse, America embodied both the promise and the dangers of the mass age. Social change in the Republic foreshadowed and fostered a status revolution in French Canadian society. For liberals, modernity and social change were not to be feared. They welcomed the mass age, and embraced America and continental integration. Theirs was an ethos of change. The French Canadian right did not share their enthusiasm, and conservative anxieties regarding modernity found a convenient outlet in anti-American rhetoric.

Modernity is a powerful and revolutionary force. It spawns new social groups and new forms of expression. In doing so, it produces a cultural and status revolution that overwhelms tradition and destroys established social relations and customs. Swept up in this

whirlwind, conservative intellectuals feared that the modern world would marginalize their ideals and their voice. Searching for order amid what they felt was anarchy, they clung to traditional values and lashed out at what they believed to be the very heart of modernity: America.

Previous scholarship on anti-Americanism in Quebec has mostly been centred on the concept of *américanité*. According to Yvan Lamonde, who initiated the historical profession to the concept in the 1980s, Quebec's history has been marked by a long struggle between those who embraced the province's *américanité* and those who rejected it. *Américanité* refers to Quebec's fundamentally American nature, to its Americanness, and should not, insists Lamonde, be confused with Americanization.¹ From the mid-nineteenth century to the postwar years, the bulk of Quebec's intellectuals would reject the province's *américanité*. 'Chez ces élites', writes Gérard Bouchard, whose work also explores Quebec's *américanité*, 'la fidélité à un passé largement imaginaire servit alors de programme pour les générations futures, la mémoire des origines se substituant à l'exaltation du rêve nord-américain'.² As a result, the bulk of Quebec's elite was out of step with both the populace and the continent's wider ethos of rupture and renewal.

The *américanité* paradigm is not without its critics. Chief among them is Joseph Yvon Thériault, who argues in a 2002 monograph that the concept impedes the understanding of Quebec's historical singularity. Moreover, he contends that Quebec's conservative and clerical elite did not reject the province's essential continentalism and were not completely out of step with its populace. These elites merely refused to accept that the American model – rupture – was endemic to the New World.³

I want to clarify this debate by showing that the concept of modernity was at the heart of intellectual discourse on the United States in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Quebec. In particular, this article examines the relationship, from 1891 to 1945, between anti-American rhetoric and anti-modernism in French Canadian thought and writing. During this period, Quebec experienced accelerated industrialization and urbanization, large-scale immigration, technological change and the rise of mass culture. To the province's intellectuals, many of these changes found their source and their very embodiment in the United States.

1891 is a significant year in the intellectual history of Canadian–American relations. One of the most momentous federal elections in Canadian history was held in March of that year. The election pitted the governing Conservatives and their protectionist National Policy

against the Liberals and their promises of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. The campaign revolved around anti-Americanism and, in a pattern that would be repeated time and again in Canadian politics, anti-American rhetoric was used by the Conservatives to attack their Liberal opponents.⁴ The Tories were indeed successful at portraying the election not as a contest between free trade and protectionism, but as a mortal struggle pitting the forces of loyalty against those of treason.

1891 also saw the publication of two of the most important Canadian essays of the nineteenth century: Goldwin Smith's *Canada and the Canadian Question* and Édouard Hamon's *Les Canadiens français de la Nouvelle-Angleterre*. Smith's book argued that the Dominion was a geographic, ethnic, economic and political absurdity whose ultimate destiny lay in political union with the United States. Father Hamon reversed Smith's premise, arguing instead that America was moribund and that it was poised to dissolve into a series of nation-states, one of which would be French Canadian.

Both essays would have a notable impact in Canadian thought and writing. Smith's work generated a great deal of debate on the future of the Canadian state. Indeed, more than 60 years after its publication, Frank Underhill argued that all modern discussion of the 'Canadian question' still revolved around the points that Smith had raised in 1891.⁵ Hamon's work fed late nineteenth-century French Canadian nationalism by integrating the Franco-Americans of New England into its messianic reasoning. Previous writing on French Canadian migration to the United States had tended to denigrate Franco-Americans and to present the exodus as a dire threat to the survival of French Canada.

The period under study encompasses the heyday of conservative French Canadian nationalism. Grounded in Catholicism and tradition, this nationalism emerged as a structured movement at the turn of the twentieth century. It reached its summit of influence during the Great Depression and began to decline in the 1940s. Anti-American sentiment was already part of the nationalist world view in the 1890s, but it would intensify in the 1920s and 1930s as a new cohort of thinkers, led by abbé Lionel Groulx (1878–1967), stiffened the resistance to modernity and America that had characterized many of their precursors.

The present article is based on a comprehensive examination of French Canadian thought and writing on America. Fiction and non-fiction published between 1891 and 1945 was examined, most notably through an analysis of the era's periodical literature. Work by nationalist intellectuals was selected and, indeed, most of the era's

leading thinkers published commentary related to the United States or to Canadian–American relations.⁶

Modernity and the anti-American ethos

‘Il faut distinguer entre l’antiaméricanisme et la critique des États-Unis’, warns Jean-François Revel in an essay on *L’obsession anti-américaine*.⁷ This distinction is important, because anti-Americanism has historically implied a *systematic* hostility to American civilization, not merely a *punctual* criticism of American policy or life. By and large, anti-American thinkers were opposed to the United States on a fundamental level and rejected the notion that French Canadians shared a wider *américanité* with the people of the United States.

It should be noted, however, that the anti-American ethos was neither uniformly unsympathetic nor wholly uninformed; certainly, it was not entirely the product of bitterness and animosity. Prominent anti-American thinkers visited the United States and sometimes praised aspects of American life. Harry Bernard (1898–1979), for instance, received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to complete a doctoral dissertation on American literature. A conservative intellectual who published several scathing critiques of the United States, he was nonetheless attracted by the vitality of its regionalist literature.

Anti-American rhetoric frequently involved inaccurate representations and irrational delusions, but irrationality was not intrinsic to anti-Americanism. French Canadian critics could, at times, prove surprisingly insightful and accurate in their assessment of American society. Besides, anti-American sentiment did not ultimately prevent these intellectuals from travelling to the United States or from interacting with Americans. Anti-Americanism was fundamentally different, in this regard, from the other major negative faiths, anti-Semitism and anti-communism, because it lacked their unconditional nature.⁸

Anti-Americanism is not an ideology per se, but a series of ideas woven into a wider system of beliefs.⁹ In pre-1945 Canada, these ideas were integral to the conservative ethos. Anti-Americanism was thus expressed most fully in the discourse of the nation’s dominant conservative families: English Canadian imperialism and French Canadian nationalism. Certainly, anti-Americanism has historically made for strange bedfellows, but more to the point, as sociologist Sylvie Lacombe has shown, nationalism and imperialism were not antithetical ideologies.¹⁰ Despite their fundamental divergence on the national

question, they both possessed an essentially anti-modern outlook, and anti-Americanism was their logical point of convergence.

French Canadian nationalism was fundamentally Catholic and was influenced by the counter-revolutionary intellectual tradition of France.¹¹ This ensured that nationalists would offer a stiffer resistance to modernity and America than their imperialist contemporaries, whose outlook was more temperate in its origins. However, since English Canada's ethnocultural proximity to its southern neighbour has historically made the United States the main focus of its nationalism, of its efforts at survival, imperialists were also more fixated on America than nationalists were.

The nationalist critique of American civilization was essentially social and cultural in nature. Nationalists saw French Canada primarily as a spiritual, ethnic and cultural entity, and consequently generated relatively little comment on American politics and government. Ultimately, the nature of political institutions mattered far less to intellectuals whose conception of *la race française en Amérique* was essentially ethnoreligious and cultural. Quebec's anti-Americans were conversely preoccupied with a number of social issues, such as the inherent materialism of American society and the immorality of American culture.

It has been written that anti-Americanism is 'a disease of the intellectuals'.¹² In the context of pre-1945 French Canadian thought, however, anti-American rhetoric was in fact the symptom of a far deeper affliction: anti-modernism. As Jackson Lears pointed out in his 1981 monograph on the anti-modern impulse in American thought, 'toward the end of the nineteenth century, many beneficiaries of modern culture began to feel they were its secret victims. Among the educated and affluent on both sides of the Atlantic, antimodern sentiment spread'.¹³ Modernity renewed the intellectual's function, yet most turn-of-the-century French Canadian thinkers were resolutely anti-modern, and a moderate traditionalism formed the core of their thought.

But why lash out at the United States? Because America, like the former Soviet Union, is more than a nation; historically it has embodied both a way of life and an ideological system with pretensions to universality.¹⁴ The American Republic is built on specific conceptions of liberty, equality, individualism and secularism, and has come to epitomize an explicitly liberal version of modernity. Moreover, as a revolutionary nation built on an ethos of rupture, America was quick to embrace the mass age and its social, cultural and technological transformations. Revealingly, in Quebec, the pre-1945 critique of the United States

was centred on a rejection of individualism, secularism, mass culture, materialism and industrialism. America was a nation where continuity, order and deference had vanished; it was the very heart of modernity.

Undoubtedly, modernity's multiple dimensions make it a difficult concept to grasp. According to historian Philip Massolin it all boils down to 'the replacement of Victorian society – agrarian, religious, adhering to a rigid set of philosophical and moral codes – with the modern age: industrial, secular, and anti-philosophical'. 'From an economic standpoint', he continues, 'it pertained to the arrival of an urban and industrial society that replaced a hoary agrarian-merchant system. Closely related to the process of urban-industrialisation, modernisation also involved the rise of a consumer, scientific-materialist, and technological society'.¹⁵

'Arquée sur le présent tout en visant constamment son propre dépassement, sa propre négation', writes philosopher Alexis Nouss, 'la modernité n'a rien à apprendre du passé'.¹⁶ The modern ethos is thus obsessed with change and newness. As a result, it invariably leads to a penchant for rupture and, in some cases, to unabashed revolutionism. Unlike traditionalism, which impedes 'l'affirmation de l'homme, du sujet', and reduces 'à la portion secondaire un espace terrestre, profane, matériel'.¹⁷ Modernity is anthropocentric, utilitarian and, in its moderate form, libertarian. Politically, it can lean towards either democracy or totalitarianism, but in both cases it will invariably corrode the power of traditional elites. In Canada, the penetration of modern ideas and practices was a slow and steady process that began in the late eighteenth century and reached its logical conclusion in the postwar era.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the attitude of many French Canadian intellectuals towards American civilization was not unlike the current outlook of countless thinkers in the developing world. In both instances, the dynamic nature of American society is viewed as a threat by elites intent on preserving existing institutions, values, practices and social relationships.¹⁸ In this sense, anti-American rhetoric is tied to the wider denunciation of the status revolution that inevitably follows the rise of modernity. Indeed, as Richard Hofstadter noted, late nineteenth-century industrialization 'transformed the old society and revolutionized the distribution of power and prestige'.¹⁹ Intellectuals anxiously observed that a new plutocracy of grandiosely wealthy men was emerging and stamping out traditional notions of status and deference.

Intellectual concerns regarding the ill-effects of the status revolution were tied to the more general middle-class anxieties that invariably follow rapid social change. These apprehensions were by

no means confined to Quebec; they could be found throughout Western Europe and North America. 'In both Europe and America, the antimodern impulse was rooted in what can aptly be called a crisis of cultural authority', writes Jackson Lears.²⁰ The power and prestige of intellectuals has always rested on their role as arbiters of culture. As a result, many French Canadian thinkers felt dispossessed by mass, or as they saw it, American culture, which was completely out of their control. Their sense of alienation was compounded by the Protestant and English-speaking nature of American society, and by the weight of America's cultural and economic presence in Quebec.

French Canadian intellectuals were aware that the United States was undergoing – indeed exporting – a status revolution, and nationalist critics were appalled by its implications. One of Quebec's leading interwar women writers, Ernestine Pineault-Léveillé (1892–1980), worried about the status of refined French Canadian women in the face of Americanization. The status revolution, she feared, would marginalize women of talent and standing and, in turn, would neutralize their influence over society. In America, she warned the readers of the *Revue dominicaine* in 1936:

la femme du monde n'est plus la femme d'un rang social élevé, d'une éducation soignée, d'une culture plus poussée. L'intérêt et l'argent ont tout nivelé avec quelques degrés dans l'égalité suivant la capacité de réception et d'adaptation des uns et des autres. On n'est plus bien souvent qu'une femme riche, ou simplement un membre anonyme, falot, sans influence dans la société.²¹

Nationalist writers were dismayed not only by the status granted by American society to millionaires, but also to sports stars and entertainers, those adulated heroes of mass culture. Indeed, while industrial capitalism produced a new plutocracy and a growing urban proletariat, mass culture spawned the modern superstar. Like many interwar *nationalistes*, the dean of the Université de Montréal's Faculty of Philosophy, Father Ceslas Forest (1885–1970), was horrified by the rise of the superstar and its implications for the status of the traditional elite. America's scale of values, he reasoned, was upside down:

Quels sont ceux que les jeunes Américains connaissent, admirent et envient? Les littérateurs, les savants, les artistes? Nullement. Ce sont les étoiles de l'écran, pour leur beauté; les étoiles du sport, pour leur force ou leur adresse ... Certains d'entre eux sont de

véritables gloires nationales. Ils jouissent d'une célébrité qu'aucun homme public, qu'aucun savant, qu'aucun artiste n'oserait ambitionner. Leurs traits que les journaux ne se lassent pas de reproduire sont souvent plus familiers aux jeunes américains que ceux du Président des États-Unis. Lors du Congrès eucharistique de Chicago, un journal reproduisit une photo où l'on voyait Babe Ruth donnant la main au Cardinal Légat. Il n'est pas douteux que pour un grand nombre d'Américains, tout l'honneur était pour le Légat du Saint-Siège.²²

Catholic clergymen were among the most zealous exponents of anti-Americanism. Their anti-modernism was often well-honed – rising secularism threatened to eradicate their moral and intellectual leadership. Yet anti-modern rhetoric was hardly confined to the presbytery. Modernity worried more than a few French Canadian intellectuals, and anti-modernism dominated French Canadian discourse from the late nineteenth century to the Second World War.

America through French Canadian eyes

For the nationalist right, various aspects of socio-political debate, including issues related to gender, identity or the economy, could be discussed through the prism of the United States. American society offered an unsettling glimpse into the not-so-distant future. The United States, as viewed through nationalist prose, was a dark and foreboding place: revolution had destabilized the nation's long-term political and social order; secularism and materialism were corroding the Republic's moral integrity and its culture; and massive industrialization was creating both a disaffected and unstable proletariat and a dangerous plutocracy of obscenely wealthy capitalists.

For Quebec's nationalist intellectuals, the core principles of the American experience – which they supposed were revolutionism, materialism, freedom, individualism and equality – were viewed as the underpinnings of an undesirable social order. They reflected a fundamental imbalance, a lack of order, which affected every aspect of American society.

American materialism was frequently denounced in French Canada, principally because Catholicism played such a major role in the formulation of nationalist discourse. 'Le matériel accapare la portion la plus considérable de l'énergie américaine', warned the

Université de Montréal's professor of American literature, Hermas Bastien (1897–1977), in 1936. America, he continued, was a 'civilisation d'essence économique' that embodied 'le libéralisme à l'état pur, oublieux des personnes et des distinctions ethniques'.²³ Others went further still. Drawing on the work of French intellectuals Jacques Maritain and Lucien Romier, Lionel Groulx offered a searing indictment of American materialism to a Catholic student association in 1928:

Bref, il semble que ce peuple vise plus bas que Dieu, ce qui, pour une civilisation chrétienne, est le commencement de tout désordre. 'Toutes nos valeurs dépendent de la nature de notre Dieu'. On aura beau faire, 'civiliser c'est spiritualiser'. Le progrès matériel peut y concourir dans la mesure où il permet à l'homme le loisir de l'âme. Mais s'il n'est employé qu'à servir la volonté de puissance et à combler une cupidité qui ouvre une gueule infinie, *concupiscentia est infinita*, il ramène le monde au chaos avec une vitesse accélérée. Lucien Romier peut écrire, s'il le veut, que ces conceptions de la vie ont cours chez le peuple 'le plus moralisant de la terre'. Il ne saurait se cacher néanmoins que les États-Unis sont déjà 'le pays où le principe de la famille semble le plus atteint'. Et quel fragile spiritualisme que celui qui n'a d'autre loi, d'autre inspiration que le *make money*, moralisme pragmatiste plutôt que religion, ne visant au surplus qu'à procurer la plus haute efficacité du travailleur, les conditions les plus favorables à la grande production!²⁴

Most nationalist observers were also reasonably critical of American liberty. It was generally assumed that freedom and order were out of balance in America, and that licentiousness was the result of American liberty. While serving as a chaplain in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Mississippi, Antonio Huot (1877–1929) warned the readers of *La Revue canadienne* in 1908 that 'le plus grand problème moral dont la solution s'impose, aujourd'hui, au peuple américain est celui-ci: où mettre les bornes entre la liberté et la licence?'²⁵ American society, he argued, was too permissive, relativistic and secular. Quebec's leading late nineteenth-century nationalist editor, Jules-Paul Tardivel (1851–1905), agreed:

En Angleterre on a quelques notions de liberté. Aux États-Unis on parle beaucoup de liberté. La langue anglaise a même deux mots pour exprimer la chose: liberty et freedom; deux beaux mots,

certes, qui arrondissent admirablement une phrase et qui font toujours éclater des applaudissements pourvu qu'on les prononce avec un peu d'emphase. Mais la Land of freedom n'a réellement pas la moindre idée de ce que c'est que la vraie liberté ... La liberté qui existe aux États-Unis, est la liberté libérale ou maçonnique. Et cette liberté là – une fausse liberté – est très nuisible à l'Église, en ce sens qu'elle lui enlève de nombreux enfants et affaibli l'esprit de foi chez beaucoup de ceux qu'elle ne lui arrache pas entièrement.²⁶

Tardivel drew a great deal of inspiration from France's counter-revolutionary tradition and correspondingly held the idea of equality in low regard. He viewed American egalitarianism, like its French counterpart, as a radical attempt at class levelling:

Les hommes sont créés égaux dans ce sens que tous sont composés d'une âme et d'un corps, que tous sont mortels, que tous ont la même fin surnaturelle à laquelle ils ne peuvent parvenir que par la même aide d'En-Haut, la pratique des mêmes vertus, l'éloignement des mêmes péchés. Mais ce n'est pas dans ce sens métaphysique que les Révolutionnaires, tant Américains que Français, entendent l'égalité. Ils parlent de l'égalité sociale et politique. Or cette égalité n'a jamais existé, n'existera jamais, ne peut pas exister. Il n'y a peut-être pas deux hommes 'créés égaux' dans ce sens; il n'y a pas deux hommes qui possèdent exactement les mêmes qualités intellectuelles, les mêmes aptitudes, les mêmes dons physiques. Tous ne sont pas appelés aux mêmes rôles dans la société. Le fils est-il 'créé égal' à son père? L'imbécile, le *minus habens*, est-il l'égal, socialement, et politiquement parlant, de l'homme d'étude et de génie?²⁷

American political institutions generated little commentary among Quebec's nationalist intellectuals. American culture and education, by contrast, produced a great deal of writing. In the United States, argued nationalists, culture had become commodified and debased. America's intellectual elite had lost all cultural influence and culture was designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator. Moreover, as America's cultural influence grew after the Great War, its French Canadian detractors became more vocal.

Many French Canadian intellectuals were educators and, in their eyes, American schools and colleges embodied a distinctly new form of learning. American education was viewed as secular, egalitarian

and utilitarian. This, of course, could only draw the ire of conservative nationalists, who held these values in low regard. Education, they believed, was a moral and spiritual endeavour whose main purpose was to separate the wheat from the chaff and, ultimately, to prepare an elite for the challenges of leadership. It was also, insisted Jules-Paul Tardivel, a private endeavour. In his 1900 essay on *La situation religieuse aux États-Unis*, he fustigated 'le principe radicalement faux et souverainement funeste qui fait de l'éducation de l'enfance une fonction de l'État, une œuvre politique'.²⁸

Issues related to race and ethnicity in the United States also generated a fair degree of criticism in Quebec. However, many nationalist intellectuals suffered from an essential dilemma: how could they criticize America's mistreatment of its racial minorities without actually appealing for racial equality? Most resolved this quandary with a healthy dose of paternalism. Indigenous people and African Americans deserved protection, but not necessarily equality.

For some turn-of-the-twentieth-century nationalists, both the Republic's treatment of its black population and the African American himself were viewed as blemishes on American society. Indeed, though segregation and racial violence were denounced in nationalist writing, Black Americans were seldom treated as intellectual and moral equals. For instance, in 1902, abbé Antonio Huot condemned 'l'infranchissable *color line*, comme on dit en ce pays, qui empêche les blancs et les noirs de voyager en chemin de fer, dans le même wagon, et de dîner au restaurant à la même table, dans les anciens États esclavagistes'. Yet, in the same breath, he insisted that 'la race noire est une race inférieure, et il serait absolument chimérique de croire qu'il soit possible au nègre, placé dans les mêmes conditions que le blanc, d'atteindre le niveau intellectuel de celui-ci'.²⁹ Commentary on immigration generated a similar dilemma. Given the presence of a large French Canadian immigrant population in New England, many nationalists were inclined to welcome the rise of multiculturalism in the United States. But these same observers also tended to be critical of large-scale immigration in Canada, so they often confined their critical remarks on immigration in the United States to specific groups, most notably to the Irish and to Jews.

In Quebec, elite hostility to the Irish frequently revolved around ethnic tensions within the Roman Catholic Church. Many French Canadian intellectuals accused the Irish-American episcopate of dominating the American Church and of trying to assimilate Franco-Americans. For their part, American Jews occasionally embodied the

contradictory stereotypes of capitalist greed and revolutionary agitation in nationalist writing. For instance, in 1924, Harry Bernard argued that the American movie industry was controlled by Jews – ‘les pellicules qu’on nous montre sont, à de rares exceptions près, de provenance américaine, ou, pour mieux dire, judéo-américaine’ – and that Jewish movie moguls were enriching themselves by promoting immorality and subversion:

Les Juifs, outre le but de déchristianisation qu’on leur prête, ont pour principal objet de réaliser de l’argent et de mettre la main sur les finances du monde. En s’emparant du cinéma, ils ne songent pas tant à faire de l’art qu’à s’accaparer la richesse. Pour arriver à leurs fins, rien ne sera négligeable ni trop bas; ils exploiteront les passions sous toutes les formes, flatteront les instincts. Ils n’ont aucun souci de la morale ni de l’ordre, et le merveilleux moyen d’éducation qu’est le cinéma deviendra entre leurs mains, à cause de leur soif d’or et de leur rage de domination, un outil de dépravation, une école de corruption et de révolution. S’ils y voient une raison d’attirer les foules, et d’emplir la caisse, ils propageront les idées anti-sociales, se feront les champions du divorce ou de l’amour libre, à l’occasion des pratiques malthusiennes. Naturellement ennemis de l’ordre, ils accorderont un appui bienveillant au socialisme le plus destructeur. Pour eux, il n’y a d’important que ce qui fait recette.³⁰

Anti-American rhetoric also contained powerful gendered messages.³¹ Many nationalists were concerned by what they saw as rising gender equality in the United States, which they believed was as an affront to traditional notions of the complementarity of the sexes. American women were abandoning their established role as wives and mothers; they were invading the public sphere and, worse still, were given to promiscuity. The implication was clear: modernity was corrosive to traditional gender relations; it was turning women into men.

Nationalists placed a great deal of importance on the role of women in *la survivance*, and perceived American attitudes towards gender equality were viewed as a threat to the nation. On occasion, the issue would surface in French Canadian literature. In *La campagne canadienne* (1925), for instance, Jesuit Adélarde Dugré (1881–1970) contrasted gender relations in the United States and Canada and warned his readers against emigration and mixed marriages. During a trip to rural Quebec, the novel’s protagonist, Franco-American

physician François Barré, is awakened to the harsh reality of his family's degeneracy:

Devant ces hommes si simplement maîtres chez eux, qui avaient une idée si nette et si ferme de ce que doit être la famille, le docteur américain se sentait humilié de l'anarchie qui régnait à son foyer. Vraiment sa femme y prenait trop de place. Qu'elle eût une voix prépondérante quand il s'agissait des choses de son ressort, passe. Quelle s'occupât seule de meubler la maison, de choisir ou de renvoyer les servantes, qu'elle allât même jusqu'à déterminer l'emploi des soirées libres, le but et l'itinéraire de leurs voyages, passe encore; mais qu'elle se chargeât d'orienter la carrière de son mari, de choisir sa clientèle et de lui indiquer son gagne-pain, c'était trop fort. En cela c'est lui, François, qui devait être juge suprême et maître souverain. Il était temps que Fanny l'apprît et l'acceptât. Il y a des cas majeurs où la femme doit obéir et se taire, si elle ne peut pas approuver et se réjouir.³²

In Dugré's novel, François Barré's son is out of control and his wife is disobedient, domineering, irreligious and immodest. The Barrés were, it seemed, a typical American family.

French Canadian nationalists were also quick to identify America with the evils of *machinisme* and the unregulated market. Indeed, though they were very much in favour of free enterprise, nationalists regularly denounced industrial gigantism and monopolistic capitalism, preferring instead a system where industry was more decentralized, both in terms of its ownership and of its location. American investment in Canadian industry was furthering the economic marginalization of French Canadians. It was upsetting the balance between urban and rural society, and was producing both obscene wealth and a restless and underprivileged working class.

The Great Depression confirmed nationalist apprehensions regarding massive industrialization and laissez-faire capitalism. Paul-Henri Guimont (1906–2000), for instance, blamed the crisis on American industrial gigantism. A rising star at Montreal's hotbed of Catholic economic thought, the *École des Hautes Études commerciales*, Guimont argued in 1935 that America had broken the natural equilibrium between agriculture and industry. Indeed, an over-reliance on massive and heavily standardized industrial production had been its undoing:

Dans la formation de son économie, elle avait fondé sur la formule nouvelle et vulgaire de la standardisation industrielle

d'extravagantes et insatiables ambitions. Elle avait méprisé le génie créateur et conservateur de la vieille Europe. L'originalité dans la conception lui était inconnue. Elle s'était gratifiée d'une superstructure industrielle excessive à laquelle correspondait une population trop peu nombreuse.³³

French Canada and the United States

Negative assessments of American society served a higher purpose. They helped French Canadian intellectuals define their national experience, most notably by presenting Quebec as a fundamentally conservative, anti-American entity. Unlike the United States, Quebec was founded on the bedrock of tradition and continuity. For Father Adélarde Dugré, the contrast between these two entities was evident: French Canadian society was 'simple, patriarcale, essentiellement catholique et conservatrice', while American society was 'éblouissante et tapageuse, protestante et matérialiste'. Quebec, as the inheritor of pre-revolutionary France, was the embodiment of Catholic tradition, while America was the quintessence of both Protestantism and modernity. Accordingly, Dugré began *La Campagne canadienne* with the following preface:

Il existe actuellement, dans l'Amérique du Nord, deux civilisations fort différentes: l'une est représentée par cent millions d'Anglo-Saxons, l'autre par trois ou quatre millions de Canadiens d'origine française. Ce qui distingue ces deux groupes inégaux, ce n'est pas seulement la langue qu'ils parlent et la foi religieuse de la grande majorité de ceux qui les composent, c'est aussi la diversité dans les manières d'agir, la divergence de vues dans la façon d'envisager la vie, ses jouissances et ses devoirs. On a hérité, au Canada français, du tempérament et des traditions de la France catholique du dix-septième siècle; on a hérité, chez les Américains anglo-saxons, du libre examen et de l'esprit utilitaire des Anglais du règne d'Élisabeth ... Cette opposition dans le caractère des deux groupes ethniques se trahit constamment dans la pratique de la vie: l'exercice du culte divin, les coutumes familiales, l'éducation, la littérature, le commerce et la réclame, les procédés électoraux, les fêtes populaires, tout traduit à l'observateur le moins attentif les profondes différences qui distinguent le Canadien resté français de l'Américain-type.³⁴

But French Canadian distinctiveness was not only based on Catholicism and French language and culture, it was also racial. Americans, it was argued, were Anglo-Saxons, and French Canadians, as Latins, were their racial antipodes. The two races, indeed, possessed fundamentally different characteristics. As Father Édouard Hamon (1891–1904) noted in *Les Canadiens-Français de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* (1891), ‘le caractère français est juste aux antipodes du caractère anglo-saxon-américain. Autant l’un est gai, expansif, sans souci, compatissant avec les misères des autres, prêt aux sacrifices les plus généreux, autant l’autre est froid, concentré, calculateur et égoïste’.³⁵ These racial differences would inevitably spawn two fundamentally distinct societies.

Nationalist intellectuals believed that French Canadian distinctiveness was threatened by the United States, and Americanization was a major issue of concern in Quebec. This was particularly true during the interwar years, when nationalists were alarmed by the rapid spread of American popular culture. Americanization, it was argued, was a sly form of assimilation precisely because it relied on seemingly benign (i.e. cultural) means of propagation. Indeed, as journalist and literary critic Victor Barbeau (1894–1994) noted in 1922, while Britain’s attempts to assimilate French Canada through violence and legislation had failed, American efforts to weaken French Canadian *survivance* with movies, jazz, chewing gum, comics, soft drinks, chorus girls and baseball were succeeding:

Ce sont eux, en tout cas, que les Américains y emploient. Le pays en est infesté d’une rive à l’autre. Vassal économique des États-Unis, le Canada est en passe de devenir également son vassal spirituel. Canadiens-anglais et Canadiens-français ne pensent, ne vivent, ne jugent que par leurs voisins. Dans tous les étages de la société leur influence pénètre et se développe. On ne va au cinéma que pour voir glorifier leurs prouesses, admirer leur ingéniosité, applaudir leur drapeau. On ne lit leurs journaux, leurs revues que pour apprendre les derniers de leurs exploits, les plus beaux de leurs accomplissements politiques ou sportifs. Ils nous écrasent de leur vie nationale. Nous ne semblons exister que pour nous féliciter de les avoir comme voisins et nous appliquer à leur ressembler le plus possible.³⁶

But Americanization did not only rely on cultural means to propagate itself. Emigration and American investment were also cited as vectors of Canadian–American convergence. Even women were occasionally

accused of contributing to Quebec's Americanization. 'La femme est l'un des grands facteurs responsables de l'américanisme au Canada', wrote Ernestine Pineault-Léveillé in 1936. 'L'américanisme', she continued, 'a désaxé la femme. En lui proposant toutes les libertés, en la sortant du foyer dont elle est la reine et maîtresse naturelle, en obnubilant sa conscience et troublant sa foi, il brisa du même coup la famille, aggrava le problème économique et disqualifia la société'.³⁷

The growth of international unionism also angered many on the nationalist right. Quebec's Roman Catholic clergy viewed American unions as dangerous agents of secularism and assimilation, and saw itself as engaged in a life and death struggle with international unionism for the soul of Quebec's proletariat. Indeed, as far as the Catholic Church was concerned, issues related to labour and industry were inseparable from religion. As a result, theological arguments dominated nationalist criticism of international unionism. The editor of *Le Devoir*, Henri Bourassa (1868–1952), summed up the nationalist position in a 1919 pamphlet:

Le syndicalisme international et neutre est pernicieux en soi et dans tous les pays, parce qu'il ne tient aucun compte, dans la recherche des avantages qu'il propose à ses adhérents, de Dieu, de la famille et de la patrie, ces trois assises fondamentales de l'ordre social chrétien. Le péril est incomparablement plus grand ici que partout ailleurs, à cause de l'unique voisinage des États-Unis. Le syndicalisme international veut dire, au Canada, le complet assujettissement des travailleurs canadiens aux caprices et à la domination du travail américain syndiqué. C'est l'une des manifestations les plus complètes et les plus prenantes de la conquête morale et économique du Canada par les États-Unis.³⁸

Nationalist intellectuals refused to accept the notion that class solidarity could transcend borders and religious denominations, and they were fervently opposed to the establishment of a secular, American space within Quebec's proletariat. Secularism, indeed, was a veritable Pandora's box. 'La neutralité a fait du syndicalisme américain un champ propice à la contagion des erreurs (révolutionnaires, socialistes)', wrote Catholic labour leader Alfred Charpentier (1888–1982) in 1920, 'il n'aspire sans cesse qu'à des réformes de plus en plus égalitaires; il se fait de la sorte, plus ou moins à son insu, le précurseur du socialisme'.³⁹ International unions, it was argued, had a penchant for strikes, violence and, ultimately, for subversion. Indeed, in nationalist prose, America itself was often viewed as a *terreau fertile* for radicalism.

Conclusion

The rise of modernity invariably produces two basic sensibilities. In pre-1945 Quebec, however, the essential dichotomy between modern and anti-modern thought was expressed, in part, by a debate centred on the province's *américanité*. The thrust of anti-Americanism in Quebec was undeniably anti-modern. During the period under study, French Canada was a traditional society undergoing rapid change and the disintegration of premodern social relations. American society came to embody these changes to the French Canadian intellectual. As a result, most French Canadian writing on America contained an encrypted commentary on the mass age.

In early twentieth-century Quebec, where political institutions were not generally viewed as vital elements of national distinctiveness, social and cultural affairs dominated writing on the United States. Anti-American rhetoric was present in nationalist writing before the Great War, but it intensified in the 1920s and 1930s, as the American presence in the province increased and fears related to cultural Americanization and the economic marginalization of French Canadians grew. With the weakening of imperialist sentiment in postwar English-speaking Canada, many intellectuals began to regard the United States as the chief threat to French Canadian *survivance*. By the 1940s, however, anti-Americanism had begun to decline as nationalist rhetoric became less intensely Catholic and conservative. This would not result in its disappearance from French Canadian discourse, however, and the anti-American torch would be passed on to Quebec's nascent left during the Quiet Revolution. Indeed, despite its many ups and downs, anti-Americanism has remained present in French Canadian discourse since the late eighteenth century. America's symbolic significance, coupled with its economic and cultural presence in Quebec, has ensured this continuity.

Notes

- 1 Yvan Lamonde, *Ni avec eux ni sans eux: le Québec et les États-Unis* (Montreal: Nuit Blanche, 1996), 11.
- 2 Gérard Bouchard, 'Le Québec comme collectivité neuve. Le refus de l'américanité dans le discours de la survivance', in *Québécois et Américains: la culture québécoise aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles*, eds. Gérard Bouchard and Yvan Lamonde (Montreal: Fides, 1995), 16.
- 3 Joseph Yvon Thériault, *Critique de l'américanité. Mémoire et démocratie au Québec* (Montreal: Québec-Amérique, 2002), *passim*.
- 4 Patricia K. Wood, 'Defining "Canadian": Anti-Americanism and Identity in Sir John A. Macdonald's Nationalism', *Journal of Canadian Studies* 36 (2001): 49–50.
- 5 Frank Underhill, 'Canada and the Canadian Question, 1954', in his *In*

- Search of Canadian Liberalism* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1960), 214.
- 6 Pascal Ory's definition of the intellectual has been applied to this study. 'L'intellectuel', Ory argues, 'est un homme du culturel mis en situation d'homme du politique, producteur et consommateur d'idéologie'. (Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France, de l'Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* [Paris: Armand Colin, 1986], 10). On the whole, the intellectuals examined in this study were essentially cultural figures – journalists, clergymen, etc. – who became involved in socio-political debate without directly entering the world of partisan politics.
 - 7 Jean-François Revel, *L'obsession anti-américaine: son fonctionnement, ses causes, ses conséquences* (Paris: Plon, 2002), 247.
 - 8 Pascal Ory, 'From Baudelaire to Duhamel: An Unlikely Antipathy', in *The Rise and Fall of French Anti-Americanism: A Century of French Perception*, eds. Denis Lacorne et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 42.
 - 9 Indeed, as historian Réal Bélanger notes, 'l'antiaméricanisme et le proaméricanisme n'ont de signification que dans leur rapport avec un plus grand ensemble idéologique qui leur sert de référent'. (Bélanger, 'Le spectre de l'américanisation: commentaire', in *Les rapports culturels entre le Québec et les États-Unis*, ed. Claude Savary [Quebec: IQRC, 1984], 168).
 - 10 Sylvie Lacombe, *La rencontre de deux peuples élus. Comparaison des ambitions nationale et impériale au Canada entre 1896 et 1920* (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002), passim.
 - 11 Nevertheless, as Pierre Trépanier notes, 'l'ultramontanisme, comme le conservatisme modéré, avait pour tradition de référence non seulement la contre-révolution française, mais surtout une synthèse proprement canadienne-française intégrant partiellement le traditionalisme britannique, avec sa singularité: le parlementarisme. L'ultracisme canadien-français ne coïncidera jamais parfaitement avec son homologue français. Joseph de Maistre, oui, mais aussi Edmund Burke et Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine, dont la conquête de la responsabilité ministérielle a été saluée comme une victoire nationale, nationaliste même'. (Trépanier, 'Notes pour une histoire des droites intellectuelles canadiennes-françaises à travers leurs principaux représentants (1770–1970)', *Cahiers des Dix* 48 [1993]: 122.)
 - 12 J. Van Houten quoted in J.L. Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home: Canadians and Anti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 6.
 - 13 Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), xiii.
 - 14 Guy Sorman, 'United States: Model or Bête Noire', in *The Rise and Fall of French Anti-Americanism*, ed. Lacorne et al., 213. According to Stephen Brooks, 'America as a "city upon a hill" and America as an "evening land" are two sides of the same coin. The coin involves the utopian expectations associated with America, or what [I call] the mythic meaning of America. Most of the millions of people who have left their native countries for America, to live or visit, have come in search of something far less grand than utopia. But foreign observers of the American scene ... have understood that America represented an important new chapter in human history and that its potential for greatness lay not in economic brawn or military prowess, not in its engineering marvels or its ability to assimilate millions of immigrants from countless nationalities, but in the ideals embodied in its social structures and political institutions'. (Brooks, *America Through Foreign Eyes: Classical Interpretations of American Political Life* [Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002], 150).
 - 15 Philip Massolin, *Canadian Intellectuals, the Tory Tradition, and the Challenge of Modernity, 1939–1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3.
 - 16 Alexis Nouis, *La modernité* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995), 15, 19.
 - 17 Yvan Lamonde, 'La modernité au Québec: pour une histoire des brèches (1895–1950)', in *L'avènement de la modernité culturelle au Québec*, eds. Yvan Lamonde and Esther Trépanier (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1986), 307.
 - 18 Alvin Z. Rubinstein and D.E. Smith, 'Anti-Americanism: Anatomy of a Phenomenon', in *Anti-Americanism in the Third World: Implications for U.S. Foreign*

- Policy, eds. A.Z. Rubinstein and D.E. Smith (New York: Praeger, 1985), 17.
- 19 Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform from Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 136
 - 20 Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 5.
 - 21 Ernestine Pineault-Léveillé, 'Notre américanisation par la femme', *Revue dominicaine* XLII (1936): 146.
 - 22 Ceslas Forest, 'Notre américanisation par les sports', *Revue dominicaine* XLII (1936): 350–1.
 - 23 Hermas Bastien, 'L'américanisation par la philosophie', *Revue dominicaine* XLII (1936): 201.
 - 24 Lionel Groulx, *Nos responsabilités intellectuelles* (Montreal: L'Action française, 1928), 28.
 - 25 Antonio Huot, 'Aux États-Unis: Les universités', *La Revue canadienne*, New Series, II (1908): 554.
 - 26 Jules-Paul Tardivel, *La situation religieuse aux Etats-Unis. Illusions et réalités* (Quebec: Cadieux et Derome, 1900), 38, 195–6.
 - 27 Tardivel, *La situation religieuse aux Etats-Unis*, 128.
 - 28 Tardivel, *La situation religieuse aux Etats-Unis*, 153.
 - 29 Antonio Huot, 'Mœurs américaines. Blancs et noirs', *La Nouvelle-France* I (1902): 370, 376.
 - 30 Harry Bernard, 'L'ennemi dans la place: Théâtre et cinéma', *L'Action française* XII (1924): 70, 71–2.
 - 31 Wood, 'Defining "Canadian"', 53.
 - 32 Adélarde Dugré, *La campagne canadienne. Croquis et leçons* (Montreal: Le Messager, 1925), 202.
 - 33 Paul-Henri Guimont, 'Coup d'œil sur l'Amérique contemporaine', *L'Actualité économique* XI (1935): 55.
 - 34 Dugré, *La campagne canadienne*, 5–6, 234.
 - 35 Édouard Hamon, *Les Canadiens-Français de la Nouvelle-Angleterre* (Quebec: N.S. Hardy, 1891), 120.
 - 36 [Victor Barbeau], 'La politique: La méthode américaine', *Les Cahiers de Turc* V (1922): 31, 34.
 - 37 Ernestine Pineault-Léveillé, 'Notre américanisation par la femme', 132.
 - 38 Henri Bourassa, *Syndicats nationaux ou internationaux?* (Montreal: Le Devoir, 1919), 3.
 - 39 Alfred Charpentier, *De l'internationalisme au nationalisme* (Montreal: L'Action française, 1920), 13.

So Near and Yet So Far: The 1995 Quebec Referendum in Perspective

Nicholas Bayne

Abstract

Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney failed to reconcile Quebec with the rest of Canada. The *Parti Québécois* (PQ) government under Jacques Parizeau called a referendum in October 1995 to decide if the province would secede. While the federal government under Jean Chrétien barely intervened, the fiery rhetoric of Lucien Bouchard brought the separatists close to victory. Quebecers voted to stay in Canada by only 1 per cent. A massive late rally of non-Quebec Canadians pleading with Quebecers to remain probably tipped the balance. Bouchard, who succeeded Parizeau, never felt confident of winning another referendum. Later the PQ lost ground as separatism ceased to appeal. In the EU referendum of 2016 the British government failed to learn from Canada's experience. The Remain side campaigned negatively rather than positively, and did not mobilize its supporters as well as the Leave camp did. Canadian comparisons also remain relevant for Scotland.

Introduction

On Monday 30 October 1995, the people of Quebec voted in a referendum on whether to remain part of Canada. The turnout was extremely high, at 93 per cent. 49.4 per cent voted Yes, i.e. to separate; 50.6 per cent voted No. Quebecers decided to stay in Canada by a margin of barely one per cent. Yet over 20 years later, Canada is still united.

In this article I will examine how this referendum happened, as the third in a series; how it produced this result; and why it has not

been repeated.¹ In my conclusion I shall explore parallels with referenda taking place in the United Kingdom: on independence for Scotland and on membership of the European Union. I have drawn on my experience as British High Commissioner to Canada from 1992 to 1996.² I have also had great help from two former colleagues: Ivor Rawlinson, then Consul-General in Montreal; and Patrick Holdich, then head of the Political Section at the High Commission in Ottawa, who later held the Montreal post also.

The first referendum of 1980: Trudeau and Lévesque

From its creation in 1867, the Dominion of Canada was a federation.³ It began with four founding provinces, which have now risen to ten together with three Arctic territories. In federations there is often a power struggle between the central government and the component provinces and usually rivalry among provinces as well. In Canada, Quebec asserted itself in both respects. This was because of its long-standing French legacy of history, language, law and culture, which defined its identity.⁴

Yet by the twentieth century Quebec had also become an economic powerhouse, centred on the cosmopolitan city of Montreal. Many large Canadian firms were based there and the city hosted the World's Fair in 1967 and the Olympic Games in 1976. This prosperity attracted English speakers to the province in increasing numbers, which challenged its francophone traditions. A movement emerged which argued that Quebec could only preserve its identity if it separated itself from the rest of Canada. This movement profited from the vacuum left by the decline of the Roman Catholic Church, the historic foundation of Quebec.

Separatism was manifested in various ways. French President Charles de Gaulle, when he visited Montreal in 1967, famously cried out '*Vive le Québec libre!*'⁵ In 1970 a terrorist group, the *Front de Libération de Québec* (FLQ), kidnapped James Cross, the British Trade Commissioner, and Pierre Laporte, a Quebec minister. Cross was released, but Laporte was murdered. Pierre Trudeau, recently elected as Canadian Prime Minister, invoked federal emergency laws and applied them with extreme rigour.⁶ Yet the most lasting sign was the formation of the *Parti Québécois* (PQ) in 1968, led by René Lévesque, with Jacques Parizeau as a founder member. The goal of the PQ was Quebec sovereignty. This meant separating Quebec from the rest of Canada, though without necessarily going as far as complete independence.⁷

In 1976 the PQ won the provincial election, defeating the Quebec Liberal Party under Robert Bourassa. Thereafter, PQ and Liberals alternated in power at intervals of exactly nine years, up until 2012. Lévesque, as premier, invited Quebecers to vote for 'sovereignty-association' in a referendum in May 1980, the first of the three. Despite – or perhaps because of – the ambiguity of the new status proposed for Quebec, it was rejected by 60 per cent against 40 per cent, on an 86 per cent turnout. Even so, Quebec suffered economic damage, as big firms moved away and outside investment dried up.⁸ Lévesque never contemplated another referendum and the PQ lost power in 1985. The matter might have rested there, except for Trudeau's intervention.

Trudeau, himself a Quebecer, was a conviction politician, combative and single-minded.⁹ Returned to power early in 1980, he resolved to unify Canada by amending the constitution. He put his justice minister, another Quebecer called Jean Chrétien, in charge of the process. In a speech just before the referendum Trudeau promised Quebecers that if they rejected sovereignty, they would benefit from his constitutional reforms.¹⁰ These reforms introduced a new Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which provided that all Canadians should have access to education in both English and French. But education was a provincial responsibility and Quebec law required public education to be conducted in French. Quebecers felt betrayed by Trudeau. After other provinces were reluctantly brought to accept Trudeau's reforms, Lévesque still held out against them. He mounted a legal challenge to the Constitution Act of 1982, without success. The Act became law, but Quebec refused to ratify it.¹¹ Trudeau had sought to unify Canada, but ended by increasing tension between Quebec and the rest.

The second referendum of 1992: Mulroney and Bourassa

After Trudeau retired from politics, the federal election of 1984 was won by the Conservatives, led by Brian Mulroney, another Quebecer though of Irish ancestry. He campaigned on a promise to reconcile Quebec to the rest of Canada, which gained him many seats in the province. In provincial elections the Quebec Liberals defeated the PQ and Robert Bourassa returned to office.

I never saw Trudeau in action, but I observed Mulroney at close quarters. He was a dealmaker and conciliator, who used his Irish charm to win people round.¹² He encouraged Bourassa to devise constitutional formulae that would respond to Quebec's needs. These

were put to the provincial premiers as part of a new settlement, the Meech Lake Accord of 1987. The key provisions were: Quebec was recognized as 'a distinct society'; more powers were transferred to the provinces; and future constitutional amendments would require the assent of all provinces.

Meech Lake was welcomed in Quebec. It was accepted by the federal Liberals, though not by Trudeau and Chrétien, and it found favour with public opinion. Since it changed the amending formula of the constitution, it had to be ratified by all provincial legislatures within three years. With time, however, opinion in the rest of Canada turned against the accord, which was thought to give unfair privileges to Quebec. As the deadline approached, two provinces failed to adopt it. Time ran out and the Meech Lake Accord lapsed in 1990.¹³

Quebec saw this as a cruel rejection by the rest of Canada and separatist sentiments were revived. Bourassa felt obliged to promise a referendum on Quebec's future in Canada by October 1992, unless a better constitutional offer was available. This encouraged Mulroney to try again, but conditions were now less favourable. Other provinces had their own demands, while the aboriginal peoples sought recognition. Canadians in general were tired of constitutional rounds and wanted more attention to economic issues. Mounting public debt had obliged Mulroney to cut back public spending and raise taxes, which was not well received.

Mulroney's second attempt reached its climax in the summer of 1992. A conference of federal and provincial ministers was hard at work when the Queen came to Ottawa for Canada Day on 1 July, to mark the 125th anniversary of Confederation. I had just arrived as High Commissioner and I heard her publicly urge the parties to agree. Sure enough, a deal was struck, so that a meeting between Prime Minister Mulroney, Quebec Premier Bourassa and all the other provincial premiers was fixed for late August in Prince Edward Island. There they formally endorsed the Charlottetown Accord.

This was a clumsier package than Meech Lake. As before, Quebec would be recognized as a distinct society; more powers were shifted away from the centre; and constitutional amendments required agreement by all provinces. In addition, the federal Senate would have a new method of selection; the aboriginal peoples would move towards self-government; and sundry new rights and freedoms were introduced. This complex deal was accepted by the federal and all provincial governments: by the Liberal opposition, including Chrétien (now its leader) though not Trudeau; by the main aboriginal leaders; and by most of the media. I commended it to London. Mulroney

declared a nationwide referendum in October 1992, to meet Bourassa's deadline.

Canadian elites backed the Charlottetown Accord. But the Canadian people rejected it in this second referendum, by 54 per cent against 46 per cent with an average turnout of 72 per cent. The strongest rejection was in Western Canada, but it was also voted down in Quebec. This result reflected deep public frustration across the country. Canada was in a recession, which increased the pain of measures to correct the budget deficit. Canadians felt poor and put upon. They held Mulroney's government responsible and punished it by the means at hand.¹⁴

Charlottetown failed, just like Meech Lake. As before, this outcome boosted separatist feeling in Quebec. Mulroney, like Trudeau, had sought to unify Canada, but ended by increasing tension between Quebec and the rest.

The third referendum, October 1995: Chrétien, Parizeau and Bouchard

In 1993 Mulroney stepped down. The Conservatives went into federal elections, with uncertain prospects. The Canadian people punished them again and they were annihilated. They won only two seats, one being held in Quebec by Jean Charest. The Liberals came back into power, under Jean Chrétien as prime minister.

But the Liberals did not do well in Quebec. Most seats went instead to a new party, the *Bloc Québécois* (BQ), a federal manifestation of the provincial *Parti Québécois* (PQ). The BQ was founded and led by Lucien Bouchard, whom Mulroney had brought into politics as part of his campaign to reconcile Quebec.¹⁵ He had won a Conservative seat in Quebec and joined Mulroney's second cabinet. But after Meech Lake was rejected he broke with Mulroney and joined the separatist camp. His BQ profited from Quebecers' disgust at the failure of all Mulroney's policies and their mistrust of the Liberals and of Chrétien in person. They won so many seats as to be the second party in the federal parliament and form the official opposition. Many feared dire consequences, but in fact the BQ made little impact either in Ottawa or back in Quebec.¹⁶ Bouchard himself, however, gained much sympathy when he survived a near-fatal disease, at the cost of losing a leg.

The *Parti Québécois* returned to power in September 1994. Jacques Parizeau, the new premier, declared he would hold a referendum on

Quebec sovereignty within a year. Parizeau had an avuncular manner that concealed both a lively brain – he had a doctorate from the LSE – and a fierce political determination.¹⁷ When I first met him as premier, I told him my government wanted Canada to stay united. ‘I am not surprised’, he said with a smile.¹⁸ Parizeau intended Quebec to move directly to independence. He claimed it could still use the Canadian dollar, enjoy dual citizenship and be grandfathered in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He was convinced that Quebec would prosper in those conditions and commissioned economic studies to prove it, though he suppressed those that disagreed with him. In his view, there was no turning back if a majority voted for sovereignty. I was at a lunch in Ottawa with the European Union ambassadors where Parizeau insisted that Quebecers would then be ‘in a lobster pot’, from which they could not escape.¹⁹

However, not all of the PQ members were as militant as Parizeau. There was also a more moderate wing, led by Bouchard, who wanted the referendum to trigger negotiations with the federal government. After much debate, the party agreed to hold its referendum on Monday 30 October 1995, with a long question that combined both views:

Do you agree that Quebec should become sovereign, after having made a formal offer to Canada for a new economic and political partnership, within the scope of the Bill respecting the future of Quebec and of the agreement signed on June 12, 1995?²⁰

The final phrase referred to a pledge that post-referendum negotiations must be complete within a year; Parizeau had insisted on this.

As the referendum approached, Daniel Johnson, who now led the Quebec Liberals, kept his head down, believing that the PQ would run themselves into the ground. On the federal government side, Chrétien wanted to avoid the mistakes made by Trudeau and Mulroney. He was a cautious but determined politician, who followed his instincts. He chose to adopt a low profile, convinced that the good sense of his fellow Quebecers would produce the right answer. In his memoirs Chrétien states that he ‘reluctantly went along’ with his advisers, who wanted him to limit his participation.²¹ But that was not how it looked at the time. Chrétien knew he was unpopular in Quebec because of his links with Trudeau and largely kept out of the province himself. He often clashed with Johnson, while insisting federal referendum strategy was only handled by Quebecers in his own entourage. Chrétien denied any role to people from elsewhere in Canada. He vetoed contingency

planning against a Yes vote, since this would suggest the federalists expected to lose.²²

For a long time this looked like the right strategy. Parizeau was not a good public advocate for his cause. He reassured committed separatists, but did not win over the undecided. Opinion polls showed support for Yes (i.e. separation) at barely 45 per cent in early October, a month before the vote. Then Parizeau handed over the campaign to Lucien Bouchard, which changed everything.

Bouchard had many assets.²³ As a moderate separatist, he believed many Quebecers were not ready for a single leap into independence; they would prefer a transitional process before they took this irrevocable step. This attitude brought into the separatist camp supporters of the small *Action Démocratique du Québec*, led by Mario Dumont.²⁴ Bouchard was personally popular in Quebec for breaking with Mulroney after Meech Lake. By surviving his deadly disease he had become a sort of secular saint. His widely reported remark to the surgeons during his amputation – ‘*Que l’on continue*’ (Keep going) – was taken as an appeal to the separatist camp.²⁵ Finally, he was a magnetic orator and attracted vast crowds to his public rallies. He captured people’s attention and won them to his side.

Opinion polls now moved rapidly in the separatists’ favour. With ten days to go they were showing the Yes side ahead, by 54 per cent to 46 per cent, having gained seven points in a week. When Paul Martin, the finance minister, spelt out publicly the economic drawbacks of separation, this was dismissed as scaremongering. The federal strategy was close to collapse and there was panic in Ottawa. Johnson appealed to Chrétien to reaffirm the pledges of constitutional change to benefit Quebec. Chrétien refused, but the press saw this as evidence of fatal disunity in the No camp.²⁶

Chrétien decided he must take over the campaign. He gave in to Johnson and, speaking in Montreal, promised ‘a new deal’ that would confirm Quebec as a distinct society and increase provincial powers. He also made two sombre appeals on television, in French and English.²⁷ Meanwhile, concern mounted all across the country. Chrétien’s ministers from outside Quebec, led by Brian Tobin, the fisheries minister from Newfoundland, could no longer endure the prospect of Canada coming apart. They overrode his order to keep silent and mounted a vast demonstration in Montreal, three days before the vote. This attracted a crowd over 100,000 strong and was attended by Chrétien, Johnson and four provincial premiers. The rally put over the message that the rest of Canada wanted Quebec to stay.²⁸

There were also some foreign interventions in the campaign. US President Bill Clinton, after meeting Chrétien in New York, declared at a press conference:

I can tell you that a strong and united Canada has been a wonderful partner for the United States ... I hope we'll be able to continue that.²⁹

He repeated the formula several times, without referring to a script. French President Jacques Chirac was more ambiguous when interviewed by Larry King for CNN. He said that France would not interfere; but if Quebec voted to separate 'of course we would recognise the fact'.³⁰ British Prime Minister John Major made no public statement (I had advised against one) but sent Chrétien a personal message of support just ahead of the vote. When I transmitted this, Chrétien told me the No camp was regaining lost ground and the Montreal rally had been a shot in the arm.³¹ But if Yes should win, he hoped the UK would still back the federal government.

On referendum day, Parizeau and Bouchard, convinced they would win, were drafting their victory speeches. By chance John Coles, the head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was visiting Ottawa that day; after the polls closed we sat before the television in Earncliffe to watch the results come in, district by district.³² For some reason, the rural francophone districts reported first. Suspense grew as the Yes votes built up a dangerous lead. The Montreal results only began to come in after 10pm. The No votes inched up the dial to just past the total for Yes. The disappointment proved too hard for Parizeau to bear and he publicly blamed his defeat on 'money and the ethnic vote'.³³ He resigned at once as premier after this racist comment, as he had always intended to do if the vote went against him.

Causes and consequences

The next section of this article addresses three questions in turn:

- What would have happened if the Yes side had won?
- What caused the unusual result, with so large a turnout and so narrow a margin?
- Why has Quebec remained in Canada, after coming so close to leaving?

Consequences of a Yes vote

There has been much speculation about this.³⁴ I can record here what I thought would happen at the time. Chrétien had forbidden any contingency plans and later wrote: 'I did not debate – and will never debate – what I would have done if the Yes side had won.'³⁵ Nevertheless, he had left some clues. It looked as if he would keep Parizeau guessing as long as possible. He would contest the result and launch a legal challenge to it, especially if the margin was small. He would drag his feet over any negotiations. If Parizeau declared Quebec independent unilaterally, Chrétien would deny his right to break up Canada.³⁶

On his side, Parizeau had anticipated that Chrétien would play for time and had lined up measures designed to force his hand.³⁷ The Quebec provincial assembly would meet at once to endorse the referendum result. A supportive letter from local dignitaries would be published. Canadian soldiers stationed in Quebec would be invited to join the new Quebec army. Even before the vote all embassies in Ottawa were being lobbied to extend diplomatic recognition. Parizeau believed his trump card was a pledge by President Jacques Chirac that France would at once recognize Quebec as an independent state and encourage other francophone countries to do so.

When Parizeau visited France in January 1995, he had called on Chirac, then only Mayor of Paris. Chirac had said publicly that if Quebec voted to leave, France 'would stand by the Quebecois and support and recognise the new situation'.³⁸ Had he gone further in private, either then or later? My French contacts in Ottawa were nervous and so was Chrétien, as his memoirs reveal. Chirac was known to be impulsive, and relations between the two men were not good. Chrétien had publicly belittled Chirac's chances of being elected president in May; Chirac had tried to hijack the agenda of the Halifax G7 summit in June, so that Chrétien had to exert his authority from the chair.³⁹ Even so, since he became president, Chirac had been correct in public over Quebec, if not exactly helpful. If he had made any private pledges, these were never tested.

Reasons for the result

A month before the referendum it looked as if the Yes side were bound to lose, with polls giving them less than 45 per cent of the vote. Bouchard's rhetoric brought them to within a whisker of 50 per cent on the day,

while all the polls had forecast they would win. The turnout of 93 per cent was exceptional, even by Quebec standards. What can explain this result?

In my view the Yes side was indeed heading for victory, until events in the last few days brought out a late surge in No voters that the polls did not catch. Two events could have encouraged this: Chrétien's pledge of constitutional reforms; and the pro-Canada rally in Montreal. At the time I believed that Chrétien's move was decisive; I am now more sceptical. It was clearly an act of desperation, against his settled principles. After the event he carried out his promise without enthusiasm. Having sounded out Mike Harris, the new premier of Ontario, he concluded there would be no support for another constitutional round. He simply introduced a resolution in parliament to recognize Quebec as a distinct society and to give Quebec, Ontario, Atlantic Canada, the Prairie provinces and British Columbia each a veto on constitutional change.⁴⁰

At the time Daniel Johnson thought the Montreal rally made things worse; but Chrétien gave his consent for it to happen and welcomed it later.⁴¹ If it had really irritated Quebecers, the Yes vote would have been even larger than the polls forecast. I believe the demonstration provided something that had been missing till then. The campaigners on both sides had hitherto focused exclusively on what Quebecers would gain, or what they would lose, by *leaving* Canada. Until the Montreal rally, no one had shown Quebecers what they gained by *remaining* in Canada, as part of this wider community. The rally served to dramatize the choice facing Quebec. Its positive and emotional message might not have changed people's minds. But it encouraged those still undecided, who would have stayed at home, to turn out and vote No. These were just enough to tip the scale and produce the exceptional level of votes cast. Justin Trudeau, then a student at McGill University, now Canadian Prime Minister, was at the rally and reached similar conclusions. He felt it was a seminal event, whose impact outlasted the campaign, and provided 'an opportunity for Canadians to express their attachment to Quebec'.⁴²

Yet if the rest of Canada could produce so strong an impact, why did Chrétien exclude them from his campaign? I believe previous experience had made him mistrustful. Other provincial governments, after initial resistance, had left Quebec isolated in opposing Trudeau's constitutional reforms. Other provincial legislatures had frustrated Meech Lake, while the electorates of Western Canada had voted massively against Charlottetown. On each occasion Quebec had felt

rejected by the rest of Canada and support for separation had surged. This time Chrétien had wanted the Quebecers to make up their own minds, without any outside influences. In fact this played into the separatists' hands, with almost fatal results.

Why is Quebec still in Canada?

After the nail-biting referendum result, many observers thought Quebec was bound to leave Canada eventually. I believed at the time that the odds had now turned against Canada remaining united. Francophone Quebecers made up 80 per cent of the population and nearly 60 per cent of them had voted to separate. There had been a steady outflow of English speakers and other non-francophones since 1980 and this gathered speed right after the referendum. It looked as if demographic trends would deliver the province to the separatists in a few years' time. Yet even before I left Canada in February 1996 I was changing my mind.

One reason was voter fatigue. Lucien Bouchard quickly replaced Parizeau as Quebec premier. He was widely expected to call new elections, followed very soon by another referendum. But Bouchard did not want another referendum unless he knew he could win it. Quebecers had endured non-stop politics for four years – a referendum, federal elections, provincial elections and another referendum. He could not rely on them turning out again; they needed a rest.

Bouchard also wanted to delay until Quebec was strong enough to thrive on its own. Public finances in Canada, both federal and provincial, were heavily indebted. Paul Martin had imposed deep public spending cuts to balance the Canadian budget and reduce the burden of federal debt. Quebec had the largest provincial debt in relation to its size. Bouchard made the restoration of healthy finances and buoyant economic growth his first priority.

In the event, Bouchard never felt strong enough to launch another referendum, though he was re-elected in 1998. Nor did his successor Bernard Landry, a close ally of Parizeau. This was because Jean Charest, elected in 1993 as the sole federal Conservative in the province (and present at the Montreal rally), had become leader of the Quebec Liberals and revived their fortunes. In 2003, after the usual nine years in power, the PQ lost power to the Liberals and Charest took over as premier. This suggested that the Quebec population was no longer hooked on separation. Lucien Bouchard, who had sought to divide Canada, in fact ended by keeping Quebec within it.

In Ottawa Chrétien was sharply criticized for nearly allowing the break-up of Canada and was determined to make it harder for this to happen in future. He asked the Supreme Court to rule on whether Quebec had the right to secede from Canada unilaterally. The Court's judgement, delivered in 1998, was nicely balanced. Quebec had no right to secede unilaterally; but the Canadian government was bound to negotiate if Quebecers expressed a clear will to secede. The Canadian parliament could also decide if a referendum question was clear enough to trigger negotiations. Both federal and Quebec governments declared they were pleased with the judgement.⁴³

Chrétien used the judgement as the basis of the Clarity Act of 2000, but went further. The Act empowered the Canadian parliament to determine, in advance of the vote, if a referendum question in Quebec or any other province was precise enough. After the vote, parliament could decide if a clear will had been expressed and would override a referendum result that was contrary to the act.⁴⁴ This law was not well received, being attacked by other provinces as well as Quebec. It was also opposed by the federal Conservatives, whose policy, when they later regained power under Stephen Harper, was not to stir up the Quebec issue. Chrétien declared he 'was immensely pleased' when the Clarity Act was adopted.⁴⁵ Yet I doubt whether it would be an effective defence against a strongly backed separatist movement. It imposes constraints before a referendum vote, especially on how the question is drafted. But the powers given to the federal parliament to reverse the vote once taken could prove impossible to enforce. The best protection lies in changing opinion in the Quebec population, where recent events have been encouraging.

Jean Charest's time as Quebec Premier lasted the usual nine years. During this time the *Bloc Québécois* lost ground badly, dropping to only four seats in the 2011 federal elections.⁴⁶ Despite this, the PQ regained power in 2012, though only with a plurality of seats. The new premier, Pauline Marois, made no promises of a future referendum, preferring to wait till she could win a clear majority. After a strong start she felt confident enough to call early elections in April 2014. But her plans went badly astray. During the campaign it emerged that a PQ majority would be taken as the signal for a new referendum. This was not what the Quebec electorate wanted to hear. They voted the Liberals back into power with 70 seats and a large majority. The PQ won only 30 seats, with their smallest share of the vote since 1970, their first appearance. Quebec politics has clearly moved a long way from what I experienced more than 20 years ago.

Conclusions: What Britain should have learnt from Canada about referenda

The United Kingdom, like Canada in the twentieth century, might have to undergo the ordeal of three referenda early in the twenty-first century: one on whether Scotland stayed in the UK in 2014; one on whether the UK stayed in the European Union in 2016; and a second one on Scotland, which is already threatened. Scotland decided in 2014 to remain part of the UK by a margin of 55 per cent against 45 per cent. But the 2016 referendum meant that the UK would have to leave the EU after over 40 years as a member. This was the decision of 52 per cent of voters against 48 per cent, on a 78 per cent turnout. The government was wholly unprepared for this result.

If the Remain campaign had studied the lessons that emerged from the Canadian experience and put them into practice, the UK might still be in the EU and the chances of Scotland leaving the Union much reduced. To my mind, there are three key lessons, to be analysed in turn:

- Remember referendum votes are volatile.
- Campaign positively, not just negatively.
- Motivate your backers to turn out on the day.

Lesson 1 Remember votes in referenda are volatile

In referenda, electors do not always vote on the question; they are often expressing their displeasure with government more generally. In 1992 the Canadian people were meant to be voting on constitutional change. In fact they used the referendum to punish Mulroney for neglecting their economic problems.

Much the same happened in the EU referendum in the UK. Many Leave voters were genuinely hostile to the EU, especially because of immigration policy. But many others used the EU as a scapegoat for their other frustrations and discontents, for example over economic austerity or the dominance of London as compared with the rest of the country. The Leave campaign exploited these frustrations with their simple message of 'take back control', though few of the outstanding problems would be solved by leaving the EU and many would be made worse. The Remain campaign did not wake up to the depth of these discontents until it was too late.

Lesson 2 Campaign positively and vigorously

In Canada, the No campaign in 1995 was low key and appealed to reason. It was negative, pointing out the dangers of separation, and

nearly led to disaster. In contrast the Yes campaign was positive; it appealed to the heart and stressed the benefits of Quebec sovereignty. Only the emotional impact of the late Montreal rally saved the No side and kept Quebec in Canada.

For the EU referendum there was a similar contrast between the two campaigns. The Remain side relied on gloomy forecasts from the Treasury or the International Monetary Fund to underline the economic dangers of leaving the EU. But this negative campaigning turned people off and was mocked by the Leave side as 'Project Fear'. The Remainers failed to articulate the benefits of being part of the European Union and did nothing to appeal to wider aspirations. This gave the Leave campaign a free hand to promise extravagant and often imaginary benefits as the result of leaving the EU. People responded positively to this optimistic narrative, even if they did not necessarily believe all of it.

Lesson 3 Get your backers out on the day

In Quebec in 1995 the voter turnout was exceptional, at 93 per cent. Only one out of 15 electors failed to vote, so that both sides evidently made superhuman efforts to get their backers to the polls. Chrétien stressed the importance of this after the Montreal rally:

All weekend the No team, by now invigorated and united in a common cause ... never let up in its efforts ... to get out our voters. If we hadn't done that, I'm certain we would have lost.⁴⁷

The turnout for the 2016 EU referendum was 72 per cent. This was a high figure for a national vote in the UK. Yet even so, one out of four electors failed to get to the polls and this determined the result. Polls before the referendum showed clearly that older people favoured Leaving and were more likely to vote. Young people favoured Remaining, but their voting behaviour was less predictable. In the event, 64 per cent of electors under 25 voted, more than in early estimates, as against 90 per cent of those over 65.⁴⁸ The Remain campaign would have known how important it was to get young people out to vote, but did not do enough to make this happen.

Finally, the result of the EU referendum has transformed the prospects for Scotland. Canada's experience is again relevant, in two different ways.

After the Scottish referendum of 2014, Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the Scottish Nationalists, seemed to be in the same position as

Lucien Bouchard when he took over from Parizeau as Quebec premier. Bouchard decided it was prudent to wait before holding another referendum. He wanted to ensure Quebec's economy was strong enough to survive on its own, detached from Canada. Only then would he feel confident of winning. But his chance never came.

The position in Scotland appeared to be comparable. Sturgeon would not want to risk another referendum unless she was sure of winning it. Scotland's economic prospects already looked doubtful when the 2014 referendum was held and have since worsened with the fall in the price of oil, Scotland's major asset. The UK government undertook to pass more revenue-raising powers to Scotland, which, over time, would reveal the true economic outlook of an independent Scotland. As in Quebec after 1995, these factors argued against an early new referendum.

But the result of the EU referendum of 2016 has changed the position fundamentally and invites a different Canadian comparison. The events of 1995 in Quebec flowed directly from the defeat of the constitutional referendum of 1992. This had been intended to reconcile Quebec with the rest of Canada, but failed to do so. The separatist *Parti Québécois* regained power, called another referendum and very nearly won it.

Unlike England and Wales, Scotland voted to remain in the EU, by 62 per cent against 38 per cent. The Scots realized how much they had to lose by leaving the European Union. Sturgeon appealed to Prime Minister Theresa May for a separate deal that would enable Scotland to stay in the EU Single Market, but May declined it, insisting on a single negotiating position for the United Kingdom. The political impact of Brexit therefore encouraged Sturgeon to bring forward a new independence referendum. In March 2017 she abruptly called for one, creating an additional problem for May just as she prepared to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.⁴⁹ Whenever this referendum takes place, the three Canadian lessons will still apply.

Notes

- 1 This article is an updated version of the annual Quebec lecture I delivered at the UCL Institute of the Americas on 2 July 2015.
- 2 A full account of my time in Canada can be found in my entry in the British Diplomatic Oral History Programme, <http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Bayne.pdf>, 97–111.
- 3 G. Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation, 1837–67* (London: Macmillan, 1995).
- 4 R. Bothwell, *A Traveller's History of Canada* (New York: Interlink Books, 2010), 117–21.

- 5 Paul Martin (senior), who was Canadian Foreign Minister at the time, gives a full account of this episode in his memoirs, *A Very Public Life, Volume II* (Toronto: Deneau, 1985), 572–604.
- 6 A. Rotstein, ed., *Power Corrupted: the October Crisis and the Secession of Quebec* (Toronto: New Press, 1971). M. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1995), 258–9.
- 7 Bothwell, *A Traveller's History*, 123–30.
- 8 See R. Delaney, 'Quebec Offers Model of How Money Moves on Secession Threat', *Financial Times*, 13/14 September 2014. The article was written just before the Scottish referendum.
- 9 J. English, *Just Watch Me: The Life of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Volume II 1968–2000* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2009). Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 245–76.
- 10 The relevant passage is quoted in Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 266.
- 11 Bothwell, *A Traveller's History*, 132–6. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 268–9.
- 12 B. Mulroney, *Memoirs 1939–1993* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2007). Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 277–306.
- 13 Bothwell, *A Traveller's History of Canada*, 149–53. Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 292–300.
- 14 Bliss, *Right Honourable Men*, 300–3.
- 15 C. Hébert with J. Lapierre, *The Morning After: The 1995 Referendum and the Day That Almost Was* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2014), 8–10. This book is based on interviews conducted in 2012 with the main figures involved in the referendum, as identified in later notes.
- 16 'Separatism in Quebec: No, We Shouldn't', *The Economist*, 23 May 2015, 39–40. The article is linked to the arrival of the Scottish Nationalists in force at Westminster.
- 17 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 15–16 (Parizeau).
- 18 Our conversation took place over lunch in the British Consul-General's house in Montreal, from which James Cross had been kidnapped in 1970.
- 19 Parizeau had been speaking English, so his meaning was unmistakable. The phrase was later leaked to Chantal Hébert and published in French in *La Presse*; see A. Wilson-Smith and F.E. Kaye, 'Parizeau's Lobster Flap', *Maclean's*, 24 July 1995. But Hébert interpreted 'lobster pot' as meaning a saucepan of boiling water, which did not capture the image.
- 20 The text of the question is given in both French and English in Hébert, *The Morning After*, xi, with comment on 41–3.
- 21 J. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2007), 134.
- 22 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 87–8, 133, 251–2 (Chrétien).
- 23 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 11–14, 16–18 (Bouchard).
- 24 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 27, 33–5 (Dumont).
- 25 'Quebec's Road-Map, of a Sort, to Sovereignty, Maybe', *The Economist*, 10 December 1994, 71. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 129.
- 26 J. Blanchard, *Behind the Embassy Door: Canada, Clinton and Quebec* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998), 235–6, 242. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 137–8. Hébert, *The Morning After*, 94–6, 253–4 (Daniel Johnson and Chrétien again).
- 27 Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 143–7.
- 28 C. Trueheart, 'Canadians at Huge Rally Implore Quebec to Stay', *International Herald Tribune*, 28 October 1995. Hébert, *The Morning After*, 121–4 (Tobin).
- 29 Blanchard, *Behind the Embassy Door*, 248. Jim Blanchard, who was US Ambassador to Canada at the time, believed Clinton's support made a vital contribution to the narrow federalist victory. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 139.
- 30 Blanchard, *Behind the Embassy Door*, 244. For Chrétien's reaction see note 39.
- 31 Chrétien gave a similar upbeat message to Jim Blanchard when he phoned him from the Montreal Rally (*Behind the Embassy Door*, 250).
- 32 Not far away, Chrétien (*My Years as Prime Minister*, 149–50) and Blanchard (*Behind the Embassy Door*, 259) were doing the same.
- 33 Quoted in the original French in J.F. Nadeau, Jacques Parizeau n'est plus', his obituary in *Le Devoir*, 2 June 2015.
- 34 Hébert, *The Morning After*, is entirely dedicated to it.
- 35 Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 150.
- 36 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 249–50.
- 37 'The Victory Speech That Never Was', *Montreal Gazette*, 22 February 1996, contains the draft speech Parizeau planned to give after winning the

- vote. Hébert, *The Morning After*, 43–5, 92.
- 38 'France Reassures Both Sides', *International Herald Tribune*, 1 November 1995.
- 39 Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 139–41. N. Bayne, *Economic Diplomat* (Durham: The Memoir Club, 2010), 185–6.
- 40 R. Palmer, 'Quebec Gets Concessions from Uneasy Canada', *Independent*, 29 November 1995. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 151–3. Hébert, *The Morning After*, 213–17 (Mike Harris).
- 41 Hébert, *The Morning After*, 96 (Johnson) and 123 (Chrétien).
- 42 Quoted in Hébert, *The Morning After*, 295.
- 43 Supreme Court of Canada, *Reference re Secession of Canada, Report 2 SCR 217(1998)*. Available at: <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1643/index.do>. Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 164–6.
- 44 Canadian Parliament, *An Act to give effect to the requirement for clarity as set out in the Supreme Court of Canada in the Quebec Secession Reference* (S.C. 2000, c. 26). Available at: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/>.
- 45 Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 167–71.
- 46 Though the BQ recovered to ten seats in the 2015 elections, this was still below the threshold for official party status in the federal parliament.
- 47 Chrétien, *My Years as Prime Minister*, 149.
- 48 T. Helm, 'EU Referendum: Youth Turnout Almost Twice as High as First Thought', *Observer*, 10 July 2016. See also Ashcroft Polls at <http://www.lordashcrofthpolls.com/2016/06/how-the-united-kingdom-voted-and-why/>.
- 49 F. Elliott, H. Macdonell and B. Waterfield, 'Sturgeon Ambushes May', *The Times*, 14 March 2017.

Quebec's Economic and Commercial Linkages with the United States, 1994–2017

Earl H. Fry

Abstract

This article examines the ebb and flow of the Quebec government's economic and commercial relations with the United States in the period 1994–2017. The topic demonstrates the impact of three major forces on Quebec's economic and commercial ties with the US: (1) the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which became operational in 1994 and was fully implemented over a 15-year period; (2) the onerous security policies put in place by the US government in the decade following the horrific events of 11 September 2001; and (3) changing economic circumstances in the United States ranging from robust growth to the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The article also indicates that the Quebec government continues to sponsor a wide range of activities in the United States, often more elaborate and extensive than comparable activities pursued by many nation-states with representation in the US.¹

Quebec's 'foreign relations'

Quebec and its foreign relations occupy a rather unique position among academics who examine the international relations of sub-state governments, also widely referred to as paradiplomacy or constituent diplomacy.² Since the beginning of the 1960s, Quebec has probably been the most activist non-central government in the world in terms of its international involvement. Although Taiwan, Catalonia and Flanders now spend more on their international programmes than

this Canadian province, Quebec has been involved for much longer on a continuous basis and has served as the model for many other non-central governments around the world as they have decided to venture forth into the international arena.³ In addition, the Quebec government's publications on the province's international relations are arguably the most thorough and sophisticated documents published by any non-central government. In particular, the Quebec Ministry of International Relations' 2006 publication entitled *Quebec's International Policy: Working in Concert*, which is over 100 pages long, should be required reading for every practitioner at the sub-state government level who acts in an international capacity.⁴ This lengthy report is to be updated in 2017, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Quebec government's Ministry of International Relations.

In the 2006 landmark report, the Quebec government identifies five major objectives of its international initiatives: (1) strengthening Quebec's actions and influence; (2) fostering Quebec's growth and prosperity; (3) contributing to the security of Quebec and the North American continent; (4) promoting the identity and culture of Quebec; and (5) contributing to the cause of international security.⁵ In order to fulfil these goals, the Quebec government currently maintains 28 offices in 15 different countries, including, in order of importance, seven general delegations, four delegations, nine bureaus, six trade offices and two areas of representation in multilateral affairs.⁶ It has also entered into more than 700 agreements with about 80 national governments, international organizations and sub-state governments in federal systems and its representatives take part in scores of international missions on an annual basis.⁷ The Ministère des Relations internationales (MRI) was renamed in 2014 the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie (MRIF) and MRIF coordinates most of the Quebec government's international activities. Currently, MRIF has 433 employees, including 178 stationed abroad, and has an annual budget of \$95 million.⁸

The Quebec government's relations with the US states

Quebec's territorial expanse covers over 1.5 million square kilometres and is almost three times larger than France is. Its GDP in 2015 was \$381 billion and Quebec would have ranked that year as the 35th largest 'national' economy in the world, larger than Malaysia's and smaller than Hong Kong's.⁹ Its population base in 2016 was 8.3 million, slightly

less than Virginia's and Switzerland's, ranking it 13th among the most populous states and provinces in the United States and Canada. However, its international outreach programmes compare more favourably with those of Switzerland than those of Virginia.

There are two main countries accorded priority status by the Quebec government, France and the United States. In the commercial and economic realms, however, the contest should not even be close, even after the EU–Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) goes into effect. The United States is Quebec's predominant partner in the trade, investment and tourism sectors. Furthermore, even though governments in Quebec have often been perceived in Washington, DC and the state capitals as left-of-centre, they have actually been among the staunchest supporters in Canada of open commercial relations with the United States. The Foreign Investment Review Act (FIRA) of 1974 supported by the federal government of Pierre Trudeau was intended to slow down foreign direct investment (FDI) in some Canadian economic sectors, with most of that investment emanating from the United States. The *Parti Québécois* (PQ) government in Quebec City later opposed Trudeau's action and openly supported more US FDI within the province. Quebec governments were also a major force in pushing for the creation of the Canada–US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) implemented in 1989, and NAFTA that superseded the FTA five years later. Former PQ premier Bernard Landry even voiced strong support for the establishment of a North American customs and monetary union utilizing the US dollar as its official currency.¹⁰

The Quebec government established its first office in the United States in New York City in 1940. It now maintains one general delegation in New York City, three delegations in Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles, one bureau in Washington, DC and three trade offices in Atlanta, Houston and Silicon Valley. These eight offices actually surpass the number of consulates in the US operated by national governments such as Australia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and at least 70 other nation-states.¹¹

In 2010, the Quebec government released its strategic plan directed towards the United States.¹² The plan consists of five major objectives: (1) contribute to the security of the North American continent; (2) promote economic exchanges; (3) ensure Quebec's leadership in the areas of energy and the environment; (4) encourage the sharing and promotion of Quebec's culture and identity; and (5) increase Quebec's capacity to act and support the development of expertise.¹³ The Quebec offices in the United States work to: create more export opportunities

for their business community back home; entice American companies to make direct investments in the province; facilitate the efforts by Quebec enterprises to secure more US venture capital financing and enter into marketing and licensing arrangements with US firms; and convince Americans in general that Quebec is a great place to visit and spend their tourist dollars. Quebec's representatives work directly with US state government officials and business executives, with each office given responsibility for specific geographic areas. Beyond the strictly economic and commercial functions, the delegations also promote political, cultural and educational objectives. For example, the Quebec delegation in Boston considers that its role in political affairs 'is to foster and consolidate relations between the government of Quebec and the six New England States, by negotiating multi-sector agreements and conducting activities in fields of recognized importance such as energy, the environment, security and transportation'.¹⁴ The delegation's official brochure emphasizes that 'in the fields of culture, education and tourism, the Office strives to promote Quebec's institutions and talents through a variety of events or exchanges with Quebec's partners in Boston and throughout New England'.¹⁵

Using MRIF and its network of offices in the United States for logistical arrangements, Quebec's premier will usually plan at least one official visit to the US annually, and other ministers will make numerous trips to make or renew the acquaintance of state officials and to participate in trade shows, conventions or specialized conferences. For example, Premier Philippe Couillard visited Washington, DC in February 2016 and met with leaders of the Office of the US Trade Representative and the Environmental Protection Agency. He also spoke on climate change at the Resources for the Future organization and gave a speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center on trade and investment opportunities in his province. In total, the Premier and other cabinet members directed 21 missions to the United States in 2015.¹⁶

Quebec is an official member of the US Council of State Governments and the National Conference of State Legislatures, and actually hosted the annual meeting of the former organization in Quebec City in 1999.¹⁷ It is also a leading player in the New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers organization, which held its 40th annual meeting in Boston in August 2016, and is an active member of the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers. In 2015, Quebec City hosted the Leadership Summit of this cross-border group. The Quebec government also co-founded in 2007 the Southeastern United States–Canadian Provinces alliance involving

several Canadian provinces and the states of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama.

In addition, Quebec's representatives meet from time to time with the staff of the National Governors' Association. Quebec also has a wide range of regional or bilateral arrangements with its neighbouring states, with the most high-profile being periodic Quebec–New York summits bringing together the premier and governor of these adjoining border jurisdictions. The Quebec Metropolitan Community hosted in June 2012 delegates from the Great Lakes and St Lawrence Cities Initiative, bringing together scores of local officials from Canada and the United States. The Quebec government has been working closely with its counterpart in Ontario to expand the Quebec–Ontario trade corridor into the United States. Currently, the Quebec government has a special arrangement with California to promote a cross-border system for the trading of carbon permits, with the goal of reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere.¹⁸

Among all the sub-state governments in the world, Quebec has the deepest and most expansive ties to US state-level executive and legislative branches.

NAFTA, post-9/11 US security policies and US economic travails

Generally, a quarter of a century of free trade, dating back to the FTA implemented in 1989, has been very good for Canada, Quebec and the United States. Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) at the end of 2015 was \$2 trillion, ranking it as the tenth largest economy in the world measured in nominal US dollars. This is a remarkable achievement because each of the nine nations ahead of Canada has a much larger population base, with Canada's 37 million people ranking them as the 38th most populous country in the world. Canada's economic growth rate over the past several years has been near the top of the major Western countries, although with the recent drop in commodity prices, economic growth in this resource-dependent nation has sagged a bit.

Canada–US free trade has been beneficial to consumers in both countries who now have a better selection of products at prices that are more competitive. Companies have also been able to abandon their branch-plant tactics in favour of global and regional 'value chains'.¹⁹ Trade between the two neighbouring countries has gone beyond

‘international’ to the level of ‘integrative’, with more than two-thirds of cross-border trade taking place either between units of the same company or among parties associated with an integrated network of firms.²⁰ In addition, one-third of the value of Canada’s total exports is composed of previously imported inputs, another sign of integrative trade.²¹ Ideally, integrative trade means that North American companies, adopting ‘just-in-time’ and other supply-chain strategies that flourish in a regional free-trade setting, are better prepared to cope with competition from their counterparts in Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world.

Yet, without any doubt, the achievements attributable to the FTA, NAFTA and continental economic growth have been marred by two momentous events: post-9/11 US security policies and the lingering effects of the major US recession from December 2007 to June 2009.

On 10 September 2001, NAFTA had been in effect for more than seven years. Canada had 30 million people and its 2001 GDP was \$1.1 trillion. The United States had 285 million people and its GDP for the full year was \$10.2 trillion. Annual trade in goods between the countries in 2000 was valued at \$410 billion. On the day before 9/11, the Canadian dollar, often referred to as the loonie, traded at about 64 US cents. The 49th parallel separating the two neighbours had long been considered as the world’s longest undefended border. Neither Americans nor Canadians needed passports to visit one another’s country. In some rural border checkpoints, officials went home at night and would place orange cones in the road to let travellers know that they were crossing from one country to the other.

Now fast forward to the tenth anniversary of the events of 9/11. Canada had a population base of 34 million and the United States 312 million. Canadian GDP in 2010 had reached \$1.6 trillion and the US GDP \$14.5 trillion. The loonie was worth 1.02 versus the US greenback. Two-way trade in goods recovered significantly from a huge plunge in 2009 and equalled \$526 billion for calendar year 2010. However, when measured in Canadian dollars, exports from Canada were actually \$50 billion lower than in 2001. The US share of total Canadian exports had also dropped from 87 per cent in 2000 to 75 per cent in 2010.

The number of Americans visiting Canada by car in June 2009 was at the lowest level since 1972, even though the US population had grown by 100 million people during that period. Today, as a result of new passport regulations, 59 per cent of Americans cannot even visit Canada because they have failed to procure passports or, in limited cases, enhanced driver’s licences which are mandatory in order to

re-enter the US.²² In 2015, there were 20.7 million trips by Canadians to the United States, versus only 12.5 million trips by Americans to Canada, even though the United States has almost nine times more people than Canada has.²³ In comparison, Americans made 15.6 million trips to Canada in 2001, illustrating a lost decade and a half in terms of US visitors to their closest neighbour to the north.²⁴ Furthermore, Canadian direct investment in the United States is currently only slightly smaller than US direct investment in Canada, in spite of the fact that the US economy is 11 times larger than the Canadian economy, measured in nominal US dollars.²⁵

What happened between 11 September 2001 and 11 September 2011? In simple terms, Washington overreacted to the horrific events of 9/11 and ‘thickened’ the common border with Canada beyond any reasonable parameters.²⁶ Ironically, in spite of all the money spent on this thickening process, a December 2010 US Government Accountability Office (GAO) report lamented that such a small section of the border had actually been ‘secured’ a decade after 9/11. The report concluded that only 1,007 miles of the nearly 4,000-mile common border had ‘full situational awareness’ by US authorities and only 32 miles were at ‘an acceptable level of control’, even though three Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the US Coast Guard had expended \$2.9 billion in 2010 alone attempting to secure the border from external threats.²⁷

Arguably, no major nation in the world is as dependent for its economic well-being on another nation as Canada is dependent on open access to the vast US marketplace. Presently, Canada’s exports of goods and services to the United States, US companies with direct investments in Canada and Americans visiting Canada for business, convention, education and tourism purposes, account for at least a quarter of Canada’s annual GDP and more than two million Canadian jobs.²⁸ Furthermore, this economic dependency has occurred at a time when the US share of Canadian exports, the US share of the stock of FDI in Canada and the US share of foreigners visiting Canada, have all declined since 9/11.

Quebec has not been spared from the problems of the past decade and a half. In the year 2000, 86 per cent of Quebec’s total exports went to the United States, compared with only 72 per cent in 2015.²⁹ Exporting is critical to the Quebec economy, accounting for more than 600,000 direct and indirect jobs.³⁰ Some of these jobs have been lost because between 2000 and 2011, Quebec’s exports to the United States

fell by \$20 billion. As recently as 2008, Quebec would have ranked as the sixth largest 'national' exporter to the US, ahead of the United Kingdom and South Korea. However, Quebec slipped to eighth among 'national' exporters in 2015, with about the same level as exports from France. Quebec also receives a relatively small share of its total imports from the US, with American companies accounting for only 38 per cent of Quebec's imports of goods in 2015.³¹

As is the case with most other provinces, Quebec has also been hurt by the slowing pace of US FDI in Canada through much of this period. In 1993, US direct investment accounted for 65 per cent of the total stock of FDI in Canada, a share that dropped to 50 per cent in 2015.³² In proportional terms using nominal Canadian dollars, US FDI in Canada increased by 358 per cent between 1993 and 2011, whereas investment from the rest of the world into Canada increased by 562 per cent. As a Library of Parliament study concluded, 'the United States is falling in importance as an investment partner for Canada'.³³

It is very difficult to gather substantive data on the stock of FDI in Quebec relative to other Canadian provinces. However, one can surmise that US and total FDI stock in Quebec is below Quebec's percentage of the Canadian population (23 per cent) and Canada's total GDP (19 per cent). For example, the Task Force on Business Investment in Quebec has estimated that foreign-based multinational corporations account for only 13 per cent of all private-sector jobs in Quebec versus 20 per cent or more in several other provinces.³⁴

Why is US direct investment relatively low in Quebec? In part, this may be attributable to Canadian government restrictions on certain types of FDI, with total restrictions ranking relatively high among OECD member states.³⁵ In addition, Quebec's extensive network of state-owned firms and special French-language regulations may dissuade some small and medium-sized US companies from investing in Quebec.

Quebec has also suffered from the drop in American tourists visiting the province. The province has been an especially tough sale for foreign visitors in spite of its well-developed tourism infrastructure and attractive cities, particularly Montreal and Quebec City. In 2008, Quebec accounted for only 12.4 per cent of all international visitors to Canada and 17.3 per cent of total spending by these visitors, both well below its share of Canada's population and GDP.³⁶ In 2014, Americans made 2.5 million trips to Quebec and they spent \$1.3 billion.³⁷ In comparison, 1.4 million visitors from other countries came to Quebec and their spending of \$1.4 billion was higher than the combined spending of the

more numerous Americans.³⁸ Moreover, Quebec was the destination for far fewer US travellers in 2014 than neighbouring Ontario.³⁹ As a whole, Americans know very little about tourism opportunities within the province of Quebec.

Policy considerations for Quebec

Both the Liberal and PQ governments in Quebec have been generally supportive of the international programmes whether the provincial economy was doing well or in the doldrums, but Lucien Bouchard's PQ government from 1996 to 2001 slashed MRI's budget and temporarily closed the offices in Boston, Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles, along with others around the world. This decision was quite drastic, but not nearly as draconian as the one made in 2003 by California's Assembly and Senate, supported by Governor Gray Davis, to close permanently the state's dozen trade offices abroad and disband the state's Technology, Trade and Commerce Agency. Even today, California, which ranks as the world's fifth largest national economy in nominal US dollars, has only one office abroad and it is paid for by the privately funded Bay Area Council.⁴⁰

Quebec's international budget was eventually restored, but under the current Liberal government of Philippe Couillard, staffing at MRIF has been reduced and cuts made in some fringe benefits for employees and certain support services abroad.⁴¹ Over the past eight years, the number of employees at MRIF has declined by 144 positions to the current level of 433. Nevertheless, the number of employees and annual spending are still far higher than what other provincial governments spend on their international programmes. Compared to the US states, MRIF's spending is only slightly less than spending by all 50 states combined on international programmes, exclusive of incentives offered to foreign investors, and MRIF's employment is about 40 per cent of total staffing for all US state government international activities.⁴²

(1) The United States Should Remain the Number One Economic and Commercial Priority of the Quebec Government

The 2006 International Policy report indicates that the United States is a major priority for Quebec. This is spelt out in priority two, strengthening and increasing economic exchanges with the United States and Europe, and in priority three, contributing to the security of the North

American continent. Since the report was released, the government has increased its resources devoted to the United States through upgrading its US offices.⁴³

However, Quebec continues to station almost as many personnel in its Paris office as in all of its offices combined in the United States. There is no doubt that the French connection is special to francophone Quebecers and these liaisons should remain strong. After all, the French government has accorded Quebec's general delegation in Paris almost the same status as an embassy. French executive leaders, presidents and prime ministers have often visited Quebec every other year, with Quebec's premier visiting Paris in the intervening years.

France is also important to many Quebecers because some previous French governments have stated that they would act positively if Quebec voters ever opted to support sovereignty in a future referendum. Aside from this contentious issue, France remains important because it represents the gateway for Quebec enterprises to gain access to the 28 nations and half a billion consumers which now constitute the European Union.

However, neither France nor any other country is in the same orbit as the United States in terms of its influence on the present and future economic well-being of Quebecers. Even more precisely, Quebec's economic connections to the United States are now much more significant than even its economic linkages to the rest of Canada. To paraphrase Andrew Cohen, Quebec's foreign trade 'isn't so foreign. It is American'.⁴⁴

Quebec's political leadership cannot afford to underestimate the United States's economic importance. The provincial government should give top priority in the allocation of money and personnel to its activities in the United States, even if this means downsizing some of its existing programmes elsewhere in the world, as well as its nascent activities vis-à-vis international organizations such as UNESCO.

If Brexit occurs by 2019, the US economy will be larger than the European Union's, even though the EU population will be about 445 million in comparison to 335 million in the US. Quebec will remain right next door to the world's largest national economy, measured in nominal US dollars. In 2015, two US states would have ranked among the world's ten largest countries in GDP, 13 states among the top 25 countries, 28 states among the top 50 countries, 43 among the top 75 and all 50 states among the top 98 countries.⁴⁵ With respect to this large market to its south, Quebec's exports of goods in 2015

represented almost 22 per cent of its provincial GDP, with 72 per cent of these exports destined for the American states. Furthermore, the vast majority of potential customers for Quebec's goods and services living within 1,000 kilometres of the province are located in the United States, not Canada. With this in mind, Quebec officials must concentrate on economic and commercial ties at the state level in the United States and make the best of what has been a rather turbulent period over the past 15 years and what might be especially difficult during the unpredictable Trump presidency.

(2) *Quebec's Diplomatic Corps Should Spend a Greater Proportion of Their Careers in the US*

MRIF has a global perspective and its officers need a great variety of geographical and functional expertise. However, a significant core of these officers who will either be permanently staffed within MRIF's headquarters or be a part of the provincial foreign service should devote a sizeable part of their careers to Quebec's relations with the United States.

Quebec's foreign service is arguably the best trained and most professional of any comparable sub-state government in the world, and it even compares favourably with many national foreign services.⁴⁶ Quebec has largely avoided the patronage and cronyism that has afflicted some other provincial and state international programmes over the past several decades. In addition, the continuity of its international programmes since the mid-1960s has resulted in the development of a foreign service corps with decades of experience. A problem facing MRIF, however, is helping its foreign service officers to make a successful transition from serving abroad to rotating back to headquarters in Quebec City. When they are abroad, these officers have numerous responsibilities and are provided with generous housing and very nice offices. In contrast, when they return to Quebec City on rotation, they are often assigned a cubicle and their list of responsibilities is reduced substantially. This is not a unique situation because the US Department of State and Global Affairs Canada face similar challenges with their much larger number of returning foreign service officers.

This problem of rotation can be solved, at least in terms of those in Quebec's foreign service who devote most of their careers to the United States. Whether stationed in Quebec City or Montreal, these officers would continue on a daily basis to monitor developments in the United States on both a regional and functional basis. They would

interact regularly with their contacts in the United States via phone or the Internet and they would travel to the US whenever needed, in strict coordination with the delegations in the US that have responsibility for the area where the officer will be visiting. Assignments in the United States should be for three to four years, followed by an assignment in another part of the United States and then two years back in Quebec. Perhaps two assignments during the foreign service officer's career would be to another part of the Americas or other countries, just to provide greater variety and a sense of excitement. Nevertheless, the officer would be a US specialist and would devote the preponderance of his or her career to Quebec-US relations. Optimally, this specialization will improve the Quebec government's ability to influence favourably US state and local government representatives and others from civil society and the private sector.

(3) *Quebec Should Optimize the Location of Its US Offices and the Utilization of Its Staff*

The Quebec government currently maintains offices in New York City, Boston, Washington, DC, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles and Silicon Valley. The New York City general delegation, located in Rockefeller Center, is far larger than any of the other offices. All of Quebec's facilities in the United States are situated in prime locations within major cities and are generally close to the targeted decision-makers Quebec's diplomats need to meet. However, the New York City, Washington, DC, Chicago and Los Angeles offices do face some special challenges. Without any doubt, New York City ranks as one of the world's most eminent cities, as the financial centre for the United States and as the prime location for corporate America. Quebec needs a major presence in the New York City metropolitan area that has a GDP not much smaller than Canada's, at current exchange rates. Nonetheless, in terms of political decision-making that might affect Quebec's economic activities in the United States, the locus of power is in Albany, not New York City. The same challenge faces the Chicago and Los Angeles offices. Chicago is the economic dynamo of Illinois, but the state government is situated in Springfield, not Chicago. The five-county Los Angeles metropolitan area would rank as one of the top 20 national economies in the world, and Quebec representatives need to be there. On the other hand, political decisions are rendered hundreds of miles away in Sacramento.

The Washington bureau has assumed almost a *sui generis* status. For many years, Ottawa asked all of the provincial governments to

refrain from opening offices in Washington and to rely instead on services provided by the Canadian Embassy. Ottawa also offered to allot space for provincial representatives within the Embassy and Alberta has done so since 2004. Previous Quebec governments decided that they needed a direct and independent presence in Washington and opened what was originally referred to as a tourism office as an appendage of the New York City general delegation. The tourism function was strictly a facade as Quebec representatives were there to follow what was going on in the nation's capital and to act as lobbyists vis-à-vis the federal government. This office has been upgraded and expanded, but the reasons for doing so are questionable. One reason for expansion is to allow Quebec to monitor the activities of international organizations such as the World Bank. This rationale is consistent with the 2006 International Policy document that emphasizes that Quebec wants to develop a direct role in international organizations that deal with issues falling under provincial jurisdiction. Quebec has now achieved a permanent status in the Canadian delegation to UNESCO and is actively engaged in the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). Frankly, this new emphasis on an enhanced Quebec presence in IOs, especially using Washington as a location for doing so, will yield modest results and is a drain on MRIF's scarce resources.

The second rationale for expanding the staff in Washington is to keep better track of issues at the White House and on Capitol Hill, and to lobby for policies that will benefit the interests of Quebec. On the surface, this is a reasonable pursuit, but in reality it is another money burner. State governments across the United States lament that they are treated as any other interest group when it comes to lobbying Congress or the executive branch in Washington. They are extremely frustrated by the lack of attention that is given to federal issues in general and to issues of particular concern to individual states.⁴⁷ If the state governments consider that they are hamstrung in their relations with the federal apparatus, why would the Quebec government fare any better? The best strategy for Quebec to follow is coalition building at the state level. Moreover, Quebec should rely on the Canadian Embassy to keep track of issues of major concern to the province. After all, the 260-member staff at the Canadian Embassy dwarfs the personnel assigned to all of Quebec's US offices combined.⁴⁸ In spite of recent cutbacks, Ottawa continues to operate 15 consulates or trade offices across the country, second only to Mexico's 50 consulates. The Quebec government could certainly decide

to keep an office open in Washington, DC, but the expansion of the staff to carry out functions linked to IOs and the US federal government is ill-advised.

There is much work to be done in the major cities where Quebec offices are opened in the United States, and staff bases outside of New York City are quite small. This results in a tendency to stay within the major metropolitan areas where the offices are situated and not venture out to other regions that are within the coverage area of each delegation. For example, the Pennsylvania state government has in recent years maintained the largest and most ambitious international programme among the 50 state governments, and Pennsylvania alone would have ranked as the world's 19th largest national economy in 2015.⁴⁹ Should more effort be given to interacting with public- and private-sector representatives in Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and somewhat less to similar groups in the ultra-competitive, topsy-turvy world of New York City? Would better results be attained in terms of Quebec's economic and commercial interests? Similar examples can be given for each of Quebec's delegations in the United States because so much of America's economic dynamism and diversity is to be found in metropolitan regions spread throughout the country and not just in a few select cities or states. The ability to tap into this dynamism and diversity is yet another reason for each delegation to work closely with the regional Canadian consulates scattered throughout the United States.

(4) Coalition Building and Domesticizing Issues Will Contribute to Quebec's Future Success in the United States

Once again, no major nation in the world is as dependent for its economic well-being on another nation as Canada is on the United States for export markets, inward direct investment and tourists, even though this dependency has definitely slackened since the beginning of the new century. In essence, both Canada's and Quebec's economic orientation since the implementation of the FTA and NAFTA has been reoriented away from an east-west axis and towards a north-south axis with at least nine of the ten provinces now exporting more to the United States than to other parts of Canada.

The Quebec government has a series of priorities in terms of its economic and commercial interests with the United States. It supports the development of a seamless border at the 49th parallel that would allow goods and people to cross with minimum disruption. It would like its natural resources and energy sources such as lumber

and hydropower to enter the United States without any impediments. It would like to attract private investment and new technological innovations from the United States in order to expand and modernize the province's infrastructure and business sector. It would like more Americans to spend their tourist dollars in Quebec rather than in other foreign destinations, and would appreciate Washington not imposing rigorous passport and identification requirements that might dissuade Americans from leaving their country. It would also like to sustain robust economic expansion while at the same time producing a cleaner environment.

The most effective lobbying strategy for Quebec is to align and coalesce with powerful US public- and private-sector interest groups that share Quebec's position on specific issues. Quebec's representatives in the US should be able to identify potential allies in state and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, academia and the business community, and then proceed to push for changes in federal, state and municipal government policies that will be advantageous to Quebecers. US elected officials have traditionally shown little concern for foreign governments which lobby for changes in laws and regulations, but they are always concerned about domestic groups that might affect their chances of being re-elected in the future.

(5) More Attention Should Be Accorded to the Border Region

A major cross-border region in Canada and the United States consists of Quebec, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.⁵⁰ This is one of the regions where North American economic integration 'is the most intense and dynamic'.⁵¹ For example, exports to New York alone represented in 2013 almost 10 per cent of Quebec's total exports to the world.⁵² Approximately 180 Canadian-based companies, mostly from Quebec, have also established a business presence in New York's Clinton County which is next to the border and within an hour's drive of Montreal.⁵³

On the other hand, the border is infringing upon the development of even closer regional economic integration. Montreal is about equidistant from New York City and Toronto, but Quebec's trade volume with neighbouring Ontario is four times higher than with neighbouring New York state, even though New York has a much larger population and GDP than Ontario has.⁵⁴ The periodic Quebec–New York summits bringing together the premier and governor should be continued, with more emphasis on substantive agreements and less on

public relations. Regular discussions should continue with leaders of other border states and all should be working to improve the transportation infrastructure on both sides of the common border. Energy and environmental issues are also of critical concern to the border states and Quebec has the potential of shipping much more hydroelectricity to this region.

In terms of the New England states within close proximity to Quebec, past bilateral discussions have often involved big teams from Quebec and relatively small teams from the individual states. Perhaps the Quebec government could be a little more circumspect in putting together the negotiating teams and pare the number of participants so that both teams are roughly equal. Some of those on the US side who have taken part in past discussions with Quebec have frequently mentioned how big the Quebec teams are, how many resources seem to be at the disposal of the Quebec team and how well prepared the Quebec team is on technical issues. These comments were intended to be positive, but some felt that the disproportionate size of the teams was also somewhat intimidating.⁵⁵

(6) *Fine Tune Executive and Legislative Diplomacy at the State Level*

Because MRIF has sent representatives to the United States for decades, it has experienced the highs and lows of cultivating good relations with certain state officials, only to find these relations deteriorating substantially with a change in executive or even legislative leadership at the state level. The problem is exacerbated by having such a high turnover in the staffing of state offices that deal with international issues. Unlike Quebec, many administrators dealing with international economic issues at the state level have relatively short tenures, meaning that there is a lack of institutional continuity as the transition is made from one governorship to the next.

Quebec's diplomats in the United States cannot be discouraged by this phenomenon, but there are certain things that can assist them to mitigate the continuity gap. As usual, the first step is to develop personal relationships with top elected officials and civil servants within the state. Governorships generally last from four to eight years and this provides ample time to instruct them about what Quebec has to offer. The second step is to make the acquaintance of legislative leaders from both major political parties. Their tenure in the state legislatures is often much longer than that of the governor, lieutenant-governor or the secretary of state. The third step is to cultivate friendships with top-tier civil service executives who may not

be directly involved in the volatile international relations sector, but do have some overlapping interests. It is much more likely that these bureaucratic officials will retain their positions in state government over a longer time period than those who have to grapple with the day-to-day uncertainties of the state's international programmes. The fourth step is to interact with leaders of civic organizations, local chambers of commerce and individual corporations who have a vested interest in nurturing better ties with their Quebec counterparts. These representatives of the private sector also help to ease the painful transition that frequently occurs when a governor and his or her closest advisers exit office.

Furthermore, Quebec's representatives should encourage state executive, legislative, civic and business leaders to visit Montreal and perhaps even Quebec City. Such visits tend to be very positive experiences and reinforce both friendships and the perception that Quebec can be a significant economic partner. Costs for such visits are relatively low, especially for those travelling from the border states that should be MRIF's major priority. However, influential decision-makers from around the United States should also be invited to visit the province. Most Americans know very little about Quebec, and the knowledge level seems to deteriorate as the distance from the border increases. With this in mind, both public- and private-sector leaders from California, for example, who deal with high-tech and entertainment issues, would probably have a pleasant eye-opening experience by visiting the centres of excellence and multimedia facilities in Montreal.

(7) *Refine Export Strategies*

The Canadian dollar value of Quebec's exports to the United States has been relatively stagnant over the past several years. The built-in advantages Quebec has enjoyed under NAFTA have been eroded somewhat because Washington has thickened the border with a labyrinth of new security measures. In addition, the US federal government has entered into a series of free-trade agreements with several other countries or groups of nations, watering down some of the advantages previously offered by NAFTA membership.

Working in collaboration with its business and labour sectors, the Quebec government needs to identify those goods and services that have the best chance of capturing larger market shares in the United States, with emphasis placed on value-added production. This does not mean that special subsidies should be given to these sectors, but rather

Quebec's representatives in the United States would highlight them as they meet with their US contacts.

Quebec also needs to push strenuously for an upsurge in electricity exports to the United States. Hydroelectricity is Quebec's leading comparative advantage in North America as it ranks fourth in the world in the production of such energy.⁵⁶ Hydro-Québec is also a world leader in this field. Without too much effort, infrastructure improvements can be made on the US side of the border that would route electricity from Quebec as far south as Florida.⁵⁷ The province is also capable of generating much more electricity from the James Bay region. This should be a leading priority, although any new expansion must have the agreement of the Cree and abide by rigid environmental standards in terms of dam construction and the location of transmission lines. With growing public concern over the negative effects of greenhouse gases and accelerating demand in the United States for renewal energy sources, Quebec's hydroelectric production should be a major export winner over the next couple of decades.

Quebec's exports to the United States can be boosted by utilizing short-lane shipping routes along the St Lawrence Seaway more effectively.⁵⁸ For the moment, the St Lawrence Seaway–Great Lakes Corridor shipping lanes are working at only modest capacity. Waterborne shipments can carry heavy cargoes and emit only a fraction of the pollution of cross-border trucking. Such shipping can also avoid the long lines at border inspection stations. Because of Quebec's strategic location along the St Lawrence River, any increases in waterborne shipments should be especially advantageous to companies located within the province that cater to consumers in the United States.

(8) Intensify the Attraction of Foreign Direct Investment

The Quebec government should not be reticent about seeking FDI from the United States. The lion's share of FDI is in the form of mergers and acquisitions, with only a small percentage in the form of 'greenfield' investments such as building an auto assembly plant from scratch. Many Quebecers have become suspicious of such activities, especially with so much publicity given to the foreign acquisitions of such well-known companies as Hudson's Bay, Inco and Dofasco.⁵⁹ However, the Quebec government should resist the temptation to limit inward FDI because the province already lags behind Ontario in attracting investment from south of the border. In addition, it will need both robust foreign and

domestic investment to modernize and expand the Quebec economy in an era of growing globalization and interdependence. Neither can Canada as a whole be complacent about the direct investment issue, because its share of inward FDI destined for North America has declined significantly since 1980.⁶⁰

Investissement Québec, the unit of the Quebec government that works to attract inward FDI from around the world, should intensify its efforts in the United States in a campaign to attract investments in targeted economic sectors. This is not an easy task, because American investors, as sophisticated as they might be on economic and financial issues, generally know very little about Quebec. Moreover, they often perceive Quebec, in comparison with other Canadian provinces, as presenting a special set of challenges linked to the predominance of the French language, the legacy of the separatist movement, the significant state role in the economic sector and the provincial government's very sizeable debt burden. Executives of small and medium-sized US companies, in particular, will also have to be convinced of the viability of establishing or acquiring enterprises within Quebec versus simply exporting their production into the province and taking advantage of the free-trade conditions put in place under NAFTA.

The Quebec strategy at the individual US state level should include the following: (1) identify companies which already export to Quebec or have entered into joint arrangements with Quebec enterprises and discuss the benefits of FDI in terms of establishing or acquiring production units having global or regional product mandates; (2) target companies in certain sectors where Quebec has a relative comparative advantage, including heavy energy users, those needing access to raw materials and those needing well-educated and multilingual workers in multimedia, pharmaceutical, hydro, aircraft production and other sectors where Quebec currently excels; (3) emphasize the advantages of both Canada's and Quebec's targeted immigration policies that will allow companies to import foreign talent much more easily than under the ponderous and somewhat xenophobic programme now being pursued by the US federal government⁶¹ and (4) constantly trumpet the healthcare advantages in Quebec both in terms of the quality of medical treatment and the competitive business advantages for corporations which might be able to cut in half their healthcare expenses by shifting units into Quebec. The attraction of FDI must be a major priority of the Quebec government because of the very close linkage in North America between such investment and trade flows, with a major

portion of all trade in goods across the 49th parallel occurring between a parent company and its affiliates. Unlike most of its fellow provinces or even sub-state units in other countries around the world, Quebec has its established network of offices opened in the United States that permits it to facilitate FDI attraction on a state-by-state basis and to use existing government and business contacts to identify potential foreign investors.

(9) *Re-energize Tourism Promotion*

Tourism officials in Canada have always faced an uphill battle in convincing Americans of the 'urgency' of visiting their northern neighbour. Canadian tourism experts even suggest that some Americans perceive Canada as being a somewhat dull tourist destination.⁶²

Quebec's representatives in the United States first have to dissipate stereotypes about 'Frenchness' and separatism and make Quebec's distinctiveness a positive selling point. Because of the French language and Québécois culture, Quebec has an allure that other parts of Canada do not have. For some Americans, having to navigate in another language might be a deterrent, but millions travel to Mexico each year and the Spanish language does not keep them away. The problem is that Quebec is not identified with the sunshine, warm temperatures and beaches of Mexico. On the other hand, Quebec has safe cities with cultural and sporting choices ranging from good museums to jazz festivals to excellent skiing and Formula 1 motor racing. Quebec City, with its unique walled fortress and revival of its old neighbourhoods adjacent to the St Lawrence River, is one of a select number of municipalities designated by UNESCO as a 'world heritage site'. Montreal also has a European-style sophistication without having to cross the Atlantic and deal with the European continent's prohibitive prices. The recent renovation of 'Vieux-Montreal' along the port area has also added immeasurably to the appeal of the city. Without any doubt, the eventual introduction of European-style high-speed rail links between Montreal and New York City, and perhaps even Boston, would provide a long-term boost to Quebec's tourism prospects.

Quebecers are justifiably proud of their cultural roots. Those representing Quebec in the United States can also trumpet the cultural richness of modern-day Quebec, ranging from Céline Dion to Cirque du Soleil to Denys Arcand. Too many forget that tourism is one of the greatest generators of jobs and income in modern societies. Furthermore, some visitors like what they see so much

that they want to return on a regular basis, make investments in the local economy or expand their own business contacts with local enterprises. In this respect, tourism and cultural promotion represent important economic development strategies for the province of Quebec.

(10) Target the United States as a Source of Immigrants

Quebec's share of Canada's population continues to fall and its birth rate for most of the past two decades has been well below replacement levels. The Canadian House of Commons is expanding its membership but none of the new seats will go to Quebec. One million people moved out of the province between 1976 and 2000 because of a combination of the fear of the sovereignty movement, tighter restrictions on the use of languages other than French in the educational system and business community and attractive economic opportunities available in other parts of Canada.⁶³

In order to maintain or increase its population base and retain its economic competitiveness, Quebec must attract a significant number of skilled immigrants from abroad. The Quebec government has the final say on whether to accept or deny entry to the province to independent immigrants who are not coming for family reunification purposes, and it has imposed a strict test favouring those who already speak French or formally commit themselves to learn French on their arrival in the province. This policy, although strongly supported by the francophone population, undoubtedly diminishes the chances of attracting skilled immigrants from Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and other parts of the world.

From a strictly economic and demographic perspective, Quebec's immigration policy is short-sighted and counterproductive. In a regional and international environment that is becoming progressively more competitive, and in view of the very low provincial birth rate, Quebec desperately needs to attract well-educated and skilled immigrants. Furthermore, how these immigrants are treated once they settle in Quebec will determine whether the best and brightest of them establish long-term roots in the province or simply decide to move to other parts of Canada.

Quebec can use its extensive network at the US state level to encourage queries from US residents who might be tempted to move northward. In particular, short-sighted US visa policies, including severe limitations on the H1-B visa rules for highly skilled immigrants, may prompt skilled foreign nationals presently in the US to relocate

to Quebec. The same situation may also be applicable to foreign graduate students enrolled in US institutions of higher learning who are required to leave the United States upon graduation. In view of several controversial immigration policies now being considered by the Trump administration, Quebec might find it easier to entice US residents to the province than at any other period over the past several decades. Once again, Quebec's comparative advantage in doing so is that it has the largest contingent of personnel stationed in the United States who can work on attracting immigrants, especially to the very vibrant and cosmopolitan Montreal urban region. However, it does bear the burden of a disadvantage compared to other provinces, and that is its rather rigid immigration regulations linked to the use of the French language by immigrants and their families.

Concluding observations

The Quebec–US economic and commercial relationship has had its share of upturns and downturns in the period between 1994 and 2017, and President Trump's 'America First' strategy and pledge to renegotiate or even terminate NAFTA may further exacerbate cross-border difficulties.

The FTA and NAFTA helped to solidify cross-border cooperation and major gains in trade, investment and tourism activity were achieved for most of the first decade after NAFTA was implemented. Unfortunately, 11 September 2001 represented a watershed in the bilateral relationship and the thickening of the border and Washington's propensity to place security before trade have combined to slow down the cross-border economic gains achieved earlier. Post-9/11 US policies also contributed to the American economic malaise over much of the past decade as budget deficits swelled and more money was funnelled into defence, intelligence and security operations and less into infrastructure modernization and other programmes that would have enhanced America's global economic competitiveness.⁶⁴

In addition, relatively slow US economic growth since 2001 has had a negative effect on Quebec's exports to the United States and US FDI within the province. However, if the United States can maintain its recent GDP growth spurt and robust job creation, and not turn inward under the current US administration, economic linkages with Quebec may once again flourish.

Finally, the Quebec government should do a thorough assessment of its ‘diplomacy’ in the United States. During the period 1994–2017, how well have its US offices performed, how effective have been its various missions to the US and how productive has been its overall strategy towards the United States? How do government expenditures related to MRIF’s US programme stack up against Quebec’s overall economic and commercial performance vis-à-vis the United States over the past two decades? Using solid metrics and performance standards, this thorough review would help determine whether a course correction is needed in the Quebec government’s economic and commercial policy towards the US, and pinpoint what facets of the programme need to be strengthened or de-emphasized.

Notes

- 1 Stéphane Paquin, ‘Quebec-U.S. Relations: The Big Picture’, *American Review of Canadian Studies* 46, no. 2 (2016): 149–61.
- 2 See, for example, Panayotis Soldatos, ‘An Explanatory Framework for the Study of Federated States as Foreign-Policy Actors’, in *Federalism and International Relations: The Role of Subnational Units*, eds. Hans J. Michelmann and Panayotis Soldatos (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Kincaid, ‘Constituent Diplomacy in Federal Politics and the Nation-State: Conflict and Cooperation’, in *Federalism and International Relations*, eds. Michelmann and Soldatos; Brian Hocking, ed., *Foreign Relations and Federal States* (London: Leicester University Press, 1993); Earl H. Fry, *The Expanding Role of State and Local Governments in U.S. Foreign Affairs* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1998); David Criekemans, ed., *Regional Sub-State Diplomacy Today* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2010) and Manuel Duran, *Mediterranean Paradiplomacy: The Dynamics of Diplomatic Reterritorialization* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015).
- 3 This has especially been the case for Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland and Bavaria. See Stéphane Paquin, *La revanche des petites nations: Le Québec, l’Écosse et la Catalogne face à la mondialisation* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 2001).
- 4 The relevance of the Quebec experience is more applicable to federated systems, but even unitary systems can find useful examples from what Quebec has been doing internationally for almost five decades. For an interesting case study involving subnational units in a unitary state, see Purnendra Jain, *Japan’s Subnational Governments in International Affairs* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- 5 Ministry of International Relations, Government of Quebec, *Quebec’s International Policy: Working in Concert* (Quebec City: Government of Quebec, 2006), 22.
- 6 Website of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie (MRIF), Gouvernement du Québec, at mrif.gouv.qc.ca/en.
- 7 Website of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie (MRIF). The Quebec government defines a ‘sovereign state’ as a state that possesses a population, territory and government that is subordinated to no other state and has the capacity to enter into a relationship with other states. In contrast, a ‘federated state’ is a state with a territorial and constitutional community forming part of a federal union. The Quebec government also enters into four different types of international commitments: (1) ‘international agreements’ between the Quebec government and a foreign government

- or international organization; (2) 'non-binding agreements' including various forms of joint statements, declarations of intent, joint press releases and reports of discussions; (3) 'multilateral conventions' involving several contracting parties that are generally initiated by international organizations and (4) 'Canadian agreements' reached by Ottawa with foreign partners but having an impact on areas falling within Quebec's constitutional jurisdiction.
- 8 MRIF, *Rapport annuel de gestion 2015–16* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2016).
 - 9 In its annual GDP rankings, the World Bank in 2015 considered Hong Kong as a distinct territory affiliated with China, just as Puerto Rico was considered as a distinct territory affiliated with the United States.
 - 10 Bernard Landry, *La cause du Québec* (Montreal: VLB éditeur, 2002), 205–9.
 - 11 US Department of State, *Foreign Consular Offices in the United States, Winter/Spring 2016* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016).
 - 12 Ministry of International Relations, Government of Quebec, *The Quebec Government's U.S. Strategy* (Quebec City: Government of Quebec, 2010).
 - 13 Ministry of International Relations, *The Quebec Government's U.S. Strategy*, 7.
 - 14 Ministry of International Relations, Government of Quebec, *Quebec Government Office in Boston* (Quebec City: Government of Quebec, 2007).
 - 15 Ministry of International Relations, *Quebec Government Office in Boston*.
 - 16 Website of MRIF at mrif.gouv.qc.ca/fr.
 - 17 Quebec also joined the Eastern Regional Conference (ERC) in 1990. The ERC is a regional affiliate of the CSG and includes ten northeastern states, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Quebec and Canada's four Atlantic provinces.
 - 18 Annie Chaloux, 'North American Climate Governance, or How States and Provinces Can Lead the Way: The Case of the Western Climate Initiative', *Working Paper of the Public Policy Observatory*, University of Sherbrooke, 22 February 2016.
 - 19 Ari Van Assche, 'Global Value Chains and Canada's Trade Policy', *IRPP Study*, June 2012, 3–6.
 - 20 Michael Hart and Bill Dymond, 'The Geography of Integration', paper presented to the Centre for Trade Policy and Law Integrative Trade Project, Carleton University/University of Ottawa, December 2006, 3.
 - 21 This is especially true in sectors such as transportation, electronics, machinery and equipment, plastics and textiles. See Hart and Dymond, 'The Geography of Integration', 4. The same authors, in 'Trade Theory, Trade Policy, and Cross-Border Integration', paper presented to the Centre for Trade Policy and Law Conference, Carleton University/University of Ottawa, December 2006, 3, point out that in 1999 Canadian exports of goods equalled 125 per cent of the value of goods production in the country, signifying the high level of imports that have later become component parts in Canadian exports.
 - 22 US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, 'U.S. Passports and International Travel, 1989–2016'.
 - 23 US Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, National Travel and Tourism Office, '2015: Top 10 International Markets: Visitation and Spending' and '2015: United States Resident Travel Abroad'.
 - 24 Statistics Canada, 'Travelers to Canada by Country of Origin, Top 15 Countries of Origin', years 2001 and 2015.
 - 25 In 2015, Canadian foreign direct investment in the US was \$269 billion measured on an historical-cost basis. US foreign direct investment in Canada that same year was \$353 billion. See Derrick T. Jenniges and James J. Fetzer, 'Direct Investment Positions for 2015: Country and Industry Detail', *Survey of Current Business*, July 2016, 8 and 14.
 - 26 In spite of freer trade between Canada and the United States, the common border has always impeded the development of commercial ties between these two distinct countries. According to the 'gravity model', trade between communities in Canada, measured by distance and population size, has always been much greater than trade between Canadian and US communities, measured using the same criteria. The imposition of security impediments by Washington has exacerbated this border effect. For a discussion of this issue, see John F. Helliwell, 'Do National Borders Matter for Quebec's Trade?', *Canadian Journal of Economics* 24 (August 1996): 507–21.

- In this article, Helliwell claims that the gravity model shows that Quebec trades 20 times more with Canadian provinces than with US states of similar size and distance.
- 27 US General Accountability Office, 'Border Security: Enhanced DHS Oversight and Assessment of Interagency Coordination Is Needed for the Northern Border', GAO-11-97, December 2010.
 - 28 In 2015, Canada exported \$525 billion in goods, of which 76 per cent went to the United States. Twenty per cent of Canada's GDP is derived from the shipment of goods to the United States (The Embassy of the United States of America, Ottawa, 'U.S.-Canada Economic Relations' at <https://ca.usembassy.gov>). In addition, US direct investment in Canada in 2015 stood at \$353 billion and US-owned subsidiaries in Canada provided 1.19 million jobs. Non-resident travellers entering Canada in 2015 numbered 27.6 million, with American residents accounting for 80 per cent of these travellers (Statistics Canada, 'Non-Resident Travelers Entering Canada, 2011-2015', CANSIM table 427-0001). Exports to the US, the commercial activities of US-owned companies in Canada and spending by US visitors to Canada together accounted for at least a quarter of Canada's GDP of \$2 trillion in 2015 and more than two million Canadian jobs.
 - 29 Institut de la statistique Québec, 'Valeur des exportations internationales par pays, Québec et Canada, 2014 et 2015' (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2016).
 - 30 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Labour Market Bulletin*, Fall 2011.
 - 31 Institut de la statistique Québec, 'Valeur des importations internationales par pays, Québec et Canada, 2014 et 2015' (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2016).
 - 32 Statistics Canada, 'Foreign Direct Investment Positions at Year End', Table 1.
 - 33 Alexandre Gauthier and Raphael Gueven-Nicoloff, 'Canada-United States: Trade and Investment', Ottawa: Library of Parliament, 2011.
 - 34 Task Force on Business Investment in Quebec, *Quebec Welcomes Investment: Summary* (Quebec City: Government of Quebec, 2008), 10.
 - 35 Kristelle M. Audet and Robert Gagné, *Openness to Foreign Direct Investment and Productivity in Canada* (Montreal: HEC Centre for Productivity and Prosperity, 2010), 9-14.
 - 36 Tourisme Québec, *Le tourisme en chiffres, Edition 2010* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2011), 26-7.
 - 37 Statistics Canada, 'Trip Characteristics of United States Residents Entering Canada and Staying One or More Nights in Province Visited, 2010', Table 13.
 - 38 Ministère du Tourisme, Gouvernement du Québec, 'Les plus récentes données sur le tourisme au Québec', 15 février 2016.
 - 39 Statistics Canada, 'Non-Resident Travelers Entering Canada, 2014'. Ontario is the destination for over half of all international visitors to Canada, according to the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre, 'Tourism Investment', at <https://www.investinontario.com>.
 - 40 California recently surpassed the United Kingdom as the fifth largest economy, based on faster economic growth in California and the plunge in the British pound in early 2017 to about £1.20 to \$1.
 - 41 Ferry de Kerckhove, 'Quebec Rethinks Its Approach to Foreign Relations', *Globe and Mail*, 28 September 2015.
 - 42 Earl H. Fry, 'The Role of U.S. State Governments in International Relations, 1980-2015', *International Negotiation* 22, no. 2 (2017).
 - 43 Ministère des Relations internationales, Gouvernement du Québec, *La politique internationale du Québec: Plan d'action 2006-2009* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2007), 31.
 - 44 Andrew Cohen, *While Canada Slept* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), 111.
 - 45 Statistics used for these comparisons are found in the annual GDP rankings of countries and territories by the World Bank and the annual GDP rankings of the states by the US Department of Commerce. Once again, GDP is measured in nominal US dollars.
 - 46 This assessment is based on the author's more than 30 years of experience in working with provincial and state international programmes and with the US and Canadian foreign services.
 - 47 Fry, 'The Role of U.S. State Governments'.
 - 48 Derek H. Burney, *Getting It Done: A Memoir* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's

- University Press, 2005), 135. This is not to imply that the Canadian government is always an effective lobbyist in Washington. As Burney laments in his book, page 143, 'Canada always struggles to gain attention at the core of American opinion'. Eddie Goldenberg, in his book, *The Way It Works: Inside Ottawa* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), page 389, adds that 'Canada will continue to have to work hard even to be noticed in Washington'. However, the Canadian Embassy does a very good job in keeping track of the status of issues on Capitol Hill that will affect Canada and in maintaining good relations with many members of Congress and their senior staff.
- 49 Fry, 'The Role of U.S. State Governments'.
- 50 Government of Canada, Policy Research Institute, 'Canada-U.S. Relations and the Emergence of Cross-Border Regions: Briefing Note', 2006.
- 51 Government of Canada, 'Canada-U.S. Relations and the Emergence of Cross-Border Regions'.
- 52 MRIF, 'New York State: Quebec's Main American Partner', 6 September 2013.
- 53 The Development Corporation for Plattsburgh, New York at <http://thedevelopcorp.com/proximity-to-canada/>.
- 54 Former Quebec Premier Jean Charest highlighted these differences during his trade discussions with Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty. See Keith Leslie, 'Ontario and Quebec Sign Deal to Lower Interprovincial Trade Barriers', *Canadian Press*, 26 November 2007.
- 55 These sentiments were expressed by some of the representatives of the border states who were interviewed by the author for this study.
- 56 MRI, *Quebec's International Policy*, 13.
- 57 Jean-François Talbot, 'Plugged into North America: Hydro-Québec in an Integrated Continental Energy Sector', *Notes and Analyses on the USA*, February 2007.
- 58 Brian Slack and Claude Comtois, 'Short Sea Shipping: The Need for a Realistic Assessment', *Quebec Studies* 42 (Fall 2006/Winter 2007): 43.
- 59 In a survey completed for Industry Canada, 68 per cent of Canadian respondents stated that they were concerned about foreign takeovers of large Canadian enterprises, with 54 per cent agreeing that Ottawa should try to limit such acquisitions of large companies by foreign investors. See Steven Chase, 'Public Opinion Grows Chilly on Foreign Takeovers', *Globe and Mail*, 28 May 2007 and Mel Hurtig, 'Selling Off Our Country', in *Living with Uncle: Canada-U.S. Relations in an Age of Empire*, eds. Bruce Campbell and Ed Finn (Toronto: James Lorimer, 2006), 240-50.
- 60 In David Crane's article, 'Why We Should Worry about the Economy', *Toronto Star*, 5 November 2007, he points out that Canada's share of inward FDI was a little more than 16 per cent in 2005, compared with more than 40 per cent in 1980.
- 61 Microsoft, for example, decided to build a new facility in Vancouver, BC instead of in the United States because of Canadian immigration policies that would make it easier for the company to attract talent from around the world. See 'So Long, Software Jobs', *Los Angeles Times*, 7 October 2007.
- 62 Tourism Industry Association of Canada, *The Canadian Tourism Industry: A Special Report, Fall 2012* (Toronto: Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 2012), 32.
- 63 Institut de la statistique du Québec, 'Migrations internationales et interprovinciales, Québec, 1961-2005'. One million left Quebec during the period 1976-2000, with the net loss between interprovincial departures and arrivals being 503,000.
- 64 Earl H. Fry, *Lament for America: Decline of the Superpower, Plan for Renewal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 1-122.

Pink, Cirque and the *Québécoisisation* de l'industrie

Charles R. Batson

Abstract

On 31 January 2010, during the broadcast of the 52nd Grammy awards, the multiple-prize-winning vocal artist Pink offered a performance of the hit single *Glitter in the Air* that stunned many viewers. Spectators present in Los Angeles's Staples Center, along with those watching via electronic media that reached some 26 million people through television in the United States alone, were both thrilled and astonished. 'C'est la Québécoisisation de l'industrie!', commented one excited observer. This paper attempts to unpack this observation and its celebration of a Québécois influence on, even signs of Québec itself in, the international performance industry. Through an exploration of certain genealogies associated with both the art and the artists and an examination of certain moments in the development of the circus arts in Québec, the article notes real traces of Québécois cultural productions appearing in international performance spaces. As it turns to offer a critical gaze onto the very celebration of this perception of a Québec in the popular cultural industry, these pages close on a proposed way of understanding how these performances may ultimately help create and maintain a Québécois identity for their viewers.

Introduction¹

On 31 January 2010, during the broadcast of the 52nd Grammy awards, the multiple-prize-winning vocal artist Pink offered a performance of the hit single *Glitter in the Air* that stunned many viewers. Spectators

present in Los Angeles's Staples Center, along with those watching via electronic media that reached some 26 million people through television in the United States alone, saw this vocalist enter from an upper backstage area through a corridor of walls lit with undulating blue LEDs. Wrapped in a simple white sheath that covered her body and hair, Pink walked slowly forward, singing three verses of the piece into a hand-held microphone as she followed a straight path down a few stairs and onto an elevated platform that was thrust into the audience. After a small vocal pause, some two minutes into the piece, she removed the outer layer of her clothing, revealing a flesh-coloured body-stocking accented with white straps, and moved forward again. The camera tracked backwards to reveal a rotating apparatus, where three female acrobats were gripping violet silks tracing the device's revolutions.

As the apparatus and acrobats slowly rose, the number's choreographer, Drea Weber, assisted Pink into long white silks hanging from the mechanism's centre, giving the vocalist a twist at the last moment of contact. Pink continued to sing, her noted rejection of lip-synched performances visually underscored by the sight of her microphone's wireless transmitter on a back shoulder broadcast by the camera as it followed her rotations through the air. At some three and a half minutes into the piece, the apparatus dipped, dropping the still-rotating artist into what was revealed to be a small pool, from which she rose again, continuing to sing as she sent droplets of water over the audience. Closing the number with a tight upside-down spin, she dropped onto the stage, stepped forward out of the silks to bow, and turned to her left to exit the stage. The next series of camera shots showed numerous well-known musicians, from Rihanna to Carlos Santana and Sheryl Crow, in a standing ovation. As she applauded, India.Arie was caught spluttering out something like an astonished 'What?'

Arie's stunned reaction was shared by many viewers. The *Huffington Post* wrote, for example, 'Pink wowed the crowd at the Grammy Awards when she sang "Glitter in the Air" while suspended in the air', in language typical of most morning-after responses in both social and print media.³ In full disclosure, I was among those millions thrilled by this boundary-shattering performance and found myself frequently commenting on it in discussions over the following days. Within the very first moments of a conversation with a close friend in Montreal, I discovered that he shared my excitement; noting what was particularly thrilling to him in the performance, he enthusiastically exclaimed: 'T'as-tu vu? C'est la Québécoisisation de l'industrie!'⁴ In the pages that

follow, I attempt to unpack what my friend may have meant in his celebration of a Québécois influence on, even signs of Québec itself in, the international performance industry. Through an exploration of certain genealogies associated with both the art and the artists and an examination of certain moments in the development of the circus arts in Québec, this article notes real traces of Québécois cultural productions appearing in international performance spaces. As it turns to offer a critical gaze onto the very celebration of this perception of a Québec in the popular cultural industry, these pages close on a proposed way of understanding how these performances may ultimately help create and maintain a Québécois identity for their viewers.

Genealogies: Perceptions, presences, influences

Much of the ‘wow’ factor highlighted by such outlets as the *Huffington Post* lies in the shock that Pink’s *Glitter in the Air* was performed indeed in the air. Despite its literal high-flying effects, the piece itself is marked by a simplicity, with its understated melodics, crisp yet cool-toned lighting and costumes, and smooth transitions in the artist’s physical movements from slow walk to regular rotations in the silks. Indeed, as an integral element of the piece’s simple structure, Pink did not engage in many complex movements as she manipulated her silks. After her original entry into her silk hammock, ‘she does not perform any dynamic movement’, notes Sarah Poole, aerial coach at Montreal’s National Circus School. As Poole describes the performance, Pink first ‘lies in a side balance, then rises from water in a suspended lay-back’. After her ascent from the pool:

she gracefully slides forward, suspending herself from the fabric under her shoulder blades in a crucifix position, lifts her leg to hook it on the fabric above her in a double stag, and finally accelerates her final spin, crocheting both [of] her legs above her in the fabric as her head points to the ground.

The performance is, however, ‘virtuosic’, in Poole’s analysis: even as she continues to sing, Pink achieves a remarkable combination of fluidity and height.⁵

The thrill that millions of viewers felt during this particular performance, then, did not depend solely on the clean, if slick, lines of its aesthetics. As she rose in her silks, Pink moved well beyond the

conventional comfort zones of many vocalists, joining the physical and the vocal in ways that brought real danger into the performance space. Knowing the risks of acrobatic and circus work, I shared her audience's *frisson* as we recognized those limit-threatening choices.⁶ India.Arie's stuttering 'What?' points to the audience's being called fully to attend, respond and react to this unsettling work performed tens of feet above the spectators, without netting or harness.

In his own engaged response, my friend leapt at seeing Québec rising with Pink in her silks. His celebration could well be justified by the many pages and pixels of the morning-after commentaries that linked Pink's performance to the Cirque du Soleil, the world-renowned Québec-based circus company. That *Huffington Post* article, for example, finishes its first sentence with a description of Pink 'spinning and singing like something out of Cirque de (sic) Soleil'. Moe Jackson's blog includes an article entitled 'Pink does a Wet Cirque de (sic) Soleil Act @ 2010 Grammy Awards'. MTV.com reports 'If Pink ever decides to pack in the mic, she could surely land a gig with Cirque du Soleil'. The Pink-Cirque conflation went on, as in Starpulse.com's note that 'Pink channeled Cirque du Soleil at last night's Grammy Awards in a breathtaking acrobatic performance', and Zap2it.com's reaction that 'Few could top Pink's Cirque du Soleil-esque performance ... – literally or figuratively'. In a comment that the pages below suggest may be interestingly prescient, one commentator offered this response to a question to 'Yahoo Answers' about how Pink got her acrobatic skills: 'She probably was trained by Cirque du Soleil ...'⁷

If we follow the logic of these multiple responses, a literally over-the-top aerial silks performance equals a number from Cirque du Soleil, in a slippage quite readily nourished by this company's solid presence in the cultural imaginary as the principal purveyor of the forms of the *nouveau cirque*, where circus's traditional three rings and animals disappear while elements of theatre, dance and character development find expanded presence. With the company's fixed shows in Las Vegas which grossed some \$650 million in 2008 alone, plus its numerous touring spectacles that have in fact taken the *nouveau cirque* to more spectators than any other troupe worldwide, Cirque du Soleil's billion-dollar revenue stream stands witness to its standing in terms of economic and cultural capital. Indeed, the Soleil commands such presence in this cultural understanding that the former American president Bill Clinton, in the closing days of the 2012 presidential campaign season, could note that the Republican candidate Mitt Romney should be the 'chief contortionist for Cirque du Soleil', fully expecting that the American

electorate would know of the highly developed position-bending skills of the company's acrobats.⁸

Buzzwords long associated with Las Vegas and its nightly performance parade of stars and showgirls, *glitz* and *glamour* also attach themselves to references to Cirque du Soleil, arguably the largest single performing-arts enterprise in that town of performing arts and indeed the largest, by some accounts, performing-arts enterprise in the world.⁹ Cirque du Soleil has itself nourished this sense of glamour for some decades, as Erin Hurley points out, investing in the spectacular from numbers with an exceptional degree of athleticism to the polish and shine of the costumes and make-up.¹⁰ Indeed, it is this particular Vegas-nourished combination of high glitz, glamorous costuming and elite-level performance that informs these references to that which is Cirque-like in the popular imagination and in popular cultural imagery. With its own particular glitter, strong acrobatic artistry and *nouveau cirque* skills in play, Pink's slick wet and white circus number could thus well be 'Cirque du Soleil-esque', in Zap2it's terms, highlighted through the glamour of its classic lines of tight body-stockings and clingy fabrics.

The relationship between this number and the Cirque du Soleil is much deeper, however, than any superficial recognition of a Cirque-like high-flying glamour. The genealogy of the apparatus itself, the aerial silks, points back to Cirque du Soleil and to Québec. Cirque's new touring show for 1996, *Quidam*, featured aerial silks for the first time in choreography developed by André Simard, a long-time creator with Cirque and trainer at Montréal's National Circus School. The French acrobat Isabelle Vaudelle had just won the silver medal at Paris's 1995 *Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain*, representing Canada in a brand-new act that she credits to her time training in Europe with Gérard Fasoli.¹¹ Simard, who had been inventing highly technical aerial skills at Montreal's Circus school since at least 1989 with the development of the elastic cord for the Québécoise trapeze acrobat Anne Lepage, worked with Vaudelle back in Montreal on the approximately eight-minute *Quidam* silks number which revealed that apparatus to the general public.¹² In 1997, Vaudelle was replaced by Québec artist Isabelle Chassé for a long-term engagement in the number prior to her leaving Cirque in 2002 to create, with other alumni of the Soleil, a new circus troupe in Montreal called 'Les 7 doigts de la main', where she continues her aerial innovations. Hundreds of thousands of viewers saw this piece in performance: *Quidam* toured for two decades before it closed in February 2016, first under a *Grand Chapiteau* and then as a

show for large arenas, and a YouTube video of Chassé's performance of the number has had close to 300,000 viewers.¹³

In this cultural imaginary, silks and Québec's Cirque du Soleil are linked. With the act's very genealogy, my friend could be right in seeing Québec coming into southern California and, indeed, the industry. Only 18 months later, for example, Cirque premiered a new show, *Iris*, that included a silks number for Los Angeles's storied theatre known then as the Kodak, and now as the Dolby. Not far, geographically and culturally, from the Staples Center where Pink showed that Québec-ness in the eyes of my friend, this venue is perhaps most famous now for being the site of the Oscar awards, including 2012's show that featured a condensed version of some of *Iris*'s pieces, with choreography by Shana Carroll, co-founder of Montreal's Les 7 doigts de la main and former performer herself with Cirque du Soleil.¹⁴ With those silks, Québec continues to penetrate the industry. The 2012 season of HBO's successful vampire-themed *True Blood*, for example, featured a fairy cabaret whose denizens performed in decidedly Cirque-like numbers, their aerial silks taking this cabaret into a world beyond the undulations of a Bob Fosse or the physical stylings à la *Moulin Rouge* that had long marked a cabaret-like movement vocabulary. In October of 2012, teen pop vocalist Justin Bieber released his video of *Beauty and a Beat*, featuring the hip-hop artist Nicki Minaj, that includes an aerial silks sequence approximately one and a half minutes into the piece. With that season's *True Blood* drawing some four to six million viewers per episode and with only one of several YouTube versions of the Bieber video pulling more than 765 million viewers,¹⁵ silks are taking pride of place in popular visual imagery of the contemporary entertainment industry.¹⁶

Silks are not the only apparatus with which Québec and its *circques* leave their marks. In 2009, for example, circus work was not unique to Pink's tour for her album *Funhouse* featuring *Glitter in the Air*. In a series of concerts related to her own album entitled *Circus*, the hugely successful former teen sensation Britney Spears found herself moving on stage among tens of circus artists on multiple apparatus, including the Cyr wheel.¹⁷ In 1993, the Québécois *circassien* Daniel Cyr had co-founded the Cirque Éloize with a group of graduates of Montreal's National Circus School, all of whom had origins in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Numerous innovations have appeared from this troupe's creative team, including the development of the Roue Cyr, a mono-wheel circus apparatus named for its designer who presented it at the Paris-based *Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain* in 2003. Even

though it was created only eight and a half years before the Spears *Circus* tour began, the Cyr wheel's inclusion there signals that performances of this Québécois-designed apparatus have within a short period become features of circus-themed shows throughout the performing arts.

Other genealogies underscore my friend's vision of a Québec marking the industry. Pink's *Funhouse* tour included other acrobatic numbers, including a trapeze sequence performed to the tune 'Sober' that featured as her catcher the artist Sebastien Stella in a performance viewed by hundreds of thousands, including in a reprise on MTV's 2009 Video Music Awards. As Pink's 'trainer, performing partner, creative guru and all-around protector', Stella brought to both his collaborator and the performance space the skills he had honed in years of acrobatic work, including a long-term engagement with Cirque du Soleil's *O*, the aquatics-themed show based at Las Vegas's Bellagio.¹⁸ As such, Stella stands as another example of the rippling currents of influence of Québec and its circuses, as the thousands of performers and creators associated with scores of shows since Cirque's founding in 1984 and the hundreds of artists from the nearly 30 years of graduating classes of Montreal's National Circus School train,¹⁹ perform and share their skills with fellow performing artists. In those early morning-after reactions, that Yahoo commentator had surmised that Pink had trained with Cirque du Soleil. Even as Pink revealed in a widely watched post-Grammy interview with Oprah Winfrey that she had trained for eight years as a gymnast when she was much younger,²⁰ the Yahoo commentator may not be completely wrong: as her 'creative guru', a Cirque-trained artist *had* trained Pink in her *Funhouse* work. In such genealogies, Cirque's presence continues to expand.

In his keynote address at the September 2012 conference on the State of Circus Research in Québec held in Montreal, the circus historian and artistic adviser to the *Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain* Pascal Jacob offered an overview of what he called the 'Planète Cirque'. In this *discours fleuve*, Jacob argued that various national influences have marked consecutive historical periods since the invention of the modern circus in the late eighteenth century. In his analysis, it is the English who dominated the circus world from its modern creation by the equestrian artist Philip Astley until approximately 1830, when their cross-Channel rivals, the French, began to lead in terms of innovation, with, for example, the Franconi brothers and the development of large-scale pantomime and animal-taming. From that time, successive schools of influence led by Germans, Americans, Soviets and again the French, brought waves of creative impulses particular to those artists to hold

sway in this 'Planète Cirque'. They moved modern, Western circus from those nineteenth-century forms into the contemporary circus world of the twenty-first century.

According to Jacob, it was in 2002 that what he calls the 'Période québécoise' began. In that year, Isabelle Chassé and her collaborators in *Les 7 doigts de la main* created their first show, *Loft*, that featured vocabularies of authenticity and intimacy; the Cirque Éloize developed their important theatre-circus hybrid show *Nomade* in the first of three significant spectacles created by the actor-clown-director Daniele Finzi Pasca; and Cirque du Soleil launched their touring show *Varekai*, a spectacle with what Jacob calls 'résonances néo-classiques' in terms of its structure and organization. Given that artists and impulses from all three companies have marked the performing arts scene explored in these pages, Jacob's analysis may well hold true – even beyond the purely circus disciplines that were the principal concerns of his discussions.²¹ It is interesting to note here that, in materials circulated at the premiere of that 2002 Cirque show, *Varekai* was reported to mean 'wherever' in the Romani language. My friend, well versed in circus cultures, may have understood, with Jacob, that 2002 could have been that *époque charnière* leading to Québec circus's influence appearing in a multiplicity of spaces – 'wherever' indeed – only a few years later.

A 2011 *New York Times* article on the Cirque du Soleil notes the continued and expanding influence of this world, 'from the special effects in "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark", which employs former Cirque employees, to the Metropolitan Opera, where the director Robert Lepage used technology he developed while with Cirque'.²² In February 2012, the Montreal daily *La Presse* announced, with some evident pride, that Cirque du Soleil would bring their spectacle-creation skills to Madonna's half-time show at the Super Bowl.²³ An October 2012 *La Presse* article concerning 'Le Québec en tournée mondiale' explores Québec's growing international presence in multimedia productions and names three companies in particular whose work is garnering important praise and influence. All three of those celebrated and influential enterprises – Solotech, Moment Factory and Geodesik – have close connections with Cirque du Soleil,²⁴ with such links even more recently underscored through such celebratory language as 'Collaborations with Cirque du Soleil got them a reputation', from a July 2013 *Canadian Business* article on Moment Factory.²⁵

As we explore these genealogies, it is important to remember that Cirque du Soleil does not merely have its headquarters in Québec, even after its 2015 sale to an international group of investors: it has

particular Québécois origins. Histories of the troupe remind us of the stilt-walkers, jugglers and buskers who came together in the early 1980s for performances that moved from the streets of the province to create multidisciplinary spectacles for a public for which home-grown circus was not a norm, unlike in the United States and in Europe.²⁶ For the artists who formed the *nouveau cirque* in Québec, their particular *nouveauté* was thus less marked by specific rebellion against traditional circus and more inflected with a generalized sense of the newness of the Québec society taking shape in the second half of the twentieth century. With a sympathetic population and a post-1960s government that funded artistic festivals for the express purpose of providing venues for Québécois artists, performance spaces became loci not only for forms of protest that had nourished earlier artists' calls for a *Refus global*: they also became places of burgeoning publicly supported creation. By the 1980s, groundbreaking and physically intense aesthetics, dramaturgies and movement forms were being created in the streets, theatres and nightclubs by such companies as the dance troupe La La La Human Steps and the physical theatre ensemble Carbone 14. Drawing on what has been termed the resultant *nouveau bouger montréalais*,²⁷ the creators of the Cirque du Soleil profited from a cauldron of creativity nourished not only by each other's artistic fervour but also by the cultural-political scene in that fruitfully friction-filled post-referendum decade.²⁸

It is tempting to think that my friend sensed this specifically Québécois genealogy when he was seeing Québec wrapped in Pink's silks. This foundational story of Québec's *nouveau cirque* has similarities, after all, with what Erin Hurley, in her cogent introduction to essays in *Globe* on Québec performing arts, reminds us is the 'Grand récit', that narrative of the Exodus of Québec and its peoples from the 'Grande noirceur' into a Quietly Revolutionary land of funded autonomy flavoured with vibrant creativity.²⁹ The very title of another article by the historian Pascal Jacob on the contemporary Québécois circus scene speaks eloquently to the mutually informing resonances among these narratives: 'Québec, un souffle de liberté'.³⁰

Québec circus artists themselves have spoken of a particularly Québécois, and *libre*, creativity that feeds their work. Gilles Ste-Croix, one of the artists initially associated with the Cirque du Soleil, locates Cirque's 'Québécois spirit' in 'its audacity and ability to change, to call into question'.³¹ The silks performer and co-founder of Les 7 doigts de la main, Isabelle Chassé, has spoken of Québec's cultural and linguistic minority status in North America as giving it 'not just a rich multiculturalism but also a drive to prove itself to the rest of the world'.³² For

Chassé, this difference, this drive, is integral to what Jacob senses as that ‘souffle de liberté’. In a 2002 interview with the *St. Petersburg Times* conducted soon after the founding of the new troupe, Chassé explains some of the elan driving her fellow artists’ work: “I think because we’re different than our surroundings, it gives us more freedom to be different in our dreams, in our goals, in our aspirations,” Chassé said. “Maybe we have a step ahead because of that”.³³ The programme notes for Les 7 doigts’s 2012 creation, *Séquence 8*, include a specific comment on the role of the city in which their work has taken principal form: ‘merci à Montréal cette ville chaleureuse et cosmopolite pour nous avoir influencés, nous le collectif’.³⁴ For Les 7 doigts and other *circassiens* before them, this particular creativity has a specific anchor, a specific locus: the city of Montreal, the province of Québec.

As my friend sensed, this creativity has indeed found foothold in the United States and beyond. In 2017, Cirque du Soleil (founded 1984 in Baie-Saint-Paul, Québec) has 18 shows actively touring on five continents or staged in permanent fixtures from Las Vegas to Florida’s Lake Buena Vista and Mexico’s Riviera Maya. Cirque Éloize (founded in 1993 by seven circus artists all from the Magdalen Islands, Québec) has three major shows touring from Amsterdam and London to Rio de Janeiro, and has just announced a five-year contract for a theatre in Paris. Les 7 doigts de la main (founded 2002, with their first show in Montréal, Québec), lay claim to at least four shows touring from the Netherlands to China, with multiple active projects from Moscow to New York. Cavalia’s first show premiered in Shawinigan, Québec, in 2001 and has been seen by more than four million spectators from Brisbane to Abu Dhabi. More than 95 per cent of the graduates of Montréal’s National Circus School (founded 1981) find jobs within a few months in companies from the Americas to Oceania.

Les 7 doigts also have the distinction of garnering a year-long contract in New York for their show *Traces*, something no other prominent Québécois performance group has been able to do, not even the Soleil. *Traces* long had a specific website devoted to its USA shows (tracesusa.com), was named among the top ten plays and musicals by *Time* magazine and has been featured on US national television. My friend’s vision of Québec penetrating the industry may be echoed in the selection of Les 7 doigts for two performances on the show *America’s Got Talent*,³⁵ as America stakes claim to skills formed out of what the creators themselves see as a Québécois specificity.

Les 7 doigts are also noted in particular for their *intimiste*-styled shows, in which spectators get a sense of not only seeing but also

‘knowing’ the artists, as they deliver performances that reveal snippets of themselves, often speaking of their histories, their concerns, their goals.³⁶ Creating cabaret-styled shows and executing unique numbers for special events, the artists of Les 7 Doigts both profit from and contribute to a growing presence of circus artists in venues from taverns to restaurants and corporate-sponsored events, as documented in newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, where we mere earthbound mortals may get to brush up against our specially talented *confrères et sœurs*. My Québécois friend is not alone in finding pride in this Québec creativity expressed in this ‘wherever’ of these international bars, taverns and stages. As public announcements were made that another co-founder of Les 7 doigts and former Cirque du Soleil performer, Gypsy Snider, created the circus choreographies for the 2013 award-winning recreation of *Pippin* for New York’s Music Box Theater, Montreal’s *La Presse* splashed a picture of an acrobat with the title ‘Les 7 Doigts de la Main à Broadway’ on its 9 January 2013 cover, above the fold.³⁷

Celebration: Moving, finding, creating a Québec

We do well to interrogate this very celebration. In 2009, an important dossier entitled ‘Le rayonnement du cirque québécois’ appeared in the journal *Spirale*, offering an analytical gaze upon what Sylvain Lavoie, the editor of that special issue, calls ‘la fête discursive qui accompagne normalement le phénomène au Québec’, where ‘le Cirque du Soleil ... occupe bien entendu une place centrale, mais son seul rayonnement interdit en quelque sorte un portrait complet de la situation’.³⁸ Similarly, in a 2006 interview published in *Voir*, Marc Lalonde, then the executive director of Montreal’s National Circus School, lamented what he called a reigning standard of ‘critiques complaisantes [qui] n’aident pas à l’évolution d’une discipline’.³⁹ As an element of his own proposed critical stance in front of the multiple acclamations that follow the success of Québécois cultural products beyond the province’s borders, Lavoie offers language that may echo them in an ironic tone: ‘On évoquera volontiers au passage le métissage, belle valeur que clame haut et fort notre pays, mais l’ouverture à l’autre, ne cache-t-elle pas le fantasme inavoué de pouvoir épingler une ville sur la mappemonde et de se dire: “I’ve done it”?’⁴⁰ As such, Lavoie calls us to attend to what messages are created and transmitted in such celebration of the ‘fabriqué au Québec, ouvert au monde’ that has accompanied Québécois *nouveau cirque*’s various successes since early in the troupe’s history.

The influential sovereigntist leader René Lévesque, for example, offered early praise for the Cirque du Soleil as a signal example of the fruits of the 'superhuman effort Quebec put itself to in the middle of the 1960s, when it became aware of how dangerously underdeveloped its human capital was', referring to this troupe as 'the extraordinary Cirque du Soleil, that United Nations in miniature performing for the young of all ages, whose inventor and leader [Guy Laliberté] is only 25 well-lived years old'.⁴¹ Even now, the provincial government's webpages devoted to the arts note Québec's *nouveau cirque* in particular in a pamphlet called 'Québec: A Vibrant Presence on the World Stage': 'If there is one field in which Québec has made an unparalleled mark, it is undoubtedly the circus arts. The major innovator, Cirque du Soleil, has quite simply reinvented the genre'. On its webpages, the Ministry of Culture and Communication has also posted a glossy document called 'Culture Québec: Une Culture qui Voyage' that features a reference to Cirque du Soleil in its first pages. With such language, we can see the government not only expressing pride for its world-travelling artists. It also stakes a claim to seeing the culture itself carried by voyaging denizens; where its artists go, there Québec also goes.⁴² Such pride-filled expressions for those artistic agents that carry and transmit Québécois culture beyond the province's borders are not limited to government communiqués. In 2011, the world-straddling Cirque du Soleil was selected in the *Les Affaires* poll as the enterprise most admired by Québécois.⁴³

As Lavoie has suggested, examining the tenets of this admiration may bring us rich rewards. In one of the first pieces of scholarship devoted to Québécois circus studies, 'States of Play: Locating Québec in the Performances of Robert Lepage, Ex Machina, and the Cirque du Soleil', Jennifer Harvie and Erin Hurley point out that the Cirque du Soleil expressly claims allegiance not to a *terroir* or *nation* of Québec, but, rather, to the "“imagi-nation” that the Cirque creates for itself and for its audiences each time it produces and tours a new show'.⁴⁴ My friend – and others, from the government to the readers of *Les Affaires* – may therefore be seeing a Québec-ness in what are ultimately free-floating signifiers in such productions where origins are purposefully effaced. Spectators discover names and nationalities of Cirque artists only if they buy the souvenir programmes and look deep into the fine print, as with the materials for *Totem's* 2010 premiere that offered such information in thin lettering and at oblique angles to the artists' images; sources of any recognizable language, including the province's dominant French, slip away into the heteroglossia of the shows' musical

vocalizations. Furthermore, as Las Vegas appears prominently in many of the genealogies at play in these pages, it is important to note the trenchant analysis of any evident Québec-ness there offered by Louis Patrick Leroux in his introduction to the dossier 'Le Québec à Las Vegas' for the journal *L'annuaire théâtral*: 'Le Québec est bien présent à Las Vegas, soit, mais il semblerait que seuls les Québécois en aient pleinement conscience'.⁴⁵ Cirque, deracinated from any originary space or place, is rarely recognized as Québécois; its name may lend it a French-sounding exoticism, but such a perception arguably consigns the name *cirque* to the same phonemic field as, say, *ambiance*. Even if Les 7 doigts explicitly include names and origins in their productions, in a counter-example to the dominant Cirque's nameless aesthetics, it is revelatory to remember that even they found their talent being 'gotten' by an 'America' that transposes their French name into an anglicized 7 Fingers and that at least one of their performers celebrates the American-ness of certain skills – basketball, for example – featured in their Montreal-developed *Traces*.⁴⁶

Having reminded us of these effacements of an original Québec, Hurley, in her 2011 *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Céline Dion*, suggests that the very interrogation of how to be national with or without making 'recourse to the dubious category of ethnicity' or other origins is precisely a Québécois question. She goes on to argue that '[I]ike other nations without a state, Quebec relies on cultural production to vouch for its national status'.⁴⁷ Without a nation *de jure*, it is in performance that a nation *de facto* can take form. As she writes, 'Viewed from this angle, the vital role of cultural production in the national project in Quebec is clear: cultural production depicts the nation's attributes onstage [...]. Granting the nation referent status through performance effectively establishes the offstage "nation" as fact'. In her penultimate chapter, Hurley explores how the performances of Céline Dion may serve as signifiers of a Québécois nation, even as a national referent may disappear into the shifts marking and making 'Céline' 'the phenomenon', where little beyond biography may refer directly to Québec. Indeed, for Hurley, one *cannot* say that 'Céline's performances are Québécois because they reference Quebec in their lyrical content, musical structure, or in her performance ticks'. As such, the shows of this stage(d) 'Céline' may be just as emptied of an explicit Québec as the spectacles of the Cirque du Soleil. For Hurley, it is, rather, through the expressly provoked affective responses of her public that 'Céline' indexes Québec and gives it shape on stage. In her affect-laden work, this Céline performs an 'emotional labour', harnessing

her viewers' energies towards creating 'the conditions of possibility for reading certain performances as "ours" (or "theirs"), and thus, as "Québécois"'.⁴⁷

Such analyses thus lead to a process of seeing and 'thinking affect' as a mode of 'meaning creation' beyond any explicitly or exclusively referential semiotics. In the case of 'Céline' and other non-referential performances that somehow call forth a Québec for their Québécois viewers, the understanding that exchange and projection of emotion may complement other means of signification, for Hurley 'opens the door to seeing how people may produce themselves as national, even in conditions that militate against it'.⁴⁸ Therefore, we may allow ourselves to attend to how affective response attributes meaning, both to the spectacle – of 'Céline', of Cirque – and to the spectators.

As a Québécois, seeing and feeling a Québec-ness wherever there may be a genealogy back to Québec, even in a signifying chain that contains potentially slipping signifiers, my friend who saw Québec twisting in Pink's silks may well be participating in the important work of producing himself, in this circle of logic, as a Québécois. Tracing parts of a travelling Québec, he may well contribute to the creation of his – and his fellow Québécois's – whole. Interestingly, the contours of this whole may be particularly well suited to the circus. Les 7 doigts' Chassé has reminded us of the cultural and linguistic marginality of her fellow Québécois. As people who are thus called to be translators, people who do the transfers and crossings of trans-latio,⁴⁹ as a necessity for a certain *survivance*, Québécois artists in their nation without a state may be particularly drawn to participate in the displacement and replacement, the voyage and the trip, that circus has long constructed – prior to, but importantly including, Cirque. Indeed, Québec, that 'culture qui voyage', may find particular presence in the travel itself, as the language of that government document, whose English translation carries the title 'Culture Québec: A Culture that Travels the World', suggests a conception of itself as peopled with voyagers. We Québécois are ourselves when we travel, when we cross boundaries, when we enter the world beyond. With Hurley, we see the 'emotional labour' these artists perform for – and with – fellow Québécois, nourishing senses not only of pride but also of self as a Québec, the referent, is called and recalled into the moving itself, where crossings find reconstructed meanings as a signal of an originary identity that necessarily 'travels the world'.

Having begun an examination of my friend's celebration of a Québec-influenced American entertainment industry by exploring real

traces of Québec cultural production in Pink's unsettling, if 'wow'-inducing, aerial work and the genealogies associated with it, these pages now close by seeing a Québécois recognize himself as he watched a particularly strong artist glitter in the air. The Québec-ness of Pink's cirque performance is thus not mere *ambiance* for the Staples Center, for Los Angeles, for America, for the globe. It carries creative, even constitutive, resonances for the many Québécois like my friend who literally and figuratively find themselves in it.

It is perhaps important to note here, at the end of an analysis of circles of creative influence, that that vaunted 'Culture qui Voyage' seems to promise to continue its travels south of its provincial borders, at least for a while. With *Pippin*, for example, Broadway now has a Québec-inflected, award-winning circus-themed show which, in the logic of dominant investment-recouping strategies in today's theatre world, has already embarked on at least one major national tour, with the resultant need to recruit and train increasingly large numbers of performers. Pink's silks and Britney Spears's Roues Cyr are finding echoes in even more aerials and acrobatics in the touring shows of vocal artists from Katy Perry to Taylor Swift. Furthermore, Montreal's Cirque-connected Moment Factory created in 2013 a highly successful and popular interactive multimedia environment for the interior of the Los Angeles International Airport, thus bringing forms of and from a travelling Québec to even more voyagers.⁵⁰ Pascal Jacob's suggestion that now is a 'Période québécoise' in terms of influence may not be wrong. Leroux has reminded us, of course, that this particular influence may go unnoted and unnamed by large numbers of spectators experiencing it, apart from the Québécois who find meaning-filled celebration in it.⁵¹

In a November 2012 interview at Montreal's permanent circus performance space La TOHU, however, Les 7 doigts's American-born Shana Carroll may have pointed to at least one way in which this Montreal that has influenced them, this Québec that has become a creative home, may find itself named and noticed beyond its borders and by non-Québécois. There, she spoke of how the company's touring shows, in particular *Traces*, have influenced young people to pursue circus training – readily available back in Montreal – in order to perform in shows like theirs.⁵² At least one American 2013 graduate of Montreal's Circus School, Kyle Driggs, has spoken precisely of seeing *Traces* as a youth in Philadelphia, knowing that this was a world he wished to join, and discovering a very real Montreal, in a very real Québec, that could take him to it.⁵³ Here joined by Carroll, Driggs and others both before and after them, my friend is ultimately not

the only one celebrating, even desiring and working to maintain, a *Québécoisisation de l'industrie*.

Notes

- 1 This article was first published under this same title in *Québec Studies* 58 (2014): 25–44. I'm grateful for the journal's permission to publish this updated version in these pages.
- 2 This description comes from the performance as broadcast on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3stsDXki_U.
- 3 'Pink's Grammy Performance: Upside Down & Nearly Naked', *Huffington Post*, 4 February 2010.
- 4 Personal conversation, 19 February 2010. As a noted figure in Montreal's performance scene, my friend prefers anonymity in these pages.
- 5 Sarah Poole, Email communication, 2 January 2014.
- 6 The real risks of serious, even fatal, injury involved in circus work were underscored by the 29 June 2013 death of acrobat Sarah Guillot-Guyard during a performance of Cirque du Soleil's *Kà* at Las Vegas's MGM Grand hotel. News of yet another dramatic circus accident reminds us of these threats: on 4 May 2014, eight performers fell more than 20 feet from a hair-hang apparatus in a Rhode Island production of the Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey *Legends* show. Pink's use of a particularly safe cradle position for much of the aerial sequence may well have mitigated much of the risk for her and her audience; however, her own accident with an unsecure harness in a show in Nuremberg, Germany on 15 July 2010 reminds us that even the most safety-conscious performer can suffer injury. Chris Barth, 'Pink Hospitalized After Aerial Stage Stunt Mishap', *Rolling Stone*, 16 June 2010, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/pink-hospitalized-after-aerial-stage-stunt-mishap-20100716>.
- 7 'Pink's Grammy Performance', *Huffington Post*; Moe Jackson, 'Pink Does a Wet Cirque de Soleil Act @ Grammy Awards', *MoeJackson.com*, 3 February 2010; Rick Porter, 'Grammys Best and Worst: Pink in the Air and More', *Zap2it*, 31 January 2012; Carte Blanche, Response to 'Was Pink ever a member of Cirque du Soleil?', *Answers Yahoo.com*, 1 February 2010, <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20100131213850AAG20bH>.
- 8 Mark Leibovich, 'Voice is Strained, but Support on the Trail Unstinting', *New York Times*, 4 November 2012.
- 9 En Piste, 'State of Affairs: Circus Arts in Quebec and in Canada', <http://enpiste.qc.ca>.
- 10 Erin Hurley, 'Le cirque: de la différence à la ressemblance', *Spirale*, No. 227 (July/August 2009), 24–7 (26).
- 11 '18th Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain', <http://www.cirquededemain.paris/en/>; Pat Donnelly, 'Quidam Performers Adapt to the Bell Centre', *Gazette*, 10 December 2010.
- 12 This history is not told without a touch of controversy. Some versions of the history, including the ones recounted in sources from the *Columbia Encyclopedia of Modern Drama* (Gabrielle H. Cody and Evert Sprinchorn, eds., [New York: Columbia University Press, 2007] entry on André Simard by Daniel Goldberg, 1245–6) to the Cirque du Soleil webpages devoted to Simard (<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/fr/jobs/casting/team/mentor/andre-simard.aspx>), suggest that Simard himself invented the discipline. Vaudelle's published interviews, along with conversations with her peers studying in Europe in the 1990s, return, however, the actual invention to Fasoli; it is instructive to remember here that the silks themselves are occasionally referred to in Europe as the '*tissu Fasoli*'. All versions of this history agree that it is Simard's work with Vaudelle in *Quidam* that thrust the apparatus and its accompanying skills and aesthetics onto the world stage. (My own correspondence with the French aerial artist Fred Deb' [Frédérique Debitte, Email communication, 25 July 2013], one of the founding members

- of the influential French company Les Arts Sauts and who was successfully experimenting with various aerial apparatus at roughly the same time as Fasoli was working with Vaudelle in France's Centre National des Arts du Cirque, further underscores a vital need for further research on the history of this art.)
- 13 Accessible through <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5ek52BJK5Y> (Isabelle Chassé in *Quidam*), with portions of other videos of this performance reappearing through fans' postings at, for example, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlwkIDPzNIL>.
 - 14 This performance can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/37606291>.
 - 15 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys7-6_t7OEQ.
 - 16 Silks are penetrating not only the contemporary entertainment industry. Certain companies in modern dance are experimenting with them. See Jayne Bernasconi and Nancy Smith, *Aerial Dance* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2008) for an examination of the dance world's explorations in aerial work. See Wency Leung, 'Aerial silks: A Workout Fit for Acrobats, Coming to a Gym Near You', *Globe and Mail*, 19 February 2012, for an example of the apparatus's appearance as a fitness tool in gyms throughout North America.
 - 17 The Cyr wheel can be seen in this (poorly filmed) sequence from the *Circus* tour: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfU1TDq3s1Q>. It is important to note in this context that Spears's show created for Vegas in late 2013 continues to engage circus apparatus – and garnered a review by Hannah Dreier entitled 'Britney's Vegas Show Looks Like Cirque du Spears', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 December 2013.
 - 18 'About Seb', SebandKatia.com. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/5TN4Jh2nFZskZMXnMy1f9Pb/sebastien-stella>).
 - 19 For a history of the National Circus School, see: Pascal Jacob and Michel Vézina, *Désirs de vertige: 25 ans d'audace* (Montréal: École nationale de cirque et les Éditions Les 400 coups, 2007).
 - 20 This interview can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWEqikOq4j8>. Pink has continued to develop her circus skills, including in an Apache dance sequence resembling a hand-to-hand number for the 2012 video *Try*, in choreography by the Cirque performer Sebastien Stella (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTCDFvMz15M>), and in other acrobatic and aerial skills for her 2013 *The Truth About Love* tour. For the 2014 Grammys, Pink performed a version of her 'Try' that combined high-flying aerials (here, ropes stood in for the silks) and a dance sequence after her rigging landed her on stage.
 - 21 Pascal Jacob's keynote address has been reprised and revised as 'The Québécois Circus in the Concert of Nations: Exchange and Transversality', in *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries*, eds. Louis Patrick Leroux and Charles R. Batson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 25–35.
 - 22 Jason Zinoman, 'Defiant Showman Demands his "Wow"', *New York Times*, 3 June 2011. Print programme: *Totem*, Montreal's Old Port, April 2010, Dir. Robert Lepage.
 - 23 Presse Canadienne, 'Le Cirque du Soleil viendra appuyer Madonna', *La Presse*, 3 February 2012.
 - 24 Alain De Repentigny, 'Le Québec en tournée mondiale', *La Presse*, 7 October 2012, <http://www.lapresse.ca/arts/musique/201210/06/01-4580904-le-quebec-en-tournee-mondiale.php>.
 - 25 Sarah Barmack, 'Magic in the Departure Lounge: Moment Factory's Moment to Shine', *Canadian Business*, 22 July 2013.
 - 26 Tony Babinski, *Cirque du Soleil: 20 Years Under the Sun* (New York: Abrams, 2004).
 - 27 See Iro Tembeck, *Dancing in Montreal: Seeds of a Choreographic History. Studies in Dance History*, 5.2 (1994).
 - 28 For more discussion of the 1980s context, see Erin Hurley, *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Céline Dion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), particularly chapter 6 and its explorations of Carbone 14.
 - 29 Erin Hurley, 'Le Grand récit des arts de la scène au Québec', *Globe*, 11.2 (2008), 11–22.
 - 30 Pascal Jacob, 'Québec, un soufflé de liberté', *Arts de la piste*, 28 (mai 2003), 20–1.
 - 31 Jennifer Harvie and Erin Hurley, 'States of Play: Locating Québec in

- the Performances of Robert LePage, Ex Machina, and the Cirque du Soleil', *Theatre Journal*, 51.3 (1999), 299–315.
- 32 John Fleming, 'Cirque du Surréal', *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 November 2002.
- 33 Fleming, 'Cirque du Surréal'.
- 34 Print programme: *Les 7 doigts de la main, Séquence 8*. Directed by Shana Carroll and Sébastien Soldevila.
- 35 See, for example, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLX3B8ksAdA>.
- 36 I have elsewhere explored the works of Les 7 doigts and their creative impulses. See in particular my 'Les 7 doigts de la main and Their Cirque: Origins, Resistances, Intimacies' in *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries*, eds. Leroux and Batson, 99–121.
- 37 'Les 7 Doigts de la Main à Broadway', *La Presse*, 9 January 2013.
- 38 Sylvain Lavoie, 'Le dernier homme, entre cirque et religion', *Spirale* (juillet/août 2009), 31–3.
- 39 Marie-Claude Marsolais, 'La grand salut', *Voir*, 23 novembre 2006.
- 40 Sylvain Lavoie, 'Le dernier homme, entre cirque et religion', *Spirale* 227 (juillet/août 2009), 31–3. Lavoie's voice is not alone. For a critical gaze upon Québécois theatre directors who choose to work for the Cirque du Soleil, see: Gilbert David, 'Quelques metteurs en scène québécois bercés par le chant des Sirènes', *Spirale* 227 (juillet/août 2009), 16–18.
- 41 Babinski, *Cirque*, 84.
- 42 'Québec: a Vibrant Presence on the World Stage', Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, <https://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/documents/publications/quebec-scenes-anglais.pdf>.
- 43 Martine Turenne, 'Le Top 10 des 150 sociétés les plus admirées', *Les Affaires*, 18 février 2011.
- 44 Harvie and Hurley, 'States of Play', 309.
- 45 Louis Patrick Leroux, 'Le Québec à Las Vegas: pérégrinations postidentitaires dans l'hyper-Amérique', *L'annuaire théâtral* 45 (2009), 9–20.
- 46 Francisco Cruz, Participation in roundtable discussion on Québec–US cross-exchanges, National Circus School, Montreal, 12 July 2013.
- 47 Erin Hurley, *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Céline Dion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).
- 48 Hurley, *National Performance*, 18, 21–2, 167–9.
- 49 For an exploration of the Québécois-specific crossings and transfers in the province's cultural capital, see: Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).
- 50 Barmack, 'Magic in the Departure Lounge'.
- 51 Leroux, 'Le Québec à Las Vegas'.
- 52 Shana Carroll, personal interview (Montreal, 6 November 2012).
- 53 Kyle Driggs, Participation in roundtable discussion on Québec–US cross-exchanges, National Circus School, Montreal, 12 July 2013.

The Quebec Election of April 2014: Initial Impressions

Christopher Kirkey

Abstract

The outcome of the 7 April 2014 general election in Quebec proved to be a surprise to many observers. Voters across Quebec chose to support a pro-federalist, Liberal Party majority government, led by Philippe Couillard. Pauline Marois's overtly separatist *Parti Québécois* (PQ) was soundly and unexpectedly defeated. The 33-day electoral campaign, marked by a heightened focus on Quebec independence, identity politics and the proposed extension of further protections for the French language, illustrated that Quebec society was far more concerned with issues surrounding the scope and delivery of healthcare, education and a whole host of related economic issues, including employment, provincial debt levels, public expenditures, taxation and the pace of economic growth. This essay, in examining the election campaign, suggests that the preferred message of the PQ failed to resonate with Quebec public opinion; a message that was only further muddled with the introduction of 'star' candidate Pierre Karl Péladeau. The results of the 2014 election, this essay concludes, further points to significant shifts underway in Quebec society; shifts that portend important new currents in public attitudes and the very relationship between the province's residents and the Quebec state.

Introduction¹

An unanticipated election result characterized by surprise, astonishment and bewilderment. While this characterization might lead

one to think of the recent result of the Germany–Brazil World Cup semi-final football match (in which Germany thoroughly and unexpectedly dominated Brazil, 7–1), these words apply with equal candour and force to the results of the 7 April 2014 election in Quebec. The immediate electoral results are clear. The Liberal Party, under the leadership of Philippe Couillard, emerged victorious, capturing a clear parliamentary majority – 70 of the 125 seats in the Quebec National Assembly. The governing *Parti Québécois* (PQ) led by Premier and PQ leader Pauline Marois, was roundly defeated, capturing only 30 seats (from a pre-election total of 54). The *Coalition Avenir Québec* (CAQ) emerged in third place with 22 seats.

I will examine that election, and attempt to suggest what accounts for the unanticipated electoral result. I will also offer a word or two on developments in Quebec, above and beyond the specifics of the election itself, that may have indeed contributed to the outcome on 7 April. Finally, I will conclude with a very brief commentary on the state of political developments and economic challenges in Quebec.

The results

Official governance in Quebec is founded upon a quite familiar model – parliamentary democracy. The periodic election of individual members, representing competing political parties, to parliament (or in the case of Quebec, the National Assembly) based on a simple plurality of votes cast by registered individuals in carefully designated territorially bound ridings, is the hallmark of Quebec and indeed many Western democracies. Quebec’s National Assembly, with 125 members, woke on the morning of 8 April to a profound shift in the political landscape of the province. The minority *Parti Québécois*, led by Pauline Marois (the first female Premier of Quebec) was resoundingly defeated. Madame Marois even lost her own riding of Charlevoix-Cote-de-Beaupre.² The Liberal Party, under the direction of its leader, Philippe Couillard (who won his riding of Roberval, north of Quebec City in the Saguenay region), emerged triumphant with a solid majority of 70 seats.³ *The Globe and Mail*, Canada’s foremost newspaper, broadcast the electoral result in a full front-page spread. Two large, boldfaced words appeared above an oversized picture of a shocked Pauline Marois on election night: ‘PQ CRUSHED’.⁴ Montreal’s English-language newspaper, the *Gazette*, posted a banner of how each political party fared, photos of a jubilant Couillard and a disconsolate Marois, framed by a headline

broadcasting ‘COUILLARD’S LIBERALS IN, MAROIS OUT AS PQ LEADER’.⁵

Some of the most relevant statistical indicators to emerge from the election are as follows. The Liberals, who secured 70 seats, (up from 50 in the previous 2012 provincial election), captured 41.51 per cent of the popular vote. The PQ managed to win only 30 ridings (as compared to 54 in 2012), and perhaps more importantly, received only 25.38 per cent of Quebec’s popular vote, the smallest share of the popular vote that the PQ has received since 1970! The *Coalition Avenir Québec*, a right-of-centre party headed by former PQ member Francois Legault (a one-time member of the Marois-led PQ, who broke off from the party subsequently forming the CAQ), emerged with 22 seats (as compared to 19 in 2012) and 23.05 per cent of the popular vote. The left-of-centre *Québec Solidaire* ended the evening with three elected members, a net gain over its 2012 standing and 7.64 per cent of the popular vote. Voter turnout was 72 per cent of all eligible voters, as compared to 74.6 per cent in 2012. Most notable was the number of individuals who opted to vote in advance polls (as opposed to casting a ballot on election day) – more than 1.1 million Quebecers or 19.27 per cent of eligible voters (up from 16.61 per cent in September 2012 election) did so.⁶

The election

The election itself, which lasted some 33 days, began against a backdrop of decided confidence for the *Parti Québécois*; public opinion polls showed that the PQ held a 12–15 per cent lead amongst likely voters. The election, called by the PQ, was designed to deliver a majority government – albeit for the PQ, not the Liberals.

The PQ opened the campaign on 5 March focused on promoting two divisive policy platforms they had introduced while serving as a minority government: their pledge to extend French language protections by way of revision to the 1977 Quebec French Language Charter and the promotion of a new so-called Charter of Values. The centrepiece of this latter initiative was the call for a ban, ‘in the name of religious neutrality’, on wearing overt religious symbols ‘such as turbans, Islamic veils and Jewish kippahs by the 600,000 employees in Quebec’s public sector; in effect, from judges and prosecutors, to police and prison officers, civil servants, doctors, nurses, teachers, daycare workers and employees of government enterprises including

Loto-Quebec, Hydro-Quebec' and the SAQ (the provincial-run wine and liquor distributor).⁷

The prospect of a PQ majority government would last for only four days. What would turn out to be the singular highlight and, most observers suggest, the critical tipping or turning point in the election, came on 9 March. The announcement that Pierre Karl Péladeau would stand as a candidate for the PQ in the riding of St-Jerome, was in itself a dramatic and decidedly unexpected development. A profound Quebec economic nationalist, the right-of-centre/anti-union leader of media giant Quebecor, seemed to many – including faithful PQ Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), political party members and long-time supporters – to be ill-suited to the progressive state-first orientation of the PQ. Yet, as confusing as this may have been to some, it was Mr Péladeau's comments after being introduced by Mme Marois that would forever alter the campaign. He professed his ambition to 'make Quebec a country' and then with a clenched fist, forcefully punched the air.⁸

That moment, that statement, that gesture, irrevocably transformed the campaign: no longer would the focus be on identity and the Charter of Values, or revising the Quebec French Language Charter of 1977 to further promote and expand the official presence and use of the French language in Quebec. Instead the election would now be squarely focused on the prospect of a third referendum and the ongoing quest of the PQ to secure political independence for Quebec. Péladeau's recruitment and role in the electoral campaign guaranteed – especially to the delight of the Liberals – that the spectre of Quebec independence would remain at the centre of political discussion.

Marois and most of her closest advisers had concluded, even prior to the start of the election campaign, that if the PQ won a majority it would take at least a full mandate (four years) to prepare another referendum on sovereignty. She proposed to first begin by launching a province-wide consultation process with Quebecers and to then table a white paper on the future of Quebec, thereby initiating a debate.⁹ All indications suggest that she may well have waited until the next election cycle had once again returned the PQ to power before placing a referendum before voters. Survey data confirmed that Péladeau was unquestionably a polarizing figure in Quebec, and worse yet for the PQ, the party quickly began to lose support to the Liberals and the CAQ, especially amongst francophone voters.

The Liberals led by Couillard, who as Liberal leader was regarded by many as a political neophyte to campaigning (and had only served

for three days as Liberal leader in the National Assembly), hammered away – successfully – at what he argued was the real agenda of the PQ. As journalist Sophie Cousineau observed: ‘Pierre Karl Péladeau was a dream come true for the Liberals’.¹⁰ Couillard’s most frequently used campaign phrase spoke volumes: ‘The best way not to have a referendum campaign is not to have a PQ government April 7’.¹¹ It must be noted, however, that Couillard’s campaign was not risk-free; he ardently and repeatedly defended (in fact championed) bilingualism and federalism more fervently than any other political leader in provincial politics in many years.

Coalition Avenir Québec was, at the outset of the election campaign, considered by many as a distant third-place, fading party. The second televised debate between the political party leaders, however, changed that perception when a combative Francois Legault (a 56-year-old airline business executive) provided a strong performance that effectively placed his party back in the running as an electoral force. Indeed, towards the end of the campaign there was a thought that the CAQ might win enough seats to prevent the now surging Liberal Party from securing an outright majority (that turn of events never materialized).¹² The CAQ, like its ancestor, the *Action démocratique du Québec* (ADQ), is a conservative right-of-centre nationalist party that principally drew its support ‘from disaffected suburban and rural Liberals and a smaller swath from the PQ’.¹³ It did not win any of Montreal’s 28 ridings. *Québec Solidaire* won three seats, including Amir Khadir in Mercier, Francoise David (she first won in 2012 after three previous unsuccessful attempts) and Manon Masse (on her fifth attempt to win a seat in the National Assembly) in Saint-Marie-Saint-Jacques.¹⁴

Marois, who resigned in her concession speech (on a very awkward platform where the three signature candidates vying to follow her as leader of the party – Péladeau, Bernard Drainville and Jean-François Lisée – all took turns aimed at implicitly projecting themselves as the front-runner for the leadership post), thanked her supporters by stating that ‘I’m worried about our language’.¹⁵ Péladeau declared, ‘In the 21st century Quebecers must start making their decisions alone’.¹⁶

In his remarks on the evening of 7 April, Couillard stated ‘the time of inflicting wounds is over ... we are all Quebecers. We should focus on what brings us together. Division is over. Reconciliation begins’.¹⁷ Here he was saying that discussion and debate over the PQ-sponsored Charter of Values, expanded Charter of the French Languages and political independence – all of which had proven, in the months prior to the election campaign and during the campaign itself to be decidedly

divisive, would be effectively curtailed and replaced with a more inclusive agenda, Quebec-focused within a broader Canadian federalist political structure.

As Les Perreux of the *Globe and Mail* noted, the electoral results effectively 'broke a cycle that has dominated Quebec politics since the 1970s, when the PQ and Liberals started alternating their hold on power every eight or nine years'.¹⁸

For its part, Ottawa – and the ruling Conservative majority government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper – welcomed the election results. Having effectively stayed out of the campaign, Harper remarked that 'the results clearly demonstrate that Quebecers have rejected the idea of a referendum and want a government that will be focused on the economy and job creation ... we look forward to working with the new government of Quebec on these priorities'.¹⁹ Justin Trudeau, son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and leader of the federal Liberal Party (and Canada's current Prime Minister) voiced that 'I had the utmost confidence that Quebec voters would reject the negative, divisive politics of Mme. Marois' proposed plan'.²⁰

Interpreting the results

The PQ platform and the campaign itself

National columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, Jeffrey Simpson, observed that 'when students of how not to run an election campaign turn to their textbooks, the PQ campaign of 2014 will be Chapter One'.²¹ Péladeau's entry into the provincial election as a 'star' candidate for the PQ, the subsequent fist clench, his statements and the spectre of another referendum were disastrous for the PQ's electoral fortunes. Marois and the PQ were unprepared for the reaction caused by Péladeau's call for independence. In short, his actions placed the PQ on the defensive for the rest of the campaign. The PQ election strategy hadn't included or anticipated the need to discuss, let alone defend/champion sovereignty or another referendum. Marois was forced to spend precious amounts of campaign time discussing 'the nitty-gritty details of an independent Quebec, including hypothetical issues such as its currency and tourism policies'.²² The election became an 'election on a referendum'.

Campaign gaffes also plagued the PQ campaign. On 13 March, just four days after Péladeau was introduced to Quebec voters, a reporter

asked him a question. Yet when Péladeau, who was standing behind Marois at a news conference, chose to step forward to the platform to respond, Marois gently pushed him aside and instead responded to the enquiry herself. Other examples include:

- In the midst of the campaign, Marois (who was confident that the proposed Charter respected the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) surprised Quebecers when she announced that a newly elected PQ government ‘would override any legal challenge’ by utilizing the Canadian Constitution’s notwithstanding clause.²³
- Evelyne Abitbol, a candidate for the PQ in Acadie, finished a remote second – she suggested during the campaign, which caused controversy, ‘that under the PQ’s proposed Charter of Values, that any Jewish doctor who refused to remove his kippah would be fired’.²⁴
- Teacher and PQ candidate Louise Mailloux, who compared circumcision and baptism to rape and said kosher products were a scam designed to allow Rabbis to line their pockets and fund what she called ‘religious wars’, lost her bid to become an MNA.²⁵

Surprisingly, the PQ campaign strategy did not call for or include plans for an orchestrated attack against Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s federal Conservatives (always a prominent feature in Quebec in an effort to build support for, and associated with the run-up to, a referendum).²⁶

The Charter of Values

There was never uniform support for this initiative, amongst Quebecers, amongst francophones and within the PQ itself.²⁷ A proposed ban on wearing religious signs – an essential contradiction of the Canadian Charter and case law in Canada – was met with significant high-profile opposition. Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, universities, hospitals, school boards, Quebec’s human rights commission, the Quebec Bar Association and past PQ premiers Jacques Parizeau, Lucien Bouchard and Bernard Landry (and former BQ leader Gilles Duceppe) all denounced the initiative.²⁸ This made it difficult for the PQ to galvanize support amongst Quebecers for this proposed action during the campaign. Secular-oriented sovereigntists who opposed the Charter and were unable to accept a right-of-centre pro-business/anti-union figure such as Péladeau were driven to support left-of-centre *Québec*

Solidaire. Conservative nationalists were also attracted by Legault's CAQ.²⁹

Poll after poll uniformly demonstrated that Quebecers were not foremost interested and did not support the PQ campaign of identity politics as an issue deserving priority; instead, their concern was with jobs and economic growth. The need for new job growth (Quebec had actually lost nearly 30,000 jobs in February 2014 alone), efforts to address health care issues and the burgeoning debt were the concerns that preoccupied Quebecers.³⁰

The Liberals

The Liberals immediately, consistently and forcefully seized on Péladeau's truthfulness and blatantly warned that a referendum (and the ongoing PQ quest for Quebec political independence) would/must follow any PQ victory. Everywhere he travelled in Quebec, party leader Philippe Couillard reminded voters of this elementary fact. The Liberal campaign was invigorated as a result.

As a campaigner, Couillard did a superior job, proved to be a tireless worker and canvassed the province. The grassroots-focused campaign run by the Quebec Liberal Party was excellent. It must be acknowledged that Liberal leader Couillard made a few missteps during the race, the most notable being his comment during the second leaders' debate when he suggested that factory-floor employees at Quebec manufacturers who might come into contact with English-speaking clients should be bilingual. Couillard, later corrected himself saying he was referring to employees in customer service who would regularly interact with English-speaking customers and business leaders/colleagues.³¹

Future directions in Quebec – A final word?

The April 2014 election campaign and result suggest two larger observations on Quebec society. First, additional administrative or legislative efforts aimed at advancing protections for the French language in the province are simply not as salient – they matter far less to the residents of Quebec in 2014 – as they once were. Simply put, 40 years of combined provincial and federal legislation and corresponding public policies have worked, in large measure (albeit not completely), to effectively defuse the lethal toxicity associated with language issues in

Quebec. Second, Philippe Couillard's victory provides further evidence that the social and political landscape of Quebec has been and continues to undergo a very significant shift; in short, the tectonic plates underpinning Quebec's model of development launched during the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s – in which the state's institutional machinery was geared towards providing an expansive range of significant social and economic benefits – are shifting dramatically. The relationship between the Quebec government and its people is being fundamentally redefined; the prevailing state-centric model appears on its way to being displaced.

In the wake of the election, the current political landscape in Quebec leaves the *Parti Québécois* in search of answers to three related questions: who will lead the party (Marois was initially succeeded by Pierre Karl Péladeau who subsequently resigned from political life; Jean-François Lisée currently serves as party leader), how will the PQ recapture political power as a majority government, and more profoundly, can it find a way to make political independence an attractive option for Quebecers in the twenty-first century? Make no mistake, the desire for sovereignty in Quebec is not extinguished. Upwards of a third of Quebecers, polls demonstrate, want a country, rain or shine.

As Quebec's 31st Premier – along with his eight women, 18 men, 26-member cabinet – Premier Couillard has his work cut out for him; most especially on the economic front. To reposition Quebec as a place of economic growth, new jobs, lower taxes, receptive to international business and committed to lowering the debt level, the government has above all else committed itself to restraining, indeed reducing, public expenditures. A mini budget was recently unveiled, with the first comprehensive budget set to be introduced in autumn 2014.

What are the prospects for success? The Premier has placed enormously talented individuals as MNAs in charge of finance (Carlos Leitao, former Laurentian Bank of Canada chief economist) and the Treasury Board (economist Martin Coiteux, Quebec representative to the Bank of Canada). Perhaps more importantly, there exists a widely acknowledged acceptance on the part of Quebecers that action – now, not later – must be taken to remedy Quebec's economic future.³²

The Quebec election of April 2014 ushered in a new political reality: Premier Couillard's central concern, in the short-term, will not be opposition from the independence-minded *Parti Québécois*, but will instead lie in the many economic challenges Quebec must squarely face.

Notes

- 1 The following essay draws upon remarks delivered, in April 2014, as part of the annual Quebec Lecture at University College London. With the exception of the inclusion of primary sources and some minor editing, the format and content of this essay faithfully replicates those remarks. I would like to thank Tony McCulloch for his generous invitation to deliver the UCL Quebec Lecture this year. Tony is a wonderful colleague and friend, an exemplary scholar and a proponent of the need to study, understand and appreciate all that Quebec has to offer. I also wish to thank the Agent-General of Quebec in London, Mr Christos Sirros, for his opening remarks. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to all those new and emerging scholars from the United Kingdom and Europe who attended the lecture; I have no doubt that their interest in Quebec, perhaps more broadly in the study of Canada, will be rewarded.
- 2 Marois served 33 years as an MNA; her first political job was as press attaché to PQ finance minister Jacques Parizeau in 1978. She held several key cabinet positions before becoming Premier, including finance, health, education, revenue, labour and the status of women. The eldest of five children born to a mechanic and schoolteacher, she was raised in St-Étienne-de-Lauzon across the river from Quebec City, and attended private schools. She has been married for nearly 50 years to Claude Blanchet, who amassed a fortune in real estate. See Marian Scott, 'The Marois Era is Over', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, A6.
- 3 Couillard was born 26 June 1957; he started medical school at 17, chose neurosurgery, graduated at 22; he has three children, and has been married twice. He worked to set up a neurosurgery unit for the Saudi Arabian government oil company Aramco (1992–6); served as neurosurgeon at Université de Sherbrooke (1996–2003) and entered politics in 2003. He was elected as an MNA, and served as health minister for Premier Jean Charest from 2003–8. Couillard quit politics in 2008, becoming a partner in PCP Healthcare Opportunities Fund, a firm promoting private healthcare businesses operating within the public system. He became leader of the Quebec Liberal Party on 17 March 2013, and was subsequently elected to the Quebec National Assembly on 9 December 2013. See Marian Scott, 'Mild-Mannered Surgeon Takes Helm', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, A4.
- 4 Les Perreaux, 'PQ CRUSHED', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A1.
- 5 *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, A1.
- 6 'The Election by the Numbers', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, A2; Charlie Fidelman and Catherine Solyom, 'Voter Turnout Very Strong', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B8; Jason Magder, 'Pollsters Feel Vindicated After Election Results', *Gazette*, 9 April 2014, A5. For precise electoral riding vote counts, consult 'Liberals Make Inroads All Over', and 'Colour This Island Liberal Red', *Gazette*, 9 April 2014, A8–A9.
- 7 Kevin Dougherty, 'Marois Steps Down After PQ Loss', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B2.
- 8 Konrad Yarabuski, 'Péladeau's election bid threatens to shake Canada', *Globe and Mail*, 10 March 2014, A1; Daniel Leblanc and Rheal Seguin, 'Péladeau the sovereigntist', *Globe and Mail*, 11 March 2014, A8–A9.
- 9 Rheal Seguin, 'Marois steps down after loss', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 10 Sophie Cousineau, 'Make No Mistake: This Was a Self-inflicted Defeat', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A7.
- 11 *Montreal Gazette*, 8 April 2014.
- 12 Christopher Curtis, 'A Remarkable Comeback for Couillard's Liberals', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B2.
- 13 Sean Gordon, 'A Third Way Remains Just That', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 14 Rene Bruemmer, 'David, Khadir Retake Their Seats', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B3.
- 15 Perreaux, 'PQ CRUSHED', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A1.
- 16 Philip Authier, 'Spotlight Turns to Future of Sovereignty', *Gazette*, 9 April 2014, A6.
- 17 Authier, 'Spotlight Turns to Future of Sovereignty', *Gazette*, 9 April 2014, A7.
- 18 Perreaux, 'PQ CRUSHED', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A1.
- 19 Daniel Leblanc, 'Harper Welcomes Liberal Win', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A6.

- 20 Mark Kennedy, 'What a Liberal Majority means to the Rest of Canada', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, A2.
- 21 Jeffrey Simpson, 'From 24 Sussex, A Big Sigh of Relief', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A6.
- 22 Daniel Leblanc, 'The Punch that Polarized a Province', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A6.
- 23 Ingrid Peritz, 'Turning Points: Four Moments that Shook up the Campaign', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 24 Andy Riga, 'Liberals Paint the Town Red', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B1.
- 25 Mailloux was vigorously supported (and by extension, defended) in her statements by PQ leader Marois. See Les Perreux, 'Marois Defends PQ Candidate Accused of Anti-semitic Beliefs', *Globe and Mail*, 14 March 2014, A1.
- 26 Seguin, 'Marois Steps Down After Loss', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 27 'Marois' Failed Xenophobic Gambit', *National Post*, 21 August 2013, A10.
- 28 Dougherty, 'Marois Steps Down After PQ Loss', *Gazette*, 8 April 2014, B2.
- 29 Seguin, 'Marois Steps Down After Loss', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 30 Jay Bryan, 'Pauline Marois Thinks If she Ignores Job Losses, They Didn't Happen', *Gazette*, 8 March 2014, C1.
- 31 Peritz, 'Turning Points: Four Moments That Shook up the Campaign', *Globe and Mail*, 8 April 2014, A5.
- 32 It should be noted that measures taken by the Couillard government since April 2014 have resulted in a variety of notable economic success stories including annual budgets that are currently generating healthy surpluses, fostering high levels of economic growth, restraining unsustainable growth in public expenditures and producing significantly lower levels of provincial unemployment.

'Silent Revolution': The Transformation of the Québécois Identity

Jocelyn Létourneau

Abstract

Since the early 2000s, the people of Québec appear to have been engaged in the transition or perhaps even the transformation of their collective identity. This is not to suggest that the Québécois now define and present themselves in an entirely new way, but that, steeped in two different fundamental realities – generational change and the place held by immigrants in modern Québec – they are open to new answers to the three questions that have continually echoed through their self-reflections as a collective subject of and in history: Where did we come from? Who are we? Where are we going? As a result, Québec – or so this article submits – is in transition. It is somewhere between the tree of its past and the bark of its future, hesitating to choose between the known impossibilities of the past and the unknown possibilities of the future. Québec is facing options that each person, based on their own perspective, views with hope or dread.

Introduction¹

Since the early 2000s, the people of Québec appear to have been engaged in the transition or perhaps even the transformation of their collective identity. This is not to suggest that the Québécois now define and present themselves in an entirely new way, but that, steeped in two different fundamental realities, they are open to new answers to the three questions that have continually echoed through their self-reflections as a collective subject of and in history: Where did we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?

The first fundamental reality arises from a change of the generational guard. Within ten years, the vast majority of the baby boomers will be in retirement.² In decision-making positions and as the voices of the public, they will be replaced by the next generations. Born in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, these generations, having come of age, will naturally take on the societal powers of word and action.

There will be no great upheaval: the continuities between the generations are strong. Each generation is itself affected by deep inequalities of class and destiny, if not aspiration and horizon. Ultimately, the effects of the times are as or more important than the generational effects in explaining the current changes in collective identity.³

That said, when it comes to identifying issues and managing problems, the post-boomer generations – Gen X and Gen Y⁴ – do not seem to behave the same way or expect the same things as their forerunners, unsurprisingly.⁵ Overall, and very generally, of course, the members of these generations are more pragmatic and less idealistic – some might even say more lucid and less lyrical – than their elders. They are also more open to the world and freed from the memories of colonization. To that we could add that they are also more emancipated and opportunistic, that is to say, enterprising and quick to seize opportunities that arise, especially if the results appear promising for the short term.⁶ It appears that the Québécois self-identity – traditionally associated with the traits of progressivism, communitarianism and ardent nationalism redolent with state socialism, corporatism, egalitarianism and romantic sovereigntism – is undergoing a sea change. Mirroring transformations in other Western societies, particularly France, the priorities of the Québécois, including those of a goodly portion of the younger generations, are shifting silently from good to just, from equal to fair and from right to reasonable.⁷

The second fundamental reality that marks the Québécois community today is related to the growing place in the province's social fabric of people born abroad. In 2011, 12.6 per cent of the total population – more than a third of the inhabitants of the Island of Montreal – were immigrants. This proportion is likely to increase. In the long term, immigrants adopt the behaviours of the residents, particularly children socialized from a young age in the host society, but nevertheless, the consequences of the ethnic diversification of Québec society, in terms of the (re)constitution of Québec's collective identity, are significant, or soon will be.

The overall effect of the confluence of this generational change and the place held by immigrants is not yet fully known or knowable.

Québec – or so this paper submits – is in transition.⁸ It is somewhere between the tree of its past and the bark of its future, hesitating to choose between the known impossibilities of the past and the unknown possibilities of the future. Québec is facing options that each person, based on their own perspective, views with hope or dread.

Québec in transition

A society exists because it is an instituted reality but also because it has adopted reference points, including a history, through which it interprets itself, defines itself and builds the borders of its Us, so it can differentiate its Self from the Other, which we could also call, drawing on Erik Erikson, self-identity. In the last 15 years, however, the acquired or assumed reference points that Québec drew on to build its self-identity over a period of 40 years since the Quiet Revolution, have taken a beating.⁹

The observers and interpreters of the transformations that the Québécois identity is undergoing generally exhibit one of three characteristic attitudes. For some, the questioning of the customary reference points is considered to be good. They believe that Québec society will run to the dogs if it continues to cling to its sacred inspirations and aspirations. Others, while inclined to support the regeneration of the Collective Identity, hesitate to push for reform because they are wary of upsetting the balance between the two cardinal poles of Québec's historicity: transformation (the desire to change) and reproduction (the desire to continue).¹⁰ Finally, there are those who believe that Québec, as a fragile and vulnerable society, cannot engage in a process of extensive change or modification of its collective reference points because this transformational process will lead to its demise as a distinct society, that is, as a society at all. These people, naturally, forcefully and vigorously resist the changes they see in the repertory of reference points which, for them, have always defined Québec.

The hypothesis we would like to advance is that Québec society is undergoing a silent transformation of its founding reference points, which may worry and torment or, indeed, inspire and reassure. Let us look at what, exactly, these changing reference points are.

- **Conception of society**
For a long time, Québec society, even in the days when it called itself French Canadian, had a curtailed and partly distorted vision

of itself. In the eyes of many speechifiers, well entrenched in the public space, and echoed by those with an interest in depicting the 'Belle Province' by emphasizing its most chauvinistic traits, Québec was a homogeneous and tightly knit society, fixed and not open to change or the Other.

But for some time now, thanks to the work of historians in particular,¹¹ this conception has been floundering. Québécois, including francophones, and especially young francophones, increasingly work on the assumption that Québec has always been an ethnically diverse and culturally composite society (which does not mean there were not tensions among groups).

The indigenous peoples were the first to be integrated into the new conception of Québec as a diversified society, to the point of being considered, by some, as the 'first Québécois' and raised to the position of one of the founding cultures of the Québec nation.¹² Then the anglophones and ethnic communities were granted an adjustment in their identity status when they were welcomed into the collective Us,¹³ although that process was and remains contentious in more than one respect.¹⁴ Currently, the idea that Québec society and culture do not arise simply and strictly from their Frenchness is gathering steam and slowly but surely entering the collective imagination.

It is hard to say whether this trend will become more pronounced or collapse. The paradigm of duality (Us/Them) continues to profoundly affect the historical conception that the Québécois have of their 'nation'.¹⁵ Whether this conception lives on due to fundamental conviction, force of habit or the lack of an alternative, we have no way of knowing. That said, it is clear that Québec is experiencing pluralism in a way that is worrisome to many of the society's editorialists. This could be seen in June 2009 when two Anglo-Montreal bands, Lake of Stew and Bloodshot Bill, wanted to take part in Québec's national holiday celebrations, performing in their mother tongue, English. This provoked a harsh response from some quarters, which was roundly criticized by others asserting that anglophones were also Québécois and that they were entitled, as citizens, to perform in their language, especially if it was to express their sense of belonging to Québec as anglophones. Ultimately, Lake of Stew and Bloodshot Bill did play a somewhat bilingual show.

The story is strictly anecdotal,¹⁶ and yet it is symptomatic of a shift which, in its potential political consequences, is absolutely

deplorable to many people. What would be the outcome of a trajectory in which anglophones and allophones, instead of being symbolically perceived as boils on the face of Québec, were seen as features of the collective self, which would mean that its personality and identity depended on the presence of these two generic groups *as well*?¹⁷

Insofar as one of the outcomes would be to (re)model Québec's self-identity, that is, the nature and historical constitution of what is 'Québécois', some see it as a significant problem. Re-examining Québec from the prism of its constituent heterogeneity rather than its putative homogeneity is, for some people, the best way to destroy the conception underlying the Us, an identity that cannot be modified without fatally shattering the Nation.¹⁸ In other words, it is dangerous for the Québécois to engage in a process of broad recognition of what they are and what they have been, within or beyond their elemental Frenchness, because coming face to face with all the many folds of their identity could lead them to discover some surprising pockets.

- Relationship with language

It seems, however, that the Québécois, including a large proportion of the francophones, are open to the idea of looking at Québec outside its French traits, or at least admitting that there is such an option.

This does not mean that the proponents of this approach deny the French fact or plan to nip Québec society from its French roots. Their goal is, rather, the contrary. In general, Québécois, including anglophones and allophones, support the idea of Québec as a francophone society. The vast majority of them also promote French as the language of public communication and the vector of social cohesion. On a continent where Tremblay's tongue is very much in the minority and English reigns as a kind of new Esperanto, the hard-won place and recognition of French in Québec and, spreading out from there, in Canada and even the United States (trilingual labels for products made in Monterey, Mexico and sold in Fargo, North Dakota) are worthy of admiration.

Among the youth in particular, however, the relationship with English and the English fact is changing. For them, speaking English or switching to English, in certain conversational contexts, demonstrates neither an individual state of alienation nor a heart-rending capitulation. For most young people, speaking the 'other language'

is not the same as speaking the Other's language. It's just a way of communicating with more people. They assume that in today's world, not speaking at least two languages, including English (and French in Québec), is a handicap for upward or even lateral social mobility. It is a matter of recognizing that being bilingual allows them to express a greater or more complex range of sensitivities and sonorities than a single language, even their mother tongue, can accommodate.¹⁹ For many young people, especially those in the avant-garde networks of Montreal, which may make them either trendsetters or early adopters, the beauty of Québec, and its urban centre especially, resides in its linguistic duality.²⁰

And yet the linguistic hearts and minds of Québec youth, especially the francophone youth who live in Montreal, are perceived by many worried stakeholders as the doomsayers of the future. Hence the continual tension on the linguistic front, the personal emotions and perceptions in politics and the media that so often overpower the demonstrative reason of sociolinguistic studies.

Do we have any reason to be alarmed? Opinions vary.

For some, despite the pressures that French continues to suffer, its situation in Québec has rarely been better. French is the language spoken most often by most people in the province. Approximately 94 per cent of the inhabitants of Québec are able to use French in regular conversation. The proportion of anglophones who speak French is also on the rise, at nearly 90 per cent of young people. Finally, because they have to attend French elementary and high school, allophones are often trilingual, which makes Montreal one of the world capitals of trilingualism, a situation famously embodied in polyglot comedian Sugar Sammy, whose bilingual stand-up comedy show *You're Gonna Rire* broke every popularity record.

It is true that the proportion of mother-tongue and/or old-stock francophones, in metropolitan Montreal especially (which accounts for half the population of Québec), will decline in the future, to the point of being a minority within two or three decades. Likewise, it is clear for all sorts of reasons – Québec's geographic situation, the continental integration of the economy, the mobility strategy of stakeholders, the benefits of speaking more than one lingua franca, especially English – that the phenomena of bilingualism and trilingualism will increase in the province, including in workplaces, especially in sectors that interface with the global economy, which are increasingly common.

In light of these trends, the people we could call 'serene' about the linguistic situation in Québec are left wondering where the problem lies. Isn't the important thing that French, in Montreal and the rest of Québec (where the primacy of French is of no concern), remains the common public language and that it continues to support a collective culture and identity – let's qualify them as Québécois – that grow and develop through and in their contact with the Other, as they always have throughout history?

Others are concerned by the situation.²¹ In their eyes, the fact that the fate of the French language in Montreal depends increasingly on speakers whose mother tongue is not French, even though their first spoken official language is, presents a stumbling block for the collective future.²² It is also troubling that francophone youth are gleefully embracing bilingualism but at the same time neglecting the quality of their own language. Finally, the idea of English as a neutral language, or even 'another of our languages', rather than the language of historical alienation, is viewed as a third stone that could sink the collective boat.

It gets worse. Since language is not just a vehicle for communication but also a vector of culture, speaking another language, for those who are worried about the linguistic situation in Québec, is already a step towards the Other; it is a little – or a lot – like making the Self into an Other. And, these worriers add, for a culture to live or at least subsist, it has to focus on itself. It has to maintain itself through its structures. It cannot allow the Trojan horse of the Other language within its walls. The Other language's vocabulary that is hiding in the horse's belly (or French language) is the leavening of an opposing culture, with a pernicious potential for the Self. To put it directly, Québécois culture (meaning: Franco-Québécois culture of French-Canadian heritage) is in danger. It needs to be protected.²³

Protecting the culture, in this case, means sheltering it, supporting it and chaperoning it. It also means recalling its carriers to their duty. It means, ultimately, defining it as minutely as possible, because it seems that the interested parties – francophones – are particularly susceptible to the cultural and identity siren song of 'Others'. In a recent document, Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, a star member of the *Parti Québécois*, reported that the current word on the street – or at least the word he heard in a tour of Québec in which he met with 1,800 people, including lots of youth – has it that 'all the other cultures seem more interesting than ours!'²⁴

This idea that Québec culture, poorly moored to the quayside of continuity by the fragile rope of a fraying language, is, of its own misguided accord, heading out on the turbulent seas of Otherness has some people demanding that it once again be leashed firmly to its base.

- Relationship with history and memory

In Québec, history – or more specifically the narrative of the Québécois experience across time – is practically a religion. Any questioning of the grand national story inevitably leads to condemnations that go far beyond reasonable and reasoned criticism. This was the situation in 2006 when a heated debate on the course ‘History and Citizenship Education’, newly introduced by the Québec Ministry of Education for high school students, roared through public space in the province. Decried as an attempt at denationalization, depoliticization and ‘defrancophonization’ of the Québec experience, apparently in favour of a post-nationalist, Canadianist and multiculturalist vision of the province’s past, the course was eventually withdrawn by the Ministry. It was replaced by a course of a far more traditional bent, featuring the accepted national framework, simply called ‘History of Québec and Canada’.²⁵

There is no need to pronounce an opinion in favour of or against the citizenship education course, which had its strengths and its weaknesses. It is important to note, however, that the debate fundamentally opposed those, on the one hand, who wanted to refresh the vision of Québec’s past by pointing out its failings in terms of both interpretative accuracy and civic relevance, and those, on the other hand, who advocated the consolidation of the existing narrative because, in their view, that narrative is historically just and politically essential. On one side, then, updating the narrative to reflect society in a process in which memory does not supplant method;²⁶ and, on the other, confirming the narrative so that society remembers itself as it should, in a process in which method is subordinated to memory.²⁷

Memory brings us to another major debate, apparently about Québec’s past but actually about its future. This was a debate that took place in 2009 between two groups – unequal in terms of rhetorical strength and ideological legitimacy – over the 250th anniversary of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

On one side, there were those who wanted to celebrate a historically meaningful event differently and from less familiar

perspectives, in the hope of giving the community a new view of one of its founding episodes. On the other, there were those for whom it was the drama of a nation that required remembrance and commemoration.²⁸ Our intention is not to claim either side was right, but rather to state that the dispute – and it was intense – was about remembering the past ‘as it should be’ or looking for possible reinterpretations.²⁹

For those opposed to the ‘breakaway’ commemoration of the Battle of the Plains, the issue was clear: we cannot play with this battle, the narrative and meaning of which must remain intact in the accredited script of the event, which is historical and identity-based. Straying from that script means opening the Pandora’s box of the collective identity, because history, memory and identity, in Québec as in any other society, are symbiotic.³⁰

Why are people so affronted by what belongs to history and memory when communities live in the present and look towards the future? Because for many people, history and the memory of what was are a compass that ensures the society will not lose the thread of continuity that binds its lasting identity. Some people find it lamentable to allow even a little complexity to seep into the national identity in Québec’s past, given the doubts that this complexity may instill in the society’s or nation’s vision of how it *was* in relation to what it *is* with regard to what it could *become* – also known as historical consciousness.

In this situation, presenting Québec’s past as a trajectory that can be assessed without the ideas of failure or incompleteness is politically dangerous, because it reinforces the uncertainty that Québécois, and especially francophone Québécois, feel about their identity, which is rooted in the concept of shortcoming, if not frank victimhood.³¹

Ditto for 1759. If this date were dissociated from a founding initial defeat and the beginning of a lasting ordeal that continues to the present, in ways that are subtler, of course, but still alienating, it might plant the seeds of identity doubt in the heads of Québécois: Are we still in survival mode or have we escaped? Were we ever in survival mode? In the event that today’s Québécois, and the youth in particular, might answer no to this question – which seems to be the case for many of them³² – it’s better to react by using the tried-and-tested cassette and winding up the old ‘chatterbox’ which distils the known incantations, rather than abandon them for a new identity anthem.³³

- Relationship with the Self

Using history and memory to map and reinforce identity is a well-known, widespread method. In Québec's current circumstances, when some people believe that the diversity-added elite are embracing pluralism and globalism with a deplorable naivety,³⁴ it is best to reinforce the walls of the Québec identity enclosure using tall, stout planks.

What is this Québécois identity that needs such protection from the onslaught of the Other and Elsewhere? To answer this, we could paraphrase St Augustine's attempt to define time: For what is Québécois identity? Who could find any quick or easy answer to that? [...] If no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to someone who asks me, I do not know.

It seems, nevertheless, that some people believed they knew – or believed they could determine – what the Québécois identity was, to the point of wanting to codify it in a law – Bill 195, which was called the *Québec Identity Act* – tabled in the National Assembly in October 2007.

The text does not state anything concrete about the Québec identity other than to say it is related to a history (national), that it is expressed in a culture (Québécoise) and that it is spoken in a language (French). Many people have expressed satisfaction that the bill died on the order table, given the possible consequences for the definition and attribution of Québécois citizenship, which was also to have been instituted through the Identity Act.³⁵ Fundamentally, Bill 195 has to be seen as a political process to appease the 'worriers' about the general identity situation in Québec,³⁶ a situation they interpret from the angle of identity degeneration, dissipation or deprivation, while it could actually – and this is our hypothesis – stem from the usual process of cultural evolution and actualization that occurs in any living, open society, a process Québec has passed through many times in its history.

- Relationship with the Other

The debate generated by the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, commonly known as the Bouchard–Taylor Commission, is the last example I will use to show that the silent revolution that Québec is currently undergoing with regard to its collective identity elicits hope in some and fear in others.

The hearings held by the Commission allowed a great many people to air their feelings about the challenges of opening up to the Other. All sorts of opinions were expressed before the Commission, from the most ardent to the most sectarian. The question underlying the debate was more or less the following: How can we open up to the Other without getting lost Elsewhere? Fundamentally, it is the definition of '*Nous-Autres les Québécois*' that was the subject of discussion for the 16 months between the time the Commission was set up (February 2007) and the day its report was released (June 2008).³⁷

For some people, including Commissioners Bouchard and Taylor, it was time to recognize what Québec had become or had always been as a society: pluralist, inclusive, open and cross-cultural, which does not mean that the French fact, on one hand, and humanist, modernist values, on the other, have not been the heart of the historical experience of the Québec community.³⁸ For others, it was important for the Québécois identity to be preserved in what it was and continued to be, because its preservation promised the continuation of a political community rooted in history.³⁹ How did these people define the Québec identity? By its Frenchness, naturally, but also by its history of humiliation, its traditions and, surprisingly, its religion – Roman Catholic, of course.⁴⁰

In the wake of the general educational reform and the release of the Bouchard–Taylor Commission report, another debate arose, this time about the 'Ethics and Religious Culture' course which replaced the existing religious culture course, centred on the Roman Catholic tradition. It remains to be seen whether the debate about the Ethics course and the polarization of positions that ensued in public opinion – for or against the course, for or against its replacement by any other moral or religious course – were related to Québécois' religious affiliations, although the spirit of Catholicism, at least cultural Catholicism,⁴¹ is never far from the surface, and certainly among the baby boomers.⁴² Whatever the case may be, what ultimately led so many people to oppose the new course was the fear of seeing other reference points – specifically, multiculturalism, which is associated with cultural relativism and specific accommodations as vectors for establishing a shared public culture that would drain the life blood out of a historical culture.⁴³ And yet the goal of the course designers was never to transfigure Québécois culture, question the historical heritage or crush any religious regime that exists in that society. It was simply to introduce the students to an

important dimension of the human condition – spirituality within religious institutions – and make them aware of the diversity of that spirituality and those religions.⁴⁴ Some, however, felt it would be reckless to open up these religious or historical perspectives to the youth, as opening up to difference meant (or might turn out to mean) closing off or marginalizing the reference point designated as the vector of the identity, heritage, memory and, by extension, rootedness of the Québécois culture across time, of which the youth are intended to be both the heirs and the trustees. What is this ‘Québécois culture’ and how can it be circumscribed? We are back to square one.

By way of conclusion

Despite the foregoing, no one should fear that Québec is on the point of exploding, because it is not. Québec is a society where radicalism has little hold. The demonstrations and disruptions that shook the province between February and September 2012 – known by the ludicrous label ‘*Printemps érable*’⁴⁵ – did not bring the community even close to a social crisis or political revolution. At the very worst, there was a confrontation between two major groups, the ‘lucids’ and the ‘solidaries’, a confrontation comfortably won by the former, no matter what some may claim.

Nor should anyone imagine, based on what I have said, that those people referred to here as ‘worriers’ are reactionaries or xenophobes. The worriers’ world is first and foremost peopled by conservatives, not in itself a bad thing, or people who, unable to find an answer to the question that haunts them – ‘What can we make of what made us?’ – prefer the timidity of the familiar to the intrepidity of change. The same goes for those called ‘serene’. They are not obtuse, neoliberal, over-optimistic or unpatriotic, but people who believe that Québec’s current situation, overall, is good, rather than bad.

Subject to internal demographic transformations (sustained immigration, change of generation) and external pressures of various kinds (transculturality, globalization, partnership of political entities), Québec is looking for its path forward.⁴⁶ The hypothesis presented here claims that the transitions and transformations underway, in terms of linguistic and cultural practices, stem from the actualization of Québec’s identity and heritage, not their decline. Québécois and especially young Québécois have a desire to open up to the Other, which is expressed in the common practice of multiple identities (*inter-référence* in French)

and the tacit recognition of interdependence, which temper their attraction for the idea of permanence and independence.⁴⁷

In this opening to the world and Otherness, we should not see a desire for the Québécois to cut short their connection with their historic cultural. Most people want to embrace the culture they inherited and regenerate it through a generous, thoughtful and empathetic relationship with the Other. Practically speaking, to welcome and recognize the Other in themselves without necessarily turning into the Other.⁴⁸

Likewise, we should not see the apparent weakening of support for independence among Québec's youth as a deterioration of the sense of identity or a reduction of their desire to form a nation. It is rather that the political form that the baby boomers associate with this identity and national impulse – independence – no longer convinces or seduces the post-baby boomers. The fact that Québécois, especially the youth, have never felt quite 'Québécois' and yet at the same time found themselves so attracted by the 'Canadian option' is not at all paradoxical. This dual-reel feeling smacks of neither the 'de-Canadianization' of young Québécois nor the 'Trudeauization' of their minds. As was true for the older generations, who all exhibited the same behaviour (and contentedness) to varying degrees, it appears that post-baby boomers place their future (and, by extension, Québec's) firmly in the heart of the central dynamics of Québec political culture, straining between the simultaneous desires of collaboration (without assimilation) and empowerment (without isolation) and the concomitant desires of transformation (without abandoning the Self) and continuation (without retreating into the Self).

Québec is changing, there is no doubt. We must not think, however, that the society's basic political identity matrix – which developed over time and is a matter of history, not essence – is about to crack. Although it is now borne by new stakeholders, the future of Québec is not about to leave its three customary paths: liberal pragmatism, progressive conservatism and quiet reformism.

Notes

- 1 This text is based on the oral format for which it was originally designed and presented – the UCL Annual Quebec Lecture at the UCL Institute of the Americas, 14 December 2015.
- 2 2018 is the demographic tipping point when the members of post-boomer generations will make up the majority of electors in Québec.
- 3 Charles Fleury, 'Génération lyrique et génération X: parcours de jeunesse de deux générations au Québec' (PhD Thesis, Université Laval, Department of Sociology, 2008).

- 4 Generation X is made up of people born from approximately 1966 to 1976 – or 1961 to 1980, according to some sources. Generation Y, also called Millennials, are those born either from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s or from 1980 to 2000.
- 5 For a portrait of baby boomers, in addition to Fleury, ‘Génération lyrique’, see the classic by Francois Ricard, *The Lyric Generation* (Stoddart, 1994). For the post-boomer generations, some interesting observations and telling data can be found in Jean-Marc Léger, Jacques Nantel and Pierre Duhamel, *Cracking the Quebec Code. The 7 Keys to Understanding Quebecers* (Toronto: Juniper, 2016), chapter 10.
- 6 ‘Strive for energy, rather than transcendence’ appears to be their motto!
- 7 Michel Forsé and Olivier Galland, eds., *Les Français face aux inégalités et à la justice sociale* (Paris: A. Colin, 2011).
- 8 Jocelyn Létourneau, *Le Québec entre son passé et ses passages* (Montreal: Fides, 2010).
- 9 Our intuitions about this, the incipient signs of which could be seen in the early 1990s, seem to have been borne out over time. See: Jocelyn Létourneau, ‘La nouvelle figure identitaire du Québécois: Essai sur la dimension symbolique d’un consensus social en voie d’émergence’, *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 6, 1 (1991), 17–38; and Jocelyn Létourneau and Sabine Choquet, eds., ‘Le Québec, une autre Amérique: dynamismes d’une identité’, Special issue of *Cités, Philosophie, histoire, politique*, 23 (France, 2005).
- 10 Jocelyn Létourneau, *Que veulent vraiment les Québécois? Regard sur l’intention nationale au Québec (français) d’hier à aujourd’hui* (Montreal: Boréal, 2006).
- 11 Gérard Bouchard is the person who has pleaded most insistently for the development of a new collective narrative based on the expansion of the ‘circle of the nation’. Bouchard, *La nation au future et au passé* (Montreal: VLB, 1999). Although our interpretation supports the idea of rehistoricizing the collective Québécois experience, it differs in some respects from that of the UQAC historian. Jocelyn Létourneau, *A History for the Future. Rewriting Memory and Identity in Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), chapter 2. Bouchard’s initiative and ours have been stridently attacked by Mathieu Bock-Côté, *La dénationalisation tranquille. Mémoire, identité et multiculturalisme dans le Québec post-référendaire* (Montreal: Boréal, 2007). For a more in-depth discussion on the attempts to revise Québec’s collective narrative, see Jocelyn Maclure, *Quebec Identity: The Challenge of Pluralism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003).
- 12 Gérard Bouchard, *The Making of Nations and Cultures of the New World. An Essay in Comparative History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008).
- 13 Already in the 1980s, the integrative work of Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, *Quebec, a History, 1867–1929* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1983) and *Quebec Since 1930* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1991) was moving toward a ‘territorialization’ of the definition of Québécois, a term that, for them, included everyone who had ever lived in Québec, from yesterday to tomorrow, regardless of their ethnic origin. The intention of the three historians appears to have been to include everyone in their narrative. Currently, some authors (Jocelyn Létourneau, *Le Québec, les Québécois, un parcours historique* [Montreal: Fides, 2004]; Peter Gossage and Jack Little, *An Illustrated History of Quebec. Tradition and Modernity* [Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2014]) have embraced an even broader goal: they want to establish how different groups and individuals jointly built the society, with dissent and conflict, of course, from their specific interests, including, sometimes, on the basis of characteristic ‘ethnic’ positions. In such a project, there is no Us (insiders) or Them (outsiders). Instead there are people, groups, parties, etc., that agree with each other or confront each other in different circumstances around political, economic or ideological issues, in order to build ‘something’ – a country, a nation, a society – that coincides with their particular or hegemonic interests. It hardly bears mention that this historical perspective does not enjoy consensus.
- 14 Bina Toledo Freiwald, “‘Qui est nous?’ Some Answers from the Bouchard-Taylor Commission”, in *Religion, Culture and the State. Reflections on the Bouchard-Taylor Commission*, eds. On Adelman and Pierre

- Anctil (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 69–85.
- 15 Jocelyn Létourneau and Raphaël Gani, 'Les mots de la nation. Au cœur du vocabulaire de base des Américains, Français, Anglais, Écossais, Gallois, Canadiens et Québécois lorsqu'ils parlent du passé de leur pays' (unpublished manuscript).
 - 16 As is the story about Pierre Karl Péladeau, when he was running to become the leader of the *Parti Québécois*, at an English performance of the francophone band Groenland at the new music festival in Abitibi-Témiscamingue in February 2015, when he shouted 'En français s'il vous plaît!' (in French, please!). According to the media, PKP's outburst was widely deplored and received little support.
 - 17 It can be said, quite rightly, that the prevailing conception of Québec and Québécois is inclusive. There have been countless public professions to this effect. An ambiguity remains, however, in terms of the conception of *Nous les Québécois*, an 'Us' that has not managed to rid itself of its ethnic roots, despite the civic definitions associated with the Québec nation. For examples of ambiguous discourse, see: Jean-François Lisée, *Nous* (Montreal: Boréal, 2007); Serge Cantin, *La souveraineté dans l'impasse* (Montreal: L'Hexagone, 2014) and Jacques Beauchemin, *La souveraineté en héritage* (Montreal: Boréal, 2016).
 - 18 Mathieu Block-Côté, *Le nouveau régime. Essais sur les enjeux démocratiques actuels* (Montreal: Boréal, 2017); *Le multiculturalisme comme religion politique* (Paris: Cerf, 2016); *Fin de cycle. Aux origines du malaise politique québécois* (Montreal: Boréal, 2012).
 - 19 This justification is put forward by the proponents of code-switching, who use a mishmash of French and English in regular conversation or to express themselves artistically, striving, perhaps, for a different linguistic aesthetic.
 - 20 Urbana, 'Parlez-vous français?' Supplement published in *La Presse* +, 25 February 2017; Catherine Leclerc, *Des langues en partage. Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine* (Montreal: XYZ, 2010); Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006); Leigh Oakes and Jane Warren, *Langue, citoyenneté et identité au Québec* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009).
 - 21 Guillaume Marois, 'L'avenir du Québec comme société distincte: enjeux démographiques', in *Le Québec et ses mutations culturelles*, ed. É-Martin Meunier (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2016), 289–312.
 - 22 Michel David, 'Les irritants', *Le Devoir*, 2 February 2017.
 - 23 Jacques Beauchemin, 'La protection de la langue et de l'identité collective comme enjeu au sein de la conscience historique Québécoise', in *Le français, langue de la diversité québécoise. Une réflexion pluridisciplinaire*, eds. Pierre Georgeault and Michel Pagé (Montreal: Québec-Amérique, 2006), 131–51.
 - 24 Paul St-Pierre Plamondon, 'Oser repenser le PQ: retrouver l'esprit d'aventure, faire renâitre l'espoir', online (<http://jflisee.org/osser-repenser-le-pq-retrouver-lesprit-daventure-faire-renaitre-lespoir/>). St-Pierre Plamondon's observation seems paradoxical, when we know that the Québécois never stop repeating how proud they are of their collective accomplishments. In reality, however, we should not be surprised. This is a constant in the Québécois system of representations—boasting and belittling themselves in the same breath, a trait clearly linked to one of the cardinal tensions of Québec's political culture: wanting to be different from the Other (desire for differentiation) but still wanting to resemble them (desire for normalization). On this topic, see: Létourneau, *Le Québec entre son passé et ses passages*, and Jocelyn Létourneau and Jacinthe Ruel, 'Nous autres les Québécois. Topiques du discours franco-québécois sur Soi et sur l'Autre dans les mémoires déposés avant la Commission Bélanger-Campeau', in *Mots, représentations. Enjeux dans les contacts interethniques et interculturels*, eds. Khadiyatoullah Fall et al. (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1994), 283–307.
 - 25 Jocelyn Létourneau, 'La renationalisation de l'histoire québécoise. Récit d'une opération publique d'histoire, de son initiation à sa consécration', online (<http://www.tonhistoireduquebec.ulaval.ca/>).

- 26 Létourneau, *Le Québec entre son passé et ses passages*, chapter 3.
- 27 Eric Bédard, *History of Quebec for Dummies* (New York: For Dummies, 2012); Beauchemin, *Souveraineté*.
- 28 J. Maurice Arbour, *Cessons d'être colonisés!* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015).
- 29 For more on this debate, see Philip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., *Remembering 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), chapters 11 and 12.
- 30 Historians were barely involved in the quarrel about the commemoration of 1759. From start to finish, the jousting was led by journalists and a few politicians, perfunctorily, and by petty and grand ideologues.
- 31 Jocelyn Létourneau, 'Mythistoires de loser: introduction au roman historique des Québécois d'héritage canadiens-français', *Histoire sociale / Social history*, XXXIX, 77 (May 2006), 157–80; Jean-Jacques Simard, 'L'identité comme acte manqué', *Recherches sociographiques*, XXXVI (Winter, 1995), 103–11.
- 32 This, at least, is what can be understood in the report produced by St-Pierre Plamondon, 'Oser repenser le PQ: retrouver l'esprit d'aventure, faire renâitre l'espoir', 20 – 'L'absence d'un sentiment d'infériorité ou d'injustice'. See also Léger et al., *Cracking the Quebec Code*, chapter 10. Note that while Québécois youth envisage the future of Québec outside the paradigm of historical inferiority, they continue to broadly use the script of 'destiny crushed by the Other' to represent Québec's historical experience. The paradox may stem from the fact that there is not yet any other, alternative narrative powerful enough to influence the youth in terms of their historical consciousness. On this topic, see Jocelyn Létourneau, *Je me souviens? Le passé du Québec dans la conscience de sa jeunesse* (Montreal: Fides, 2014).
- 33 Following the National Battlefields Commission's decision to cancel the most spectacular and popular events for the commemoration of 1759, one group, mainly sovereigntists, decided to hold, on the Plains of Abraham on 8 and 9 September 2009, a public reading of texts illustrating Québec's history 'from its indigenous sources to the multiple facets of its present'. The event, called 'Le Moulin à paroles' (literally 'word mill' but used to mean windbag or chatterbox), gave its organizers the chance to remind Québécois about the tragedy of their existence, a tragedy that began with the Conquest in 1759. See: Collective of authors, *Sous haute surveillance. Le Moulin à paroles* (Montreal: L'Instant même, 2010).
- 34 Christian Rioux, 'La "diversité" ou la tarte à la crème', *Le Devoir*, 13 January 2017. Rioux, a columnist with *Le Devoir* who is connected with 'conservative nationalism' (also known as 'identity nationalism'), is one of the main stakeholders who continue to denounce anything that is likely to change historic cultures. 'Conservative nationalists' consider themselves to be the clairvoyant heroes and protectors of a political community – (French) Québec – that is disintegrating and broadly repudiated by its 'multiculturalized progressive' intelligentsia. On conservative nationalism, see Jean-Marc Ptiote and Jean-Pierre Couture, *Les nouveaux visages du nationalisme conservateur au Québec* (Montreal: Québec-Amérique, 2012).
- 35 The bill was presented to the National Assembly by Pauline Marois, at that time the PQ representative for the Charlevoix riding.
- 36 For an overview of the position of the 'worriers' about the contemporary condition in Québec, see the cited works of Beauchemin, Bock-Côté and Cantin. Within the 'worrier' movement, the first two are among the most articulate and influential thinkers (see Jocelyn Létourneau, 'Triste espérance'. [Review of Jacques Beauchemin's *La souveraineté en héritage* and Serge Cantin's *La souveraineté dans l'impasse*.] *Recherches sociographiques*, LVIII, 1 (2017), 173–80).
- 37 Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, *Building the Future. A Time for Reconciliation. Report* (Québec: Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles, 2008).
- 38 Gérard Bouchard, *The Making of Nations and Cultures of the New World. An Essay in Comparative History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

- 39 Several contributions to the publication edited by Bernard Gagnon, *La diversité Québécoise en débat. Bouchard, Taylor et les autres* (Montreal: Québec-Amérique, 2010) suggest this. See in particular the texts by Thériault and Beauchemin.
- 40 This article will not comment on the debate stemming from Bill 60, the Charter of Québec values, tabled in the National Assembly in November 2013 by PQ minister Bernard Drainville. While ultimately this law was not adopted, the discussions about establishing shared rules for living in a secular state and mapping out religious accommodations are still very much alive and continue to draw in politicians. The enthusiasm over the debate is essentially unchanged from in the days of the Bouchard Taylor Commission. It opposes, on one side, people with an open conception of Québec identity and culture, based on the idea of identity and cultural actualization, who advocate minimal legislation on the matter, and, on the other side, those who have a closed conception of this identity and culture, based on the idea of identity and cultural permanence, and who advocate varying degrees of protectionist legislation on the matter. So far, the position of the former has won out over that of the latter, which is nevertheless fairly strong in the public space.
- 41 Cultural Catholicism means a conception of the Catholic religion as an identity resource, a marker of historical continuity and a reservoir of collective meaning. In Québec, Catholicism, even secular Catholicism, is part of the national identity. Jean-François Laniel, 'La laïcité Québécoise est-elle achevée? Essai sur une petite nation, entre société neuve et république', in *Le Québec et ses mutations culturelles*, ed. É-Martin Meunier (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2016), 423–74; Robert Mager and Serge Cantin, eds., *Modernité et religion au Québec. Où en sommes-nous?* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010).
- 42 It appears that Catholicism as a cultural reference point is quickly fading among the new generations. É-Martin Meunier, 'Effritement de la religion culturelle et transformation du modèle québécois de laïcité', in *Les enjeux du pluralisme: actualité du modèle québécois*, eds. Jean-François Plamondon and Anne Vaucher (Bologna: Pendragon, 2010), 151–6; Louis Rousseau, ed., *Le Québec après Bouchard-Taylor: les identités religieuses de l'immigration* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2012).
- 43 Joëlle Quirion, *Le cours Éthique et culture religieuse: transmission des connaissances ou endoctrinement?* (Montreal: Institut de recherche sur le Québec, 2009); Mathieu Bock-Côté, 'Du Printemps d'érable au débat sur la Charte des valeurs: mutation et renaissance du nationalisme québécois', in Meunier, *Le Québec et ses mutations culturelles*, 393–419. For a critique of the course from a secular and civic perspective, see Daniel Baril and Normand Baillargeon, eds., *La face cachée du cours Éthique et culture religieuse* (Montreal: Leméac, 2016).
- 44 George Leroux, *Éthique, culture religieuse, dialogue: arguments pour un programme* (Montreal: Fides, 2007); Nancy Bouchard and Mathieu Gagnon, eds., *L'éthique et culture religieuse en question: réflexions critiques et prospectives* (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2004).
- 45 The play on words does not translate: *Printemps arabe* (Arab Spring) and *Printemps érable* (Maple Spring).
- 46 Like many societies, some of which, including the United States, the United Kingdom and even France, are flirting dangerously with or even embracing populist ideas.
- 47 According to a study conducted by Simon Langlois ('L'appui à la souveraineté du Québec de 1995 à aujourd'hui', unpublished manuscript, Department of Sociology, Université Laval, Québec, 2015), between 2004–5 and 2012–15 support for sovereignty has only remained steady among those 55 and over. It has declined for all other age groups, dropping by 25 basis points among 18-to-24-year-olds, 19 basis points among 25-to-34-year-olds, 22 basis points among 35-to-44-year-olds and 21 basis points among 45-to-54-year-olds. The diagnosis of a loss of *faith* ('Yes, and it all becomes possible') but not necessarily of *consideration* ('Eventually, but why now and why at all?') among youth concerning the idea of independence can also be seen in St-Pierre Plamondon, 'Oser repenser le PQ'.
- 48 This vision is expressed in St-Pierre Plamondon, 'Oser repenser le PQ'.