**Youth of Quebec’s English-speaking community**

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

Part of a series of documents pertaining Canadian Heritage’s Living together project.

**APPENDIX F**

This document contains a **summary of some of the issues specific to the youth of Quebec’s English‑speaking community**. This overview is more indicative than exhaustive, and is not to be seen as a scientific literature review per se. However, it highlights some concerns that Young English speakers in Quebec have expressed over time. For more information, please consult the bibliography, which includes a list of references used in this summary, as well as other suggested readings.

The identity of Quebec’s young English-speakers

* Many studies show that young English-speaking Quebecers have bilingual, multiple identities. A single identity appears to be becoming less and less common among members of official language minorities in Canada. This situation does not mean, however, that they will be eventually assimilated into the majority group.
* Although most young English-speakers want to integrate and fully participate in a majority French‑speaking Quebec, they also value the development and vitality of Quebec’s English-speaking communities. The report entitled *An Update on Quebec’s English-Speaking Youth (2008-2015)* (Palmer, 2015) reveals a strong sense of belonging among young people to their respective English‑speaking communities, but that this sense is tied to the feeling of being valued, particularly through employment.
* Today, for some French-speaking Quebecers, Quebec’s English-speakers might be indistinguishable from English-speakers from the rest of Canada (ROC) or even the United States (Bourhis and Sioufi, 2014). Although the majority sees language as the only characteristic that defines English-speakers, Quebec’s English-speakers feel different from English-speakers in the rest of North America.
* Recent studies showed that these young people, while they do not consider themselves to be marginalized (their language remains an important tool of power in the world), they do not feel they fully participate into Quebec society. They said that they do not always feel accepted by the French‑speaking majority, even if they were born in Quebec and have lived there all their lives and despite the fact that they are able to speak French.

Participation in Quebec society

* Bilingualism among young English-speakers helps them with their economic and social integration, but does not seem to be enough to stop some migration outside of the province. Taking note of increased bilingualism among English speakers, the Commission for the *Estates General on the Status and Future of the French Language in Quebec* affirmed that young people have more language tools than their elders to fully participate into Quebec society (Magnan and Lamarre, 2013).
* Parents are worried that their children will not have the necessary French-language skills to join the job market. However, there has been progress since 2009 with respect to French instruction offered in the English education system, but the instruction provided varies a great deal from one school to another (and for youth in English Universities, French language instruction is not a requirement). The opportunity to use French outside the classroom has been recognized as a key aspect of improving French-language knowledge.
* Out of those who leave Quebec, many are bilingual but perceive themselves as having more limited written French skills or have more limited written French skill and therefore do not meet the language requirements of some jobs upon hiring. However, job market integration can also lead to increased bilingualism, particularly with regard to learning technical vocabulary through on-the-job language training.
* The English-language arts world in Quebec, particularly the music sector, attracts not only English‑speaking consumers, but also French-speaking consumers. In addition, English-speaking artists have a sense of belonging to Quebec society, which implies that they are integrated into the French-speaking culture and/or that they have redefined their identity. Recently, English-speaking artists have been recognized by the French-speaking community: for example, many prizes have been awarded to English-language writers. However, local events organized and hosted by English‑speaking communities receive little attention from French-language media and Quebec’s English-language culture is nearly invisible outside Quebec.
* Many English-speaking young people born or raised in Quebec have trouble defining the nature of their historical relationship with the Quebec experience other than as outsiders. Questions such as why do they not seem themselves as co-founders of Quebec society or have they been largely excluded from the Quebec narrative may need to be better understood.
* By all accounts, young French speakers and English speakers both see Quebec’s past as being marked by conflicts between the French and the English and are not familiar with moments of collaboration or at the least harmonious coexistence in history, as demonstrated during the 2015 Conference in Quebec (Morin Centre) entitled, “*Ambiguous Encounters: Anglophone-Francophone Relations in Quebec, from the Conquest to the Quiet Revolution*”.
* Research by Zanazanian on the historical representations of French-speaking and English-speaking teachers in Quebec shows that, as a whole, French-speaking respondents expressed indifference to the historical experiences and social realities of English-speaking Quebecers, while English-speaking respondents showed empathy towards French-speaking Quebecers that they pass on to their students (Zanazanian, 2008).

Bringing together the two language groups

* Pairing members of both language groups together (similarly to intercultural pairing) transforms the idea of contact into a real, interpersonal experience. It is not rare to see that French speakers and English speakers have no or very few friends from the other language group. This situation might contribute to prejudices about the other being maintained, and for English speakers, represents a disadvantage in terms of access to networks that might facilitate socio-economic integration.
* The success factors for bilingualism among English speakers identified in the 2015 report (Palmer) include partnerships and collaboration between the English-speaking and French-speaking communities.
* The testimonials of the Senate reports (2011) and the Palmer study (2015) prepared for Canadian Heritage both show that collaboration between the French-speaking majority and the English-speaking minority is essential to maintaining the vitality of English-speaking communities in Quebec. This collaboration targets interests—often common—of the two language communities and the many examples of success show that the relationship between French speakers and English speakers can be a winning formula for each group, rather than a zero-sum game. The Senate report identified this issue by stating: “It is important to understand that a win for the rights of the Anglophone minority does not necessarily threaten the aspirations of the Francophone minority. The goals of the two communities do not have to be mutually exclusive and can be achieved in an atmosphere of respect for the rights of both.”
* The number of mentorships, internships, exchanges and opportunities for informal learning has decreased since 2009 (e.g. ESDC Career Focus Internship Program, Katimavik) (Palmer, 2015). A testimonial from the Regional Association of West Quebecers points to the additional challenge for young English speakers of the lack of contacts in professional networks, which means that they miss out on opportunities for internships, learning and mentoring (Report by the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, 2011).
* The project of bringing together the two language groups could take into account the theory of intergroup contacts (“théorie des contacts intergroupes”) that emerged in the 1950s’ United States during school desegregation between “Black” and “White” schools. Academics in Quebec (Côté, Lamarre and Razakamanana, 2016) applied this theory in the context of exchanges between French- and English-language schools. The conditions to follow for efficient linguistic intergroup contacts could be summarized as these below. The participants of the two groups have:
  + To be equal, have equal status;
  + To perceive that they have a common goal that gathers them, and that they need to work together to reach this goal (collaboration over competition);
  + To have personalized relationships and high level of contact with the other group;
  + To feel competent in their second language. This element if part of a broader condition which is the need for anxiety management caused by these contacts;
  + To be surrounded by people who foster harmonious intergroup relationships;
  + To have pleasant relationships.
* As a result of a linguistic intergroup program that follows these principles (Option-études Châteauguay), Côté, Lamarre and Razakamanana (2016) indicated that the participants, the Francophones students as much as their English-speakers counterparts, stated that they kept their original ethnolinguistic identity even though their perception of their second language’s competency, their linguistic usage and their social network evolved. This research illustrates that around 40% of the participants kept the mixed social network they built during their participation in Option-études Châteauguay, even 5 years after their participation.

Conclusion

* Young English speakers in Quebec, who are for the most part bilingual, want to integrate and fully participate in a majority French-speaking Quebec. However, recent studies showed that these young people, while not feeling marginalized (their language remains an important tool of power in the world) do not feel completely integrated in Quebec society.
* The proposed initiative will identify how, for the betterment of English-speaking youth, English‑speaking and French-speaking youth in Quebec might be brought together, based on an anticipated chain of results, and what kind of strategic action is necessary to make it a reality. The goal is to identify a set of potential solutions, with targeted results and performance indicators, which can guide stakeholders who are active in this field.