

7. Languages, Culture & Immigration

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Rapprochement between French-speaking, English-speaking Quebecers.**
- 2. Integrating Newcomers into Quebec Society without Threats, Coercion.**
- 3. Busting Myths about the English-speaking presence in Quebec.**
- 4. Countering the ‘Decline of French’ Narrative in Quebec.**
- 5. When the French Language trumps Charter Rights, Economy.**
- 6. Recognizing both French and English as Common Languages in Quebec.**
- 7. Immigration, Immigration Recommendations.**
- 8. [GAME CHANGER] The English Language Services Act, Ombudsman, Commissioner and Ministry of the English Language.**

7.1. Introduction

The *Canadian Party of Quebec’s* Language, Culture and Immigration policy is one of inclusivity and equality for all. The Party seeks to reverse current Government of Quebec policies going back decades that discourage bilingualism and equal rights for all Quebecers. It seeks to foster an environment whereby everyone feels welcome in their home province, regardless of mother tongue, heritage and ethnicity. This policy of *inclusivity* –discussed in Section 1 and elsewhere in the platform – is a guiding theme that will promote better socioeconomic justice for all Quebecers.

CaPQ policies seeks to unite all Quebecers in common purpose, rather than divide people as previous Quebec Liberal and Parti Québécois governments have done with the enactments of Bill 101, Bill 178, Bill 21, and the Legault government with Royal Assent of Bill 96 on **June 1, 2022**.

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7.2. [CaPQ Principle 6] **Rapprochement between French-speaking, English-speaking Quebecers**

In the Province of Quebec, politicians have enacted laws that promote mistrust, anger and fear between French-speaking and English-speaking Quebecers. Since the passing of the Union Nationale's Bill 63, *An Act to promote the French language in Québec* - the so-called "grandfather of Quebec language laws" - in 1969, an insipid language law regime has emerged - inspired by French language hardliners within Quebec's political, bureaucratic, academic, cultural and media intelligentsia.

The Parti Québécois' *Bill 101*, the original *Charter of the French Language (CFL)*, which became law on August 26, 1977 marked a watershed moment in Quebec history, precipitating the greatest interprovincial migration in Canadian history. After a couple of decades of relative "language peace", the Coalition avenir Québec's (**CAQ**) *Bill 96* - with its 201 articles redefining all facets of Quebec society - risks reopening old wounds and heightening linguistic tensions for generations to come. What can Quebecers of good faith do to stop this erosion of basic freedoms in face of an unprecedented onslaught against their civil liberties, constitutional protections, and human rights?

CaPQ was founded to promote policies that encourage bilingualism, educational freedom of choice, equal rights for all and cultural diversity throughout the province. It's time for francophones to proclaim their pride in the French language without allowing the rights of their English-speaking neighbours to be eroded. English-speaking Quebecers have a 260-year presence in Quebec, which includes great institutions that have served and will continue to serve French-speakers in their mother tongue.

At the same time, English-speaking Quebecers, whether they be of British origin or ethnic minorities, will continue to learn French in growing numbers from childhood, and live up to its legacy as the originators and drivers of formal immersive second language teaching in Canada (St. Lambert Elementary School, 1965).

Monolingualism is anathema to a modern, forward-looking society. In Europe, there's a saying that to be bilingual is to be badly educated. Large numbers of European Union (**EU**) citizens are multilingual, often learning foreign languages as early as the age of three.¹ However, the mother tongue of children there doesn't seem to be threatened.

The Party seeks to encourage French-English bilingualism throughout Quebec, not only in the Montreal region. It will do so by advocating for better language education at the primary and secondary school levels, especially at publicly-funded institutions. It also seeks to remove

¹ Delia Schipor, (2022, June 9). Jeg Gotta Like Spille Fortnite, Men I Never Win the Game: Implementing Multilingual Pedagogies in a Norwegian Primary School. *Languages* 7: 147. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages7020147> Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2226-471X/7/2/147> September 14, 2022.

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legal and bureaucratic obstacles currently in place that impede a child's educational choices based on linguistic and ethnic origin.

CaPQ supports *moitié-moitié* French-English exchanges for adults at the regional level throughout Quebec. In this manner, it looks to speak over the heads of those who support a closed, unilingual, officially French-only Quebec, to the multilinguistic reality that goes back to when only indigenous people inhabited Turtle Island.

Respect and trust will be achieved by sharing what French and English-speaking Quebecers have in common: culture, sports, festivals, business and technological achievement, and *joie de vivre*. A strong work ethic, a desire for better environmental stewardship, and pleasure in being able to speak both of Canada's official languages.

Unless a francophone family has the means to send their kids to private school - especially a non-subsidized English private school - chances are that these francophone kids will have little interaction with anglophone kids until perhaps CEGEP (N.B. that itself is in doubt, given Bill 96's new English CEGEP restrictions).

This is the **CFL's** legacy - segregation of publicly-funded childhood education based on state-defined language rights from birth, as well as income level. Permitting French children to attend English schools if they choose to do so would be a meaningful step towards *rapprochement* (**CaPQ Principle 6**). Currently, about 13% of English-eligible school-age children attend French schools in Quebec. What's wrong with three to five percent of French Quebec school children going the other way?

7.3. Integrating Newcomers into Quebec Society without Threats, Coercion

Instead of encouraging a non-threatening relationship between the provincial government and minority groups without language and cultural coercion, Bills 21 and 96 encourage fear, anger and mistrust amongst francophones, anglophones as well as all ethnic minorities and indigenous nations. **CaPQ** wants to repeal these laws and recalibrate community relationships based on equality and acceptance to all who reside in Quebec.

It's important to encourage people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to integrate into Quebec society, but with the freedom to live their lives as they see fit. Soon enough, it will be evident that they share the same preoccupations as other Quebec residents: jobs, the economy, healthcare, education, social services, public transportation, socioeconomic justice, etc.

Newcomers need state support, not state control based on regressive laws and policies based on unfounded fears. They will benefit from healthy relationships based on mutual respect and equality with the Quebec government. They will also benefit from better representation in the province's political decision-making apparatus.

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The *Canadian Party of Quebec* recognizes the importance of representative, accountable government in developing and maintaining a non-threatening relationship between language and culture that speaks to all Quebecers. To achieve this goal, the Party pledges to:

- Promote multilingualism throughout local media outlets covering local news, events, and cultural activities;
- Strive toward accessibility, affordability and inclusivity of all public services and social initiatives in Quebec;
- Transform Quebec into a more open, attractive and welcoming place to live in.

7.4. Busting Myths about the English-speaking presence in Quebec

For centuries, French Quebec's opinion leaders have demonized the 'Other', especially those who identify with the English-speaking community of Quebec (**ESCQ**). In response, **CaPQ** is committed to countering the myths about English speakers, the English-speaking presence in Quebec, and Quebec institutions founded by the English-speaking community.

Identity politics in the form of Quebec nationalism has seized the minds of many people, with the stereotypical English-speaker, i.e., the Westmount Rhodesian, the fat, unilingual English saleslady at Eaton's or The Bay who doesn't speak French, or the so-called "tête carré" often serving as the scapegoat of all of Quebec's ills.

Although negative ESCQ caricatures change from generation to generation, Quebec governments and their allies continue to perpetuate the myth that anglophones and francophones are locked in a zero-sum struggle for supremacy – a never-ending battle on the Plains of Abraham, sort of speak.

The Legault government's unhealthy fixation on linguistic, religious, and cultural differences distracts from the actual issues that matter to all Quebecers: high inflation, labour shortages, healthcare crises, pandemics, housing affordability, poor quality of education, rising poverty, etc.

The past is often the key to understanding the present, and how to plan for a more equitable future for all. The French language was vibrant in Quebec for over 350 years before the state-sanctioned language discrimination regime took hold. Targeting English-speaking Quebecers to be sure, but penalizing francophones as well by discouraging exposure to the English language and by extension the ESCQ.

The present-day Government of Quebec behaves very much like the Roman Catholic Church of yesteryear: authoritarian, weary and suspicious of the "other", keen to maintain control of the majority francophone masses.

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Since the start of the Quiet Revolution, English-speaking Quebecers have been at the forefront of Canadian bilingualism, in large measure to better communicate and integrate with francophone-majority Quebec. They remain motivated to contribute to a strong and prosperous Quebec, and live in peace with their francophone neighbours, relatives, and family members.

Outside politics, day-to-day relationships between Quebec's anglophones and francophones can be mostly characterized as cordial and mutually respectful. Inter-marriage is increasingly common, especially in Montreal and other urban areas. Times have changed, and many modern-day francophones are happy to adapt to a more open, mobile, and interconnected world.

According to the most recent 2021 *Statistics Canada* Census, just under 3.9 million Quebecers have the knowledge of both English and French and under 4 million Quebecers with the knowledge of French only. Thanks in large part to immigration, Quebecers are increasingly speaking more than two languages. Something to be celebrated in an increasingly multicultural society.²

Therefore, the *Canadian Party of Quebec* will:

- Urge the *Government of Quebec* to legally guarantee public services both in English and French, the two official languages of Canada, and, when possible, in other indigenous and minority languages;
- Support Quebecers in their desire to overcome their differences, to live peacefully and work together towards common goals;
- Respect Section 133 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and not attempt to diminish English language rights related to the National Assembly, provincial courts, and legal documentation at the provincial level

7.4.1. Best Treated Minority in Canada? The World?

In his October 2021 inaugural speech to open the new National Assembly session, Premier François Legault jumped on two common stereotypes when discussing Quebec's official language minority:

1. The ESCQ as the best treated minority in Canada, if not the world.

² Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released August 17, 2022.
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 8, 2022).

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2. The concept of the 'historic' anglophone community in the context of Bill 96.³

Like most Quebec nationalists, Mr. Legault took personal credit for English Quebecers' institutions that he believes francophones in the rest of Canada could only dream of. What he failed to mention was how, over two plus centuries, the ESCQ largely built and maintained its own institutions through its share of taxes and charitable donations. If one were to believe Legault, institutions like McGill University, the MUHC, and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts were gifts to the ESCQ, courtesy of the majority population.

Premier Legault also failed to mention that whenever French-Canadians in other provinces and territories assert their rights – especially through the court system – the Government of Quebec usually opposes them for political reasons. Namely, to avoid having to give Quebec's English speakers similar constitutional rights – especially education rights.⁴

One reason why, it can be argued, that since the *French Languages Services Act* (1986) became law in Ontario and even before that, Ontario's francophone minority are better treated by its provincial government than Quebec's English-speaking community is by its government.

Of course, bilingualism in New Brunswick is enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Something the Government of Quebec isn't prepared to consider at the present time.

And current treatment of the ESCQ is sure to erode if, as prescribed in Bill 96, healthcare and other services become tied to English school eligibility. Something that risks disqualifying half the community.

7.5. Countering the 'Decline of French' Narrative in Quebec

The French language has not only survived, but thrived in Quebec for over 400 years. Thanks to the resilience of the *canadiens* themselves, but also to British governors (1763-1867) who granted protections for the French language, French-Canadian culture, the Roman Catholic religion, and the French civil code that were unprecedented in the British Empire at that time.

³ Philip Authier, (2021, October 20). Quebec anglos are best-served minority in Canada, Legault insists. *Montreal Gazette*. <https://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/inaugural-speech-quebec-to-decentralize-health-create-daycare-spaces> Retrieved September 14, 2022.

⁴ Martin Patriquin, (2016, April 7). Why Quebec is fighting against its rights: New research shows that Quebec has consistently harmed French rights in the rest of Canada. *Macleans*. <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/why-quebec-is-fighting-against-its-rights/>

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The *Constitution Act, 1867*, further cemented French as the majority language of the newly created *Province of Quebec*, one of four founding provinces of the new nation-state of Canada.

Bill 63 effectively ended de facto bilingualism in Quebec in 1969. Subsequently, Bills 22 and 101 have been used to limit education rights, dictate the language of business in the workplace, and define Quebecers' rights as persons based on language and ethnicity: francophone, anglophone, allophone (a.k.a. ethnic minority). Arguably a violation of the Canadian Constitution's prohibition against discrimination.⁵

Bill 96 - the so-called 'Bill 101 on steroids' according to former Senator André Pratte - is touted as the next logical step in the evolution of legal protection and promotion of the French language in Quebec. Unfortunately, like its discriminatory predecessors Bill 22 and Bill 101, Bill 96 will hold working-class and middle-class Quebec francophones captive by limiting opportunities to learn in English (e.g., English CEGEP caps) and overtly discouraging bilingualism.

The oft-repeated claim that French in Quebec is currently in decline isn't supported by evidence. First of all, the concept of language decline is ambiguous at best, and not usually used in linguistics. It's not clear what's meant by decline: a *language shift* due to cultural assimilation resulting in gradual abandonment of native language for a foreign lingua franca or *language attrition* whereby one loses proficiency in one's native language?

Language shift happens when a speech community perceives a foreign lingua franca language to have a higher status than their own native language. According to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census, 93.7% of Quebecers can speak French, 86.1% are First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) French, and 77.7% of Quebecers were mother-tongue French.⁶

Not the type of statistics that can support the decline narrative of French language hardliners.

On the other hand, language attrition, or, language loss, usually happens when the native speakers of language get isolated from their community and the second language interferes with their ability to use and comprehend their first language. This isn't the case for French Quebecers, who even in Montreal form the linguistic majority and are able to nurture international ties in various fields with the *Francophonie* community of nations.

⁵ Tony Kondaks, (2020, February 5). Limiting English services violates constitutional prohibition against discrimination [Op-ed]. *The Suburban*. A13.

⁶ Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released August 17, 2022.
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (Retrieved September 10, 2022).

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With current advances in telecommunications and transportation, French-speaking Quebecers aren't isolated from other French speakers – whether they be French Quebecers in different regions or francophones worldwide. Moreover, no specific policies or laws in Canada today prevent Quebecers from learning and speaking French.

French is one of two official languages in Canada. In Quebec, the French language is taught in schools, encouraged by governments, business and industry and supported culturally. A status not accorded to the indigenous (First Nations, Inuit) languages nor “immigrant” languages like Mandarin and Punjabi.

Yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary, the “decline of French” narrative is systematically used by some Quebec politicians to attack English and the minority languages that they view as a threat. Premier Legault has gone so far as to invoke the “Louisianization of Quebec” when challenged about the benefits of bilingualism for the province.⁷⁸

7.5.1. Is Quebec becoming another Louisiana?

It's a mistake to attribute the diminishing use of French in Louisiana to the dominance of the English language itself. Different demographic and historical contexts and trajectories make it impossible to compare the use of French in Louisiana to that in Quebec over the past two centuries.

While francophones make up less than two percent of Louisiana's population today, over 93% of Quebecers speak French. French is clearly a minority language in Louisiana whereas in Quebec, it's the language of the majority.

In Louisiana, francophones became a minority around the 1830s and there has been no government support or infrastructure to learn French in Louisiana since 1921, when the state prohibited French from being taught in Louisiana's public schools. This has never been the case in Quebec, where French language rights have been guaranteed in law since 1763, where French has been one of Canada's two official languages since 1969, and where it remains the main language of instruction in the majority of Quebec's public schools.

The lack of linguistic or philological education – deliberate or otherwise – from Quebec politicians leads to laws like Bill 96 that restrict Quebecers' linguistic choices. They're based on erroneous assumptions, and are out of touch with the multilingual reality of the modern world.

⁷ Morgan Lowrie. (2022, June 1). Quebec Premier Francois Legault accused of stoking immigration fears after speech at CAQ convention. *The Canadian Press*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-quebec-premier-francois-legault-accused-of-stoking-immigration-fears/>

⁸ Montreal Gazette. *New political parties would turn Quebec into another Louisiana, Legault warns* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckfOZRi3ABY> Retrieved September 15, 2022.

This idea of the Louisianization, I completely disagree with that. It makes no sense

says Richard Marcoux, a sociology professor at Université Laval and the director of the *Observatoire démographique et statistique de l'espace francophone*, refutes the idea that Quebec's French-speaking population could shrink like that of Louisiana's.⁹

If we are to give Premier Legault the benefit of the doubt, Louisianization is perhaps meant to symbolize an example of assimilation of a minority language into a more dominant language group. However, in today's globalized world, Quebec exists as a complex, multilingual, open society where languages can peacefully coexist without endangering each other.¹⁰

7.5.2. Is a Francophone less Francophone for Knowing the English Language?

Currently, 46.4 % of Quebecers can converse in both English and French and it's expected reach 50% by 2036, the highest English-French bilingualism rate in Canada. according to Statistics Canada.¹¹ So, the evidence appears to indicate that francophone Quebecers aren't losing their French because of the presence of English.

If Mr. Jean-Francois Garneau could write an op-ed in the *Montreal Gazette* on May 21, 2021 entitled, "Dawson College did not turn me into an Anglophone.", why is Premier Legault undermining a fundamental human right and jeopardizing Quebec's social fabric with myths about the decline of the French language today?¹²

Many developed countries like Norway and Switzerland have already opted for active multilingualism. In Norway, children study Norwegian in parallel with the mandatory English from Grade 1 and, once in Grade 8, they take an elective foreign language course in addition to Norwegian and English.

⁹ Verity Stevenson. (2022, June 9). How the CAQ is rebranding Quebec nationalism. *CBC Montreal*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/caq-quebec-nationalism-1.6475684>

¹⁰ Tommy Chouinard et Ariane Krol. (2022, 31 mai). « Un parallèle un peu rapide » de Legault. *La Presse*. <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/2022-05-31/le-quebec-une-louisiane/un-parallele-un-peu-rapide-de-legault.php>

¹¹ Martin Turcotte. (2019, October 3). Results from the 2016 Census: English–French bilingualism among Canadian children and youth. *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2019001/article/00014-eng.htm> Retrieved September 14, 2022.

¹² Jean-François Garneau. (21 May 2021). Dawson College did not turn me into an Anglophone. *Montreal Gazette*. <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/montreal-gazette/20210521/281741272321015>

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In Switzerland, there are four official languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh) and government-supported multilingualism does not threaten any of the mother tongues as “almost two-thirds (64%) of Swiss use more than one language at least once a week, with 38% using two, 19% three and 7% four or more”.¹³

If Quebec’s nationalist politicians really cared about the population’s literacy rate and language proficiency, they would embrace multilingualism like Norway and Switzerland. However, restrictive language legislation forces all non-anglophone Quebecers to study exclusively in French before CEGEP, and with Bill 96 restricts non-anglophones’ access to English instruction via English CEGEP enrollment caps.

7.5.3. CaPQ Recommendations on Language.

The only way to defeat the fears of some Quebecers’ monolingual inferiority is to offer them the freedom to make their own linguistic choices free of government shackles. Therefore, the *Canadian Party of Quebec* will act to:

- Ensure that all Quebecers have the right to study both English and French, the official languages of Canada;
- Offer special protections for minority languages, in particular indigenous languages;
- Ensure that the Government of Quebec offer bilingual government services to all Quebec residents;
- Support people living in Quebec who have yet to master either of the two official languages of Canada yet with reasonable accommodations (translation, interpretation services, special education arrangements etc.).
- Incentivise multilingualism in all spheres of life to foster greater understanding between people from different linguistic backgrounds and to improve economic opportunities, trade links and diplomatic relations.

7.6. When the French Language trumps Charter Rights, Economy.

There are inherent dangers with placing the French language at the top of a hierarchy of rights in Quebec, superseding both the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, as well as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Most liberal democracies value individual

¹³ SwissInfo. (2016, October 5). How many Swiss regularly use at least four languages? https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/multilingualism_how-many-swiss-regularly-use-at-least-four-languages/42495614#:~:text=Whether%20chatting%20with%20family%2C%20friends,and%207%25%20four%20or%20more Retrieved September 14, 2022.

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rights, freedom, and justice for all. Yet it seems Bill 96 supporters are willing to throw it all away in the belief laws will encourage French language transfer and use.

Present-day Quebec language legislation is similar to policies which were established prior to the Quiet Revolution, whereby successive Quebec governments and the Roman Catholic Church, in tandem, didn't prioritize education for the French-speaking population. The Legault government via Bill 96 is now overtly discouraging English use in public administration and civil society, in an attempt to force Quebecers to remain here, since functioning in French only is very difficult in other provinces.

When the first Parti Québécois was elected and implemented Bill 101, many companies left Montreal. Today, the métropole's economic activity is roughly half that of its erstwhile rival, Toronto. Quebec's federal transfer payment allowance continues to grow – a staggering \$13.7 billion for 2022-2023.¹⁴

Arguably, the Lévesque government's greatest achievement was establishing Toronto as Canada's financial and economic capital, a distinction Montreal once enjoyed.

Bill 96 threatens to spark another economic exodus. In a little more than two months after Bill 96's passage, Sanofi Pharma has announced that it will leave Quebec. Leaders of Quebec video gaming industry, which employs 11,000 Quebecers and brings in \$1.75 billion in revenue annually are requesting relaxations in the law, in part because of new French language demands on outside talent.¹⁵

Quebec, with its French-speaking majority, is uniquely placed within North America to exploit its linguistic duality. Nowhere else in North America is there a better opportunity for its population to become French-English bilingual.

Yet for many decades, successive Quebec governments have discouraged and prohibited the majority population from attending English public Schools. Meanwhile, Anglophones can attend English or French public Schools, giving the English-speaking population an educational and economic advantage. Various Liberal, PQ, and CAQ governments over the years have spoken with one voice to proclaim that language legislation is necessary to "protect" the French language. In reality, they are ensuring that millions of French Quebecers without the means to afford private education (or who aren't self-motivated to learn English) remain effectively unilingual French.

¹⁴ The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P. (2021, December 21). Letters to Provinces and Territories: Quebec 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/letters-provinces-territories/2021/quebec.html> Government of Canada. Retrieved September 15, 2022.

¹⁵ Jack Coleman. (2022, June 30). Québec Bill 96 language law places local gaming industry at risk. *NME Networks*. <https://www.nme.com/news/gaming-news/quebec-bill-96-language-law-local-gaming-industry-risk-3259474> Retrieved September 15, 2022.

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Finally, if Quebec is to remain a democratic province within Canada, the basic rights and freedoms of all its residents must be respected. Bill 101 and now Bill 96 have stripped away many rights and freedoms and in doing so, threaten Quebec democracy itself.

7.7. Recognizing both French and English as Common Languages in Quebec

The recognition of Quebec's two common languages – French and English – by the provincial government would go a long way towards *rapprochement* between the two language groups. Arguably, English can be said to be the common language of 1.2 million English-speaking Quebecers, just as French is the common language of 7.3 million French-speaking Quebecers.

English has been present in Quebec for over 260 years, and can legitimately be called a common language for those coming from a variety of ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds, but speak mostly in the language of Shakespeare. This in no way would delegitimize French's place in Quebec – itself an official language – nor its rightful place in Quebec public life.

The politically-motivated fears of French decline in Quebec are mostly based on misinterpreted data, citing “the drop in the share of Quebecers whose mother tongue is French or who speak French most often at home; the ‘insufficient’ proportion of allophones or newcomers who eventually adopt French as their primary language; and a decrease in the extent to which francophones report they are speaking French predominantly in the workplace”.¹⁶

The arguments used to incite these fears focus mostly on Montreal with complete disregard for Quebec as a whole. Bills 21, 101 and 96 might have little impact or significance in the outlying regions of Quebec, where few immigrants reside and where the mother tongue is predominantly French. However, these same Bills have a huge impact on the quality of life, feeling of acceptance and equality within the Greater Montreal Area where most anglophones and allophones in the province reside.

The *Canadian Party of Quebec* strongly rejects the Legault government's efforts to declare French as the sole, official language of Quebec. A hierarchy of rights centred on the French language goes against René Lévesque's own vision of Quebec: “Québécois est un nom qui unit tous ceux qui sont nés au Québec ou qui y vivent. Il relie les diversités culturelles, linguistiques et religieuses. Il est la marque d'appartenance à un peuple, à une terre.”

¹⁶ Allison Hanes. (2021, July 15). Allison Hanes: Challenging the orthodoxy that French is in free fall in Quebec. Montreal Gazette. <https://montrealgazette.com/opinion/columnists/allison-hanes-challenging-the-orthodoxy-that-french-is-in-free-fall-in-quebec> Retrieved September 15, 2022.

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The CAQ government's attempts to construct Quebec identity by scapegoating linguistic minorities demonstrates a lack of respect not only towards the minorities themselves, but towards Quebec's democratic institutions and the role of government itself.

7.8. Immigration

People who have the courage and desire to emigrate from their country of origin take this important step seriously and are prepared to work hard to achieve a better life. Most immigrants come to Quebec to improve their economic situation, and seek the safety and liberty that they couldn't secure in their homeland.

Unlike other Canadian provinces, Quebec has significant immigrant powers – for example, the right to manage economic immigration - while the federal government handles family reunification and the refugee admission cases. This extra layer of decision-making is responsible for longer application processing times and the higher fees prospective immigrants have to pay. Regardless, most newcomers accepted by Quebec aren't scared off by the socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural challenges immigration to Quebec entails.

The call by Premier Legault to get family reunification cases solely under Quebec jurisdiction to better prioritize French-speaking foreigners runs counter to Canada's commitment to multiculturalism and bilingualism, and risks contravening **Article 16, paragraph 3** of the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* on Family Unity:¹⁷

“The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.”

Prioritizing family reunification cases based on the official languages of immigrants' countries of origin as opposed to, for example, urgency, safety and security of an immigrant family, will force some immigrants to leave Quebec for a more inclusive province - if not abandon Canada altogether - just to reunite with their families.

Selecting immigrants based on their linguistic background introduces several ethnic, racial and other identity-based biases that go against the *Canada Immigration Act* objective “to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society, while respecting the federal, bilingual and multicultural character of Canada”.¹⁸ Quebec risks losing opportunities to welcome qualified and ambitious applicants who are open to learning French and integrating into Quebec culture, simply because less qualified and less motivated speakers of French get prioritized.

¹⁷ The United Nations Refugee Agency. *Family Reunification*. <https://www.unhcr.org/family-reunification.html>

¹⁸ Government of Canada. Justice Laws Website, (2022, September 1). *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*
S.C. 2001, c. 27. <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-2.5/fulltext.html>

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More perplexing is the Bill 96 requirement for refugees to learn French within six months of arriving in Quebec, and restrictions on public services access in a language other than French just six months after their arrival. There seem to be no financial reasons for the service cuts and linguistic restrictions announced. Nor are there any socio-economic benefits for the most vulnerable newcomers struggling to adapt to their new reality in Quebec, as pointed out by many community workers and groups helping immigrants, migrant workers, and refugees.¹⁹

A report commissioned by Quebec's Immigration Ministry's Study in 2019 found that six months was not enough for immigrants to learn French and recommended giving newcomers more time to settle in Quebec before beginning French courses, among other recommendations to support and accommodate the new arrivals dealing with past trauma and learning a new language.²⁰

Newcomers attending French immersion classes full-time can't work for most of the day. A previous arrangement to be paid while learning French helped newcomers integrate into Quebec's workforce much faster and more efficiently. Quebec's failure to come up with a better and timelier plan to integrate newcomers into the workforce contributed to an acute labour shortage, especially in healthcare, as has been made obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Legault government lacks a comprehensive, transparent, fair and unbiased immigrant acceptance and retention strategy due to its fixation on identity politics. Linguistic policies enacted by successive Quebec governments discourage immigration from highly educated, highly qualified individuals with a linguistic background other than French, even though many non-French speaking newcomers are eager to come here.

A few years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, outmigration was somewhat offset by Quebec's rate of immigrant acceptance – at one time the highest provincial rate in Canada. However, during the pandemic, Quebec's annual rate of immigrant acceptance has fallen from the usual 50,000 to just over 33,000 immigrants per year. The proposals to raise immigration levels by 10,000 in Quebec this year were met with many negative reactions based on the perceived threat to Quebec's cultural identity. This type of thinking from Quebec's immigration strategists and politicians puts our province at an economic and social disadvantage in the face of labour shortages and stiff competition from other jurisdictions. When a government places the French language above overall qualifications, Quebec society loses out.

Quebec's systemically discriminatory linguistic policies and cultural identity fears have negatively impacted immigration. What's needed now is a concrete and strategic immigrant

¹⁹ Verity Stevenson, (2022, May 27). Immigrants in Quebec could struggle to have rights respected under new language law. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/immigration-impact-bill-96-1.6465770>

²⁰ Benjamin Shingler, (2022, June 13). Learn French in 6 months? Quebec-commissioned report shows why that's nearly impossible. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-french-language-1.6483297>

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attraction and retention program. The Government of Quebec should learn from past mistakes.

For example, in the mid-1980s, the aircraft engine manufacturer *Pratt & Whitney Canada*, headquartered in Longueuil, Quebec, moved its Engineering Division to Toronto, largely because they could not attract enough qualified aerospace engineers to Quebec. Many of these engineers opted for provinces with more freedom – freedom of choice in education (**CaPQ Principle 4**), in particular, where their children would not be forced into French schools.

7.81. The Case for (some) English-speaking Immigration to Quebec

In keeping with a post-Quiet Revolution vision of Quebec that's anchored in human rights, minority rights, bilingualism and rapprochement, the *Canadian Party of Quebec* is adopting a dynamic immigration and integration policy.

Given Quebec's low birth rate, steady immigration is necessary for ensuring economic growth and maintaining a high quality of life for Quebecers for years to come.

The Party is committed to improving services and incentives that will attract immigrants to Quebec. We support an immigration policy focused on economic needs, rather than language, as a priority in the selection of immigrants. At the same time, allocating resources to assist new immigrants integrate into Quebec society.

Although Premier Legault recently equated immigration to the decline of the French language in Quebec, it's the decades-long outmigration of English-speaking Quebecers that puts the minority's community's future in jeopardy and by extension weakens the province's socioeconomic fabric.

Quebec lost nearly 600,000 people to other provinces in 45 years (1971-2015)²¹, and if the Legault's government troika of laws (96, 21, 40) are all allowed to stand, the province risks yet another prolonged period of negative interprovincial migration – notably but not exclusively from its English-speaking community.

Note that within five years, one in three mother-tongue anglophones who arrived in Quebec between 2008 and 2017 left the province.²²

Chronically negative interprovincial migration is bad for Quebec, because of the loss of professional and business talent, entrepreneurs who take jobs and economic growth

²¹ Jason Clemens, Yanick Labrie, and Joel Emes, (2016, June). Interprovincial Migration in Canada: QUEBECKERS VOTE WITH THEIR FEET. Fraser Institute.
<https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/interprovincial-migration-in-canada.pdf>

²² How Real is the Decline of the French Language? (2021, August 16) Montreal Gazette, A2-A3.

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elsewhere, and others whose absence produces unfavourable ripple effects in Quebec's economy.

Equating immigration with the decline of the French language and culture is extremely divisive, similar to dog-whistle politics in other societies where scapegoating of immigrants has led to social unrest.

CaPQ Recommendation: Consistent with *Government of Canada* policy to encourage Francophone immigration outside of Quebec, the Party wants to encourage English-speakers to immigrate to Quebec. Hence, a provision that a minimum of 10% of permanent immigrants accepted into Quebec annually be *First Official Language Spoken (FOLS)* English, in order to help rejuvenate an aging ESCQ, particularly outside the Montreal region.

7.9. Immigration Recommendations

The *Canadian Party of Quebec* agrees that federal jurisdiction should be maintained in family class/reunification, student visa applications (shared with Quebec), temporary workers/immigrants, and refugee selection/placement in Quebec. As well as responsibility for health, security and criminal checks. In addition:

- The Party asks the *Government of Quebec* to facilitate the transition from temporary to permanent status immigrant in a fair, streamlined path. This could include a reduction of wait times and French language requirements for the Quebec experience program. Recognition of foreign credentials for professionals should be facilitated and expedited, and when deemed necessary, proper equivalence testing of said credentials should be managed by the professional orders themselves.
- It also demands a complete investigation into the closed work permit system. Increasingly, both in Quebec and other provinces, stories are emerging of abusive employer practices, unhealthy work environments, unsanitary housing, etc.²³²⁴
- Immigration numbers for Quebec should be a minimum of 70,000 annually, with the potential to increase it to 90,000 over the next five years, based on economic need. Allowances should be made for specific regions like the Beauce and Quebec City that have shortages of skilled workers and manual labourers alike.
- Provide more financial support and better French language training to help newcomers integrate into Quebec's workforce more efficiently and effectively.

²³ Morgan Lowrie, (2022, June 19). 'Politically invisible': temporary immigration soars in Quebec as official targets left unchanged. The Canadian Press. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-temporary-immigration-1.6493990>

²⁴ Olivia O'Malley, (2022, April 11). Alleged mistreatment of temporary foreign workers in Quebec prompts calls for change. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8749961/quebec-temporary-foreign-workers-seniors-homes-abuse-allegations/>

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- The selection process for all categories should be expedited and further funds and resources allocated to ensure maximum expedited processing. Especially for high demand economic immigrants or temporary workers.
- Restructure the investor and entrepreneur programs so as to expedite the admission of business-class immigrants with attendant economic benefit. French language proficiency shouldn't be a requirement in the assessment of these types of applicants.
- Quebec's administrative regions should clearly define their labour needs in high demand occupations, as part of an expedited high demand category to deal with immediate economic needs.
- Immediate removal of the Bill 96 clause that obliges newcomers to Quebec to learn French within six months of arrival, after which time they would no longer be allowed to access most public services in any other language.²⁵
- End the exploitation of temporary foreign workers, who mostly come from Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras (e.g., temp agencies operating without scrutiny, ending closed work permits, etc.).

Non-permanent immigration in Quebec has grown from nine per cent of international immigration from 2012 to 2016 to 64% in 2019. As of 2021, the *Institut du Québec* found there were nearly 177,000 workers in Quebec classified as "temporary," made up of international students with work permits, temporary foreign workers and skilled workers.²⁶

Whereas in the last four years, permanent immigration levels have been capped at 40,000 to 50,000 a year. The time for a revamped immigration system in Quebec is now.

²⁵ Verity Stevenson, (2022, May 27). *Immigrants in Quebec could struggle to have rights respected under new language law*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/immigration-impact-bill-96-1.6465770>

²⁶ Morgan Lawrie, (2022, June 19). *'Politically invisible': temporary immigration soars in Quebec as official targets left unchanged*. The Canadian Press. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-temporary-immigration-1.6493990>

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7.10. The English Language Services Act, Ombudsman, Commissioner and Ministry of the English Language

Based on all the above, the *Canadian Party of Quebec* is proud to present a comprehensive plan for the promotion and preservation of the English language and, by extension, the English-speaking community of Quebec.

This *English Language Services Act (ELSA)* is inspired by *Ontario's French Language Services Act (1986)*, as well as the entrenchment of official bilingualism status for New Brunswick in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

1. Full Repeal of Bill 96;
2. Full respect of English language rights in Quebec
 - a) National Assembly – equality;
 - b) Provincial Courts – equality.
3. Recognize English, as it has been since 1763, as an official language of Quebec
4. Provincial government entities must make an active offer of English services, meaning that these services must be evident, available, accessible and of comparable quality to French services
5. Right to services in English
 - a) A person has the right in accordance with this Act to communicate in English with, and to receive available services in English from, any head or central office of a government agency or institution of the Legislature;
 - b) The Act stipulates that government institutions must offer designated public services in the official language of the client's choice. The public must be informed of this option and the services must be of comparable quality in both languages. This also applies to services offered by a third party.
6. Ombudsman
 - a) (a) conducting investigations into the extent and quality of compliance with this Act, pursuant to complaints relating to English language services made by any person or on the Ombudsman's own initiative;
 - b) (b) preparing reports on investigations, including recommendations for improving the provision of English language services;
 - c) (c) monitoring the progress made by government agencies in providing English language services;
 - d) (d) advising the Minister on matters related to the administration of this Act; and
7. English Language Services Commissioner
 - a) An independent agent of the legislature;
 - b) Office of the Commissioner of the English Language
8. Ministry
 - a) There shall be a ministry of the public service to be known in English as the Ministry of English-speaking Quebecers;
 - b) Secretariat for relations with English-speaking Quebecers folded into the Ministry
9. Minister
 - a) Functions

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- i. (2) The functions of the Minister are to develop and co-ordinate the policies and programs of the government relating to English-speaking Quebecers and the provision of French language services and for the purpose, the Minister may,
 - ii. (a) prepare and recommend government plans, policies and priorities for the provision of French language services;
 - iii. (b) co-ordinate, monitor and oversee the implementation of programs of the government for the provision of English-language services by government agencies and of programs relating to the use of the English language;
 - iv. (c) make recommendations in connection with the financing of government programs for the provision of English language services;
 - v. (d) review the availability and quality of English language services and make recommendations for their improvement;
 - vi. (d.1) make recommendations relating to regulations under this Act;
 - vii. (d.2) require non-profit corporations and similar entities, facilities, homes and colleges referred to in the definition of “government agency” in section 1 to furnish to the Ministry information that may be relevant in the formulation of recommendations respecting their designation as public service agencies;
 - b) (e) require the formulation and submission of government plans for the implementation of this Act and fix time limits for their formulation and submission,
10. Provincial Advisory Committee on English-speaking Quebecers
11. Municipalities
- a) Municipalities, including RCMs, can choose to conduct operations and pass by-laws in English and in French;
 - b) Grandfather status for all current municipalities, of which 50 of 89 could lose their status;
 - c) No threshold for mother-tongue percentage of residents will be required
12. Regional bilingualism
- a) Regions can be assigned a bilingual designation where all provincial services are provided in both English and French languages;
 - b) Montreal, the South Shore, North Shore, Pontiac, and the Eastern Townships will be declared bilingual
13. Appointments
- a) Calls for English-speaking community representation to be taken into account when making appointments to councils, agencies, commissions and organizations.
14. Act respecting health services and social services
- a) A right to services in English or French languages, and to access other language services;
 - b) Our health policy to be delivered at a later date
15. Translation bureaus
- a) To support government services with new technology.
16. Equal access to employment
- a) Ensure that English-speaking Quebecers, newcomers and Indigenous peoples are hired in proportion to their respective populations.