

## QUEBEC'S MINORITY ENGLISH-SPEAKING POPULATION: IDENTITY FORMATION AND AFFIRMATION THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY

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### Abstract

In an effort to more fully comprehend the realities of the English-speaking communities in Quebec (ESCQ), this paper explores the cultural reproduction of its collective identity through the community's institutional base. The institutions and organizations of the ESCQ are essentially social and cultural community groups through which members can claim ownership for their collective identity. From this perspective, this paper presents new research by introducing community concerns through semi-structured interviews conducted with institutional leaders from across the English-speaking population in the Spring of 2012. We investigate the intricate relationship between the ethnocultural identity of the community and how an institution has the ability to foster the links, bonds and attachments that contribute to enhancing community well-being and sustainability. This, we believe, is an important step in recognizing how the English-speaking community can build more recognition and ideological legitimacy and be seen as a contributing partner to the broader French-speaking community in Quebec.

### Résumé

*Dans le but de comprendre plus complètement les réalités des communautés d'expression anglaise (CEAQ) du Québec, ce document explore la reproduction culturelle de leur identité collective à travers la base communautaire institutionnelle. Les institutions et les organisations du CEAQ sont des groupes communautaires essentiellement sociaux et culturels à travers lesquels les membres peuvent réclamer leur identité collective. Sous cet angle, cet article présente de nouvelles recherches sur la vitalité des CEAQ en fournissant les préoccupations communautaires soulevées lors d'entrevues semi-structurées. Menées avec les leaders institutionnels provenant de la population anglophone au printemps de 2012, ces entrevues permettent d'étudier la relation complexe entre l'identité communautaire ethnoculturelle et la façon dont*

*une institution peut créer les liens qui contribuent à l'amélioration du bien-être et de la durabilité d'une communauté. Nous croyons qu'il s'agit d'une étape importante dans la reconnaissance de la façon dont la communauté anglophone peut construire plus de reconnaissance et de légitimité idéologique, et être considérée comme un partenaire de l'ensemble de la communauté francophone au Québec.*

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## **Introduction**

Beginning with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s the English-speaking people of Quebec lost their once dominant minority status to an increasingly politicized French collective intent on using its majority position to establish a Québécois nation state. Through various political policies such as the Charter of the French Language, commonly referred to as Bill 101, the Québécois nation has been able to impose the dominance of the French language and culture on all its citizens. At the same time, a new collective identity for *le peuple Québécois* was fostered based on rigid, binary representations of us-them French majority versus them-English-speaking, Allophones and cultural and religious minorities within its territory.

A recent example of how these majority-minority group relations continue to divide Francophones and Anglophones is the Parti Québécois (PQ) recently tabled Bill 14. If the Bill were to be passed by the Quebec National Assembly, amendments to the French Language Charter would follow resulting in further restrictions of the use of English in Quebec civil society. In addition, at the time of writing this paper the PQ has promised to table in the near future a new Charter of Secular Rights and Values that will introduce new restrictions on the religious practices and expressions of Quebec ethnocultural communities.

As an ethnolinguistic minority, the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ)<sup>1</sup> must be able to strengthen their vitality and safeguard the institutional representation they currently hold. The ESCQ rely on their institutions not only to provide access to crucial services in English but also to articulate their place, culture and way of life. ESCQ institutions represent a community cornerstone which has guaranteed its survival over the years. The vitality of its institutions helps promote intergenerational continuity; community development and sustainability that ensure that the ESCQ have a permanent space in the sociological landscape of Quebec. Furthermore, institutional vitality can be an expression of a strong collective identity, a grassroots process that aids in cultivating the organizational vehicles for English-

speaking communities to mobilize around shared interests so that they can build higher levels of institutional support within the broader political context of Quebec society.

In order to facilitate the development and survival of the ESCQ, Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), propose that language is among the most salient dimensions of group identity. They develop a conceptual framework that is composed of socio-structural variables so that linguistic minorities can achieve greater levels of group autonomy. The group vitality framework, they suggest, is underpinned by a strong collective identity and is an integral component to building group status and formal institutional support for a language minority community. Thus, a resilient Anglophone social identity denotes a strong collective consciousness able to marshal action for sustainable social programming and institutional support for the community. However, within the broader socio-political context of Quebec, the English-speaking community is faced with the difficult task of articulating its identity within a social climate that remains indifferent (even hostile) toward linguistic and cultural minorities. The ESCQ also face more traditional challenges to their sustainability such as demographic decline due to stagnating birthrates, outmigration and an aging population. Herein lays our interest in language, identity and the institutional vitality of the ESCQ: how does the community see itself and what role does institutional vitality play in forming and affirming a collective identity for its members? Is the English language even a marker of identity for this population?

In an effort to more fully comprehend the realities of the ESCQ, we explore the cultural reproduction of its collective identity through the community's institutional base. The institutions and organizations of the ESCQ are essentially social and cultural community groups through which members can claim ownership for their collective identity. The ability to assert a strong group identity enables the formation of cohesive interpersonal relationships at the grassroots, community level. From this perspective, this paper presents new research by introducing community concerns through semi-structured interviews conducted with institutional leaders from across the English-speaking population in the Spring of 2012. We investigate the intricate relationship between the ethnocultural identity of the community and how an institution has the ability to foster the links, bonds and attachments that contribute to enhancing community well-being and sustainability. This, we believe, is an important step in recognizing how critical mass and engagement can build more recognition and ideological legitimacy for the community.

The goal of this research is to explore how community leaders conceive of institutional vitality according to the social realities and challenges faced by their various organizations within the community. For the purpose of this discussion, institutional vitality in the ESCQ refers to a set of diverse identities and actions that come together around common issues pertaining to health and social services, education, arts and culture as well as employment, housing, youth and seniors. We wanted to know if these leaders understood what was meant by institutional vitality and how it applied to their organization. We asked how leaders viewed the role of their organizations in affirming an Anglophone identity that is (or not) connected to the larger English-speaking collective. Strong leaders, who can mobilize members and show them the importance of engagement, contribute to shaping the collective identity of the community's institutions.

We also examine the practical realities found at the grassroots level because it is important to clarify how identity is shaped and formed through interpersonal exchanges within local communities. We explore with the leaders how the Anglophone identity has changed and resulted in a more diverse, heterogeneous population with varying social needs. Within this context we ask whether it is even possible for institutions which serve the community to envisage a collective Anglophone identity. The perspectives considered here contribute to an emergent portrait of institutional vitality for the English-speaking collective across Quebec. From these conversations, we developed an institutional vitality model that encompasses six interdependent factors to define collective identity in the ESCQ. A fundamental aspect to this work reveals that knowledge-sharing among community leaders and their partners (Hanrahan, Johnson and Walling, 2001; Normand, 2012) must form the backbone to community development initiatives working for social change. This is integral to understanding the collective consciousness of the community because people with lived experience bring agency to the issues they feel are most important to them. We are then, as researchers, able to better comprehend the role of identity formation and how to go about defining the community in a more collective manner.

We assert that a project of community institutional development in the ESCQ cannot happen without the acknowledgement and assistance from the State in addressing the needs and concerns of its minority populations throughout the province (Jedwab, 2007). That is, the Quebec government must support the issues of distress among the ESCQ in order to stem the demographic and institutional decline English-speaking Quebecers now face. We posit, in the absence of strong identity formation through institutional vitality and effective

leadership, the ESCQ will continue to lose its status and legitimacy unless the Quebec State takes an active role in recognizing the valuable contributions linguistic and ethnocultural minorities make to the economic, social and public culture of Quebec society.

This article begins with a brief discussion of anglo-Quebecers identity formation. We then describe the methodology used to conduct the qualitative research portion of our work. Interviews with community organization leaders guide our understanding of ESCQ identity formation and how the population functions as a linguistic minority that is increasingly forced to rely on its own efforts and initiatives to ensure its survival. The core of our essay focuses on six building blocks for institutional vitality and collective identity: leadership, continuity and knowledge transfer; community identity and ethnocultural diversity; critical mass, momentum and synergy; retaining youth; challenging sheer numbers as indicators of vitality and; partnerships with majority institutions come together through a holistic model as well as a bottom-up, knowledge-based community governance approach.

### **General Realities of Anglo-Quebecers' Identity Formation**

Anglophones have made valuable contributions to Quebec society as one of the founding language and cultural groups in the province. Recalling this rich history helps the ESCQ bolster its sense of belonging and define its community space. English-speakers also play a valuable role in helping the Francophone community negotiate *difference* within its borders. Especially on the island of Montréal, the collective identity of the ESCQ has shifted over time to reflect the diverse demographic makeup of Quebec. All this is important for developing ways to engage, educate and mobilize the English-speaking community to increase its vitality. By first identifying what it means to be an Anglophone, the community can then delineate the goals and priorities needed for its collective voice to be heard. How ESCQ institutions view their role in Quebec toward developing a collective focus will largely influence the future survival of the English-speaking population. But how do we define this diverse and scattered language group at a time when many Anglophones feel anxious about the vitality of their community?

Implicit in the periodization offered by scholars of English-speaking identity formation in Quebec,<sup>2</sup> is the influential role the community's institutions and organizations play in the process. When the English-speaking community has control over its own institutions and organizations, it enjoys a strong collective identity of its own affirmation. As the population loses power over its organizational capacity and formal representation is denied, its collective agency

wanes and the population is positioned in a reactive stance to an externally imposed linguistic minority status. In other words, when a community possesses a network of institutions that responds to the needs of those who identify with the group, it has institutional completeness (Breton, 1964) and will retain a healthy sense of group consciousness. The interpersonal exchanges between individuals, who define themselves as English-speakers by virtue of using the language in their daily lives, foster the group identity of a community. This means that members' *social proximity* is needed for a collective identity to develop and it begins at the grassroots level of community engagement. Landry, Allard and Deveau (2011) relate that by creating institutions and organizations a group can define its "identity borders" through acquiring support and control over them.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, institutions and community organizations are key indicators of group vitality because it is through them that individuals come together to define who they are, identify with a common cause and engage in collective actions in the public sphere. The extent to which this concerted action takes place can be explored by looking at the "institutional identity"<sup>4</sup> or ways in which the ESCQ and its community leaders view Anglophone vitality through the mission or mandate of their institutions and organizations. Part of this research involves distinguishing some of the knowledge-based community governance practices which indicate how well English-speaking institutions are able to adapt, learn and innovate in their environment. These practices are found in such organizations as the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) and the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN). In the present context, we ask, are the organizations and institutions that serve the ESCQ able to adapt to meet the changing needs of its linguistic, ethnic and culturally diverse members? The groups' ability to develop and innovate<sup>5</sup> in light of its socio-historical context and its mission is crucial to understanding its institutional completeness. The potential for innovation within an organization is particularly important as both provincial and federal funding continues to be drastically cut back. Increasingly, communities must explore other options independent of public support if they wish to develop and increase their vitality (Cardinal, 2007; Cardinal and Hudon, 2001). As well, in many cases the ESCQ institutions and organizations are less connected to formal networks in the broader French-speaking community and often work with minimal government funding (Blumel and Ravensbergen, 2011).

For the ESCQ we expand the term "institution" to incorporate entities such as women's societies, historical associations, interest-

based organizations such as drama and language arts, economic development corporations including employment centres and outreach, health and social services along with other community development facilities and structures that aid in immigrant integration. More traditional institutions are also included such as schools, hospitals, universities, research centres, radio and television outlets, newspapers and financial and commercial organizations.<sup>6</sup> Although many of these latter institutions may operate in English, a mandate to identify with the English-speaking community is often absent. Our research examines the grassroots institutions, associations and organizations that identify with the English-speaking community and garner *informal institutional control* from within the ESCQ.

For many rural and regional areas English-speaking communities that do not have formal institutional support, ethnolinguistic identity development and intergenerational transmission of the English language occur predominantly through their community organizations. *Informal institutional control* then, comes from *within* the minority language community at the grassroots level and can develop into *formal institutional control* to the degree that the ESCQ is able to occupy decision-making roles within the institutions of the dominant majority. In order for the ESCQ to have formal institutional control, they must have representation at the formal institutional level within the public sphere.<sup>7</sup> Group identity is not only predicated on language use and proficiency and if we wish to examine how vitality relates to the English-speaking community through the presence of its unique institutions, we need to apply an understanding of identity in the ESCQs to the current vitality models in place (Government of Canada, 2006).

Existing vitality models offered in the scholarly literature and their various attributes offer a partial interpretation of group identity formation for the English-speaking community (Fishman, 1990; Gilbert, 2010; Giles *et al*, 1977; Landry *et al*, 2007; Sachdev and Bourhis, 1990). However, these models lack the ability to capture the social, political and historical dynamics of identity formation within the organizations and institutions of the ESCQ. As will be discussed, the demographic and ethnic composition is undergoing fundamental change in the community and there also persists a lack of perceived legitimacy for offering services in the English language (Urtnowski *et al*, 2012). The literature guided us to conclude that for group vitality to emerge, the institutional context of the group must be analyzed as a space that has the potential to cultivate strong identity formation.



### Research Question(S) and Methodology

This research explores how the English-speaking community conceives of institutional vitality according to the social realities and challenges they face in their various institutions and organizations. We ask: *How can the English-speaking community define itself as a collective through its institutions? What is the relationship between institutional vitality and identity construction in forming an English-speaking identity?* To situate the research question(s), we asked community leaders three questions pertaining to institutional vitality and the English language as a social marker of identity for the ESCQ.<sup>8</sup> Here we focus our attention on grassroots institutions, associations and organizations that identify with the English-speaking community and garner *informal institutional control* from within the ESCQ.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with executive directors in their professional capacities of prominent institutions and community organizations of the ESCQ.<sup>9</sup> We also held discussions with academics working in the field. The executive directors (referred to as community leaders) were selected from a variety of sectors of the English-speaking community such as arts and culture, education, health and social services, faith-based institutions (churches), community development organizations, and community media.<sup>10</sup> We ensured a wide geographic coverage of Quebec to balance the high concentration of Anglophones in Montréal with those in areas such as the Eastern Townships, Gaspé, Magdalene Islands, Lower North Shore, and Rouyn-Noranda.

## DISCUSSION

### *Six Building Blocks for Institutional Vitality and Collective Identity*

The collective identity of the English-speaking community develops from the institutional support that is sustained within each organization and institution. This process, identified through knowledge-based community governance practices, illustrates our notion of the group vitality model for the ESCQ.

The six interdependent factors (building blocks) discussed below, reflect the consultations with the community that have identified how to build strong organizational capacity within a given institution. There are many beneficial experiences and examples of innovation and success in the Anglophone communities across Quebec that have increased their capacity for greater institutional support. Once they are harmonized with the needs of a particular community, the building blocks help define the collective identity of the institutions and organizations (Hanrahan *et al*, 2001). In this way, we can more fully understand how these groups form cohesive interpersonal networks within the broader community in which they exist.



### **1) Leadership, Continuity and Knowledge Transfer**

Leadership and continuity is stimulated at the grassroots level and it is central for a strong collective identity to develop in the ESCQ. Leaders are the *doers* that carry out mandates, execute initiatives, and provide the essential charisma and leadership necessary to mobilize community members to action around its common interests. Effective leadership can advance the common interest which is a necessary condition for social action. The continuity of an organization depends on the ability of leaders to transmit knowledge-based strategies to other leaders. Those individuals who are charged with defining and implementing a community's agenda can play a decisive role in shaping its institutional objectives.

How individuals become engaged and more aware of Anglophone contributions to Quebec society is demonstrated by the events and activities that are organized in a local community. For example, Townshippers' Day, an annual bilingual festival held in the Eastern Townships to celebrate English-speaking culture and history provides an opportunity to get people out and learn more about their cultural roots and their belonging in Quebec. This event is also an information fair for regional communities to learn more about what services and programs are available in English. More importantly, it provides Anglophone leaders with an opportunity to promote community development by engaging with and mobilizing new members of the community around social issues that affect both the ESCQ and the broader French-speaking community. In keeping with Gilbert (2010) notion of the "social milieu," the grassroots level can strengthen community life and be represented through events such as Townshippers' Day. As a micro-level social milieu, strong leaders take the knowledge-base of the community and harness its potential to establish common bonds and links between like-minded individuals and groups.

To transmit a collective identity for its members, leadership must have a *broad thinking* outlook that goes beyond the scope of a primary mission. Whether that is a principle within a school or a religious leader that conducts service during worship, an institution should reach out into the community to promote the vitality of its community-base. According to respondent #2, Executive Director of the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN), strong leaders sees the opportunities in collaboration where local organizations work together to come up with priorities to improve the well-being of its members. Referred to as a "multifaceted level" of leadership, she says that leaders must understand that they serve very important roles in the broader thinking of a community on multiple levels. The Executive Director of

the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex (QEHC), respondent #3, referred to this leadership as “transformative” wherein members have the ability to be interconnected and network within their communities.

## ***2) Challenging Sheer Numbers as Indicators of Vitality***

The “sheer numbers” of English-speaking residents which make up the demographic concentration in a community cannot alone measure the strength of ethnolinguistic vitality. That is, a community that seems to have a large number of English-speakers and an adequate number of institutions serving the community does not necessarily guarantee a strong collective identity. In this sense, there is a need to reexamine how we interpret demographic decline within the English-speaking community. Micro-transformations at the community level which have led to progress on institutional support fronts for English-speaking communities tell a great deal about the shifting vitality in recent years.

In Thetford Mines, for example, there is a higher degree of institutional and community vitality because of the initiatives and governance strategies that have redefined collective identity in this community. Located approximately 100 km southwest of Quebec City, this community has 600 Anglophones and is spread across three administrative regions. Described by respondent #4, the Executive Director of Jeffrey Hale Community Partners, as once in a state of “palliative care,” the community was rapidly declining and most Anglophones who were left represented an older, more isolated population. The perception was that the community and its organizations would eventually disappear. However, although Thetford Mines had significant infrastructure in different institutions with several English-language churches and two English language schools, it lacked the foundational base of a community focus

Thetford Mines eventually built a collective institutional identity thereby contributing to reconnecting different age groups through social proximity and intergenerational language transmission. In November 2000, the leaders who were tasked with revitalization created the Megantic English Speaking Community Development Corporation (MCDC). This entity continues to maintain the new initiatives and priorities that the community has established and ensures the rural communities actively participate in the development of the greater English-speaking community.

Thetford Mines demonstrates how stronger institutional vitality can be sustained when individual members shift their perception of community; they come to recognize their role in the community as a collective endeavour. Thetford Mines redefined the community and

reimagined how social interactions take place at the level of social proximity so that the “geographic milieu” can include the greater English-speaking community as a whole. They changed the traditional ways of social interaction where some members participated in a different faith-based denomination. This allowed English-speakers to move freely and connect with other English-speakers regardless of religious faith. Thetford Mines also recognized that the peripheral English-speaking community, which included young bilingual Anglophone and Francophone parents of children at the English schools, is a part of the community and needed to be actively engaged as well.

Another example of building community support is reflected by Avante, a women’s centre located in the Brome Missisquoi region. Respondent #5, Executive Director of Avante, describes her mandate as helping English-speaking women who live in isolation develop stronger ties to the community. With a feminist orientation, they promote and defend women’s rights towards achieving greater autonomy and equality. The term “Avante” is Italian which means “to move forward” and the goal of the centre is to provide help and support to women located in rural areas surrounding Lac Brome.

Avante fosters integration around sensitive issues and works with the community image to provide women with a safe space to express their concerns as well as motivate them to get involved in the community which boosts their self image and self esteem. The organization acts as a “porthole” or a “gateway” that women can come through to figure out what’s out there in the French-speaking community. According to this respondent, “The centre addresses the need for women to free themselves from their present social conditions that dictate and limit their behavior and think about expanding how they might live and work within the community.” Institutional vitality here plays an integral role in affirming a collective identity for its members by building “life-exchange networks.”

Since 1997, Avante has been developing ties with English-speaking networks as well as with partners of the Francophone majority to represent their concerns as a collectivity on committees and round tables.<sup>11</sup> A *Health Matters* seminar is given through teleconference through a partnership with local CLSCs as well as other telehealth conferences which are organized regionally with the CHSSN. We see how important social proximity is when members are able to take part in the organizations and institutions in the community. More than 40 percent of Avante’s members are unilingual and most want to receive information in English and they want to *learn* in their language. Avante practices community-based governance and cross-collaborates

with the community development committee at the local Town Hall to mobilize the community around shared interests. This women's organization represents the strong links and bonds that are needed to engender a collective consciousness among the broader English-speaking community.

### ***3) Critical Mass, Momentum and Synergy***

The community leaders discussed that for strong institutional vitality to be developed, critical mass, momentum and synergy must be encouraged by community identification. Respondent #2 defines critical mass as "a type of synergistic effect that occurs when organizations are able to communicate and coordinate their efforts in certain priority areas; they bring more weight to bear in policy circles when they share valuable resources and knowledge-base transfers." Critical mass represents the knowledge-base strategies that are developed and brought together as a planned framework for development in key priority areas such as retaining youth through economic or internship opportunities in the regions. Likewise, respondent #6 the Executive Director of Townshippers' Association explains:

By building the networks we are gaining strength because we are not alone. We have more influence because we are supported by a wider network. This critical mass or snowball effect feeds back into the regions because of how the network is influencing us. Your institutions are going to be part of your network. Even though the realities are so different the common voice and theme is still the language—we are linguistic minorities even though we have different environments and histories.

Townshippers' Association located in the Eastern Townships represents one of the strongest examples of informal institutional control within the regions. The association has been active for 33 years, promoting the interests of the English-speaking community to strengthen its cultural identity. Many programs are in place that addresses heritage and culture, community development, health and social services and youth. With a very strong knowledge-base, Townshippers' has developed a strong community-based network approach to community governance within its region.

Townshippers' has also garnered a significant amount of influence at decision-making levels because they are supported by a wider network and they are well integrated in the Francophone majority sector. The association belongs to five networks and this network approach feeds back into the regions helping to build the capacity around culture and needs-based services available to the community. Multiple leaders are required with expertise in varying areas in order

for vitality to be sustainable in each sector. Townshippers' works alongside other English-speaking partner organizations such as the QCGN, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) and Youth Employment Services (YES) to foster economic development. Through collaboration, what is learned from these organizations allows Townshippers' to take a greater leadership role within its community.

#### **4) A Community of Communities**

A fourth component for institutional vitality in the ESCQ is a reconceptualization of community identity which sees a diverse collective as a "community of communities." Expanding the identity borders and recognizing that the ESCQ is no longer ethnically homogenous suggests redefining who constitutes an English-speaking Quebecer to incorporate a more inclusive definition. English-speaking immigrants and Allophones represent a large source of future growth for the ESCQ. A diverse English-speaking immigrant population requires that the ESCQ take measures to address their changing demographics. Especially within Montréal, the population is even more multiethnic and multilingual. The Anglophone population can add to their existing numbers and increase its overall diversity and vitality. Community identity will appear differently depending on the region the English-speaking institution resides in. Overtime, with greater institutional control the community has the ability to acquire a "public face" (Landry *et al*, 2011) and present an identity which reflects its institutional and community make-up.

One challenging factor to sustaining a collective identity for the ESCQ is a perceived lack of legitimacy for offering support services in English. Sometimes, offering services in English is viewed as a threat to Quebec's francization interests. This may inhibit the ability of an English-speaking institution to identify along linguistic lines. Along with this, the community continues to face challenges around issues of inclusion and belonging in a predominantly French-speaking majority. Because the community is so heterogeneous, their cultural and religious aspects must be considered as they adapt to the Quebec context. The ESCQ can provide the bridge to connect newcomers to the social and political realities in Quebec as they cross over in their enculturation, learning and adapting to the French common culture and language. This fuels the impetus for the English-speaking community to partner more effectively with Anglophone ethnic/racial minorities (participant, Priorities Setting Forum, March, 2012; interview notes). Bridging with immigrants and newcomers to aid in integration provides the ESCQ with a way to rally around common

concerns with a unified voice and work towards a compromise within Quebec's current political context.

Instead of focusing on their identity as "English-speaking," some interest-based organizations within the arts and culture sector of the ESCQ have chosen to concentrate on the cultural investment they offer their diverse membership. For example, the Quebec Drama Federation (QDF) situates the arts around the individuals working within community theatre. Relationships are established with fellow artists who speak other languages and come from different cultures. According to respondent #7, Executive Director of the QDF, "[t]he commonality becomes the cultural investment that is contributed to... We work for the pure love and enthusiasm 'in doing'; in this medium language does not matter and the arts act as the cross-pollinator [between language communities]."

Respondent #8, Professor of Social Linguistics at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), explains that the arts/culture sector becomes a shared interest that acts as "a bridge of pleasure" as the community experiences something with newcomers who are attempting to integrate into Quebec society. The ESCQ can facilitate integration by building bridges with newcomers through common interest in speaking English as well as French. Rodgers, Garber and Needles (2008) point out that ethnocultural minorities have a great deal to contribute by bringing new energy, stimulating art forms and a capacity to build bridges of understanding among various ethnic groups (p. 114). According to respondent #9, Executive Director of the English-language Arts network (ELAN), "Introducing a traditionally homogenous group of Caucasian artists to a diverse, multicultural talent base of racial/ethnic artists has an interesting outcome... It enables cultural and linguistic communities to understand each other and contribute to regenerating community vitality as well as introducing new cultural identities."

### ***5) Retaining Youth***

The Coasters Association on the Lower North Shore and the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) in the Gaspé peninsula recognize that youth retention is one of the largest challenges many of the rural communities are facing. Respondent #10, Executive Director of Coasters relates, "The lack of economic opportunity forces youth to look elsewhere and without young people returning to their home communities there will be no future families, no students in schools and, eventually, no critical mass to mandate social services." Both organizations point to long-term development programming provided

by the appropriate institutional infrastructure as crucial to fostering economic opportunities to keep young people in the regions.

Developing a strong social identity in young people at the grassroots level of civic involvement engenders a sense of belonging to and connectedness with Anglophone culture and heritage. Intergenerational knowledge transfers cannot take place if there are no younger generations coming up to contribute to community support, especially in these more rural and remote areas. Young Quebecers today are more diverse than ever before. Many do not identify with their parents generation because the realities are different for them. They are more bilingual and in many ways, more integrated into the wider French-speaking society. Cultural identity does not seem to play an important role in the decisions they make about their future.

Many communities are isolated or small and do not offer as many opportunities as larger cities. Some leave the regions and migrate to the urban areas of the province and others leave Quebec altogether and migrate to other provinces in search of work. Community leaders in the regional communities relate that some Anglophone youth are often out of work or they have never worked in their regional communities; their only option is to migrate to the cities to explore job opportunities. Respondent #2, discussed that numerous community experiences in recent years indicate what happens when there is a missing group of leadership that is neither able to address nor pursue vital community interests.

Communities are recognizing the importance of creating economic opportunities which permit the youth to stay in the regions. Respondent #11, Executive Director of the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI) relates that "local economic employability and youth retention are interdependent factors to growing and developing a strong institutional support base. The fisheries as the main industry sector have been in decline, and the community was forced to develop other sectors of their economy." CAMI soon realized that the development of these sectors presented an opportunity to involve the youth and make them a priority within the planning and elaboration process. Through partnerships with the local CEDEC office, CAMI is now engaged in a multi-year restructuring plan that aims to diversify its economic resource base in tourism. This will provide opportunities for youth to stay and work in the community by upgrading existing infrastructure to carry out phase one of this strategic development plan.

The Quebec Community Groups Network <sup>12</sup> (2005) has also asserted that programs must be developed for the English-speaking communities that encourage young people to explore their creativity, along with



supporting them with the proper funding and resources to fully engage them in community life. "This involves giving Anglophone youth decision-making powers to effect change" (Respondent #6). They also face challenges integrating into Quebec society because they have lower rates of political participation and they have higher rates of unemployment compared with their Francophone counterparts. Strong leaders can encourage and set an example for young people to work towards becoming involved in civic and provincial politics in Quebec. Youth empowerment begins by creating more opportunities to improve cross-collaboration among Anglophone and Francophone youth to realize the collective aspirations they have for their community.

### ***6) Partnerships with Majority Institutions***

For community development initiatives to take hold and be well-rooted in the public sphere, partnerships with majority French-speaking institutions become essential. Respondent #4 explains that the community development landscape in Quebec is changing: "Today more and more communities are realizing that they are both stakeholders in the broader 'community' in which they exist. They realize that they can work together for common goals and share resources and capacity." Respondent #12, Executive Director of the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), poignantly describes how networks effect community development in the Gaspé:

We work locally but we want to get the biggest bang for our buck so we also work greatly with regional partners and we can cover more territory in less time. This ensures that you are including everyone so no one is stepping on anybody's toes. Everyone is coming to the table and possibilities are being discussed and shared and the most appropriate organization is taking their piece of the puzzle and doing what they do best.

Within Health and Social Services, CHSSN manages a Quebec-wide Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI) that is designed to support the community in maintaining access to services for the English-speaking communities. The NPIs provide a forum for member organizations to share information and tools with other stakeholders whom they would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet. English-speaking organizations then take the information they receive about new projects and services and distribute it more widely to the English-speaking community. According to respondent #4, once effective networking and coordination is achieved within English-

speaking institutions, policies that foster exchanges and partnerships with majority institutions can be developed.

In order to effectively partner with and influence majority institutions, both English-speaking leaders and their community institutions must be recognized as players, as an additional piece of the puzzle. Integral to community vitality is a leader who has a very deep understanding of the community, its identity, realities and needs. "An ideal leader is able to establish meaningful and effective relationships with other organizations, institutions and fellow leaders. Bilingualism is a must, not only for effective communication, but also for the foundation of mutual trust and respect that form the bedrock for open exchanges and dialogue" (Respondent #2).

Presently, there are divergent opinions and approaches as to the best way to bring about these partnerships with majority institutions. CASA uses professionally trained people who are paid to liaise with majority institutions, while Neighbours in Rouyn-Noranda, with less resources, rely on volunteers to do this. The need for partnerships varies according to the differences between communities of varying size and geographic setting. CASA has worked with a CSSS (Centre de santé et de services sociaux) in the Gaspé as well as on a partnership agreement at the school board level with a Francophone institution. Essentially, it is important to forge a mutual interest that enables the community with the school board for example, to work side by side to increase their community vitality. Projects and partnerships must be multiyear in order to build a strong knowledge base and the continuity that is necessary overtime for sustainable development. Efforts at establishing a rapprochement between the two language communities benefits the province overall economically from increasing Anglophone vitality in these communities. Gradually they begin to work together to transform the traditional confines of separate "silos" and build horizontal governance structures for cross-linguistic collaboration and community development.

Respondent #12 says that CREs (Conférence régionale des élus) have helped address and fund social development priorities for underprivileged communities like hers in the Gaspé region: "The provincial government has knocked on our door and asked us where we need help because Anglos are at the top of the poverty list in many regions of Quebec." Working alongside Québec-based *regroupements* or coalitions with funding bodies of the provincial government is slowly taking place in small ways. It is apparent that there are nascent partnerships which are transforming the traditional conceptions based on "two solitudes." Another example, CASA has signed a four-year contribution agreement with *Emploi Québec* and the *Commission*

*jeunesse* to provide services in English that target Anglophone youth in order to increase their employment possibilities in the Gaspé. This respondent also relates that building these partnerships with the majority institutions requires an immense amount of time, energy and dedication to forge the requisite capacity of the partnerships and establishing a relationship built on trust that all parties can contribute to the proper knowledge-base.

Likewise, CAMI has initiated similar partnership projects aimed at fostering institutional vitality. Respondent #11 remarks, "Partnership is really about community vitality—access to the Francophone community to share knowledge in their institutions." CAMI does the logistics and members from the CSSS come and do workshops and translate documents which contribute to the overall sharing of the knowledge base. The volunteers play a key role as representatives that can access this information and bring it back to the community.

### **Conclusion and Further Research**

We have seen that institutional vitality plays a central role in supporting the identity markers of the minority English-speaking collective of Quebec. Institutional vitality is an ongoing, collaborative process uniting academic inquiry with active community engagement that builds relevant meaning to the objectives and language used to speak about the collective life of the ESCQ. This process is essentially most observable at the grassroots level.

We ask what will be the future role of institutional vitality in maintaining a collective identity for the ESCQ. We suggest two avenues to institutional vitality that the ESCQ will need to work on. First, ESCQ leaders and members must take a more active role in promoting community development priorities in partnership with majority institutions. The ESCQ will need to expand their present institutional identity to include the capacity to serve the majority Francophone population. Second, the already ethnoculturally diverse English-speaking population will have to become even more diversified. The ESCQ needs to redefine its collective identity as a community of communities. The current identity markers must open up to incorporate immigrants in the province. The interests of these two groups are no longer diametrically opposed. The ESCQ must aid in newcomer integration by bridging immigrants through its institutions. If ESCQ institutions are already collaborating with Francophone majority organizations, then the English-speaking population can play a supporting role in Quebec's francization project. As discussed, Anglophones must be recognized for their contributions to Quebec society so that they can develop a sense of belonging to the province.

In this way, an English-speaking collective identity can be well-rooted in the institutions and organizations they represent.

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**APPENDIX I:**

**LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED**

- Respondent #1:** Qu'anglo Communications & Consulting (Ormstown)
- Respondent #2:** Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)  
(Quebec City)
- Respondent #3:** Queen Elizabeth Health Complex (QEHC) (Montréal)
- Respondent #4:** Jeffery Hale Community Partners (Quebec City)
- Respondent #5:** Avante Women's Centre (Lac Brome)
- Respondent #6:** Townshippers' Association (Lennoxville)
- Respondent #7:** Quebec Drama Federation (Montréal)
- Respondent #8:** Professor of Social Linguistics, Université du Québec à  
Montréal (UQAM) (Montréal)
- Respondent #9:** English-language Arts Network (ELAN) (Montréal)
- Respondent #10:** Coasters Association (Lower North Shore)
- Respondent #11:** Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI)  
(Magdalen Islands)
- Respondent #12:** Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)  
(Gaspé peninsula)
- Respondent #13:** Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA)  
(Montréal)
- Respondent #14:** Community Economic Development and Employability  
Corporation (CEDEC) (Magog)
- Respondent #15:** The Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)  
(Montréal)
- Respondent #16:** Neighbours Association (Rouyn-Noranda)
- Respondent #17:** Canadian Heritage (PCH)
- Respondent #18:** Professor of Sociology, Bishop's University (Lennoxville)
- Respondent #19:** Community Learning Center (CLC) (Magog)
- Respondent #20:** Learn Quebec (Laval)
- Respondent #21:** Rawdon Historical Association/Anglican and  
United Church (Rawdon)
- Respondent #22:** Quebec English-speaking Communities Research  
Network (QUESCREN) (Montréal)
- Respondent #23:** Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA)  
(Montréal)

## NOTES

- 1 English-speaking Community of Quebec collectively refers to the English-speaking communities throughout the province. We also use the terms English-speaking and Anglophone interchangeably although we do recognize that the federal and Quebec's provincial governments employ them differently for statistical purposes.
- 2 See especially Jedwab (2007).
- 3 Levels of institutional and organizational support and control differ because of the demographic and geographical factors of the ESCQ. The disparities between urban and rural located institutions are considerable and the English-speaking population is so heterogeneous which makes institutional completeness uneven across the province. On the island of Montréal, the ESCQ has a relatively high degree of institutional support and control (Bourhis and Landry, 2008). Overall it appears the English-speaking community has strong institutional support and control in education, health and social services and a variety of cultural and media outlets; however, in areas of employment and economic development very few programs offer services in English to assist local and regional communities (Jedwab and Maynard, 2008). In isolated geographic areas where English-speaking populations are low such as the North Shore region, institutional support and control is weak.
- 4 Here, a broad definition of institutional identity is implied which accounts for the complexity or race, ethnicity, culture and religion because increasingly, individuals do not conceive of themselves solely along linguistic lines.
- 5 Innovation as a process is made up of social learning, knowledge co-production, and the collaboration of a diverse array of actors (Normand, 2012, vol.1). By identifying a social need, the innovation process means adopting new rules of action and new norms. These develop out of compromises in consensus building among leaders who are committed to the project (Normand, 2012, vol.2).
- 6 Thériault (2007) advances the idea of "social organizations" to differentiate between the more traditional conceptions of institutions as the group's means of historical continuity. Social organizations serve more utilitarian roles that can be adapted to the groups; evolving needs and these community-based institutions are at the heart of institutional vitality for the ESCQ.
- 7 The English language and culture has the ability to function in important social domains that foster its upward mobility through formal and informal institutional control (Bourhis and Landry, 2008). Currently, most formal representation has been limited in Quebec to areas such as business, some Members of the Legislative Committee (MLAs) and cabinet members and professional



associations. Although Anglophones are represented to some extent on Quebec's English-speaking school board association (QESBA), in municipal governance positions and also on a variety of advisory committees, this representation is not uniform across all of the communities in Quebec and it varies as well, in amplitude.

- 8
  - a. In your experience, what type of leadership is needed to best serve the interests of the English-speaking communities of Quebec?
  - b. How can Anglophone communities develop/have influence at the institutional level?
  - c. The English language needs to be widespread across a variety of institutional contexts such as government services, public administration, corporation and industries along with business and finance, education and media. This allows for its members to see their language as legitimate and socially recognized. How important is social organization and grassroots mobilization to fostering strong institutional control in different sectors such as education, arts/culture, business and health/social services?
- 9 This research is part of the Institutional Vitality Research Project (IVRP) contracted by the QCGN. The IVRP is funded by the QCGN and has been contracted to Amanda Pichette. Dr. Cheryl Gosselin, co-author, is also on the advisory committee for the project. The interviews took place within the context of this project and the executive directors interviewed herein all work for QCGN member-organizations.
- 10 See Appendix I for a list of the organizations consulted and respondents.
- 11 Avante participates in the Table régionale des centres de femmes de la Montérégie, the Table de concertation et de prévention de la violence conjugale et sexuelle de Brome-Missisquoi, and the politique familiale de Bedford.
- 12 QCGN is made up of approximately 32 regional and sectoral community organizations from across the province. They promote the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking communities by responding to the priority needs and expectations of their community organizations.

