ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS: IDENTITY AT THE BORDERS OF BELONGING

Cheryl Gosselin, Ph.D.,
Bishop's University

Abstract

Globalization, in particular the movement of people across boundaries of space and time, is believed to benefit Quebec society yet is perceived as threatening due to the province's paradoxical situation as a linguistic majority within its own borders, but a minority in relation to the rest of Canada. This paper explores Quebec's sociopolitical landscape and the making of linguistic, social and cultural borders that displace English-speaking and immigrant identities to the margins of society through a content analysis of Bills 14 and 60 and their public hearings along with newspaper editorials and articles on the topic found in the Quebec Community Groups Network's online *Daily Briefing*. The empirical evidence, including news sources from urban and regional areas, reveals how English-speaking Quebecers position themselves within the borders of French society as a whole.

Résumé

La mondialisation, en particulier le mouvement de personnes dans l'espace et le temps, est vue comme bénéfique pour la société québécoise, mais elle est également pourtant perçue comme une menace à cause du paradoxe voulant que la province soit une majorité linguistique à l'intérieur de ses frontières mais en situation de minorité avec le reste du Canada. Cet article explore le paysage sociopolitique du Québec et la fabrication de frontières linguistiques, sociales et culturelles qui marginalisent les identités des anglophones et des populations immigrantes. Cette exploration se fait par l'analyse du contenu des projets de loi 14 et 60 et des auditions publiques tenues en lien à ces projets ainsi que des éditoriaux et des articles de presse publiés dans la section Daily Briefing du site web du Quebec Community Groups Network. La preuve empirique, notamment les sources médiatiques provenant des régions urbaines et régionales, révèle comment les Québécois d'expression anglaise se positionnent à l'intérieur des frontières de l'ensemble de la société francophone.

Introduction

Space and identity intersect in numerous ways; how we see ourselves is not only situated in spaces, but also continuously transformed by them (Moussa, 2014:97). Inversely, we alter the spaces we live in thereby creating new ones that further shape our locations in society. Often times, space referents are used as metaphors for identity formation – roots, borders, crossroads, (dis)locations and (dis)placements (Moussa, 2014:97). Today both space and identity are being remade by globalizing and transnational forces as flows of capital, labour, and people disrupt traditional associations between subjectivities, nations, states and their borders (McDowell 1996). The movement of people across the blurred boundaries of space and time signify the displacement and dislocation of places and identities. Fragmented, mixed or hybrid identities are now lived "on" or "in-between" borders or liminal spaces. Quebec welcomes these globalizing forces, as capital, ideas and people contribute to the province's economy, but at the same time, feels threatened by immigrants and the English language as potential risks to its distinct French culture. Most recently, both the Parti Québécois (PQ) and Liberal governments have proposed legislation calling for stricter rules against the use of the English language in the province, the denial of ethno-religious groups' freedom of expression and, through austerity measures ignoring the right of English-speaking Quebecers, the provision of health care in the language of their choice. It is within this context that this article seeks to explore how the sociopolitical landscape of Quebec produces spatial patterns of linguistic and cultural borders around its English-speaking population thereby displacing them outside the boundaries of French, Quebecois identity.

As a linguistic minority within Quebec, English-speakers are surrounded by borders: geographical, social, cultural, linguistic, national and political. These borders shape the material realities of the Anglophone population in terms of the places they occupy which are often outside the normative day-to-day interactions of French society. English-speakers also embody borders with their complex and diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Moreover, this linguistic minority group incorporates the transnational bodies of immigrants. Through my reading of what I refer to a "state texts of identity formation," this paper focuses on the ways the former PQ government promoted the fixed identities of French Quebecers with the recent drafting of Bill 14 – the 2013 PQ amendments to the Charter of the French language, and Bill 60 – the 2014 PQ Charter of Secular Values. These two proposed legislative initiatives symbolically located the Anglophone population and immigrants, especially English-speaking and Muslim, outside the

boundaries of French Quebec. This paper will then turn to focus on to how the English-speaking community reacted to the bills, through an exploration of English language newspaper articles and reports that covered the public hearings on each of these legislative efforts. I suggest that the English-speaking community of Quebec (ESCQ) resisted these exclusionary attempts at identity formation and instead positioned themselves within the borders of Quebec society to carve out their own space of belonging.

The paper begins by establishing the methodological basis of the analysis followed by a review of scholarly work on the links between space and identity formation. This analysis, demonstrates how social difference is lived and experienced by the linguistic minority population in terms of the physical and identity spaces they inhabit, and under what conditions the ESCQ can most effectively contribute to identity formation in an inclusive Quebec society.

Methodology

The findings examined in this article are based on a content analysis of the English language press and report writing which contains the ESCQ's reaction to two recent, politically charged, proposed pieces of provincial legislation. All newspaper articles and/or reports were located through the Quebec Community Groups Network's (QCGN) *Daily Briefing*-vcrv@shiftcentral.com. The *Daily Briefing* is an internet site which gathers news about the English-speaking communities from across the province, throughout Canada as well as internationally. The site provides a summary of articles with a link to the full-length news source. The news sources are primarily written in English, but include some French articles and links to television news reports in either language. The *Daily Briefing* also archives all materials to enable readers to retrieve past items by date or subject. The newsprint and video sources from the *Daily Briefing* utilized for the purposes of this paper are the *Montreal Gazette*, *The Record* [Sherbrooke], CJAD Radio, television *Global News*, *CBC News, 800 News* and *CTV News* (based in Quebec), and the *Financial Post*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail, The New York Times* and the *Guardian* all generating news from outside the province.[1]

The content analysis for this paper further includes Bill 14 – An Act to amend the Charter of the French language, the Charter of human rights and freedoms, and other legislative provisions (hereafter Bill 14), introduced into the National Assembly in December 2012 by the PQ government, and Bill 60 – Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests

(hereafter Bill 60), introduced into the National Assembly in August of 2013 by the same PQ government. Numerous community groups from the English-speaking minority population submitted briefs at the public inquiries into each of the proposed bills. However, only two organizations that submitted reports were invited to present at the inquiries of the two bills, namely the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Townshippers' Association, which happen to be the two largest lobby groups for the English-speaking population. Their reports offer additional empirical content analysis material. All sources were collected between December 2012 and May 2014.

Statistical Profile of the English-Speaking Community of Quebec
Currently, the English-speaking population of Quebec numbers about one million peoples (First Official Language Spoken) representing 13% of the province's demographics. In 1971 – before the PQ came to power, and the subsequent adoption of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) – English-speakers represented 15% of Quebec's population. In the last four decades, almost 300,000 Anglophones left the province representing the largest mass exodus of a population during peacetime. Currently most English-speakers (80%) live in the Montréal area with the rest scattered throughout the regions of the Eastern Townships, Lower North Shore and in the Western area around Gatineau. While recent polls reveal that 90% of English-speaking Quebecers identify with English Canada, 70% also felt they were very much a part of their regional community in Quebec (Jedwab, 2012). Seventy-seven percent of English-speaking Quebecers between the ages of 25 to 44 are bilingual. Almost a third (32%) of the English-speaking population is composed of immigrants (Corbeil *et al*, 2010). In this way, the ESCQ rely heavily on global migrants for their demographic renewal, compared to the Francophone population, where immigrants represent 7.6% of the population. Ethno-cultural diversity has always been a feature of the ESCQ with British, Scottish, Irish, Jewish (76% of the Jewish community of Quebec are English speaking) and others who have long ago made Quebec their home. Eighty-five percent of Quebec's Sikhs and 6% of Muslims belong to the ESCQ (Quebec Community Groups Network, 2013). A more recent trend is the rising proportion of visible minorities among the English-speaking immigrant population. This group is composed of Blacks from various origins as well as Arabs, West and South Asians, and Koreans (Corbeil *et al* 2010). According to the National Household Survey of 2011, 52.3% of Quebec's foreign born population was able to converse in English and French while 25.9% only knew French and 17.4% only English (NHS, 2014).

Conceptual Framework: Spatiality and Identity

Over the past three decades, the social sciences have witnessed a spatial turn in their epistemological viewpoints. Geographical concepts such as space, place and location have become useful for exploring and exposing the embodied and engendered nature of knowledge claims to truth and universality. These re-politicized concepts are seen as required to displace the androcentric and ethnocentric grand narratives by those voices situated at the margins of "meaning making." Beyond these intellectual debates about space and the need to spatialize social theory, there is the material sense of space as deeply determining for the multiple "Others" whose lived are dislocated, marginalized and displaced by contemporary, "real" world forces (McDowell 1996). The material contexts of space and place are considered important for contextualizing and situating social relations such as gender, class, race as are other forms of domination and subordination (Duncan 1996; Peake and Rieker 2013). Space is seen as relational and constitutive of social processes (Massey 1992; Lefebvre 1991). Massey refers to the relationships between people occurring in space and time which lead to the creation and meaning of different spaces and time. Lefebvre argues that space is a social invention produced by bodies, materials and their relations. His dialectic of space is composed of three elements: the mental (*l'espace conçu*), the physical (*l'espace perçu*) and the cultural/social (*l'espace vécu*). Appadurai (1996) reveals the links between local places and global spaces by arguing that locality is marked by the global flow of cultures and bodies where local subjects encounter the destabilized worlds of mobile translocals.

Identities then do not merely exist in space; they are produced through space. Identity categories of gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality are increasingly seen as fluid and flexible. These categories are no longer understood as separate or binary but as intersecting and imbricated. The identity borders of gender, class, race, ethnicity, language, and sexuality are thus complex, hybrid or hyphenated, moving and full of risks-both personal and political (Anzaldua and Keating 2002). Gender, race and class structures operate as sites power within processes of globalization. In this sense identity borders are not just physical but ideological to show how lives are marked by global flows and their consequences for living on the margins, at the borderlands or continuously destabilized.

Space is also perceived to be a site of power whereby location in the social structure determines how one is situated in space (Peake and Rieker 2013). Spaces ultimately are about power; they are gendered, classed, racialized and sexualized. Who controls space gets to define the use of and the lives within its borders and who can cross the

boundary lines or not. But equally true, space is a site of counter-power for the marginalized to resist and subvert the hegemony of the places they live in. Thus spaces are produced by social relations of power which create different and interlocking geographies of scale and in turn flexible and shifting identities create meaning of the spaces they live, work and play in.

Today, the relational and constitutive nature of space and identity are made even more complex by the context of globalization and transnational activities. We live in a global world characterized by a period of rapid movement across the globe of people, ideas and capital; an era of space-time compression (Harvey 1989); the replacement of a space of places with that of a space of flows (Castells 1989) and the blurring of national borders. Transnationalism is used to define the experiences of global circuiting bodies (Basch *et al* 1994; Friedman and Schultermandl 2011). "Immigrants" no longer leave their country of origin to take up permanent residence in a host society nor does their up-rootedness mean a permanent rupture. Rather, mobile people live physically dispersed within the boundaries of many nation states and likewise continually crisscross the borders of others. The concept of transnationalism is used to describe interconnected social experiences of occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time and across national borders (Friedman and Schultermandl 2011). At the discursive level, a neoliberal agenda is restructuring much of the delocalized world resulting in altered forms of the urban based on new frameworks of difference, distinctions and segregation along gender, race and class lines, and exclusionary rights to the city for many already marginalized groups such as the homeless (Peake and Rieker 2013). Thus, space is produced through the processes of globalization such as capitalism, neoliberalism, state systems as well as the individuals through their everyday lives.

The relational and constitutive conceptual framework for space and identity is a particularly helpful theoretical tool to analyze the impacts of Bills 14 and 60 on the Anglophone populations' spatial and symbolic borders of belonging. This framework informs the analysis by showing how the legislative efforts of the former Quebec government, designed to strengthen the majority through legal and administrative enhancements to French language law and secularism in the province, were promoted and advanced at the expense of its minorities - especially English-speaking and immigrant communities. The goal of both legislative initiatives was to spatially distance (*l'espace perçu*) the minority groups from the public and institutional spaces of Francophone society by enshrining Quebec's core French identity and secular values in its constitution (*l'espace conçu*). The end result would

likely have been a further erosion and displacement of Anglophone identity, ethno-religious cultures, and bodies (veiled Muslim women, for example) to the margins of Quebec society (*l'espace vécu*).

Analysis

Bill 14 – Montréal: "the magical place of memory"
The PQ government of Pauline Marois was elected in September of 2012 and soon after introduced Bill 14 to amend both the charters of the French language and human rights and freedoms. The aim was to strengthen the existing language legislation, Bill 101, by making French a "fundamental factor of Quebec's social cohesion." Citing "institutional bilingualism," caused by the existence of Quebec's English-speaking population as a direct threat to the French language, Bill 14 provided measures to protect and bolster French in the areas of civil administration, business enterprises, municipalities, early childcare, universities, colleges, and immigration at the expense of Anglophone linguistic rights. Other amendments sought to reinforce the learning of French in education and give more power of inspection to the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF). By far the most ambitious aspect of the new law was the amending of Quebec's Charter of human rights and freedoms to include "every person has a right to live and work in Quebec to the extent provided for in the Charter of the French Language." This amendment would have required the government to provide its citizens with a guaranteed holistic French experience (in life and in work), but not in any other language. Ideologically, Bill 14 thereby needed to further the construction of Quebec as an exclusionary (ethnic) space for French only, effectively serving to reinforce the identity borders between the majority and its linguistic minority. The new law would have directly attacked the rights of already marginalized English-speaking Quebecers, placing the ESCQ outside the boundaries of the French collective identity markers. The goal was to prioritize French as a collective right and deny individual rights to language choices other than French. Bill 14 would have given the French majority the power to limit, if not totally eradicate, the use of English from public spaces in the province, including educational institutions, places of work, and municipalities. Bill 14 would have further repudiated the inherent right of Anglophones to their institutional spaces in civil society. This new spatial and linguistic order would be upheld by linguistic officials from the OQLF.

Public hearings on Bill 14 commenced in the early winter months of 2013. Among the many Anglophone institutions and organizations, both the Quebec Community Groups Network and Townshippers'

Association submitted briefs to which this analysis refers. Each brief attempted to draw identity boundaries in Quebec that included its English-speaking communities. In its report, the QCGN admits that the majority of English-speaking Quebecers (60%) accepts and supports Quebec as a French province but, clearly, French is not the foundation of Anglophone identity (QCGN, 2013a). The QCGN recognizes that the English-speaking population has multiple identities negotiated through nation, community, religion, and family which combine to shape their sense of belonging in Quebec (QCGN, 2013a). At the institutional level, the English educational system works to ensure that "our children are bi-literate and able to participate fully in a French-speaking Quebec. The success of members of our community to become bilingual (69%) demonstrates a deep commitment to the French language, and Quebec" (QCGN, 2013a:3). Indeed, the English controlled educational system is paramount to the community's ability to participate effectively in Quebec society. The use of "our" reveals the QCGN's ideological attempts to constitute its own identity borders. At the same time, the ESCQ are an official linguistic minority giving it the right to position its members within the boundaries of the French collective. Not content to stay at the margins, the QCGN seeks to cross the identity boundaries that Bill 14 attempted to impose and situate the English-speaking community within the common well-being of Quebec society.

Among the already vulnerable minority communities of Quebec Anglophones, the English speakers of the rural Eastern Townships would, (according to the Townshippers' Association in its brief to the National Assembly's Committee on Culture and Education), be particularly at risk if the proposed legislation had become law (Townshippers' Association 2013a). Living in rural or regional areas, and the resulting spatial isolation of residents, can be seen as additional identity and spatial borders felt by English-speaking members of the Townships. Locality is deployed by the Townshippers' as a discursive and spatial strategy to intervene in the debates about linguistic identity and belonging. The Townshippers' Association (2013a) represents the English-speaking populace through the identity markers of roots and historical belonging; "here in the Eastern Townships, our history is one of longstanding, fruitful collaboration and partnership with our French-speaking neighbors." The Association argues that as one of the founding peoples of Quebec, English-speakers have the right to be protected under the law. An additional identity marker is that of bilingualism, which is discursively used to locate the Anglo- and Allophone communities within the dominant French Quebec; "the minority groups throughout Quebec have become increasingly fluent

in the use of French…[and] bilingualism [is] a tool to enhance our prosperity and quality of life" (Townshippers' Association, 2013a). The brief illustrates the way in which the Association advances the argument to the French majority that the English-speaking minority is part of the democratic structures of Quebec society. As such, Quebec has a moral obligation to help all non-French citizens and newcomers integrate rather than "suppress bilingualism and the rights of English speakers" (Townshippers' Association, 2013a). Both briefs endeavor to unravel the ideological and material binary between the French majority and English minority and place the minority linguistic group within the identity borders of French; in reality a culturally diverse and globally situated society. While both organizations highlight the kinds of collaborative and solidarity projects that are assumed through bilingualism, the widespread erosion of English rural and urban institutional spaces are contrasted to reveal the contested identity and spatial borders between the majority-minority groups. These linguistic borders are sites of struggle; they are relational and constituted in the continual battles for power and control by the majority and its English-speaking minority. These linguistic relations of power end up surveilling the identity borders of belonging and the spaces of operation. While the French majority tries to delineate Quebec boundaries exclusively in French, the Anglophone minority must diligently work to remake these borders into anti-hegemonic and inclusive socio-spatial imaginaries of belonging.

Throughout the public consultative period, the English language media in Quebec published the public's reactions to the proceedings. The discursive mechanisms used by the media were to criticize the PQ for strengthening the language legislation, legal opinions, appeals to include the English-speaking community as belonging to Quebec society, and the sense-making of Montréal as a place for memory and belonging. Much ink was spilled to criticize the PQ's hardline and narrow identity politics, In an opinion article entitled, "Mme. Marois, why are you trying to divide Quebecers?," the authors call Premier Marois a liar for promising on the night the PQ won the election in 2012 that Anglophones would receive fair treatment;

> Mme. Marois,….[y]ou said on election night that you care about Anglophones, but we keep losing rights, freedoms and access to services. What has led us to this point are shameful, mean-spirited and just plan discriminatory language laws that has turned a fifth of Canadian citizens in Quebec into second-class citizens. (Shapiro and Yufe, March 5, 2013).

According to Sandy White (September 25, 2012) in, "The PQ needs to remember they govern for all Quebecers," the PQ will "usher in a tumultuous era of change to Quebec's democratic, economic, linguistic

and religious makeup" where Anglophones will see "an onslaught of attempts to suppress the English language" and "the sanctity of a free and open society for all Quebecers" will be in jeopardy. Dan Delmar in "Quebec language zealots' anti-anglo message has a trickle-down effect" (February 15, 2013), reports on an incident that took place on Montréal's public transit system and was caught on video in which a woman is screaming at fellow passengers for addressing her in a language other than French. The author believes the spatializing of the anti-Anglophone attitude in a public place is the direct result of the government's strategy to strengthen Bill 101; "[w]hen government enacts policies that are inherently repressive toward whole groups of people that is an action that can have real-world implications. It legitimizes the demonization of Anglos and other linguistic minorities, and discourages civil exchanges between citizens with equal rights." Jonathan Lang (April 11, 2013) rightly points out the 'Bill 14 calls for the French language to constitute "the foundation of Quebec's identity and of a distinct culture." What this means for English-speaking Quebecers is that "[the proposed law] effectively removes non-French Quebecers – including Anglophones and First Nations – from being part of that foundation. This amounts to a rewriting of the province's history and it sends groups once considered to be included in the fabric of Quebec identity to the margins." Thus, as Lang notes, anyone not included in the "we" are to be spatially and ideologically placed outside the boundaries of French society to the place of "others."

Many articles noted there were no empirical studies to show the French language in decline in Quebec but rather, more and more newcomers were adopting French as their second language. Throughout the hearings, numerous articles sited recent statistics revealing that French was gaining ground among immigrant newcomers. As one author reminds us, for the first time in modern history, 51.1% of foreign-born Quebecers have French as their first official language spoken (Scott, May 10, 2013). Kay refers to Bill 14 as "the PQ's 'soft ethnocide'" (Kay, February 5, 2013). The mayor of Quebec City, Regis Labeaume blasts the "mean" Bill 14 saying "the Anglophone community should be defended like anybody else in Quebec, Quebec City Anglophones help the city so I think the least we can do is to try to help them too" (Montgomery March 11, 2013). There were also several articles written by legal experts including a statement by two Montréal civil rights lawyers Julius Grey and Michael Bergman, who both insisted that Bill 101 should not be tinkered with. According to Bergman (2013), Bill 14 would create a new linguistic world order for Quebec where the 155 proposed amendments would lead to endless court challenges. For Bergman, the concern is the elevation of the right

to live and work in French to a human right and fundamental freedom above the rights of individual English-speakers that is worrisome from a legal standpoint. To reiterate what Lang (2013) wrote in his opinion piece, Bergman states that, "the new law calls for the French language to constitute the foundation of Quebec's identity and of a distinct culture thereby removing the Anglophone community from the fabric of Quebec's identity" (Bergman, March 15, 2013).

In addition to the above captured media topics, a number of writers expressed the opinion that Quebec as a nation was founded on the pluralistic principles of recognizing the contributions of English-speakers to nation-building. According to Jonathan Lang, Bill 101 includes a vision of the Quebec nation as a pluralist one and allows for the inclusion of the Anglophone community in the articulation of its identity, but that Bill 14 "is a step backward in recognizing and celebrating the province's historic diversity" (Lang, April 11, 2013). Zhimei Zhang (2013), an immigrant from China writes in the *Montreal Gazette* that "her community has raised a generation of trilingual individuals who are assets to Quebec society in its economic development but now many people from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are hesitant to come." Zhang states that, "We chose to come to Quebec and stay in Montréal because of its bilingualism and multiculturalism; they make this city unique. We are visible, we too have our rights, and our voices need to be heard" (Zhang, March 10, 2013). Montréal, as a former space of inclusion and representative of a plural Quebec society is echoed in the sentiments of another writer. Before Bill 14 was introduced in late 2012, the OQLF made some dubious prosecutions against non-French business owners for using languages other than French in their enterprises. Dubbed "pastagate" by the media in reference to a dispute between the office and a restaurant owner who was ordered to remove the English word pasta from his Italian menu, the city of Montréal became an international laughingstock for the selective targeting by the so-called "language police." Montréal, the most multicultural city in Quebec, was now positioned by the PQ government in its discourse as a spatial threat to the French language. In the opinion of Andrea Weinstein, (June 25, 2013) the Montréal of her childhood memories now feels "like foreign territory." As she relates, "every day comes with another wave of disappointment: pastagate, reasonable accommodation, language police…somewhere beneath the tarnished face of modern Montréal is this other magical place [she] remembers so well as a girl." Her hopes are for politicians to put aside their own individuals aspirations and "show true tolerance and respect for diversity, [only then] will Montréal be restored to a place where our children and their children

will find the same magic of old." The writer's memories of Montréal follows the representational logic of the city as a space of belonging for many English-speaking people that is now being contested by the PQ as a spatial site of danger and threats to the French collective. This discursive positioning of space and identity is indicative of why English-speaking Quebecers feel the need to insert their identities into Quebec society at various scales of belonging; at the level of nation, city, regional, rural, and memory. Amid the debates around identity and belonging, the PQ government withdrew Bill14 in the summer months of 2013. There would, however, be more conflicts to come over the role of who should and should not be part of the public face of Quebec society.

Bill 60: the PQ's veiled intentions
In the dreary month of early November 2013, the PQ government rolled out its secular values initiative which sparked another heart-wrenching and divisive societal wide examination into identity and belonging; this time through the strange bedfellows of religion and gender equality. The proposed Charter affirming the values of secularism and the religious neutrality of the state, as well as the equality of men and women, and the framing of accommodation requests, sought to prohibit public-sector employees from wearing conspicuous religious signs or headgear such as the hijab, turban and kippas. The charter ban on religious signs would be "an integral part of employment conditions" for about 600,000 people (the percentage of public employees from religious or ethnocultural backgrounds other than French or Catholic is less than 1%) working in Quebec's civil service, health and education institutions, affecting judges, prosecutors, police and prison doctors, nurses, teachers and all employees of public companies such as Hydro-Quebec. The PQ's Jean-François Lisée (January 10, 2014), in an editorial for *The New York Times*, expressed his view that Quebec's approach to the separation of church and state is rigorous, progressive and modern [and] the next logical step along the path of secularization for the province. Lisée matter-of-factly suggested that Bill 60 is Quebec's latest expression of its "dim view of multiculturalism" and that it is Canadians who do not like to "see Quebec veer from Canada's path who are wrong." According to him, "multiculturalists seem to think some personal preferences are more permissibly expressed by government workers than others….a truly secular state should not permit the symbols of any religion, whether of the majority or a minority, to breach the wall between church and state." The PQ minister for international affairs held that it was appropriate for the PQ to legislate culture and identity in order to produce a secular space; one that is counter to the Canadian

Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its Multicultural Policy. One must ask, however, what the PQ was trying to do by discriminating against a virtually non-existent presence of religious symbols in the public sphere. The Charter was attempting to actively promote secular values but at the expense of other important aspects of society such as basic human rights. Reminiscent of Bill 14, the new Charter was to be superimposed onto the Charter of human rights and freedoms. Bill 60 sought to amend the Charter of rights so that gender equality, separation of church and state, and other fundamental values of the Quebec nation would be grouped along with the primacy of the French language. By guaranteeing the primacy of the French language first, freedom of expression would be reduced as well as removing established rights in the name of secularism. So, for example, one could surmise that no man or woman can work for the state with their face covered – by a veil or Muslim burqa – because that would imply gender inequality and segregation. As stated by the Townshippers' Association (2013b) in its brief to the public consultations on the proposed bill, "the goal is to engineer a society of conformity and blatant discrimination based on language, religion and ethnic background." The text of the proposed legislation discursively positions women's (Muslim) bodies as an identity marker to be located outside Quebec society. Muslim women embody the "other" in Quebec and must be removed to the borderlands beyond its secular, gender equal identity. The veiled body becomes a spatial scale for anti-Muslim sentiments and concerns about other ethnocultural oppressions of women. Indeed, these religious bodies became a contested site for struggles between the French collective, its values and "others" who inhabit the borders of identity. The proposed legislation provoked unease in Quebec's social climate and numerous examples of verbal, racist slurs, and in some cases physical attacks against veiled Muslim women in public were reported in the media. (Curran, January 13, 2014). Curran reports that of "1,000 Quebecers polled by Leger Marketing, 48% support the PQ government plan to outlaw people of faith from wearing religious symbols such as hijabs, kippas, turbans or conspicuous crucifixes while working in government jobs." In an article written by Katherine Wilton for the *Montreal Gazette* (May 9, 2013), Jack Jedwab, executive director of the Association for Canadian Studies, argues that going forward we can expect more debates about accommodation because of the changing religious landscape in Quebec, especially in Montréal. With a huge influx of immigrants from North Africa, Asia and the Middle East, "the increase in the number of secular Quebecers and immigrants from non-Christian faiths could lead to more debate and possible conflict."

Both the Townshippers' Association and the QCGN opposed Bill 60. The QCGN rejected the Bill in its entirety arguing that the legislation is an affront to human and minority rights because these would be restricted by the will of state defined values:

> The QCGN is deeply disappointed that the Government of Quebec continues to govern in a manner that divides Quebecers, and that does not reflect our collective values. We know Quebec to be a society that is welcoming, generous, tolerant, and socially progressive. We know Quebec to be a place that has mastered the balance between collectivism and individualism. We know Quebec to be a place that long ago rejected the centralized dictate of values and behaviour. (December 20, 2013b)

The Townshippers' Association took an even more alarmist view stating that "the inclusion of the condition of 'the primacy of the French language' means that the English-speaking minority would find itself disenfranchised from the Quebec Charter of Rights and Freedoms not only in regard to Bill 60 **but all past and future legislation**" (emphasis original). The brief went on to claim "this is obviously Bill 14 in disguise, and goes well beyond the establishment of a 'secular' dress code for public employees. Townshippers' Association believes that it presents a direct threat to the English-speaking populations represented by groups such as ours" (2013b). The QCGN and Townshippers' invoked the same representational logic from Bill 14 in their briefs to the Secular Charter hearings by using historical roots, the prominence of "our" English-speaking population to Quebec's past and future as well as the minority's bilingual contributions to cultural and economic development. These discursive mechanisms demonstrated the groups' attempts to (re)define Quebec's identity borders by establishing claims to a shared spatiality of civic, institutional and interpersonal places.

In addition to the above themes, the two community groups highlighted the historical and contemporary heterogeneous aspect of the English-speaking population. "Ours is a community of communities with one third of English-speaking Quebec composed of immigrants, compare to only eight per cent of the majority" (QCGN 2013b). The relative homogeneity of Quebec's French-speaking majority means that Bill 60 targeted religions such as Jewish, Muslim and Sikh that account for less than five per cent of the province's total population. In contrast, the English-speaking minority must rely on immigrant for its group vitality. The ESCQ are today composed of a diversity of hybrid identities that have been propelled by transnational processes stemming from the global mobilities of peoples. These transnational identities contribute to English-speaking communities by adding numbers to its population and sustaining its cultural institutions. As the QCGN (2013b) stated in its brief, "the French majority struggles

with recognizing the enormous beneficial role linguistic, religious and cultural diversity plays in Quebec's success," while the English-speaking minority sees this global circuit of moving bodies as a welcome tool for its community vitality. The debates around Bill 60 revealed the intergroup boundary markers of difference between French and English, religious and non-religious, men and women, urban and rural. If passed, Bill 60 would have further entrenched the "us" versus "them" dynamic and make the identity borders of the majority as exclusively French and secular, thereby locking English-speaking Quebecers and their diversity outside the boundaries of the collective sense of belonging.

The English language media reports associated with Bill 60 were similar to the discourses that had framed Bill 14 as detrimental to Anglophones and divisive for all of Quebec society. Colin Standish in an editorial to the *Sherbrooke Record* argues that "Bill 60 would have a prejudicial effect on non-Francophones, newcomers and minorities who are currently vastly underrepresented in Quebec's civil service, and suffer from lower employment rates" (November 19, 2013). Claiming that the Charter does not reflect the values of Quebecers and Canadians, he calls on "human dignity, our most basic of rights and values," to maintain all non-Francophones as part of the collective identity.

What should be highlighted here, are the many stories from Quebec's Francophone milieu which was opposed to the Charter of values. The Quebec Bar Association argued the Bill was formulated in a legal vacuum and produced a 35-page analysis which exposed the proposed law with precise legal arguments to show the denial of personal choices as an assault on fundamental rights and freedoms (Authier, January 16, 2014) The human rights commission expressed serious reservations about the unnecessary amending of the Charter of Rights where equality, secularism and neutrality were already enshrined (Derfel, January 17, 2014). In the article, Derfel quotes Jacques Frémont of the Commission who stated, "superimposing Bill 60 on the Charter of Rights would place certain values above basic human rights like freedom of expression and religion." As well, sixty professors from Quebec French-language universities signed a declaration claiming it could not support a law that "denied the religious freedoms of individuals" (Fortier, December 31, 2013). Finally, past premier and long-time PQ member, Lucien Bouchard, appealed to his fellow Quebecers to "look beneath the angst and hate stirred up by its political leaders" (Bouchard March 6, 2014). His words paint a picture of inclusivity: "we share so much with the people that surround us" such as the real challenges that unite us;

"good jobs in a strong economy, secure health, safety of our children and care of our elderly and disenfranchised." In terms of language and culture "Quebec is the land of two solitudes. *Les Anglais vs. Les Frogs. Les Blokes vs. Les Pepsis. Les Têtes Carrée vs. The Frenchies.* And now we have another enemy in the public discourse: *les Autres* – those that would impose their religious beliefs on us" (Bouchard March 6, 2014). For Bouchard, Quebecers need to break out of this artificially imposed duality and the solution is to work collectively to "hold our politicians accountable on the issues that affect us all and not spend our energy solving made-up problems, like Muslim women wearing hijabs." Clearly, his "us" includes non-Francophones as well as non-Christian. He (re)writes the Quebec nation as a spatial and ideological place of inclusivity with boundaries wide enough to embrace all identities, cultures and religions. There were some Francophone Quebecers that did support Bouchard's views. Don Macpherson, journalist from the *Montreal Gazette* (March 8, 2014) reported that a CBC-EKOS poll revealed 11 percent of Francophones said they had seriously considering leaving (Quebec) because of the narrow fear and monoculturalist demagogy of the PQ. I suggest that these voices attempt to reconfigure the traditional spatiality of Quebec as a space of divisions between French and English, Catholic and non-Catholic, city and region, ethnocultural versus *pure laine* to one of inclusivity, diversity, tolerance and acceptance.

The PQ's proposed values charter never saw the light of day. The public hearings ceased when the government called an election in March of 2014 which it then decisively lost the next month. The subject is, however, still very much part of public discourse, as the current Liberal government has recently proposed its own Charter of values amid opposition calls for one and the continued, apparent public support for prohibiting the wearing of the Muslim veil in public. In June of this year (2015) Bill 62-An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for religious accommodation requests in certain bodies, was tabled. The Bill does not go as far as the PQ government efforts to ban all religious symbols but rather calls for accommodation of such symbols under certain conditions. At the same time, the Justice Minister introduced Bill 59-An Act to enact the Act to prevent combat hate speech and speech inciting violence and to amend various legislative provisions to better protect individuals, amongst much controversy surrounding whether the law would actually protect minority groups from hate crimes or stifle freedom of expression. Clearly, the spatial distancing between the majority and its minority groups has not returned to pre-Bill 14 and 60 levels but Quebec's identity still remains fractured.

Who knows when the building of a more positive, collective sense of belonging will begin, if ever.

As to why the PQ government proposed the two bills in the first place, Stasiulis (2013) suggests Quebec has adopted a discourse of "worrier nation;" a reaction to its defeat at the hands of the British some 265 years ago, leaving the French forever feeling vulnerable about their survival in a "sea" surrounded by an Anglophone presence. This may explain the PQ's desire to bolster the French language while other processes such as Quebec's growing immigrant population and Islamophobia, both globally and domestically, have led to the government's adoption of a more exclusive form of citizenship. Quebec and its governments, including Liberal and PQ have been dealing with the reasonable accommodations debate since the late 1990s. Bilge (2013) reminds us that in 2007 Pauline Marois, as the newly elected PQ party leader, proposed Bill 195-the Québec Identity Act, which sought to reaffirm Quebec's (mono) culturalist nationalism, core values of gender equality and secularism, its Constitution and citizenship and the teaching of a nationalist history (p.174). In 2010, the Liberal Government introduced Bill 94-An Act to establish guidelines governing accommodation requests within the Administration and certain institutions, which the PQ as opposition party at the time criticized for not going far enough to defend the core secular values of the province. Thus, the current "us-them" boundaries of belonging could have been set by the PQ wanting to "avenge past wrongs" but definitely were established long before Bills 14 and 60 in a historical process that discursively and concretely, cast aside those identities that do not share the linguistic, cultural and religious heritage of the French majority.

Conclusion

Celine Cooper (2013) convincingly observes that,

> whatever happens to people happens in places. The relationships Quebecers have with each other – as neighbors, co-workers or classmates are shaped by our interactions in the everyday places we share such as our city streets, schools, parks, places of worship and work spaces. These become the sites through which we come together, learn about one another, and build a collective sense of identity and belonging.

What happens to this process of building a shared sense of belonging when the state sanctions the exclusion of certain people from these public spaces because of their language, religion or what they look like and the clothes they wear? This paper has attempted to delineate the answers by placing this discussion within the broader political debates on identity and belonging in Quebec, as they occurred during the PQ

government's introduction of Bills 14 and 60. The PQ tried to define the rules and set parameters for who could belong within the borders of Quebec's identity and lay claim to its public spaces. Space and identity are always contested in any society especially within the context of globalization and the attendant making of mobile transnational subjects. In Quebec, these global forces provoked a crisis in the traditional identity and spatial boundaries of the nation as home to a French collective majority which is increasingly aware of its minority status in a globalizing English context. These boundaries are becoming blurred, unidentifiable and are called into question by a diverse array of cultures, religions and languages who want in. Quebec's struggle over identity and the spatial negotiation of belonging must be read through a number of social categories: language, majority-minority relations, ethnicity and culture, religion and gender and, include spatial scales such as the body, home, community, institutional settings, city, region and nation.

The PQ government developed two state texts of identity formation to seal its nation boundaries against the intrusion of "others." It used the current global context of mobility, a widespread anti-Muslim movement, the bodies of veiled Muslim women as embodied "others," and growing bilingualism within its borders to produce contested sites around identity and belonging. The English-speaking population and ethnocultural minorities, current and future, were viewed as threats to Quebec identity and spatially located outside the borders of the French collective. In reaction to these efforts to deny the rights of Anglophones and religious-cultural minorities, leaders of the English-speaking population responded by crafting a counter narrative which reconfigured the identity map of Quebec to include them in the everyday, public spaces of belonging. The reasons behind the PQ's desire to strengthen the already existing language laws and initiate a charter of secular values are difficult to comprehend; whether politicians hoped to capture more votes or used the proposed legislative initiatives as part of a longstanding nation-building plan, we may never know as the answer died with the crushing defeat of the PQ in the April 2014 provincial election. Perhaps the road forward lies in the fact that the majority of Quebecers voted no to the PQ's plans to divide the province by language, religion, culture and personal appearance as the party suffered its worst defeat since its inception. The debate around identity and belonging continue, indeed it may always hold an important place in the hearts and the shared public space of Quebec society.

Research is needed into the effects the PQ's narrow identity politics has on English-speaking communities throughout the province. The

acrimonious discussions of the two proposed laws between the majority French-speaking population and its linguistic minority resulted in the spatial distancing of the two groups and their respective institutions. How do Anglophones negotiate their identities amid a space that is symbolically and materially coded as French, "belonging to us" and not English or immigrant? How many Anglophones have left the province in the "post-bill" climate (according to a CBC-EKOS poll conducted in 2014, half of Quebec non-Francophones had seriously considered leaving Quebec at the time (Macpherson March 8, 2014); how many immigrants have decided to abandon attempts to integrate, and settle elsewhere in Canada, and how many of the Anglophones and "non-Quebecois" that remain experience daily reminders that they do not belong? These questions are complex and require our immediate attention.

ENDNOTES

1.   For the purposes of this research paper, I have chosen to focus on and analyze English-language media sources and the ESCQ.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anzaldua, G. & A. Keating (eds) (2002). *This bridge we call home*. New York: Routledge.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Authier, P. (2014). Quebec Bar Association's negative opinion of Quebec Charter of Values reinforces status quo, Minister Bernard Drainville says. *Montreal Gazette*, January 16, 2014.

Basch, L., N.G. Schiller & C.S. Blanc (2006). *Nations Unbound*. London: Routledge.

Bergman M. (2013) No reasonable accommodation in Bill 14. *Montreal Gazette*, March 15, 2013.

Bilge, S. (2013). Reading the Racial Subtext of the Quebecois Accommodation Controversy: An Analytics of Racialized Governmentality. *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 40(1), 157–181.

Bouchard, L. (2014). Letter: I still hold out hope that Quebecers who support the values charter can be swayed. *Montreal Gazette*, March 6, 2014.

Castells, M. (1989). *The Informational City*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cooper, C. (2013). We must speak out against injustice. *Montreal Gazette*, June 11, 2013.

Corbeil, J-P., B. Chavez & D. Pereira (2010). Portrait of Official-Language Minorities in Canada – Anglophones in Quebec. Statistics Canada: Ottawa, ON.

Curran, P. (2014). Charter fuels stereotyping, tension: poll. *Montreal Gazette*, January 13, 2014.

Delmar, D. (2013). Quebec language zealots' anti-language message has a trickle-down effect. *National Post*. February 15, 2013.

Derfel, A. (2014). Quebec's human rights commission voices "serious reservations" about Bill 60. *Montreal Gazette*, January 17, 2014.

Duncan, N. (1996). (Re)placings. Nancy Duncan, *Body Space*, New York: Routledge, 1–10.

Fortier, M. (2013). Soixante professeurs contre la Charte. *Le Devoir*, 31 décembre 2013.

Friedman, M. & S. Schultermandl (eds) (2011). *Growing Up Transnational*. Toronto: University Press.

Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Jedwab, J. (2010). The deep diversity of English-speaking Quebecers. (J. Jedwab, ed.) *Canadian Diversity,* 8(2), 3–5

Kay, J. (2013). With the claim of "soft ethnocide," Quebec's separatists reach a pathetic new low. *National Post*, February 5, 2013.

Lang, J. (2013). Bill 14 and the loss of identity. *Montreal Gazette*, April 11, 2013

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lisée, J.-F. (2014). Quebec's Latest Stand. *The New York Times*, January 10, 2014.

Macpherson, D. (2014) La question qui tue: Are anglophones valued in Quebec? *Montreal Gazette*. March 8, 2014.

Massey, D. (1992). Politics and space/time, *New Left Review*, 196:65–84.

McDowell, L. (1996). Spatializing Feminism in Nancy Duncan (ed), *Body Space*, New York: Routledge, 28–44.

Montgomery, A. (2013). Labeaume blasts "mean" Bill 14. *CJAD 800 News*, March 11, 2013.

Moussa, G. (2014). Breathing Borders. Malek, G. & G. Moussa (eds), *Min Fami: Arab Feminist Reflections on Identity, Space and Resistance*. Toronto: Inanna Publications, 97–99.

National Household Survey (NHS) (2014). *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Quebec*. Statistics Canada: Ottawa, ON.

Peake, L. & M. Rieker (eds) (2013). *Rethinking Feminist Interventions into the Urban*. London and New York: Routledge.

Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) (2013a). Brief presented to the National Assembly's Committee on Culture and Education with regards to General consultation and public hearings on Bill 14: An Act to amend the Charter of the French language, the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and other legislative provisions, presented February 11. 2013.

Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) (2013b). Brief to the Committee on Institutions General Consultation and Public Hearings on Bill 60 Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation request, presented December 20, 2013.

Scott, M. (2013). French gains ground among newcomers. *Montreal Gazette*, May 10, 2013.

Shapiro, G. & R. Yufe. (2013). Mme. Marois, why are you trying to divide Quebecers? *Montreal Gazette*, March 5, 2013.

Standish, C. (2013). Twenty-four word title obscures real changes and scope of "Values" Charter. *The Sherbrooke Record*, November 19, 2013.

Stasiulis, D. (2013). Worrier Nation: Quebec's Value Codes for Immigrants, *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 40:1, 183–209.

Townshippers' Association (2013a). Brief regarding Bill 14, presented January 30, 2013.

Townshippers' Association (2013b). Brief regarding Bill 60, presented December 10, 2013.

Weinstein, A. (2013). Opinion: When did home begin to feel like foreign territory? *Montreal Gazette*, June 25, 2013.

White, S. (2012). The PQ needs to remember they govern for all Quebeckers. *The Globe and Mail*, September 25, 2012.

Wilton, K. (2013). Secular vs. religious: more conflicts may be on horizon. *Montreal Gazette*, May 9, 2013.

Zhang, Z. (2013). We are all Quebecers. *Montreal Gazette*, March 10, 2013.