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Amending the *Official Languages Act*: A New Vision of Bilingualism?

Mario Polèse

IN BRIEF

Canada's linguistic map has changed. French continues to decline, as immigrants and native-born francophones, notably outside Quebec, shift to English. Bill C-13, an amendment to the *Official Languages Act*, is a brave attempt to come to terms with this new reality. However, like its predecessors, Bill C-13 remains a captive of its past and wedded to the principle of equal language rights, an individual right irrespective of place. A more forceful attempt to arrest the decline of French and create a new vision of bilingualism would include a recognition of the pivotal role played by Quebec in the maintenance of French in Canada, an obligation to harmonize federal language legislation with Quebec's and, outside Quebec, an attempt to give more substance to "Regions with a Strong Francophone Presence" and propose strong measures in favour of French.

EN BREF

La carte linguistique du Canada a changé. Le déclin du français se poursuit, à mesure que les immigrants et les francophones de souche, notamment à l'extérieur du Québec, se tournent vers l'anglais. Le projet de loi C-13 constitue une tentative courageuse de maîtriser cette nouvelle réalité. Cependant, comme ses prédécesseurs, le projet de loi demeure captif du passé, tributaire du principe de l'égalité des droits linguistiques, un droit individuel transportable. Une mouture plus robuste de la loi pour stopper le déclin du français, et ainsi créer une nouvelle vision du bilinguisme, inclurait la reconnaissance du rôle central du Québec dans la préservation du français au Canada, l'obligation d'harmoniser les lois linguistiques fédérales avec celles du Québec et, hors-Québec, de donner plus de substance à la notion de « région à forte présence francophone » et d'instaurer des mesures fortes pour y soutenir le français.

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Bill C-13, an *Act to Amend the Official Languages Act*, breaks with the past, formally inscribing the protection and promotion of French as a key objective. Its short title*, An Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada's Official Languages*, is a tacit admission that Canada's two official languages are not equal. How bilingualism is viewed in Canada, and Quebec's place in it, is undergoing a sea change.

In June 2021, the House of Commons overwhelmingly passed a Bloc Québécois motion acknowledging Quebec's Bill 96, which endorses Quebec's right to define itself as a nation and declare French the province's sole official language. Now C-13 formally acknowledges Quebec's *Charter of the French Language* (also known as Bill 101), which "provides that French is the official language of Quebec," a manifest departure from Pierre Trudeau's vision of bilingualism – the right of every Canadian to learn and to use English or French.

The federal government initially introduced the amendments to the *Official Languages Act* in June 2021, then C-32, at about the same time it approved the Bloc's motion, but the bill was not passed because a federal election was called. It was subsequently reintroduced with some changes in the House of Commons on March 1, 2022, as Bill C-13.

Quebec's Bill 96, which aims to strengthen Bill 101, and the federal amendments to the Official Languages Act (Bill C-13) are both driven by the same political imperative – halting the perceived decline of French. This makes them in essence complementary. This is no minor feat considering the almost universal condemnation of Bill 101 outside Quebec, and the almost visceral antipathy of nationalist Québécois to official bilingualism, which some viewed as a Trojan horse for English.

Canada's linguistic map has changed since the *Official Languages Act* was enacted in 1969. The demographic equilibrium between Canada's two official languages is gone. If Canada is to remain officially bilingual, the decline of French must be arrested or, alternatively, bilingualism redefined. C-13 is a brave attempt to come to terms with this new reality.

There are many welcome features in this new edition of the *Act,* starting with the frank recognition that French is the threatened language[2] and the new enforcement powers granted the Commissioner of Official Languages with respect, notably, to the bilingual service obligations of federally regulated private businesses. Air Canada is an oft-cited example. We must equally welcome the instruction to

[1] Following the publication of the 2021 Census data, an update of this Insight is now available in Appendix B. The main conclusions, however, remain unchanged.

[2] The wording of the relevant "AND WHEREAS" reads as follows: "the Government of Canada is committed to protecting and promoting the French language, recognizing that French is in a minority situation in Canada and North America due to the predominant use of English."

the courts to interpret language rights liberally, keeping past injustices in mind,[3] plus the introduction of a new concept outside Quebec of "Regions with a Strong Francophone Presence" (RSFPs) which implicitly recognizes that the vitality of a language (French in this instance) depends on social context, necessarily tied to a place. C-13 also reaffirms the government's commitment to "strong measures" in favour of French, notably for federally regulated workplaces in RSFPs. The government also looks to increased francophone immigration to stem the decline of French outside Quebec. All this is to be applauded.

However, C-13, like its predecessors, remains a captive of its past, wedded to the principle of equal language rights, an individual right irrespective of place. Language rights are almost always the result of political compromise. Canada is no exception. C-13 valiantly attempts to navigate between an equal right and a place-based approach to language. The two are not necessarily compatible. "Strong measures" to effectively protect French may require giving it preference over English, which collides with the principle of equal rights, a dilemma C-13 still fails to resolve.

A caveat is in order before proceeding. I am not a legal scholar.[4] The perspective here is that of a social scientist with a background in economics and demography. The question I ask is this: will C-13 halt the decline of French in Canada? I conclude that, regrettably, the answer is "no," notably outside Quebec. To understand my conclusion and also my recommendations for strengthening C-13, we need to revisit the original act and to re-examine the evolution of French in and outside Quebec.

THE *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT* WAS NOT ABOUT SAVING THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

The *Official Languages Act* was adopted in response to the greatest threat Canada had known to its very existence. It is difficult for Canadians today to imagine the sense of crisis gripping the nation at the time. The conclusion of the 1965 *Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, appropriately titled *The Crisis*, begins: "All that we have seen and heard has led us to the conviction that Canada is in the most critical period of its history since Confederation …. We do not know whether the crisis will be short or long. We are convinced that it is here." The authors end, six pages later: "There are those who feel that the problems will lessen and go away with time. This is possible, but, in our view, it is more probable that unless there are major changes the situation will worsen with time, and that it could worsen much more quickly than many think."[5]

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[3] The new wording (with some editing) of Section 3.1 reads: "Language rights are to be given a large, liberal and purposive interpretation (…) to be interpreted in light of their remedial character (…) the norm for interpretation (. . .) is substantive equality."

[4] For a recent overview of the academic literature on the *Official Languages Act*, see the special issue of *Minorités linguistiques et société / Linguistic Minorities and Society:* https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/minling/2021-n17-minling06632/

[5] Canada, *A Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,* 1965, https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.893456/publication.html .

The *Official Languages Act* was adopted four years later, a centrepiece of Pierre Trudeau's promise to resolve the crisis. The commissioners' worst fears seemed to be coming true. The FLQ (*Front de libération du Québec*) was planting bombs in Montreal's Anglo neighbourhoods. In 1968, René Lévesque, a charismatic Quebec minister, resigned from the Quebec Liberal Party and founded the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ), which would come to power seven years later, promising to hold a referendum on Quebec independence. The possibility that Quebec might leave Canada was real in 1969.

Why this voyage into the past? Simply as a reminder that the rationale for the 1969 act was to convince French-speaking Québécois that Canada was also their country where they could feel at home from coast to coast to coast, and that the federal government was also *their* government with now an explicit mandate to protect their rights as francophones.

Some 50 years later, we can say that the elder Trudeau largely succeeded, literally transforming the nation and its self-perception. The Union Jack no longer adorns Canada's flag. A recent survey by Léger reveals that some 80 percent of Québécois declare themselves proud to be Canadian.[6] However, the act failed to arrest the emergence of a sense of Quebec nationhood and the decline of French outside Quebec. The two are linked.[7]

The goal of the act was not to save French. There was no apparent need for that. The status of Canada's French population appeared assured. The 1961 census showed that 28 percent of Canadians had French as their mother tongue, similar to 60 years earlier. Since Confederation, Canada's French-speaking population had consistently remained at around 30 percent. True, the overwhelming majority was concentrated in a single province, Quebec; but it was essential to demonstrate that French would henceforth be respected everywhere (the mistreatment of French outside Quebec was one of the drivers of Quebec separatism).

The goal of the 1969 act was, in short, to right a historic wrong, and finally give French the respect and legal status it deserved — a historic achievement. However, legal equality and numbers are two different things. The authors of the original act could not have foreseen how the numbers would change. But change they did (see figure 1). The percentage of Canadians who have French as their mother tongue has fallen continuously since 1961 and will most probably soon fall below 20 percent.

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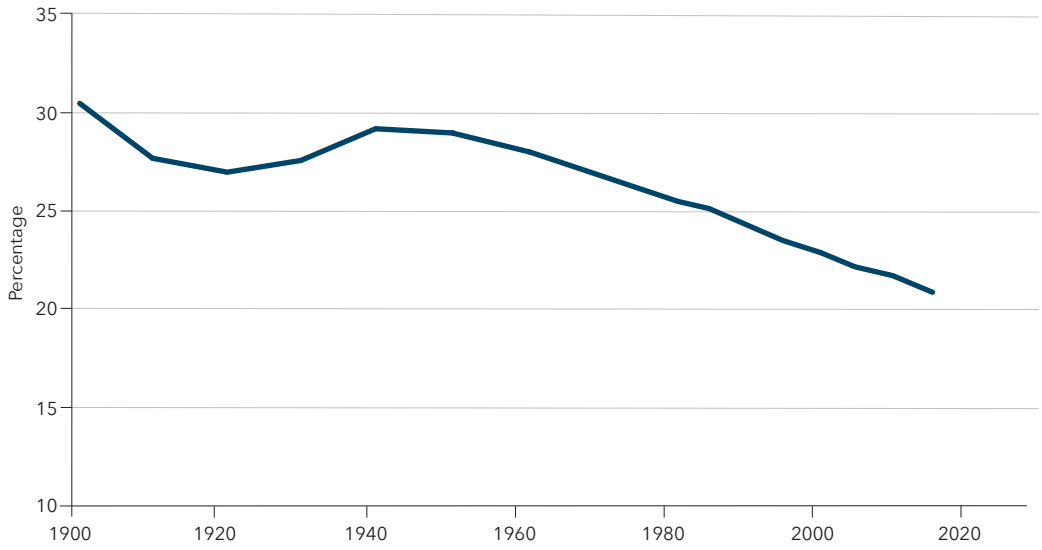
[6] Léger, *Sondage hebdomadaire de Léger*, June 29, 2020, https://acs-metropolis.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Sondage-hebdomadaire-de-L%c3%a9ger-29-juin-2020.pdf.

[7] The act also failed at another level: building a bilingual nation where citizens (or at least, many) would understand both languages — a noble but unattainable ideal. Some 10 percent of Canadians outside Quebec were bilingual in 2016, not very different from 1969; see Figure 3A in the Appendix. See also L. Cardinal, "The Limits of Bilingualism in Canada," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10 (1) (2004): 79-103.

Figure 1. Percentage of Canadians whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2016



Statistics Canada, *The evolution of language populations in Canada, by mother tongue, from 1901 to 2016*
https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2018001-eng.htm

BREAKDOWN OF THE LANGUAGE BALANCE

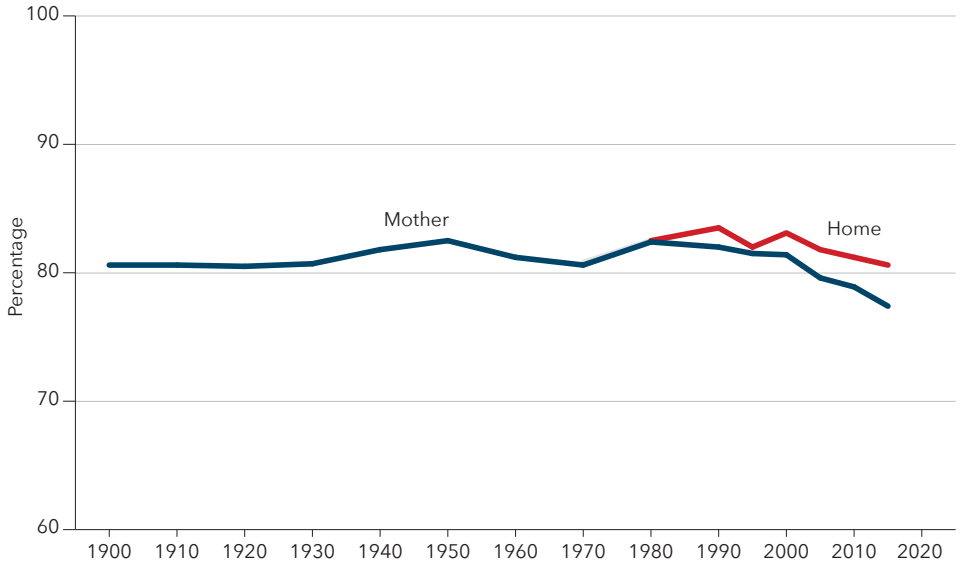
Why the sudden decline? The first reason is simple: fewer children were born to French-speaking mothers (see figure 1A in the Appendix). As francophone society underwent the Quiet Revolution beginning in the1960, education was taken out of the hands of the Catholic Church.[8] Quebec went from being arguably the most religious society in North America to the most secular.[9]

The decline in birth rates, an inevitable consequence of secularization, broke the delicate balance between the number of anglophones and francophones. In crude terms, French Canada had children and English Canada had immigrants. French-Canadian women maintained one of the highest birth rates of any western society well into the 1950s, offsetting the number of English-speaking and anglicizing immigrants in the rest of Canada. Canada's immigration policy well into the twentieth century openly favoured English-speaking and "Northern" peoples. This delicate balance broke down when French-Canadian families ceased having so many children, while English Canada kept admitting immigrants. The result was a mathematical inevitability.

We cannot, of course, fault the *Official Languages Act* for failing to counter the fall in francophone birth rates, notoriously impervious to public policy. But the language choices of immigrants (and the native born) are another matter. They are responsive

[8] Less well publicized, French Acadia also experienced its own social revolution. New Brunswick elected its first Acadian Premier, Louis Robichaud, in 1960.
[9] For a personal account of Quebec's social transformation, see M. Polèse, *Le Miracle Québécois (Montreal: Éditions du Boréal*, 2021).

Figure 2. Percentage of Quebecers whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2016, and whose home language is French, 1971-2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801.

to public policy, notably to legislation regulating the use of language in education and at work. This brings us to the second reason for the decline of French: language transfers,[10] which continued to favour English, notably outside Quebec. Quebec brought in legislation early on explicitly aimed at stemming such transfers, but there was no counterpart in the rest of Canada, either at the federal or provincial level. It is this omission that C-13 hopes to correct, at least in part, some 50 years later. The scale of the challenge facing C-13 can be seen in the contrasting fortunes of French within and outside Quebec, to which I now turn.

BILL 101: COUNTERING THE BREAKDOWN

The breakdown of the language equilibrium transformed Quebec politics. Language became a major issue in the 1970, 1973 and 1976 elections, and arguably the principal reason the PQ won the 1976 election. Demographers became media stars, somberly predicting that, unless something was done to bring future immigrants into the French fold, the percentage of francophones would soon fall below 70 percent in the province. Even kindred Latin peoples, Italians most notably, were increasingly sending their offspring to English schools. The data were clear: the 1971 census, the first to publish home language statistics (that is, the language spoken most often in the home), revealed that some 90 percent of immigrants became English-speaking after the second or third generation. Something needed to be done.

[10] This term refers to the adoption of a language other than one's native language as the language spoken most often in the home.

It was this demographic disequilibrium that the PQ government sought to remedy with Bill 101. And remedy it, it did. The demographic calamity warned of by demographers did not occur (see figure 2). In yet another paradox, Bill 101 probably did more than any other measure to ensure that the PQ would lose the 1980 referendum. Almost overnight, the need to ensure the future of French ceased to be a compelling argument for independence. Bill 101, making primary and secondary schooling in French obligatory for future immigrant children, meant that they and their descendants would become French-speaking Quebecois, changing the profile of French Quebec forever.

OUTSIDE QUEBEC: A DIFFERENT CONTEXT

No equivalent to Bill 101 exists outside Quebec. Immigrants are not required to send their children to French schools. Indeed, under Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, non-citizens do not have the automatic right to educate their children in the language of the minority, French in this case. That right, as enshrined in the Charter, is reversed for francophone Canadian citizens outside Quebec.[11] However, the central issue is that having a *right* does not mean that one can or will necessarily exercise that right.[12] Much depends on social context.

Figure 3 shows the home language of persons who also speak a language other than French or English at home. Although not a direct measure of language transfers, it is a good proxy.[13] The results speak for themselves. Outside Quebec, English is the home choice of allophone households in proportions approaching 100 percent. New Brunswick is the only exception with some 9 percent of allophone households opting for French, still considerably below the proportion of francophones in the province (31 percent whose mother tongue is French).

Almost everywhere, immigration serves to drive down the francophone share of the population. Even in Quebec, between a quarter and a third of allophone immigrants (depending on the source and cohort) adopt English as their home language.

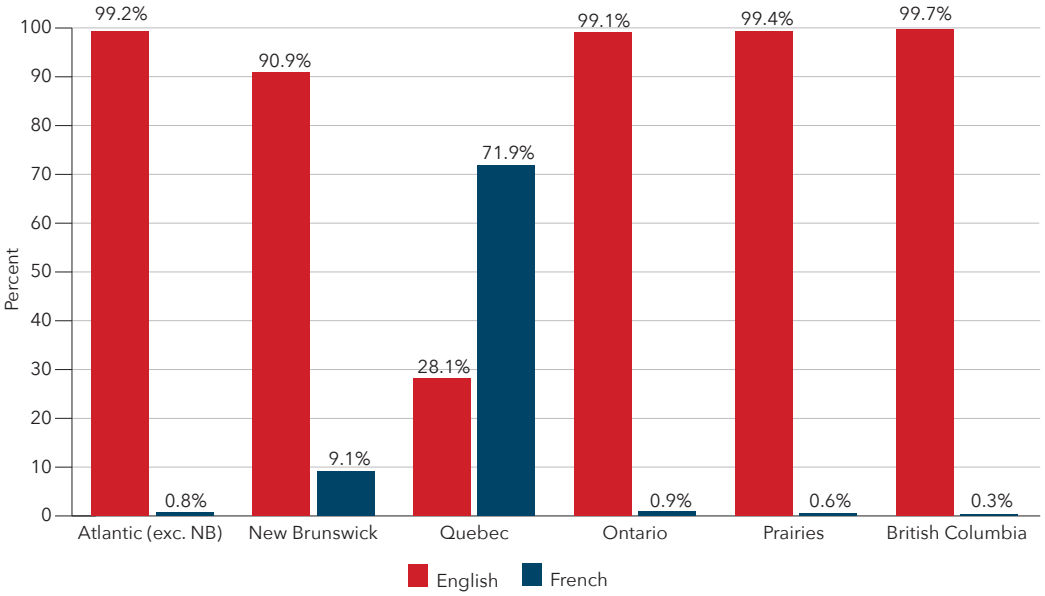
The other half of the story outside Quebec is language abandonment. Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of francophones and anglophones (mother tongue) for whom that mother tongue is the language most commonly spoken in the home. This

[11] Defined as citizens whose mother tongue is French or have received their primary education in French. Local francophone school boards may, however, decide to accept francophone immigrant children, an ongoing issue with solutions varying from province to province.

[12] Some 20 percent of Acadian parents in New Brunswick do not, it seems, avail themselves of the right to send their children to French schools. Besides the direct impact on language transmission, a collateral effect is the reallocation of community efforts, involving costly marketing campaigns, to convincing francophone parents to send their children to French schools. Source: Pierre-Marcel Desjardins. *Rapport portant sur les recommandations 1 et 2 du rapport du panel d'experts sur le financement de l'école francophone Document soumis au Groupe d'action de la Commission sur l'école francophone* (GACÉF Moncton, 2012).

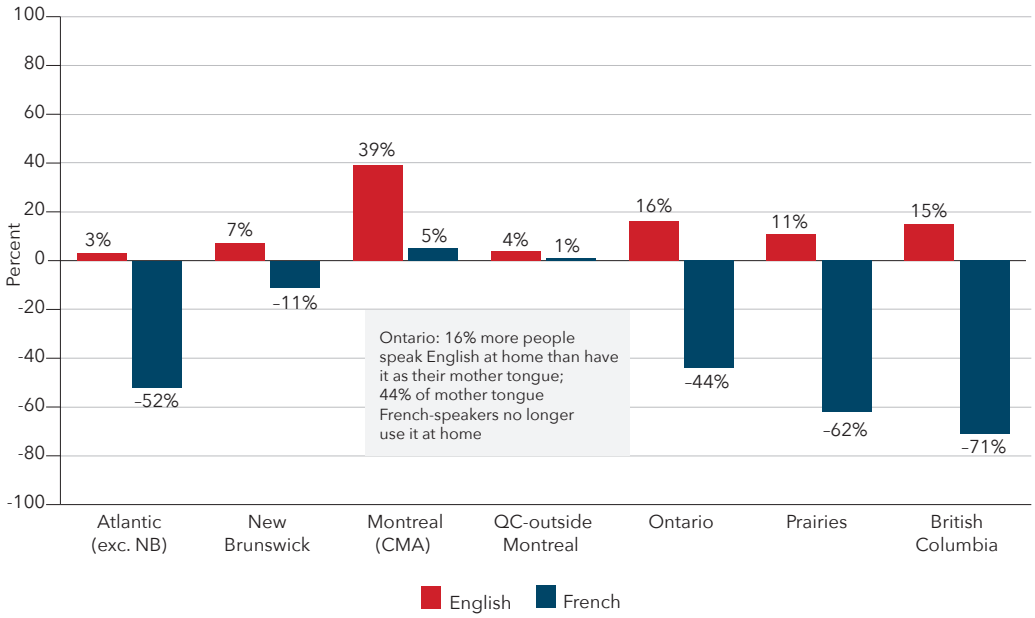
[12] Quebec provides a good test. Among recent allophone immigrants (2000-2010 and 2011-2016 cohorts) 76.6 percent and 75.9 percent, respectively, adopted French, and 31.4 percent and 23.2 percent adopted English as their home language, similar to the percentages in Figure 3. Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF), *Rapport sur l'évolution de la situation linguistique au Québec*, 2019 (Table 10, 26).

Figure 3. Percentage of households that speak French or English in the home among those who also speak another unofficial language at home, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. *Language Highlight Tables*. 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016005. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/index-eng.cfm

Figure 4. Language maintenance and abandonment by region, 2016



Note: Figure 4 illustrates the following simple metric: (hl/mt)-1, where hl = home language speakers and mt = mother tongue speakers. I have added minus one (-1) for illustrative purposes, to show that results below 100 percent refer to language losses.
Source: Statistics Canada. *Language Highlight Tables*. 2016 Census. Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016005. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/index-eng.cfmz

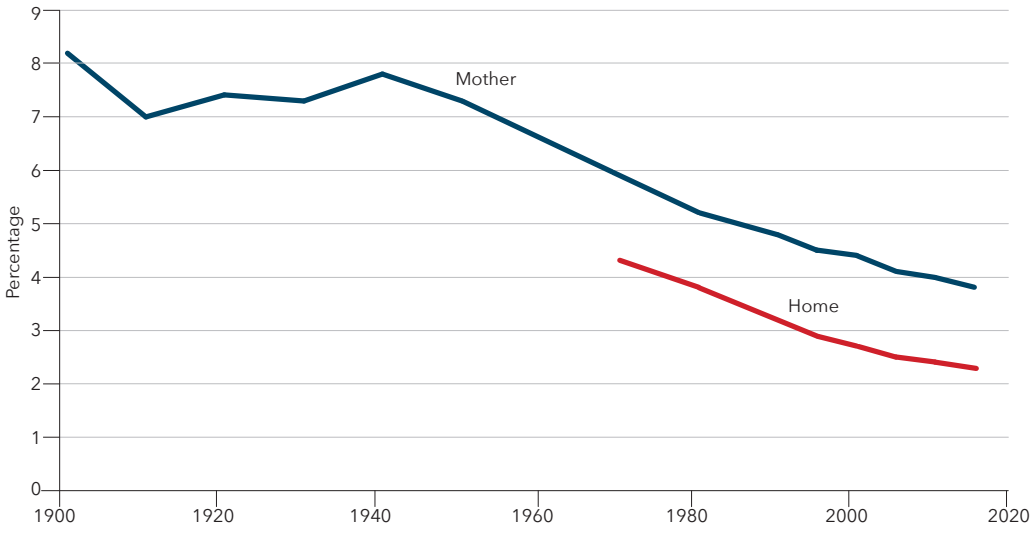
illustrates the propensity of a group to retain its language and even attract new speakers, or alternatively to abandon its language. The reasonable assumption is that, when fewer persons speak a language at home than have it as their mother tongue, they are in the process of abandoning their language.

Outside Quebec and New Brunswick, the proportion of francophones who no longer use their native language in the home ranges from 44 percent in Ontario to 71 percent in British Columbia. Even in New Brunswick, some 11 percent of Acadians have abandoned their native language. The only province where francophones are not assimilating (and even there, it is a miniscule proportion) is Quebec. The high proportion for English in Montreal may come as a surprise, but it is typical of urban centres with high concentrations of immigrant (allophone) populations, confirming that English remains a powerful presence in Montreal.

The inevitable result of the continued shift toward English by both immigrants and native-born Canadians outside Quebec is illustrated in figure 5. Not only is the share of those whose mother tongue is French systematically declining – now below 4 percent – but the share of those who speak French in the home is almost half that of the former (2.3 percent of Canada's population outside Quebec), according to the 2016 census. The two variables feed into each other. If in every generation some one-half of native French-speakers abandon their language, the mother tongue curve will inevitably also fall, until one day it hits zero.

Comparing figure 5 with figure 2 paints a dire picture. Both show a drop in the weight of native French-speakers, but in Quebec the drop is in part offset by others who have

Figure 5. Percentage of Canadians (outside Quebec) whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2016, and who speak French in the home, 1971-2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801.

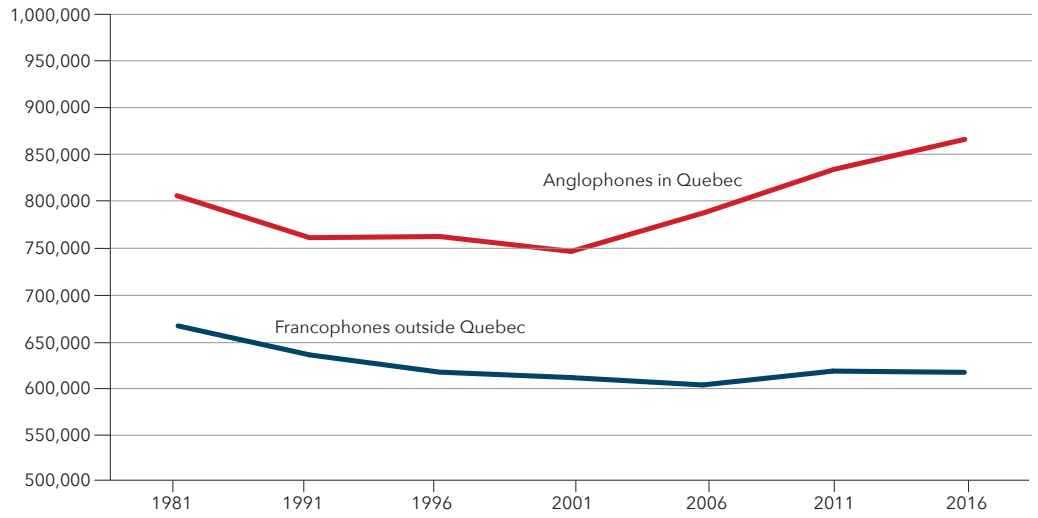
adopted French. No such compensation mechanism is at work outside Quebec. The result is that Canadas's French-speaking population (those who have French as their home language) is increasingly concentrated in Quebec, and recent growth is due almost exclusively to Quebec (see figure 2A in the Appendix). Between 2001 and 2016, the number of home French-speakers in Canada grew by 590,075 of whom 5,640 (less than 1 percent) were outside Quebec.

Unequal minorities

Nowhere is the contrast within and outside Quebec greater than the usefulness of French in the workplace. Some 80 percent of Quebecers use mainly French at work, a result we can again largely attribute to Bill 101, which imposes French-speaking obligations on firms with more than 50 employees – a level that Bill 96 proposes to reduce to 25.

No analogous provincial legislation exists outside Quebec. We should thus not be surprised that only a minute fraction (1.4 percent) of workers outside Quebec use mainly French at work, 2 percent if bilingual workplaces are included. Even in Ottawa, with the largest francophone population outside Quebec and a strong federal government presence, less than 5 percent of the workforce report French as their main language at work (8 percent if bilingual workplaces are included; see Table 1A). A third of francophones in the National Capital have abandoned their language. Compare this with Montreal, where 27 percent of the workforce uses mainly English at work and anglophones continue to integrate others (see figure 4). The difference is not difficult to explain. Francophones outside Quebec speak a less useful language than anglophones in Quebec – in short, two very different language minorities.

Figure 6. Number of francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec (home language), 1981-2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801.

At this point I cannot help but invoke Aristotle's aphorism: "The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal." Equating Quebec's anglophone minority with francophone minorities outside Quebec has long been a sore point in Quebec, unnecessarily pitting the province against those minorities.[14] The two are minorities, yes, but Quebec's linguistic minority continues to attract others – a demographic minority, but also a sociological majority in the jargon of sociologists. Figure 6 illustrates the recent evolution of the two minority populations. Quebecers who speak English at home outnumber the combined population of French speakers outside Quebec and have grown more rapidly. If the trend holds, the chief beneficiary of Ottawa's generosity will increasingly be Quebec's anglophone minority, an ironic twist of fate, and certainly not what was intended.[15]

The rise of English

The impetus behind C-13 and Quebec's Bill 96 is more than a matter of statistics. It is a simple fact of life for most francophones that their language is threatened. Some 50 years after Bill 101 was passed, it is still possible (and not unusual) to live one's life in English in Montreal and climb the ladders of business without speaking French. Indeed, in November 2021, the CEO of Air Canada unleashed a minor tempest when he revealed in a speech given in English to the Montreal Board of Trade that he had lived in Montreal for 14 years without learning French, adding that Montrealers should be proud that it is possible to succeed in Montreal without knowing French.[16]

But the inequality between the two languages has accelerated. The perception that French is losing ground has been growing steadily over the last 25 years (see figure 7). We need not look far to understand why: the meteoric rise of English as the language of the information age. The digital universe needed a common language, and that language was English.[17] English, very simply, has become the world's lingua franca – the language of science, entertainment and business, and the common language of Europe and Asia. The days when French was the de rigueur language of international diplomacy are gone.

Gone also are the days when French culture was a must for budding intellectuals. A recent survey of Quebec francophones revealed that, among younger cohorts (ages 15 to 35), only 9 percent listened to French songs, compared to half of those over the age of 55.[18] Not just songs. Younger francophones surveyed consumed proportionately fewer French-language cultural products in all categories (TV, theatre, magazines,

[14] A recent example is *French School Commission vs. Yukon* (https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/15357/index.do), where Quebec supported the territory, arguing against the demands of the local French school board for more autonomy and resources for fear of a precedent that would require Quebec to give equal treatment to English schools in Quebec.

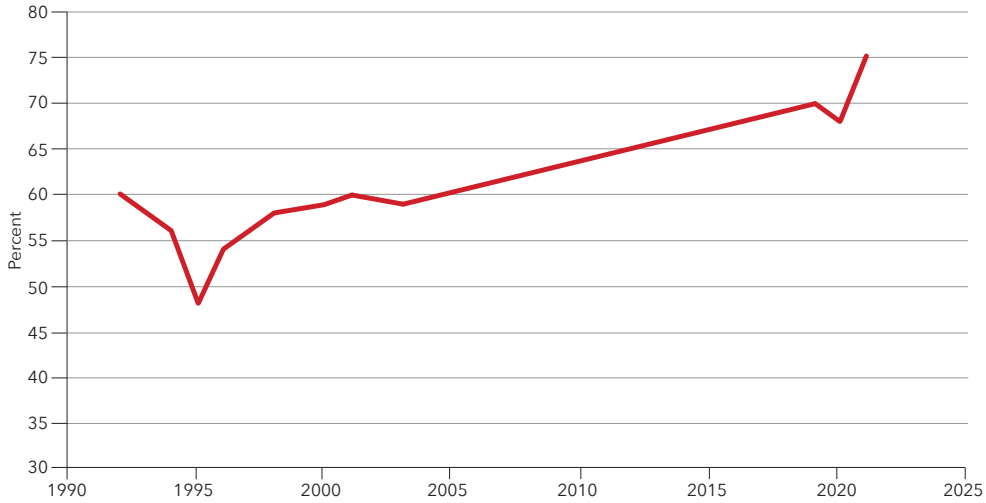
[15] Another dimension of the growing disparity between the two linguistic worlds is displayed in Figure 3A. Quebecers are increasingly bilingual, different from Canadians elsewhere, which might lead the reader to conclude that Bill 101 has been more successful in promoting bilingualism than the *Official Languages Act*.

[16] J.L. Bordeleau, "Le patron d'Air Canada ne s'exprime qu'en anglais, le tollé est unanime" *Le Devoir,* November 3, 2021.

[17] Note the break in Figure 7 around 1995, generally considered the year the Internet took off.

[18] OQLF (2019), (Figure 15, 55).

Figure 7. Responses to the question, "Is the French language in Quebec threatened?" 1992-2021



Source: Confederation of Tomorrow, *Respect, Influence, and Fairness in the Canadian Confederation: 2021 Survey of Canadians*, September 2021, p. 23, https://centre.irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/09/CoT-2021-Report-6-Respect-Influence-and-Fairness-in-the-Canadian-Federation.pdf

etc.). Students know they need to master English if they are to succeed in the world of science and technology. English is the language of IT, the language of international scientific conferences and of the most prestigious scientific journals.

French remains one of the world's great languages, but it is no longer an equal competitor with English. Three conclusions follow from our voyage in and outside Quebec:

- Countering the rising attraction of English requires strong legislative measures; even Bill 101 is no longer sufficient.
- English-speakers in Quebec and French-speakers outside the province are not in comparable situations; the former speak the more useful language.
- If French is to survive and flourish outside Quebec, it will be in places where francophones have a solid majority.

In introducing the concept of Region with a Strong Francophone Presence (RSFP), C-13 implicitly recognizes this reality, although the definition remains very open.[19] The promised "positive measures" in favour of French include encouraging francophone immigration and strengthening the right to work in French. Let us thus take a closer look at the presence of French outside Quebec.

[19] C-13 gives the following guidelines (edited extract): "In making a regulation that defines RSFPs, the Governor in Council may take into account any factors that the Governor considers appropriate, including the number of Francophones, the proportion of Francophones, the vitality and specificity of the community."

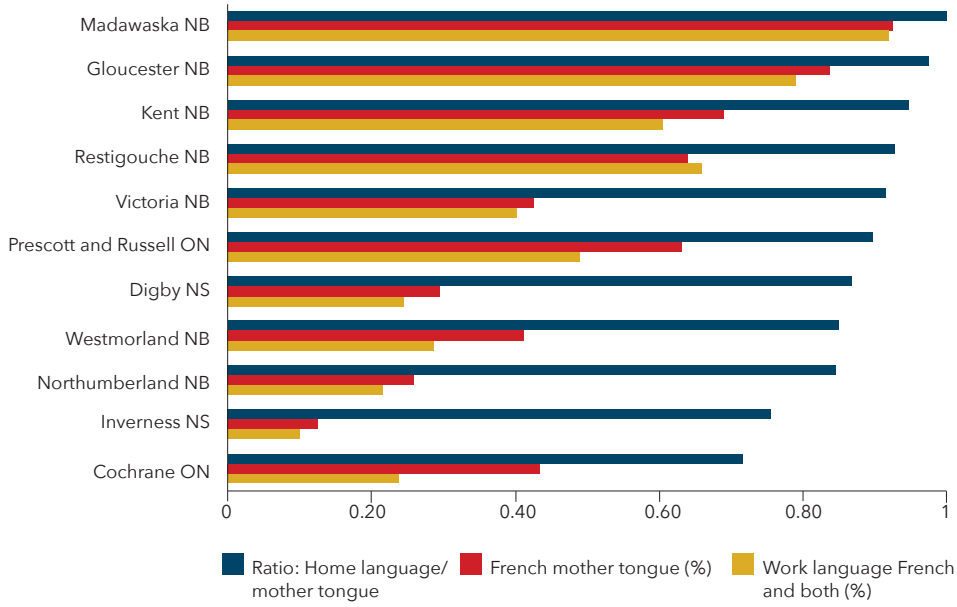
FRENCH OUTSIDE QUEBEC: A SECOND LOOK

The picture I have painted thus far of the state of French outside Quebec is dismal. The 2016 census divides Canada into 288 census divisions of which 190 are outside Quebec.[20] Figure 8 lists the 11 census divisions outside Quebec where the proportion of persons whose mother tongue is French who also speak French at home is over 70 percent, sometimes considered the minimal tipping point below which language survival becomes de facto impossible, and I am probably being generous given the pull of English.

Figure 8 contains both good and bad news. Let's begin with the good news. More than 300,000 francophones live in census divisions where language retention remains strong, accounting for a third of francophones outside Quebec, half if we count only French home speakers.

The survival of French is, as one would expect, sensitive to local conditions. Québécois often like to depict themselves as the last Gaulois (of Asterix comic book fame) bravely standing firm in an Anglo Sea. But the true Gaulois are the Acadians, who have survived under far more difficult conditions. Nine of the 11 census divisions in Figure 8 are Acadian. The other two, Prescott-Russell and Cochrane, are no less place-specific – the first is in the stretch of largely francophone towns between Montreal and Ottawa and the second in the francophone corridor of Northern Ontario along Highway 11.

Figure 8. Census divisions outside Quebec with highest proportion of French survival rates, 2016



Statistics Canada, 2016 Census. Special tabulations.

[20] All data presented here for census divisions and urban areas are drawn from Statistics Canada tabulations (2016 census) provided to the author.

The Acadian success story (at least compared to the rest of French Canada outside Quebec) also confirms that policy matters. The first five census divisions, all with proportions above 90 percent, are in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province with a full range of public services available in French and with the only major French-language university outside Quebec: Université de Moncton, which has three campuses, Moncton, Edmundston and Shippagan.[21] The latter two are located respectively in Madawaska and the Acadian Peninsula, also the only census divisions where over 50 percent of employees work in French.

The two Acadian redoubts outside New Brunswick — Digby and Inverness in Nova Scotia — also tell us that identity matters. L'Acadie is more than just a place; it is an identity with historical roots that transcend provincial boundaries. Acadians are different from francophones west of Quebec, who tend, as a rule, to identify with their respective provinces. Geography also matters, proximity to Quebec being an obvious advantage. Madawaska and Prescott-Russell are basically demographic extensions of Quebec. But enough said about strong francophone milieus outside Quebec. It's time for the bad news.

Absence of an urban base

The bad news is that the majority of francophones outside Quebec live in overwhelmingly English worlds. Canada is an urban nation. Yet, with the exception of Moncton (Westmorland), figure 8 includes no major urban centre, and even the Moncton census metropolitan area (CMA) is majority English-speaking (60 percent mother tongue, 67 percent home language). French Canada outside Quebec has no major urban centre that it can truly call its own, where immigrants (and domestic migrants as well) will be naturally drawn to French. It has no equivalent of Quebec's French-majority CMAs.

Table 2A in the Appendix lists the 19 largest CMAs outside Quebec,[22] where two-thirds of Canadians outside Quebec live. A quarter million francophones live in this urban universe, of whom 38 percent still speak French at home.[23] Toronto is fairly typical. Francophones are a minuscule minority in the city (1.1 percent of the total population). Less than 1 percent of the workforce works in French or in bilingual settings. Barely one Torontonian in 10 understands French. One does not need an advanced degree in statistics to conclude that Toronto (like its sister cities) does not provide an environment conducive to a life in French.

The corollary to the absence of a strong francophone urban base is that the most solidly French communities outside Quebec (thus candidates for the RSFP designation)

[21] By major, I mean universities with graduate and undergraduate programs. Other smaller French-language universities exist but with a limited range of programs.
[22] The Ottawa-Gatineau CMA is excluded because it straddles Ontario and Quebec.
[23] Cities are by definition places where cultures meet. Mixed couples where one of the partners is anglophone will tend to adopt English as the home language, one of the principal mechanisms of anglicization in cities.

tend to be rural and small towns and, more often than not, peripheral.[24] These are typically places of net out-migration. Reinforcing French there, although certainly welcome, is unlikely to arrest the overall decline of French outside Quebec.

Ineffective (and incomplete) solutions

Three conclusions follow. *First*, francophone immigration, although certainly welcome, will do little to halt the decline of French outside Quebec. If Quebec's Bill 101 proves anything, it is that immigrants and their descendants (francophones included) will, even in predominantly French urban settings like Montreal, often adopt English over time, *unless* otherwise constrained. Many, perhaps most, Haitian or Senegalese parents coming to Toronto will enrol their children in English schools. They are free to do so. Indeed, Article 23 of the Charter, as noted earlier, in principle excludes them from the French system so long as they remain non-citizens.[25] Their descendants will, we can safely predict, come to adopt English as their first language, copying the behaviour of native francophones in Toronto. Attracting francophone immigrants to urban centres outside Quebec, with the possible exception of Ottawa and Moncton, will create a short-term illusion of francophone growth, but little else.

Bringing francophone immigrants to rural and small-town communities "with a strong francophone presence" makes more sense; that is, if they can be convinced to settle (and stay) there, a challenge in itself. The numbers at play will necessarily be small. Also, the descendants of francophone immigrants in, say, Shippagan, NB, stand a good chance, like their fellow citizens, of eventually moving to a large urban centre. That is not to say that helping local francophone institutions (hospitals, school boards, etc.) or local firms wishing to hire French-speaking workers is not useful. Such measures should be encouraged, but they will not alter underlying economic realities. That is not their function.

Second, continued strong support for local francophone institutions (schools, cultural centres, etc.), while again certainly welcome, will not necessarily ensure life in French, especially once we leave the universe of RSFPs. Most francophones outside Quebec, I suggest, do not live in communities that could be classified as RSFPs, where French is strong enough (hopefully) to ensure its continued use in daily life and in career paths. It would be helpful if we could demonstrate that federal support for French institutions and access to French-language services has slowed the rate of decline of French in French minority regions. The data, unfortunately, do not allow us to draw such a conclusion. But then again, this should perhaps not be seen as the objective of federal policy outside the universe of RSFPs.

[24] On the peripheral nature of Acadian communities, see P.-M. Desjardins, "L'Acadie des Maritimes: en périphérie de la périphérie?" *Francophonies d'Amérique* 19 (2005): 107-24, doi:10.7202/1005313ar.

[25] I have difficulty imagining that the authors of C-13 were not aware of this problem. Article 23 of the Charter, as written, is at odds with C-13, a contradiction that will need to be resolved. See: M. Polèse. "Minority Language Rights: Charter's Section 23 Needs to Be Revised" *Policy Options* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy), April 5, 2022. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/april-2022/minority-language-rights-charter/

Adequately financed institutions, managed and controlled by francophones, are essential for keeping the language alive within the community, and warranted as such.[26] That the language minority in, say, Whitehorse or Vancouver should have the right to their schools should not require an explanation. However, we should not ask them to do what they cannot do. They will not alter the basic demographics of their home communities. Going to school in French in Vancouver does not mean that one will be able, later, to live and work in French in Vancouver. The two should not be confused.

Third, reinforcing the right to work and to be served in French, arguably C-13's strongest addition in favour of French, which as noted earlier includes new enforcement powers for the Commissioner of Official Languages, nonetheless does not ensure that French is actually the language of work or of generally shared communication in federally regulated workplaces in RSFPs or other French minority environments.

Here we come to C-13's original sin, alluded to in the introduction: the focus on equal rights. Language is different from many other rights in that it is by definition social, useless unless also understood and used by others. As in the case of schooling, having a right doesn't mean that one will exercise it. Much depends on social context. This is even truer for work where two rights are *de facto* in competition on the same shop floor or in the same office. The equal right of individuals to work in English or French will often mean, as many francophones know from experience, that the language mastered by the greatest number (i.e., English) will emerge as the *de facto* shared language of the workplace.

C-13 (1) reaffirms the right (of employees) to carry out their work and be supervised in French, specifically in federally regulated businesses in RSFPs; (2) adds protections for workers who don't speak English; and (3) requires firms to establish internal committees to support management in the fostering of French.[27] Although again undeniably positives steps, they do not preclude the parallel right to work in English. In excluding the possibility that French may in some instances be imposed as the common language of work (for all), C-13, like its predecessors, is in essence transferring the onus to workers (or their unions). That workers now have more powerful means of legal recourse does not change the basic chemistry on the ground – at least, that is my reading.

Stated differently, the right to work in French is limited unless French is effectively understood and used by all concerned (or at least the great majority), which means restricting English. Here again, Quebec provides a useful reference point. Comparing workers in provincial and federal public administrations,[28] 1 percent worked mainly in English in the former, compared with 29 percent in the latter, and, even more telling, 12 percent in the private sector. Unlike workers in the private sector in Quebec,[29] those

[26] For a review of the issues from a governance perspective, see L. Cardinal, S. Lang, and A. Sauvé, "Les minorités francophones hors Québec et la gouvernance des langues officielles: portrait et enjeux," *Francophonies d'Amérique* 26 (2008): 209-33, https://doi.org/10.7202/037982ar.

[27] See amendments headed "Language of Work"; I assume that the same provisions apply to workers in federal institutions, including public administration, although this is not mentioned in C-13.

[28] OQLF (2019), Table 31, 86. The data are for 2016.

[29] The percentage for private sector workers would undoubtedly be even lower if federally regulated private businesses were excluded and not subject to Bill 101.

in federal institutions have the *right* to work in French *or English*, in keeping with the spirit of the *Official Languages Act*.

CANADA'S LANGUAGE DILEMMA

Canada's language conundrum is a classic case of conflicting policy objectives. Ottawa cannot both treat English and French equally and arrest the decline of French. C-13 is trapped in a dilemma. Which explains its valiant attempt, as noted in the introduction, to define "substantive equality" (*égalité réelle*) in very liberal terms; but without taking the next step and stating that in some cases one language (i.e., French) may be given priority over the other.

The roots of the dilemma go back to Canada's history of European settlement and the political imperatives of the 1960s, taking us back to the origins of the *Official Languages Act*. Had Pierre Trudeau been a demographer (or a sociologist) and not a professor of law, the act would undoubtedly have been very different. Its objective was to ensure that rights – portable rights conferred on individuals – were protected. Geographic mobility is at the heart of the Canadian story. Since their arrival on this continent, francophones have criss-crossed the land; the coureurs de bois, voyageurs and Métis were star actors in the settlement saga of the Canadian West. The act enshrined the right of all Canadians to services in both languages wherever they moved.

And the national unity crisis dictated that language rights be applied equally across provinces. Trudeau was opposed to anything that hinted at special status for Quebec. Anglophones in Quebec would have the same rights to services in their language as francophones to theirs outside Quebec.

This conception of bilingualism and associated language rights is different from that in most other bilingual (or multilingual) western nations, Belgium and Switzerland being prime examples. Here, the guiding principle is ensuring secure spaces for each language group, a condition for social peace. Swiss and Belgian legislation seeks to minimize places where languages meet, limiting linguistic competition.[30]

The European view of language rights is the outcome of the reinforcement of language boundaries over time. Canada is moving along the same path. English has, for all practical purposes, disappeared from small towns in Quebec outside Montreal where it was once present. I still remember a time when Quebec City had a vibrant English-speaking community with its own daily newspaper, now a distant memory. French is undergoing the same fate in many places in Canada first settled by francophones. New arrivals, often from Quebec, to northern mining towns and Alberta's oil patch can

[30] I have worked in both nations. During one of my stays in Switzerland, the canton of Zurich (German-speaking) ordered a group of French-speaking parents to close a private primary school they had opened and paid for. The parents challenged Zurich's order in the courts, pleading that this was a private school, but the courts upheld the canton's order. There was no question of allowing French-speaking parents to transport their *right* to French schooling to German-speaking Zurich.

produce a temporary surge in the number of francophones and demand for services. But it is exactly that, temporary, not viable long-term options for French life.

The rights of francophones should, of course, be respected across Canada; but this is not the same thing as protecting historically strong French communities against the (irresistible) invasion of English. Is there a path out of this dilemma? Is Canada's noble legacy of equal rights truly incompatible with the protection of specific communities? Not necessarily. Canada is, I believe, moving toward a hybrid, typically Canadian model of bilingualism – a delicate balancing act with which Quebec has grappled since the passage of Bill 101, imposing French while at the same time continuing to respect the basic rights of its anglophone minority.

The Supreme Court of Canada has at various times struck down (or watered down) elements of Bill 101, but upheld its core features,[31] implicitly recognizing that English language rights (with respect to schooling, public notices, the workplace, etc.) can differ across provinces and that French is the weaker of the two languages, warranting protection.

Should not the same reasoning apply to communities within provinces? The principal hurdle to adopting stronger measures to promote French outside Quebec is not legal but political. This is where C-13 falls short. C-13 could have gone further in pointing the way to a new vision of bilingualism: a Canada with two languages, each with the right to secure spaces, while remaining true to the founding ideal of two languages respected across the nation.

REDEFINING BILINGUALISM

What might a different C-13 include?[32]

- *Recognition of the pivotal role of Quebec in the maintenance of French in Canada*. If French is not to fall below a politically untenable tipping point, it will be because Quebec remains solidly French. That is the first condition, without which the second – maintaining viable francophone communities outside Quebec – becomes untenable.
- *Obligation to harmonize federal language legislation with Quebec's,* notably for workplaces. Whether such harmonization takes the form of parallel federal legislation (the path C-13 seems to favour, although the proposed amendments still fall short of Bill 101) or makes federal legislation subservient to provincial legislation does not matter. What matters is that federal legislation be consistent with provincial legislation.
- *Recognition of the distinctive role of Acadia in the maintenance of French in Canada*. Several paths are possible, beginning with the designation of a

[31] The court notably upheld the provision limiting access to English schooling, but with an adjustment.
[32] The recommendations below abstract away from the possibility that some might take the form of separate laws.

special Acadian "Priority Francophone Zone," defined in consultation with provincial governments and community groups. I also see targeted funding for Acadian educational institutions and businesses, possibly coordinated by a dedicated federal agency.

- *Give more substance to "Regions with a Strong Francophone Presence,"* perhaps with a new name, such as "Priority Francophone Zones" or something similar, to drive home the objective of making French the *priority* language. The amendment would (1) set clearer definition criteria; and (2) more clearly identify measures to protect French that the federal government would support in collaboration with provincial and local governments, including, for example, the establishment and/or reinforcement of French-language post-secondary educational institutions.

  I have also proposed a possible bottom-up approach.[33] Local authorities (cities, townships) could request to be thus designated, giving them access to federal funding, which would be conditional on local regulations to promote French in different spheres of public life such as in the workplace, in education and signage. However, this presupposes provincial legislation which grants local authorities the power to do so.
- *Promote French as the common language of work* in federal and federally regulated workplaces in RSFPs; specifically, an obligation that French be the language of work in federal workplaces in localities (towns, townships) where more than 50 percent of the population is francophone.
- *Declare Ottawa a special "Priority Francophone Zone."* Adopt a commitment that 25 percent of the federal workforce will in five years be employed in units where French is the language of work, preferably located in central Ottawa.
- *Start a conversation on language security.* Should Canada take a leaf from the Swiss book? Should language rights cease to follow individuals in some cases,[34] education being the most sensitive? Bill 101 set a precedent for immigrants. Residents of Quebec who did not receive their primary schooling in English in Canada cannot send their children to English schools. Might the same restriction be warranted in certain RSFPs? This is of some importance given the government's focus on francophone immigration.

  Taking the Swiss analogy a step further, can we imagine making French education compulsory for *all* newcomers in certain places? Quebec's original Bill 101 contained such a stipulation (access to English schools was limited to children of parents schooled in English in Quebec) but was struck down by the Supreme Court with the word Quebec replaced by the word Canada. The ruling would undoubtedly be confirmed today. But what if migration to Quebec from the rest of Canada surges tomorrow?
- *Introduce the notion of a sociological minority (or majority).* The interpretation of "substantive equality" (*égalité réelle*) needs to be further enhanced. True equality will have been attained the day anglophones and francophones are

[33] M. Polèse, "Is Modernizing the Official Languages Act a Mission Impossible?" *Policy Options* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, May 20, 2021). https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/may-2021/is-modernizing-the-official-languages-act-a-mis-sion-impossible/

[34] The principle of mobile rights is already breached in the case of First Nations.

equally secure in their ability to hold on to native-born speakers and to attract newcomers, sociological equals. That is probably an impossible goal.
The inequality, in this respect, of Canada's French and English language minorities needs to be formally acknowledged.[35] As a possible avenue, I suggest (1) introducing the prefix "sociological" and (2) not treating the English language minority as a single block. As noted earlier, a group can be a demographic minority but a sociological majority (and vice versa). Outside Quebec, in all census divisions except Madawaska in New Brunswick, francophone populations are both sociological and (in most cases) demographic minorities. In 68 census divisions in Quebec (out of 98), anglophone populations are sociological minorities, concentrated mainly in eastern Quebec.[36] However, in the remaining 30 divisions, anglophone sociological majorities (anglophones assimilating others) are concentrated mainly in Greater Montreal and western Quebec. The first group can, in other words, be viewed as deserving "equal" treatment with francophone minorities, a questionable proposition for the second.

A POLITICAL REALITY CHECK

Much of my focus has been on the future of French outside Quebec, simply because this is the principal challenge, and also where C-13 is most lacking in courage. Yet this should not surprise us. C-13 is primarily aimed at Quebec, the home of 90 percent of Canada's francophones. This focus may change now that the responsible minister (Ginette Petitpas Taylor) is an Acadian. And C-13 does not really need to do much to please Quebec. It needs to promise to respect the province's language legislation and enshrine the protection of French as a key objective.

C-13 does both, although some adjustments may be necessary to the amendments dealing with the harmonization of the act with Quebec's Bill 101. These changes are not overly complicated – as much symbolic as substantive. This does not lessen their significance. Harmonizing Bill 101 with C-13 and giving French pride of place, as noted earlier, is a break with the past, which raises the question of why the Rest of Canada (ROC) is willing to endorse this about-face now. My reading is that much of the political class in ROC has concluded that a bilingualism that alienates Quebec is counterproductive. Anyway, much of ROC never was totally happy with Trudeau's noble vision of coast-to-coast-to-coast bilingualism.

Whatever the political motivations behind C-13, if it succeeds in changing how Québécois view Ottawa, henceforth an ally in the battle for language security, it will have attained its objective, no minor achievement.

[35] I fully recognize that this recommendation will not be universally welcomed by Quebec's English minority, notably the QCGN (Quebec Community Groups Network). However, it is time to put an end to the false equality that unnecessarily pits francophones in and outside Quebec against each other.
[36] Table 3A in the Appendix lists the 20 Quebec census divisions with, respectively, the lowest and highest *hl/mt* ratios for English.

Outside Quebec, C-13 does not, unfortunately, promise francophones similar language security. C-13 remains wedded to a philosophy of protecting individual language rights, which it does admirably, but this is not to be confused with protecting language communities. In a world where natural growth (births over deaths) no longer suffices, future growth is dependent on the integration of newcomers, which means moving beyond the right to French to the imposition of French, which I do not see happening soon anywhere outside Quebec.

However, it's all too easy to blame C-13 for its inadequacies. We should not ask it to do what it cannot do. Even were the federal government to be more assertive in promoting French outside Quebec, this would have little effect, with the possible exception of Ottawa, in the absence of matching provincial legislation. Federal and federally regulated workplaces account for a small fraction of the workforce. The two chief policy tools for ensuring the future of French – education and language of work – are provincial responsibilities. Local authorities are creatures of the provinces. The effective implantation of RSFPs (or whatever one wishes to call them) will be largely dependent on the goodwill of the provinces. In the end, C-13 probably goes as far as is politically feasible – much farther than Trudeau *père* could have imagined or wished.

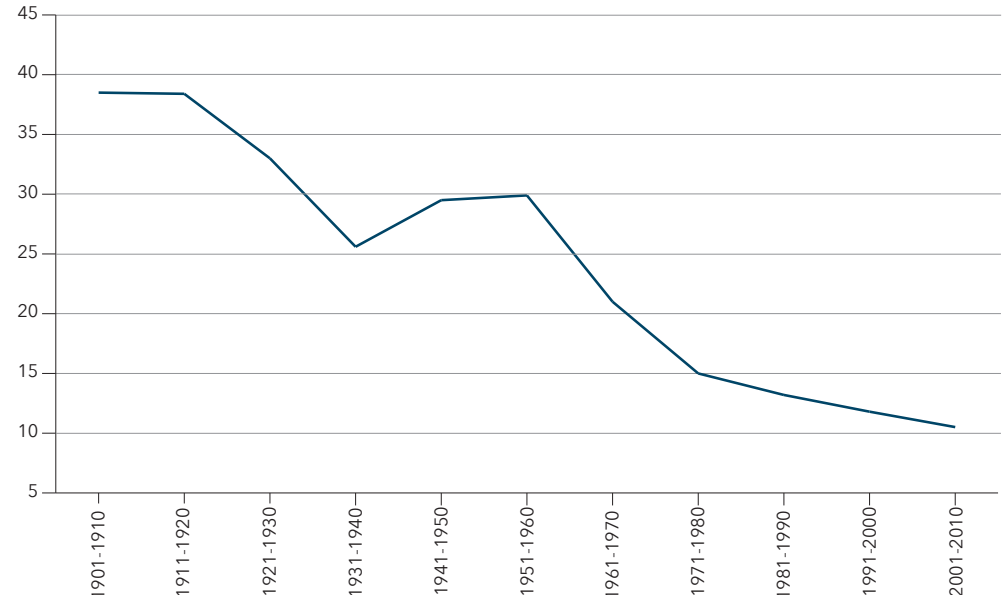
The picture is not totally bleak. French will not die outside Quebec. French will survive and even flourish in many French-majority rural and small-town communities, simply because these are generally places with little in-migration. For other minority francophone communities, continued federal support for French will ensure that their weight declines gradually, peacefully, perhaps keeping the language alive in the home for several generations, a very civilized Canadian solution.

French will still be the dominant language in Caraquet on the Acadian Peninsula a hundred years from now, I am sure, as well as in similar (hopefully) linguistically secure communities. But, at that point, those valiant francophones outside Quebec will most probably be no more than 1 or 2 percent of the Canadian population.

The task of saving Canada as a bilingual nation, in what is perhaps the final paradox, will then fall almost exclusively to Quebec.

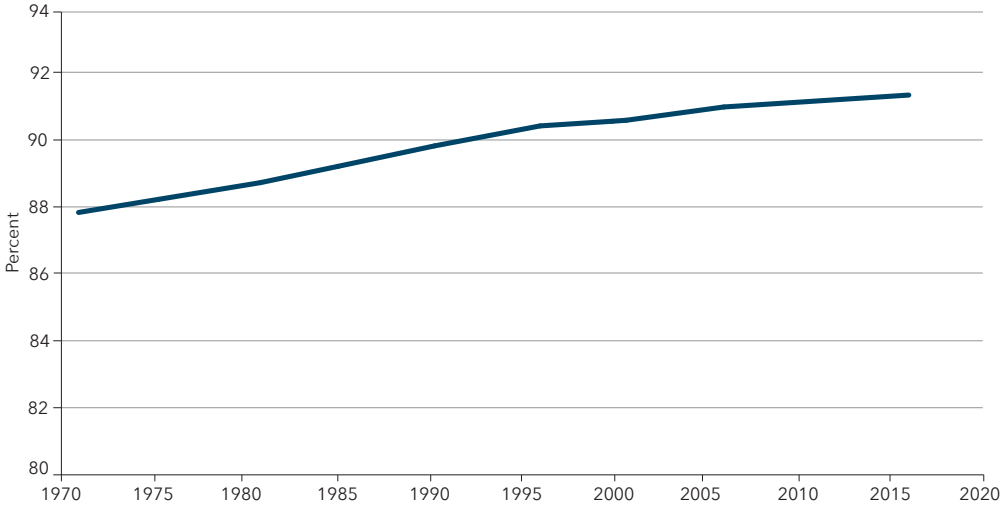
APPENDIX A – SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1A. Quebec birth rate per 1,000, 1900-2010



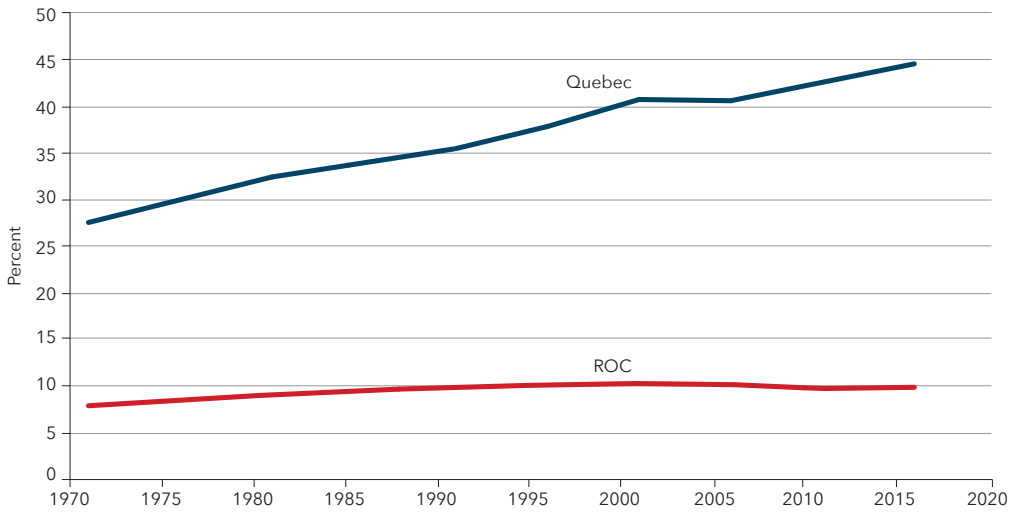
Source: Wikipedia, *Démographie du Québec*
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%A9mographie_du_Qu%C3%A9bec

Figure 2A. Percentage of Canada's francophone population (home language) in Quebec, 1971- 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801.

Figure 3A. Percentage of population that is bilingual, Quebec and the rest of Canada, 1971-2016



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0004-01, "Population by knowledge of official languages and geography, 1951 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000401.

Table 1A. Percentage of population whose mother tongue is French and who speak French in the home, outside Quebec, 2016

Census division with geocode	Province	Population 2016	Home language/ mother tongue	French mother tongue (%)	Work language French (%)	Work language both (%)	Speak only French (%)
1313 - Madawaska	NB	31,490	1.00	92.6	85.5	6.3	37.65
1315 - Gloucester (Acadian Peninsula)	NB	74,360	0.97	83.8	72.1	7.0	39.87
1308 - Kent	NB	29,955	0.95	68.9	51.6	8.9	8.11
1314 - Restigouche	NB	29,945	0.93	64.0	52.8	13.2	24.76
1312 - Victoria	NB	18,310	0.92	42.5	31.0	9.3	6.53
3502 - Prescott & Russell	ON	87,255	0.90	63.2%	39.5	9.5	11.12
1203 - Digby	NS	17,040	0.87	29.6	20.6	4.1	0.59
1307 - Westmorland	NB	145,705	0.85	41.2	21.4	7.2	3.85
1309 - Northumberland	NB	45,405	0.85	25.9	17.5	4.2	6.63
1215 - Inverness	NS	16,750	0.75	12.5	8.0	2.1	0.45
3556 - Cochrane	ON	78,510	0.72	43.4	17.3	6.5	4.62
3506 - Ottawa	ON	916,860	0.68	13.8	4.7	4.2	1.35
1303 - Sunbury	NB	26,920	0.65	9.4	2.1	2.2	0.93
6204 - Baffin	NWT	18,805	0.62	2.7	0.7	0.1	0.24
4608 - Division No. 8 (Norfolk)	MB	13,020	0.60	6.4	2.1	0.9	0.08
3554 - Timiskaming	ON	31,680	0.59	23.3	6.9	3.9	1.72
3548 - Nipissing	ON	81,285	0.58	22.8	7.6	3.1	1.08
6106 - Fort Smith	NWT	32,520	0.58	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.15
3552 - Sudbury	ON	20,920	0.58	25.3	6.1	1.9	1.51
1310 - York (Saint John)	NB	98,760	0.57	6.7	1.7	1.6	0.33

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census. Special tabulations.

Table 2A. French speakers in the 19 largest metropolitan areas outside Quebec, 2016

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)	Population (2016)	Home language/ mother tongue	Mother tongue (number)	Mother tongue (%)	Work language French in both (%)	Speak only French (%)
Toronto	5,862,855	0.45	63,610	1.1	0.83	0.08
Vancouver	2,426,230	0.34	24,845	1.0	0.42	0.04
Calgary	1,374,650	0.41	20,720	1.5	0.44	0.10
Edmonton	1,297,280	0.39	26,430	2.0	0.54	0.13
Winnipeg	761,540	0.40	26,350	3.5	1.43	0.13
Hamilton	734,885	0.35	10,030	1.4	0.65	0.07
Kitchener	495,790	0.27	5,730	1.2	0.48	0.04
London	486,500	0.32	5,640	1.2	0.74	0.07
Halifax	397,630	0.35	9,750	2.5	1.01	0.07
St. Catharines	396,865	0.29	11,925	3.00	1.02	0.09
Oshawa	375,605	0.36	6,610	1.76	0.93	0.06
Victoria	357,690	0.31	6,015	1.68	0.49	0.04
Windsor	325,005	0.27	9,495	2.92	1.27	0.11
Saskatoon	286,900	0.26	3,705	1.29	0.43	0.05
Regina	231,480	0.42	2,605	1.13	0.62	0.12
St. John's	203,260	0.50	1,010	0.50	0.69	0.03
Barrie	194,450	0.35	3,865	1.99	0.88	0.05
Kelowna	190,565	0.25	3,165	1.66	0.38	0.04
Abbotsford	176,330	0.18	1,440	0.82	0.28	0.04
Total (19 CMAs)	16,575,510	0.38	242,940	1.47	0.71	0.08

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census. Special tabulations.

Table 3A. Census divisions in Quebec with lowest and highest ratios of English speakers

LOWEST ratios	HI/Mt English	English mother tongue	HIGHEST ratios	HI/Mt English	English mother tongue
2495 - La Haute-Côte-Nord	-	35	2465 - Laval	1.83	30,100
2419 - Bellechasse	0.25	200	2499 - Nord-du-Québec	1.77	2,030
2492 - Maria-Chapdelaine	0.25	40	2466 - Montréal	1.43	305,640
2414 - Kamouraska	0.31	80	2458 - Longueuil	1.27	29,270
2491 - Le Domaine-du-Roy	0.31	80	2473 - Thérèse-De Blainville	1.26	6,615
2487 - Abitibi-Ouest	0.32	125	2481 - Gatineau	1.26	30,095
2413 - Témiscouata	0.33	105	2471 - Vaudreuil-Soulanges	1.23	32,730
2427 - Robert-Cliche	0.40	175	2464 - Les Moulins	1.17	3,725
2450 - Nicolet-Yamaska	0.41	160	2477 - Les Pays-d'en-Haut	1.17	3,215
2426 - La Nouvelle-Beauce	0.45	210	2467 - Roussillon	1.16	19,485
2416 - Charlevoix	0.50	70	2482 - Les Collines-de-l'Outaouais	1.16	11,415
2418 - Montmagny	0.50	110	2484 - Pontiac	1.12	7,930
2410 - Rimouski-Neigette	0.53	375	2485 - Témiscamingue	1.11	2,090
2454 - Les Maskoutains	0.53	675	2483 - La Vallée-de-la-Gatineau	1.10	2,995
2429 - Beauce-Sartigan	0.56	375	2472 - Deux-Montagnes	1.09	5,490
2496 - Manicouagan	0.56	205	2469 - Le Haut-Saint-Laurent	1.09	6,705
2430 - Le Granit	0.57	245	2406 - Avignon	1.08	2,025
2493 - Lac-Saint-Jean-Est	0.61	165	2455 - Rouville	1.08	605
2490 - La Tuque	0.61	180	2480 - Papineau	1.07	1,230
2432 - L'Érable	0.61	155	2446 - Brome-Missisquoi	1.06	9,095

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0004-01, "Population by knowledge of official languages and geography, 1951 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000401.

APPENDIX B – UPDATE FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE 2021 CENSUS DATA ON LANGUAGE

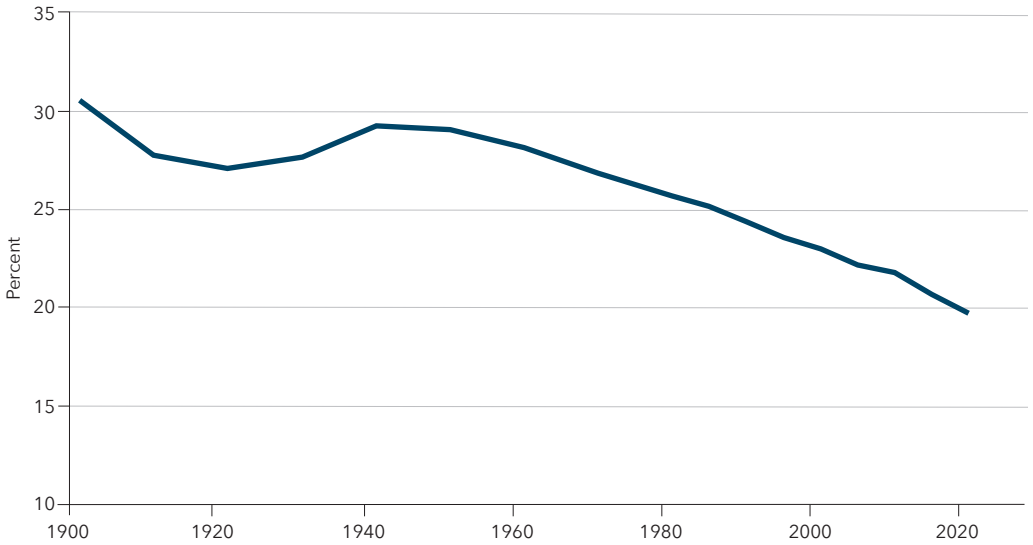
The 2021 census results do not alter the study's main conclusions. French continues to decline in Canada, notably outside Quebec. Bill C-13, despite its positive features, is not sufficient halt the decline. More than "strong measures," which remain essentially incentive in nature, will be needed to ensure the linguistic security of francophone communities outside Quebec. In the absence of more robust local measures in favour of French, increasing francophone immigration to communities outside Quebec will in most cases have only a passing impact, given the underlying forces favouring the adoption of English. The challenge is not more francophone immigrants, but local environments that will ensure that their descendants remain francophone. However, this means a new vision of bilingualism and the difficult trade-off between language rights and language security that comes with it, both in and outside Quebec.

The study's principal figures, updated to 2021, are presented in the following pages, occasionally modified depending on data availability.

Main points:

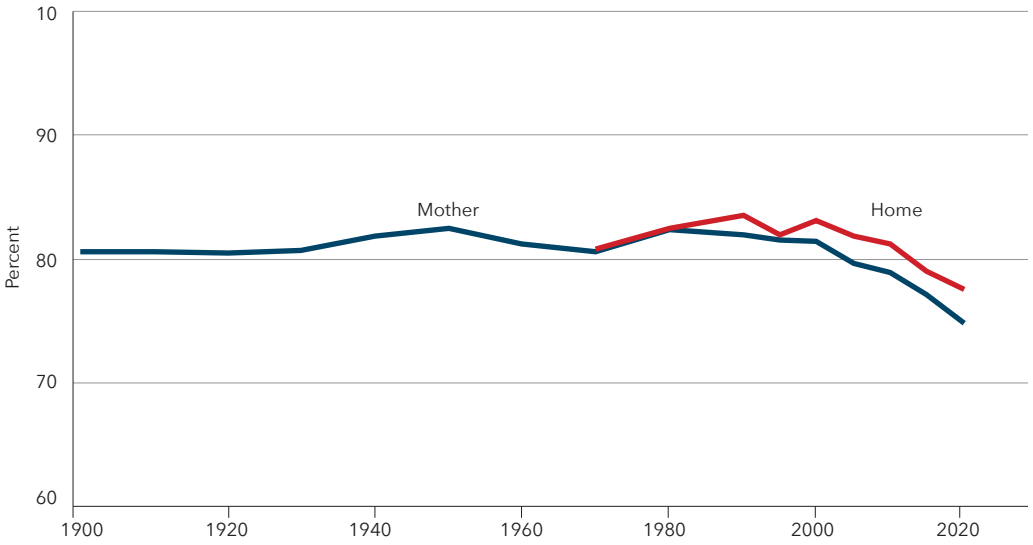
- The share of Francophones in Canada (mother tongue) has fallen below the threshold of 20%. The demographic equilibrium between the nation's two official is definitely broken.
- The difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada is growing. French as a mother tongue is declining in Quebec but compensated in part by newcomers adopting French as home language. The opposite is happening outside Quebec, where language abandonment, not adoption, is the rule for Francophones, signifying further decline in the future.
- Language abandonment by Francophones outside Quebec continues, with rates of abandonment now at 45% in Ontario and at more than 60% in the Western Provinces. Francophones in New Brunswick continue to hold out, but even they continue to lose adherents (a drop of 11 percentage points). Quebec remains the sole province where French attracts.
- Outside Quebec, allophone immigrants massively adopt English (at almost 100%) as the second language spoken at home. Even in Quebec, the pull of English continues to remain strong: it is spoken at home by a third of allophone households.
- Canada's two official language minority populations are increasingly unequal. The decline of Francophones outside Quebec has accelerated, with barely half a million people having French as a home language, while Quebec Anglophones are growing in numbers and now approaching one million.
- Quebec and the rest of Canada are also continuing to grow apart when it comes to bilingualism. Quebec is becoming more bilingual, the rest of Canada less so. This reflects the decline of French as a second language perceived as useful, and the parallel rise of English, perceived useful not only across Canada, but across the world.

Figure 1. Percentage of Canadians whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2021



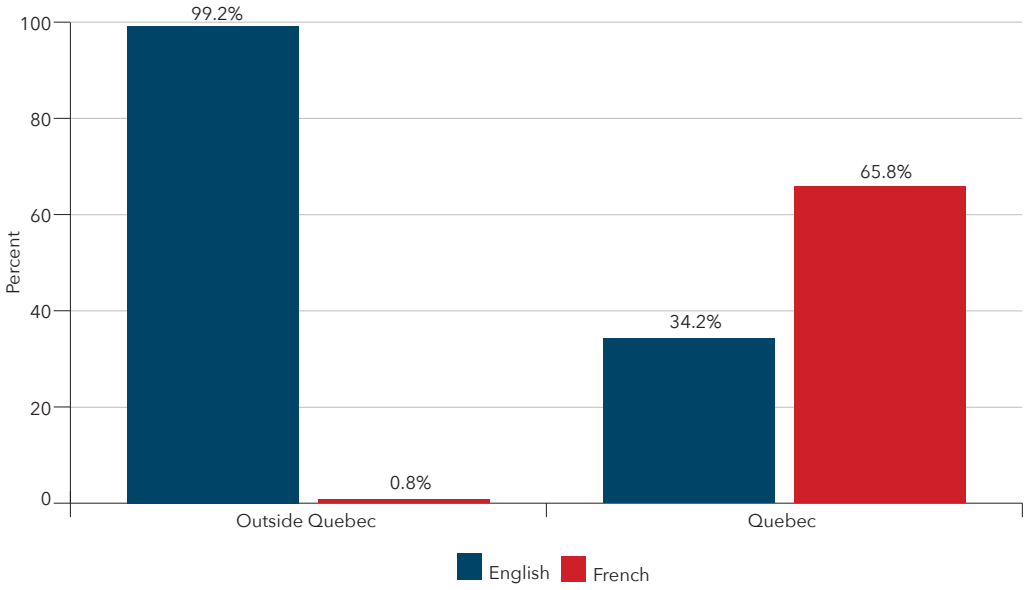
Sources: Statistics Canada, *The evolution of language populations in Canada, by mother tongue, from 1901 to 2016*, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2018001-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, Table 1, "Mother tongue, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t001a-eng.htm.

Figure 2. Percentage of Quebecers whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2021, and whose home language is French, 1971-2021



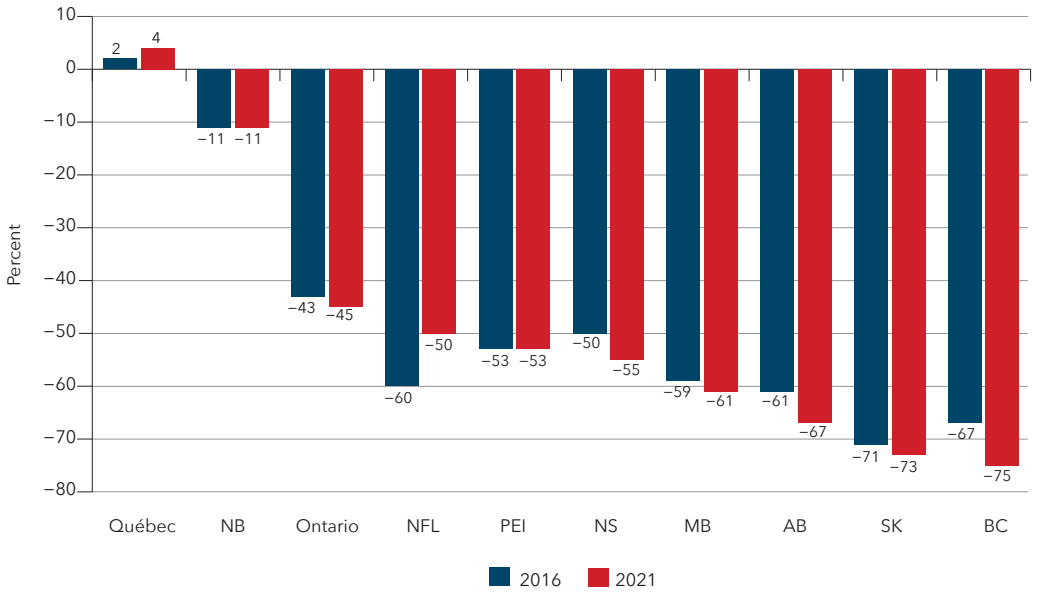
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, *Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016*, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801; Statistics Canada, "The evolution of language populations in Canada, by mother tongue, from 1901 to 2016" https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2018001-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Table 3, Language spoken predominantly at home, provinces and territories, 2016 and 202," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t003a-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Table 1, Mother tongue, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t001a-eng.htm.

Figure 3. Percentage of households that speak French or English in the home among those who also speak another unofficial language at home, 2021



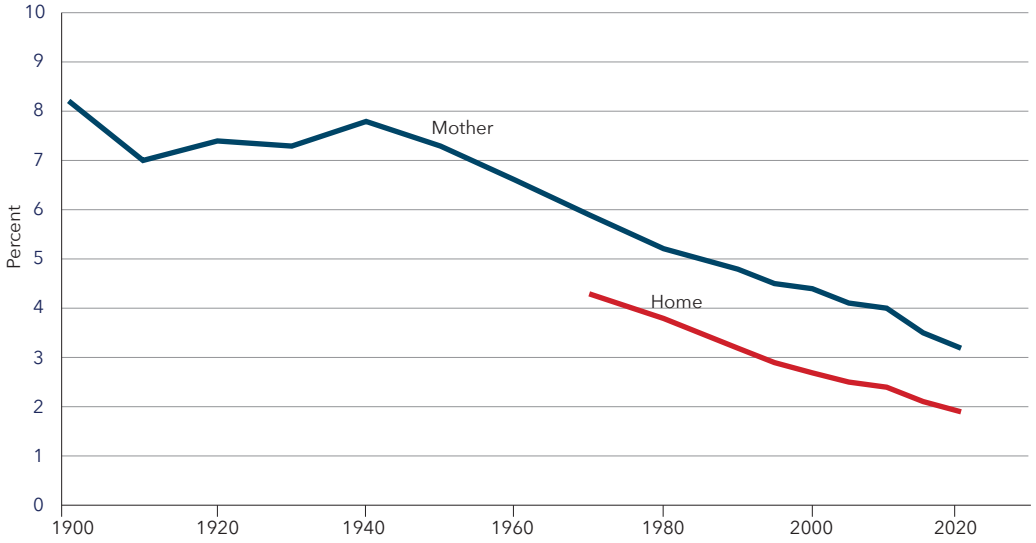
Source: Statistics Canada, "Table 3, Language spoken predominantly at home, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t003a-eng.htm.

Figure 4. Language maintenance and abandonment by province 2016 and 2021[1]



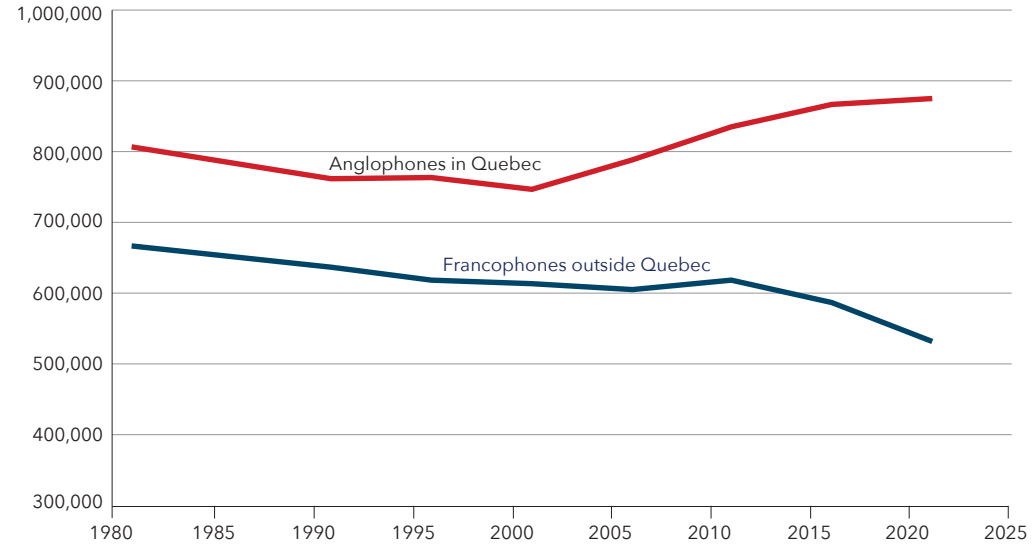
[1] Ratio "Home Language/ Mother Tongue" −1.
Source: Statistics Canada, "Table 1, Mother tongue, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t001a-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Table 3, Language spoken predominantly at home, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t003a-eng.htm.

Figure 5. Percentage of Canadians (Outside Quebec) whose mother tongue is French, 1901-2021 and who speak French in the home, 1971-2021



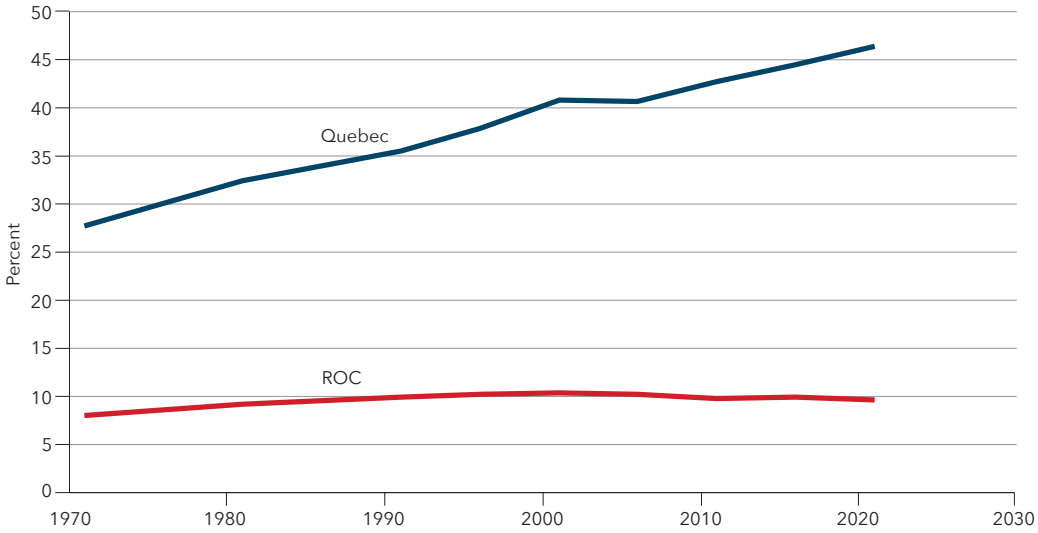
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016", https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801; Statistics Canada, "The evolution of language populations in Canada, by mother tongue, from 1901 to 2016," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2018001-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Table 3, Language spoken predominantly at home, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t003a-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Table 1, Mother tongue, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t001a-eng.htm.

Figure 6. Number of francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec (home language), 1981-2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 15-10-0008-01, "Population by language spoken most often at home and geography, 1971 to 2016," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1510000801; Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0192-01, "First official language spoken by language spoken most often at home: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with part," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810019201&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.26&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.1.

Figure 3A. Percentage of population that is bilingual, Quebec and the rest of Canada, 1971-2021



Source: Statistics Canada, "Table 4, Knowledge of official languages, provinces and territories, 2016 and 2021," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220817/t004a-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "More than one language in the bag: The rate of English-French bilingualism is increasing in Quebec and decreasing outside Quebec," https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022052-eng.htm.

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