On a Differentiated Reading of Rights: Systemic Francophobia Invites Itself to the Debate

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The question that informs this article is whether English-language portrayals of Quebec are at times part of a process that one might describe as systemic Francophobia. Do disagreements with the orientations favoured by Quebec occasionally take the form of an outright disparagement of Quebec society as a whole or of its political elites? If so, is this disparagement marginal or anecdotal, or is it a recurring phenomenon? Does this radical critique contribute to reinforcing the social norms of Anglo-conformity at the heart of Canadian identity, which is constructed, in part, through the identification of an undifferentiated "Them" (Francophone Quebecers)? To address these questions, the article proceeds in two parts. The first part presents a theoretical discussion of the notion of Francophobia (as a specific form of collective disparagement) that is particularly aimed at French-speaking Quebecers. It argues that the use of negative discursive representations of French-speaking Quebec is not only part of a mechanism of differentiation and inferiorization, but also serves to define the contours of a Canadian "We" in opposition to a form of unacceptable sociality that is essential to the consolidation of the Canadian identity. The second part of the article then focuses more specifically on the analysis of discursive manifestations that illustrate traits specific to Francophobia. To this end, Bills 101 and 21 are examined through an analysis of debates held in the House of Commons and newspaper articles taken from the Canadian English-language press.

La question qui sous-tend cet article est de savoir si la représentation du Québec s'inscrit parfois dans un processus que l'on pourrait qualifier de francophobie systémique. Les désaccords avec les orientations privilégiées par le Québec prennent-ils parfois la forme d'un dénigrement pur et simple de la société québécoise dans son ensemble ou de ses élites politiques? Si oui, s'agit-il d'un phénomène marginal ou anecdotique, ou bien d'un phénomène récurrent? Cette critique radicale contribue-t-elle à renforcer les normes sociales d'angloconformité au cœur de l'identité canadienne, qui se construit, entre autres, par l'identification d'un « Eux » indifférencié, soit les Québécois francophones? Pour tenter de répondre à ces questions, l'article est divisé en deux parties. La première partie présente une discussion théorique sur la notion de francophobie (comme forme spécifique de dénigrement collectif) qui vise particulièrement les Québécois francophones. Elle soutient que l'utilisation de représentations discursives négatives du Québec francophone fait non seulement partie d'un mécanisme de différenciation et d'infériorisation, mais sert également à définir les contours d'un « Nous » canadien en opposition à une forme de socialité inacceptable, essentielle à la consolidation de l'identité canadienne. La deuxième partie se concentre plus spécifiquement sur l'analyse des manifestations discursives qui illustrent des traits propres à la francophobie. À cette fin, les projets de loi 101 et 21 sont examinés à partir des débats tenus à la Chambre des communes et d'articles de journaux tirés de la presse canadienne-anglaise.

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I. Introduction

This article examines how the reading of principles and rights enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* among some English-speaking political and media elites in Canada contributes to an unfavourable portrayal of certain initiatives taken by the Quebec government. These representations are not part of a simple political disagreement, which is normal and expected in any liberal democracy, but are rather part of a particular discursive strategy of disparagement that we characterize as "Francophobia." The recurrence of these representations is such that we must qualify this Francophobia as systemic.

The points of disagreement between Quebec and the "Rest of Canada" are well known. Although they have been prevalent since the *Act of Union* of 1840 and the Confederation of 1867, episodes of conflict have been particularly frequent since the Quiet Revolution (1960-1980), which was marked by the desire for autonomous affirmation, even secessionism, of successive governments in Quebec (from Jean Lesage to François Legault). The resultant "clash of visions" has been the subject of an extensive literature which, to a large extent, focuses on the opposition between national projects carried out by the federal government and the Quebec government.[1] This opposition was particularly salient during the constitutional debates that took place between the late 1960s and the mid-1990s, and was fuelled by the establishment of the Quebec language regime in the 1970s, which departed from that of the Canadian government's 1969 *Official Languages Act*. More recently, fresh discussions were prompted by the numerous pieces of legislation that have been introduced since 2009 to define Quebec's own secular regime. In this context, it is not surprising that deep divergences have been expressed, both in the public space and in the academic literature.

The question that informs this research is whether English-language portrayals of Quebec are at times part of a process that one might describe as systemic Francophobia. In other words, do disagreements with the orientations favoured by Quebec occasionally take the form of an outright disparagement of Quebec society as a whole or of its political elites? If so, is this disparagement marginal or anecdotal, or is it a recurring phenomenon? And does it contribute

1 Thomas O Hueglin, *Federalism in Canada: Contested Concepts and Uneasy Balances* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021); Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, 2nd ed (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2018); Alain-G Gagnon, André Lecours & Geneviève Nootens, eds, *Contemporary Majority Nationalism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011); Alain-G Gagnon & Raffaele Iacovino, *Federalism, Citizenship and Quebec: Debating Multinationalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Eugénie Brouillet, *La négation de la nation: l'identité culturelle québécoise et le fédéralisme canadien* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 2005).

to reinforcing the social norms of Anglo-conformity at the heart of Canadian identity, which is constructed, in part, through the identification of an undifferentiated "Them" (Francophone Quebecers)?

We are aware that the use of the term "Francophobia" may seem suspicious since it refers to a political phenomenon and has been used as a discursive weapon to denounce certain "drifts" that have marked the relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada.[2] However, the approach taken here is more analytical than politically driven, even if the use of the term "Francophobia" may raise eyebrows. To this end, the analysis borrows from the framework developed by sociologist Elke Winter, who stresses the importance of taking into consideration socioethnic leveraging, which "takes place as one group is constructed as socially, culturally, or morally more (or less) deviant from the dominant norm than the other."[3] Two cases, distant in time, but which illustrate the same dynamic, will be considered: the debates that preceded the adoption of the *Charter of the French Language*, or Bill 101 (1977), which preceded the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and those surrounding the *Act respecting the secularization of the State*, or Bill 21 (2019).

The article is divided into two parts. The first part presents a theoretical discussion of the notion of Francophobia (as a specific form of collective disparagement) that is particularly aimed at French-speaking Quebecers. It argues that the use of negative discursive representations of French-speaking Quebec is not only part of a mechanism of differentiation and inferiorization, but also serves to define the contours of a Canadian "We" in opposition to a form of

2 For example, the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, Impératif français, and the Mouvement Québec français, supported by 101 public figures, circulated a petition in December 2013 to denounce Francophobia, followed by a "NO to Francophobia" advertising campaign in 2014: Mario Beaulieu, "Pourquoi une campagne contre la francophobie?", *Huffpost Québec* (24 February 2014), online: <www.huffpost.com/archive/qc/entry/campagne-contre-la-francophobie-ssjb_b_4844532> [perma.cc/MDK8-HW36]. In the wake of this, a study cataloging manifestations of Francophobia was published: Maxime Laporte, *Unis contre la francophobie. Recension de manifestations récentes de francophobie* (Montréal: Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal, 2013). The editor and publisher of *Relations* associated Francophobia with some form of racism: Emiliano Arpin-Simonetti, "La campagne 'Unis contre la francophobie' a de quoi laisser perplexe", *Relations* (May-June 2014) 39. Books were published in response to the presence of Quebec Bashing in English Canada: Patrick Bourgeois, *Québec Bashing, morceaux d'anthologie* (Montréal: Éditions du Québécois, 2008); Normand Lester, *Le livre noir du Canada anglais,* tome 1, 2 & 3 (Montréal: Les Intouchables, 2001, 2002 & 2003). Journalist, author and producer Jean-Benoît Nadeau uses the term to denounce the Conservative Party of Canada for reproducing an "acceptable prejudice" by rejecting bilingualism: Jean-Benoît Nadeau, "Francophobie, le retour", *L'actualité* (February 2020), online: <lactualite.com/societe/francophobie-le-retour/> [perma.cc/44NN-PX3A].

3 Elke Winter, "Rethinking Multiculturalism After its 'Retreat': Lessons from Canada" (2015) 59:6 American Behavioral Scientist 637 at 641.

unacceptable sociality that is essential to the consolidation of the Canadian identity. The second part focuses more specifically on the analysis of discursive manifestations that illustrate traits specific to Francophobia. After some initial contextualization, Bills 101 and 21 are then examined though an analysis of debates held in the House of Commons and of newspaper articles taken from the Canadian English-language press.

II. Defining the Notion of "Systemic Francophobia"

The choice to use the notion of "systemic Francophobia" does not stem from the refusal of the current Premier of Quebec, François Legault, to recognize the systemic racism present there as elsewhere in Canada. Rather, it is a choice based on a reflection from the literature on the systemic nature of certain social phenomena.

There are few studies that use the term "Francophobia." The sociologist Jacques Beauchemin uses it in a commentary to describe an Anglo-Canadian newspaper that, at the beginning of the 19th century, considered French Canadians to be by nature promiscuous and poor-minded.[4] He noted, by referring to the sociologist Fernand Dumont,[5] that this negative representation of French Canadians did not prevent commentators from emphasizing the Anglophobia of the former without paying the slightest attention to its Francophobic counterpart, all while remaining silent about the particularities of the political framework within which it was expressed and without showing the least remorse. Sociologist Sylvie Lacombe, in a study of the perception of Quebec sovereignty in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, concluded that the federalist option was presented as having a monopoly on political and moral legitimacy, particularly by virtue of the flexibility of Canadian institutions. The federalists thus oppose the sovereigntist project, which is said to be driven by a manipulative, power-hungry political elite, much like the clerical elites that were dominant before the Quiet Revolution. Lacombe does not use the term Francophobia for this phenomenon, but she does point out that the representation of Quebecers is built around characteristics that highlight their irrationality, immaturity, and inability to protect themselves against manipulation and misinformation.[6]

4 Jacques Beauchemin, "Nationalisme québécois et crise du lien social" (1995) 25 Cahiers de recherche sociologique 101 at 109.

5 Fernand Dumont, *Genèse de la société québécoise* (Montréal: Boréal, 1993).

6 Sylvie Lacombe, "'Le couteau sous la gorge' ou la perception du souverainisme québécois dans la presse canadienne-anglaise" (1998) 39:2/3 Recherches sociographiques 271.

More recently, Geneviève Bernard Barbeau has produced an in-depth study on *Quebec Bashing*, taking as her starting point Maclean's October 2010 article, "Quebec: The most corrupt province in Canada," which established a link between the corruption that is allegedly plaguing the province of Quebec and the constitutional debate. She identifies the socio-discursive mechanisms that fuel Francophobia as well as the arguments used by participants in the debates that followed this publication.[7]

The term Francophobia also appears in publications on representations of French cultural practices in the context of conflicting relations between France, the United States, and the United Kingdom. This notion refers to the expression of a systematic bias against France based on stereotypes, prejudices, insults, and sweeping judgments.[8] These representations are tinged with expectations of the exotic, primitive, and backward character of France, like those that characterized colonial authors' descriptions of distant Asian or Middle Eastern countries. For Jean-Philippe Mathy, France is described as "the place of the quaint, backward but oh so romantic imagined 'other' of modernity, a place filled with autocratic Papist aristocrats, bigoted peasants, repressive priests and repressed parishioners."[9] In sum, this vision is based on a reductive understanding of French culture and society that does not take into account the interaction of social forces and the evolution of ideas within the Hexagon. This type of Francophobia projects a watertight logic that imprisons France in a durable and fatal identity, stuck in an unchanging culture that keeps reproducing itself without changing its unalterable foundations.

In this study, we are not interested in the reasons behind such Francophobic discourses. Our intention, rather, is to define the contours of these discourses in the most neutral way possible, to propose a certain analytical operationalization, and to examine them in terms of an empirical question.

7 Geneviève Bernard Barbeau, *Le dossier Maclean's et le Québec bashing : analyse sociodiscursive d'une affaire médiatique controversée* (PhD Thesis, Département de langues, linguistique et traduction, Université Laval, 2014) [unpublished] [Bernard Barbeau, *Le dossier Maclean's et le Québec bashing*]; Geneviève Bernard Barbeau, "L'affaire Maclean's entre critique légitime, bashing et violence détournée : le rôle du ressentiment dans l'interprétation d'un discours controversé" (2015) 40 Semen, online: *OpenEdition Journals* <journals.openedition.org/semen/10427> [perma.cc/72ZU-L3VC].

8 Justin Vaïsse, "American Francophobia Takes a New Turn" (2003) 21:2 French Politics, Culture & Society 33.

9 Jean-Philippe Mathy, "The System of Francophobia" (2003) 21:2 French Politics, Culture & Society 24 at 30.

A. Francophobia: A Particular Form of Collective Disparagement

It is possible to consider Francophobia as a specific discursive device that is part of a double logic of *differentiation* and *inferiorization* of a targeted community. At the heart of all Francophobic discourse is an axiological form that is expressed in the form of disparagement. The latter is made up of several elements. First, for Bernard Barbeau, it manifests itself in the discursive space by using strong images — be they metaphors, figures of speech, or hyperbole — that allow for unqualified, false, or implied statements. Common to these images is that they characterize a group or community in a pejorative, negative, or depreciatory manner.[10] Second, these negative statements must be applied indiscriminately, without differentiation, or without nuance either to French-speaking Quebecers (whether most of them or their elites) or to certain aspects of their society or culture.[11] Third, it must generate or fuel a set of negative attitudes and emotions directed against individuals or groups because of their supposed membership in the defined category, namely Quebec francophones. These attitudes and emotions can vary in intensity: the mildest form is that of dislike, antipathy, or disdain, but they can also take the form of fear and contempt,[12] and in extreme cases can manifest themselves as hostility, hatred, and outright rejection. As Erik Bleich points out with regard to Islamophobia, focusing on attitudes and emotions emphasizes the evaluative and affective aspects of negative judgment. This evaluation detects whether the group is good or bad, worthy of respect or contempt, to be avoided or joined.[13]

Analytically, disparagement consists of three elements that complete the essential and inescapable discursive process at the heart of Francophobia: (1) reification or specialization of one culture or society; (2) reaction to the identification of what is presented as deviance from norms defined as superior because they are universal; and (3) anchorage in an unresolved past. Each of these elements, considered individually or collectively, serves to qualify or give substance to the rationale for disparagement.

10 Bernard Barbeau, *Le dossier Maclean's et le Québec bashing*, *supra* note 7 at 43.

11 We borrow from the scientific literature on Islamophobia and transpose it to the context of negative discourse against francophones: Erik Bleich, "What Is Islamophobia and How Much Is There? Theorizing and Measuring an Emerging Comparative Concept" (2011) 55:12 American Behavioral Scientist 1581 at 1586. The same criteria could be used to analyze discursive manifestations of hostility towards other groups, with the necessary nuances.

12 Disdain is distinct from contempt. The former refers to a judgment of fact while the latter refers to an action based on a value judgment: Arkadiusz Koselak, "Mépris/dédain, deux mots pour un même sentiment?" (2005) 32 Lidil, online: *OpenEdition Journals* <journals.openedition.org/lidil/87> [perma.cc/37WC-NDFU].

13 Bleich, *supra* note 11 at 1586-1587.

1. A Process of Reification

As the French sociologist Étienne Balibar points out when talking about racism, an observation that is also relevant when it comes to a process of constructing difference specific to Francophobia, it proceeds from a desire to "naturalize" or "essentialize" culture. In this sense, Balibar views racism as a matter of fixing identities within the framework of historical structures of domination. Culture, like ethnicity, is specific to these reified identities and leads to a form of internal exclusion insofar as it can function in exactly the same way as so-called natural differences (which are the basis of racism based on biological markers or the identification of phenotypes). The process of naturalization of culture thus functions like that of naturalization of "nature" in racism, or a form of exclusion of the other on the basis of cultural traits that are detached from biological markers of race.[14]

However, Francophobia and cultural racism should not be confused. Even if the processes are part of a logic that may seem identical, Francophobia does not proceed from the racialization of cultural difference on a linguistic basis.[15] It is nevertheless an identity assigned by the locutor. The latter may identify Francophones or the social or political elites who speak for them on the basis of their ethnic origin, ancestry, or a series of ethnocultural traits or stereotypes.[16] These traits are thus constructed from stereotypes. Bernard Barbeau reminds us that these practices are a particular form of representation that is based on clichés, preconceived and fixed images that have negative connotations. She notes that "in defining a group, it is the images shared by a community that are put forward by speakers and that contribute, in some cases, to stirring up tensions between them."[17] Quebec Francophones can thus be presented as intolerant, quick to discriminate, closed in on themselves, resistant to diversity,

14 Étienne Balibar, "La construction du racisme" (2005) 38:2 Actuel Marx 11 at 13-14; Étienne Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion" (2005) 11:1 Parallax 19 at 25-27.

15 We are aware that there is some debate in the literature about using the notion of cultural racism to describe prejudice, hostility, and even discrimination based on cultural differences other than those referring to biological differences: see e.g. Pierre-André Taguieff, "The New Cultural Racism in France" (1990) 83 Telos 109; John Solomos & Les Back, "Conceptualising Racisms: Social Theory, Politics and Research" (1994) 28:1 Sociology 143; Rohit Barot & John Bird, "Racialization: the Genealogy and Critique of a Concept" (2001) 24:4 Ethnic & Racial Studies 601. From this perspective, Francophobia may be a specific form of cultural racism. Studies that use the concept of cultural racism seek to deconstruct the discourses of the right and the extreme right towards groups stigmatized on the basis of their origin, ethnicity, religious or cultural affiliation. However, it is too broad a concept to adequately describe the construction of difference that is based, for the most part, on linguistic markers. This is why we prefer to use the term Francophobia to describe the phenomenon that is the subject of this study.

16 Fernando Bravo López, "Towards a Definition of Islamophobia: Approximations of the Early Twentieth Century" (2011) 34:4 Ethnic & Racial Studies 556 at 569.

17 Bernard Barbeau, *Le dossier Maclean's et le Québec bashing*, *supra* note 7 at 36 [translated by author].

etc. Ultimately, the naturalization of the group corresponds to a homogeneous representation of the latter based on negative stereotypes, to a generalization of certain traits or behaviours.[18]

2. Deviance from Universal Norms

Another element in the discursive logic of disparagement refers to a process of differentiation, presented as deviance, from norms defined as universal. If this deviance is problematic, it is because it represents a threat to the presumed cohesion of the reference society. This element implies the presence of a profound divergence, which is subject to opprobrium, in the way a group dissociates itself from the dominant national ideology. In a liberal democracy, of course, disagreements can occur and are vigorously debated. On the other hand, Francophobia arises when, in the context of these debates, preferences shared by a majority of members of the French-speaking community are considered regressive in relation to norms that are presented as superior in terms of their adherence to the principles that should apply to all individuals. In this regard, Balibar reminds us that any national ideology must be constructed and imagined on the basis of universalist claims: first, by insisting that there should be no natural differences between the individuals who make up the nation; second, by insisting that a nation can only "think of itself as immediately universal in its very singularity."[19] In other words, particularisms must take the form of universal values referring, for example, to the ideals of human fraternity, justice, tolerance, acceptance of all, respect for the equal dignity of each person, protection of individual freedoms, etc. This tension between particularism and universalism is particularly salient in a multinational state in which national projects are in competition. Paradoxically, in the name of the unity of the nation, intolerance and even a denial of difference is deployed. This condemnation is made under the guise of an unacceptable deviation from a moral ideal that cannot accept the relevant difference without denying itself.

For political scientist François Charbonneau, "a moral ideal has two obvious qualities, namely to propose a particular conception of the good (this is its moral character), which it would be desirable to see imitated (this is its universal or ideal character)."[20] This ideal is embodied in a set of public policies that

18 Maryse Potvin, "Les dérapages racistes à l'égard du Québec au Canada anglais depuis 1995" (1999) 18:2 Politique & Sociétés 101 at 113.

19 Étienne Balibar, "Le racisme: encore un universalisme" (1989) 18 Mots 7 at 9 [translated by author].

20 François Charbonneau, "Comprendre le nouveau nationalisme canadien: le Canada comme idéal moral politique" in Geoffrey Ewen & Colin M Coates, eds, *Introduction aux études canadiennes: histoire, identité, cultures* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 2012) 78 at 84 [translated by author].

marked the establishment of the welfare state in Canada. It is expressed both in a certain vision of bilingualism — found both in legislative form in the *Official Languages Act*, but also in the *Constitution Act, 1982* — and in the principles and devices enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This moral ideal of Canadian identity captures the idea of a normative superiority that must be defended. Given the social, political, and legal dynamics that led to the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, [21] it is difficult to see the *Charter* as anything other than the transformation of norms that feed what is still called Canadian Anglo-conformity.[22] In short, the disparagement of Quebec francophones can also be based on highlighting a differentiation that is presented as a deviation from norms considered to be superior.

3. An Unhealthy Relationship With the Past

The third element that may be present in negative discourses targeting French-speaking Quebecers, concomitant to the one just described, is characterized by its "morbid relationship" with time. In Balibar's words, it "reflects the inability of societies to 'progress' from the point of view of civilization, or their insurmountable dependence on archaic structures of the collective mentality."[23] This can take two forms. First, societies can be blamed for looking back to an unrelieved past, for constantly referring to it as a reminder of the complaints

21 Dominique Clément, *Human Rights in Canada: A History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016).

22 The term Anglo-conformity is no longer used to describe the normative universe that governs the Canadian imaginary and identity. It is generally associated with the assimilationist policies that preceded the transformation of the criteria for Canadian citizenship and the adoption of multiculturalism in Canada, which recognizes the diversity of ethnocultural origins of Canadians. In sum, the literature associates Anglo-conformity with the sole preponderance of British values that were downgraded and permanently replaced beginning in the 1960s. See Howard Palmer, "Mosaic Versus Melting Pot? Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada and the United States" (1976) 31:3 Intl J 488; Sarah Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada" (1997) 5:1 Intl J on Minority and Group Rights 33; Keith Banting & Will Kymlicka, eds, *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); David McGrane, "From Liberal Multiculturalism to Civic Republicanism: An Historical Perspective on Multiculturalism Policy in Manitoba and Saskatchewan" (2011) 43:1/2 Can Ethnic Studies 81; Keith Banting & Stuart Soroka, "Minority Nationalism and Immigrant Integration in Canada" (2012) 18:1 Nations & Nationalism 156; Jatinder Mann, "'Anglo-Conformity': Assimilation Policy in Canada, 1890s-1950s" (2014) 50 Intl J Can Studies 253 [Mann, "Anglo-Conformity"]; Jatinder Mann, "The End of the British World and the Redefinition of Citizenship in Canada, 1950s-1970s" (2018) 24:2 Asian J Can Studies 17; Shannon Conway, "From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s" (2018) 84 Études can / Can Studies 9. In other words, Anglo-conformity disappeared in favor of multiculturalism. There is little dispute about this interpretation, with some exceptions: see Jay Goldstein, "Anglo-conformity in Winnipeg: An Update" (1998) 30:2 Can Ethnic Studies 114.

23 Balibar, "La construction du racisme", *supra* note 15 at 14 [translated by author].

made against Canada and the offences suffered since the Conquest of 1760.[24] In so doing, French-speaking Quebecers have not succeeded in overcoming the fundamentally ethnic character of their nationalism, as opposed to a form of political belonging that would be based on adherence to common norms, a belonging proper to civic nationalism. This dimension complements the previous one insofar as:

> … [b]y framing all French Canadians as Québécois nationalists, and by portraying this nationalism as outdated and ethnically oppressive, in dominant (media) discourses the image of "Quebec" is used as an undesirable contrast to a modern, cosmopolitan Canada where individuals of all ethnic and religious backgrounds can trade their talents for membership in the multicultural nation.[25]

All in all, the disparagement establishes a relationship that is deemed corrupt with an unresolved past. Francophobia based on disparagement can be *systemic* in the sense that differentiation based on the ethnic and linguistic origins of Quebec francophones manifests itself in a more or less subtle way by appealing to conscious or unconscious prejudices, often unintentionally and in a *persistent* and *cumulative* form.

Table 1 — Operationalization of Disparagement

DIMENSIONS	KEY INDICATORS
1. Process of Reification (essentialization or naturalization)	1.1 Generalizing certain traits or behaviors to an entire group (or subgroup, such as political elites)
	1.2 Representing a group (or subgroup) in a homogeneous way based on negative stereotypes
2. Process of Differentiation (deviance from universal norms)	2.1 Defining universal standards or norms that are considered morally superior
	2.2 Denouncing and condemning (calling to order) preferences deemed regressive
3. Unhealthy Relationship With the Past	3.1 Rebuking a group for looking back to a past that is not over and referring to it
	3.2 Representing group membership according to a criterion considered outdated (such as ethnicity)
	3.3 Using historical comparisons that are considered retrograde (use of strong, depreciatory images)

24 Marc Angenot, "Le ressentiment : raisonnement, pathos, idéologie" in Michael Rinn, ed, *Émotions et discours : L'usage des passions dans la langue* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008) 83.

25 Winter, *supra* note 3 at 651.

Finally, it is important to distinguish Francophobia from criticism. An unfavourable and negative comment will not necessarily be part of a Francophobic discursive process. It is legitimate to express reservations and disagreements, even profound ones, with positions or policies that may be supported by a majority of French-speaking Quebecers and the political elites who represent them, provided that these disagreements are based on reasoned arguments rather than on a set of stereotypes that are emotionally rooted in prejudice. However, when criticism seeks to demonize the opponent and their negativity, it employs another strategy that seeks to delegitimize the opponent's discourse by appealing to a set of distinct elements: "abstract universalism, the myth of a certain homogeneity of the group to which one belongs, the myth of a superiority of this people over another, the myth of a continuous and glorious past and future [of the dominant group]."[26] Criticism becomes Francophobia when it is systematically inscribed in a differentialist representation of the Other by using a process of inferiorization, by situating it in a relationship of deviance vis-à-vis an irreproachable universalized norm (but nonetheless carried positively by the dominant group of reference), and by situating it in a rogue relationship to history.

B. The Mirror Effect of Self-Representation of Canadian Identity

This article has underlined that the mechanisms specific to Francophobia presuppose the existence of a presumed superior normativity, and therefore of a hierarchical representation of societies in a competitive relationship. Drawing on Edward Said's work on Orientalism, Balibar argues that the essentialized Other participates in the process of the construction of the Self or the *Soi* through a subtle play of mirror effect.[27]

For the purposes of our analysis, three themes of self-representation of the Self are particularly prominent in the criticisms formulated against francophone Quebec: the first corresponds to the reading of the principles of democratic pluralism; the second to the representation of the Canadian nation; the third to the conditions of belonging, inclusive or exclusive, to the Canadian social and national space.

26 Potvin, *supra* note 18 at 111 [translated by author].

27 He uses a rather complex wording to express this relatively simple idea: "all the properties attributed to the Other are inversions and distortions of those vindicated for oneself, where indeed the Self is nothing but *the Other's Other*, whose identity and stability is permanently asserted and secured (in the imaginary) through the representation of an essential Other, or an essentialized Other, whose identity in this respect arrives from the Other in inverted form." Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion", *supra* note 14 at 30.

1. On Democratic Pluralism

This article echoes the observations of political scientists Luc Turgeon, Antoine Bilodeau, Stephen E White, and Ailsa Henderson that liberal principles are open to different interpretations. They concluded their review of the literature by pointing out that there is a:

> … distinction between enlightenment and reformation liberalism: enlightenment liberalism, which entails a "commitment to sustained rational examination of self, others, and social practices," prioritizes individual autonomy; reformation liberalism, which entails a commitment by liberal institutions to tolerance and diversity, privileges individual choices, whether they are perceived to be the product of rational examination or not. Other scholars distinguish between French and British (or "Anglo-Saxon") forms of liberalism.[28]

Turgeon et al summarized these different aspects of liberalism by using the following formula: "freedom through the state against freedom from the state."[29] Thus, there may be a disagreement about the role of the state in protecting individual freedoms. This is evidenced in their study of support for restrictions on minority groups' religious symbols. In the case of Quebec, stronger liberal values were associated with greater support for restrictions on religious symbols, while the opposite was true for the rest of Canada.[30] As the political philosopher Joseph Carens reminds us, liberal political communities can take different forms and involve different political-institutional arrangements.[31] Similarly, it is possible and morally defensible for Quebec to adopt a language policy that makes French the official language of the state, since it is the language of social interaction, public life, and immigrant integration.[32]

28 Luc Turgeon et al, "A Tale of Two Liberalisms? Attitudes toward Minority Religious Symbols in Quebec and Canada" (2019) 52:2 Can J Political Science 247 at 249 [footnotes omitted], citing William Galston, "Two Concepts of Liberalism" 105:3 Ethics 516; John R Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like the Headscarves: Islam, the State, and the Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Christian Joppke, *Veil: Mirror of Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

29 Turgeon, *supra* note 28, citing Bowen, *supra* note 28.

30 Turgeon, *ibid* at 261.

31 Joseph H Carens, "Liberalism, Justice, and Political Community: Theoretical Perspectives on Quebec's Liberal Nationalism" in Joseph H Carens, ed, *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspectives from Anglophone Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 3 at 4.

32 Joseph H Carens, "Immigration, Political Community, and the Transformation of Identity: Quebec's Immigration Politics in Critical Perspective" in Joseph H Carens, ed, *Is Quebec Nationalism Just? Perspectives from Anglophone Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 20 at 57-58.

2. Representation of Boundaries to Set Symbolic Limits of National Identity and Belonging

These boundaries separate groups and generate and sustain feelings of similarity and belonging. For sociologists Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár, symbolic boundaries are objectified forms of difference and exist at the intersubjective level.[33] They categorize, identify, and segment groups into "Us" and "Them," suggesting that differentiation facilitates positive evaluation through in-group and out-group comparison. This process aims to achieve and maintain the superiority of the reference group through a mechanism of positive distinction that helps to reinforce the sense of belonging. In the case of Canada, sociologist Elke Winter presents the construction of Canadian national (and multicultural) identity as the product of a triangular relationship whereby the pluralistic (or multicultural) "We" is made possible by the incorporation of the "Others" (mainly via immigration) in opposition to a "Them" presented as deviant from the collective ethos.[34]

In this relationship, the "We" is particularly open and welcoming to pluralism of identity. The liberal principles of equality, tolerance, accommodation, dialogue, individual freedom, and the fight against discrimination are central, and are cast in opposition to Quebec nationalism, which would be "communitarian" and oppressive towards linguistic, racialized, or religious minorities. The image of Quebec ("Them") is thus used to illustrate the contrast with a modern, cosmopolitan Canada where individuals of all origins and religious beliefs ("Others") can use their talents to actively participate in building a multicultural nation ("Us").[35] Indeed, political scientist Keith Banting and political philosopher Will Kymlicka insist that this multicultural "We" does not hesitate to change laws and regulations to better accommodate the specific needs and aspirations of minorities.[36] What is more, the strengthening of anti-discrimination laws and public policies of accommodation is presented as a clear trend in Western democracies.[37] Societies that fall on the margins of this emancipatory trajectory, or that depart from this univocal reading of liberal pluralism, exclude themselves from this "Us" and serve as a repellent ("Them").

33 Michèle Lamont & Virág Molnár, "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences" (2002) 28 Annual Rev Sociology 167 at 168.

34 Elke Winter, *Us, Them, and Others: Pluralism and National Identity in Diverse Societies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011) at 6.

35 Winter, *supra* note 3 at 652.

36 Keith Banting & Will Kymlicka, "Is There Really a Retreat From Multiculturalism Policies? New Evidence From the Multiculturalism Policy Index" (2013) 11:5 Comparative European Politics 577 at 582.

37 Conversely, more restrictive integration arrangements are associated with "illiberal" versions of civic integration. See *Ibid*.

3. Interpreting the Conditions of Nationhood

The use of the binary opposition between civic and ethnic versions of nationalism is common. Although this dichotomy is often used to account for the formation of national identities,[38] it seems reductive in that it sends back-to-back conceptions built on a value judgment, the first being intrinsically good, the other being fundamentally bad.[39] By contrast, this article favours the way political scientists Antoine Bilodeau and Luc Turgeon understand the criteria of belonging. They distinguish between more exclusive and rigid definitions of national identity, which they describe as ascriptive (referring to certain characteristics such as being Christian, being born in the country, having Canadian or Quebecois ancestors), and more inclusive and flexible definitions, which they consider attainable (such as mastering the common language, identifying with the country or nation, respecting political institutions and laws).[40] Although Bilodeau and Turgeon conclude that there are few significant differences between native-born Anglophones and Francophone Quebecers in the way they define the boundaries of their respective nations,[41] the perception remains among many authors that Quebec distinguishes itself from the rest of Canada by adhering to a more rigid and exclusive, even racial, form of national identity.[42]

In short, the disparagement of which Quebec francophones are the object is built around a self-representation of Canadian identity based on a set of virtues that are foreign to the former. The images projected of Canada refer in turn to contrasting visions of liberal pluralism, of the definition of the boundaries of the nation based on mechanisms of differentiation between "Us," "Others," and "Them," and of the criteria that allow inclusion in this imagined "Us."

38 Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Toronto: Viking, 1993); David Pettinicchio, "Migration and Ethnic Nationalism: Anglophone Exit and the 'Decolonisation' of Québec" (2012) 18:4 Nations & Nationalism 719; Victor Piché, "Ethnic and Linguistic Categories in Quebec: Counting to Survive" in Patrick Simon, Victor Piché & Amélie A Gagnon, eds, *Social Statistics and Ethnic Diversity: Cross-National Perspectives in Classifications and Identity Politics* (Cham: Springer, 2015) 89; Daniel Béland, André Lecours & Peggy Schmeiser, "Nationalism, Secularism, and Ethno-Cultural Diversity in Québec" (2021) 55:1 J Can Studies 177.

39 FC DeCoste, "Persons/Peoples/Polity: Interrogating Neonationalism in Quebec" (1998) 4:2 Rev Constitutional Studies 290; Philip Spencer & Howard Wollman, "Good and Bad Nationalisms: A Critique of Dualism" (1998) 3:3 J Political Ideologies 255; Yael Tamir, "Not so Civic: Is There a Difference Between Ethnic and Civic Nationalism?" (2019) 22 Annual Rev Political Science 419.

40 Antoine Bilodeau & Luc Turgeon, "Boundaries of the Nation(s) in a Multinational State: Comparing Quebecers and Other Canadians' Perspectives on National Identity" (2021) 27:2 Nations & Nationalism 530 at 532.

41 *Ibid* at 543.

42 Daiva Stasiulis, "Worrier Nation: Quebec's Value Codes for Immigrants" (2013) 40:1 Politikon 183; Darryl Leroux, "Entrenching Euro-Settlerism: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Nationalism in Québec" (2014) 46:2 Can Ethnic Studies 133.

Francophobia is therefore not limited to reproducing a negative image of the targeted group, but also includes, even more importantly, the identification of characteristics that we do not want to see reproduced in our own society.

III. Debates on Bill 101 and Bill 21 in English-speaking Canada

The Anglo-Canadian representation of Quebec has evolved over time. Quebec society was initially conceived in a condescending and non-threatening way by the rest of Canada, as a "priest-ridden province."[43] However, the changes brought about by the Quiet Revolution gave rise to a reconfiguration of Quebec's identity that could not help but conflict with the one that was trying to establish itself within a Canada, an identity that aimed to definitively break its ties with the British imagination.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a form of Quebec nationalism was articulated around an ideology of "national liberation" of the "Quebec people" — conceived in terms of its francophone core — and sought to transform the economic and political environment that had contributed to the subordinate socio-economic status of a population that was nevertheless a majority within its territory. In this regard, there was a symbolic refocusing on the political boundaries of Quebec. While French Canada represented the territorial basis of traditional nationalism, the politicization of the nationalist movement led it to conceive of the Quebec political space as the only one that could be controlled by the national minority. This refocusing forced a (re)conceptualization of the "Québécois" as a political subject, and of the centrality occupied by linguistic and cultural markers. This was followed by the adoption of a series of legislative measures designed to strengthen the status of the French language in Quebec. The first example of this came when the language conflicts of the late 1960s led the Quebec Liberal Party's (QLP) Premier Robert Bourassa (elected in 1970) to pass the *Official Language Act* (Bill 22) in July 1974. This *Act* marked a turning point. It imposed French on commercial signage, required businesses wishing to do business with the government to adopt francization programs, restricted access to English-language schools to students demonstrating sufficient knowledge of the English language, made French the language of public administration, and gave priority to French in legislation. In 1976, the elec-

43 E-Martin Meunier, "Le clergé canadien-français et le prêtre collecteur devant la culture populaire au xx^{e} siècle: un renouveau religieux en faveur du peuple?" (2013/2014) 24/25/26 Port Acadie 50 at 54. Historian Jatinder Mann is representative of this trend and demonstrates this dichotomy between the attitudes and feelings that animate English-Canadian and French-Quebec societies. See Mann, "Anglo-Conformity" *supra* note 22 at 254.

tion of the Parti Québécois (PQ) then resulted in a further strengthening of language legislation, with the adoption of the *Charter of the French Language* in 1977 signalling a break with the institutional bilingualism still present in Bill 22. In particular, the 1977 *Charter* addressed the institutionalization of bilingualism in Quebec, its role in the anglicization of Quebecers of immigrant backgrounds (whether first or second generation), particularly through the public school system, and finally, the francization of the economy and the workplace.[44] Simply put, it was a matter of transforming power relationships in favour of the French-speaking majority in order to ensure the survival of the French language in North America.[45]

This reconfiguration of the Quebec national consciousness has not been without its problems. First, it contradicts the spirit that presided over the adoption of the Canadian government's *Official Languages Act, 1969*. This legislation is based on the symmetry of status among the official languages, even in a minority situation, and, in so doing, contributes to granting an equivalent status to English in the Quebec political arena. Institutional bilingualism — which affects only federal institutions — has a symbolic impact that goes beyond its scope, reinforcing the idea that it is possible and even legitimate in Quebec to make English the language of integration for Canadians of neither British nor French heritage. Secondly, the new self-perception that many French-speaking Quebecers have of themselves runs counter to the emergence of a Canadian identity that is based, among other things, on the values associated with multiculturalism (equality of cultures and freedom to choose one's affiliation), which are presented as universal.

Since the 1995 referendum, Quebec nationalism seems to be fuelled less by constitutional tensions with the rest of Canada than by issues related to ethnocultural diversity and the place and status of the French language. The political discourse has also revolved around the theme of secularism and, more specifically, the wearing of religious symbols in public and civic spaces.[46]

44 Guy Rocher, "Les dilemmes identitaires à l'origine de la Charte de la langue française" (2002) Hors-série R d'aménagement linguistique 17; Jean-Claude Corbeil, *L'embarras des langues : origine, conception et évolution de la politique linguistique québécoise* (Montréal: Québec Amérique, 2007).

45 Bill 101 was supported by 66 percent of Quebecers in 1977, including 71 percent among those under 35: Claire Durand, "Loin de la loi 101", *La Presse* (11 January 2014), online: <www.lapresse.ca/debats/votre-opinion/201401/10/01-4727607-loin-de-la-loi-101.php> [perma.cc/3WQL-BXK3].

46 François Rocher, "Les formes multiples de la laïcité" in Lucia Ferretti & François Rocher, eds, *Les enjeux d'un Québec laïque: la loi 21 en perspective* (Montréal: Del Busso éditeur, 2020) 23; E-Martin Meunier & Jacob Legault-Leclair, "Les inquiétudes d'une majorité et la Loi 21: le Québec, le catholicisme et la laïcité en 2019" (2020) 8, online: *R internationale francophonies* <publications-prairial.fr/rif/index.php?id=1167> [perma.cc/2AZB-KYVL].

A first bill (Bill 106, *An Act to promote action by the Administration with respect to cultural diversity*) was introduced in the fall of 2009 by the Liberal government to promote and monitor the administration's action with respect to cultural diversity. However, after being strongly criticized for not clearly giving precedence to the principle of gender equality over that of religious freedom, Bill 106 was withdrawn by the government.

In March 2010, another new bill (Bill 94, *An Act to establish guidelines governing accommodation requests within the Administration and certain institutions*) was introduced in the National Assembly. In the explanatory notes, the Bill required, among other things, "that a personnel member of the administration or an institution and a person to whom services are being provided by the Administration of the institution show their face during the delivery of services." Once again, a debate was launched on the principle of secularism and on the prohibition (absolute or relative) of government employees from wearing religious symbols and signs. Bill 94 also died on the order paper.

In 2012, the election of a PQ-led government, albeit in a minority, resulted in the introduction of a new bill with an evocative title: 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*. This Bill was debated under the title of "Charter of Values." Then, following the 2014 provincial election, the QLP introduced Bill 62, which was designed to foster state adherence to religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for requests for accommodations on religious grounds in certain bodies. This again included a requirement for government employees to perform their duties with their faces uncovered, and included the same requirement for a person coming forward to receive a public service. However, with the electoral defeat of the PQ in the April 7, 2014 election, the bill could not be passed.

Finally, in the 2018 elections, the QLP was replaced by the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ), which formed a majority government. The CAQ intended to legally enshrine the principle of the religious neutrality of the state. The *Act respecting the laicity of the State* (Bill 21) was accordingly adopted on June 16, 2019 to enshrine the preponderant character of the secular nature of the state in the Quebec legal order. It prohibits the wearing of religious symbols by certain government employees in positions of authority (including police officers, justices of the peace, correctional officers, prosecutors, principals and vice-principals, and teachers in public schools) and requires that individuals provide a public service with an uncovered face and receive a public service

with an uncovered face when necessary for identification and safety reasons. In addition, the *Act* contains two sections that specify that its provisions apply notwithstanding the sections dealing with the protection of fundamental freedoms enumerated in the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Although supported by two thirds of Quebecers, the law was criticized for allegedly targeting ethnic minorities and, in particular, Muslim women who wear the hijab. However, for the Quebec government, and for most Quebecers, the law adheres to a model of secularism whose cornerstone is the principle of state neutrality with respect to the religious preferences of citizens, a tenet that derives from the principle of separation between religions and the state.[47] The adoption of Bill 21 in 2019 is particularly indicative of the importance attached to this issue.

These two key moments, the adoption of Bill 101 in 1977 and Bill 21 in 2019, are emblematic of the divergent, even contradictory, conceptions that animate the socio-political imaginary of Canada and Quebec. They illustrate the political conflict between two political projects that claim to be based on universalistic ambitions and ideals. It is therefore quite normal, in a democratic society, for voices to be raised against these two Quebec government initiatives. It is also unsurprising that, in the political joust, the competing logic calls for historical arguments and attempts at justification by invoking elements of the ideology of cultural pluralism and liberal universalism in order to delegitimize the ambitions of the opponent.[48] According to Mike Medeiros, in multinational states, national minorities are often perceived as a danger to national cohesion, if only by virtue of their desire to increase their margin of autonomy. Thus, the desire of national minority groups to assert their differences peremptorily, particularly if they control important political and institutional levers, may pose a risk to a coherent — it would be more accurate to say "unifying" — conception of the country shared by individuals and groups belonging to the dominant culture. In many cases, this dynamic can lead to the development of negative feelings and attitudes towards groups (national

47 A strong majority of Quebecers, 76%, say they are in favor of this legislation (which is also supported by 68% of Canadians): Pierre Saint-Arnaud, "68% des Canadiens appuient la loi sur la neutralité religieuse, selon un sondage", *Le Devoir* (27 October 2017), online: <www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/511560/68-des-canadiens-appuient-la-loi-62-selon-un-sondage> [perma.cc/8Y56-ML5A]. Another poll shows that support for the legislation varies depending on the nature of the religious symbols worn by government employees in positions of authority or public school teachers: Vox Pop Labs, "Les Québécois et les signes religieux" (29 November 2018), online: *Vox Pop Labs* <voxpoplabs.com/fr/signes-religieux/> [perma.cc/66A4-H6MV] (according to a survey of 4635 respondents conducted in October 2018, the ban on the burqa, the niqab, the hijab, the kirpan, an ostentatious cross, and the dastār are supported by a majority).

48 Potvin, *supra* note 18 at 113.

or otherwise) that do not adhere to the representations, norms, and identity vectors of this culture.[49]

The question is how, in this political conflict involving divergent conceptions of the constituent elements of the Canadian and Quebec national projects, the arguments against these laws adopted by the representatives of Quebecers sitting in the National Assembly were articulated. Does this conflict use an axiological form that disparages Quebecers (and their representatives) as a whole, or is it based on reasoning that is neutral in this respect? In other words, does it illustrate or feed on a certain form of Francophobia on the part of certain elites in English-speaking Canada? The notion of Francophobia at issue here is a powerful one and should not be used lightly, which is why it is important to define its meaning in an analytical manner.

A. Methodological Considerations

The purpose of this research is to measure and report on the way in which "English Canada" perceives Quebec francophone society and the elites that represent it. To this end, an analysis was conducted of the debates that preceded the adoption of Bill 101 (1977) and Bill 21 (2019) in the House of Commons and in three major English-language daily newspapers in Canada. The time frame covers the period between the introduction of the bills in the National Assembly and their assent, i.e. from July to August 1977 for Bill 101, and from March to June 2019 for Bill 21. These two moments were chosen because they are emblematic of the tensions that remain between Quebec and Canada on issues considered central to competing national identities. The first period precedes the constitutional entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, while the second comes almost four decades later. The periods chosen (from two to four months, covering the dates during which the draft was debated in the National Assembly) seem to be sufficiently long to reflect the diversity of the arguments that were advanced. These periods are all the more significant because they cover the initial presentation of the bills by the government (hence a shock effect), when the population is able to express, "on the spot," a variety of points of view and objections without the filters that the passage of time might impose. The subsidiary question is therefore to see if the manifestations and negative axiological forms against Quebec francophones were manifested in the same way and with the same intensity for issues that are 42 years apart.

49 Mike Medeiros, "Not Just About Quebec: Accounting for Francophones' Attitudes Towards Canada" (2017) 15:2 French Politics 223.

The analysis began by identifying the statements made in the House of Commons from the official record of the debates for Bill 101 and from the online search engine for Bill 21. Then, using the Eureka and Factiva databases, op-eds, columns, and editorial articles on the two bills from the *Montreal Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail*, and the *Toronto Star* were identified and collected. For Bill 21, this research was complemented with articles published in the *National Post*. Data from its predecessor, the *Financial Post*, is not available online for the period corresponding to the debates preceding the adoption of Bill 101. Obviously, a considerable number of factual articles (presentation of bills, reaction of actors, reports, etc.) were published during the same periods. They have not been included since we are interested in the public statements published directly in the pages of the selected newspapers. Based on a keyword search, 28 statements in the House of Commons and 47 articles for Bill 101 were identified, as well as 28 speeches in the House and 51 articles for Bill 21. All of the House of Commons statements were analyzed while samples of articles were selected; 29 articles for Bill 101 and 26 articles for Bill 21. 15 of 33 articles from the *Montreal Gazette* were randomly selected for the first bill, and 8 of 34 articles from the same newspaper for the second bill. This methodological choice was made to avoid an imbalance between the number of articles published in the English-language press in Quebec and the number of articles published in the press outside Quebec. This means that all articles published in newspapers outside Quebec were included in the database.

B. Bill 101: *Charter of the French Language*

The debates that preceded the adoption of the *Charter of the French Language* in Canada took place in a singular socio-political context. With the election of the PQ — whose political program was based on the project of sovereignty-association — in 1976, the introduction of this piece of legislation was widely perceived at the symbolic level in English-speaking Canada as a gesture of rupture or as a preliminary step towards secession. At the outset, it should be noted that both in the House of Commons and in op-eds, columnist articles, and editorials, Quebec society was dissociated from its government and the legislation it introduced. This discursive strategy seems to allow political and media actors to express their ideas with less nuance, attributing certain intentions and characteristics to the government and representing its actions independently of social dynamics. It is thus possible to identify certain manifestations of Francophobia. With respect to Bill 101, the limited number of Francophobic occurrences in the House of Commons (3) invites us to remain cautious, even if their mere presence in English-language political discourse is, in itself, significant. On the other hand, Francophobic occurrences are

more present in opinion articles and editorials (21 out of 29) (Table 2). It should be added that this is a recurring aspect of the discourse that takes different forms.

***Table 2 — Bill 101* — Charter of the French Language**
Number of interventions and articles with occurrences related to Francophobia by dimension (July-August 1977)

	Statements in the House of Commons	**Newspapers**
Disparagement (Quebec Society)	**0**	**1**
Disparagement (Government of Quebec)	**1**	**9**
Naturalization and Specialization	**1**	**4**
Unrelieved Past	**0**	**1**
Deviation From the Norm	**1**	**6**
Total	**3**	**21**

Thus, several political and media actors are initially proceeding to essentialize and naturalize French-speaking Quebecers and their political elites. The latter are first accused of manipulation and authoritarianism. According to an editorial in *The Globe and Mail*, they were involved in putting a false problem on the political agenda, particularly by engaging in propaganda.[50] The "domination of the poor French-speaking Quebecer" was in fact a discursive construction of the elites. The decline of the French language or its precarious situation is questioned, which contributes to delegitimizing the government's initiative, while at the same time suspecting the government of wanting to reduce, or even eliminate, minority rights.[51] This is a recurring theme among the detractors of Bill

50 "A narrowing wage gap is ignored", Editorial, *The Globe and Mail* (18 July 1977) 6.

51 The *Toronto Star* published a piece from the Quebec Liberal MP John Ciaccia denouncing the government's intentions: John Ciaccia, "Liberal says Bill 101 repeats other provinces' wrong", *Toronto*

101. This attempt at delegitimization can be interpreted as a form of disregard for the obvious concerns of a segment of the population. For example, an editorial in the *Toronto Star* stated that the premiers, who were scheduled to meet at their annual conference, had no time to waste, and that there was no need to discuss the language issue.[52] Second, Quebec's political elites would be intolerant while consciously feeding a divisive approach to the country. If adopted, the *Charter of the French Language* would contribute to building walls around the province.[53] In this case, it is the provision that prohibits people from other Canadian provinces from attending English schools in Quebec that is particularly offensive. Maurice A Dionne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence and Member of Parliament for New Brunswick, did not mince words when he stated in the House of Commons that "René Lévesque has offered Quebecers an equitable society but a racist society."[54] The government's policies should also be condemned according to Kenneth R Scobie, who, in *The Globe and Mail*, expressed a desire to send a message to the Quebec population that "there can be no union with a province that supports this divisive ideology."[55] Thus, the sovereignist political elites are recurrently portrayed as an indivisible whole, while Quebec society is rather infantilized and presented as being incapable of showing sufficient judgment and maturity to resist the manipulation of which it is the victim.

Second, the analysis also highlights the existence of negative discourses associated with the second dimension of Francophobia, namely deviance from norms defined as universal. The affirmation of the status of French, at the heart of Bill 101, is first represented in some discourses as a terrible evil that would threaten the socio-economic advancement of individuals and groups in society. If, in *The Globe and Mail*, Liberal member of the National Assembly Bryce Mackasey doubted the very survival of Quebec that promoted unilingualism rather than bilingualism as formalized by the federal government,[56] other observers were much more critical. Although its virulence is an exception, an

Star (12 August 1977) B3 ("I don't believe French in Quebec is threatened. French has always been spoken in Quebec and it always will be. And when you travel to all corners of Quebec you will notice it isn't French that is threatened. The government of Quebec is preparing to do with this law … the same thing other provinces of Canada have done in the past: That is to extinguish the right of minorities, or at least reduce them considerably.").

52 "Premiers have no time to waste", Editorial, *Toronto Star* (15 August 1977) C4.

53 Gretta Chambers, "Have PQ hardliners seized control while setting up 'wall around Quebec'?", *Montreal Gazette* (16 July 1977) 7.

54 *House of Commons Debates*, 30-2, vol 8 (6 July 1977) at 7394 (Maurice A Dionne).

55 Kenneth R Scobie, "Bill 101", *The Globe and Mail* (25 July 1977) 7.

56 Bryce Mackasey, "Mackasey: Time for Trudeau to seek mandate to change the constitution", *The Globe and Mail* (20 July 1977) 7.

editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, republished in the pages of the *Toronto Star*, is particularly hostile to the provision in Bill 101 restricting freedom of choice of language of instruction: "It will create a helot class of under-educated, second-class proletarians, locked into the French Quebec ghetto and equipped only to serve their new masters in lowly non-competitive jobs."[57] These comments are expressed without nuance and explicitly show contempt for the French fact and for the Quebec population as a whole, since a connection is drawn between French unilingualism and the working class. The author of this editorial goes on to clarify his thoughts on a surprising hierarchy of languages:

> We are referring to Quebec's Italian, Portuguese, Greek and other immigrants who are now forced, against their will, to send their children to French schools. What kind of future can such a child expect on this English-speaking continent? At home the child spoke Italian, Greek, Portuguese, or some other foreign tongue. And now, instead of English, which is an easy language to master, the child is forced to learn French, a difficult language. The child's mental capacity will be fully occupied in trying to master this foreign tongue, which few will learn properly anyhow.[58]

This excerpt conveys several prejudices and calls into question both the societal and instrumental value of French in the North American context. English is not only an easy language to learn, but is the only language that gives access to an enviable socio-economic status in North America.[59]

It should be noted that many of the criticisms of the provisions of Bill 101 thus mobilize the argument of free choice and, in turn, point to two different conceptions of the liberal state. In this sense, these "free choice" arguments offer an illustration of how English-speaking Canada self-represents its principles and values in opposition to French-speaking Quebec. While one conception is about ensuring freedom of choice, protecting minority rights, and opposing restrictions on individual liberties, the other is associated with a constraining an overly intrusive state presence.[60] This explains why many political and media actors invite the federal government to discipline the Quebec government into conformity with the norm,[61] explicitly subscribing to laissez-faire linguistics and the development of a primary loyalty to a pan-Canadian identity.[62] Paradoxically, the remedy for a Quebec state that is deemed too invasive would

57 "Bill 101 would mother a class of uneducated: Winnipeg paper", Editorial, *Toronto Star* (15 August 1977) C4.

58 *Ibid*.

59 Ross Munro, "Dr. Laurin should reconsider", Editorial, *Montreal Gazette* (13 August 1977) 6.

60 "Any normal country", Editorial, *The Globe and Mail*, (14 July 1977) 6; Scobie, *supra* note 56.

61 Mackasey, *supra* note 57.

62 Douglas Fullerton, "PQ's language bill fed on slogans that ignore history", Editorial, *Toronto Star* (18 August 1977) B4.

be the intervention of an equally invasive federal state that would actively protect individual freedoms. Respect for individual rights and freedoms, on this view, must take precedence over the expression of collective preferences via democratic lawmaking. This position is also reflected in the thinking of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who considered Bill 101 to be an attack on the ideal of tolerance that animates all Canadians.[63]

Third, there are fewer occurrences of the last dimension of Francophobia, namely the reference to a past that has not yet passed. One example of this is the way in which the nationalism advocated by the Quebec government is portrayed as part of the tradition inherited from another era. In an article in the *Montreal Gazette*, for example, Peter Cowan argues that the government's objective in adopting the *Charter of the French Language* is to create a traditional nation-state. In the context in which it is stated, this image is pejorative in that it refers to a form of political organization that is reputed to be insensitive to the diversity that makes up society.[64] In addition, references to a past that has not yet passed can also be traced indirectly in interventions and articles that question the commitment of Quebec elites to the democratic principle and accuse them of authoritarianism and manipulation.

In sum, the analysis of the debates preceding the adoption of the *Charter of the French Language* highlights above all the competition between two distinct national projects and illustrates the dual logic of differentiation and inferiorization that is intrinsic to Francophobia. The latter, it should be pointed out, is practically absent from the interventions made by members of Parliament in the House of Commons. For federal MPs, the main elements on which the Canadian socio-political imaginary is based refer to a symmetrical conception of institutional bilingualism,[65] multiculturalism, and respect for human rights and freedoms. These interventions present Quebec as being hostile to minorities and present its nationalism as being based on race and culture.[66]

63 *House of Commons Debates*, 30-2, vol 8 (14 July 1977) at 7650 (Right Hon Pierre Elliott Trudeau).

64 Peter Cowan, "'Exaggerated attacks' on English cost Laurin chance to bridge the gap", *Montreal Gazette* (22 July 1977) 7.

65 *House of Commons Debates*, 30-2, vol 8 (6 July 1977) at 7386 (Hon Robert L Stanfield) (Progressive Conservative Party Leader Robert Stanfield stated: "I say that a policy of [bilingualism] is essential to the country. A policy of quasi-unilingualism — English across the country with French permitted in Quebec and perhaps around the national capital — would not work, quite apart from any concept of justice in the country … I hope that we in Canada can overcome the feelings of [intolerance] and insecurity that are so often associated with language differences, but if we are wise we will not try to build national unity on language differences. I think that this is a fundamental error of the Prime Minister. Language differences are a cause of stress and strain, not cohesion.").

66 *House of Commons Debates*, 30-2, vol 8 (4 August 1977) at 8062 (J Robert Holmes) (Ontario Conservative MPP J Robert Holmes argued that "It is my belief that federalism and national unity

C. Bill 21: *Act Respecting the Laicity of the State*

The debates that preceded the adoption of Bill 21 in English-speaking Canada differed in several respects from those that occurred a few decades earlier around Bill 101. Most notably, these debates took place in a context where the Quebec independence movement no longer constituted a significant and immediate threat to Canadian national unity. Instead, the controversial provisions of Bill 21 concern the expression of religious beliefs within public institutions for certain categories of employees. While critics of Bill 101 recognized that the language debate has some legitimacy, an analysis of the speeches in the House of Commons and the opinion pieces and editorials in the major English-language newspapers on Bill 21 reveals a real antinomy between the way English-speaking Canada sees itself and the way it sees French-speaking Quebec. The picture painted here of Quebec can easily be likened to a process of what one might call systemic Francophobia. Unlike the Bill 101 debate, the dissociation between Bill 21 and the government, on the one hand, and Quebec society on the other, is less marked. In this regard, there was little francophobic language in the House of Commons. While negative statements were aimed exclusively at political and governmental elites, the same restraint was not found in the newspapers, where statements specific to the mechanisms of disparagement were much more numerous (23 occurrences in a sample of 26 articles) (Table 3, opposite page).

There are several instances here of the specialization and naturalization of French-speaking Quebecers and their political elites. First, the majority of the population that adheres to the principles and provisions of Bill 21 is presented in a pejorative manner. Among their attributes are ignorance, irrationality, and even a lack of critical thinking.[67] This excerpt from *The Globe and Mail* is an evocative example:

> As Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." Looking at Quebec today, where

are a viable option over independence, and to take any course of action which accepts in principle the establishment of political independence based on race and culture is to indicate our loss of faith in federalism and our future as [a] united country").

67 Ahmed Sahi, "Quebec is making Muslims choose: Your career or your beliefs", Opinion, *Toronto Star* (17 April 2019), online: <www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2019/04/17/quebec-is-making-muslims-choose-your-career-or-your-convictions> [perma.cc/VE3J-V9VN]; Jennifer Guyver, "False god of secularism gave rise to religious symbols ban", Opinion, *Toronto Star* (8 April 2019) A11; "Nuances aside, Quebec is wrong to throw minority rights under the bus", Editorial, *Toronto Star* (29 March 2019), online: <www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2019/03/29/nuances-aside-quebec-is-wrong-to-throw-minority-rights-under-the-bus> [perma.cc/XW5T-LLBG].

reality is stranger — and far more dangerous — than fiction, and where a government works to effectively sanitize bigotry against its own people, his words ring too true.[68]

***Table 3 — Bill 21 —* Act Respecting the Laicity of the State**
Number of interventions and articles with occurrences related to Francophobia by dimension (March-May 2019)

	Statements in the House of Commons	Newspapers
Disparagement (Quebec Society)	**0**	**2**
Disparagement (Government of Quebec)	**3**	**12**
Naturalization and Specialization	**0**	**2**
Unrelieved Past	**0**	**2**
Deviation From the Norm	**0**	**5**
Total	**3**	**23**

French-speaking Quebecers would not understand the true nature of the bill and, more importantly, its consequences. They are also cast as intolerant, inward-looking, and closed to diversity.[69] In particular, this *Toronto Star* editorial portrays Quebec identity as fixed: "[Quebecers] don't think they and their society should be required to adapt to the minorities among them. The burden, they believe, should be the other way around."[70] Second, Quebec political elites, especially members of the government, are described as hypocritical, manipulative, populist, and intolerant.[71] Their "anti-hijab-and-kippah

68 Sheema Khan, "Quebec's Bill C-21 is stranger than fiction. The pushback must be real", Opinion, *The Globe and Mail* (5 April 2019) A15.

69 Peter Stockland, "The Quebec government's secularism bill stinks to high heaven", Opinion, *The Globe and Mail* (1 April 2019) A13; Don Macpherson, "It's Quebec vs. Montreal in fight over Bill 21's fate", Opinion, *Montreal Gazette* (20 April 2019) A16.

70 "Nuances aside", *supra* note 68.

71 Sahi, *supra* note 68; Martin Patriquin, "More evidence of what's wrong with Bill 21: Adult education teacher's case highlights absurdities, hypocrisies and cruelties", Opinion, *Montreal Gazette* (11 April 2019) A6.

legislation"[72] is said to be racist, sexist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic.[73] Some articles also draw connections between the bill and White supremacism.[74] According to a McGill University doctoral student who published an op-ed in the *Toronto Star*, this bill "[is] being blown in our faces by politicians who think lighting Quebec's fundamental values of respect for human rights, diversity and freedom of conscience on fire and basking in the warm glow as moral panic starts to choke us all is a reasonable way to govern."[75]

In addition, two Bloc Québécois MPs, Monique Pauzé and Marilène Gill, rose in the House of Commons to denounce the comments of the Mayor of the Municipality of Hampstead, William Steinberg, who compared Bill 21 to a form of ethnic cleansing.[76] They called on the Minister of Justice, David Lametti, to condemn this comparison, which he eventually did after being asked the question several times. This hesitation undoubtedly shows a reluctance to spontaneously dissociate himself from the comment of the municipal official, which he would finally describe as inflammatory. A motion tabled by Bloc Québécois MP Monique Pauzé to condemn the comments was not adopted for lack of unanimous consent.

Second, interventions in the House of Commons and opinion pieces in English-language newspapers also highlight how Bill 21 would deviate from the Canadian norm. This idea is clearly illustrated in this excerpt from a *Toronto Star* editorial: "a major province is going in the opposite direction. It is tossing aside individual and religious rights in the name of majority values. Whatever the historical and cultural explanations, it's a gross violation of the traditions of

72 Don Macpherson, "Quebec versus Montreal", *Montreal Gazette* (19 April 2019), online: <montrealgazette.com/opinion/columnists/macpherson-quebec-versus-montreal> [perma.cc/8NCF-Z5TU].

73 "Nuances aside", *supra* note 67; Julie Anne Pattee, "Bill 21 may be xenophobic but Quebecois culture is not", *Toronto Star* (24 May 2019), online: <www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2019/05/24/bill-21-may-be-xenophobic-but-quebecois-culture-is-not.html> [perma.cc/MKZ6-3LQL];Sahi, *supra* note 68; Andrew Coyne, "Are we going to abandon Quebec's minorities?", Comment, *National Post* (2 April 2019) A4.

74 See e.g. Fariha Naqvi-Mohamed, "I'm feeling a sense of sadness", Opinion, *Montreal Gazette* (12 April 2019) A7 (a Nova Scotian shares her dismay: "I lived my entire life as a fiercely proud Canadian and Quebecer, but always remained proud of my roots. Somehow the political landscape has changed, a country founded and densely populated by immigrants has become increasingly polarized. Those of us whose families immigrated in the last three generations, those of us who are people of colour and those who adhere to a minority religious faith seem to be under scrutiny. It is not because we have changed, because we have not. Nor is it because we have done anything to draw the ire of the far right and the white supremacists other than to merely exist.").

75 Guyver, *supra* note 67.

76 *House of Commons Debates,* 42-1, No 402 (10 April 2019) at 26933 (Monique Pauzé); *House of Commons Debates*, 42-1, No 403 (11 April 2019) at 27010 (Marilène Gill).

tolerance and accommodation that should be the hallmark of any modern, complex society."[77] Just as was the case in the discussions about Bill 101, Quebec society and its government are discursively constructed in opposition to the rest of English-speaking Canada and its values of openness and inclusion.[78] As Justice Minister David Lametti puts it, the Quebec law clearly violates individual rights and freedoms: "The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protects the rights of all citizens. We cannot choose which to protect and which to limit. Our position is clear. The state must not dictate what people can or cannot wear, regardless of their beliefs."[79] Prime Minister Justin Trudeau goes one step further by deeming Bill 21 discriminatory, when he says that "there is no place for discrimination against citizens in a free society, especially not on the basis of their religion. This is what I believe and what this government believes. We will always believe, unequivocally, that we must defend the rights of all Canadians at all times."[80] This legitimate criticism does not illustrate a Francophobic attitude, but shows how Canadian society does not recognize itself in the way the government of Quebec, supported by a majority of French-speaking Quebecers, conceives of the neutrality of the state in matters of religion. Others show less restraint, though, suggesting not only that the secular preferences of a majority of Quebecers cannot be reconciled with "Canadian" values, but also that these preferences are regressive: "If Quebec pushes ahead with this regressive bill and uses the notwithstanding clause to insulate it from court challenges, appropriate federal and interprovincial sanctions should follow."[81] Once again, it would be up to the other provinces and the federal government to discipline the government of Quebec. Behind this explicit invitation is the idea that historically Canada has been too tolerant of Quebec and the policies it has implemented to express and protect its identity.[82] On the other hand, though, others qualify the differences between Quebec and Canada by portraying the former as a carbon copy of the latter. For example, in the pages of the *Toronto Star*, Ahmed Sahi

77 "Nuances aside", *supra* note 68.

78 See Ted Wakefield, "If it smells racist …", Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail* (30 March 2019) O10 (In an op-ed in *the Globe and Mail*, one reader from Winnipeg stated that: "In the rest of Canada, our communities insist only that religious minorities aren't accorded undue influence in politics. In Quebec, Bill 21's ideology of secularism would demand the faithful be absent from the public square and, perhaps in time, absent from their communities as well."); Dennis Forsyth, "If it smells racist…", Letter to the Editor, *The Globe and Mail* (30 March 2019) O10 (In the same newspaper, another reader from British Columbia went further: "In response to Konrad Yakabuski's opinion on Quebec's proposed religious symbol ban and the 'complexity' of the debate, I remember a wise old man once telling me: If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck — it's a duck. Well, if it feels racist, sounds racist, and smells racist — I'd bet that it's racist.").

79 *House of Commons Debates*, 42-1, No 403 (11 April 2019) at 27010 (Hon David Lametti).

80 *House of Commons Debates*, 42-1, No 402 (10 April 2019) at 26933 (Right Hon Justin Trudeau).

81 Wakefield, *supra* note 77.

82 Coyne, *supra* note 74.

depicts popular support for Bill 21 and its controversial provisions as the antithesis of Quebec's culture and rich history, which is said to be based on immigration, tolerance, and equality of opportunity.[83]

An analysis of the discourse surrounding Bill 21 also highlights a number of instances that depict Quebec society, its government, and Bill 21 as being trapped in the past. To this end, several strong and depreciatory images are mobilized. For example, Bill 21 is compared directly or indirectly to the Test Oath, which excluded Catholics from civil and military service in the then recently conquered British Province of Quebec between 1763 and 1774;[84] to racial segregation in the early 1960s in the United States;[85] to the sartorial control exercised over Jews in Nazi Germany; to the policies of Pol Pot's Cambodia or Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkey;[86] and to Voltaire's France or Duplessis' Province of Quebec.[87] These examples present Bill 21 and its principles as undemocratic, incompatible with liberalism, and outdated. In the words of fallen media magnate Conrad Black, writing in the *National Post*: "Quebec should have outgrown nonsense like Bill 21 long ago."[88] Yet it is interesting to note that the vast majority of comparisons are drawn from an authoritarian past, never mentioning that liberal democracies in Western Europe have also restricted the wearing of religious symbols in public spaces and institutions of the state.

In sum, the arguments against Bill 21 show a certain hardening of the tone and attitude of English-speaking Canada towards the preferences expressed by Quebec society and its political elites. The deviation from the norm and from the way Canada represents itself prompts stronger reactions than in the case of Bill 101.

IV. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was not to defend or condemn Quebec's legislation on language or secularism. In a democratic society, criticism is necessary

83 Sahi, *supra* note 68.

84 "Quebec's hijab ban doesn't just violate the Charter. It breaks with Quebec's history", Editorial, *The Globe and Mail* (30 March 2019), online: <www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-globe-editorial-quebecs-hijab-ban-doesnt-just-violate-the-charter> [perma.cc/SF4F-AEUC].

85 Sahi, *supra* note 67.

86 Heather Mallick, "The cruelty behind Quebec's hat war", Opinion, *Toronto Star* (1 April 2019), online: <www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2019/04/01/the-cruelty-behind-quebecs-hat-war> [perma.cc/JG5K-63RH].

87 Rick Salutin, "Religious headgear and the ongoing search for meaning in Quebec", *Toronto Star* (10 May 2019) A11.

88 Conrad Black, "Quebec should have outgrown this nonsense: Bill 21 is offensive, in impact and historic implications", Opinion, *National Post* (4 May 2019) A19.

and legitimate as long as it concerns the substance and principles underlying state policies and laws. However, as illustrated above, some stakeholders refuse to limit themselves to commenting on these aspects alone. Political debates provide an opportunity to discern features that reveal the preconceptions and prejudices — even stereotypes — that feed the collective consciousness. One of these features relates more specifically to the representation of French-speaking Quebecers in the Canadian social and political space.

Several findings emerge from an analysis of speeches in the House of Commons and opinion articles and editorials in the main English-language newspapers on the debates preceding the National Assembly's adoption of Bill 101 in 1977 and Bill 21 in 2019. First, there is a marked difference in the frequency of Francophobic statements in the House of Commons and in English-language dailies. Such statements are few in number in the former, but clearly predominant in the latter. For the most part, parliamentarians use a register that, while critical, does not generally target French-speaking Quebecers or their elites in an undifferentiated way or refer to them collectively in a disparaging manner. This is not the case, though, in the print media. In the press, the portrait of Quebec is explicitly part of a process of differentiation and, at times, disparagement that is associable with systemic Francophobia. In this respect, the analysis presented here shows several manifestations of a radical critique of the interpretation and application of legal norms favoured by a majority of francophone Quebecers and their political elites. The expression of this Francophobia is complex and can be qualified by whether or not one considers the undifferentiated disparagement of government measures as extending automatically to the popular will and identity of Quebec. Indeed, the government is more often targeted than the Quebec population as a whole, but the fact remains that the population's support for government measures means that attacking one is also, indirectly, attacking the other. Nevertheless, what characterizes this form of disparagement is its undifferentiated character insofar as it is not so much the legal devices present in the legislation that are portrayed negatively as the actors who implement them and who are, among other things, accused of manipulating the population and acting in an authoritarian manner. The radicalness or intensity of this criticism also seems to vary over time. Thus, even if certain comments tend to reify Quebec francophones and attribute negative qualities to them collectively, the deviation from a universal societal norm that is part of "Canadian-style" liberal pluralism recurs repeatedly in the discourse. Here, two visions of liberalism continue to confront each other, with the discursive apparatus seeking to show the moral superiority of one over the other that is being denounced. This is a powerful indicator of the construction of a Canadian identity that calls for

the designation of a "Them" that cannot live up to the normative aspirations of modern Canada.

The use of this process is most pronounced in the criticisms of Bill 21, which may be viewed as an effect of the post-1982 reconfiguration of Canadian identity marked by the entrenchment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and multiculturalism. The reconfiguration of the Canadian identity is illustrated by the integration of certain "Others" (individuals and groups who are neither of British nor French ancestry) into a Canadian "We" that opposes all forms of discrimination. In this context, certain initiatives of the Quebec government appear unacceptable precisely because they break with these ideals. This amounts to the emergence and consolidation of a new Anglo-conformity that has nothing to do with the one that characterized the dominant Canadian identity until the late 1960s.

This study does not argue that disagreements between Quebec and Canada are most of the time expressed in the public space using the discursive devices of Francophobia. Indeed, this is not the case among the political actors who have intervened in the House of Commons. Nor does this research claim that the age-old opposition between the two political communities can be explained by Francophobic sentiment. Rather, it demonstrates that the use of undifferentiated disparagement, in the forms identified, is present, recurrent, and persistent, particularly in the English-language print media. This is why it is possible to say, in the two cases studied, that certain representations went far beyond reasonable criticism and amounted to systemic Francophobia. The use of this particular form of disparagement of French-speaking Quebecers or their political elites makes it difficult, if not impossible, to seek mutual understanding within the framework of reasonable pluralism that should be at the heart of democratic debate.

Finally, this study raises a series of questions that could be the subject of further research. Although the study has uncovered the axiological forms of our proposed definition of Francophobia, a process of differentiation based on the ethnic and linguistic origins of Quebecers, its systemic character based on their persistence and cumulative nature remains to be confirmed by using a larger number of cases.[89] The disparagement was evident in the two cases selected,

89 There is no shortage of examples: the reactions to elections in which the PQ or the CAQ are brought to power; the debates over the constitutional accords of Meech (1987-1990) and Charlottetown (1992); the 1995 referendum; the "Charter of Values" presented by the Parti Québécois government (2013-2014); the questioning of the equalization system; Bill 96 of 2021 (*An Act respecting the official and common language of Quebec, French*); etc.

and there was evidently some persistence over time, but it would be unwise to draw a strong general conclusion at this stage of the research. Nevertheless, beyond the disparagement, this text also highlights some revealing devices of the self-representation of Canadian identity. It shows how the latter is constructed in opposition to a "Them," in this case Quebec, which it portrays pejoratively to reaffirm its attachment to certain major principles of modernity.