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"Ethnic Profile, Historical Processes, and the Cultural Identity Crisis among Quebeckers of French Descent"

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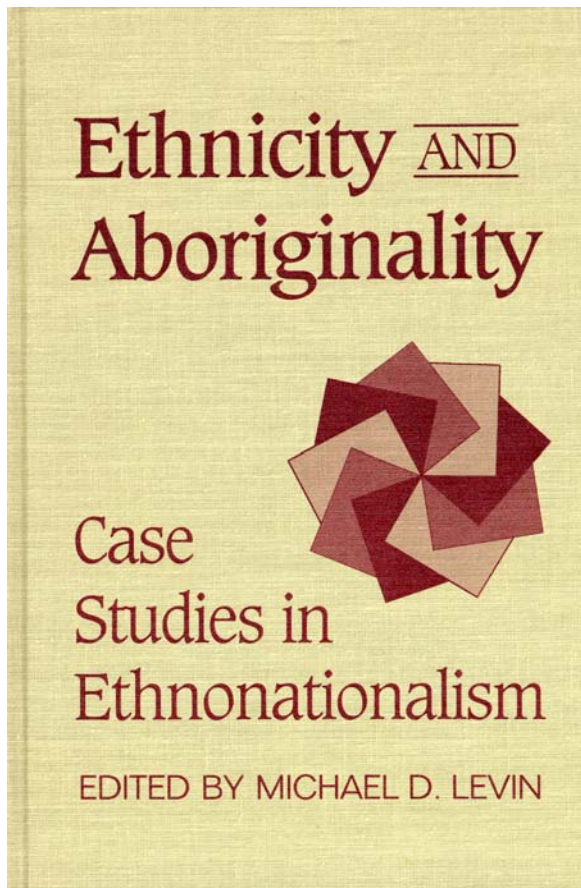
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Cultural identity and development

The idea of making an ethnological analysis of the cultural identity crisis among Quebeckers of French descent seems to be well suited for a colloquium entitled "Ethnonationalism: Canadian and International Perspective." I want to do it from a development perspective. The close relationships that exist between cultural identity and societal development are of such importance that they justify both the nature and the orientations of such a theoretical stand. Some of these justifications are, from the standpoint of the vital interests of a particular ethnic group, related to the concept of its development (or of its social progress) and to the imperative, of its "culturalization" Others refer to social conditions that make development possible through a process of self-consciousness on the part of the whole ethnic group. Whereas the former belong to the order of objectives, the latter are integral parts of instrumental strategies.

The social progress of an ethnic group can be slowed down or accelerated by a large number of sociopolitical and sociocultural conditions that acquire great significance for the cultural identity of a people. From my viewpoint, the concept of cultural identity has three ma-

jor components: a collective self-image which, because of its specificity, confers to a group its distinctive character; social institutions that embody its various elements and its way of life; and a projection into the future which ensures its continuity and its lasting while taking into account the dynamism capable of transforming it. Thus conceived, the cultural identity of an ethnic group constitutes a powerful evolutionary lever that firms up ethnic self-image and constitutes a guiding principle for collective development projects. But, for this connection to take place, principles upon which this identity rests must be known and internalized; their concrete expressions, through their consensual nature, must be found in all social strata, and the prospective views of the ethnic group's future must be convergent. We would then be in a situation where the cultural identity of the group is a vigorous one. A weak cultural identity, however, would manifest itself in acculturated behavioural patterns, in cultural confusion, and, at the extreme, in deculturation phenomena. Such cultural patterns could not serve as the launching grounds for creativity and for the conception of future societal projects. The working hypothesis that I wish to document in this case study on French Quebec, from an emic perspective, is that Quebeckers- of French descent are going through a profound cultural identity crisis that imperils the survival of a francophone cultural entity on the North American continent.

The cultural identity crisis
of french-speaking Quebeckers

In order to document the hypothesis advanced here, the type of analysis follows two interconnected pathways: that of institutional frameworks and that of the life habits of individuals in their respective sociocultural niches. Such splitting of a pattern is being made with the view to giving a sharper perspective on these two fundamental aspects of the ethnicity crisis of Quebec francophones.

Social Institutions

The cultural identity principles, the particular social institutions as well as the other complementary phenomena tied to ethnicity, from a collective standpoint appear to me to be sharp reading instruments in the examination of the impact of rapid social changes, whether they are the results of endogenous determinants or the consequences of external dynamisms, to the extent that they best reflect the numerous dialectical tensions existing between individual and collective identity, between idiosyncratic behavioural patterns and institutional armatures, and between resistance to change and involvement in acculturational processes. The swing between these polar stances obeys cultural norms and constraints that act either as curbing or pressure elements, as much at the level of the individual in his daily living as that of institutional frameworks. A close examination of these oscillations might lead to discovering how and through which processes they transform the ethnic image that the French-speaking Quebeckers have of themselves as a group, their ways of life, and their social representations that nurture their concepts and views relating to social development (les projets de société).

Although they have fostered the use of the French language in public services throughout Canada, federal linguistic policies related to the concept of a multicultural state and the policies on bilingualism - including in this Bill C-72 - have not been successful in stopping the proportional reduction of the francophone population of Canada that has occurred in the past few decades. The French-speaking population of Canada today barely represents twenty-five per cent of the total. In contrast, within the Province of Quebec, the population of French descent has been successful in maintaining its relative numerical importance, eighty per cent of the total population, despite a sharp decrease in the birth rate. Such a stability, however, cannot necessarily be viewed as a marker of the vigour of cultural traditions, since it is being accompanied by the shattering of ethnic institutions and the weak-

ening of the basic principles of the cultural identity configuration (Tremblay 1983).

Let us look at historical processes with the intent of documenting that assertion. The national consciousness of Quebeckers of French descent arose in the middle of the nineteenth century, that is, about one hundred years after the British Conquest. At that time, they collectively became aware that the Roman Catholic church, the parochial confessional school, the patriarchal family, their network of social solidarity, and the French language were the main ethnic institutions of what was then being called the 'French Canadian Nation.' Through that expressed recognition, these social institutions became the armature of cultural patterns that embodied a spiritual worldview, a type of ruralist and theocentric social organization, at the heart of which was an abundant population constituting the main contingent factor for economic production and the reproduction of cultural patterns. A conservative nationalism, self-centred and impervious to external ideologies, was at first an affirmative nationalism and gradually became an aspiration to a nation-state.

At the time of the election of a government led by the Parti Québécois, the distinctive principles of the cultural identity of French-speaking Quebeckers were gradually shifted from ethnic institutions to the nation-state. This transfer in the cultural identity infrastructures brought about some drastic changes in both the content and the expression of Quebec identity. Those changes were so rapid and without due ordering that they fostered many negative consequences. From a nationalistic perspective, one was the discarding, in 1980, of the political sovereignty project.

Far from achieving national aspirations and nurturing collective hopes, the nation-state of French Quebec, at this embryonic stage, was confronted by hard facts in the federal-provincial arena (the repatriation of the Canadian constitution without the consent of Quebec after the negative answer to the Quebec referendum) and by the unpredictable consequences of the 1981-2 economic crisis. These two major events imposed upon the government of René Lévesque the necessity to endorse laws and install administrative policies that were quite unpopular, especially among the most faithful clientele of the Parti Qué-

bécois. This conjuncture had given rise to an abrupt disenchantment toward the nation-state, at the same time endangering the cultural foundations of the francophone community. The latter was in such a state of turmoil that it found it impossible to reorient itself on the disintegrating traditional ethnic institutions, nor was it capable of inventing replacement institutions that would be generally attractive. That abrupt discrepancy between Frenchspeaking nationalists and the nation-state happened at the very time when the Quebec spatio-temporal universe was undergoing a massive and undifferentiated invasion by the Anglo-American mass culture. This penetration of southern value systems and models of behaviour has been accentuated by the enforcement in 1989 of free trade policies between Canada and the United States of America which, by the way, do not seem to exclude cultural institutions from the agreement. This dualistic stance, the rejection of the nation-state as a principle of ethnic assertion, on the one hand, and the invasion of public and private life by numerous elements of American culture, on the other, imperceptibly constructed a powerful structure of collective alienation from the original culture.

Some people are going to disagree with me about my statement above. They will use as an argument the established fact that, in the past, French-speaking Quebeckers were successful in surmounting, on a number of occasions, the historical difficulties that became a threat to their ethnicity and that they are still capable, by which deus ex machina I do not know, of getting out of the deadlock. Some others, even more optimistic than the preceding ones, reflecting as far as I am concerned a besieged mentality, are going to cast back to the numerous questions associated with the survival of a French Quebec: 'Since our language remains a distinctive cultural trait and continues to be our main instrument for self-affirmation, does it not suffice to convince you'? This powerful linguistic consciousness, to be sure, was attenuated, in its real and symbolic scope, when the Supreme Court of Canada stated that it was unconstitutional to impose French unilingualism. in the display of signs outside business establishments. The current government (controlled by the Liberal party), even though it was committed to a federalist ideology, has used the 'notwithstanding' clause in order to enact Bill 178 in the Quebec Legislative Assembly. The bill represents a compromise that has left unsatisfied both the protagonists of a radical nationalism expressed in French unilingualism

and the members of the English-speaking community who felt deprived of one of their fundamental individual rights. In general terms, however, Bill 178 has left the great majority of the francophone community satisfied.

That said, it is right to think that Bill 101 produced a strong linguistic consciousness among the intellectual elite and the middle class of the francophone community. But it has failed to francocize immigrants since at present three out of four are English-oriented in order to better their chances of success in the workplace. English is the North American language (la langue de I'Américanité), the medium of prestige and of advancement within the professional world. Is it not spoken by more than ninety-five per cent of North American people? It comes as no surprise, then, that French is the only language facing a survival challenge in North America, even in La Belle Province. We do not have to be surprised either that Bill 101, until it was rigorously applied, had a limited effect on the process of francocization of business enterprises and of commercial signs and on the improvement of the written and spoken language among members of the upcoming generations.

Furthermore, despite the overwhelming importance of linguistic patterns in a given culture, language only represents one cultural element among many others. To assign to the spoken language the primacy among the foundations of cultural identity, let alone to say that it is the only one, would amount to mistaking the container for the contents. Moreover, to consider the French language in Quebec as a factor of social cohesiveness among French speakers, and between the people of French descent and the various ethnic groups or the indigenous peoples, would amount to giving it a strength that it does not have at this time. Its mediating value and its integrating power are more symbolic than real.

How does one explain this functional weakness of the French language in Quebec? Diverse contextual and conjunctural elements have to be taken into account. Space does not permit a detailed answer, but there is an established fact that is important. The French-speaking community is divided about its main cultural orientations. Value systems of authority, economic standards of living, environmental condi-

tions, ways of life, political affiliation, and so on all vary and, as a result, create many reference points for identity. The diversity of cultural allegiances and ethnic values does not rest on a unitary foundation.

Let me refer to a second category of factors which account for some of the weaknesses of the French language in La Belle Province - the cross-cultural context in the school system. In some Montreal schools, for instance, allophone students are more numerous than those of French descent, accentuating the weight of the 'otherness' in systems of thought and in social relationships. It is imperative, too, to underscore the increasing importance of overtly expressed aspirations of the ethnic communities, both old and new, especially in greater Montreal, to participate more actively in the full economic, social, and cultural development of Quebec as full-fledged partners. The leaders of these communities vigorously denounce the social policies of the dominant society aimed at keeping them in a folkloric ghetto. They require, on the basis of sound arguments, an adequate representation in the public and parapublic functions and in the information media. In the workplace, as in daily social environments, they determinedly fight racist prejudices and ethnocentric views of those with whom they interact. To be sure, they live in Quebec but their ethnic roots, their many sources of inspiration and the symbols which express them, while being visible here, especially in the case of ethnic groups having some numerical importance, belong to the mother country. Under all those circumstances, in Metropolitan Montreal at least, the French language is bound to remain at most an instrument of bringing together the French-speaking and those of foreign origin and of reducing areas of misunderstandings. To consider the French language to be a source of social cohesiveness in such a multi-ethnic environment, goes far beyond what it can provide. The functional prerequisites simply do not exist.

The Sociocultural Universe and the Daily Activities of the French-speaking in Quebec

In the first move, I draw a panoramic view of the sociocultural space of present-day Quebec with the aim of showing the issues at stake and the various forces acting upon the society. I shall be able, afterwards, to provide you with the genesis and the evolution of those issues from the cultural identity standpoint.

Issues at Stake

It appears to me impossible to define the way of life and the daily activities of French-speaking Quebeckers today without referring to the settlement patterns along the banks of the St Lawrence River in the seventeenth century, without reconstructing the main institutional structures that were responsible for the ways of life and value systems, without alluding to the main dynamics of change that have been decisive in the evolution of Quebec society toward modernity, and without identifying the ideological systems that have ensured the survival of the French culture on the North American continent up to now. This sketch enables me to outline the profile of institutions, values, and behaviour of five million French speakers who have built an original ethnic profile by borrowing cultural elements from three distinct civilizations: the indigenous peoples (Inuit and Amerindian) who lived in that territory before the coming of the whites; the settlers originating from numerous French provinces at the beginning of the seventeenth century who strove to maintain their regional traditions on American soil; and the various Anglo-Saxon stocks, settling here after the conquest of Canada by the British in 1760 and during the decade that followed the American Revolution (1775-85), with lifestyles stemming from British institutions.

Quebec is at the heart of the Canadian and North American francophone diaspora. Its history is filled with unexpected events and outcomes and numerous contradictions. In the first place, the survival of the people of French descent in Quebec has contradicted the predictions of Lord Durham, who in his famous but gloomy report of 1839 on the Quebec situation, shortly after the rebellion of the patriots (1837-9), foresaw the ready assimilation of the French-speaking Canadians under the pressure of the powerful British institutions. French Quebec, however, did not raise itself to the high messianic ideals of the Abbé Lionel GrouIx, one of its most impetuous nationalists, who aspired to convince every French-speaking Quebecker and the French speakers living in the other Canadian provinces of a Catholic and French mission ordained by God (and, therefore, sacred) on American soil. That utopian vision of a French America has maintained itself, as an ideology, among some ultranationalist groups, but gradually lost its appeal when it was confronted by real facts. Today, the francophones' image of North America is that of sheer numbers and of lost territories, not only in the United States and in English Canada, but even in Quebec itself when one pays due attention to linguistic transfers from French to English, as reflected in five-year census data.

From the angle of its cultural reconstruction, Quebec's history is that of the many tensions which existed between the two main ethnic and linguistic communities (the French and the English) aiming at ensuring that their collective rights as ethnic minorities were respected in law and in practice. The francophones, for their part, saw to it that the institutional structures of the central government were respectful of theirs. The anglophones did the same within Quebec's social institutions, particularly at the time of the Parti Québécois government (1976-85). The English-French conflicts have become sharper than ever since the second Liberal government of Robert Bourassa, which followed the election of 1985, has maintained through the use of Law 178, in contradiction to the ruling of the Supreme Court, unilingual French signs outside commercial establishments. As a reaction to the decision of the Quebec Legislative Assembly, the anglophones of the Montreal region established a new political party, the Equality party, and have been successful in having four of their members elected during the political campaign of the fall of 1989. Moreover, the death of the Meech Lake Accord recognizing the distinctive character of the

Quebec society, was in a large measure, the indirect, if not the direct result, of Quebec's unwillingness to abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court. The establishment of the Mixed Legislative Commission on the political future of Quebec in the fall of 1990 created a new sociopolitical contest whose definitive outcome is yet unknown for Canada's future as a federal country. So far, one outstanding established fact comes out of the study of the preliminary briefs submitted to the commission (500, we are being told). It is that the status quo ante is being unanimously rejected as an acceptable solution, even by people and groups identified with the federalist ideology. In general, it is felt, that, with the rejection by the rest of Canada of Quebec's basic prerequisites to reintegrate Confederation, Quebec must firmly express a political stance, such as complete sovereignty, in order to impose a type of negotiation with the rest of Canada in which Quebec will be in a position of power, in contrast to the negotiating processes of the past.

The pressure for holding a referendum on the question of Quebec's political status, which was to be held in 1992, is another trend that testifies to the seriousness of Quebec's intentions. Members of the English-speaking community, who have been in Quebec for generations, are prepared to abide by whatever political choice the majority of Quebeckers will make. The Equality party has already committed itself to conform to the views of the majority. I do not know as yet to what extent such stands are being influenced by recent sample surveys where two-thirds of Quebec residents are fully prepared to endorse the idea of full political sovereignty for the Province of Quebec. Contrary to what happened in 1980, the business community is not any longer unwilling to accept full political autonomy for Quebec, if the economic ties with the rest of Canada are retained. To be sure, this is a new political climate that occurs in an unpredictable social environment. There are still unknown factors that may emerge and transform a situation which is so far in line with Quebec's traditional aspirations. What lessons could be learned from the past?

Quebec, a society with a majority of French-speaking residents, has undergone many crises sparked by its bicultural and multi-ethnic composition and by the divergent views expressed within each of the existing ethnic groups regarding their future in a modern Quebec.

Land claims and the appearance of a self-determination process among the indigenous peoples (Tremblay 1989) - the aboriginal crisis of the summer of 1990 in Quebec is but a pale reflection of those native aspirations - as well as the ethnic and religious aspirations of some ethnic groups within the educational system in the workplace, and within the information media, are clear-cut, overt expressions of internal frictions. Furthermore, the dualistic ideological split of the francophones, which became manifest at the time of the 1980 referendum, might yet be, up to a point, operational. If, in the past, unanimity was spontaneously established on the basis of survival, today the notions of fundamental ethnic claims and aspirations, of economic development, and of ethnic progress, the main components of a modern Quebec society, un projet de société, are being translated in divergent views.

The main elements on which those divergences rest among francophones are several. I shall restrict myself to mentioning the most important ones: the nationalist discourse, which has evolved from a conservative ideology to an ideology of progress and development; legislative reforms that converted the Quebec state into a powerful economic and social instrument of intervention in public affairs and made it the main lever of group promotion, hence the emergence of a nation-state; the new functions and roles of unions and semi-public organizations in the definition of their main fields of competence and of their relationships with government; and individual and collective reactions to cross-cultural relationships, in general, and to the increased and massive influence of the Anglo-American mass media in particular.

It should not be forgotten that the Province of Quebec remained a rural and agricultural country until the Second World War by standing aside in a well-protected cultural niche. The then-dominant ideology justified that closing off by invoking the necessity for the francophones to save their religious, linguistic, and family traditions. That main cultural orientation, principally spelled out by the religious elites that kept a solid grip on the bourgeoisie and the lower classes, was to maintain French Quebec in a state of inferiority in the scientific, industrial, and commercial domains for a long time. The urbanization and industrialization of Quebec progressed at such a fast tempo during

the Second World War that the Belle Province at that time fully integrated itself into the North American economic and sociopolitical universe. It is to be noticed, however, that values did not change at the same pace as did industrial and commercial structures. This established fact is not much of a surprise to those who are familiar with the ethnological paradigm of change. The astute Maurice Duplessis knew it, and he did not fail to take advantage of such a universal law upon coming back to power in 1944. During the fifteen years that his political hegemony lasted (1944-59), he advocated a return to traditional institutional structures and values, which, in his view, had been profaned by technological changes, the coming into people's attitudes of universal values, and, most of all, by the entry of women into the workforce.

An ideology of catching up was to sustain the strivings of the 'Quiet Revolution' of Jean Lesage (1960-6) and of governments that followed. The guiding principles of that planned transformation were established in reaction to a conservative ideology and did produce a rejuvenation of the state apparatus and did install main social reforms in the fields of education (the democratization of the educational system), of social affairs (the socialization of medicine and the medicalization of social services), and of natural resources (the nationalization of hydro-electricity and other natural resources).

These guiding ideals and those socializing practices were to be implemented on a prospective time horizon where the Province of Quebec, while stressing the importance of the exemplary patrimonial value of traditional institutions, would acquire greater autonomy in the management of public affairs relative to the federal state and would make itself noticed for the high quality of its technical and cultural achievements. The hydroelectric development of James Bay and the agreements, then considered exemplary, with the aboriginal peoples, the World's Fair of 1967 in Montreal, the 1976 Olympics in the same city, the International Flower Exhibit, the coming to Quebec City of the great sailing vessels in 1984, the recognition by UNESCO of Quebec City as a World Heritage Site, and some others of a similar importance, all belong to the kinds of achievements associated with the new international personality of Quebec.

The election of 15 November 1976 represents another historical event of great importance for French-speaking Quebeckers. The Parti Québécois, upon taking over the control of government institutions, from the Liberals, put forth new political orientations and challenging development projects. The 1981-2 economic crisis, to which I referred earlier, cast a devastating shadow on that political panorama so filled with high promises, brought about a sudden dismay among the young who had been particularly vulnerable to relatively high unemployment rates, and tarnished the image of the Parti Québécois. It was during that time that the identity crisis of the francophones in Quebec was exacerbated by a crisis of cultural objectives. Quebec then felt the need to redefine itself and take into account its multiple component parts. This occurred at the very time when a closer and more intensive integration into the North America space was taking place with the ratifying, by the Canadian government, in 1988, of a general free trade agreement with the United States.

The Quebec of the 1980s

Since it is out of the question that in this chapter I reconstruct the cultural models and behavioural patterns of traditional Quebec, let me attempt to describe what they have become in the past decade.

The survival ideology, centred on the past achievements of ancestors, is being replaced by a development ideology centred on aspirations oriented to the future. The comparative horizon has become English Canada. The objectives are crystal clear. The francophones of Quebec have to acquire and master the required expertise in order to get the most important management functions within Quebec institutions. They must build the basic instruments of their economic development and of their social advancement in order to match the level of success of the wealthiest Canadian province, that is, Ontario. A state that has leveraging power (un État-levier) is perceived as the most appropriate structure to lead the economic planning and the social development required for such attainments. Quebec wants to build its

cultural revolution on modern principles and practices. A third ideo-logical phase, that of national affirmation, coincided with the exercise the political power by a sovereigntist party. The Parti Québécois thus became the main founding factor of an ethnic framework invested with an importance that supersedes all other institutional settings. That party established as its main priority the development of the French culture and installed the kinds of political structures that would gradu-ally lead to a full political autonomy.

Although the general assessment of the Quiet Revolution is rela-tively positive, the Lesage government did not achieve its main objec-tive, that is, it did not have the leverage to make Ottawa recognize Quebec as a distinct province within the Canadian Confederation. In 1989, the Quebec of Robert Bourassa was again pushed back to the departure line. That lack of recognition became, as we know now, the main obstacle to the successful conclusion of the negotiations between Quebec and Ottawa in order to gain back the rights and prerogatives lost during the Second World War through a centralized process and to ensure the full recognition of privileges rightfully agreed upon by the so-called founding peoples in the British North America Act of 1867. Upon looking back at what happened then, one comes to the conclusion that the state planning carried out by the Lesage govern-ment was from top to bottom and failed to rely to a large extent on the needs of the people. Lesage's prospective horizon was too wide and he underestimated the resistance to change. In the extreme, the disen-chantments related to unrealistic expectations and the political corrup-tion of the 1950s were the onset of a kind of nationalism oriented to-wards economic development and political self-determination.

The Breaking Down of the Institutional Frameworks of Social Cohesiveness and the Cultural Identity Crisis

The rapid social changes which accompanied the transformations of French Quebec, either in the institutional structures or in behav-ioural patterns, did not produce only beneficial effects. There exists, at the present time, a questioning of new institutional structures (the pri-

vatization of state-owned industries, for instance), conflicting cultural guidelines, and a wide variety of public discourse relating to the content of ethnic identity and to the principles upon which it must rest. Deep discrepancies have emerged between past traditions and those of today. This cultural discontinuity is reflected in the changing patterns of religious beliefs and practices, in the breaking down of the family structure and functions, in the strengthening of materialist values related to a consumer society, in the questioning of the system of authority, in the promotion of individualist values, and in the relative absence of interest toward the voluntary organizations; committed to promoting ethnic aspirations. These ruptures, it should be noted, are occurring within the very elements of a civilization that, up to the recent past, had ensured the ethnic viability of Quebec francophones.

One must add to the discontinuities identified those related to the incorporation into the life habits of the majority of an ideology of confrontation that now sets the climate for the day-to-day relationships among interdependent groups, such as those that exist between the state and its civil servants in the public and parapublic sectors, between business owners and workers, between teachers and students, between parents and children, and between men and women. The loss of cultural elements, such as the respect for the civil and religious authority, the submission to those in positions of responsibility, a spiritual worldview, and the quasi-unanimity in value systems, is being accompanied by the acceptance, without any criticism, of a long string of new values. To these transfers in the content of the ethnic profile of French-speaking Quebeckers one must add the continuous pressures coming from the cultural imperialism of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Let me point out some of them: computers and their data bases that reflect alien modes of thinking, pay television that accentuates the penetration of the English-speaking culture, and the mass media in general, all of which make for even greater pressure on the Quebec cultural island. France itself, and other francophone countries, feel threatened by the invasion of the American culture. Thus, it becomes easier to understand why such a small cultural unit as Quebec, a close neighbour to the American Goliath with which it entertains intense commercial, industrial, political, and social relationships, feels so vitally threatened in its foundations and in its legitimacy.

This identity crisis is exacerbated by criticism of the welfare state, and the consequent privatization of state-owned industries and enterprises and shrewd revision of social security measures, and further worsened by the disenchantments regarding the nation-state, a concept which seems to have been discarded following the coming to power in December of 1985 of a party advocating a renewed federalism. Let us refer, first, to the criticisms of the welfare state and, later on, to the defeat of the Parti Québécois government,

In 1985, the Bourassa government won the election by promising to reduce the public debt, to create new jobs for the young, and to re-establish, according to a bonne-ententiste ideology, more harmonious relationships with the federal state. It was officially called 'the worthy risk' (le beau risque). At the beginning of its mandate, the Liberal government was successful in reducing public expenses and in finding ways to accommodate fluctuating economic cycles by implementing the implicit ideology of the Liberal party, that is, the promotion of private enterprise and of a profitable entrepreneurial state. These economic guidelines were viewed with favour by the public because of the vigour of the North American economy and the lack of alternatives on the part of the opposition party. The Liberals were successful in gaining a second mandate in 1989 despite the election by the Parti Québécois of a new leader, Jacques Parizeau, a prominent ex-minister of the Quebec government.

Let us move now to the disenchantments. One must revert to the economic crisis of the early 1980s. René Lévesque was then head of the Quebec government. As I mentioned earlier, in order to reduce government expenses, his government in 1982 passed legislative measures that were unpopular, especially among those who had re-elected him immediately after the failure of the Quebec referendum, that is, among the young, the new middle classes, the employees of the public and parapublic sectors, people on welfare, and college and university students and their professors. In wanting, in other respects, to regulate the evolution of group identity (l'identité nationale) of Quebec francophones through a restrictive view of sociocultural patterns, the Parti Québécois was counterproductive. The use of instruments of economic development, of social promotion, and of ethnic self-development had produced results opposite to those intended.

Since the nation-state had gradually become the exclusive symbol of ethnic identity and collective emancipation, it was at the centre of numerous disputes not only among those who shared political seccession as an objective, but also among individuals who were willing to consider it. This had negative consequences on the collective self-image of francophones and confused the cultural guidelines that were going to be implemented in their survival strategies.

The failure of the nation-state of the 1980s to yield the expected results could be viewed from another perspective, that of global society. In its governmental functions in a multi-ethnic society, the nation-state had failed to promote the ethnic objectives of those endorsing complete sovereignty for Quebec, in either an exclusive manner or on a general basis without prejudice to non-francophones. It had to manage state affairs in the interest of all citizens, including those who did not share the Parti Québécois ideology. Moreover, the francophone community is itself divided concerning its political future and governmental strategies to be used to achieve due compromises. This ideology is fuzzy about cultural elements to be retained, even, or especially, if linguistic patterns are excluded.

These circumstances in the state made Quebec francophones yet more vulnerable to the invading pressure of Americanism. The ethnic roots of the up-coming generations are very fragile. Difficulties in the labour market and the consequent unemployment of the young mean that primo vivere takes precedence over any other worry or goal, including that of the maintenance of their cultural heritage.

Concluding remarks

The modernization of Quebec institutions and the pronounced integration of Quebec in the North American sociocultural universe have brought about value conflicts of great magnitude among francophones in Quebec. The crisis of ethnic and traditional values comes up in a new sociopolitical context, that is, one of unsettled trade, of priva-

tization of state-owned industries, and of a revision of linguistic legislation and labour laws. Ethnic values, in particular, are being exemplified in many different models. This is reflected in the collective self-image, in ways of life, and in prospective views, the three social and symbolic universes within which the ethnic future of francophone Quebec is at play.

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