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# **DEMOLINGUISTIC TRENDS IN QUÉBEC AND CANADA**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This update comprises three parts. The first part (Chapter 1) is an introduction presenting the essential elements and main conclusions of the original study. The second part, which constitutes the body of our brief and is divided into four chapters, contains all of the additional observations, comments and analyses stemming from demolinguiistic trends in Québec and Canada over the last decade.

The first section (Chapter 2) is a brief conceptual analysis of the available linguistic indicators and of the territorial breakdown used. As shown in this methodological discussion, an analysis of the past demolinguiistic dynamics and a forecast of future trends will be based on reliable and statistically significant temporal data (pertaining to births, deaths, migrations and language transfers) only if linguistic groups are defined in terms of the language most often spoken in the home. Similarly, breaking Québec down into three regions (Montréal island, the rest of metropolitan Montréal and the rest of Québec) is the only way to grasp differences in demolinguiistic behaviour and in demolinguiistic dynamics, while respecting data constraints.

In the second section (Chapter 3), evolution in the linguistic composition of Québec and Canada during the 1986-1996 decade (last known period) is put into perspective over a longer period. This analysis confirms the essential elements of the trends identified in our 1991 brief, that is, a significant, ongoing erosion of the Anglophone group in Québec, both in terms of number and relative weight, combined with the increasingly slower growth of the Francophone group and the rapid growth (in number and percentage) of the Allophone group. However, a new development is the slight decline in the relative weight of the Francophone group (whereas the percentage of Francophones in Québec had increased significantly during the 1971-1986 period), due essentially to a rapid drop in the percentage of Francophones on Montréal island. In the rest of Canada, the marginalization of Francophones continues (except in New Brunswick), while the demographic weight of Québec within the Federation continues to decrease.

Chapter 4 illustrates the extent to which demolingistic behaviour and the demolingistic dynamic vary from one linguistic group to the next and from region to region. The behaviour of the Anglophone group is very clearly indicative of a dynamic of decline, in terms of both number and relative weight: pronounced, chronic subfertility; a strong propensity toward emigration without significant immigration (interprovincially or internationally); a net gain through language transfer too low to offset natural and migration loss. This trend toward decline is, however, less acute in Montréal.

The growth of the Francophone group in Québec was long ensured primarily through natural increase; however, the much more rapid drop in the fertility rate of this group has drawn it into the same dynamics of decline as its Anglophone counterpart. In fact, the Francophone group in Québec receives hardly any reinforcement through international immigration (which actually has an adverse effect on the relative weight of the group); nor do interprovincial migration and linguistic mobility yield appreciable gains. Only the Allophones, a highly heterogeneous group, demonstrate growth dynamics: high fertility rate; low mortality; minimal domestic migration loss; and permanent reinforcement through international immigration. Linguistic mobility is its only relatively significant source of attrition; however, the adverse effects are more than offset by demographic factors.

The forecast of demolingistic trends in Québec and its regions is discussed in Chapter 5. The growing demolingistic divide between Montréal island and the rest of Québec cannot be stressed enough. Although Montréal island will likely experience slower demographic growth and population ageing, essentially due to international immigration, it will also become majoritarily non-Francophone, whereas, off the island, Francophones will undoubtedly maintain their percentage of the total population, but will increasingly decline in number and will age very rapidly.

The third section of our brief (Chapter 6) contains the principal results of our study, as well as new conclusions that appear warranted in light of the changes having occurred since the original study. Noteworthy among these are the imminent minorization of Francophones on Montréal island, which is already well under way outside the boundaries of the former City of Montréal,

and the shift toward French in the linguistic behaviour of new immigrants. The impact of this behaviour change should not, however, be overestimated, as the number of language transfers is so low that it is illusory to believe that current trends can be reversed by influencing linguistic mobility. Fertility and international immigration will continue to be the two determining factors in the evolution of the number and relative weight of Francophones, especially in Montréal.