



CANADA AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Québec-United States Relationship

Political, Security, Economic,
Environmental and Cultural Dynamics

Edited by
Frédéric Gagnon
Christopher Kirkey
Stéphane Paquin



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Frédéric Gagnon · Christopher Kirkey ·
Stéphane Paquin
Editors

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Cultural Dynamics

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*With grateful appreciation for those pioneering scholars who championed
the study of Québec-United States relations, especially:*

*Louis Balthazar
Earl H. Fry
Alfred Olivier Hero Jr.*

FOREWORD

THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN IDEA: THE NEW QUÉBEC-CANADA-US TRIANGLE

International relations have been transformed over the past 50 years as a result of social changes and emergent economic and political relationships created by the effects of globalization. New actors and partnerships have blossomed throughout the international community, including the role of sub-state entities such as American states, European regions and Canadian provinces, not to mention cities and municipalities. In North America, the establishment of a Canada/United States free-trade agreement in 1988, followed by the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1994, has to some extent created new zones of influence and fostered the development of fresh economic opportunities. Interdependence between states has become a reality, leading researchers to question the ability of national governments to exclusively develop, implement and monitor their own policies. These developments gave rise to the concept of paradiplomacy, which at its core boils down to the ability of sub-state entities to act on the international stage and to develop and conduct their own foreign policy.

Frédéric Gagnon, Christopher Kirkey and Stéphane Paquin's book, *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics*, is a significant part of this reflection. Using the case of Québec as an example, this volume examines the reasons that led Québec to want to become a credible player and to exert a

role on the international scene, while considering its relative autonomy in pursuing its own distinctive social, cultural and economic international policies. Québec, as much as the United States and Canada, is experiencing a period of social and political transformation at the start of this century that is forcing it to rethink international relations and corresponding public policies; the case of immigration and its impact on the social and cultural life of Québec being a clear example. The United States has also changed since the 1960s, and the traditional image of a society based on a certain puritanism—the very idea of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant—has been eroded in favor of a greater cosmopolitan focus. Canada itself is no longer a vertical mosaic dominated by certain elites, while Québec has made secularism one of the cornerstones of its thinking and development. It is in this context that the evolution of values has modified political attitudes and provoked a reconsideration of national identities.

Such was our questioning when we began to investigate Québécois' opinions on their future in North America and on the strategies the Québec government should adopt to face these new challenges. *Le destin américain du Québec* (Lachapelle ed., Presses de l'Université Laval 2011) inspired many of the contributors to this new book volume, who provide an essential and necessary update on the evolution of Québec democracy and its politics—specifically its engagement with the United States across many issues and areas. In fact, Québécois' attitudes to the Americanization of our values, to our Americanness, and to our acceptance of the challenges of living side by side with the United States (our main economic partner), clearly demonstrate that we share the same concerns as other peoples in the Americas and elsewhere in the world. In Québec's case, cultural diversity and U.S. hegemony in the development of new information technologies are good examples of the complexity of the world in which we live, and above all of the challenges for a North American and French-speaking state to preserve its language, culture and values.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Québécois are showing renewed interest in many North American issues. Québécois' feelings of closeness to Americans and Canadians, for example, remain a barometer of the trust our fellow citizens have with our main economic partners to implement policies better adapted to the new changes in our respective societies. This sentiment is also a measure of a certain isolationism that gained momentum under the presidency of Donald Trump (2016–2020).

The U.S. president's consistent bellicose posture toward Canada—a point leaving one to wonder whether his administration was genuinely interested, for instance, in negotiating and concluding an updated Canada-United States-Mexico trade agreement—left many observers to question their effects on the Québec and Canadian economies. The results of surveys conducted in 2007 and 2019 clearly demonstrate that there has been a significant drop in Québécois' feeling of closeness to Canadians from other provinces, from 48% to 40% (a drop of 8 points), and an even more significant decline toward Americans, from 37% to 21% (a drop of 16%).¹

As a result, Québécois' lack of confidence in the Canadian government's ability to defend Québec's interests in negotiating the new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) coupled with Trump's closed borders rhetoric could not help but raise concerns among Québec decision-makers and citizens. As a result, 31% of Québécois felt neither more accepted as Québécois by Americans, than by Canadians from other provinces. Québec, as a sub-state actor, must therefore be constantly vigilant and give itself the political and economic tools to defend its interests.

Québécois are also paying close attention to what will happen in both the United States and Canada as new administrations come to power. Whoever occupies the Oval Office in Washington and the Prime Minister's Office in Ottawa in the coming years will be scrutinized and their policies analyzed through the eyes of Québécois. Will we see the birth of a new Québec-Canada-United States triangle and a commitment to an expansion of bilateral and multilateral relations? Gagnon, Kirkey and

¹ Guy Lachapelle and Aubert Lavigne-Descôteaux, 2019. *L'Américanité des Québécois*. Centre d'études sur les valeurs, attitudes et sociétés (CÉVAS) and Secrétariat du Québec aux affaires canadiennes (SQAC); survey conducted by Léger amongst the Québec and Canadian population from December 6, 2018 to January 6, 2019, totaling 4,028 respondents, including 1,004 from Québec. Guy Lachapelle, 2007. *Américanité, anti-américanisme et américanisation*. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); survey of 1,251 Québec respondents conducted by Léger Marketing.

Paquin's book is certainly timely and offers considerable food for thought.
Happy reading!

July 2024

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PREFACE

This book's principal focus is a scholarly examination of the contemporary Québec-United States relationship. *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics* most closely examines various policy aspects that dominate this relationship; it is not intended to be an exhaustive profile of all things that shape and preoccupy the Québec-U.S. landscape. Rather, the book is purposely designed to offer a review of the most salient topics, issues and policies that inform and are relevant to the vibrancy of this longstanding singular North American partnership.

The origins of this book go back over ten years, when we collectively began to work on what would become two symposia—one on Québec and the international community, and the other on future directions in Québec society. Both of these initiatives, held in Montréal, produced special issues of the *American Review of Canadian Studies*. No sooner had we wrapped up these efforts in 2018, then our conversation turned to the idea of planning and delivering a full-length book volume on the Québec-United States relationship. We immediately recognized the need for such a volume, given the recent lack of concerted scholarly production on the subject, both in English and in French. This conversation quickly paid dividends.

Our initial discussion, followed by further direct working exchanges in Montréal and Plattsburgh, phone conversations, Zoom conferences, and emails, led us to conclude that a book project focusing on Québec-U.S.

relations would be a welcome addition to the scholarly cannon and would prove useful as a teaching and research resource. The onset and length of the COVID-19 pandemic proved at times to be an obstacle, as we sought to successfully navigate our way forward. In particular, the need to re-schedule our planned authors' workshop proved to be vexing; finally, in May 2022, we gathered at the High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid, New York, for scholarly presentations and exchanges. Health issues, for Chris, in 2023 and 2024, also contributed to a delay in the production of the book. We collectively persevered and are happy to see the publication of this long-anticipated volume.

This edited book, *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics*, features emerging and established scholars who offer new and important interpretations on the mechanics that contribute to and at times challenge the workings of Québec-U.S. relations.

Montréal, Canada
Plattsburgh, USA
Montréal, Canada

Frédéric Gagnon
Christopher Kirkey
Stéphane Paquin

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The realization of this book reflects the unfailing support of colleagues, friends, and family. We begin by extending our appreciation to David Carment of Carleton University, who as the editor of *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* and past editor of Palgrave Macmillan's Canada and International Affairs scholarly series, fully supported the development and publication of this book. We also wish to extend our appreciation to Anca Pusca, Executive Editor of International Studies at Palgrave Macmillan, who demonstrated a strong, immediate interest and support for this book project. Her kind patience in allowing us the necessary time to bring all this material together cannot be underscored enough. We further extend our appreciation to Esther Sundar, Project Coordinator at Springer, who graciously worked to help us turn this wide-ranging project into this scholarly book volume. Callie Dow, as an undergraduate student at State University of New York Plattsburgh, wonderfully assisted in arranging the preliminary index and list of abbreviations to this book. In addition, we wish to express our gratitude to the anonymous external reviewers employed by Palgrave Macmillan; their collective insights and detailed suggestions resulted in a much better book volume. Finally, we acknowledge the significance of each of the contributors to this volume. We are deeply thankful to our colleagues for their time and efforts in crafting original, thoughtful contributions that allow us to more fully understand and appreciate the Québec-United States relationship.

The realization of this book is a milestone in our respective academic careers. To envisage, plan, and produce a scholarly volume dedicated to exploring the depths of Québec-U.S. relations is a special moment. For Stéphane, his interest in the United States is rooted in the debates on free trade between Canada and the United States over 35 years ago. During these debates, high-calibre leaders such as Brian Mulroney and Bernard Landry, then a professor at UQÀM, were able to convince a majority of Quebecers to support this initiative, which would strengthen the integration of Quebec and Canada in North America. Since then, he has taken a keen interest in North American integration and cross-border relations.

Frédéric began developing his expertise in Québec-United States relations in 2001, when he joined the Observatoire sur les États-Unis of the Raoul Dandurand Chair in Strategic and Diplomatic Studies at UQÀM. Completing his master's thesis under the supervision of Professor Louis Balthazar, he owes much of his interest in Québec-U.S. relations to Balthazar, but also to his interactions over time with government officials and civil servants at the Québec Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie. He thanks the Fulbright Canada program and the Institute on Québec Studies at SUNY Plattsburgh for allowing him, in 2014, to begin the field surveys he continues to conduct to this day in the U.S. border region. He thanks Chris and Stéphane, who are not only extraordinary colleagues, but also true friends.

For Chris, his intellectual curiosity in Québec-United States relations can be largely traced to conversations and support offered, some thirty plus years ago, by two outstanding scholars and teachers—Louis Balthazar and Alain-G. Gagnon—of Quebec policies and its deep engagement with its southern neighbor. To Frédéric and Stéphane, my most heartfelt thanks for your personal friendship and intellectual creativity; your collaboration on this project serves as a role model for what a professional partnership can and should operate like. To my colleague and professional partner at the Center and Institute, Amy Sotherden, there are not enough minutes in a day to express my gratitude to you for all you did to help make this book a reality, including all the last-minute editorial details you cheerfully tackled.

We are most grateful for the financial assistance extended to this project. In particular, the United States Department of Education National Resource Center Title VI program, the United States Division of the Québec Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie, the Center for the Study of Canada and Institute on Québec Studies at SUNY

Plattsburgh, the Observatoire sur les États-Unis of the Raoul Dandurand Chair in Strategic and Diplomatic Studies at UQÀM, Fulbright Canada, and Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. We would also like to thank the contributing authors whose work, research and efforts have made *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics* a reality.

CONTENTS

Part I Introduction: The Relevancy of Québec-United States Engagement

- 1 The Québec-U.S. Relationship: Contributing Forces and Policy Choices** 3
Frédéric Gagnon, Christopher Kirkey,
and Stéphane Paquin

Part II Political and Economic Considerations

- 2 Living on the Margins of the Empire: Political Relations Between Québec and the United States: 1940–2000** 21
Stéphane Paquin and Christopher Kirkey
- 3 What Do They Think of Us? American Perceptions of Québec Before, During and After Trump’s First Term in the White House** 49
Frédéric Gagnon and Christophe Cloutier-Roy
- 4 Perceptions of the United States and Political Debates in Québec** 73
Scott Piroth

5	Party Realignment in Québec: Lessons from the United States	101
	Jean-François Godbout and Éric Bélanger	
6	Québec-U.S. Relations: “It’s the Economy Stupid!”	133
	Stéphane Paquin and Alexandre Millette	
7	Between Charm Offensives and Confrontations: A Brief Portrait of the Defense of Québec’s Commercial Interests Before American Authorities	161
	Patrick McSweeney and Richard Ouellet	
Part III Migration, Regional Cooperation, Climate, Energy, and Commercial Interests		
8	The Fantasy of the Québec-U.S. Border	191
	Élisabeth Vallet and Mathilde Bourgeon	
9	Adapting to Distinct Societies: Québec Policy and Paradiplomacy in Migration	215
	Neal Carter	
10	Québec’s Participation in the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and the Council of Great Lakes Governors, 2012–2022	241
	Christophe Cloutier-Roy	
11	20 Years of Climate Paradiplomacy Between Québec and the United States	263
	Annie Chaloux and Jennyfer Boudreau	
12	Decarbonization and Electrification in the Northeast: The Climate Crisis Will Foster a New Québec-United States Relationship in Electricity	285
	Pierre-Olivier Pineau	
13	The Dairy Industry as a Source of Conflict between Québec and the United States	309
	Kenneth Holland and Julie Holland	

Part IV The Role and Place of Cultural and Social Environments	
14 Québec's Cultural Policy in the United States: From Diplomacy to Industries	337
Alexandre Couture Gagnon	
15 7 Fingers Back and Forth Across the Border: A Tale of Two Countries and Their Circus Collaborations	355
Louis Patrick Leroux	
16 QAnon's Influence in Québec, from Alexis Cossette-Trudel to Éric Duhaime: Signs of an Americanization of Québec's Political Culture?	373
Alexandre Turgeon	
Part V Epilogue: The Intellectual Foundations of the Québec-United States Relationship	
17 The Intellectual Foundations of Québec's Americanness: A Historiographical Examination	395
Yvan Lamonde	
Index	413

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACSUS	Association for Canadian Studies in the United States
AD	Antidumping
ADQ	Action Démocratique du Québec
BQ	Bloc Québécois
CAQ	Coalition Avenir Québec
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBP	United States Customs and Border Protection
CES	Canadian Election Studies
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
CGGL	Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers
CGNA-PMEC	Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers
CHPE	Champlain Hudson Power Express
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLCPA	Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
CRIQ	Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec
CUSFTA	Canada United States Free Trade Agreement
CUSMA	Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement
CVD	Countervailing Duty
DFC	Dairy Farmers of Canada
DOC	Department of Commerce
ENC	National Circus School
EU	European Union

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIRA	Foreign Investment Review Agency
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GATE	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GPS	Guide de positionnement stratégique du Québec à l'égard des États Unis 2014–2017
ILO	International Labour Organization
IQ	Investissement Québec
IREP	Institut interuniversitaire de recherche sur les populations
ISO-NE	New England Independent System Operator
MAC	Ministère des Affaires culturelles
MAIQ	Ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales
MEI	Minister of the Economy and Innovation
MELCC	Ministère de l'environnement et de la lutte contre les changements climatiques
MIFI	Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration
MJQ	Ministère de la Justice (Ministry of Justice)
MRI	Ministère des Relations internationales
MRIF	Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie
MTESS	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NASEO	National Association of State Energy Officials
NECEC	New England Clean Energy Connect
NEG-ECP	New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers
NERC	North American Electric Reliability Corporation
NICE	Northeast International Committee on Energy
NMPF	National Milk Producers Federation
NPCC	Northeast Power Coordinating Council
NRG4SD	Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development
NSC	National Security Council
NYISO	New York Independent System Operator
NYPSC	New York State Public Service Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIF	Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
PARRI	Programme d'appui aux régions en recrutement international
PLQ	Liberal Party of Québec
PQ	Parti Québécois
QIV	Québec International Vision
QS	Québec Solidaire
RGGI	Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

SMPIF	Supply Management Processing Investment Fund
STCA	Safe Third Country Agreement
TCI	Transportation and Climate Initiative
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TRQ	Tariff rate quotas
UN	Union Nationale
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USBP	US Border Patrol
USDEC	US Dairy Export Council
USMCA	United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
USTR	United States Trade Representative
WCI	Western Climate Initiative
WEIM	Western Energy Imbalance Market
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWGIWGA	Where We Go One, We Go All
ZEV Alliance	International Zero-Emission Vehicle Alliance

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1	Campaign ad for Aaron Woolf, Democratic candidate for New York State’s 21st Congressional District seat, in Plattsburgh, New York, October 28, 2014. During our interviews, the campaign teams of Aaron Woolf and his Republican opponent Elise Stefanik emphasized the benefits of trade with Québec for local jobs in the district (<i>Photo Credit</i> Frédéric Gagnon)	54
Fig. 3.2	The town of Braddock, Pennsylvania, is one of the symbols of deindustrialization in the Midwest. Promising to bring good jobs back to the region, Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in key presidential states like Pennsylvania in 2016. Joe Biden echoed Trump’s protectionism to take back the state in 2020, and Democrats promised to continue protecting US workers in the run-up to the 2024 election (<i>Photo Credit</i> Frédéric Gagnon)	61
Fig. 4.1	Opinions of the U.S. and Support for Sovereignty, 2002–2022 (<i>Source</i> Pew Research 2002–2021; Léger Marketing 2002–2021)	91
Fig. 4.2	Support for Sovereignty by Feeling Thermometer Rating of the U.S., 2011–2019 (<i>Source</i> Canadian Election Studies, 2011, 2015, 2019)	92
Fig. 4.3	Confidence in the U.S. President and Support for Sovereignty, 2005–2021 (<i>Source</i> Pew Research 2002–2021; Léger Marketing 2002–2021)	93

Fig. 5.1	Democratic Presidential candidate vote share	105
Fig. 5.2	Party families in the parliament of Québec	107
Fig. 5.3	Mean party positions on three political cleavages, 2012–2018	115
Fig. 5.4	Demographic changes in Québec	117
Fig. 5.5	Is the French language threatened?	119
Fig. 6.1	Technological levels of exported goods in the United States (2021) (Institut de la Statistique du Québec 2023)	152
Fig. 9.1	Net migration in Québec and Canada, 1970–2021 (Compiled from Statistics Canada 2022)	223
Fig. 12.1	Electricity exports from Canadian Provinces to the U.S., 1990–2021 (CER 2022)	289
Fig. 12.2	States with statutory greenhouse gas reduction and reporting requirements and market-based policies (Shields 2021)	291

LIST OF TABLES

Table 6.1	Québec’s international exports: top 10 trading partners (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)	147
Table 6.2	Québec’s International Imports: Top 10 Trading Partners (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)	148
Table 6.3	Québec’s international exports by U.S. divisions (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)	151
Table 6.4	Québec’s international exports: top 10 states (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)	152
Table 6.5	Québec’s top 10 product groups exports in the United States (2021) (Statistics Canada 2022; Institut de la statistique du Québec 2022)	153
Table 7.1	Summary of trade flows with Québec’s ten largest trade partners in 2020	167
Table 7.2	Québec’s principal exports	168
Table 9.1	Net migration in Canada and Québec, 1970–2021	222
Table 9.2	Number of immigrants living in Québec and Canada, 2016, by origin	229
Table 9.3	RCMP apprehensions of irregular border crossers by province, 2017–2023	232
Table 9.4	RCMP apprehensions of irregular border crossers by province, 2023	234
Table 11.1	Summary of federal and provincial jurisdiction over environmental issues	266

Table 12.1	Electricity generation and consumption in Québec, New York and New England, 2021 (EIA 2022a; Statistics Canada 2022a, 2022b)	288
Table 13.1	Milk production, by province, 2023	312

PART I

Introduction: The Relevancy
of Québec-United States Engagement



The Québec-U.S. Relationship: Contributing Forces and Policy Choices

Frédéric Gagnon, Christopher Kirkey, and Stéphane Paquin

Québec's engagement with the United States is the most significant and consequential point of interaction amongst all its international activities. This new, edited book volume seeks to explore the many ways in which Québec engages with the United States, including political exchange, border issues, trade, business and investment, transportation, immigration, cultural links and identity, the role of energy transmission and

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natural resources, and environmental considerations. Studying Québec as a sub-national actor pursuing a wide range of paradiplomatic bilateral and multilateral initiatives directly involving the U.S., our book both explores and explains what, when, why and how “La belle province” has chosen to engage the United States while examining the fundamental issues that lie at the heart of the relationship. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in focus, this edited collection of essays, titled *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics*, features the work of scholars who think deeply about Québec-U.S. relations on each side of the border. Each contribution considers relevant contemporary issues; in so doing, this collection examines and focuses on the background, scope, and impacts of policy decisions that have affected contemporary relations between Québec and the United States.

This volume presents new and up-to-date arguments and insights about a complex and relatively understudied relationship, expanding on previous academic treatments while complementing those focusing on the broader theme of Canada-U.S. connections. As co-editors of this book and scholars who have been reflecting for decades on the importance of Québec’s paradiplomacy and the evolution of relations between Québec and the United States, we believe that you will find this publication to be a timely contribution that meaningfully explores multiple links that exist between Québec and its neighbor(s) to the South.

Since the establishment of Canada in 1867, Québec has pursued its own international policies parallel to that of the Canadian federal government, a practice known as paradiplomacy. Québec is today part of a small, select group of non-sovereign federated states very active on the international stage. Panayotis Soldatos, who coined the term paradiplomacy, defines it as “[...] direct and, in various instances, autonomous involvement in external-relations activities” of federated states (Soldatos 1990: 37). Paradiplomatic activities occur when a subnational or non-central government, like the government of Québec, mandates an actor, often a minister, to negotiate or enter into relations with other actors in the international system in an effort to maintain and advance its interests. These actors may be sovereign states, federated states, nongovernmental organizations, or private sector actors. Paradiplomacy is thus similar to the conduct of state diplomacy with the major difference being that subnational governments are not recognized as actors of independent standing in international law. Subnational actors cannot become full

members of international organizations, nor be a signatory to, nor a full participant, as part of an international treaty (with some exceptions, like in the case of Belgium). They often do, however, participate in international negotiations and engage in the working of international organizations, albeit within the context of a national delegation. The conduct of paradiplomacy by subnational governments, such as Québec, principally focuses on economic and trade policy, foreign investment, efforts to attract decision-making centres, export promotion, science and technology, energy, environment, education, immigration, labor force mobility, multilateral relations, international development, human rights, and transborder security. The Québec-United States relationship is at the forefront of Québec's paradiplomatic activities in the international community.

QUÉBEC: AN EXCEPTIONAL ACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

On August 3, 2023, Québec's Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie (MRIF), Martine Biron, announced that the Québec government will move to establish a new office in Tel Aviv, Israel, bringing the number of Québec's international representations around the world to a record 36. In the United States alone, Québec operates two general delegations, in New York and Los Angeles; six delegations, in Washington, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, and Seattle; an office in Miami and two antennas, in Philadelphia and Silicon Valley, for a total of 11 distinct representations. By way of comparison, Canada has one embassy and 14 consulates in the United States, for a total of 15. In addition to these various forms of representation, two public companies under the jurisdiction of the Québec government, Investissement Québec and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, respectively count 11 and 9 foreign offices, with some of them in the United States. Québec also has 3 immigration offices and 4 satellite bureaus abroad.

While some observers characterize the notable presence of Québec in the global community as one of "exceptionalism" in the global community, such activities have become increasingly commonplace amongst subnational actors; both amongst Canadian provinces and other actors around the world. In short, the creation of an international relations footprint by Canadian provinces and other substate governments is by no

means a new phenomenon. The first precedents for international engagement by Canadian provinces date back over 150 years; Ontario posted its first immigration officer to the United Kingdom in 1869, and Québec did the same in the U.K. and the U.S. in 1871. Québec opened a representative office in Paris in 1882. In 1908, the Québec government passed a law to establish an agency in the UK, which opened in 1911. An Agent General was appointed in Brussels in 1914. The Québec delegation in New York opened during the Second World War in 1940 (Nossal et al. 2023). Currently, British Columbia operates 23 international representations, compared with 15 for Alberta, 13 for Ontario and 9 for Saskatchewan, with offices deployed on 5 continents. Yet the province that remains at the forefront of representation and engagement on international issues is Québec. The case of Québec is also markedly distinct, since the dimension of identity, largely absent from the international motivations of Canada's other provinces (with perhaps the exception, in some respects, of New Brunswick and the Francophonie), is at the heart of Québec's international strategies. Consider Alberta for a moment—it often clashes with Ottawa over climate change negotiations and the protection of its oil interests in the energy sector, whether in Brussels or Washington. That said, Alberta does not seek to promote its distinct identity on the international stage, but rather focuses on its economic and energy interests, often diverging from and at times in conflict with Ottawa's foreign policy.

Canada is not the only country to have seen a notable increase in the number of its provincial or subnational representations abroad. According to Earl Fry, in the United States, 4 states operated 4 foreign offices in 1970; by 2008, this figure had risen to 42 states operating a total of 245 offices. According to the latest available figures (2015), 42 American states operated 212 foreign offices, a decline of 33 representations. By comparison, the U.S. government operates approximately 270 embassies and consulates worldwide (Fry 2017). Recently, the Biden administration appointed Ambassador Nina Hachigian as “U.S. Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy,” and created a “subnational diplomacy” unit within the State Department's Bureau of Global Partnerships. The purpose of this appointment, according to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, is to recognize the importance of engaging with and providing benefits to local communities in relation to international affairs, as well as to integrate their ideas into the decision-making process by consulting more systematically with local elected officials and governors,

while exposing them to international issues. In 2024, major international policy issues such as trade, international climate issues and transnational threats such as terrorism and pandemics require the sustained collaboration of all government players—as these issues affect the areas of competence of both state and city actors, it is best to recognize this and consult accordingly (Paquin 2023).

In Europe, all German Länder operate a combined 140 representations beyond their borders. The figure is even higher for Belgium’s federated states. Wallonie-Bruxelles International, the equivalent of Québec’s MRIF, operates 17 political and 107 economic representations, for a total of 124 - a considerable number for a region of 3.7 million inhabitants. Flanders, for its part, has 13 political representations, 90 economic and 10 tourist offices, for a total of 113.

WHAT DOES THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT THINK ABOUT QUÉBEC’S ROLE IN THE WORLD?

Historically, Canada has invested a great deal of time and energy limiting and controlling the international actions of the provinces, including Québec. Not so long ago, Québec’s international strategies led to heated disputes with the federal government, and not exclusively when the Parti Québécois (PQ) was in power, preparing a referendum on the separation of Québec from Canada. Some fifty years ago, during international negotiations to set up the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (the forerunner of La Francophonie), relations were so strained that Québec minister Jean-Guy Cardinal travelled to Gabon (with his safe-conduct granted by the French government) for a meeting of French-speaking countries—he feared he would be arrested on his return to Canada for “high treason”! In 2000, Joe Biden, while sitting on the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, went so far as to declare that “in peacetime, Canada’s foreign policy is to fight Québec” (TVA 2000).

Times have changed, however, as the Québec office in Tel Aviv—whose opening was postponed due to the recent resumption of hostilities in the region—will be housed in the Canadian embassy. This situation is not unusual. While the Québec government has refused to allow the Québec office in Washington to be housed in the Canadian embassy (unlike Ontario and Alberta), the situation co-exists in several other nations.

QUÉBEC'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

Even though Québec shares a large border with the United States, and while the latter has long been its main trading partner, Québec's first representation in the U.S. did not open until World War II, on June 28, 1940. This General Agency was officially a "Tourism and Trade Office" located at Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. During the Quiet Revolution that began in the 1960s, the main goal of Québec's activism in international relations was to maintain a strong relationship with France. That said, the General Agency in New York was elevated to the rank of "Délégation Générale" in 1962. In addition, to finance the complete nationalization of hydropower in Québec, the government turned to New York financial markets. In the late 1960s, the Québec government opened several representative offices in the U.S., including Boston, Lafayette, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas.

With the election of the Parti Québécois' to power in 1976, and its promise to hold a referendum on Québec's sovereignty, the relationship with the United States took on new importance. The Parti Québécois program, which proposed that a sovereign Québec become a neutral country, was not, in the context of the Cold War, to the liking of the U.S. Following Premier René Lévesque's disastrous speech to the Economic Club of New York in 1977—remarks that did not convince anyone to support his cause—it became clear to the Québec government that it needed to develop a more sophisticated, nuanced strategy toward the United States. That strategy, known as "Opération Amérique," aimed to raise Québec's profile in the U.S. by not working to convince the U.S. government of the relevance and merits of independence, while simultaneously moving to avoid any American interference in the upcoming referendum.

In the aftermath of the Québec government's failed referendum of November 15, 1980, and the difficult recession of the early 1980s, the relationship between Québec and the United States increasingly focused on economic matters. This policy, initiated under the Parti Québécois, was accentuated by Robert Bourassa's Liberals in the second half of the 1980s. A cross-party consensus quickly emerged in support of free trade negotiations between Canada and the United States. What came as a surprise was that these negotiations were supported by Jacques Parizeau's Parti Québécois, a political party that often presented itself as "pro-labor." In Parizeau's mind, the realization of a free-trade agreement with the

U.S. would limit the Canadian government's ability to interfere in the Québec economy. It would further limit the risks in the event of another referendum on independence.

After the failure of a second referendum on October 30, 1995, and the embrace by the governing PQ of a zero-deficit operation—resulting in major cuts to Québec's international representations abroad and in the U.S.—the government quickly reversed course reinvesting in its relations with the U.S. As in the 1980s, trade and investment once again became the focus of international engagement toward the United States. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the U.S., cross-border security issues also emerged as a subject demanding cross-border attention and action.

Following the election of Jean Charest as premier of Québec in 2003, the Québec-United States relationship received renewed intensity. Québec's network in the United States grew rapidly, with Québec seeking to strengthen its political relations with state governors, both bilaterally and through its inclusion in new multilateral sub-national forums with a focus on issues such as energy, environmental protection, cross-border security and power system management. Under the Charest administration (2003–2012), Québec and California set up what was, at the time of its introduction, the second-largest carbon market in the world: the Western Climate Initiative.

Under the current government of premier François Legault (2018–), policy toward the United States has shifted sharply in the direction of economic issues. Hydroelectricity exports to the northeastern U.S. have been stepped up with major new contracts, notably with the states of New York and Massachusetts. Québec has also promoted the goal of being “North America's green battery.” A new Albany-Bromont semiconductor corridor has been launched. Québec has further positioned itself to be a major player in the exploitation of critical minerals on its territory. For Legault and his government, the objective is to demonstrate and convince its American partner(s) that Québec has several desirable assets to assist Washington in achieving some of its main foreign policy objectives. For instance, on his arrival at the White House, President Joe Biden stressed the importance of fighting climate change, but also of reducing U.S. dependence on at-risk countries and regions in key sectors. In the high-quality semiconductor sector, for example, the Biden administration stressed that Taiwan's pre-eminence could represent a national

security threat should China one day decide to launch a military intervention of the island or initiate an economic blockade in the region. Biden further believed that the green revolution he proposed would depend too much on Chinese imports (e.g., rare earths and critical minerals, battery components for electric vehicles, etc.).

At a time when protectionism has gained prominence in both major political parties in the United States, not the least because Donald Trump has popularized slogans like “America First” and actively and repeatedly denounced economic globalization and free trade agreements during his presidency, one of the key challenges for Québec in the future will be to make sure its southern neighbor(s) remains convinced of the importance of strengthening cross-border trade. While Trump, during his first term in office, imposed tariffs on Canadian and Québec steel and aluminum, and demanded greater access to Canadian and Québec markets for American dairy products, Biden too also relied on protectionism, emphasizing “Buy America” and “Buy American” measures, to ensure that his infrastructure and economic projects are “Made in America,” thereby creating, first and foremost, American jobs. With Trump’s re-election for a second term during the 2024 presidential election, Québec’s paradiplomatic efforts on U.S. soil therefore remain crucial. Québec’s representatives in the U.S. will increasingly need to continually reiterate the importance of the relationship and the benefits of Québec-U.S. relations for American workers and U.S. prosperity.

FOCUS OF THE BOOK

This book includes a foreword and seventeen chapters, spread over five distinct sections. All contributors, invited specifically to participate in this book volume, are respected scholars who range from early-career to senior academics, predominantly from the social sciences with an assortment of individuals from the humanities. These researchers, representing 15 academic institutions (and a government ministry) from Canada and the United States, total 22 men and women from Anglophone and Francophone communities. The topics of the chapters cut a wide swath across several public policy areas. Though their coverage is broad, all of these chapters (individual chapter summaries appear at the end of this introductory chapter) speak to the centrality of policy to the creation and active management of Québec-U.S. relations.

The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics is a fresh, original contribution. No other scholarly publication exists that brings together leading policy-oriented scholars to examine this subject in a comprehensive, multidisciplinary framework. A review of existing literature on Québec-U.S. relations, in either English or French, reveals three core observations. First, significant scholarship that directly addresses the Québec-United States relationship—including *Problems and Opportunities in U.S.-Québec Relations*, edited by Alfred O. Hero Jr., and Marcel Daneau (Westview Press 1984), *Contemporary Québec & the United States 1960–1985*, by Alfred O. Hero Jr. and Louis Balthazar (University Press of America, 1988), and *Le Québec dans l'espace américain*, Louis Balthazar and Alfred O. Hero Jr. (Éditions Québec Amérique 1999)—are effectively dated and as such, essentially serve as historical reference works. These works are void of any contemporary policy analysis on issues of concern to current scholars. Second, select book chapters of the Québec-United States relationship have selectively and only episodically appeared in edited volumes dedicated either to the study of Québec (see, for example, “Québec’s International Relations,” in *Québec State and Society*, edited by Alain-G. Gagnon [University of Toronto Press 2013], and “The Ottawa-Québec-Washington Dance: The Political Presence of Québec in the United States,” in *Québec Questions: Québec Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Stéphan Gervais, Christopher Kirkey and Jarrett Rudy [Oxford University Press 2016]), or focusing on Québec’s international relations (see, for example, *Histoire des Relations Internationales du Québec*, edited by Stéphane Paquin, VLB Éditeur 2006). Third, issue-specific journal articles on Québec-U.S. relations have periodically appeared in the journal *Québec Studies*, a publication of the American Council for Québec Studies.

The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics is intended principally for students and scholars who are interested in the Québec-U.S. relationship and in the history, politics, and economic dimensions of Québec policy. Undergraduate university students in the fields of political science, economics and business, Québec Studies, Canadian Studies, history, sociology, and Cultural Studies are the principal readership for this book.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

Following immediately after this introductory chapter is Part II, “Political and Economic Considerations,” which includes six contributions examining the foundations, evolution, and intricacies of these forces on the Québec-United States relationship. In Chapter 2, Stéphane Paquin and Christopher Kirkey trace the political and diplomatic evolution of Québec-U.S. relations, beginning in 1940 through 2000. Focusing most closely on Québec policy toward the United States, the authors review various efforts constructed and pursued by successive Québec governments over a sixty-year period to advance its interests and institutionalize its relationship with American executive and legislative branches—with uneven but measurable success. American public opinion toward Québec, before, during, and in the aftermath of Trump’s first term in the White House, offers a contemporary examination of the Québec-U.S. relationship. Frédéric Gagnon and Christophe Cloutier-Roy, utilizing field survey primary data from several American state visits (2014, 2018, 2022), argue in Chapter 3 that the political emergence of Donald Trump, first as a contestant for the Republican party nomination in 2016, then as the Republican Party candidate, and later as the President of the United States (2017–2021), had a notable impact on Québec-U.S. relations by encouraging the American public to pay attention to Québec and more significantly, to regard the benefits of the relationship as unhealthy for the U.S. Equally important, the authors document how, since 2014, Québec’s paradiplomatic strategies toward the U.S.—given the impacts of Trump—have shifted (and may continue to do so). American public opinion toward Québec and the very vibrancy of the political relationship, we learn, is a decidedly fluid reality. Scott Piroth, in considering how American policies and political developments impact Québec politics, documents in Chapter 4 how these forces, beginning in the 1970s, “have been broadly unfavorable to sovereigntists.” Looking forward, Piroth maintains that current and future issues between Québec and the U.S. are unlikely to fuel support for a “yes” vote in the province.

Chapter 5, by Jean-François Godbout and Eric Belanger, carefully examines Québec’s political party system and the question of party realignment. Arguing that developments in Québec have essentially mirrored political party realignments in the United States, the authors

suggest that the most recent transformation of the Québec party system—now more than a decade old—is a significant departure from past experiences. With four parties represented in Québec’s National Assembly, the model of a “stable two-party equilibrium” has been thrown into question. The recent transformation of Québec’s political party system, the authors conclude, is highly relevant to the current and future American body politic.

The primacy of economic engagement for Québec with the United States, the central feature of Stéphane Paquin and Alexandre Millette’s Chapter 6 contribution, maintains the intensive commercial nature of Québec’s international policies toward the U.S. can best be approached through six distinct periods: 1867–1960, 1960–1976, 1976–1980, 1980–2001, 2001–2014, and 2014 to the present. The authors demonstrate that there is a marked continuity in Québec’s policies toward the U.S.; a continuity, that increasingly over time, has placed greater emphasis on an international economic strategy that is principally American focused. The final contribution to Part II is provided by Patrick McSweeney and Richard Ouellet. The essay, Chapter 7, considers several features central to our understanding of Québec’s economic engagement with the U.S., including the legal basis for Québec’s paradiplomatic trade activities, the significance of Québec-U.S. trade, and precisely how Québec exporters can best “maintain access to U.S. markets.” Pivotaly, the authors further outline those critical factors that shape Québec’s response to any outstanding Québec-U.S. trade dispute—several of which are chronicled.

Part III, “Migration, Regional Cooperation, Climate, Energy, and Commercial Interests,” contains six contributions focusing on timely, contemporary public policy issues central to our current understanding of the Québec-United States relationship. Élisabeth Vallet and Mathilde Bourgeon’s essay, Chapter 8, addresses the increasing attention paid to efforts targeting the securitization of the Québec-U.S. border. Significant changes in the international community, most notably the displacement and global migratory movement of peoples, have injected a sharp incentive, the authors maintain, for both Québec and Washington to prioritize the border crossing experience. Neal Carter’s work, Chapter 9, in examining migration to Québec, adopts a longer-term historical framework, tracing the key contributing social and political factors that have promoted Québec to actively pursue policies designed to attract migrants to the province—and how these efforts and results differ from that

of Canada. Carter's essay further considers the recent impacts of the Safe Third Country Agreement (original and revised) and concerns arising from migration crossings from the United States to Québec. In considering Québec's engagement with the United States through two particular sub-national institutional forums—i.e., the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and the Council of Great Lake Governors—Christophe Cloutier-Roy, in Chapter 10, effectively traces this engagement over a ten-year period (2012–2022). The author carefully considers the identification and prioritization of policy issues at both conference venues, noting the emphasis placed on energy, transportation, trade, climate change and infrastructure. Cloutier-Roy concludes by outlining three political challenges for Québec, in these forums, moving forward.

Annie Chaloux and Jennyfer Boudreau's contribution, Chapter 11, squarely focusing on climate paradiplomacy between Québec and the United States, forcefully demonstrates that as "a significant area of cooperation," this relationship "has been institutionalized, consistent, and growing for over 20 years." While Canada-U.S. climate policy has, as a whole, proven to be decidedly uneven and inconsistent, this chapter insists that "the significant autonomy of federated states and provinces to act on climate issues" is especially noteworthy. Electricity trade between Québec and the American Northeast states is the focus of Pierre-Olivier Pineau's essay in Chapter 12. The author argues that while an institutional framework for harmonizing electrical institutions and markets between Québec and New England-New York has been slow to develop, the emergent challenges posed by climate change provide a so-called trigger for a "stronger and more integrated Québec-U.S. relationship on electricity." In their essay "The Dairy Industry as a Source of Conflict between Québec and the United States," Chapter 13, the final contribution in this section, Kenneth and Julie Holland consider the impacts of Canada's protectionist-oriented regulatory dairy regime; a regime disproportionately influenced by "Québec's dairy industry, the largest in Canada." Québec's embrace of supply management practices, the authors observe, has a depressive impact on Québec-U.S. trade relations. Little is likely to change, however, as business and political forces in Québec and Canada are collectively tilted in a protectionist policy direction that is unlikely to support any dramatic increase in the import of American dairy products.

Part IV, "The Role and Place of Cultural and Social Environments," includes three chapters devoted to an examination of the intersections of

culture on the Québec-U.S. relationship. Alexandre Couture-Gagnon, in providing an overview of Québec’s cultural policies toward the United States since the 1960s in Chapter 14, asks what significant changes in substance and tone can be observed. She argues that starting in the 1990s, Québec’s approach toward the promotion and implementation of culture in the U.S., “has become mainly pragmatic or utilitarian, serving as economic benefits for the province.” In the essay “7 Fingers Back and Forth Across the Border: A Tale of Two Countries and Their Circus Collaborations,” Louis Patrick Leroux focuses in Chapter 15 on cross-border Québec-U.S. circus collaborations, most notably the Montreal-based 7 Fingers varied experiences in the U.S. Leroux demonstrates, in his examination of “stories and connections bridging Montreal, San Francisco, and New York,” that the 7 Fingers circus confirms that “the informal networks, the circulation of performers and designers, the training methods and references all suggest an integrated [Québec-United States] market.” Alexandre Turgeon’s essay, Chapter 16 in our volume, offers a contemporary and compelling examination of QAnon’s influence in Québec, asking if this recent political and social development is indicative and symptomatic of an increasing Americanization of Québec’s political culture. Focusing most closely on U.S.-based social media efforts to counter the government of Québec’s health policy actions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the influence of QAnon on Québec political figures including Alexis Cossette-Trudel and Eric Duhaim, Turgeon argues that Québec’s political culture is indeed being subject to and increasingly influenced by the forces of Americanization.

The fifth and final part of *The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics* is titled “Epilogue: The Intellectual Foundation of the Québec-United States Relationship,” and explores the historiographical evolution of the intellectual foundation of Québec’s Americanness. Penned by one of the leading contributors to Québec intellectual discourse on the impacts and influences of America on Québec’s social, political, economic and cultural life, Yvan Lamonde’s contribution—a fitting epilogue to this volume—carefully traces the changes in perspective fashioned by scholars on Americanness. The creative journey reviewed by Lamonde in Chapter 17 clearly demonstrates shifts in our collective understanding of Americanness over time; shifts, that have proven central to shaping Québec-U.S. relations. The U.S., Lamonde concludes, will continue to be the focus of scholarly inquiry as it will exert and impact Québec in meaningful ways.

The Québec-United States Relationship: Political, Security, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Dynamics engages scholars and the general public alike on the scope, complexity, and dynamism that characterizes Québec-United States relations. The chapters represented in this volume offer compelling testimony suggesting why this relationship deserves our collective attention and merits careful scholarly investigation. Indeed, the outcomes of the November 2024 U.S. presidential, congressional and state-level elections will have salient impacts on the course of relations between Québec and Washington. Republican victories, especially that of presidential candidate Donald Trump, will arguably inject a heightened degree of uncertainty into the healthy functioning of Québec-U.S. relations.

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PART II

Political and Economic Considerations



Living on the Margins of the Empire: Political Relations Between Québec and the United States: 1940–2000

Stéphane Paquin and Christopher Kirkey

The United States has been represented in Québec City since 1834. For many years, there were U.S. consulates in several cities in Québec including Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Saint-Jean, Coaticook, Saint-Hyacinthe, Rivière-du-Loup, Rimouski, and even Gaspé. In the nineteenth century, due to improvements in the means of communication, these consulates were progressively closed, with the exception of those in Montréal and Québec City. During the Quiet Revolution, the Québec City consulate was elevated to the rank of consulate general, to

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closely monitor and report on the evolution of Québec politics rather than to offer a broad range of traditional consular services to Americans staying in the Québec capital. Today, the Consulate General handles relations with the National Assembly, government officials, and political parties. It often attracts high quality diplomats even though it does not have the status of an embassy (Balthazar and Hero 1999: 80–81). Conversely, the American Consulate General in Montréal focuses on commercial, investment, trade, migration and other consular functions.

Québec's diplomatic presence in the United States stretches back to 1940, with delegations currently in several regional centers across the nation. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Québec are effectively complimented by a robust economic relationship. Despite Québec's strong diplomatic and commercial relations with the U.S., it has proven and remains almost impossible for a Québec premier to secure a bilateral meeting with an American president. In fact, there are very few precedents. The first meeting with an American president took place on July 31, 1936, when Adélar Godbout briefly met Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Québec. The American president was the guest of the Canadian government. At the 1967 World's Fair of Montréal, Daniel Johnson was able to meet briefly with President Lyndon Johnson for a photo. During the Québec City Summit in March 1985, René Lévesque had a brief exchange with Ronald Reagan. Lucien Bouchard spoke for a few minutes with Bill Clinton in 1999, at a meeting of the Forum of Federations in Mont-Tremblant, Québec. François Legault was able to meet President-elect Donald Trump briefly in December 2024 at the reopening of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. That said, Bernard Landry did not meet with George W. Bush at the Summit of the Americas in Québec City in 2001, and Philippe Couillard was unable to secure a personal meeting with Donald Trump at the G7 Summit, in Charlevoix in 2018.

Every time a Québec premier has requested a direct, dedicated meeting with the American president in Washington, the request has been declined. Without Ottawa's approval, such a meeting seems unlikely. Balthazar and Hero, two leading experts on Québec-U.S. relations, argue that “[T]here is no political relationship between Québec and the United States for the simple reason that Washington has never wanted to address Québec as an autonomous political actor. For the American government, there is no other Canadian interlocutor than the federal government of Canada” (our translation from Balthazar and Hero 1999: 65).

The situation is decidedly less complicated when it comes, for example, to meeting with a U.S. Secretary of State or even principal advisors to the President. Following his election in 2003, Premier Jean Charest obtained a one-on-one meeting with Secretary of State Colin Powell. In 2005, during another trip to Washington and Virginia, he met with three influential members of the Bush administration, Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez, and Secretary of Energy, Samuel W. Bodman. When the current Premier François Legault, for example, undertook an official visit to Washington on May 22, 2019, he met with Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce, and Mark Menezes, Under Secretary of Energy. He also engaged Wells Griffith Sr., Donald Trump's energy advisor, and Landon Derentz, Director for Energy on the National Security Council, in a meeting that took place in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, adjacent to the White House. This meeting was a precedent for a Québec premier (Hétu 2019). The President's representatives wanted to know more about two issues of interest: the potential export of hydro-electricity to the U.S., and the availability of strategic materials in Québec, whether lithium, graphite or other rare earth minerals—increasingly important due to escalating geopolitical conflict between the United States and China.

As the American political system is based on a separation of executive and legislative powers, the difficulties of access to the American executive do not apply to the legislative branch. As Balthazar and Hero note, senators who take an interest in Canada are not obliged to report their meetings with Québec elected officials to the executive branch or even to the Canadian Embassy in Washington. It is therefore very common for members of the legislature, whether in the House of Representatives or the Senate, to meet with Québec premiers or even ministers. While all of these events represent important diplomatic precedents, one thing remains: Québec does not enjoy direct and privileged ties with the president or members of the executive branch of the U.S. federal government, as it does with France. Despite this, Québec has nonetheless sought to increase its leverage in the United States since the 1960s (Paquin 2014, 2016; Bernier 1996).

This chapter chronicles the efforts of Québec to advance its interests by examining efforts of successive provincial governments to institutionalize and deepen its political relationship with the United States through direct engagement with the American executive and legislative branches of government. In particular, a range of paradiplomatic efforts constructed

and pursued by Québec between 1940 and 2000 are identified and closely evaluated.

QUÉBEC-U.S. RELATIONS: THE BEGINNINGS

Despite the importance of the links between Québec and the United States, when the time came for the Québec government to post representatives abroad, who were not simply “immigration agents”—and thereby create formal instruments of diplomacy—Great Britain, France, and even Belgium were prioritized before the United States. It was not until the election of Adélar Godbout’s government and the appointment of Charles Chartier as Agent General on June 28, 1940, that the first official diplomatic representation was opened in the United States—in New York City. The agency took the name of the “Commercial and Tourist Bureau,” and was located in the Rockefeller Center building in Manhattan.

The Quiet Revolution resulted in a dramatic expansion of Québec’s international relations. Several important policies and instruments were put in place after the election of Jean Lesage to promote the development of a network outside Québec’s borders. Among these instruments were (1) the opening of the Maison du Québec in Paris in October 1961; (2) the conclusion of the first “agreement” with the French government on education in February 1965; (3) the formulation of the Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, also in 1965, which provided the legal basis for Québec’s international action; (4) the establishment of a protocol department in 1966, in anticipation of Expo 67, where the Québec government welcomed 44 heads of state or their representatives, including presidents Charles de Gaulle of France and Lyndon Johnson of the United States; (5) the creation of the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs in 1968, the forerunner of the Ministry of International Relations and la Francophonie; and, (6) Québec’s participation in international conferences of francophone ministers of education, whose reports led to the creation of the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique in March 1970, followed by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in the mid-1980s. The addition of these instruments gave Québec an international personality that was unprecedented at the time, and which today remains largely unique in the contemporary world, even while the practice of paradiplomacy by subnational governments has become commonplace throughout the international community.

A casual observation of these activities by Québec underscores that the emphasis of Québec governmental policies toward the United States took second place to that of the France-Québec relationship, which was positioned as the real driving force behind Québec's international activism in the 1960s. That said, this period also marked the emergence of multiple instruments related to international policy toward the United States. As early as 1962, the Trade and Tourist Office in New York was promoted to the rank of general delegation. Following the 1962 election, the Québec government knocked on the door of New York's financial markets in order to finance projects to complete the nationalization of electricity in Québec. This new financial strategy on the part of the government necessitated a more significant Québec presence in the financial capital of the United States.

Motivated by the objective of formally establishing a structured relationship with the U.S. government, André Patry, Jean Lesage's advisor on international issues and author of the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine, went to Washington in April 1965—without informing Canadian authorities—to meet with two State Department officials. The U.S. Consul General in Montreal facilitated the meeting. André Patry specifically sought to obtain, for the Québec general delegation in New York, tax advantages normally reserved for consulates and embassies of sovereign countries. Québec hoped to convince the United States to accede to this request, noting that American consulates based in Montreal and Québec City—should American authorities refuse Québec's request—could be subject to taxation by Québec. This request, made by Premier Jean Lesage a few months earlier, was formally rejected by the Americans (Lisée 1990: 63); American officials were opposed to such a suggestion, fearing that many foreign government offices would in turn also demand the same treatment. Following his visit, André Patry made two critical observations. First, the American government did not prefer to deal directly with a province and, second, it had an incomplete knowledge of Québec. In short, Québec did not represent a concern for the Americans, and the State Department did not see an interest, contrary to France, in extending special status to the Québec general delegation in New York. Upon his return to Québec, Patry promoted the idea of a targeted marketing campaign to American authorities emphasizing the special character of Québec. Premier Lesage did not share this urgency. As André

Patry notes, there was no immediate political will in the Québec government during the Quiet Revolution to develop relations with the American government—unlike with that of France (Patry 1976).

Additional links were developed with American states during the Quiet Revolution. Jean Lesage, for example, went to Louisiana in 1963 to try to institutionalize ties. Concerned about the French fact in this southern U.S. state, and since his government had just created a Department of Cultural Affairs that included a French Canada Overseas Service, Québec officials discussed with local authorities the possibility of setting up a cultural exchange program between Québec and Louisiana. The outcome of these discussions was positive; negotiations began shortly thereafter between Québec City and Baton Rouge to reach an agreement. When the Department of External Affairs of Canada was informed of the situation in September 1965, it proposed to simplify the agreement in order to avoid the intervention of the Canadian and American federal governments. This initiative by the Québec government, however, raised concerns in Washington. It was not until 1969, when the governor of Louisiana visited Québec, that the Québec and Louisiana authorities finally concluded an exchange program in the areas of culture and education (Patry 1980: 67).

In total, Premier Lesage went to the United States five times. His successor at the head of the Québec government, Daniel Johnson, went to the United States twice during his short mandate, even requesting an official visit to see President Lyndon Johnson; the United States politely denied these requests (Lisée 1990: 69). President Johnson agreed to attend the 1967 World's Fair, but this trip was brief, lasting only a few hours; the meeting with Prime Minister Johnson even more so (Balthazar and Hero 1999: 54–55).

The Québec government further expanded into the United States in the late 1960s under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Bertrand's, Union Nationale. Although he did not travel to the United States, the Québec government moved to open several offices including Boston, Lafayette, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas in 1969. Prime Minister Robert Bourassa (1970–1976) crossed the U.S. border seven times, among other things to promote and seek American financing for the James Bay hydro-electric megadam projects in northern Québec. It was also under Robert Bourassa that the Québec government participated in the first annual conference of New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers in 1973. That same year, Bourassa gave a speech at the Economic Club of New York (Balthazar 2011). Significantly, the first traces of a department

for “American affairs” in the annual reports of the Québec Department of Intergovernmental Affairs emerged in the 1974–1975 annual report. As a result of these increasingly regularized actions and the establishment of additional diplomatic engagements with the United States, Québec-United States relations increasingly grew to be more important and professional (Balthazar 2011; Bernier 1996).

THE FEAR OF A “CUBA OF THE NORTH”

Prior to the pro-sovereignist Parti Québécois assuming political power in November 1976, U.S. government officials in Québec were very discreet in their dealings with the party. Indeed, when René Lévesque sent a friendly message to President Gerald Ford in July 1976 (a few months before he was elected premier), on the occasion of the bicentennial of the American Revolution, the State Department asked its Québec consulate to verbally inform Lévesque that his message had been received; a diplomatic procedure which ensured that Washington would not provide a written response to the premier. At the same time, the U.S. consul in Québec City, Everett Melby, avoided inviting sovereignist politicians to his receptions. Clearly, the United States did not want to be associated with nor viewed as tacitly supporting the pro-independence party, which included many left-wing radicals in its ranks (Lisée 1990: 298). The Parti Québécois electoral platform, adopted in 1975, was not likely to reassure the Americans (Parti Québécois 1975). In the section on “Foreign Policy and Defence,” article 1 stated that “all forms of neo-colonialism in international relations must be rejected” (p. 264). In point 3 b), it speaks of “replacing preferential ties with the Commonwealth with intimate relations with French-speaking countries; b) the establishment of ties with Third World countries, particularly those of Latin America, and finally, the close relations that bind us to Canada and the United States of America.” To implement a “foreign and defense policy,” it proposed to “practice a pacifist foreign policy based on the rejection of the use of war as a solution to international disputes [...] and the withdrawal from military alliances such as NORAD and NATO” (our translation from Parti Québécois 1975: 265). From an American point of view, the political program of the Parti Québécois, along with numerous imprecise and contradictory statements made by elected officials or identified personalities, were disconcertingly naïve—and potentially dangerous—for a party

that aspired to power and independence for Québec in a cold war context (Hero 1977).

When the Parti Québécois came to power in 1976, the financial community in the United States became, perhaps not surprisingly, somewhat nervous, especially as Hydro-Québec was one of its most important clients at the time. The Americans had no particular sympathy for nationalism in general, and had a perceptible preference for a united Canada. René Lévesque confirmed this apprehension in a speech he gave in the United States, on January 25, 1977, at the Economic Club of New York, before an audience composed of financial elites. This speech, titled “Québec: Good Neighbour in Transition,” asserted that Québec’s sovereignty is inescapable, comparing Québec’s independence to the American War of Independence. These references to this seminal event in America’s political formation effectively reinforced pre-existing reservations against the sovereigntist project. The same response was generated in speaking of the social-democratic orientation of the party’s program, denouncing the “institutionalized belief that our economy could only be developed by outsiders, as if Québec were no more than a convenient reserve of raw materials for foreign enterprise,” and explaining that the government would limit foreign investment and nationalize the asbestos industry (our translation from Lévesque 1977). Faced with this ill-pitched speech, the financial markets punished Québec (Hero 1977). To make matters worse, Lévesque’s speech was broadcast live on Canadian television. In his memoirs, René Lévesque blames the failure of the speech on English-speaking Canadians living in the United States, whom Lévesque describes as a “devious diaspora” who had done their best to make this foray into the United States a resounding failure, and on the speech writers who had little experience and understanding of American politics. They had included in the text “little gaucheries that scratch the ears” (our translation from Lévesque 1986: 392).

One month following Lévesque’s remarks, the Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, was invited on February 21, 1977 to the United States for a three-day official visit. Trudeau was extended the same welcome in Washington as a VIP. In addition to a first meeting with President Carter at the White House, he was invited to attend a state dinner and to address both houses of the U.S. Congress in Washington, an exceptional privilege and a first for a Canadian Prime Minister. Trudeau received a warm welcome, even though many in the United States did not appreciate his Third Option policy and general embrace of economic

nationalism. He was nevertheless applauded at length for his speech after declaring that the secession of Québec was a crime against the history of *mankind*. It was in this context that President Jimmy Carter defined for the first time, in February 1977, the American doctrine on the Québec national question (Lisée 1990: 262). This doctrine remains the basis of official American policy towards the Québec sovereigntist movement. It was repeated many times and served as the official position of the United States during the 1995 referendum on Québec independence (Balthazar 2006a; Balthazar and Hero 1999: 82). This position has three core elements:

1. The United States does not intend to interfere in Canada's internal affairs and therefore does not take a position in the constitutional debate.
2. The United States has a preference for Canadian unity. Canada is a preferred partner for the United States and the two countries have an excellent relationship. The United States supports anything that promotes Canadian unity and cohesion.
3. But the decision is up to Canadians. The United States will respect the popular will of the citizens of Canada.

OPERATION AMERICA

Following these developments, the Québec government prepared a policy targeted directly at an American audience. This policy, presented to cabinet in the fall of 1977, was born of urgency; the urgency of appeasing the players in the world of finance, but also the American federal government (Lisée 1990: 312). The Lévesque government, committed to holding a referendum in the first term, developed a strategy aimed at American opinion leaders to reassure investors, but also to make them understand that a sovereign Québec would be a loyal ally for the United States, not a “Cuba du Nord.” At first, René Lévesque and his advisors put pressure on the Parti Québécois to revise its positions on international politics, in particular to abandon its pacifist posture. This was done in 1979, confirming an independent Québec would remain a member of NORAD and NATO (Roussel 2006). The government also set forth a strategy toward the United States; this operation was called *Operation Amérique* (Couture Gagnon and Chapelle 2019). Its objective was

to emphasize Québécois' commitment to the rule of law and democracy, and to make Americans understand that Québec would respect its financial obligations in the event of a YES victory in the upcoming referendum on sovereignty. Québec also wanted the American government to maintain a certain neutrality before and during the referendum campaign (Balthazar 2006a: 90). Operation Amérique was important because, as Lise Bissonnette (1981) recounts, prior to its implementation, Québec's policy towards the United States was largely improvised and reactive. In 1978, missions to the United States were expanded. A new delegation was opened in Atlanta in 1977 (in President Carter's home state of Georgia) and, in 1978, Québec City set up a tourism office in Washington. The opening of a Québec delegation in Washington provoked much resistance in Ottawa and Washington. Such resistance was not only intended for Québec since a few years earlier Ontario had also been refused the opening of a permanent office in Washington. The Canadian government, informed of the establishment of the Québec delegation in Washington, moved to oppose it informing American government officials of their displeasure. Faced with various pressures, the Québec government ultimately chose to empower its New York based delegation general representative with the responsibility of travelling to Washington to conduct official provincial business (Lisée 1990: 308).

In concrete terms, Operation Amérique further translated into the establishment of public relations and communications departments throughout various Québec delegations in the United States, and the creation of a weekly newsletter with a circulation of more than 5,000 copies and aimed at selected American clients. A system welcoming American journalists to Québec was founded, as well as the development of American tours for the Premier and important ministers in Lévesque's cabinet. Several official visits were made and the Québec government deliberately sought to be more present in forums that welcomed the *foreign policy elite*, that is, forums such as the Council on Foreign Relations, which were present throughout the United States and brought together American actors who gravitated around international issues, whether they were public administrators, elected officials and their advisors, journalists, academics or representatives of the business community (Balthazar 2006a). Between 1976 and 1980, Shiro Noda counted at least 40 ministerial visits to the United States by the Lévesque government (Noda 2001: 185).

The government of René Lévesque also stepped up efforts to make Québec better known in academic and cultural circles. It encouraged the creation of a scholarly society devoted exclusively to Québec studies, a first in the world: the American Council for Québec Studies, distinct from the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, which organized conferences every two years and published a scientific journal, *Québec Studies*. In addition, associations of teachers of French, notably the American Association of Teachers of French, gradually became aware of the importance of the French language in Québec, of Québec literature, and of Québec's expertise in teaching the language. Links were established and congresses of American associations were held in Québec. According to Couture Gagnon and Chapelle (2019), this operation concludes, according to the authors, with an increase in content in French textbooks in the United States through an increase in content on Canada and Québec.

Despite apprehensions in Québec City, the American government remained officially discreet during the 1980 referendum campaign (Baltazar 2006b; Mason 2006; Lisée 1990). Thus, when, for example, Vice President Walter Mondale and later Secretary of State Cyrus Vance made their official visits to Canada, they avoided going beyond official lines. Similarly, when René Lévesque met with Senator Edmund Muskie, who would become Secretary of State on May 7, 1980, a few days before the referendum, Muskie had kind words for him. Throughout the period, White House Special Advisor on National Security Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had already lived in Montréal as the son of a Polish diplomat, treated the subject with some sympathy, noting he understood the racism that Québécois have been subjected to. According to Claude Morin, the mastermind of Operation America, "In fact, during the entire period, Washington's position remained surprisingly moderate" (our translation from Morin 1987: 265).

What the Québec government was not privy to at the time was that the U.S. Consul General in Québec City was advising the US government to steer clear of any and all observations or commentary on the referendum. Indeed, in a telegram from the American Consulate General of Québec, dated April 22, 1980, the Consul General reported that Claude Morin had told him, "[...] reiteration of US preference for a united Canada in present super-charged pre-referendum atmosphere will have disproportionately heavy impact here [...]. Average Québécois will perceive it as 'Ottawa-engineered outside interference.' [...]. Only certain result, Morin

said, would be a new anti-Americanism in francophone Québec [...]. This reaction would be most intense if it was felt that US had tipped a close referendum race to the ‘No’” (quoted in Mason 2006: 18). The Consul General’s comment and advice was that “with referendum in full swing and tensions heightened in Québec, anything Secretary might say to press on this issue will inevitably be exploited by one side or the other. [...] We would think, however, that, given the present volatility of Québec opinion, the less said explicitly at this point, the better” (quoted in Mason 2006: 18).

TOWARD CANADA-US FREE TRADE

Operation Amérique was designed around the 1980 Québec referendum on sovereignty-association. Following the referendum defeat on November 15, the Québec government moved to adjust its American strategy, and its general paradigm of action in the United States. After the Parti Québécois’ electoral victory in 1981, there was no longer any question of holding a referendum on sovereignty, but rather of trying to avoid the patriation of the Constitution. It was no longer necessary to reassure American elites about the consequences of independence. Moreover, Québec experienced an economic recession in 1982. The consequences for the province were significant; public service wage cuts were both painful and drastic. In the global context, the anti-government, free market policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, indicated a political shift to the right.

These factors collectively prompted the Lévesque government to turn resolutely to the United States in order to attract job-creating investments and create new commercial opportunities for Québec companies. The change from the PQ’s 1975 program was complete if not stunning. A man closer to economic and conservative circles, Rodrigue Biron, formerly leader of the right-wing Union Nationale, was appointed Minister of Industry and Commerce in 1981. Claude Morin left the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs in early 1982, in the wake of the constitutional collapse and the repatriation of the Constitution. Jacques-Yvan Morin succeeded him, making several trips to the United States to promote trade relations. This theme was even trumpeted in the context of tensions in the Canada-U.S. relationship, as sparked by the strengthening of the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) and the Trudeau government’s highly protectionist energy policy. In a June 1982 conference before the World

Affairs Council of Northern California in San Francisco, Jacques-Yvan Morin stated that Canadian government representatives were propagating a false image of Québec's reality in the United States. He maintained that the Québec government supported the Reagan administration's desire to reduce protectionism between the two countries, and unlike Canada, Québec was open to American investment (Balthazar and Hero 1999: 61).

This new message being promoted by the Québec government bore fruit. And strangely enough, the government of René Lévesque received a more sympathetic welcome from the Reagan administration and from Republican elected officials who abhorred "socialists." In the early 1980s, it was easier for representatives of the Québec government to develop networks with the Republican elite than with the Democrats. In March 1981, following an assassination attempt on President Reagan, René Lévesque personally wrote to tell him how affected he was by the situation. For the first time, the President's reply, written by a White House official, was sent directly to René Lévesque. The letter even stated that the American government had no objection to the letter being made public, a first (Lisée 1990: 408). This warming relationship with the Republican party earned René Lévesque a singular and unanticipated invitation. On July 14, 1982, Jesse Helms invited Lévesque to meet his colleagues on the floor of the U.S. Senate; Helms in fact had obtained the unanimous consent of the senators present to invite Lévesque to meet with them, a first for a Québec elected official in the United States. Despite this offer, Lévesque declined the invitation, perhaps fearing reactions in Québec. Senator Helms nevertheless offered a very complimentary statement about Lévesque which appeared in the *United States Senate Journal of Debates*. Helms observed:

As chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee, I am impressed with the importance that Québec has for the United States [...] Mr. Levesque has been Prime Minister of Québec since 1976, and just last year he and his colleagues were returned to office with even greater majorities. [...] Although he is well-known as an exponent of Québec nationalism, he has always insisted that this nationalism be exercised with a close association with Canada.

Mr. Levesque is an advocate of using private enterprise to develop the economy of Québec, and has invited American investors to continue to participate in enlarging the private sector. He is a distinguished political leader in his countries, and the holder of the French Legion of Honor. The

Senator from North Carolina may not agree with all of our distinguished guest's views, but from what he has learned today there are broad areas that unite the people of Québec and the people of the United States, not the least of which is the affection which both have for each other. [They (Québec) are fortunate to have leaders of stature and distinction and we are fortunate to have one of those leaders today. (*Congressional Record*—Senate, 1982: no 16231)

At the end of 1982, Bernard Landry, Minister of State for Economic Development, and very much in favor of trade liberalization, secured Lévesque's permission to move forward with the creation of a new Québec Department of International Trade. Landry sought to pursue his economic mission in the United States with great zeal. In September 1982, at a federal-provincial meeting of trade ministers, Landry denounced the Canadian government's Foreign Investment Review Agency, stating that this agency was detrimental to American investments in Québec and stressed the importance of liberalizing trade with the United States. He also spoke with a journalist from the *Chicago Tribune* in the fall of 1982 to promote the idea of a common market between Québec, Canada and the United States (*Chicago Tribune* 1982). According to him, Québec, but also Canada, should consider the possibility of creating a common market with the United States. In Bernard Landry's mind, this meant a sovereign Québec associated with the United States and Canada (Bissonnette 1983: 1). On February 2, 1983, the U.S. State Department responded to Landry's suggestion in a press release issued in Washington and Québec—the day before Landry was scheduled to leave for Washington to meet with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige to discuss the ongoing softwood lumber issue along with other provinces. The statement, in part, read: "It would be inappropriate for the United States government to engage in special trade relationships with provincial governments as distinct from Canada as a whole... (Americans) "hope that Canada will remain strong and united. We do not intend to interfere in Canada's internal affairs. We would expect all Canadians to respect this restraint" (quoted in and translated from Bissonnette 1983: 1). The communiqué also stated that "The United States ... values its close and important economic relationship with Canada. We are each other's best customers and our two economies are closely linked. We fully expect this pattern of trade and cooperation to

expand and develop” (Bissonnette 1983: 1). According to Lise Bissonnette, this was the first time that the State Department had so formally responded to a statement by a minister of the Québec government (Bissonnette 1983: 1).

In March 1985, President Reagan was in Québec City to meet with Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. During this summit, the Québec presence was “essentially ceremonial, and very discreetly ceremonial” noted Québec’s Minister of International Relations, Bernard Landry. Premier Lévesque attended Mr. Reagan’s arrival, the private dinner and gala on March 17, and was represented by his Deputy Premier at the banquet on March 18. In his speech at the banquet, the President of the United States devoted a few paragraphs to the situation in Québec, effectively stating that the Americans were aware of what had happened in Québec, and felt that Québec had now made its choice (Galarneau 1985: 389).

THE RETURN OF THE LIBERALS AND THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD

With the election of Robert Bourassa’s Liberals in 1985, Québec’s international relations became even more economically oriented. The major issue of the period was the question of free trade with the United States. The conclusion of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1988 was one of the most important events in Québec and Canadian history. Québec Liberal Ministers including Paul Gobeil and John Ciaccia moved to ensure that relations with the United States were front and center for the province. The period from 1987 to 1990 was marked by constitutional negotiations in Canada with the conclusion of the Meech Lake Accord which aimed to bring Québec back—by amending the 1982 Constitution, and, among other things, strengthening provincial powers and recognizing Québec as a “distinct society”—into the Canadian constitutional fold. The agreement did not, however, receive unanimous ratifications by all ten provinces before the June 23, 1990 deadline, and therefore failed. In the aftermath of the unsuccessful Meech Lake Accord, support for Québec’s independence rose sharply and the national question was revived. While in the 1970s no American official was willing to speculate publicly about the future of Québec or even the viability of a sovereign Québec, a few weeks before the demise of the Meech Lake Accord, American diplomat Robert Pines, who was Under

Secretary of State for Canadian Affairs at the State Department, declared on a Canadian public affairs program, *The Journal*, that Canada would be viable without Québec. In this interview, he speculated on the viability of a sovereign Québec, observing that both English and French-speaking Québécois he met were sincerely convinced that Québec is capable. Offering this statement in public a few days before the failure of the Meech Lake Accord naturally created a shadow of shock. The U.S. State Department promptly sent a directive to media relations officials on June 21, 1990, two days before the unravelling of the Meech Lake Accord, to provide a corrective to the question that had been posed with regard to the inquiry “What is the US reaction of the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord in Canada.” The answer advanced by officials must be:

Americans care about what happens in Canada. We have always enjoyed superb relations with Canada and we hope that Canada will remain strong and United.

However, decisions on the presents and future relationships among the provinces and between them and the government of Canada are internal, domestic matters which are for Canadians to decide.

We do not intend to comment on or involve ourselves in internal Canadian issues and we know this reserve will be respected by all Canadians.

(Press guidance June 21, 1990—Canada: Meech Lake Accord, reproduced in Lisée 1994: 172)

Jean-François Lisée, working as a journalist, claimed that the U.S. State Department went so far as to orchestrate a leak to the *New York Times*, in order to send a signal to Canadians. This procedure, is attributed by Lisée, as unusual, perhaps even unprecedented in the history of Canada-U.S. relations on the Québec question. In addition, journalist Clifford Krauss was invited to meet with senior State Department officials and at least one other official responsible for the Canada issue within the Bush senior administration. Kraus learned that two reports had just been completed on the Québec issue, one by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the major American intelligence agency, and the other by the Department of State (Krauss 1990). These reports focused on the question of all existing treaties between Canada and the United States, and what if anything, would have to be amended in the event of Québec’s independence. The *New York Times* article by Kraus underscores:

The State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency have concluded that any loosening of Canada's federal makeup as a result of the nation's constitutional crisis would affect a broad range of security, trade and environmental ties between Washington and Ottawa.

The reports, completed in the last few days, make clear that there is no immediate threat to the relationship that the United States has with Canada, its largest trading partner. But they emphasized the effects of fraying Canadian unity on the relationship over the long term.

"We're highly concerned," said a senior State Department official who deals with United States-Canadian relations. "We would be highly distressed if Canada broke up. This situation has major implications for the United States in the long term." He was alluding to an array of treaties ranging from security to drug enforcement that extend across the world's longest open border.

[...] In none of these projections do American officials view a potentially independent Québec as hostile to Washington. But they make the point that coordinating cross-border relations between two sovereign states was complicated enough and to have three involved would alter old balances and require complex renegotiations of treaties, agreements and understandings.

Most experts doubt that Québec will leave Canada soon. None of the reports recommended intervention in the Québec issue, although United States officials are privately urging officials in Ottawa and Québec to do as much as possible to hold together. (Krauss 1990)

Two years later, with the constitutional climate in Québec still tense, the U.S. Consul in Québec City, William McCahill (who was about to leave Québec to take up a new mandate), claimed in a rare interview, in *Le Devoir*, that Québec was not doing a good job of defending its image in the United States. More surprisingly, he stated in the interview that "English Canadians must recognize that Québécois form a nation" (Venne 1992). He also noted that his superiors at the State Department are well aware of Québec's aspirations. He maintained that "The United States...will not interfere in 'your family affairs' although the White House is very interested. The appointment in Ottawa of Mr. Peter Teeley, a close friend of George Bush [Sr.], to whom he has an ear," testifies to this. He emphasizes that "Québec diplomacy must be present and active on an ongoing basis [...] to counter the advertising and Aboriginal lobbying campaigns against Great Whale or the negative effects of the interventions of influential writers such as Mordecai Richler, who in his

writings peddle the image of a racist and anti-Semitic Québec” (Venne 1992).

THE 1995 REFERENDUM

The U.S. ambassador to Canada in the run-up to the 1995 referendum, James J. Blanchard, made no bones about his preference for a united Canada. In his post-referendum book, *Behind the Embassy Door: Canada, Clinton, Québec*, he explains how he purposely maneuvered to support the cause of a unified Canada. As he writes in the prologue, the stakes of the referendum were very high “...because the survival of a nation that we’re coming to know and love is at stake” (Blanchard 1998: 1). For Blanchard, Québec independence would be a tragic event, not only for Canadians, but also for Americans, Québécois, and the world (Blanchard 1998: 68). Blanchard maintained that the reluctance of the United States to interfere in Canada’s domestic affairs was utilized by “separatists” as a sign of support, sympathy or even indifference toward the break-up of Canada (Blanchard 1998: 67). Blanchard argued that he confronted Jacques Parizeau on the idea that Québec’s accession to NAFTA would not be automatic in the event of independence, a fundamental issue for him. For Blanchard, it was far from clear that the Americans would support Québec’s continued participation in this important trade agreement. Blanchard further outlines that he worked closely with Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, André Ouellet, as well as Eddie Goldenberg, a close advisor to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, on these issues. The U.S. ambassador indicates that he was prepared to go further to express the U.S. government’s position against Québec independence, but that Canadian officials were more concerned about avoiding too direct an intervention that could create a backlash in Québec and become politically unmanageable. It was feared that too much intervention would ultimately help the “YES” camp. Blanchard was also intimately involved in the organization of U.S. President Bill Clinton’s official visit to Canada on February 23, 1995. Clinton, who was invited to make a speech before the Canadian Parliament, declared:

In a world darkened by ethnic conflicts that literally tear nations apart, Canada has stood for all of us as a model of how people of different cultures can live and work together in peace, prosperity, and respect. The

United States, as many of my predecessors have said, has enjoyed its excellent relationship with a strong and united Canada, but we recognize, just as the Prime Minister said with regard to your relationships to us a moment ago, that your political future is, of course, entirely for you to decide. That's what a democracy is all about. (Clinton 1995)

In the early days of the 1995 referendum campaign in Québec, support for the “YES” side hovered around 42%. Under these circumstances, Canadian authorities did not want the U.S. to intervene in the debate, as this could derail the campaign, effectively providing support to the “YES” side. A few weeks later, with Lucien Bouchard of the Bloc Québécois acting as the unofficial leader of the “YES” campaign, some polls showed the pro-sovereigntist camp with a one point lead. Against this backdrop, pressure mounted on the White House to intervene in the referendum campaign. At a press briefing in Washington attended by André Ouellet, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher offered a statement that went further than the usual U.S. position: “I don't want to intrude on what is rightfully an internal issue in Canada. But, at the same time, I want to emphasize how much we've benefited here in the US from the opportunity to have this kind of relationship that we do have at the present time with a strong and united Canada [...] I think we shouldn't take for granted that a different kind of organization would obviously have the exact same kind of ties” (quoted in English in Cardinal 2005: 448). Bernard Landry, then Québec vice-premier and responsible for international relations, reacted strongly to this statement. He informed Stephen Kelly, U.S. Consul General in Québec, that he wanted to personally deliver a letter to Ambassador Blanchard meant for Warren Christopher. Landry also had a copy of the letter sent to the White House by Parizeau's emissary in Washington, René Marleau, even though it was addressed to the Secretary of State. Marleau was flabbergasted by the tone and content of the letter, which was written with the collaboration of Jean-François Lisée a collaborator of Parizeau at the time. In effect, it went completely against one of the foundational principles of Québec's engagement with Washington, which is to not “antagonize” or otherwise offend Americans. The PQ government also went so far as calling certain governors, especially those in New England, notably Angus King of Maine and William Weld of Massachusetts, telling them “listen, all we're asking is that there be no negative interventions,

and we invite you to call the White House to ‘pass the message’ (quoted in Cardinal 2005: 277).

The thrust of Landry’s letter read as follows:

That declaration, made less than two weeks before the referendum day in Québec, inevitably attracted considerable attention here, and it was presented by opponents to the project of our government as a clear shift in the traditional position of the United States [...] A sovereign Québec would be, after all, your eight largest trading partner [...] Should American declarations be publicly perceived as a factor in the decision that Québécois are to make, they would enter into our collective memory and the history book. If the Yes side wins, as it is now probable, Québec voters and the historians will remember that the sovereignty of Québec was achieved despite or even against the American will. That will make more difficult our task of developing with the United States the productive and friendly relationship we hold dear. If victory eludes the Yes side by a slim margin, as is plausible, those who did vote YES - a clear majority of francophone Québécois - will be tempted to assign responsibility to the United States for part of the profound disappointment. I don’t know how many decades it will take to dispel that feeling. In the days to come, should American declarations be more emphatic, or should they come from the higher levels of the Administration, the deeper would be the traces left in our history. (quoted in Cardinal 2005: 449)

According to Mario Cardinal, James Blanchard was surprised by Landry’s reaction and the content of the letter. He held that Landry was positioning himself to look foolish in Washington for appearing to threaten the U.S. Secretary of State. “Tell him, if he has any brains at all, not to tell anyone about this letter. Tell him I’m going to keep it confidential but that I think he made a big mistake writing it.” According to Blanchard, “I think the Canadian desk at the Department of State read it and just thought it was goofy. I didn’t want it to look bad. It’s not my job. And, anyway, it was a private letter” (translated from Cardinal 2005: 277).

On October 25, 1995, President Clinton—five days before the Québec referendum—took a planted question on the Québec matter at a press briefing:

When I was in Canada last year, I said that I thought that Canada had served as a model to the United States and to the entire world about how

people of different cultures could live together in harmony, respecting their differences, but working together. This vote is a Canadian internal issue for the Canadian people to decide.... I can tell you that a strong and united Canada has been a wonderful partner for the United States. I have seen how our partnership works, how the leadership of Canada in so many ways throughout the world works, and what it means to the rest of the world to that that there's a country like Canada where things basically work. Everybody's got problems, but it looks like a country that's doing the right things, moving in the right direction, has the kinds of values that we'd all be proud of. And they have been a strong and powerful ally of ours. And I have to tell you that I hope that will continue.... Now the people of Québec will have to cast their votes as their lights guide them. But Canada has been a great model for the rest of the world... and I hope that can continue. (quoted in Blanchard 1998: 248)

The U.S. government had prepared for all eventualities following the results of the 1995 referendum. On October 30, 1995, James L. Fetig, former White House director of public affairs for the National Security Council (NSC), sent Mary A. Peter, Director for European and Canadian Affairs (also on the NSC), suggestions for responses in the event of a “YES” or “NO” victory (Clinton Library 1995). The documents that were deposited in the presidential library include a summary of a telephone discussion that took place on October 29 at 10:30 p.m., the day before the referendum, between Bill Clinton and Jean “Chr rien” (renamed Cretien in the document). The summary of the conversation reads:

IF NO: During the call, the two leaders discussed how important the vote was for the people of Qu bec and Canada. Specifically, the President expressed his admiration for a strong and united Canada and how much the United States looks forward to working together with Canada to develop an even stronger relationship in the future. IF YES: During the call, the two leaders discussed the outcome of the referendum and agreed that it is premature to predict the final impact of the vote. The President assured PM Cretien that the United States would continue to consult closely with Ottawa as Canada works out its constitutional arrangements in the coming weeks and months.

The document also outlines guidelines for a yes or no vote in the referendum. The following is a complete reproduction of the questions and answers suggested by the National Security Council.

Here is proposed guidance for both a “yes” and a “no” vote.

U. S. POSITION ON THE QUÉBEC REFERENDUM: IF QUÉBEC VOTES NO

Q: What is the White House position on the referendum on Québec sovereignty? A: This is obviously an internal Canadian issue. It’s going to be decided locally.

However, I can say on behalf of the President that a strong and united Canada has taken over to be a great country as well as a powerful ally, and we hope it will continue. I am sure that most Americans agree.

I would recall what the President said before the Canadian Parliament in February: “In a world darkened by ethnic conflicts ... Canada has stood ... as a model of how people of different cultures can live and work together in peace, prosperity and respect.”

[IF ASKED]

Q: Do you support Secretary Christopher’s statement that Québec would not enjoy the same type of relationship?

A: As Secretary Christopher explained, the ties between our two countries have been carefully cultivated, and we should not take for granted that a new entity would have exactly the same kind of ties.

Q: What is the Administration’s position on NAFTA membership for an independent Québec?

A: This is a hypothetical situation, and any speculation would be inappropriate. I can say, however, that nothing is automatic. Complicated legal issues are involved, and we have given no assurances to any party.

AFTER THE REFERENDUM

Q: What is the U.S. position on the outcome of the Québec referendum?
IF QUÉBEC VOTES NO

A: The President has expressed his admiration for strong and united Canada. We look forward to a continuing close relationship with all Canadians in years to come.

IF QUÉBEC VOTES YES

A: It is up to Canadians to work out their future constitutional arrangements. It will be some time before the meaning of the referendum for Canada is clear. It would be premature to speculate on its impact on the U.S. Recognition?

A: Since the Canadians have yet to work out their future constitutional arrangements, it is premature to consider the question of recognition of Québec,

Border Crossings?

A: Since this is a time of transition, nothing will change in the immediate future.

NAFTA?

A: This is one of many issues that will have to be analyzed in light of whatever constitutional, political and economic arrangements are made by Canadians in the wake of the referendum. Complicated legal issues are involved, and nothing is automatic. We have given no assurances to any party.

Bill Clinton made a state visit to Mont-Tremblant, Québec—long after the “NO” side narrowly prevailed on October 30, 1995—to a conference on federalism in October 1999. At that meeting, Clinton reaffirmed his support for a “strong and united Canada.” In his speech Clinton stated that “The suggestion that people of a given ethnic group or tribe or religion can only have a meaningful communal existence if they have their own independent nation is a questionable assertion. The momentum of history, said Clinton, is toward more political integration, not disintegration” (quoted in Pearlstein 1999).

CONCLUSION

Since the late 1990s, Québec’s international policy has been marked by an even greater emphasis on relations between Québec and the United States. This chapter illustrates the efforts of Québec to politically engage the United States over a sixty-year period. The Québec-U.S. relationship, driven by Québec’s desire to establish and expand regularized, structured diplomatic exchanges, was, as this chapter suggests, initially shaped by political and economic developments in Québec, Canada and the United States. No issue has influenced the course of Québec-U.S. political relations as has the singular question of Québec nationalism and sovereignty. Québec’s engagement with Washington, as we argue, was for a prolonger period driven by considerations of political independence. For its part, the Québec policy of the White House, Congress, and the Department of State remained consistent, expressing admiration for Canada as a nation while maintaining a policy of strict non-interference in Canadian and Québec internal political affairs.

The current focus of Québec political leaders toward the United States in the twenty-first century is to maintain and indeed deepen political (and commercial) relations; consider, for example, that Québec announced in early December 2024 the establishment of a new delegation in Seattle.

This objective, for a substate actor such as Québec, while characterized—even in the current absence of heightened political nationalism—by limitations, has made considerable progress in the past twenty plus years. While limitations such as reciprocal annual meetings by political leaders are noted, increasingly regular access to senior officials in the American executive and the U.S. Congress suggest that efforts by political and bureaucratic officers in Québec City in actively pursuing a robust relationship with the U.S. are proving successful. As this chapter demonstrates, a strong, vibrant engagement with the American Empire remains vital to Québec’s future.

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What Do They Think of Us? American Perceptions of Québec Before, During and After Trump's First Term in the White House

Frédéric Gagnon and Christophe Cloutier-Roy

FRÉDÉRIC GAGNON AND CHRISTOPHE CLOUTIER-ROY

The scientific literature on Québec-US relations often emphasizes two aspects that are essential to understanding American perceptions of “La Belle Province.” On the one hand, it notes that Québec enjoys a particularly positive reputation on American soil, due to the strong cultural, economic and political ties it has established with the United States (Roby 2007; Paquin 2016; Fry 2010). On the other hand, it argues that Québec

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does not attract much attention south of the border, except during pivotal moments that put Québec on the US radar (Balthazar and Hero 1999; Boucher 1999; Gagnon 2016). In recent decades, for example, the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 (Couture Gagnon and Chapelle 2019), the Québec sovereignty referendums (Lisée 1990; Légaré 2003) or the 9/11 attacks and the fear that terrorists could enter the United States via the northern border (Andreas 2005), have prompted Americans to take a greater interest in Québec.

This chapter argues that the election of Donald Trump in 2016 was another such pivotal moment. We demonstrate that Trump (successfully) encouraged Americans to pay more attention to Québec and become more skeptical about the benefits of Québec-US relations, and that some of these tendencies persisted during Joe Biden's presidency. Methodologically, our approach draws on the work of Richard Fenno and the qualitative approach he calls "soaking and poaking" (Fenno 2003: 249-295; Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020: 184). Using field surveys personally conducted during the 2014, 2018 and 2022 US midterm elections in ten New England and Midwestern states that the Québec government describes as part of its "historic strategic perimeter," (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2021) we compare how Americans in these regions perceived "La Belle Province" before, during and after Trump's first term in the White House, on issues such as trade and the economy, the border and immigration, and climate and the environment.¹

The following states were selected to serve as the sample for this chapter: New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio. We chose these locales as the scientific literature has established that Americans living in the Northeastern and Midwestern states *bordering* Canada are more likely than others to pay attention to Québec (Robertson 2005: 46; Banker 1984: 170; Konrad and Nicol 2008: 3). Owing to a lack of time and resources, we were unable to conduct surveys in all these states during each of the three elections. However, in the case of each election, we visited between three and nine states,² attended various electoral activities (i.e., partisan rallies, election debate viewing events with supporters of both parties, public addresses by federal and local candidates for office) and conducted semi-structured interviews with dozens of actors interested in Québec-US relations: federal and local candidates

for office, voters, journalists, lobbyists, trade unionists, campaign advisors and managers, staff members of party organizations.

Our research method has certain limitations. For example, the testimonies of the individuals we met represent but a small sample of the myriad of actors interested in Québec-US relations, and may not always be fully representative of the general American perception of Québec.³ That said, our approach enables us to offer a complementary perspective to that of scholars who rely exclusively on survey data to try to “measure” how Americans and Canadians/Québecers perceive each other (see for instance, Lavigne-Descôteaux 2010). Using polling data ourselves where necessary (and available) in this chapter, we offer a different perspective and describe American perceptions of Québec through original qualitative data collected during three election cycles that punctuated this period of great transformation in American political life.

The chapter is divided into three parts useful for assessing variations in American perceptions before, during and after Trump’s first term in office, namely: (a) during the 2014 midterms, when Barack Obama was president; (b) during the 2018 midterms, two years after Trump’s election to the White House; and (c) during the 2022 midterms, when Joe Biden was president. We conclude with a discussion of what the changes observed in the field mean for the practice of Québec’s paradiplomacy in the United States.

*“We love Québec”: American Perceptions of “La Belle Province”
During the 2014 Midterm Elections*

This project was initiated during the 2014 midterm elections, during which three of Québec’s neighboring states: New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire were selected for data gathering and evaluation. Focusing initially on the campaign offices of federal and local electoral candidates in cities such as Plattsburgh (NY), Concord (NH), Manchester (NH), Montpelier (VT) and Burlington (VT), we asked some twenty Republican and Democratic campaign and party staff members the following questions: “How do you think Québec and Québec-US relations affect elections in your district or state this year?”; “What issues of Québec-US relations are the most important to voters, interest groups, the media, and candidates?”; “How do people feel about Québec here?” (Gagnon 2016: 102). Most of our interviewees’ answers confirmed two

theses that were then predominant in the scientific literature on American perceptions of Québec. The first thesis, advanced by scholars such as Louis Balthazar maintains that Americans do not pay much attention to Québec, and that their knowledge of “La Belle Province” is not particularly high (Balthazar 1978, quoted in Couture Gagnon and Chapelle 2019: 417). Marc Boucher, who spent several years of his career as Québec’s Delegate in New York, Atlanta and Chicago, adds that interest in Québec certainly varies depending on where you are and which communities you interact with in the United States (Boucher 1999). For example, several university professors, think tanks and academic associations have developed a strong expertise in Québec, such as the Institute on Québec Studies at SUNY Plattsburgh or the American Council for Québec Studies. However, Boucher notes that the US media rarely cover Québec issues or Québec-US relations, which tends to confirm that “La Belle Province” is not particularly high on the radar of the public. The second prevailing thesis, which our 2014 interviewees’ responses confirmed, is that Americans generally have a positive opinion and perception of Québec. Academics such as Charles Doran and Brian Job argue there are several reasons for this: (a) for many Americans, “the French language and culture connote luxury, an exciting life-style, romance, and the romantic”; (b) Québec is “viewed as a nice place to visit”; and, (c) the province’s personality “is wonderfully congruent to the American. Attributes of warmth, informality, equalitarianism, and sociability are appreciated in the United States” (Doran and Job 1984). Other scholars, such as Yves Roby, add that Québec and the Northeastern states share common cultures and histories, due in part to the immigration of some 900,000 French Canadians to the United States between 1840 and 1930 (Roby 2007). During our fieldwork in 2014, we were often reminded of this common heritage by the signs of family businesses bearing names of Québécois origin in many of the towns and cities we visited.

Despite these strong cross-border ties, some 2014 interviewees drew our attention to examples of friction between Québec and the United States. In New Hampshire, for example, the Northern Pass, a project to build a transmission line that would have enabled Hydro-Québec to export more hydroelectricity to New England, was generating strong opposition from voters and local groups concerned about the project’s effect on residential property values and the state’s landscape (Gagnon 2016: 91–95). In Vermont, environmental groups paid close attention to the Addison Rutland Natural Gas Project, aimed at importing natural gas

into the Green Mountain State through the Québec-US border (Ibid.: 87–90).

Apart from these few issues, Québec was not a concern for most of the people we spoke to. Most extolled the merits of the relationship with “La Belle Province,” especially regarding the economy. In upstate New York, and the city of Plattsburgh particularly, the campaign teams of the two candidates for New York’s 21st Congressional District seat, Republican Elise Stefanik and Democrat Aaron Woolf, stressed the importance of trade with Québec for local jobs (Ibid.: 82–83). When we spoke with Democratic Party staffs in Burlington, Vermont, they added that Québec tourism is particularly beneficial to the state’s economy (Ibid.: 83) (Fig. 3.1).

Drawing on survey data from this period, these positive testimonials on Canada/Québec were far from anecdotal. According to a Gallup poll conducted in February 2014, 93% of Americans had a positive opinion of Canada (Gallup: 2023). Of these, 52% perceived their northern neighbors “very favorably” and 41% “mostly favorably.” The same survey illustrates that no other country had a more positive reputation in the eyes of Americans: for example, 90% had a favorable opinion of Great Britain, 81% of Germany, 78% of France and 58% of Mexico (Ibid.). In June 2016, some 18 months after our 2014 field surveys, Barack Obama took the opportunity, in addressing Parliament in Ottawa, to reiterate how much Americans appreciate Canada and Québec (Obama: 2016). Humorously pointing out that “Our only battles take place inside the hockey rink,” he extolled the merits of Canada-US free trade, saying, for instance, that the US is stronger when “a company in Québec can create jobs in North Carolina” (Ibid.).

During his speech, however, Obama signaled to his audience that views on free trade and globalization were starting to change in the US, and that many Americans were now convinced that protectionism was key to bringing good jobs back home. In Obama’s words: “For them, globalization is inherently rigged towards the top one percent, and therefore, what’s needed is an end to trade agreements and various international institutions and arrangements that integrate national economies” (Ibid.). In the subsequent presidential duel between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in 2016, it was exactly this type of rhetoric that enabled Trump to capture the White House, thanks to surprise victories in three key states hard hit by deindustrialization: Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin (High 2019). Breaking with the dominant discourse of recent



Fig. 3.1 Campaign ad for Aaron Woolf, Democratic candidate for New York State's 21st Congressional District seat, in Plattsburgh, New York, October 28, 2014. During our interviews, the campaign teams of Aaron Woolf and his Republican opponent Elise Stefanik emphasized the benefits of trade with Québec for local jobs in the district (*Photo Credit* Frédéric Gagnon)

decades on trade, Trump campaigned in 2016, and governed for the first two years of his presidency, promising to tear up or renegotiate international agreements unfavorable to American workers, or impose tariffs on countries that do not respect those same workers (Irwin 2017). Another peculiarity of Trump's approach was that he made less distinction than his predecessors between America's traditional allies and strategic rivals (Gagnon 2021). As a result, Trump regularly attacked Canada and encouraged Americans to view Canada-US relations with suspicion, stating, for instance, that the North American Free Trade Agreement

(NAFTA) represented the worst trade deal ever realized, that Canada's and Québec's supply management system in the dairy sector unfairly injured farmers in states such as Wisconsin and New York, or that tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum are essential to protect these industries in the United States and US national security (Hawes and Kirkey 2020; Gagnon 2021). When we returned to the field during the 2018 midterm elections, it was clear that there was a discernible "Trump effect" on how the actors we had focused on in 2014 now perceived Québec and Québec-US issues.

"We love Québec, but...": Trump's Effect on American Perceptions of Québec During the 2018 Midterm Elections

To suggest that Donald Trump completely changed American perceptions of Canada and Québec would be an exaggeration. If we rely on Gallup poll data in February 2018—i.e. a few months before the start of our field surveys that year—we observe virtually no difference compared to 2014. Indeed, 94% of those surveyed had a positive opinion of Canada, compared with 93% in 2014 (Gallup 2018). Of these, 50% viewed their northern neighbors "very favorably" (vs. 52% in 2014) and 44% "mostly favorably" (vs. 41% in 2014). That said, our semi-structured interviews and observations in the field indicate that polls are not always sufficient to understand the subtleties of Americans' perception of their neighbors to the north. In the three states we had already surveyed in 2014 (New York, New Hampshire, and Vermont), our 2018 interviewees (some of whom were the same as in 2014) maintained that they continued to have a positive opinion of Québec, and that "La Belle Province" was not a major concern. Notably, however, more of them expressed doubts about the benefits of Québec-US relations, particularly on trade and the economy (Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020). The change was particularly punctuated among our Republican interlocutors; normally less protectionist than the Democrats (Lester 2021). Many no longer hesitated to embrace Trump's ideas about the shortcomings of NAFTA and the risks of international economic competition for American jobs, even from allies like Canada. In New Hampshire, for example, the Republican candidate for the state's 1st congressional district, Eddie Edwards, declared his support for Trump's tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum, during a televised debate pitting him against his Democratic opponent (Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020: 186).

Some Republicans continued to extol the merits of the trade relationship with Québec. In New York's 21st Congressional District (mentioned above), Representative Elise Stefanik, who would soon become one of Trump's staunchest allies (Cramer 2022), gave a more nuanced reading of NAFTA's effects on the US economy than did the president, and even expressed reservations about the White House's negotiating strategy: "During my visits with businesses and families across our district, it is clear that uncertainty over NAFTA is already having real consequences for our region and these will only grow if a conceptual agreement with Canada is not reached" (Stefanik 2018).

Yet Trump's effect on Republican positions on trade with Canada and Québec became more apparent when we extended our fieldwork to Maine or Midwestern Great Lakes states like Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, many of which had helped Trump prevail over Hillary Clinton in 2016. In Minnesota, one of the state's Republican Party directors met in Minneapolis summed up the change underway within his political formation by citing the example of Trump's tariffs on Canadian steel, saying that Americans don't hate Canada or Québec, but prefer "to create jobs here [rather] than north of the US border" (quoted in Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020: 186). He added that on trade, Trump's break from his predecessors was well received in Minnesota and other Midwestern states as it raised questions about whether the relationship with Canada/Québec is fair for the US. In interviews conducted in Columbus, Ohio, government relations lobbyists stressed that Trump has succeeded in changing the Republican Party's attitude on globalization, and in convincing a growing number of voters that protectionism is essential to bring good jobs back to America, even if it sometimes harms the interests of Canada and Québec.⁴ In Wisconsin, Republicans such as Bryan Steil, candidate for the state's 1st Congressional District, reiterated Trump's criticism of Canada/Québec in the dairy sector, stating during an election debate in October 2018: "when I started, I went to a dairy breakfast and spoke to local dairy farmers talking about the struggle they faced to export milk from Wisconsin to Canada. Canada has had a convoluted milk pricing scheme for the duration of NAFTA" (Steil 2018).

Our field observations in 2018 led to a second key conclusion about the evolution of American perceptions of Québec: Trump's victory in 2016, thanks to his protectionist rhetoric and sometimes combative approach toward Canada, encouraged Democrats to opt more for this

type of discourse too, moving away from the pro-free trade positions of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton (Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020: 186–187). During the 2016 presidential primaries, Senator Bernie Sanders particularly embodied this current, asserting for example, somewhat like Trump, that trade agreements like NAFTA and international economic competition have impoverished workers and weakened regions like the Midwest (White 2016). Two years later, on the campaign trail for the 2018 midterms, the Democrats we met seemed more convinced of these views than was the case during our 2014 field surveys. Some even supported Trump’s positions on issues of interest to Québec. This is notably the case with Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin, who offered the following remarks about NAFTA during an election debate in October 2018: “I agree with President Trump on the need to renegotiate NAFTA, which, unfortunately, resulted in too many particularly Wisconsin manufacturing jobs leaving this country” (Baldwin 2018).

This desire to protect the country’s manufacturing jobs, particularly in the Midwest, was also at the heart of Joe Biden’s platform during the 2020 presidential election and his first two years in the White House. In his February 2023 State of the Union Address, for instance, Biden summed up his vision as follows: “Too many good-paying manufacturing jobs moved overseas. Factories at home closed down. Once-thriving cities and towns became shadows of what they used to be” (Biden 2023). These words are not unlike those Trump regularly uttered during his presidency, as this passage from his January 2017 presidential inauguration speech indicates: “We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies and destroying our jobs” (Trump 2017). Joe Biden has not used as dramatic a tone as Trump to describe American job losses and has refrained from attacking allies like Canada head-on. In his first official meeting with Justin Trudeau in February 2021, he even promised to “revitalize” the “deeply interconnected and mutually beneficial economic relationship” with Canada (The White House 2021), in the critical minerals sector in particular—i.e., resources such as cobalt, lithium and nickel, which are used to manufacture the batteries for electric cars, solar panels and wind turbines essential to Biden’s promised fight against climate change.

Biden’s arrival as US president at the White House in January 2021 was therefore partly reassuring for Québec, given Trump’s tumultuous first term in the White House. The Democrat’s first two years in office illustrate, however, that he did not completely abandon the protectionism

embraced and promoted by his predecessor. His overall approach and tone were by no means identical. He opposed, for example, tariffs such as those imposed by Trump on Canadian steel and aluminum (Biden 2020: 70), and was more convinced than Trump about the benefits of trade with Canada and Québec, especially in key sectors such as semiconductors, those chips and microchips that are essential to the operation of today's electronic devices found in electric cars, computers and weapons systems (The White House 2023; Miller 2022). During Biden's official visit to Ottawa in March 2023, he and Trudeau even announced a new investment by IBM in its Bromont, Québec plant, to "promote secure and resilient semiconductor supply chains, creating jobs in both countries" (The White House 2023). Other Biden policies, however, unquestionably first and foremost focused on creating jobs in the US, even if this sometimes runs counter to the interests of Canada and Québec, particularly threatening jobs north of the border. For example, the initial versions of the Inflation Reduction Act proposed by Biden and passed by the US Congress in August 2022 were of concern to Canada and Québec, because they promised "subsidies for purchases of electric vehicles which required that they be assembled in the United States" (Sanders 2022: 2). This measure, which would have proven unfavorable to Canada and Québec retailers and manufacturers, was ultimately modified in the final version of the law, which provides tax credits for vehicles manufactured in North America, not just in the United States (Ibid.).

The dairy sector, mentioned above, is another subject where there were similarities between Trump and Biden. While the renegotiation of NAFTA enabled Trump to obtain greater access to the Canadian market for American producers (Dufour et Hurdle 2022), the Biden administration used the dispute settlement mechanism provided by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaced NAFTA, to denounce Canada's and Québec's supply management systems and the restrictions they impose on US exports. Borrowing a note from the Trump political playbook, members of the Biden administration such as US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said they were "deeply troubled" by Canada on this issue, claiming that Ottawa "failed to honor and implement its USMCA commitments" (quoted in Sanders 2022: 7).

Biden's insistence on "Buy American" and "Buy America" measures is a third example of the persistence of protectionism during his presidency. These measures aimed to prohibit foreign companies, including

those from Canada and Québec, from obtaining government contracts for economic development projects such as those planned under the above-mentioned Inflation Reduction Act or the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Biden’s vast infrastructure plan passed by Congress in November 2021. Biden opposed Trump’s tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum, but the importance he placed on “Buy American” and “Buy America” measures showed his desire to promote these sectors on US soil, by requiring companies receiving federal subsidies for the country’s economic recovery to use “Made in America” materials in their projects.

During the 2022 US midterms, our field surveys revealed a core reason as to why Biden did not completely break with his predecessor’s protectionist disposition and policies towards Canada and Québec: the appetite for such a vision has remained strong south of the border, especially in states that Biden considered crucial to his re-election in 2024, such as Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

QUÉBEC-US RELATIONS IN BIDEN’S TIME: THE PULSE OF AMERICANS ON THE GROUND DURING THE 2022 MIDTERMS

Our data collection in 2022 commenced with Pennsylvania, followed by sites in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. As in 2014 and 2018, we focused primarily on the election offices and headquarters of the two major parties, in cities such as Pittsburgh (PA), Columbus (OH), Detroit (MI), Lansing (MI), Milwaukee (WI), and Madison (WI). Interviews conducted with Democrats and Republicans allow us to draw at least three conclusions about Americans’ perceptions of Québec during Joe Biden’s presidency. First, it has become even clearer to us—than in 2018—that Trump’s first term in office has convinced Democrats to keep echoing his protectionist position for the foreseeable future. In an interview in Columbus with one of the Democratic candidates’ election planning directors for Ohio, our interviewee candidly revealed that there is now a strong conviction in his party that Trump beat the Democrats in 2016 because he denounced trade agreements and promised above all to create jobs in the US.⁵ Our interviewee added that he believes his party now has no choice but to insist on these same themes in order to win future elections, especially in Midwestern states that determined the outcome of the 2016 and 2020 presidential contests. The boarded-up

homes and abandoned industries evidenced first-hand during site visits to Braddock (PA), Detroit, and Milwaukee help to understand the deep desire of voters in both parties to change trade policies to the advantage of American workers, which, in turn, explains why Biden was so insistent on protectionism during his tenure in the White House (Fig. 3.2).

For Québec, however, a second—more positive—finding from our 2022 field surveys is that Americans seemed more convinced of the benefits of Canada/Québec-US trade than we observed in 2018. On the Democratic side, staffers for Democratic Party candidates interviewed in Pittsburgh indicated that voters expect good jobs to be brought back to the region, but do not perceive Canada or Québec as a major threat to the achievement of this objective. Other Democrats, echoing the approach of President Biden, noted that economic collaboration with Canada/Québec can be beneficial if it accelerates the production of goods essential to US global competitiveness with China, such as semiconductors.⁶ Similar responses were voiced on the Republican side: for example, political and campaign staffs interviewed at party offices in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and in Milwaukee, observed that Trump’s protectionism remains strong among Republicans, though Canada is not as high a priority now that NAFTA’s renegotiation is over.⁷

Other Republicans continued, however, to pay close attention to Canada/Québec and to make comments about their northern neighbors that were reminiscent of the kind of criticism Trump directed at Canada while in the White House. For example, when we indicated that we were from Québec, several Republicans told us that they had closely followed Justin Trudeau’s treatment of Canada’s “Freedom Convoy.”⁸ Formed by truckers and demonstrators opposing various measures to combat COVID-19, including the vaccination mandate to cross the border into the United States, this movement was the subject of marked attention on US soil in January and February 2022. This was particularly the case as conservative media outlets like Fox News regularly broadcast footage of the movement, while denouncing the measures put in place by Justin Trudeau to restore order in Ottawa, where the demonstrators undertook their most sustained and symbolic actions (Bump 2022). On February 11, 2022, for example, in a segment devoted to this issue on his show, star host Sean Hannity claimed that many of his viewers supported the “Freedom Convoy” (Fox News 2022). A Canadian demonstrator to whom Hannity gave the floor then said that Canada and Québec have been “under the grasp of a tyrant [Trudeau] since he got in,” while



Fig. 3.2 The town of Braddock, Pennsylvania, is one of the symbols of deindustrialization in the Midwest. Promising to bring good jobs back to the region, Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in key presidential states like Pennsylvania in 2016. Joe Biden echoed Trump's protectionism to take back the state in 2020, and Democrats promised to continue protecting US workers in the run-up to the 2024 election (*Photo Credit* Frédérick Gagnon)

Hannity called Trudeau a “gutless, spineless, cowardly Prime Minister” (Ibid.). This type of comment is reminiscent of the way Trump sometimes referred to his Canadian counterpart during his presidency. For example, in June 2018, Trump called Trudeau “dishonest” and “weak” after he prematurely left the Charlevoix G-7 summit in Québec because of their disagreements over US tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum (Paletta et Achenbach 2018). As Sean Hannity’s stance on the “Freedom Convoy” issue illustrates, certain Trump allies with great influence over the perception of American conservatives continued to fuel negative opinions of Canada/Québec in Joe Biden’s time. During our fieldwork, many of the Republicans we interviewed did not hesitate to repeat what they had heard on Fox News about this issue. A Republican Party staffer in Allegheny County in Pennsylvania, for example, told us that she had followed the “Freedom Convoy” closely on Fox News, and that in her opinion, Justin Trudeau lacks respect for the individual freedoms of Canadians and Québécois.⁹

This example is far from anecdotal, if the March 2022 Gallup polls on Americans’ perceptions of their neighbors to the north are anything to go by. Compared to the 2014 and 2018 figures cited above, there has been a noticeable drop in positive opinions of Canada in recent years: the percentage of Americans with a favorable view of Canada has fallen from 93% (in 2014) and 94% (in 2018) to 87% in 2022 (Brenan 2022). This latter percentage remains high and shows that Canada and Québec still enjoy an excellent reputation in the United States. However, these same polls demonstrated that positivity evinced by Republicans has deteriorated. In February 2019, for example, 89% of Republicans said they had a positive opinion of Canada, including 39% who described their attitude as “very favorable” (Gallup 2019). By March 2022, these percentages had fallen to 80% and 25% respectively (Brenan 2022). Furthermore, the percentage of Republicans with a “very unfavorable” opinion of Canada jumped from 2% to 8% during the same period (Gallup 2019; Brenan 2022). If we look at the February 2023 figures, we see that these results could be set to last, as only 81% of Republicans had a positive opinion of Canada, 28% a “very favorable” attitude and 5% a “very unfavorable” one (Gallup 2023).

In the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election and in the run-up to the 2022 midterms, some Maine Republicans did not hesitate to publicly express one of the reasons why they have an unfavorable opinion of Québec in particular. These include Tom Saviello, a former Maine

state senator, and Liz Caruso, a candidate for the Republican nomination in the 2022 primary to represent the state's 2nd Congressional District. Saviello and Caruso vigorously denounced the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) project, which aims to build a transmission line in Maine to link Québec and Massachusetts and increase Québec hydroelectric exports to the US (Coderre et al. 2019: 12). Just as we saw with the Northern Pass in New Hampshire during our 2014 investigations, opponents of the NECEC in Maine denounce Hydro-Québec projects in New England for a variety of reasons, including the impact of such infrastructure on the state's landscape and residential property values near transmission lines (Kroot 2020/2021).

Republican opposition to NECEC in Maine has differed from that of the Northern Pass in New Hampshire in at least two key ways: it is more virulent and more inspired by Trump's manner of framing Canada-US relations, and it is more visible because a second (and now former) Fox News star, Tucker Carlson, brought the issue to the attention of his viewers and encouraged Americans to view Québec suspiciously and threateningly. In a twenty-minute report broadcast in April 2021 as part of his documentary news magazine "Tucker Carlson Originals," Carlson and guests such as Tom Saviello and Liz Caruso treated NECEC in obvious Trumpist tones (Carlson 2021), claiming that Hydro-Québec's plan represents a "bad deal" for Maine, and an "attack against rural America" by "corrupt" "foreign energy conglomerates" who want to "destroy" Maine's forests (Carlson 2021; Bardou-Bourgeois 2024). This example illustrates that although Québec still has an excellent reputation in the United States, it is sometimes targeted by local actors who no longer hesitate to draw on Trump's style and modes of communication to encourage Americans to view "La Belle Province" in a negative light.

CONCLUSION: AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF QUÉBEC'S PARADIPLMACY IN THE UNITED STATES

This chapter took as its starting point two dominant theses in the scholarly literature on Québec-US relations, namely that "La Belle Province" enjoys a particularly positive reputation on US soil, and that it does not attract much attention south of the border, except at pivotal moments that place the province on the US political radar. Drawing on field surveys conducted in Québec's "historic strategic perimeter" during the 2014, 2018 and 2022 elections, we have good reason to believe that the election

of Donald Trump in 2016 constituted such a pivotal moment. Trump encouraged, with some success, Americans to pay more attention to the relationship with Canada and Québec, and to be more skeptical about its benefits, particularly on trade.

While not suggesting that the Québec-United States relationship has irrevocably changed since the political emergence of Donald Trump, our chapter demonstrates that the context in which Québec's paradiplomacy unfolds in the United States has undergone at least three evolutions since 2014. First, Republicans and Democrats have deep disagreements on many issues, but increasingly align on the need to protect American workers and create good jobs in the US. For Québec's paradiplomacy, this change already means investing more energy, time, and resources in convincing Americans to do business with Québec, but also being more attentive to the risk that the policies put forward by Republicans and Democrats could harm Québec's jobs and economic interests in the future. During Trump's first term in office, aluminum tariffs or demands for better access to the Canadian market for Wisconsin dairy farmers carried obvious risks for Québec regions that depend heavily on these sectors, including Saguenay Lac-St-Jean, Chaudière-Appalaches and Montérégie. Such uncertainties did not disappear during the presidency of Joe Biden, as evidenced by the first versions of the Inflation Reduction Act, which threatened access to the American market for Québec companies involved in the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles. The growing appetite of both parties for protectionism also means that Québec will have to deal with elected officials who are less interested in free trade than before, regardless of future alternations of power in Washington, and in the states with which Québec has its closest ties.

Second, if one excludes trade issues, Trump has accentuated partisan polarization in the United States and the tendency of both parties to systematically oppose projects put forward by their political opponents (Jacobson 2023: 457). This polarization did not coincide with Trump's arrival on the American political stage (Klein 2020), but his promises to deconstruct Obama's legacy as soon as he arrived at the White House, the two impeachment proceedings launched by House Democrats to oust him, his refusal to accept the results of the 2020 election, and the Capitol insurrection of January 6, 2021 planned and carried out by his supporters, illustrate the extent of the palpable tensions that exist between Democrats and Republicans today. During our field surveys in 2022, supporters of both parties were more insistent than in 2014 and 2018 that the potential

for bipartisan collaboration is impossible on most issues, and that winning elections has practically become an existential issue. More concretely, the Democrats we interviewed often confided in us that Trump's re-election would, in their view, lead to the end of American democracy, while the Republicans felt the country is already in peril because of major electoral fraud carried out by the opposing party. In a country where Democratic and Republican agendas often consist of undoing what the opposing party has achieved during its years in power, and where recent electoral cycles have led to frequent alternations in power, Québec's paradiplomacy needs to be more agile and flexible than in the past. On environmental issues, for example, Trump promised to revive fossil fuels like coal, while Joe Biden proposed one of the most ambitious non-fossil fuel driven climate change plans in US history. In the space of four years, White House policy has gone from an approach often incompatible with Québec's to a vision almost entirely in line with its own. During Trump's first term in office, Québec obviously did not stop promoting the fight against climate change on US soil. However, "La Belle Province" often found its best allies outside the federal government, in state capitals run by Democratic governors or rare moderate Republicans, for example. After the election of Joe Biden, these same governors remained crucial allies for Québec, but "La Belle Province" was also able to count on the White House to promote the electrification of transport and renewable energies. Trump's re-election in the 2024 presidential election has, however, marked a new break in the White House's climate policy, forcing Québec to adjust its approach once again.

Finally, a third reality of Trump's first term crucial to Québec is that the billionaire's defeat in the 2020 presidential election did not mark the end of his political dominance over the Republican Party or his desire to become president again. Trump was the first major Republican candidate to officially enter the 2024 presidential race, and with just a few months to go before the start of the primary season he was easily leading the race to secure his party's nomination and face Joe Biden again (Real Clear Politics 2023a). He remained neck-and-neck in the polls in a potential second electoral duel against Biden, despite four criminal indictments filed against him in 2023, including two for attempting to overturn the results of the 2020 election (Real Clear Politics 2023b).

After Biden's decision to leave the race in July 2024, Vice President Kamala Harris was unable to beat Trump in the November presidential race. The return of Trump to the White House has plunged Québec back

into a climate of uncertainty similar to that which marked the billionaire's first term in office, particularly on trade. A few weeks after his victory over Harris, Trump threatened to impose a 25% tariff on all Canadian and Québec exports to the United States. If Trump adopts such policies and attitude towards his northern neighbors throughout his second term, Québec's paradiplomacy on American soil will rarely have been so essential to preserve Québec's most important international relationship, on which hundreds of thousands of jobs in the province depend.

The period covered by this chapter (2014 to present) suggests that the successive Québec governments of Philippe Couillard (April 2014—October 2018) and François Legault (October 2018—) have proven relatively adept at overcoming obstacles to the functioning of the Québec-US relationship. Couillard and his government made public several strategy documents outlining the main objectives of Québec's paradiplomacy on American soil in Trump's time. In both "Québec's Export Strategy 2016-2020" (Québec Government 2016) and "Québec's international policy" (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2017), his government stressed that the United States is Québec's main partner, and that it is essential to continue promoting the know-how of Québec companies on US soil. Couillard also acknowledged, however, that US protectionism was here to stay: "For a close US trade partner like Québec, protectionist measures, when introduced, pose a special challenge" (Ibid.: 14). Québec's international policy released by François Legault's government in 2019 (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2019), as well as its "territorial strategy for the United States" unveiled in 2021 (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2021), also emphasize the rise of protectionism in the US, but introduce a novelty compared to Philippe Couillard's approach, as they place the economy at the top of Québec's paradiplomacy priorities on US soil. Québec's "territorial strategy in the United States" underscores, for example, that a "strong current of protectionism is sweeping the US, appealing to both major political parties" (Ibid.: 11; our translation). The document also notes that Québec is faced "with an increasingly conflictive international trade environment" and that "Québec must not take the US market for granted." (Ibid.: our translation). As this chapter argues, our field surveys on US soil tend to confirm such conclusions. Trump's second term in the White House will perhaps make them even

more obvious, but the Biden presidency showed that Québec needs a vigilant, proactive presence in the United States, regardless of which party is in power.

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NOTES

1. Readers will note that some of the results and conclusions presented in this chapter have been the subject of initial reflections in the following: Frédéric Gagnon, 2016, “Right Next Door: Québec and the 2014 Electoral Marketplaces of Ideas in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.” *Québec Studies* 61: 77–109; and Frédéric Gagnon et Christophe Cloutier-Roy, 2020, “Ephemeral or Durable? Donald Trump’s Impact on Canada–US Issues in the Great Lakes Heartland and Northeast Borderlands.” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 26 (2): 182–196.
2. New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire in 2014; Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine in 2018; Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania in 2022.
3. We thank Professor Charles Doran for bringing this limitation to our attention during a discussion of this project at the 2019 conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States.
4. Interview conducted in Columbus, Ohio, October 25, 2018.
5. Interview conducted in Columbus, Ohio, October 25, 2022.
6. Interview conducted in Columbus, Ohio, October 25, 2022.
7. Interviews conducted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 24, 2022, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 28, 2022.

8. Notably in interviews conducted in Republican offices in Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Oakland County north of Detroit.
9. Interviews conducted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 24, 2022.

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Perceptions of the United States and Political Debates in Québec

Scott Piroth

How has Québec's relationship with the United States influenced politics within Québec? Québec's paradiplomacy efforts are designed to promote Québec's interests abroad, but the success or failure of those efforts also has an impact on politics in Québec—particularly when it comes to the national question. Sovereignists have, for example, tried to persuade Québécois that the relationship between an independent Québec and the United States would remain positive, arguing that economic, political, and security links would not be disrupted. The United States would not interfere in negotiations between Québec and the rest of Canada and would eventually recognize a sovereign Québec. Of course, this narrative has been contested by federalists in Québec and in the rest of Canada. This

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chapter focuses on how various policies, events, and actors have influenced perceptions of how the United States would respond to an eventual Québec secession.

U.S. policies can influence Québec's politics in several ways. First, U.S. policies can directly impact Québec, such as decisions made regarding border security and trade. Border restrictions and tariffs limit continental integration and reinforce Québec's dependence on the rest of Canada. Conversely, relatively open borders and free trade agreements remove obstacles to an independent Québec and lessen Québec's dependence on Ottawa. Second, the words of U.S. policymakers can influence public opinion in Québec regarding the viability of independence, such as President Clinton's interventions in the 1995 referendum campaign and after. Third, U.S. policies can force choices on Canadian governments with the potential to divide Québécois from other Canadians. This was clearly a risk with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lastly, policies and politicians in the United States provide points of comparison with policies and politicians in Canada. Leaving Canada may seem more attractive to Québécois when Canada suffers by this comparison, such as during the Obama/Harper era and less attractive to Québécois when Canada's leaders seem preferable, such as during the Trump/Trudeau years.

The principal argument of this chapter is that political developments in the U.S. in recent decades have been broadly unfavorable to sovereigntists across four significant dimensions.

- 1) Free trade agreements have not removed economic uncertainty from the Québec-U.S. economic relationship, and security concerns and the pandemic have created a much less permeable border.
- 2) The U.S. policy of non-interference in Canada's national unity debates has not prevented the U.S. government from essentially taking Canada's side on key questions, such as Québec's eventual accession to NAFTA/CUSMA.
- 3) U.S. foreign policies have been deeply divisive within Canada, but Canadian governments have been able to avoid national unity crises by either siding with Québec's majority opinion or securing elite consensus. Over time, public opinion in Québec and the rest of Canada have tended to converge on the most controversial issues.
- 4) Québécois' views of the U.S. can fluctuate wildly depending on U.S. politics and policies, but even during the Obama Administration, when many Québécois were inspired by events in the U.S., there

was no corresponding rejection of Canada. Furthermore, Canadians from different provinces share similar views of U.S. politics.

FREE TRADE AND OPEN BORDERS

Free trade agreements strengthen the argument that access to the United States' market would be relatively unchanged by Québec's secession. On the other hand, U.S. investment decreased in the aftermath of the first PQ election in 1976, and, more recently, President Trump's erratic protectionism illustrated the dangers of dependence on the U.S. market. Sovereignists have assumed that the U.S. border would remain relatively open regardless of Québec's status and that border security would be cooperative. The events of September 11, 2001 cast considerable doubt on these assumptions. The thickening of the border disrupted economic relations and raised the prospect that the U.S. would insist on more restrictive border policies. Though some terrorism-related fears have dissipated over time, the COVID-19 pandemic and the influx of refugees from the U.S. have again raised the salience of international borders.

The largest obstacle to persuading Québécois that Québec should become an independent country has always been fears about the economic consequences of secession. Hero and Balthazar believed that Québécois would only vote for independence if there was confidence that their standard of living would not suffer and that this confidence depends upon the maintenance of economic links with both the U.S. and the rest of Canada (Hero and Balthazar 1988: 443). In the sphere of trade, the objectives of the U.S. government and Québec's governments (both sovereignist and federalist) usually coincided. The U.S. generally supports both stability and open markets (Lisée 1990: 119). The 1989 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) influenced the sovereignty debate in two important ways. First, they created a powerful argument that an independent Québec could maintain economic ties with its U.S. trading partner and perhaps even guarantee continued access to the Canadian market. Second, it created divisions between Québec federalists and some on the left in the rest of Canada who had previously been allies in efforts to reform Canadian federalism.

For sovereignists, free trade weakened the arguments against independence. Not only would Québec secure access to the large U.S. market,

the rest of Canada would also be bound by a trade agreement which would prevent them from restricting trade with an independent Québec (Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 11). Jacques Parizeau viewed free trade as a “cadeau de ciel” for sovereigntists and believed that free trade would end the threat of economic reprisals from the rest of Canada in the event of Québec’s independence because the U.S. would not allow it (Parizeau 1997: 43). He expressed confidence that in the event of a Yes vote, the financial community in New York would prevail on the rest of Canada to avoid vindictive actions that would be harmful to the economy (Parizeau 1997: 287). As discussed below in the context of the 1995 referendum, neither the U.S. nor the Canadian government concedes that an independent Québec would remain part of NAFTA. In 1995, Finance Minister Martin warned that there was no guarantee that Québec could join NAFTA and that Canada could veto such membership and that NAFTA did not guarantee access to the Canadian market at existing levels (Martin 2008: 170).

Trade agreements have not prevented trade disputes between Canada and the U.S. Trade disputes are endemic to the relationship and illustrate the dangers of dependence on the U.S. market. President Trump forced a renegotiation of NAFTA, used specious claims of “national security” to impose tariffs on Canada in 2018, then imposed new tariffs on Canadian aluminum only weeks after the new free trade agreement (CUSMA) went into effect in 2020 (Busch 2020). The Canada-U.S. trade relationship is more predictable, but remains fraught with challenges, with the Biden Administration. “Buy American” provisions championed by President Biden seriously threaten Canadian exports. For example, generous tax credits for electric vehicles in the *Inflation Reduction Act of 2022* were only extended to vehicles manufactured in Canada during last minute negotiations on the bill (Canadian Press, 7 August 2022b). The ability of an independent Québec to navigate the perils of this relationship is uncertain.

Support for free trade and close economic ties with the U.S. cannot be explained solely in terms of its perceived impact on support for sovereignty. In 2004, Gidengil, et al. found “no support for the argument that sovereigntists are more continentalist than federalists” (Gidengil et al. 2004: 362). In 2019, sovereigntists were less likely than were federalists (32% vs. 41%) to agree that “there should be more free trade with other countries, even if it hurts some,” and sovereigntists were also less likely to

agree than were federalists that “international trade creates more jobs in Canada than it destroys” (45% vs. 65%) (Canadian Election Study 2019).

The FTA was ratified only after contentious debates within Canada that drove a wedge between the ostensibly social-democratic PQ government and those on the left in the rest of Canada—the principal opponents of the FTA (Resnick 1990). Gagné argues that opposition to free trade in English Canada was largely motivated by fears regarding sovereignty and Canadian culture, whereas the opposition in Québec centered on the economic impacts (Gagné 1999: 100–101). Free trade opponents feared the loss of Canada’s sovereignty, but both sovereigntists and federalists in Québec believed that free trade would reduce Ottawa’s ability to intervene in areas of provincial jurisdiction and increase Québec’s autonomy whether as a province or as a sovereign state (Gagné 1999: 102–104). By 1988 both major provincial parties in Québec supported free trade, though both had internal divisions on the issue. The PLQ’s electorate overlapped with the federal Liberals, who opposed the accord. Meanwhile, the PQ faced internal opposition from labor unions and agricultural producers (Martin 1995: 16). Balthazar notes that most Québécois did not share the widespread opinion of leftist elites in the rest of Canada that free trade with the U.S. threatened their culture (Balthazar 1991: 42). Over time, free trade dissipated as a source of conflict within Canada. By 2017 over 80% of Canadians both inside and outside of Québec thought that NAFTA was at least “somewhat good” for Canada (Pew Research 2017). After initially opposing the FTA, both the federal Liberal Party and the NDP voted in favor of the renegotiated Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) in 2020. Ironically, the BQ voted against CUSMA on second reading because of concerns regarding Québec’s aluminum industry (Harris 2020).

Along with trade, U.S. policies regarding the border and border security directly impact Québec. The U.S.-Canada border was relatively open prior to 2001, and sovereigntists assumed that border security would be cooperative regardless of Québec’s status. The events of September 11, 2001 cast considerable doubt on these assumptions. The thickening of the border disrupted economic relations and caused the U.S. to adopt more restrictive border policies, which had a significant impact on cross-border traffic. Québec’s government responded by instituting secure driver’s licenses and participating in programs like NEXUS as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (Leblond 2010: 199). In this new era, Canadians and Québécois continued to travel to the U.S., but fewer Americans

travelled to Canada, and Québec's tourism industry suffered (Von Hlatky and Trisko 2010: 239).

Though terrorism-related fears have dissipated over time, the border became an issue again during the Trump presidency. Migration across the U.S.-Canada border is governed by the *Canada-United States Safe Third Country Agreement*, and refugee claims cannot be made at regular border crossings. Prior to 2023, many refugee claimants sidestepped the *Agreement* by crossing the border at points such as Roxham Road in Québec. The flow of refugees in the summer of 2017 strained local resources and created political conflict within Canada. Conservatives blamed Prime Minister Trudeau for encouraging irregular entries, such as when he tweeted “#WelcomeToCanada” in January 2017 in response to President Trump's executive order banning immigration to the U.S. from several Muslim countries (Wherry 2019: 237–239). Crossings were heavily restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but when the border reopened in 2021, thousands of refugee claimants again began crossing into Canada at Roxham Road each month, despite the change in the U.S. Administration (CBC). In March 2023, the U.S. and Canada negotiated changes to the *Safe Third Country Agreement*, extending it to cover the entire border. Refugee claimants can no longer use irregular crossings, such as Roxham Road, to avoid being returned to the United States. This has stemmed the influx of irregular refugee claimants arriving in Canada (Nerestant 2023). Nevertheless, the global flow of refugees appears unlikely to dissipate, and the attractiveness of Canada as a destination for asylum seekers is linked to future U.S. policies. If the U.S. further restricts refugee claimants, it is likely that many will try to come to Canada instead. COVID-19 demonstrated that Québécois cannot take it for granted that the U.S. border will remain open, and Roxham Road illustrated that unexpected disruptions can create border chaos.

Events since 2001 have cast considerable doubt on sovereigntist claims that an independent Québec could rely upon predictable economic relations with the United States and relatively permeable borders. In addition, the views of Québécois and those in the rest of Canada have converged on trade issues, and this is no longer a major source of conflict between Québec and the rest of Canada.

THE U.S. AND THE SOVEREIGNTY DEBATE

The words and actions of U.S. leaders can influence public opinion in Québec regarding the viability of independence. The U.S. does not have formal diplomatic relations with Québec. The relationship is largely triangular, as Québec's representatives must go through Canadian channels; nevertheless, U.S. diplomats pay considerable attention to Québec. The fact that the U.S. maintains two consulates in Québec is evidence of this interest (Balthazar 2010: 247). The official policy of the U.S. government toward the Québec national question has a little for each side. Sovereignists emphasize the policy of non-interference, whereas federalists highlight the stated preference of the U.S. government for Canadian unity.

The PQ government that was elected in 1976 sought to reassure the United States government that it would not threaten U.S. interests. Bissonnette contends that the PQ government made little effort to reach out to Washington because they believed that Washington would always take the “Canadian” side. Bissonnette also reports that the U.S. Consul in Québec City advised the PQ government to adopt a “low profile” toward Washington to avoid forcing the U.S. government to publicly take sides. She contends that federalists were also careful to avoid seeking overt U.S. support—fearing that it would create a nationalist backlash. Nevertheless, the PQ did take steps to avoid alienating the U.S. government. For example, in 1979, the party revised its electoral program to affirm its commitment to cooperating with NATO and NORAD (Bissonnette 1981: 67–73). On the economic front, Premier Lévesque sought to ease economic anxieties in the U.S. Lévesque travelled to New York in 1977 to speak before the Economic Club of New York on Wall Street. The reaction was disastrous. Lévesque compared Québec's independence movement to the American Revolution. This did not go over well with the New York audience that did not believe the PQ was serious about independence, and in the immediate aftermath of the speech, there was a sell-off of U.S. assets (Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 168; Lisée 1990: 127–129).

According to Lisée, Québécois were very pro-American, and a signal from Washington that an independent Québec would be welcomed could help them overcome apprehensions about leaving Canada (Lisée 1990: 111). There was never any real possibility, however, that such a signal would materialize. Lisée concludes, “Despite his skills as a communicator,

Lévesque simply could not ignite a spark of sympathy for his cause in the United States, where a conceptual padlock remained firmly in place. The debate over the American role in the separatist battle would not center on the degree of support or understanding shown by neighbours south of the border. It would center on the degree of opposition to the sovereignty option expressed in Washington and New York” (8). The PQ government shifted to trying to dissuade influential Americans from open expressions of hostility toward secession. Despite an inauspicious beginning, the PQ government was relatively successful in this endeavor.

There is little doubt that U.S. officials preferred stability and would not have wanted a secession crisis to the north, but they avoided any explicit interventions in the 1980 referendum campaign. The U.S. State Department’s official position on Québec was that separatism was an internal issue for Canadians to decide (Lisée 1990: 117). Shortly after the PQ came to power, President Carter did an interview with CTV and dodged a question about whether the U.S. would recognize an independent Québec. Carter did say that his preference would be for Québec to remain in Canada but that the decision was not his to make. Carter’s most important contribution to the debate was his invitation to Prime Minister Trudeau to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress in 1977, where Trudeau described Québec’s secession as a “crime against the history of mankind” (Trumbull 1977). As the referendum approached, the Carter Administration continued its non-interventionist approach. This may have been because U.S. officials were never asked to intervene. Trudeau was cautious about the perception that the U.S. would be too overt in its support for federalism and believed that the No side did not need outside assistance to win the referendum (Lisée 1990: 233; Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 168). By contrast, PQ minister Claude Morin feared that U.S. opposition to independence would have been catastrophic and would likely drive many conservative Québécois away (Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 193; Lisée 1990: 163).

As in 1980, in 1995 sovereigntist leaders sought to reassure U.S. officials that an independent Québec posed no threat to U.S. interests. Shortly after the 1994 election, the new PQ government worked to try to ensure U.S. neutrality in the coming referendum debate. Premier Parizeau spoke at the America’s Society in New York City and said that separation was likely to be mutually beneficial for both parties, would not disrupt existing trading relationships, and answered his own rhetorical question “What can America do about it?” with “Nothing. Absolutely nothing”

(Came 1994). Deputy Premier Bernard Landry told U.S. Ambassador Blanchard that Americans should not be afraid of separatism because Québécois are pro-American and pro-free trade (Blanchard 1998: 67). Similarly, Parizeau dismissed the idea that Québec would be excluded from NAFTA, asking if the U.S. would be willing to exclude Québec from NORAD or the agreements governing the St. Lawrence Seaway (199) and cited various U.S. experts who argued that the U.S. would be inclined to negotiate free trade with an independent Québec (300). Ambassador Blanchard was not persuaded. He told Landry that Americans had no sympathy for secession, equated it with the U.S. Civil War, and viewed it as contrary to international law (68). Blanchard told Parizeau that an independent Québec would not be part of NAFTA and “would be on its knees before Canada, begging for admission” (77). Premier Parizeau strangely believed that the U.S. government would feel pressured to recognize an independent Québec if France granted such recognition (Parizeau 1997: 341). He also seemed to believe that the U.S. government would deal directly with Québec in the aftermath of a Yes vote (Duchesne 2004: 534). In fact, private documents released in 2007 from the Clinton Library revealed that the planned U.S. response to a Yes vote matched the pre-referendum rhetoric. The U.S. government anticipated that any subsequent change to Canada’s constitutional arrangements would take time to negotiate, and the U.S. would not negotiate with Québec in the meantime. Furthermore, Québec’s membership in NAFTA would not be automatic and would require negotiations (FOIA 2007).

The non-interference policy of the United States government regarding Québec’s independence officially remained unchanged from 1980 to 1995, but U.S. officials were more willing to signal their opposition in 1995 than in 1980. Ambassador Blanchard pushed hard for stronger anti-independence messaging. He believed that U.S. silence was “used by the separatists as a sign of support, sympathy, or indifference to the idea of Canada’s break-up” (Blanchard 1998: 67). Blanchard’s view was that “the independence of Québec would be a tragic event for everybody—not just for Canadians, but for Americans, Québécois, and the world” (68). Blanchard urged more direct intervention from President Clinton (Blanchard 1998: 201). In a February 1995 speech to the House of Commons, President Clinton included lines that could be construed as favoring Canadian unity without appearing to be overtly meddling in Canadian affairs. He said, “In a world darkened by ethnic conflicts that literally tear nations apart, Canada has stood for all of us as a model of

how people of different cultures can live and work together in peace, prosperity, and respect.” Clinton continued, “your political future is ... entirely for you to decide. That’s what democracy is all about” (Blanchard 1998: 211).

In the days leading up to the vote, public opinion shifted toward the Yes side, and Canadian officials were grasping for anything that might turn the tide. With Prime Minister Chrétien’s assent, President Clinton answered a planted question at a news conference regarding the referendum and in his reply, Clinton described Canada as a country that “basically works” (Blanchard 1998: 138–39). This was front-page news in Québec. Hébert writes, “At the time of the referendum, U.S. president Bill Clinton was the most influential political figure in francophone Québec. According to polls sponsored by the No committee, his referendum intervention impacted more positively on the federalist cause than the so-called love-in that brought thousands of non-Québecers to Montreal in the immediate lead-up to the vote” (Hébert 2007: 253). Hébert concluded, “No foreign head of state, certainly no American president, has skated quite as close to the edge of Canadian internal affairs as Clinton did in the lead-up to and aftermath of the 1995 referendum. He only got away with it because of the immense popularity he enjoyed in Québec” (230). Words matter—especially when spoken by a popular U.S. president.

Despite the narrow defeat of the Yes side, sovereigntists had reason for optimism, and considerable uncertainty prevailed in the late 1990s. In 1999, President Clinton made a more forceful intervention on the side of federalism. As an invited speaker at the International Conference of the Forum of Federations in Mont Tremblant, Québec, Clinton gave a sustained defense of federalism. Clinton stated:

It seems to me that the suggestion that a people of a given ethnic group or tribal group or religious group can only have a meaningful communal existence if they are an independent nation – not if there is no oppression, not if they have genuine autonomy, but they must be actually independent – is a questionable assertion in a global economy where cooperation pays greater benefits in every area of life than destructive competition. (Clinton 1999: 29)

While recognizing the need for secession in extreme cases, such as the former Yugoslavia and East Timor, Clinton questioned the criteria to

decide whether a territory should become independent, asking “Is there an abuse of human rights?... Are minority rights, as well as majority rights, respected? What is in the long-term economic and security interests of our people? ... Will it be better or worse if we are independent, or if we have a federalist system? (Clinton 1999: 30). The message delivered in Québec was clearly that Québec did not meet these criteria and that federalism offered the best alternative (Clinton 1999: 31).

In the 2000s, the threat of Québec’s secession receded, and U.S. officials did not have weigh in on the Québec question. President Obama was drawn into the debate on Scotland’s independence referendum in 2014. Because the U.K. government had agreed in advance to the Scottish referendum and to respect its results, there was less ambiguity surrounding how a Yes vote would be interpreted, and the official U.S. policy was neutrality. Nevertheless, Obama made remarks in June 2014 that left little doubt regarding his preferences, “The United Kingdom has been an extraordinary partner to us. From the outside at least, it looks like things have worked pretty well. And we obviously have a deep interest in making sure that one of the closest allies we will ever have remains a strong, robust, united and effective partner” (BBC News 2014). It is easy to imagine Obama expressing similar sentiments regarding Canada if there had been a resurgence of support for sovereignty during his administration, and considering Obama’s popularity in Québec, such an intervention could have been powerful. Similarly, President Trump ignored the State Department’s neutrality regarding the 2017 referendum in Catalonia, and during a news conference with Spanish Prime Minister Rajoy, Trump stated, “I think Spain is a great country, and it should remain united” (Gearan 2017). It would be difficult to speculate how Trump might have responded to hypothetical Québec referendum, and considering his unpopularity in Québec, whether his views would influence voters.

The cumulative impact of official U.S. statements regarding how the U.S. would respond to a hypothetical Yes-side victory in a referendum on sovereignty has not bolstered the sovereigntist cause. While eschewing direct statements opposing sovereignty, U.S. officials have repeatedly made it clear that the U.S. prefers a united Canada and that an independent Québec would not remain part of agreements, such as NAFTA, without difficult negotiations and the support of the Canadian government. As time has progressed, the sovereigntist position that the U.S. would not be an obstacle to secession has become increasingly untenable.

U.S FOREIGN POLICY AND QUÉBEC PUBLIC OPINION

Much of the debate during the 1980 and 1995 referendum campaigns focused on the economic implications of sovereignty, and the security of Québec was largely taken for granted. In 1979 Gourevitch noted that an independent Québec would remain under NATO's security umbrella; however, "a sharp increase in international tensions or a change in their character could alter these defense calculations" (Gourevitch 1979: 248). This prediction has come to fruition in the post-September 11 era. The threats of terrorism, pandemics, climate change, and migration have displaced Cold War fears of nuclear attack as the issues driving foreign policy decisions. Though the Parti Québécois asserted that "the most important foreign policy decisions, such as the military engagement in Afghanistan or the Canadian position on climate change, have been taken by Ottawa, and far too often in contradiction of the interests and values of Québec" (Haglund and Massie 2016: 234), the reality is more complex, and Canadian foreign policy has often aligned with public opinion in Québec on major issues.

Of all the post-9/11 foreign policy decisions of the U.S. government, the one that was most likely to drive a wedge between Québec and the rest of Canada was the Iraq War. The decision by the Bush Administration and the final decision by the Chrétien government regarding Canada's participation in the conflict took place as the 2003 Québec provincial election campaign was unfolding. Public opinion in Québec was strongly opposed to the intervention—reaching 76% in October 2002. An estimated 150,000 people demonstrated against intervention in Montréal in February 2003 (Haglund and Massie 2016: 242–243). The Bloc Québécois (BQ) was categorically opposed to the Iraq War, and BQ leader Gilles Duceppe participated in antiwar demonstrations in early 2003. On March 11, the National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion supporting a diplomatic and peaceful resolution to the crisis (Lachapelle 2003: 921). In addition, all three provincial party leaders (Landry, Charest, and Dumont) wore white ribbons supporting peace during the provincial election campaign (Hébert 2007: 101). Meanwhile, public opinion in the rest of Canada was far more divided, with narrow majorities supporting intervention in most provinces (Lachapelle 2003: 919). The Conservative Party of Canada, and the Conservative premiers of Alberta and Ontario all supported Canada's participation in Iraq (Lamontagne et Massie 2019: 174–175). Thus, the Chrétien government faced the risk of an internal

crisis that would pit Québec against the rest of Canada, increase the electoral prospects of the PQ, and potentially revive support for sovereignty. There was considerable pressure from the U.S. administration urging Canada's support. U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci stated that the U.S. viewed Iraq as a national security issue and told Canadian reporters that "security trumps trade" (Cellucci 2005: 139). Chrétien described the decision not to participate as "one of the most important moments in our history" (Chrétien 2007: 318).

In retrospect, Chrétien's decision turned out well for Canada. As the conflict progressed, Canadian public opinion began to shift toward the non-interventionist position. When asked in 2003 if Canada made "the right decision or the wrong decision to not use military force against Iraq," Québécois were significantly more likely than those in the rest of Canada (83% to 68%) to respond that Canada made the right decision (Pew Research 2003). By 2005, differences between Québécois and other Canadians had nearly disappeared, with over 80% of both groups believing that Canada made the right decision (Pew Research 2005). In Québec, Charest's Québec Liberal Party (PLQ) won a majority—effectively removing the threat of a third referendum in the short-term. Hébert writes that the decision to stay out of Iraq may have helped the PLQ, but the issue itself united most Québécois. Opposition to the war crossed party lines in Québec and bridged the sovereigntist/federalist and francophone/anglophone/allophone divides (Hébert 2007: 250–251). As opposition leader, Stephen Harper supported the Iraq mission and was critical of Chrétien. When Harper became prime minister in 2006, BQ leader Duceppe warned that he would bring down the Conservative's minority government if Harper decided to belatedly join the mission (Hébert 2007: 248). There was never any real prospect of this, however, as Canadian public opinion turned strongly against the conflict. Iraq was undoubtedly the foreign policy issue with the greatest prospect of creating a conflict between Québécois and other Canadians that might have revived the sovereigntist movement. Had Chrétien or Harper committed Canadian troops to the conflict, many Canadians probably would have rallied around this decision at the outset. The disastrous period of 2004–2007 would have severely tested Canadian resolve and likely inflamed opinions on both sides, further alienating Québécois from Ottawa.

The conflict in Afghanistan played out very differently. Haglund and Massie report that Canadian participation in the American campaign to unseat the Taliban in Afghanistan was relatively unpopular in Québec.

At the outset of the mission in 2001, according to Léger Marketing, only 36 percent of Québécois as opposed to 57 percent in the rest of Canada favored the deployment. Unlike Iraq, however, key political leaders in Québec supported the Afghan mission. Contrary to his opposition to the Iraq War, BQ leader Duceppe backed the initial Canadian participation in combat against the Taliban in the autumn of 2001 and continued to express support for the mission through 2007 (Haglund and Massie 2016: 243). In the provincial arena, the National Assembly unanimously approved a motion supporting Canada's military contribution to Afghanistan in April 2002 during a period of PQ government (Lamontagne and Massie 2019: 161). Public opinion became increasingly opposed to the mission as it dragged on and casualties mounted. By 2007, nearly seventy percent of Québécois opposed the Afghan mission. Nevertheless, the PQ did not campaign on the issue in either 2007 or 2008 (Lamontagne and Massie 2019: 161–163). Had there been sustained opposition to the Afghan mission among Québec's political elites in the beginning, Afghanistan might have become an issue to mobilize support for sovereignty as public opinion turned against this conflict. Furthermore, Québécois were consistently less supportive of the Afghan War than were other Canadians between 2001 and 2011 (Haglund and Massie 2016: 237–238). By the time that sovereigntist leaders turned decisively against the conflict, the issue was less divisive than it would have been a few years earlier. The soldiers were home and most Canadians, both inside and outside of Québec, were opposed to the war (Lamontagne and Massie 2019: 161–163; Haglund and Massie 2016: 244–245).

Another source of conflict between Canada and the United States was Canada's decision not to join the U.S. missile defense program in 2003–2004. Pierre Martin notes that Québécois were consistently more opposed to missile defense than were other Canadians; however, the differences were not that great. The major difference was among politicians. The BQ consistently opposed missile defense, whereas the federal Liberals from Québec remained mostly silent (Martin 2005). In 2004, with the Liberals reduced to a minority government and Prime Minister Martin's poll numbers sinking in Québec due to the Sponsorship Scandal, the issue was not on the official agenda when Martin met President Bush in November. Nevertheless, Bush raised the issue with Martin privately. Then, Bush told that press that he hoped that Canada would sign on as a missile defense partner (Martin 2008: 157–162). Bow argues that the Martin government's decision to reject participation in the U.S.

ballistic missile defense program was a consequence of the wave of popular anti-American sentiment primarily caused by the Iraq War and President Bush's general unpopularity in Québec (Bow 2008: 354). Prime Minister Martin's decision defused the possibility of political conflict between Québec and the rest of Canada regarding this issue. Unlike the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, however, the urgency of the BMD decision was artificially created by the Bush Administration. The tone-deaf approach of the Bush Administration to Canada's domestic politics raised the salience of the issue and pushed Martin to make a very public decision in 2004, and, not surprisingly, domestic politics trumped U.S.-Canada relations. Nevertheless, missile defense remains an ongoing concern. The changing threat environment with North Korean missile tests and an increasingly hostile Russia might lead a future Canadian government to revisit Canada's BMD participation, and survey data suggests that such a decision would be less divisive today than it would have been in 2004 (Canadian Press, 10 May 2022a). In 2017, a plurality of Québécois remained opposed to Canadian participation in missile defense, but the views of Québécois were comparable to the views of Canadians elsewhere (Massie et al. 2021: 96). Similarly, the views of Québécois regarding the Ukraine conflict are nearly indistinguishable from the views of other Canadians. Both overwhelmingly support continuing Canada's efforts to support Ukraine (Angus Reid Institute 2022).

When U.S. foreign policies divide Canadians, there is always the potential that sovereigntists can point to such divisions as evidence that the rest of Canada does not share Québec's values. This was a strong possibility during the early days of the Iraq War. By siding with the majority opinion in Québec, the Chrétien government avoided a national unity crisis. There was sufficient support in Québec (at least among elites) during the early stages of the Afghan War that Québec-RoC differences did not spark a unity crisis. In both cases, public opinion in Québec and the rest of Canada converged over time, and Canadian leaders could take positions that did not divide Québécois from other Canadians.

QUÉBÉCERS' VIEWS OF THE U.S. AND CANADA

The final aspect of the Québec-U.S. relationship that this chapter considers is the interrelationship between attitudes toward the United States and attitudes toward Canada in Québec. I hypothesize that when

the U.S. is perceived positively, attitudes toward Canada suffer by comparison. For example, Québécois tended to view President Obama favorably in comparison to Prime Minister Harper. On the other hand, Québécois expressed intensely anti-American sentiments during the Iraq War and more recently during the Trump Administration. In these periods, Canada's government benefits from the comparison, and Québécois find common ground with other Canadians in opposing U.S. policies. The story becomes much more complicated when the Canadian government sides with the U.S. on a policy opposed by most Québécois, such as the war in Afghanistan. Using survey data, I explore changes in attitudes toward the United States over time to test the hypothesis that Québécois become more likely to support sovereignty during periods when the U.S. is viewed more positively (and vice versa).

Though francophones in Canada and the revolutionaries in the 13 colonies shared a common British enemy, there was little sympathy between these two groups. Anti-Catholicism was strong among the American revolutionaries, and the concessions made by the British in the *Québec Act* of 1774 were cited in the *Declaration of Independence* among the reasons for the Revolution. Francophones in Canada concluded, probably correctly, that they would be better off under British rule than as part of the new United States. Over the following two centuries, the trajectories of francophone Canadian views of the U.S. and anglophone Canadian views of the U.S. diverged. Québécois views of the United States were heavily influenced by the distinctive experience of French Canadians. As Dupont writes, "industrialization, cities, and labor, all characteristics of life attributed to the United States, were opposed to tradition, village life, and agricultural work, which were thought to be the source of the moral strength and superiority of French Canadians" (Dupont 1995: 30). Nevertheless, Dupont contends that "the anti-American sentiment of the English-speaking majority was not shared by the French-speaking majority in Québec, nor was it shared by the Francophone minorities. What they feared then was not assimilation to the United States, but assimilation to the English-Canadian majority" (35).

In post-Quiet Revolution Québec, concern about the corrupting influence of American values waned, and many Québécois see more commonalities than differences with Americans. Despite the language barrier, many Québécois feel more at home in the United States than in France, elsewhere overseas, or even in anglophone Canada. In a 1991 *Globe and Mail*-CBC survey, 29% of Québécois agreed or strongly agreed with the

statement, “I have more in common with Americans than with Canadians living in other provinces” (Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 225). For many Québécois, closer ties with the United States present opportunities rather than threats. Conservative Québécois admired American commitment to free market principles and staunch opposition to communism. Among nationalist elites in post-Quiet Revolution Québec, anti-American attitudes were less prevalent than among leftists and nationalists in the rest of Canada (Hero and Balthazar 1988: 246–247). René Lévesque had been a war correspondent for the U.S. Army, admired the egalitarianism of American society, and even referred to himself as a “Yankébécois” (Lévesque 1986: 125–126). BQ and PQ leader Lucien Bouchard was married to an American at the time of the 1995 referendum and his two children are dual citizens (Chrétien 2007, 129). Even Jacques Parizeau, who was more of an anglophile than a Yankébécois, told *Time* magazine in 1992 that Québécois should learn English, much to the consternation of some of his unilingual colleagues in the PQ leadership (Duchesne 2004: 232–233).

Chodos and Hamovitch write:

While in most parts of the world independence and national self-assertion were associated with a loosening of U.S. control, Québec’s peculiar circumstances had produced a nationalist movement that saw close relations with the United States as not only compatible with its independence project but indeed an essential part of it. In the PQ vision, there was no contradiction between the independence of Québec and the vital interests of the United States. (Chodos and Hamovitch 1991: 198)

Nevertheless, there is a current of anti-Americanism in Québec. Writing in 1993, Mario Roy claimed that anti-Americanism in Québec was encouraged by elites in universities and the media (Roy 1993: 68). Gagnon and Desnoyers argue that anti-Americanism in Québec differs from anti-Americanism in the rest of Canada. Canadians view U.S. culture as a threat to national identity, whereas Québécois often dislike American policies and the values they represent. Consequently, anti-Americanism is more deeply rooted and relatively stable in the rest of Canada. By contrast, anti-Americanism in Québec fluctuates depending on the political situation in the U.S. (Gagnon and Desnoyers 2010: 104–105). Anti-Americanism was prevalent during the George W. Bush administration, whose religious conservatism and bellicose foreign policy were

particularly out of sync with Québécois' sensibilities, whereas President Obama's internationalism and support for health care reform aligned with Québécois' values (Lavigne-Descôteaux 2010: 147–149). President Trump was viewed very negatively across Canada and by comparison Canada seemed to be “a relatively successful example of liberalism, tolerance, and sanity” (Wherry 2019: 38).

Views of the United States 2002–2021

Since 2002, Pew Research has regularly surveyed attitudes toward the United States in countries around the world, including Canada with a relatively large sample of Québécois. This data enables the analysis of trends over time and comparisons between Québécois and other Canadians. Looking at the big picture, there is no obvious relationship between opinions of the United States and support for sovereignty. Figure 4.1 shows that opinion of the United States has ranged from 60% unfavorable in 2007 to 80% favorable in 2016. The trend for support for sovereignty, by contrast, has been in a long, slow decline. The short-term increase in support for sovereignty in 2005 coincided with the Gomery Commission inquiry on the Sponsorship Scandal and does not seem plausibly connected to views of the U.S.

Examining data on an individual level does not support the hypothesis that positive views of the U.S. contribute to support for sovereignty. Figure 4.2 shows data from the 2011, 2015, and 2019 Canadian Election Studies (CES). In each case those supporting sovereignty had significantly less positive views of the U.S. than did opponents of sovereignty. Pew Research usually asks respondents for their views on the United States and, separately, their views of Americans. Even during the Obama Administration Québécois have been more likely than other Canadians to view “Americans” negatively. The most common response in both Québec and the rest of Canada is a “somewhat favorable” opinion of Americans, but typically 35–40% of Québécois express at least “somewhat unfavorable” views of Americans, whereas in the rest of Canada, this number has rarely exceeded 25%. In addition, in 2005, Québécois were more likely to view Americans as dishonest (62% vs. 46%), violent (73% vs. 61%), and immoral (50% vs. 29%) than were those in the rest of Canada (Pew Research 2005).

Pew Research also regularly asks respondents whether they have confidence in the sitting U.S. president, and Québécois' views of the United

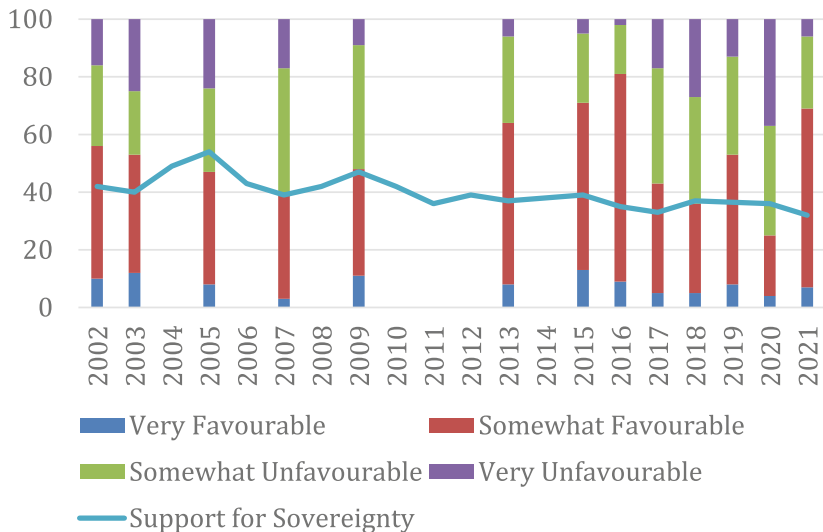


Fig. 4.1 Opinions of the U.S. and Support for Sovereignty, 2002–2022 (Source: Pew Research 2002–2021; Léger Marketing 2002–2021)

States are strongly correlated with their views of the sitting U.S. president. As the most prominent representative of the U.S., this makes sense. Since 2005, *Influence Communication* has tracked media coverage in Québec in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and various websites and has ranked the top “personnalités de l’année” based on the volume of this coverage. The U.S. president is generally among the Top 5 most covered individuals in Québec and has often topped the list. For example, Barack Obama was first in 2009 and Donald Trump was first each year from 2017 to 2020. No other foreign leader has made the Top 5 more than once, and only the prime minister of Canada and premier of Québec have consistently made the Top 5 (Influence Communication 2021).

Figure 4.3 illustrates that opinions regarding U.S. presidents change dramatically depending on who is in office. In 2009, 86% of Québécois were satisfied with Obama’s performance as president—far exceeding his favorability rating in the U.S. Québécois tended to have somewhat less favorable attitudes than did other Canadians toward the U.S. throughout the Bush and Trump presidencies and somewhat more favorable attitudes during the Obama presidency. For example, in 2020, 75% of Québécois

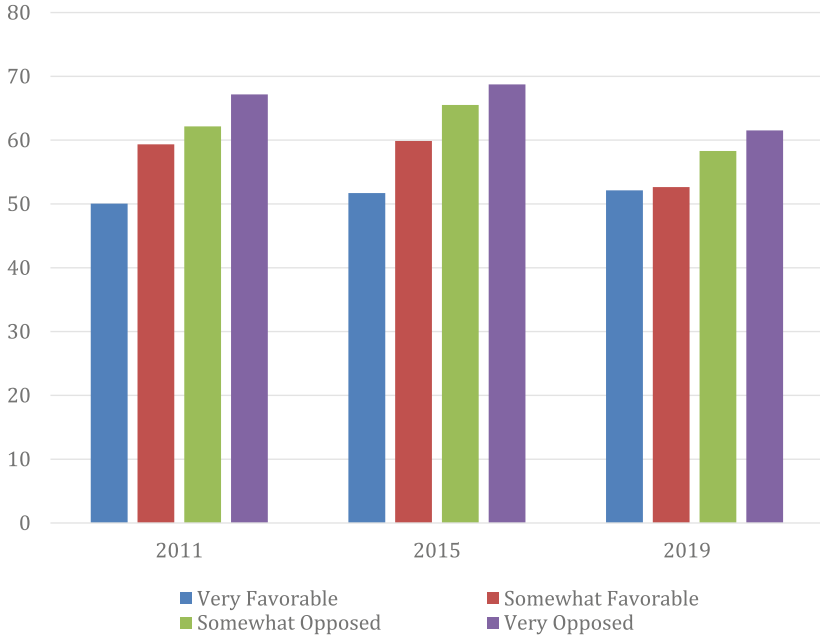


Fig. 4.2 Support for Sovereignty by Feeling Thermometer Rating of the U.S., 2011–2019 (*Source* Canadian Election Studies, 2011, 2015, 2019)

had unfavorable views of the U.S., whereas 64% of other Canadians had unfavorable views of the U.S. When asked about whether they had “confidence [in the sitting U.S. president] to do the right thing regarding world affairs,” Québécois expressed significantly less confidence in George W. Bush, similar levels of confidence in Barack Obama, and less confidence in Donald Trump than did other Canadians. It should be noted, however, that by 2020 fewer than one Canadian in six expressed any confidence in President Trump. Québécois had more confidence in President Biden in 2021 than did other Canadians, but again the trend converged. The views of Québécois and other Canadians regarding both the United States and U.S. presidents were similar throughout these two decades. Figure 4.3 shows that except for a modest increase in support for sovereignty at the beginning of the Obama Administration, there is no evidence of any relationship between Québécois’ confidence in the U.S. president and support for sovereignty.

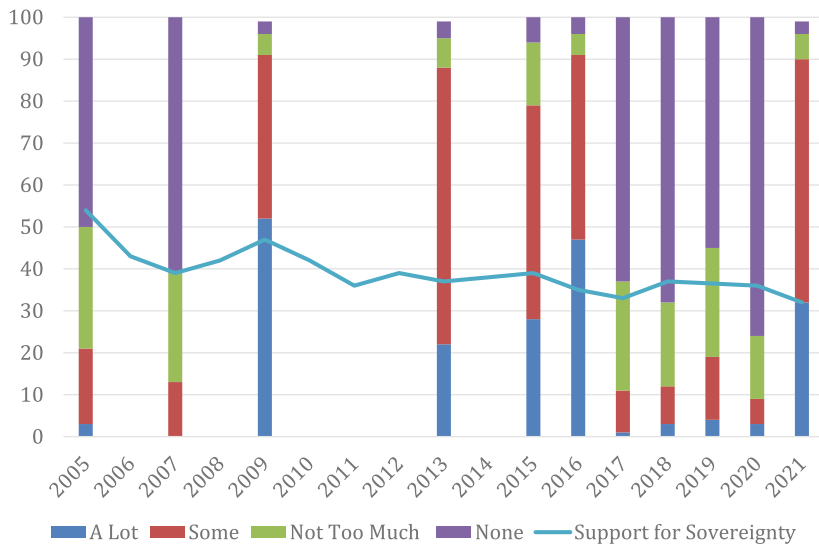


Fig. 4.3 Confidence in the U.S. President and Support for Sovereignty, 2005–2021 (*Source* Pew Research 2002–2021; Léger Marketing 2002–2021)

As a healthy economic relationship with the United States makes the case for sovereignty more compelling, one would predict that favorable attitudes toward the U.S. and the U.S. Administration would make Québécois more optimistic about future Québec-U.S. relationships and increase the desire for closer ties. There is some evidence to support this view, but it is not overwhelming. In the 1980s and 1990s, Québec francophones were more likely than English Canadians to believe that Canada's ties with the U.S. should be closer (Gidengil et al. 2004: 358). This no longer seems to be true. Though the question did not specify economic ties, during the final year of the Obama Administration when Québécois had very favorable attitudes toward the U.S., there was no big appetite for closer relations between Canada and the U.S.—39% favored closer ties, whereas 50% favored the status quo, and 11% preferred a less close relationship, and these numbers were nearly identical to those in the rest of Canada (Pew Research 2016).

Québécois' views of the U.S. are highly contingent on the state of politics in the U.S. more so than other Canadians, Québécois admired President Obama and disliked President Bush, and these assessments

strongly correlated with their view of the United States itself. There is little evidence, however, that views of the U.S. influence Québécois' views on sovereignty. Nevertheless, U.S. politics and policies over the past two decades contribute to an unfavorable environment for sovereigntists. The Iraq War and the election of President Trump demonstrated that U.S. politics can be far further out of synch with the values of Québécois than anything seen with Canada.

CONCLUSION

Paquin writes, “The challenges of Québec–United States relations are of critical importance for Québec’s future, as the United States is likely to indefinitely remain its largest trade partner and its largest investor. Additionally, the decisions that are taken south of the border ... all have fundamental impacts on Québec. There is now a general consensus among all various political entities in Québec of the singular importance of the United States to the future prosperity of the province” (Paquin 2019: 159). The main argument of this chapter is that political developments in the U.S. in recent decades have been broadly unfavorable to sovereigntists. This chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the current environment and prospects for the future.

The successful conclusion of negotiations for the CUSMA removed a major source of uncertainty from the economic relationship, and the arrival of the Biden Administration has restored some normalcy to diplomatic relationships. Furthermore, the Biden Administration’s climate initiatives increase Québec’s appeal as a trading partner. Québec can supply hydroelectricity to help meet demand for renewable, non-carbon energy sources, and Québec is a supplier of minerals, such as lithium and nickel, that are needed for electric vehicle batteries (Zadikian 2021). On the other hand, protectionism has gained ground in the United States. As the “buy American” debate illustrates, the Democratic Party remains internally divided over trade, and the Republican Party can no longer be relied upon to anchor free trade coalitions in Congress. The re-election of Donald Trump ensures that Canada trading relationships with the United States will be tumultuous for the foreseeable future. In 2021, 66% of Québécois viewed the U.S. as a “somewhat reliable” partner, but only 5% viewed the U.S. as a “very reliable” partner (Pew Research 2021). For many Québécois, a “somewhat reliable” partner is not good enough to assuage fears regarding the economic consequences of sovereignty. Lastly,

nothing that has occurred in recent years would suggest that the U.S. government's position on Canadian unity or on the eventual ascension of an independent Québec to CUSMA has fundamentally changed since the Clinton Administration. Although one could perhaps imagine President Trump seeking to sow chaos by supporting separatism, the official U.S. policy of non-interference along with tacit support for Canadian unity would most likely prevail.

Border issues have also been transformed in recent years. The transition to a “thickened” border to accommodate U.S. security concerns after September 11, 2001 was painful and costly, but, by 2020 had become the new normal. This was upended by Covid-19 pandemic. Not only was the U.S. border closed, even inter-provincial travel entailed navigating quarantines and testing requirements. Unlike free trade, easy access to international travel was never a critical argument for sovereignty, but in an era when borders are extremely salient, sovereigntists need to explain how an independent Québec would manage its borders. Again, this is not necessarily an argument against sovereignty. The PQ has called for stricter border controls to prevent the influx of irregular migrants and views greater control over legal immigration to Québec as essential to the long-term preservation of the French language in Québec (Canadian Press, 10 May 2022a). An independent Québec enclosed within tight borders, however, bears little resemblance to the vision of an outward-looking Québec championed by sovereigntist leaders in the 1980s and 1990s.

U.S. foreign policy as a source of internal divisions within Canada may have peaked under the George W. Bush Administration. Unlike fierce disagreements over Iraq and Afghanistan, most Canadians inside and outside of Québec are aligned either for or against U.S. foreign policies. U.S. support for Ukraine's resistance to Russia's invasion is popular across Canada, whereas it would have been difficult to find support for President Trump's efforts to undermine multilateral institutions, such as NATO, in Canada. Of course, there is no guarantee that a future U.S. foreign policy decision will not again pit Québécois against other Canadians. At present, the spillover effects of U.S. domestic politics into Canada are more salient. The trucker's convoy that occupied Ottawa in January and February 2022 and temporarily blocked the Ambassador Bridge was partially inspired by actions in the U.S., financially supported by some Americans, and heavily promoted by U.S. right-wing media. The convoy itself and the pandemic

restrictions and vaccine mandates that precipitated it clearly divided Canadians, but the views of Québécois did not deviate from the views of most Canadians regarding both the protests and the policies that led to the protests (Ipsos 2022). The rise in support for the Conservative Party of Québec, the People’s Party of Canada, Doug Ford’s electoral success in Ontario, and the ascension of Pierre Poilievre to the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada indicates that electoral politics in Québec and Canada have been influenced by the rise of populism in the U.S. Thus far, these changes in tone and attitude have not led to election victories in Québec or federally or to fundamental shifts in policies in Ontario.

Québécois’ views of the U.S. are more sensitive to events in the U.S. than are the views of other Canadians. Québécois had more negative views of the U.S. than did other Canadians during the Bush and Trump administrations. Québécois had more positive views of the U.S. during the Obama administration and early evidence suggests more positive views of the U.S. under President Biden. These are differences in degree—not differences in direction. The current volatility in U.S. politics casts considerable doubt on the argument that an independent Québec would have a dependable partner to the South. The greater risk is that this volatility will spill over into Canada. This could ultimately create a new rift between Québec and rest of Canada. Such a rift might motivate renewed support for sovereignty, but the North American context would be very different than it was in 1980 or 1995 when the relative stability of the Québec-U.S. relationship might have cushioned the instability of secession. The perceived risks of a renewed push for sovereignty during a period of U.S. political turmoil would be yet another barrier to a Yes vote.

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Party Realignment in Québec: Lessons from the United States

Jean-François Godbout and Éric Bélanger

INTRODUCTION

Political parties in Québec are currently in a state of shambles. The province has a Westminster style parliamentary system where representatives, as in the United States, are elected with a first-past-the-post voting system. Normally, this winner-take-all approach to counting votes should promote the election of a limited number of candidates and favor the development of a two-party system (Duverger 1951; Cox 1997; Gaines 1999). However, Québec has been defying this logic for well over a decade now. There are currently four political parties represented in the National Assembly, and these parties have been competing in the last six

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provincial elections. A new fifth party, the Conservative Party of Québec (2009–present), secured 12.9% of popular support, in the most recent October 3, 2022 provincial election. The fragmentation of the party system observed in Québec over the last twenty years shows no sign of abating. If we look at the popularity of the main parties since 2018, we can see that the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) has maintained a relatively high level of popularity over the last four years, oscillating around 40 percent. In fact, the CAQ has been consistently popular in public opinion polls, especially during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for the remaining opposition parties has never been much lower; the only notable exception has been the rising popularity of the Conservative Party of Québec in the first few months of 2022, which is partially explained by their opposition to the public health measures for managing the pandemic. Clearly, the Québec party system is showing no sign of converging toward a more stable two-party equilibrium, at least in the short term. Voting intentions remain highly divided.

How can we explain the presence of four competitive parties in the Québec party system today? The ‘mechanical’ and ‘psychological’ effects of the plurality voting system, which tends to punish smaller parties and reward larger ones, lead us to expect at least some level of electoral coordination over time (Bélangier and Mahéo 2020; Blais and Carty 1988). However, this is not the case. Scholars have suggested that the increasing popularity of the CAQ and Québec Solidaire (QS) is related to the decline in the salience of the sovereignty conflict in Québec, which has polarized both major parties—the Parti Québécois (PQ) and the Liberal Party of Québec (PLQ)—since the 1970s (Bélangier and Mahéo 2020; Vallée-Dubois et al. 2020). Incidentally, this decline, which began more than 25 years ago after the second unsuccessful Québec referendum on sovereignty in 1995, has also been linked to the emergence of new political cleavages, related to conflicts over the management of diversity and immigration, the environment, or issues like taxation and redistribution (Bélangier and Godbout 2022; Xhardez and Paquet 2021; Bilodeau et al. 2018; Bélangier et al. 2022).

Clearly, an explanation based entirely on the impact of the voting system on the number of parties is insufficient to understand this feature of Québec’s current political life, since the electoral system has not changed fundamentally since Confederation. In this chapter, we shed light on this issue by turning to theories of political cleavages and party

realignment (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Taagepera and Grofman 1985; Key 1955; Schattschneider 1960; Burnham 1970; Sundquist 1983).

A key goal of this chapter is to link Québec to the American context. Throughout the chapter, we argue that interesting parallels can be made from these two cases, especially with regard to the underlying factors that can explain why party systems change. Not only do we draw from the party realignment literature, first developed in the United States, but also from more recent theories of social psychology and intergroup relations that have been used to account for the growing racial, ideological, and cultural polarization within the American electorate.

PARTY REALIGNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AND QUÉBEC

In order to make sense of the recent evolution of the Québec political party system, we draw upon the literature on party realignment that was first developed to explain party system change in the United States. A party realignment generally occurs under two conditions: first, there must be a modification in the composition of the coalitions of voters who support the existing parties; and second, there must also be a change in the nature of the conflict that opposes them. According to Lipset and Rokkan (1967), these conflicts are usually linked to the most important social, cultural, or economic cleavages of the day. It is important to note here that a party realignment does not necessarily imply the creation of a new political party; this situation only occurs when dominant parties are unable to position themselves to meet the demands of the electorate. Thus, parties are often created after a new political cleavage emerges and transforms existing voting coalitions.

The American Context

There have been several party realignments at the national level in the United States since the nineteenth century, first with the demise of the Federalists and the emergence of the Jacksonian Democratic Party during the 1830s, then in the 1860s with the onset of the Civil War and the creation of the Republican Party, and lastly in the 1930s with the creation of the New Deal coalition to support the progressive agenda of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Note that the first two realignments not only saw the emergence of new political cleavages (i.e., industrialisation

and slavery), but also of new parties to meet the demands of voters (i.e., Democratic and Republican). The third realignment saw only a change in the supporting coalitions of the two main parties, with Southern Whites, Afro-Americans, Catholic and Jewish voters, as well as farmers and labor unions, supporting the Democratic Party, while Northeastern and Midwestern voters largely favored the Republican Party. The last major party realignment in the United States began in the early 1960s when Southern Democrats stopped supporting the Democratic party (Lublin 2004). At the time, Southern Democrats were opposed to civil rights legislation to end segregation, which was supported by the rest of the Democratic Party. As a consequence, Southern voters turned away from the Democratic Party in 1964 and delivered all of their electoral college votes to the very conservative Republican presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater. In 1968, five Southern states threw their support behind the American Independent Party, led by Alabama Governor George Wallace, which openly favored a return to segregation. However, the Southern strategy of the Republican Party, based on “States rights” and a “law and order” platform, eventually convinced enough Southern voters to shift their support to the Republicans, which became the dominant party in this region after the 1972 election.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the impact of this last realignment in the American party system by reporting the proportion of votes for the Democratic party candidate at the time of each presidential election between 1900 and 2020. Each line represents the smoothed average vote share in the South (light blue) and in the rest of the United States (dark blue).¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century, we clearly see the advantage that the Democratic Party had in the South; this dominance began to weaken after the Second World War, and disappeared during the civil rights era. At this point in time, the trends were reversed, with the Democratic Party now being more successful outside of the South. In short, the new cleavage took root in, or manifested itself as, a regional divide.

However, what is important to remember here is that American politics over the last 120 years can mostly be explained by the opposition between Democratic and Republican parties. Although there were short periods of instability, such as after the emergence of several distinct minor parties—like the Dixiecrats and the American Independent party in the South or the Progressive party in the Midwest—the party system has always reverted to a two-party equilibrium. In this context, the changes to the party system did not occur after the replacement of old parties by

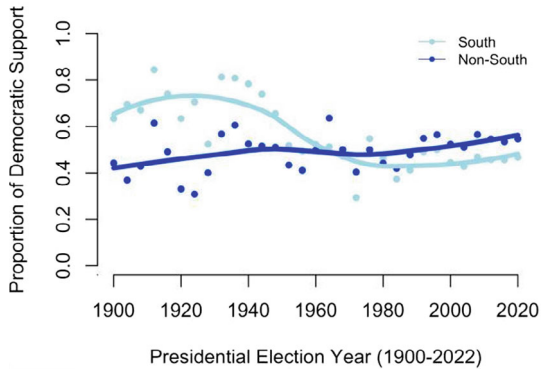


Fig. 5.1 Democratic Presidential candidate vote share

newer ones, like in the nineteenth century. Rather, the two main parties were able to remain dominant by taking opposing positions on the most important cleavages of the day and by attracting new voters who switched their allegiance to support these views.

The Québec Context

Recent changes in Québec politics do not seem to follow this textbook theory of party system change and voter realignment. To be sure, the province has been dominated by two major parties for most of its history, as the plurality voting system theory would bring us to expect.

Figure 5.2 illustrates this equilibrium by reporting the parliamentary seat share of the main party families from Confederation to today. All of the parties represented in Québec's Parliament are grouped according to four categories: conservatives, liberals, nationalists, and labor parties.² Note that parties in each of these categories have different names over time, except for the Liberal Party. To begin, the plot confirms that in the first era of the party system, which covers the nineteenth century to the end of World War I, representation in parliament was dominated by either the Conservative or Liberal parties (light blue and red lines). The first party system in Québec was characterized by an opposition between reactionary forces that sought to protect French-Canadian language and culture, and liberal reformers who challenged the dominance of the Catholic Church. This situation changed somewhat with the

emergence of the first Nationalist Party, founded by the Liberal Honoré Mercier after the hanging of Louis Riel by a federal court in 1885.³ The support of Québec voters for nationalist parties took on many other forms throughout the twentieth century; nationalists only became dominant toward the end of this era, after the creation of the Parti Québécois in 1968. This last period is characterized by a strong partisan polarization between federalist (PLQ) and sovereigntist (PQ) voters. Prior to this, the party system was dominated by the Union Nationale (UN), which replaced the Conservative party in the 1930s. Unlike the PQ, which promoted the secession of Québec from the rest of Canada, the UN espoused a different kind of nationalism, aimed at protecting French-Canadian identity, language, and values, by promoting more autonomy within the federation. This brand of nationalism is more reactionary and explains why we associate the UN with the conservative party family. Finally, we can also see in Fig. 5.2 that support for the nationalist PQ has been declining over the last 20 years. As mentioned earlier, this trend is explained by the growing popularity of two new parties created in recent years, QS and the CAQ. Two things are worth mentioning here: first, QS is the first labor party to have elected more than two representatives in the whole history of Québec; and, second, the 2018 election witnessed the return of the conservative party family to power, after an absence of more than 50 years.

From this very brief overview of the history of party systems in Québec, we can identify several important periods of realignment, such as during the 1930s with the emergence of the UN, and the 1960s with the emergence of the PQ, when the party system was transformed (Lemieux 2008). As in the American case, these realignments were short-lived and promoted a return to a more stable two-party equilibrium. However, unlike the US, each of these realignments occurred after an old dominant party was replaced by a new one. So far, these changes seem to follow the text-book definition of a party realignment. This logic seems to fall apart, however, when we consider the most recent transformations of the party system. For more than a decade now, four parties have been represented in the National Assembly, with no indication of a return towards a more stable two-party equilibrium.

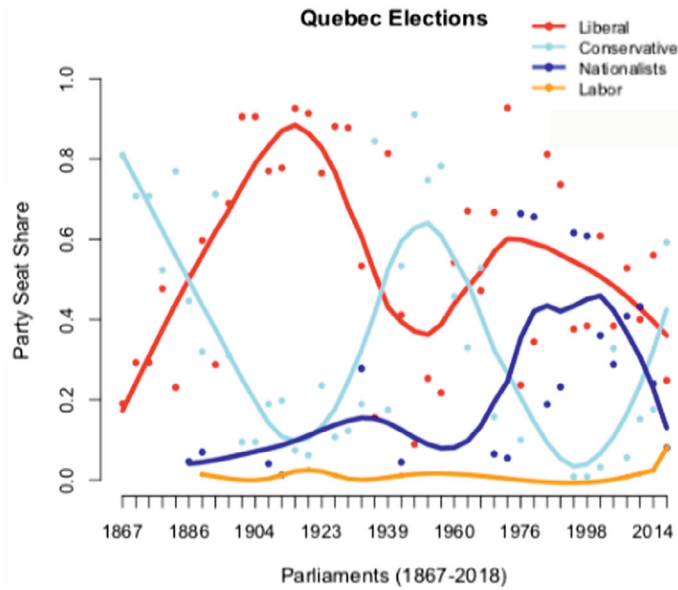


Fig. 5.2 Party families in the parliament of Québec

POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND THE PARTY SYSTEM

To make sense of this puzzle, we now turn to social cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). At its core, this theory holds that the number of political parties in a party system reflects the most important political cleavages found in society. Lipset and Rokkan identify four such cleavages that have historically influenced party organization in Western democracies. These relate to (1) territory (center versus periphery), (2) religion (church versus state), (3) economic sectors (rural versus urban), and (4) class (owners versus workers). Generally, in a democratic society, at least one of these cleavages will be politicized at different points in time, and parties will take opposing views on this issue.

But what happens when several important cleavages divide the party system simultaneously? This situation should occur frequently, as it is common for many countries to have more than one underlying social conflict at a time. In this context, the political debate and resulting partisan competition will become multidimensional, with more than two

parties competing. More precisely, in a plurality electoral system like the one used in Québec and in the US, the number of parties (P) will be equal to the number of ideological cleavages (C) plus one, or $P = C + 1$ (see Taagepera and Grofman 1985).⁴ It follows that Duverger's law—which predicts a two-party convergence under a plurality electoral system—should only work when there is one main cross-cutting cleavage in society, implying here that $C = 1$. This seems to be the case in the US today with Republicans and Democrats being polarized along a left–right ideological continuum, opposing liberals to conservatives (McCarty et al. 2006). However, when there are more than two parties in the party system ($P > 2$), there must necessarily be more than one dominant political cleavage ($C > 1$).

If we apply this formula to Québec's party system today, we should expect to find three dominant political cleavages ($C = 3$), since there are four main parties ($P = 4$) represented in the National Assembly. But what are these underlying conflicts? In the remainder of this chapter, we argue that three major political cleavages have been structuring the party system in Québec since the beginning of the twenty-first century, mainly conflicts related to sovereignty, redistribution, and diversity. We now review each of these cleavages briefly.

Sovereignty Cleavage

We can assume that the first major political cleavage in Québec is related to the province's place in the Canadian federation. This conflict really began with the rise of civic nationalism during the 1960s following the Quiet Revolution. As we saw earlier, the importance of the constitutional question during this period became a determining factor in the vote (Pinard and Hamilton 1977, 1978), with sovereigntists supporting the PQ, and federalists supporting the PLQ. Following two failed referendums in 1980 and 1995, the relevance of this political cleavage seems to have become less important for Québec voters (Langlois 2018). Not only has the support for the PQ declined over the last twenty years (Bélangier and Mahéo 2020), the support for sovereignty has followed a similar trend as well (Vallée-Dubois et al. 2020). Today, around 35% of Québec voters are in favor of separation (Lecavalier 2020). Although sovereignty is not as popular as in the heydays of the 1980s and 1990s, it is still very relevant to the political platforms of the four major parties represented in the National Assembly. By consulting these documents, we can see that

the PQ and QS are in favor of Québec sovereignty, while the CAQ and the PLQ favor the opposite and choose to remain in Canada (Bélanger et al. 2018).

Redistribution Cleavage

The second relevant political cleavage in Québec politics today relates to the more traditional conflict over wealth redistribution. It is important to note that political parties in the province have not historically been divided along a left–right ideological continuum, as was the case in most other Western democratic regimes during the twentieth century. Indeed, for almost one hundred years following Confederation, both the Liberals and the Conservatives (later the Union Nationale) supported economic liberalism, with a limited role for government. This situation changed with the election of the Liberal government of Jean Lesage in 1960. This election marked the beginning of the Quiet Revolution, which promoted economic development through state intervention and economic nationalism. The arrival of the PQ in 1968, which labelled itself as a social democratic and sovereigntist party, modified the configuration of the party system by moving the Liberals somewhat closer to the right, as a pro-business and federalist party. However, as seen previously, the most important conflict during this period was over Québec sovereignty, since economic questions were deemed to be secondary to the broader national goal of independence. This mindset is well articulated by former PQ Premier Bernard Landry, who claimed in 2012 that “Independence is neither left nor right, but forward” (Bourdeau 2018, *translation from the authors*). However, such a dismissive attitude towards economic and social justice issues has contributed to reducing the traditional support for the PQ among trade unions, francophones, and progressive voters. Indeed, the early 2000s was characterized by a growing division between the left and the right in Québec, following the new austerity and neoliberal orientation of the PQ government under the leadership of Premier Lucien Bouchard. This rightward shift created important tensions within the party, with several disillusioned progressive members leaving the PQ to form a new sovereigntist party on the left in 2006, Québec Solidaire, which put more emphasis on social democracy, feminism and environmentalism (Dufour 2012). At the same time, the neo-liberal vision proposed by Lucien Bouchard’s government was taken up by one of his former ministers, François Legault, who himself

founded a new party, the Coalition Avenir Québec, in 2012. By reviewing the most recent party platforms of the four main parties represented in the National Assembly, we situate QS and the PQ on the left, as they favor a greater level of government intervention in the economy and support labor unions, with the CAQ and the PLQ on the right, because they are more pro-business and support lower levels of taxation (Kirkey 2017; Pétry 2013).

Diversity Cleavage

The third most important political cleavage in Québec society today relates to diversity. This line of conflict refers to the management of immigration, but also of ethnocultural and religious differences within the province's population. In recent years, political parties have proposed two main approaches to manage diversity. The first one, interculturalism, is based on a pluralistic view of society, and advocates for "harmonious relations" between the francophone majority and other minority groups. This view promotes an "integration process that does not seek to eliminate differences", but rather to foster "the development of a common identity" by respecting minority rights (Bouchard and Taylor 2008: 287). The second approach focuses more on integration by encouraging the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant francophone culture. This view is somewhat analogous to the melting pot model of immigration in the United States, which favors the "Americanization" and assimilation of minority groups into the cultural majority. It is also related to the French republican principle of the secular state that aims to return "all religions to the private sector and established state secularism in the public sphere" (Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères 2022). Although the protection of the French language and culture has been a central concern for the Francophone population of Québec since the conquest, this issue has not always monopolized political debate in the province. For many years, the high birth rate and relative isolation of the French-Canadian population has shielded this population from the threat of assimilation into the English-speaking majority of North America. However, demographic changes in the second half of the twentieth century, as well as the increase in the number of immigrants who chose to live and work in English, have made this issue much more salient to the francophone majority. The adoption of the Charter of the French Language in 1977 (i.e., Bill 101) by the PQ was intended to slow down this trend, but it was

the conflicts surrounding the issue of “reasonable accommodation” in the early 2000s that brought this issue back to the forefront of political debate in the province. At the time, a minor party, the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ), was mostly associated with its position on the sovereignty question, which proposed a constitutional third way between the federalism of the PLQ and the sovereignty of the PQ. However, the ADQ formed the official opposition in the National Assembly for the first time following the 2007 election by taking a strong position against the intercultural approach of the Liberal government, mostly in regard to several minor “incidents” where accommodations were requested by students and parents for cultural and religious reasons. Having finished third in this election, the PQ chose a new leader, Pauline Marois, who vowed never to be outflanked on the issue of identity. The subsequent election of a PQ government in 2012 forced the identity question back to the fore after the government proposed adopting a “Charter of Québec Values” (see Mahéo and Bélanger 2018) to promote a more secular society and to limit the wearing of religious symbols in public by civil servants. Having failed to secure a majority in the National Assembly, the PQ waged a campaign in the 2014 election, hoping to capitalize on the proposed charter to secure enough seats for its adoption. The PQ lost the election, but by that time the ADQ had merged with the CAQ and François Legault and his team decided to reinforce their position on diversity management by proposing to reduce the number of immigrants, with a values test for newcomers, and a charter of secularism for public employees. In addition, the CAQ proposed to reinforce Bill 101 by imposing a series of additional measures to protect the French language in the province. Although these proposals were very similar to those of the PQ, it was really the CAQ that was able to capitalize on their popularity among francophone voters by winning the 2018 election and later by adopting Bills 21 and 96 to address these issues. Note that both the PLQ and QS took opposing sides on the diversity cleavage, by proposing to follow the recommendations of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission instead, which was created in the wake of the reasonable accommodation scandals of the mid-2000s. These recommendations were mostly in line with the intercultural approach described above. To summarize, the positions of the main political parties on the issue of diversity management are as follows: the PQ and the CAQ champion integration, while QS and the PLQ favor pluralism (Bélanger et al. 2018).

Other Potential Cleavages

Of course, one can always identify a number of other potential cleavages that could divide the partisan system in Québec. A good example here would be the debates surrounding the different health measures that were imposed by the government and supported by all parties in the National Assembly during the COVID-19 pandemic. With Québec having adopted some of the strictest measures in North America, such as curfews, store closures, and extended lockdowns, it is not surprising that a protest movement developed during this period to demand more individual freedoms. The only political party that has officially taken a stand against these health measures, the Conservative Party of Québec, was thus able to capitalize on this position in early 2022, as demonstrated by its popularity scores in the polls (Bélangier et al. 2024). This last phenomenon confirms the text-book theory of party realignment and party system change. In this case, we had four parties represented in parliament that supported more or less the same position on a very divisive issue (i.e., health measures and pandemic control). A fifth party then took a contrary position to mobilize a growing number of disgruntled voters. Sensing that they could be outflanked on the right, the CAQ government chose to rapidly phase out most public health measures in the spring of 2022. In the absence of such a decision, it is likely that the popularity of the CPQ would have continued to hover around 15 to 20 percent in the polls.⁵

This example serves to illustrate the importance of the strategic choices made by political parties. To the extent that the party system can be understood as an arena of competition among several political parties seeking to represent voters in a multidimensional space, it is possible to identify a number of *wedge* issues that may redefine the major cleavages in the electorate (Hillygus and Shields 2008). We have argued in this section that three main cleavages are dividing the electorate in Québec today, but others could emerge in the future, while existing ones could disappear or subside temporarily. The important thing to remember here is that realignments occur when parties and voters change positions on important cleavages that divide them.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Québec political parties are in transition today.⁶ Five parties are currently attempting to position themselves in order to gain an electoral advantage. Our objective in this section is to measure these positions by looking at the preferences of voters on three distinct political cleavages: sovereignty/federalism, left/right, and pluralism/integration. To do so, we use individual level data from three public opinion surveys conducted in the 2012, 2014 and 2018 Québec election campaigns.⁷ These three opinion surveys contain a number of identical questions that should increase our understanding of the changing relationship between political cleavages and electoral choice during this period. It is important to note that this analysis does not allow us to directly estimate party positions on these issues, as we could have done, for example, by assessing the content of election platforms (e.g., Pétry 2013) or by interviewing party members (e.g., Montigny 2018). In fact, polling data only allows us to estimate the position of voters who reported voting for these parties. Nevertheless, this approach has been validated several times in the political science literature and we are confident that it closely reflects the positions of parties and voters in the party system (for Canadian examples, see Johnston 2008; Godbout et al. 2015). To measure these positions, we have constructed three different scales based on a series of questions that are related to each main cleavage. This method has the advantage of combining questions that address the same issue with a common measure, which then facilitates comparison of results.

First, the cleavage between sovereigntists and federalists on the constitutional issue combines two different survey questions. The first one directly measures support for sovereignty: “If there were today a referendum on independence that asked whether Québec should be an independent country, would you vote YES or NO?” The second question measures the level of attachment towards Canada: “How attached do you feel to Canada?” We combine these two questions to create a 0 to 1 scale, where 1 (0) represents unconditional support for the sovereigntist (federalist) option.⁸

The second scale representing the divide between left and right is relatively simple to explain. It has to do with the issue of redistribution of wealth in a society; on the one hand we find those who support more government intervention in the economy, and on the other, those who support a more free market approach and lower levels of taxation. In all

three surveys, we used a single question to measure this concept on a 11-point scale: “In political matters people talk of “the left” and “the right”. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is the most left and 10 is the most right, where would you place your own views, generally speaking?” The scale is then standardized from 0 to 1.

Finally, the last cleavage representing the diversity issue is constructed from two questions related to immigration. This scale seeks to measure the division between, on the one hand, a pluralist approach to managing ethnocultural diversity in the province, and on the other, an approach associated with integration, which seeks to encourage the assimilation of minority groups into the dominant francophone culture. The first question deals directly with this issue: “There are different views about those who come from outside Québec, who often have their own customs, religion and traditions. Do you think it is best if such newcomers try to adapt and blend into the local culture? Or is it best if they stay different and add to the variety of customs and traditions in the locality?” Respondents were asked to indicate whether they preferred adaptation or diversity. The second question asked respondents to indicate if they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement, “There are too many immigrants in Québec.” As with the other two divides, these two questions were combined to create a scale of 0 to 1.⁹

Average Party Positions

This subsection presents the results of our analyses of the survey results. Figure 5.3 reports the means of the three scales for each party by election, while the bars represent the 95% confidence interval of the mean for these values.

The first row of Fig. 5.4 reports the average placement of voters on the left–right scale for the 2012, 2014, and 2018 elections. As we can see, party positions do not change much over time. Supporters of the CAQ and the PLQ are located on the right, while supporters of the PQ and QS are located on the left. The figure confirms, however, that QS voters are the most polarized on this issue. The second row reports the party positions on the sovereignty/federalist scale. Once again, we find the same pairs of parties on opposite ends of the spectrum. The CAQ and the PLQ voters seem to have closer ties to Canada, while QS and PQ voters are more likely to favor sovereignty. Note here, however, that the

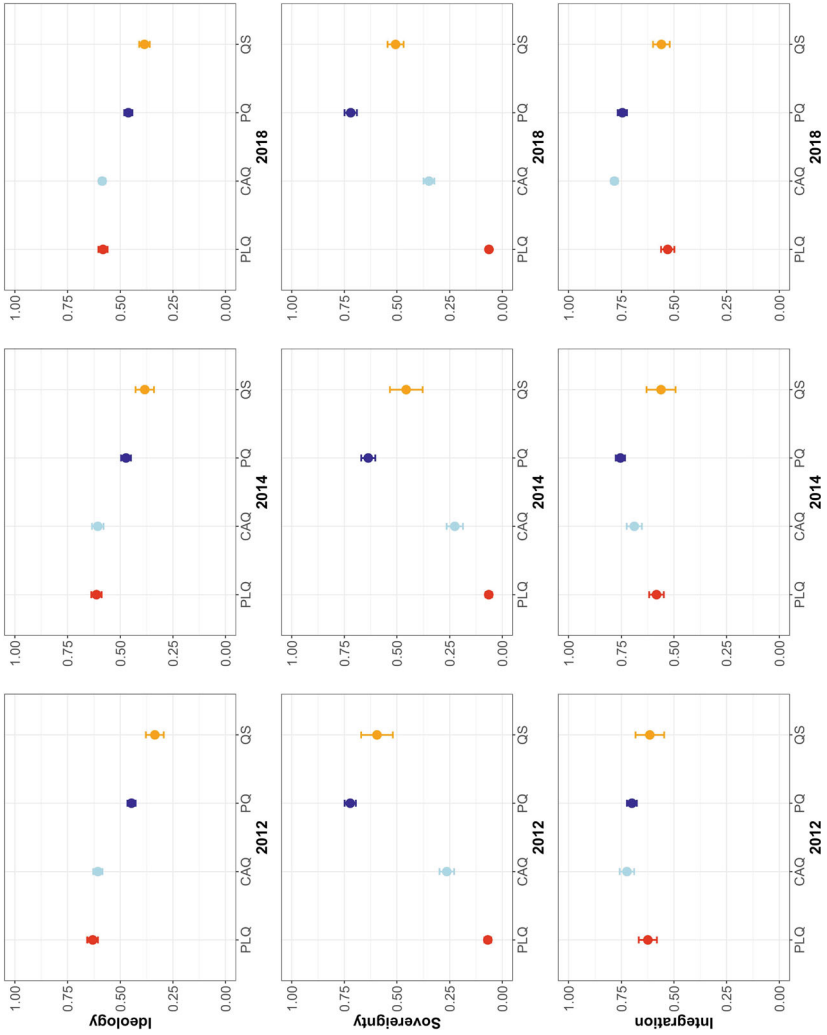


Fig. 5.3 Mean party positions on three political cleavages, 2012–2018

PQ and the PLQ are the two most polarized parties on this scale in all three elections, reflecting in part the historical opposition between these parties since the 1970s. The more moderate positions of the CAQ and QS are in line with their platforms. It seems that QS is capable of attracting both federalist and sovereigntist voters, even if the party clearly states that it seeks to promote Québec independence. It is a little more difficult to explain the position of the CAQ on this issue. We can see that while it is not a sovereigntist party, it does have a nationalist platform that promotes the protection of the French language and culture. Thus, the party has the potential to attract voters who have stronger ties to Québec, but who are nevertheless not fully in favor of Québec independence. The third row of Fig. 5.4 reports the party position on the diversity scale. Unlike the previous two cleavages, the placement of the parties here appears to be changing over time. In 2012, there was no meaningful difference between the parties, although the average for the PQ and the CAQ was higher than for the PLQ and QS. The parties polarized somewhat in 2014, an election that was marked by the debate over the “Charter of Québec Values” proposed by the outgoing PQ government. In this election, PQ supporters occupy the most polarizing position, followed by the CAQ. The opposite end is once again dominated by PLQ and QS voters who are more supportive of diversity. Finally, the last election confirms another movement on this scale; the CAQ is now occupying the most polarizing position, closely followed by the PQ. From this analysis, we can conclude that there has been a significant movement towards polarization on the diversity scale. These results are in line with the analysis of Gagnon and Larios (2021) and Paquet and Xhardez (2020) who found a similar pattern by looking at electoral platforms and media coverage over the last twenty years in Québec.

It appears then that the ordering of the four main parties on these three political cleavages is not always the same from one election to the next. For example, the PLQ and QS are together on the issue of diversity management, but completely at odds on the left–right ideological scale. Similarly, the PLQ and the CAQ are opposed on the issue of diversity, but together on the left–right divide and the constitutional question. Finally, the PQ and QS share more or less the same positions on the issue of sovereignty and redistribution, but are completely opposed on the issue of diversity. In short, the first two cleavages still largely oppose the same dyads of parties (PQ-QS versus CAQ-PLQ). It is only with the last cleavage that we see a reversal of these alliances.

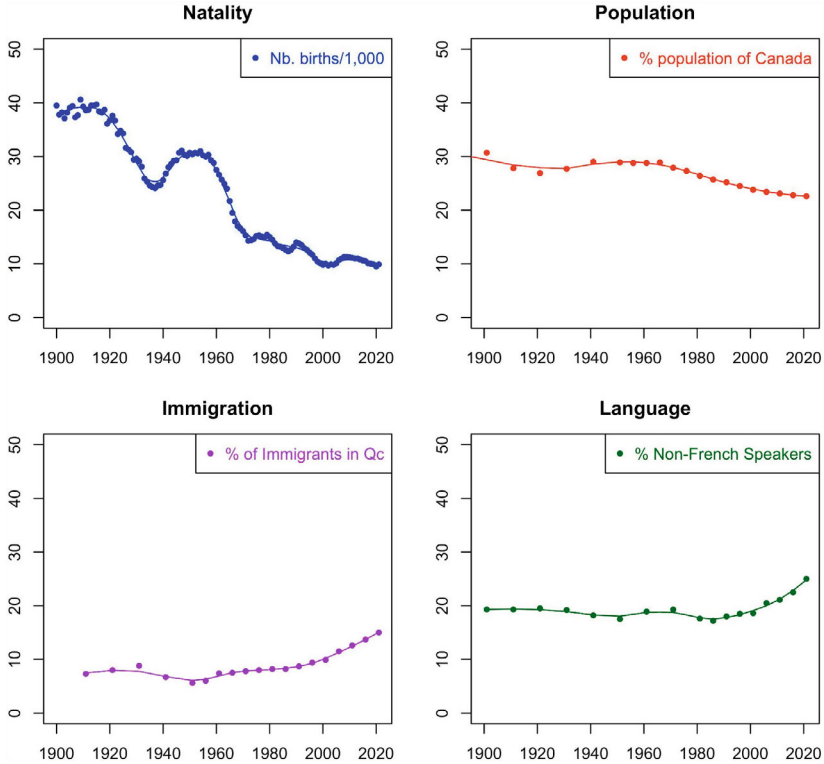


Fig. 5.4 Demographic changes in Québec

The introduction of this new political conflict is therefore similar to the transformation of the Québec party system that occurred during the 1970s. At the time, four parties were also competing against each other on three political cleavages: identity, the left–right axis, and the new cleavage of Québec sovereignty. The Ralliement Cr ditiste (RC) and the Union Nationale were positioned against the PLQ and the PQ on the left–right and identity axes. However, the order was reversed on the issue of sovereignty, with the PQ and the UN on one side against the RC and the PLQ on the other. Ten years later, there were only two parties left in the party system, which was now polarized between sovereignists (PQ) and federalists (PLQ). For several authors (e.g., Lemieux

et al. 1970; Clarke 1983; Pelletier 2012), this period corresponds to a realignment of political forces in Québec. Are we to conclude that the same phenomenon is taking place right now with the issue of managing ethnocultural diversity?

DISCUSSION

In their theory explaining the transformation of political parties, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that important historical cleavages, such as center vs. periphery, church vs. state, rural vs. urban, or owner vs. labor, will continue to shape the party system long after they become irrelevant in society.¹⁰ Historically, it is the conflict between the center and the periphery that has most influenced political debates in Québec. Indeed, for a long time, the protection of the French language, the Catholic religion, the seigniorial regime, and civil laws were seen as essential for the survival of French Canadians, who feared losing their identity after New France was ceded to Great Britain in 1763. Political opposition was organized primarily around the defense of these common interests against the center, represented initially by the British authorities, and later by the Canadian federal government (Balthazar 2013). For Bouchard and Taylor (2008) this conflict, linked to minority insecurity, is undoubtedly the most important cleavage in Québec; they consider it to be “an invariant in the history of French-speaking Québec. It is revived or becomes dormant depending on the circumstances, but it is (and undoubtedly always will be) at the heart of Québec’s future” (Bouchard and Taylor 2008: 185).

In the remainder of this section, we argue that the diversity cleavage outlined above is linked to this concept of minority insecurity, or what is called “la survivance” in Québec. Our main argument is that the management of diversity has become relevant again because of recent demographic changes that threaten the survival of the French language and culture in the province. These changes can be seen in Fig. 5.4, which plots from 1900 to 2022: (1) the birth rate of Québec women (per 1000); (2) the proportion of Québec’s population in Canada; and the proportions of (3) immigrants and (4) non-native French speakers in Québec. All of these trends confirm that the demographic composition of the province is changing rapidly. There has been an important decline in the number of births for quite some time now, which has contributed to reducing its overall share of the population: Québec now represents slightly over 20% of Canada’s population, compared to 30% in 1900. This transformation

is occurring despite the increasing number of immigrants, especially after 1990, which has contributed to reducing the number of French speakers in the province as well.

The consequences of all of these changes can be seen in Fig. 5.5, which reports the proportion of francophones from Québec who feel that the French language is threatened. These numbers are taken from different public opinion polls conducted between 1991 and 2020. The trend reports a gradual increase in perceived levels of threat to the French language, with levels now reaching close to 70%, compared to 50% around the time of the 1995 referendum.¹¹

In the remainder of this section, we argue that we can gain insights into the relationship between these demographic changes and “La Survivance” by looking at the concepts of minority insecurity and group threat theories taken from social psychology (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967). These notions suggest that the threat of cultural extinction can lead certain minority groups to support public policies that strengthen the solidarity and cohesion of its members. In Québec, Bourhis (1994), Wohl et al. (2010), and Wohl et al. (2011) have confirmed in experimental studies that the threat of assimilation significantly increases the sense of collective anxiety among French-speaking Québécois by stimulating their desire to protect the status of language and culture from future threats. Hence, for a large segment of the Québec population of French-Canadian origin, the level of identity insecurity is extremely high today because of the low birth rate, but especially because of the increase in the number of immigrants (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; Gagnon and

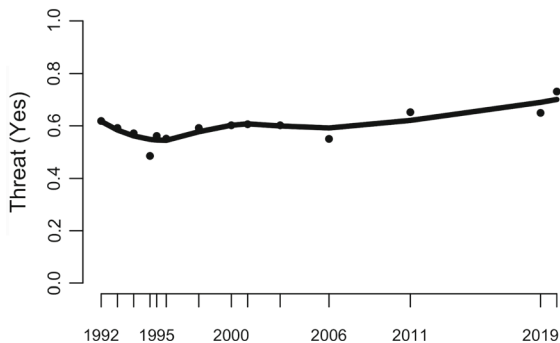


Fig. 5.5 Is the French language threatened?

Larios 2021; Brie and Ouellet 2020). These theories also explain why controversial policies that aim to protect the dominant status of the French language in the province are so popular within the francophone majority. Examples here would include Bills 101, 21, and 96, or any other measures that seek to defend the French-Canadian language and culture or to promote greater integration of newcomers.

It is also interesting to note that a related phenomenon has recently been observed in the US among white voters as well. According to Ashley Jardina (2019), the growing diversity of the American population and the fact that the white non-Hispanic majority will become a minority by 2044 (US Census Bureau 2014) has increased the level of anxiety among white voters, especially those who feel threatened by these demographic changes and have a strong feeling of “white identity”. To be sure, there is a distinction to be made here between white identity and racial prejudices: some people who identify as white have racial prejudices, but not all white identity voters fall within this group. Although they are not racist, white identity voters will tend to favor public policies that favor their interests to protect their own privileges in American society. They are also more likely to be conservatives and to support the Republican party (Jardina 2019).

There are, of course, important differences between white American voters and French-speaking Québec voters. On the one hand, white non-Hispanic Americans are currently the dominant ethnic group in the US and should remain so for several decades to come. On the other hand, the francophone population of Québec is a minority group in Canada, representing a little over 1% of the North American population. Unlike white Americans, the very existence of the French language and francophone culture in Québec has always been in jeopardy. There have been moments in Québec’s history when the level of “relative deprivation” (Bougie et al., 2011) was much higher, such as right after the British conquest or the failed Rebellion in Lower Canada, and others when it was much lower, such as during the Quiet Revolution or at the time of the two most recent referendums. However, as illustrated above, the collective level of anxiety appears to be rising again (at least with regards to the status of the French language), particularly in response to the demographic changes in the province. Another important difference between the American and Québec cases is that French-Canadian identity (later Québécois identity) has been part of the collective consciousness in the majority for a much longer period of time, unlike in the US, where white group consciousness

is a relatively new phenomenon that is becoming increasingly relevant to explain political behavior (Jardina 2019). One thing is clear, however, in both cases, policies that are geared towards protecting the status and the privilege of the majority group are more popular among those who feel threatened by recent demographic changes.

We now return to the conditions that explain why the cleavage related to the management of ethnocultural diversity appears to be supplanting the issue of sovereignty in Québec today. We believe that the lower level of existential threat and collective anxiety observed during the period from the Quiet Revolution to the 1995 referendum would have put the identity insecurity of a majority of francophone Québécois on “hold”. After all, this was a time when anything was possible, when nationalists could radically transform the Québec state (Rioux 1968; Balthazar 2013). This sense of collective invulnerability continued in part when nationalism became a sovereigntist movement during the 1970s. The identity divide that sought to protect French Canadians then became redundant, as did the Union Nationale and the Ralliement Crémieux, which sought to defend this position.

As we have seen above, however, this sense of identity insecurity, which we find in the origins of the party system, again took up a greater share of political debates from the 2000s onwards (Laxer et al. 2014; Gagnon and Larios 2021; Xhardez and Paquet 2021). The reduction in support for the Parti Québécois (Bélanger and Mahéo 2020) and for sovereignty (Vallée-Dubois et al. 2020) is no doubt related to this phenomenon. Strategically, for the ADQ in 2007 and later for the CAQ in 2018, it paid off electorally to play the identity card; first with the “crisis” of reasonable accommodation, then with Bills 21 and 96. This strategy proved less effective for the PQ and its Charter of Values proposal in 2014, probably because the party was still associated with the sovereigntist movement; to be sure, the identity issue did not fundamentally change the composition of the party’s electoral coalition (Bélanger et al. 2018).

All of this implies, then, that the CAQ is using identity insecurity to promote policies that aim to protect the majority status of the French language and French-Canadian culture in Québec. It is a new form of decomplexed nationalism that equates the Québec nation with the French-speaking majority and proposes a rejection of the individual values associated with modern liberalism (Maclure and Boucher 2016; Salée 2022). For François Legault, “being a nationalist is first and foremost based on three pillars: the French language, culture and the secularity

of the state” (Comeau 2019). We find here the same message as in the nineteenth century, when the first nationalists sought to defend the heritage of the French regime: i.e., the Catholic faith, colonial institutions (seigneurial regime) and its laws (civil code). Today, belonging to the Québec Nation is no longer based on faith, but on language and secularism, which can be construed as a new form of religion for the majority (see also Bouchard 2020).

CONCLUSION

The literature on the relationship between the number of parties and the voting system suggests that Québec should have a stable two-party system, which has often been the case historically (Pelletier 2012). However, as we saw, Québec is currently dominated by four competitive political parties that seem to compete along three distinct political cleavages. One of these cleavages, related to diversity management, has broken the traditional alliance between sovereigntists and left-leaning voters, represented by the PQ, and federalists and right-leaning voters, represented by the PLQ. It is only over this conflict that the parties have fundamentally changed positions, with the CAQ and the PQ favoring greater integration, and QS and the PLQ supporting pluralism. We believe that this last cleavage provides enough evidence to suggest that a realignment is currently underway in Québec, since the positions defended by the two old parties have failed to meet the new demands of the electorate.

In our view, the management of ethnocultural diversity is redefining the party system because it is linked to “la survivance”, an issue that has been central to the consciousness of the francophone majority since the British conquest. This last cleavage is becoming increasingly relevant today because it is linked to feelings of existential threat and minority insecurity. In turn, this collective feeling of relative deprivation is explained by recent demographic changes in Québec. Thus, it is not surprising to find that the conservative position taken by the CAQ on the issue of diversity management has attracted the support of a large segment of the francophone electorate, enough to provide the party with a strong electoral advantage, mostly at the expense of the PQ, which has lost its “raison d’être” after two failed referendums on sovereignty.

In the American case, the party system is currently dominated by one principal cleavage opposing Republicans to Democrats on a left and right

ideological continuum. However, the contour of the political landscape is rapidly changing in this country, along with its demographic structure. Increasingly, a growing number of white non-Hispanic voters feel that their dominant position in American society is being challenged by immigrants and other minority groups (Jardina 2019). The fact that these groups threaten the status and privileges of the majority provides strong incentives for politicians to use questions of identity to mobilize voters through policies aimed at protecting their interests. The growing support of non-Hispanic white voters without a college degree towards the Republican party in the two most recent presidential elections seem to offer some evidence to this effect (Sides et al. 2022).

In the end, we believe that scholars who study American politics have much to gain by looking at the transformation of political parties in Québec. Although very different, both of these cases share a common set of institutions that can be traced back to their colonial experience. However, the most recent demographic changes in Québec are perhaps what makes this case so interesting, since these trends can provide us with some important insights about the consequences of identity politics, when the privileges associated with majority status are threatened. Calls to limit immigration and to protect the English language in the United States were made by Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign (Díez 2019), and we believe that such rhetoric will become more common as the country becomes a majority-minority nation by 2040. Ultimately, mobilizing voters by encouraging them to think along language or ethno-cultural lines risks increasing polarization even more in the United States. Although this strategy can offer parties short-term electoral gains, it can also weaken democratic norms at the expense of long-term political stability. Hopefully, Québec's experience can provide valuable insight into how the majority could protect its language and culture while fostering inclusiveness.

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NOTES

1. The South is represented by the eleven former Confederate states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas).
2. These party families represent grouping based on ideology following the results of each election. The Liberal family corresponds to the PLQ today and is constant over time. The Conservative family was first represented by the provincial branch of the federal Conservative party (“les Bleus”), which was later replaced by the Union Nationale, the Créditistes, the ADQ, and finally by the CAQ. The Nationalist family corresponds to several parties that promoted a more radical nationalist and autonomist view for Québec at different periods of time. In this group, we find the Parti National in the 1880s, la Ligue Nationaliste in the 1900s, l’Action Libérale Nationale in the 1930s, the Bloc Populaire in the 1940s, and the Parti Québécois after 1968. Note that members of the Parti National were affiliated with the Liberal party, but ran under a different banner. It was also not uncommon for MPs during the nineteenth century to remain independent (Assemblée nationale, La répartition des sièges aux élections générales). Finally, the Labor family includes the five Labor MPs (1880–1930) and one Cooperative Commonwealth Federation MP (1944) before the arrival of QS in the 2008 election.
3. Louis Riel, a Métis from Manitoba, was hanged by a court for his involvement in the North-West Rebellion against the federal government. As a French-speaking Catholic, he was seen by many in Québec as a defender of the Catholic faith against the expansion of Protestantism in the West. The position taken by the Conservative government to oppose Riel precipitated a realignment that led voters away from the Conservatives towards a newly formed nationalist party, the Parti National (dark blue line), which later morphed into the Liberal Party. For the most part, the Parti National was a rebrand of the Liberal Party led by Honoré Mercier. However, the party attracted many Conservative party members.
4. In their original article, their proposed equation is $N = I + 1$, where N is the number of parties and I is the number of cross-cutting issue cleavages. These are the exact same concepts as we use here (P and C , respectively).

5. Another example worth mentioning here relates to the anglophone minority in Québec. In the wake of the adoption of Bill 96, two provincial political parties have been created that aim to provide a voice for anglophone Québécois unhappy with this new language legislation. They are the Bloc Montreal and the Canadian Party of Québec.
6. Some of the text in Sect. 4 is a translation of excerpts taken from “Les clivages politiques et le système partisan du Québec au XXI^e siècle”, an article published by Éric Bélanger and Jean-François Godbout (2022). *Recherches Sociographiques* 63(1): 27–55.
7. These are the Québec Election Studies conducted by political scientists Éric Bélanger and Richard Nadeau. These two researchers were joined by Ailsa Henderson and Eve Hepburn in 2012, and Jean-François Daoust and Valérie-Anne Mahéo in 2018. The data collection was carried out online by the firm Léger Marketing with its Internet panel of participants. The sample sizes are 1505 individuals in 2012, 1517 individuals in 2014, and 2821 individuals of voting age in 2018. These data are archived at the Center for the Study of Democratic Citizenship dataverse.
8. Yes respondents are coded 1, undecided respondents at 0.5, and No respondents at 0 for the first question. The attachment to Canada scale is coded 1 (very attached), 0.67 (somewhat attached), 0.33 (not very attached), and 0 (not at all attached). The scale is constructed by dividing the sum of these two variables by two. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.78, indicating acceptable internal consistency between the variables.
9. Respondents who support integration were coded at 1, undecided at 0.5, and those who support diversity were coded at 0. The immigration scale is coded by the level of support towards the statement: strongly agree (1), somewhat agree (0.67), somewhat disagree (0.33), or strongly disagree (0). In 2018, this scale contains five categories. The scale is constructed by dividing the sum of these two variables by two. The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale is 0.5, indicating little internal consistency between these two variables. This is not surprising, as the issue of diversity management has been salient for a longer period of time in Québec, unlike the issue of immigration.
10. Some of the text in Sect. 5 is a translation of excerpts taken from “Les clivages politiques et le système partisan du Québec au XXI^e

siècle”, an article published by Éric Bélanger and Jean-François Godbout (2022). *Recherches Sociographiques* 63(1): 27–55.

11. These survey questions were combined from different polls, mainly *Un Combat Inachevé* (Pinard et al. 1997), the Center for Research and Information on Canada (Murphy and Salée 2007), Environics (2020), and Canadian Election Studies (2006, 2011, 2019).

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Québec-U.S. Relations: “It’s the Economy Stupid!”

Stéphane Paquin and Alexandre Millette

While the France-Québec relationship was the initial formative cornerstone that launched Québec’s international engagement, the United States has, since the early 2000s, progressively become an essential area of concern for Québec—to the point where budgets devoted to Québec-U.S. relations by the *ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie* (MRIF) exceed those of France-Québec relations. In 2024, Québec has official government offices in ten American cities: New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Silicon Valley, Miami, and Atlanta compared to one in France. A quarter

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of Québec's diplomatic presence worldwide is now squarely focused on the United States.

In a previous contribution (Paquin 2014b), we divided the relationship between Québec and the United States into five main periods. The first period, from 1867 to 1960, was characterized by the virtual absence of a paradigm and the operation of formal diplomatic instruments, except for the establishment of representation in New York City during the Second World War. The second period (1960–1976) reflected the Québec government's desire to develop a greater presence in the United States with the creation of numerous instruments, notably delegations, while the international policy paradigm was gradually built up, especially the economic dimension. In the 1960s, a tradition was established in relations between Québec and the United States—that of official visits by premiers, particularly to New York. Premier Jean Lesage (1960–1966), for example, visited the United States five times, while his successor, Daniel Johnson (1966–1968), visited New York twice, and later Robert Bourassa (1970–1976, 1985–1994) visited south of the border seven times, including several times to promote the James Bay hydroelectric mega-dams in northern Québec (Balthazar 2011). Additional ties also developed with the United States during the Quiet Revolution, particularly with the South, including when Jean Lesage went to Louisiana in 1963 to seek to institutionalize the links between Louisiana and Québec. The Québec government also established new offices in the United States in the late 1960s. Contrary to what is at times suggested, it was not Robert Bourassa who initiated the opening of offices in the United States, but Jean-Jacques Bertrand (1968–1970) of the Union Nationale (UN). Under the aegis of the UN, Québec opened several offices in the United States in 1969: in Boston, Lafayette, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Dallas. Robert Bourassa opened his share of diplomatic offices, but these locations were external to the United States: Brussels in 1972, Tokyo in 1973, as well as immigration offices in Athens, Rome, and Beirut. In 1973, however, Bourassa's government did participate in the first conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, a tradition that continues to this day. That same year, Robert Bourassa gave a speech at the Economic Club of New York. These events were the result of more important and professional relations with the United States (Balthazar 2011: 248; Bernier 1996).

The third period (1976–1980) was characterized by a heightened awareness amongst Québec sovereigntists of the importance of the United

States. This period was marked by a major paradigm shift. This third period began the day after the election of the Parti Québécois on 15 November 1976. No indication that once elected, the PQ would intensify Québec's international policy towards the United States. Although the party's platform emphasized the importance of Québec's relationship with the United States, and although René Lévesque (1976–1985) had been a war correspondent for the U.S. military and liked to call himself a 'Yankee-bécois', proposals that a sovereign Québec would withdraw from NATO, not participate in NORAD, and be an officially neutral country indicated a very naïve understanding of international relations on the part of the Parti Québécois in the context of the Cold War (Roussel 2006). The intensification of Québec's US policy was born out of a crisis that was created by René Lévesque himself. Like his predecessor, René Lévesque traveled to the United States in the months following his election. On January 25, 1977, Lévesque gave a speech at the Economic Club of New York to an audience that included the financial elite of the US financial capital.¹ According to many, this speech was a complete failure and forced the Québec government to structure its actions toward the United States in the context of an upcoming referendum on sovereignty association. This policy was known as "Operation America". After the government's referendum defeat on November 15, 1980, it became necessary for the Québec government to adjust its American strategy. The political and economic context effectively guided this re-formulated approach.

The fourth period (1980–2001) was marked by the emergence of a commitment to free trade, representing an economic turn in Québec's international engagement with the United States. After the re-election of the Parti Québécois in 1981, no further referendum on sovereignty was planned; it was no longer necessary to reassure American elites about the consequences of independence. Furthermore, the Québec economy was hit hard by the 1982 recession. It was in this context that the Parti Québécois became more favorably disposed to exporting to the United States and attracting American foreign investment to the province (this shift heralded the Parti Québécois' support for the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement a few years later). On April 30, 1981, René Lévesque appointed Rodrigue Biron, former leader of the right-wing Union Nationale, as Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism. The Québec government also sought to distinguish itself from Canadian policy on the screening of foreign investments, particularly those of American origin. Jacques-Yvan Morin, Québec's Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs, stated during a visit to San Francisco (1982) that the Québec government did not share Ottawa's view on foreign investment. Québec advocated for a more open policy and the development of a north-south economic axis (Balthazar 2006a, b).

The fifth period (2001–2014) was characterized by an even greater emphasis on Québec-US relations. This strategy, which began under the Parti Québécois, was vigorously developed by the Liberal Party of Jean Charest (2003–2012), which took power in 2003. The economic shift of the early 1980s was further accentuated after 2001. Since then, Québec's international strategy has been characterized by the importance of new challenges that extend the public policy paradigm to issues such as security, post 9/11, and energy and environmental issues. This renewal of Québec's presence in the United States began gradually in the late 1990s, following the 1995–1996 wave of closures of thirteen Québec representations abroad due to financial constraints. Lucien Bouchard (1996–2001) renewed trade missions in the United States, by opening or reopening delegations in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and a small office in Miami. This was a strategic shift, as the Premier understood the importance of the United States for Québec. The Québec government also moved to create chairs in the United States in Québec universities. In its 2001–2004 Strategic Plan, the Québec government made relations with the United States a priority. The document, published in 2001, observed: "The ten years of free trade with the American partner, by considerably increasing foreign trade, have shown that Québec was right to take the lead in favoring the signing of the FTA, and then NAFTA" (Government of Québec 2001: 37).

This U.S.-oriented international strategy was further reinforced and intensified by Jean Charest's government, notably in its 2006 International Policy and in the 2010 Québec Government Strategy towards the United States. The latter document outlines the reasons why the United States is an important strategic partner and confirms that, in addition to the traditional policies of export promotion and investment attraction, new themes are emerging in the relationship with the United States: Québec's leadership in energy and the environment and Québec's contribution to the security of the North American continent (MRIF 2010: 21–30). The Québec government's 2010–2013 American Action Plan set out five major objectives and 38 concrete measures, including promoting trade; ensuring Québec's leadership in energy and the environment; contributing to the security of the North American continent;

encouraging the sharing and promotion of Québec’s culture and identity; increasing Québec’s capacity for action; and supporting the development of expertise (Bernier 2011).

Regarding the paradigm underlying Québec’s commitment to international engagement with the United States, the Québec government maintains that the increasingly close interweaving of the Québec economy with that of the American economy ensures that Québec’s economic destiny is inextricably linked to the northeastern United States as it is to that of central Canada. The Québec government is actively committed to countering the periodic protectionist voices of certain members of Congress. In this perspective, the American states are partners of choice, with the Québec government working to forge closer ties with them, whether bilaterally or in sub-state multilateral forums (Paquin and Chaloux 2011).

With the election of Philippe Couillard’s (2014–2018) Liberal Party government, followed by François Legault’s (2018–...) Coalition Avenir Québec, are we witnessing continuity or a new paradigm shift in Québec’s relationship with the United States? During this period, despite the relative symbiosis between the economies of Québec and the United States, certain stumbling blocks began to appear in trade relations following a paradigm shift in US international economic policy. First, the arrival of Donald Trump in the White House in January 2017 marked the implementation of a new international economic direction and corresponding policies for the United States, firmly anchored in economic nationalism and advocating protectionism (Allen 2016). This protectionist wave has been further perpetuated with Joe Biden’s presidential election in November 2020 (Anderson 2021; Baschuk 2021). Although they have been longstanding trading partners and are intrinsically linked economically, Québec has not escaped this protectionist realignment of the United States (see also McSweeney and Ouellet chapter in this book). Second, the outbreak of a global pandemic has drastically altered international economic relations on a planetary scale. This external shock undermines Québec’s strategic positioning within the value chains it has developed with its main trading partner. The economic slowdown is indeed leading to cyclical contractions in Québec’s exports. To offset the depreciation of exports in the balance of trade and to revitalize the Québec economy following the COVID-19 health crisis, the Legault government is currently proposing a series of actions to stimulate the recovery of the Québec economy.

The objective of this chapter is to continue the effort to periodize Québec's international policy towards the United States (Paquin 2014a, b). This sixth and most recent period focuses primarily on the relations maintained by the Couillard and Legault governments with their various American partners. It is mainly marked by frictions regarding economic integration that can be attributed to two factors: the emergence of a new international economic policy favoring protectionist measures on the part of the United States, and the advent of a global pandemic. The highlights of Québec's international policy towards the United States from 2017 to 2024 will be documented utilizing different analytical perspectives, including trade and investment, energy and natural resources, the environment and climate change, and cross-border issues.

THE SIXTH PERIOD: BREAK OR CONTINUITY?

The Québec Liberal Party's 2014 election platform did not announce any specific commitment to Québec's international policy. This underestimation of the crucial importance of international issues generated unforeseen expenditures for the Couillard administration. The austerity agenda that marked the first months of its mandate led to heavy cuts at the MRIF. With the return to a balanced budget, the government changed course: the MRIF's budget, which had been lowered to nearly \$90 million after the Liberals were elected, was raised to \$105 million in 2017, with an additional \$100 million increase spread over the 5 following years. Thus, after a wave of closures of representations abroad—i.e., Moscow, Taiwan, and Santiago—the government subsequently decided to promote a new expansion or strengthening of Québec's international delegations. At the beginning of 2017, Québec had 26 government offices in 14 countries; the goal was to increase this number to 33 in 19 nations. In 2024, Québec has 34 representations in 19 countries, suggesting that this objective has been attained. The importance of the United States is also confirmed, as 28% of the delegations are deployed in that country (MRIF 2022).

In April 2017, the Couillard administration announced the adoption of a new international policy titled *Québec on the World Stage: Involved, Engaged, Thriving* (Government of Québec 2017). Although this document was global in scope, the Couillard government continued to reiterate the importance of the trade partnership between Québec and the United States. The U.S. market received approximately 70% of

Québec's international merchandise exports at the time (Government of Québec 2017: 30).

Trade issues were also central to the new international policy formulated by the Couillard government. Faced with a turn toward protectionism, particularly south of the border, the government restated its support for economic partnerships, which "stimulate prosperity and allow for social progress". The importance of this issue for Québec is undeniable. For instance, exports of goods and services represented approximately 30% of Québec's GDP in 2016 (ISQ 2017: 1:2). Moreover, by adding Québec's exports to those of the other provinces over the same period, this proportion neared 45%, which is enormous compared to other countries. Even though Québec's share of all Canadian exports represented only 15%, Québec was one of the most globalized jurisdictions in the world at the time.

In that context, the Québec government supported Ottawa's efforts to develop free trade agreements. It also demanded active participation in all stages of trade negotiations, as it did during the negotiation of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union (EU), to defend its economic interests while ensuring that its specific characteristics were respected. The Canadian government denied that request, even though federal-provincial cooperation was important during the negotiations.

A second important theme of the policy is a "more sustainable, just and secure" world. In that context, Québec wished to strengthen its "leadership" in the fight against climate change and energy transition policies and activities. Namely, it prioritized the expansion of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI)—a grouping of U.S. states and Canadian provinces into a carbon market—by including California. Ontario had already joined the movement, while Mexico was another partner of choice, according to the provincial government. Québec was also involved in several networks (The Climate Group, nrg4SD, etc.) to disseminate Québec's expertise and share best practices on climate change. Québec's government was also active in various networks, such as the Conference of Governors or the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Governors and Premiers driven by the importance of natural resources and biodiversity of the province. Québec also wished to deepen its ties with stakeholders in the northern regions through the Arctic Circle. The policy also promoted international cooperation on security, radicalization, and cyber security. Border security was deemed essential to ensure the smooth flow of

trade, among other issues. Agreements concluded with various American states—Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York—promoted deeper cooperation in that area. In addition, to fight the spread of infectious diseases and the risk of a pandemic, the Québec Ministry of Health and Social Services established international networks, notably with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States.

When comparing Couillard’s international policy with its predecessor, published in 2006 under the Charest administration (MRIF 2006), it proves to be much more cohesive. The latter integrated several elements that were absent from its predecessor, including climate change, energy, the mobility of people and students, the internationalization of knowledge, and immigration. However, Couillard’s policy was in line with the Charest years; there was no significant paradigm change. It should also be noted that many of the issues addressed under Couillard’s international policy fell under the responsibility of other ministries (Education, Health, Public Safety, etc.). Consequently, the main challenge of its implementation was the creation of an interdepartmental structure in which the MRIF had the leading role. In short, to promote better coherence and consultation between the various actors concerned, the MRIF intended to set up an interdepartmental consultation mechanism. It also planned to set up consultation mechanisms with cities and regions, as well as with civil society actors active on the international scene. The key to the success of Québec’s international policy under the Couillard administration lay in this necessary wide-ranging collaborative process.

QUÉBEC’S INTERNATIONAL POLICY UNDER FRANÇOIS LEGAULT’S COALITION AVENIR QUÉBEC: A FOCUS ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Québec’s October 2018 provincial election resulted in the Coalition Avenir Québec, led by François Legault, succeeding Philippe Couillard’s Liberal government. In 2019, the Minister of International Relations and Francophonie, Nadine Girault, released an addition to the Québec International Policy document, previously published by the Couillard government, thus putting a greater emphasis on economic matters regarding Québec’s international engagement. This revision is outlined in Québec International Vision (QIV)—*Québec: Proud and in Business Around the*

World (Government of Québec 2019b). This reorientation of the foundations of Québec’s international action is conveyed through a triad of objectives promoting the province’s economic development beyond its borders. This new version differs from previous efforts in that it aims to: (1) strengthen economic action at the international level, (2) rely more on Québec’s pre-existing networks and look to leverage them into powerful economic pillars, and (3) modernize efforts geared to promote international action (Government of Québec 2019b).

ENHANCED ECONOMIC ACTION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

In pursuit of the first objective, the Québec government seeks to: promote the attractiveness of the province in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) and increase exports; recruit labor and talent; propel Québec innovation on international markets; open the world to educational institutions and young people; and contribute to the fight against climate change in a sustainable economic perspective.

The employment opportunities associated with FDI are generally capital-intensive, meaning that investments made in Québec are in high-technology sectors, or even in the production of high-value-added goods. Consequently, increased FDI in targeted sectors will help consolidate Québec’s strategic position within its value chains while developing expertise in these areas. To attract foreign investment, the Government of Québec is targeting three related actions: developing a new method to attract foreign investment, triangulating promotional efforts with companies and their subsidiaries, and promoting Québec’s comparative advantages to potential investors (Government of Québec 2019b: 17). As we discuss later in this chapter, in June 2019, the Legault government pushed forward Bill 27 which proposes the reform of *Investissement Québec* (IQ) to stimulate the FDI growth of the province, mainly from its prime economic partners.

Furthermore, access to foreign markets is a priority for Québec’s economy. We can see the vital importance of international exports, but also the preponderance of the United States in Québec’s economy, which accounted for 70.57% of the province’s international exports in 2021, followed by China (4.22%), Japan (1.92%), Mexico (1.91%), and France (1.72%) (Statistics Canada and ISQ 2023). As we will demonstrate later in the chapter, the significance of this economic partnership

between Québec and the United States is of the utmost importance for the province. Within this symbiotic relationship will emerge Québec's strategic perimeter, which is where most of the transactions with the United States, whether it be goods and services or FDI, will take place.

Moreover, Québec's government wants to eliminate the trade deficit that has been occurring yearly since the early 2000s. Since the main source of surplus in the trade balance comes from the United States, we gain a better insight into Québec's strategy towards its primary foreign economic partner (Statistics Canada 2023; ISQ 2023). To increase the surplus coming from the United States, Québec's government advocates the following actions: increasing and consolidating its strategic positioning within value chains with its various American partners; increasing the diversification of outlets for Québec companies; offering better support to Québec's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in their efforts to break into the international market; and promote Québec's strategic positioning through multiple trade agreements, such as the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSA), the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (CPTPP), which open doors to North American, European, and Asian-Pacific markets (Government of Québec 2019a: 20). The main objective promulgated by Québec's stance seem to be aimed at lowering transaction costs between the province and the United States.

In 2020, Québec's government set up the *Programme d'appui aux régions en recrutement international* (PARRI) through the *ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* (MIFI). In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity (MTESS) is also involved in promoting the recruitment of international talent by Québec firms. By reimbursing a portion of the amount paid by private companies, the Québec government subsidizes the attractiveness of highly specialized and educated workers with a high level of mobility. Also, the QIV advocates the implementation of new agreements regarding the recognition of professional qualifications with Québec's international partners. This desire to attract talent is complementary to the local development of talent; the government's objective is to highlight the place of Québec innovation in international markets in high-value-added niches such as artificial intelligence, aerospace, video games, visual effects and

animation, life sciences, and health technologies, as well as the development of information and communications technologies (Government of Québec 2019b: 25).

To remain at the forefront of these sectors, and to develop new ones, the Government of Québec relies on research and innovation carried out in Québec's higher education institutions, research centers, and businesses. Besides, more than a quarter of all jobs and research and development expenditures in Canada take place in Québec (Government of Québec 2019b: 26). In addition, Québec's government is also intensifying its practices in terms of recruiting international talent, particularly within the framework of the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), since these students represent sought-after candidates for immigration. With the pandemic slowing down, businesses are looking to expand their production simultaneously creating a sudden increase in demand, and a lack of supply, from the labor market in all economic sectors in Québec. Therefore, the development of Québec's human capital undeniably depends on opening its higher education institutions to international talent and promoting recruitment on an international scale in higher value-added sectors to meet its labor market demands.

LEVERAGING QUÉBEC'S NETWORKS AND TURNING THEM INTO POWERFUL ECONOMIC LEVERS

The second objective of Québec's International Vision is based on strengthening Québec's action in the Francophonie; promoting Québec's culture and artists; consolidating Québec's position as a world-class tourist destination; attracting more international organizations and events; and, mobilizing Québécois in international business networks.

While all those objectives are worthwhile, some are more nested with the economic strategies and ideology pushed forward by the Legault administration. Namely, the promotion of the attractiveness of Québec in terms of FDI and the recruitment of international talent in high-value-added sectors by various governmental actors, such as the MTESS and the MIFI.

Therefore, the strengthening of Québec's action within the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) is motivated by several factors. The province's participation in the OIF provides access to international bodies and contact with more than 80 states around the world. It is therefore fertile ground for developing new economic partnerships.

In addition, Québec's IOF membership provides the opportunity to showcase economic opportunities to potential investors.

Québec's government is also focusing on the attractiveness of international organizations. To this end, the QIV counts more than 70 international, governmental, or non-governmental organizations that have set up their head office or a representative office on Québec territory. In 90% of the cases, these organizations are mainly centered in the Montréal metropolitan region (Government of Québec 2019b), thus confirming the primacy of the city of Montréal in terms of international relations. Under the aegis of the MRIF, the Government of Québec wishes to paint a portrait of the Québec business diaspora abroad; this initiative is being undertaken with the mindset of creating ties with Québec nationals dispersed throughout the world to create new international business networks.

MODERNIZING INTERNATIONAL ACTION

The third objective of Québec's International Vision is based on improving high-level cooperation; deploying Québec's international brand image; creating the Québec Diplomacy Institute; strengthening international strategic intelligence; and, deploying the "representations of the future."

This part of the plan converges with economic strategies put forward by the Legault government. From a conceptual point of view, this could be seen as an acknowledgment of complex interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1973) and a call in favor of enhancing the linkage between Québec and its partners around the world. The strategy developed in the QIV does involve an elevated level of interaction between actors where their actions and decisions have impacts on others. Accordingly, those actors are engaged in a perpetual negotiation where cooperation is promoted to achieve maximum effectiveness. To better coordinate the province's international efforts, Québec's government established the *Comité ministériel de l'action internationale du Québec*. This initiative came at the end of the 2017–2018 budget. In fact, over 50% of the budget is managed by bodies other than MRIF (Government of Québec 2019b: 48). The creation of this ministerial committee intends to refocus Québec's international action budget around the MRIF. According to the 2022 annual report, the committee reached and even exceeded, its goals (MRIF 2022). Moreover, it slightly changed its name to *Comité interministériel*

de l’action internationale du Québec. Thus far, the centralization implemented by this committee seems to favor the coordination of Québec’s international actions.

As for Québec’s international positioning strategy, the government is committed to utilizing digital technology to promote its assets internationally by developing an image brand for the province. Through various digital platforms, the Québec government hopes to relay its messages beyond its borders. The representation of Québec’s interests internationally is also a key element to be developed (Government of Québec 2019b: 50). The use of digital platforms to promote Québec’s assets is already well underway; the 2022 annual report of the MRIF, for example, shows some moderate progress in the adoption of this new digital diplomacy (MRIF 2022: 35). While the goals have been met, there is still more than half of the foreign delegations that need to adopt this new digital diplomacy by the end of 2023.

While the province already has diplomats scattered around the world, the Legault government also proposes the implementation of the Québec Diplomacy Institute, which aims to provide a specialized resource for the training and development of Québec diplomats and to support the efforts of Québec’s representatives abroad. Concerning international strategic intelligence, the Government of Québec seeks to implement a business and strategic intelligence service within the MRIF. This service would make it possible to process and disseminate information that would facilitate Québec’s international activities. To this end, this knowledge transfer service would make it possible to better target potential commercial partners or market opportunities for Québec exports. By combining those elements, the Legault administration has given itself the mission of bringing Québec’s international representations into the modern era. The QIV puts forward a new concept of Québec’s international offices: “To become true economic showcases of Québec’s modernity, the physical locations of Québec’s representations abroad will be transformed into open, digital, collaborative and innovative spaces, and will reflect the dynamism of Québécois (Government of Québec 2019: 53).”

BILL 27: REFORM OF INVESTISSEMENT QUÉBEC

As previously mentioned, the new international policy of the Legault government focuses primarily on the promotion of the economic development of Québec beyond its borders. It also doubles down on the

Couillard government approach in fighting the rise of protectionism beyond the meridional border. According to Legault's administration, one of the key elements of this economic development resides in the promotion and attractiveness of FDI and the reduction of transaction costs. It is deemed such an important factor that, even before the publication of the QIV, the Minister of the Economy and Innovation (MEI), Pierre Fitzgibbon, the Minister for Regional Economic Development, Marie-Ève Proulx, and the President and CEO of *Investissement Québec*, Guy Leblanc, unveiled a proposal for substantial reform of *Investissement Québec's* operating methods:

IQ will thus become the Québec government's main means of action in the field, both in the regions and internationally, to support investment, technological innovation, and business development. Its approach will focus on Québec's economic development, attracting foreign investment, diversifying Québec exports, and supporting businesses in all regions that have investment or digital transformation projects. (IQ 2019a)

Moreover, the *Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec* (CRIQ) is being absorbed by IQ and members of the MEI who are responsible for guiding Québec companies in foreign trade will join IQ International. Despite this centralization of resources around *Investissement Québec*, Montréal International, and Québec International remain free to prospect for FDI in their respective regions. Thus, this reform of IQ is aimed more at pooling resources to facilitate the development of Québec's regions (MEI 2020). This reform prioritizes three objectives: the economic development of Québec, increasing exports, closing the productivity gap of Québec companies, and increasing foreign direct investment (IQ 2019a; Government of Québec 2019a). At the end of the first five years of the IQ reform, the Québec government hopes to double FDI and reach a level of exports of goods and services corresponding to 50% of the province's GDP. The most recent report available, for the fiscal year 2022–2023, shows marked growth in FDI. The latter amounted to \$6 billion, up from 2.3 billion in 2018–2019 (IQ 2019a, b, 2023).

QUÉBEC’S INTERNATIONAL TRADE: A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES²

As pointed out earlier, the Legault administration’s pathway closely parallels the Couillard’s government international policy, while focusing on the economic component. Two factors mainly contributed to this slight shift in size and scope in the QIV: the fight against protectionism in the United States, Québec’s primary international trading partner, and the elimination of the trade deficit by increasing exports around the world. It is also worth mentioning that the Legault government wishes to instrumentalize the post-COVID economic growth as a launchpad for Québec’s exports, which led to the publication of the Territorial Strategy for the United States—*Setting Course for Recovery: Strengthening Action in the American Market* (MRIF 2021). Therefore, it is relevant to explore Québec’s relation with its principal economic partners, namely the dominant role played by the United States in Québec’s international exports.

As indicated in Table 6.1, an overwhelming portion of Québec’s international exports are directed towards the United States. The same can be said about Québec’s international imports as one-third originates from the United States, as illustrated in Table 6.2.

Considering the proximity and the long-standing relationship between the province of Québec and some of the states in the dubbed strategic

Table 6.1 Québec’s international exports: top 10 trading partners (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Exports value (Millions/CAD)</i>	<i>Share in international exports (%)</i>	<i>Share in Canada’s Exports (%)</i>
1	United States	70,778.24	70.65	14.85
2	China	4,219.41	4.21	14.65
3	Japan	1,923.53	1.92	13.39
4	Mexico	1,916.23	1.91	23.41
5	France	1,722.84	1.72	42.63
6	Germany	1,673.52	1.67	24.40
7	Korea, South	1,188.38	1.19	20.83
8	Switzerland	1,141.34	1.14	37.67
9	Netherlands	1,134.22	1.13	23.76
10	United Kingdom	1,044.50	1.04	6.44

Table 6.2 Québec's International Imports: Top 10 Trading Partners (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Imports value (Millions/CAD)</i>	<i>Share in international imports (%)</i>	<i>Share in Canada's imports (%)</i>
1	United States	34,237.43	33.29	11.51
2	China	13,859.16	13.48	16.11
3	Germany	5,199.23	5.06	27.21
4	Mexico	4,935.77	4.80	14.77
5	France	3,469.38	3.37	48.86
6	Brazil	3,302.23	3.21	44.08
7	Italy	3,197.52	3.11	30.54
8	United Kingdom	2,894.13	2.81	36.76
9	Japan	2,554.19	2.48	16.54
10	Korea, South	1,776.36	1.73	17.18

perimeter, this deep economic symbiosis between Québec and the United States, facilitated by political efforts, is not surprising. It has developed gradually over time, as discussed in this chapter, resulting in the multiplication of partnerships and the deep integration of value chains. Despite this, it is possible to detect current frictions in the economic relationship between Québec and the U.S.

First, there has been a marked rise in U.S. protectionist policies and practices since 2016. Despite a change of administration in the White House in 2020, the U.S. federal government persists in introducing protectionist measures such as the *Buy American Act* (White House 2021a), the *Reshoring Initiative* (White House 2021b), and the executive order *Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Board-Based Growth* (White House 2021c). These are part of a broader trend and directly affect certain economic sectors in Québec, such as aluminum and pulp and paper. This increase in American economic protectionism is significant for Québec's economy, as approximately 70% of Québec's international exports, between 2017 and 2021, are directed to the U.S.

Second, the advent of a global pandemic has slowed international trade. According to the International Trade Centre's calculations, which are based on the United Nations (UN) Comtrade data, the total global exports amounted to 19,327.9 billion (USD) in 2018 before dipping

to 18,750.1 billion (USD) and 17,488.47 billion (USD) in 2019 and 2020 respectively. As we entered the post-pandemic era, those numbers bounced back to 22,112.53 billion (USD) in 2021 (ITC 2023).

Considering the importance of exports to the United States for Québec’s economy, there is reason to question the impacts of the pandemic on the strategic value chains, mainly in terms of cross-border transportation (logistics and distribution) and production that cannot be carried out remotely. Moreover, the pandemic has had direct repercussions on Québec’s exports to the United States. Based on data from the *Institut de la Statistique du Québec*, Québec’s exports in the United States totaled 64.36 billion (CAD) in 2018. Interestingly, that number slightly increased in 2019 to reach 65.37 billion (CAD), which runs counter to the global downward trend initiated by the pandemic. Nevertheless, Québec’s exports sunk to 60.14 billion (CAD) in 2020 before an upswing to 70.74 billion (CAD) in 2021, a 17.63% yearly increase (ISQ 2023).

By combining the rise of American economic protectionism and the impacts of the pandemic on Québec’s economy, it is easier to understand the reasons why Québec’s government is mobilizing to find new markets and to promote an energetic territorial strategy to penetrate the American market. Three initiatives stemming directly from the QIV were launched in 2020–2021: the *Action Plan for Export Recovery* (APER) (2020–2025), the *Territorial Strategy for the United States—Setting Course for Recovery: Strengthening Action in the American Market* (2021), and the *Diplomacy Institute* (2020). While those initiatives are all interesting, we will focus our attention on the *Territorial Strategy for the United States* and on Québec’s international exports to the US market.

The *Territorial Strategy for the United States* promulgated by the Government of Québec identifies priority sectors to be exploited: trade and investment, energy, environment and climate change, and cross-border issues. In terms of trade and investment, membership in the United-States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) guarantees low transaction costs for commercial activities. Moreover, market diversification is a key objective of the strategy developed by Québec’s government. As noted, new economic partnerships are emerging with certain American regions. The end of the pandemic also marks an opportunity for a green economic recovery. To this end, the Legault government is trying to promote Québec’s expertise in projects such as *Build Back Better*, or *Reimagine, Rebuild, Renew* (White House 2021d). In terms of energy, Québec is promoting the export of its hydroelectricity through projects

such as *the New England Clean Energy Connect* (NECEC) in the states of Maine and Massachusetts and the *Champlain Hudson Power Express* (CHPE) in New York State. Regarding the environment and climate change, there are several forums in which Québec and certain American states participate, including the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the International Joint Commission, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Alliance, the Conference of New England Governors, and Eastern Canadian Premiers (CGNA-PMEC), the *Western Climate Initiative* (WCI) and the *Transportation and Climate Initiative* (TCI). Québec's participation in these forums provides an opportunity to use both its economic diplomacy and its diplomacy of influence to promote its green energy niches. Regarding cross-border issues, the Government of Québec is focusing on the imperatives of international competitiveness and the gains made by establishing binational value chains to ensure the fluidity and security of borders (MRIF 2021: 15–16).

The importance of the U.S. market for Québec's international exports remains undeniable. To deepen our understanding of this critical trade relationship, we examine two critical elements. First, we divide exports from Québec across regional sub-sets in the United States. Second, we analyze the principal U.S. states that are recipients of Québec's international exports by reviewing technology-level categories.

As illustrated in Table 6.3, the main U.S. divisions acquiring Québec's exports in 2021 are the Mid-Atlantic region with \$14,997 million, the Northeast Central region with \$13,782 million, and, the New England region with \$10,414 million (ISQ 2022). Together, these regions comprise 14 US states and account for 39.13% of Québec's international exports in the US in 2021. On the one hand, the dominance of these regions is not surprising since they are part of Québec's strategic perimeter in North America—i.e., the majority of U.S. FDI going to the province of Québec comes from these regions. On the other hand, these regions are also at the heart of the implementation of the main binational value chains, featuring major infrastructure and commercial transit arteries. Finally, they are located within the energy corridor that Québec wishes to implement and share cross-border environmental concerns with those neighboring states (MRIF 2021: 13). Additionally, the Government of Québec has forged political ties with its trading partners in these American states. Within Québec's strategic perimeter, there are six of the government's nine official representations in the United States: the

general delegation in New York; three delegations in Atlanta, Boston, and Chicago; an office in Washington D.C.; and an antenna in Philadelphia (MRIF 2021: 10).

Table 6.4 lists the top ten U.S. states where Québec’s international exports are channeled. Using 2021 data, we see that the top U.S. states receiving Québec’s international exports are in the US regions that make up Québec’s strategic perimeter in North America. The exception to this rule is Texas, which ranks fourth. It is therefore significant to highlight the presence of a Québec government delegation in Houston.

Considering the QIV and the importance given to the development of high-tech economic sectors in all the statements issued by Québec’s government, there is reason to believe that products exported to the U.S. belong to these economic sectors. A look at the data for the technology level categories (see Fig. 6.1 and Table 6.5) shows that this is not the case.

Table 6.3 Québec’s international exports by U.S. divisions (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Exports value (Millions/ CAD)</i>	<i>Share in international Exports (%)</i>	<i>Share in Québec’s Exports (%)</i>	<i>Share in Canada’s Exports (%)</i>
1	U.S. Middle Atlantic	14,997.35	14.97	21.19	27.37
2	U.S. East North Central	13,782.81	13.76	19.47	9.15
3	U.S. New England	10,414.31	10.40	14.71	31.88
4	U.S. South Atlantic	9,810.05	9.79	13.86	28.02
5	U.S. West South Central	6,260.15	6.25	8.84	13.96
6	U.S. East South Central	5,649.08	5.64	7.98	26.41
7	U.S. West North Central	3,527.09	3.52	4.98	9.41
8	U.S. Pacific	3,476.22	3.47	4.91	5.03
9	U.S. Mountain	2,168.89	2.16	3.06	8.10
10	U.S. Other states	692.29	0.69	0.98	17.60

Table 6.4 Québec’s international exports: top 10 states (2021) (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2023)

Rank	State	Exports value (Millions/CAD)	Share in Québec’s exports in the United States (%)	Share in Canada’s exports in the United States (%)
1	New York	7,232.95	10.22	28.95
2	Pennsylvania	4,513.85	6.38	24.71
3	Ohio	4,452.40	6.29	23.14
4	Texas	4,216.48	5.96	14.84
5	Connecticut	3,257.59	4.60	59.93
6	New Jersey	3,250.55	4.59	28.16
7	Indiana	2,833.83	4.00	20.45
8	Massachusetts	2,833.24	4.00	19.15
9	Illinois	2,602.58	3.68	4.29
10	Michigan	2,548.31	3.60	5.13

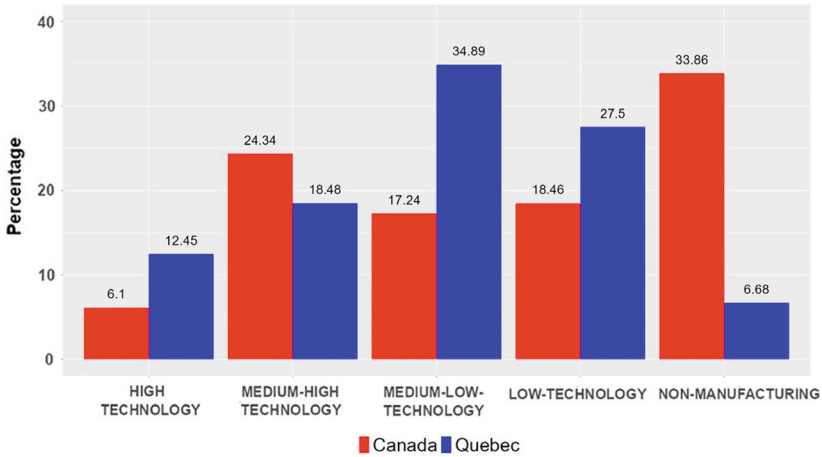


Fig. 6.1 Technological levels of exported goods in the United States (2021) (Institut de la Statistique du Québec 2023)

Table 6.5 Québec's top 10 product groups exports in the United States (2021)
(Statistics Canada 2022; Institut de la statistique du Québec 2022)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Product group (HS4 codes)</i>	<i>Exports value (Millions/CAD)</i>	<i>Share in Québec's exports in the United States (%)</i>	<i>Share in Canada's exports in that product group in the United States (%)</i>
1	7601—Unwrought Aluminum	8,249.49	11.66	88.74
2	8802—Helicopters, Airplanes and Spacecraft	3,094.00	4.37	63.96
3	4407—Lumber (Thickness >6MM)	2,764.89	3.91	19.52
4	8411—Turbojets, Turbo-Propellers and Other Gas Turbines	2,531.45	3.58	61.13
5	2710—Preparations of Non-Crude Petroleum Oils and Oils Obtained from Bituminous Minerals	2,187.30	3.09	16.87
6	7408—Copper Wire	1,956.24	2.76	93.70
7	7403—Refined Copper and Copper Alloys-Unwrought	1,578.88	2.23	89.20
8	8704—Trucks and Other Vehicles for the Transport of Goods	1,341.07	1.89	83.52
9	1806—Chocolate and Other Food Preparations Containing Cocoa	1,130.15	1.60	54.25
10	4410—Particle Board of Wood or Other Ligneous Material	1,082.74	1.53	21.38

Although the Québec government is making considerable efforts to create economic niches in high and medium-high technology spheres, the data shows quite a different reality. Most of Québec's international exports to the United States refer to medium-low (metallurgy) and low (pulp and paper) technology products. Nevertheless, Québec's investments in the creation of strategic high and medium-high technology sectors are not obsolete if one considers the breakthroughs made in Texas and Connecticut. These markets are growing faster than Québec's other main trading partners in the United States; it is therefore in Québec's interest to use its economic diplomacy and diplomatic influence to further solidify and grow these markets.

CONCLUSION

Dating back to the confederation of Canada in 1867, the relationship between Québec and the United States has evolved through five distinctive periods. The first period (1867–1960) was characterized by a virtual absence of paradigm and formal diplomatic instruments. The second period (1960–1976) reflected Québec's willingness to develop its presence in the United States during the Quiet Revolution. The third period (1976–1980) distinguished itself by the increased awareness of Québec's sovereigntists towards the importance of the United States as an economic partner. The fourth period (1980–2001), set itself apart with the commitment to free trade between Canada and the United States, compelling an economic shift in Québec's international strategy toward the U.S. The fifth period (2001–2014) identified numerous new challenges at an interstate level promoting a public policy paradigm switch.

In this chapter, we argue that Québec's government is now entering its sixth period (2014–...). After assessing the international policies under the Couillard and Legault administrations, we observe that the international actions undertaken are in continuity with those set up by Jean Charest's government but with a clear focus on economic policies. Québec's international relations are indeed becoming increasingly focused on the United States. While Couillard's international policies depicted a broad horizon of issues, the linchpin of Legault's international policies' is economic, relegating other issues as peripheral concerns. The predominance of economic issues in Québec's international policies is embodied by Legault's government actions, such as the reform of *Investissement Québec*, which became the main architect of Québec's

international economic strategy to attract FDI; the publication of a new international policy titled, *Québec’s International Vision*, which seeks to promote exports and lower transaction cost; and, the publication of the *Territorial Strategy for the United States*, once more focusing on lowering transaction cost, promoting exports, facilitating FDI, and advocating for the pursuit of strategic positioning within the value chains.

This economic-intensive shift in Québec’s international policies is also most fully understood against the rise of protectionism in the United States, and the determination of Québec’s government to eliminate its rampant trade deficit. Moreover, Legault’s administration aims to instrumentalize the post-pandemic economic recovery to bolster Québec’s international exports across the world while focusing on its strategic perimeter in the United States. As illustrated, the economic strategy (according to the data) implemented by Québec’s government in this sixth period seems to be working. Nonetheless, the persistently high inflation rate in 2022–2023 might bring forth an economic contraction, slowing the efficiency of Québec’s international policies. It is therefore worthwhile to consider the sustainability of Québec’s international policies based primarily on economics. Only time will tell if this one-track approach is viable or if there is a need to pursue a more balanced option in Québec’s international policies.

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NOTES

1. For a transcript of the speech, see: <https://www.archivespolitiquesduQuébec.com/discours/p-m-du-Québec/rene-levesque/all-ocution-du-premier-ministre-du-Québec-monsieur-rene-levesque-devant-le-club-economic-of-new-york-hotel-hilton-de-new-york-le-mardi-25-janvier-1977/>.
2. Data used in this chapter may vary slightly from current data since they were collected in April 2022.

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Between Charm Offensives and Confrontations: A Brief Portrait of the Defense of Québec's Commercial Interests Before American Authorities

Patrick McSweeney and Richard Ouellet

INTRODUCTION

The essential question examined in this chapter is: What does Québec do to protect its trade interests in the U.S.? While this is an interesting question, it is one which is rarely asked overtly. A more common question received by scholars and legal practitioners involved in the defence of Québec commercial interests before American authorities, is not “what”

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but rather “why”—in other words, why does Québec seek to protect its trade interests in the U.S.? The “why” question has two levels.

First, why does Québec **feel the need to protect its trade** with the U.S.? While trade disputes with the U.S. were relatively rare¹ since the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), recent years have seen a significant uptick in trade disputes with the U.S.² The proximity and the high degree of integration of Canadian and U.S. economies, most notably in the auto sector, helped, for a long time, to maintain good trade relations. However, there was a noticeable degradation in the relationship starting in the twenty-first century.³ The fifth installment of the Softwood Lumber Dispute, generally referred to as Lumber V, was, for example, initiated by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC). The outbreak of the Lumber V was not a surprise, as it occurred only 13 months after the end of the 2006 Softwood Lumber Agreement. What was a surprise was the initiation in April 2017 of a trade dispute on Civil Aircraft, the initiation in September 2017 of a similar dispute on Uncoated Groundwood Paper, and the imposition, in June 2018, of National Security Tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum. There followed what can fairly be described as a torrent of trade activities, some specifically targeting Canadian exports, and others aimed at all exports, including those from Canada. The torrent included typical countervailing duties and dumping investigations. By 2019, seven of the top ten Québec exports to the U.S. were directly targeted by some sort of U.S. trade action. So the answer to the first aspect of the “why” question now seems relatively obvious: the Canada/U.S. trade relationship is no longer what it used to be.

Second, **why Québec**, when there is a perfectly good Canadian federal government with economists, diplomats, lawyers and more to protect the Canadian economy? To answer this aspect of the “why” question, one must remember that Canada is big and that its economy varies wildly from coast to coast to coast. Climate, natural resources, demographics and infrastructure vary significantly from province to province. As a result, the importance of industrial sectors will differ depending on where it is located. For instance, petroleum is the largest industry in Alberta, but it is virtually inexistant in Québec. Should a dispute arise over Canadian petroleum exports to the U.S., Alberta will have a strong interest in defending its petroleum industry, compared with Québec. In other words, there is an asymmetry of interests between provinces. Provinces want their economies to grow, and the needs of a small industry in a

small province may not receive as much attention from Ottawa if that province doesn't make its voice heard. In addition, provinces have constitutional jurisdiction to legislate in certain areas critical to their economies, notably in the regulation of businesses. It would be short-sighted for a province to develop an industrial sector counting only on its internal market to ensure the growth of that industry. So, while the Canadian federal government ensures that Canadians are protected on a more macro level, Québec ensures that the specific interests of its businesses and industries are protected.

All international political and economic relationships, including that of Québec and the United States, require work. Québec places great importance on maintaining good trade relations with the U.S., its neighbor and largest international trading partner. It invests large amounts of time and resources in maintaining a close and positive relationship, engaging U.S. partners on all levels, notably, with U.S. business, as well as with local, state and federal governments. The U.S., for its part, also invests significantly in its relationship with Québec, maintaining two consulates general in the province, and being very active in the Québec. This chapter explains that Québec utilizes the resources at its disposal—political, diplomatic and legal—in order to defend its commercial interests and industries, within the confines of rules-based systems, be they under Canadian or U.S. law, NAFTA, CUSMA or the World Trade Organization (WTO).

QUÉBEC AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

To begin, let us consider the legal basis for Québec's engagement in international trade. The Canadian Constitution sets out the powers of the federal Parliament and those of provincial legislatures. Section 132 of the Constitution Act, 1867 (British North America Act, 1867), provides that the Federal Government and Parliament are fully empowered to ensure the performance of obligations of Canada or any of its provinces, as part of the British Empire, when those obligations arise from treaties between the British Empire and other countries. In addition, the Constitution Act, 1867 sets out the areas of exclusive power of the federal Parliament and areas of exclusive power of the provincial legislatures.

In the inter-war years (1918–1939), a number of important developments took place. First, the International Labour Organization (ILO) was created. The ILO adopted a number of conventions aimed at protecting workers. Second, Canada gained independence from the British Empire,

following the adoption of the Statute of Westminster, 1931. The ratification of ILO conventions gave rise to a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada, and subsequently, an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,⁴ commonly called the *Labour Conventions Reference*. The Privy Council held that Section 132 of the Constitution Act, 1867 did not grant the federal Parliament exclusive power in performing the treaty obligations of Canada. Rather, when dealing with areas where the provincial legislatures had power to legislate, the federal Parliament and the provincial legislatures must work together to ensure the performance of treaty obligations. It must be noted that the Labour Conventions Reference did not address the power of the federal authorities to negotiate and conclude international treaties, even in areas of exclusive provincial power. Nevertheless, it created space for provinces to lay a claim to some degree of control of international relations, notably when their areas of exclusive powers were impacted (see Paquin 2022, 2013).

Then, on April 12, 1965, the Québec Vice-Premier and Minister of Education, Paul Gérin-Lajoie, delivered a speech to the Consular Corps in Montreal (Gérin-Lajoie 1965). Mr. Gérin-Lajoie questioned why provinces were competent to implement treaties when their exclusive powers were concerned, but not to negotiate or execute such international agreements. He concluded that Québec could negotiate and execute its own treaties within the province's areas of constitutional jurisdiction, such as culture and education. The speech laid the foundation for what came to be known as the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine, which has become the corner-stone of Québec's international policy. In essence, the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine states that what Québec is competent to do within its borders, it is also competent to do beyond its borders.

In the 60 years since Paul Gérin-Lajoie delivered his speech, Québec has developed an extensive network of 34 delegations and offices throughout the world, with a permanent presence in no less than nine U.S. cities—New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Miami, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles and Silicon Valley. In addition, Québec has concluded numerous agreements with countries, sub-national entities and international organisations, on subjects and in areas within its constitutional jurisdiction.⁵

Provinces' areas of constitutional jurisdiction, exclusive or otherwise, are set out in sections 92 *et seq.* of the Constitution Act, 1867, and, for the purposes of this discussion of Québec's commercial interests, include:

- Administration of the provinces' lands and forestry resources
- Hospitals and municipal institutions
- Licensing of commerce within the province
- Works and undertakings within the province (with certain exceptions)
- Property and civil rights
- Exploration and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources and forestry
- Generation and production of electricity
- Education
- Agriculture and immigration, within the province
- All matters of a local or private nature in the province

As a result, provinces have competence in many areas which are highly relevant to international trade, such as, natural resources and forestry, energy, government procurement, including at the municipal level, recognition of qualifications, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, transport and investment. While federal authorities may be able to negotiate and conclude treaties with other countries, on a very practical level, the implementation of those treaties, which often requires amendments to legislation and regulations, cannot take place without the cooperation and consent of the provinces (see Ouellet and Beaumier 2016).

The role of the provinces in the implementation of treaties has, over time, led the federal government to include provincial participation, both in trade negotiations and in trade disputes, although not always to the same degree. For instance, while the federal authorities have certainly not renounced their responsibilities with respect to the various economic sectors, they tend to consult the provinces on proposed positions which impact those economic sectors. There are several reasons for this approach. First, the importance of economic sectors varies from one province to another. For example, the petroleum industry is very important to Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador, but less so to Québec. In addition, language sensitivities differ from one province to another, meaning that the treatment of cultural and entertainment industries varies across Canada. Second, the relationship between the provinces and the industries present in their territories tends to be closer than the relationship between the federal government and those same industries. This is because the senior officials in provincial ministries and agencies tend to be geographically closer, hence more easily accessible, to the industry

representatives than the federal ministries and agencies. Also, the provincial ministries and agencies, and municipal entities which are under the authority of the provinces, tend to offer more programs and subsidies to these industries than the federal authorities. Therefore, the practice has emerged whereby federal authorities consult the provinces, and the provinces in turn consult the industries present in their territories, on issues relating to trade negotiations and trade disputes (see Legendre and Durel 2022). Indeed, the federal, provincial and territorial governments have established the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Trade, generally referred to as “C-Trade”, which meets four times each year in order to discuss all major trade issues, including ongoing or anticipated trade negotiations and trade disputes.

IMPORTANCE OF QUÉBEC/U.S. TRADE

The U.S. is the largest trading partner of Québec, holding this preeminent position by a significant margin. In addition, Québec enjoys a significantly positive trade surplus with the U.S., which is not the case with the rest of the province’s top 10 trading partners. Also, it could be argued that the nature of exports to the U.S. is more beneficial to Québec’s economy than the nature of the exports sent to our second largest trading partner, China. The figures, as measured by volume and percentage, demonstrate the primacy of the Québec-US economic trading relationship (Table 7.1).

As this table illustrates, the U.S. is the destination for nearly 70% of all of Québec’s exports. In comparison, Québec’s second export market, China, accounts for 5.6% of the province’s exports, not even one-tenth of the value of the U.S. market. No other trade partner represents more than 1.9% of Québec’s exports (Japan and the Netherlands). In terms of imports, the U.S. is the source of over one third (33.8%) of Québec’s imports, which is more than twice the percentage of imports from China, again in second place, representing 14.2% of Québec imports.

The true importance of the U.S. as a trading partner becomes apparent when we examine its contribution to Québec’s balance of trade. Year on year, Québec tends to have a relatively small trade deficit. In 2020, the total value of imports amounted to approximately \$89 billion, while exports were slightly over \$86 billion, leaving a trade deficit of a little over \$3 billion. However, when we examine the role of the U.S., we see that in the absence of Québec’s most important trade partner, the province would run a significant trade deficit. In 2020, imports from the U.S. were

Table 7.1 Summary of trade flows with Québec's ten largest trade partners in 2020

Country	Imports		Exports		Total trade		Rank
	Billion \$	%	Billion \$	%	Billion \$	%	
U.S	30.166	33.8	60.160	69.8	90.326	51.4	1
China	12.702	14.2	4.816	5.6	17.519	10.0	2
Germany	4.962	5.6	1.521	1.8	6.483	3.7	3
Mexico	4.007	4.5	1.348	1.6	5.355	3.0	4
France	3.284	3.7	1.486	1.7	4.770	2.7	5
U.K	2.974	3.3	1.271	1.5	4.246	2.4	6
Japan	2.183	2.4	1.664	1.9	3.846	2.2	7
Italy	2.824	3.2	0.465	0.5	3.289	1.9	8
Brazil	2.624	2.9	0.546	0.6	3.170	1.8	9
Netherlands	1.173	1.3	1.648	1.9	2.821	1.6	10
Total trade	89.366	100.0	86.196	100.0	175.563	100.0	

Source Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec (2021)

approximately \$30 billion, while exports to the U.S. were approximately, \$60 billion, meaning that there was a trade surplus of \$30 billion with the U.S. Indeed, Québec runs a trade deficit with eight of its top ten trade partners. In other words, the trade surplus with the U.S. offsets nearly all of the trade deficits with Québec's other partners.

It is important to remember that it is not merely the value of the exports which is important. We must also consider the nature of those exports. While exporting raw material helps with the trade balance, exporting valued-added goods, whether they be finished or partly finished goods, generates activity within Québec's economy. A more intensive review of Québec is particularly revealing (Table 7.2).

This table indicates that the U.S. is the primary destination, and in some case, virtually the sole destination, of seven of Québec's ten most important exports. Apart from the value of these products as exports, the products themselves involve significant levels of transformation or manufacturing. In other words, the goods exported to the U.S. tend to have undergone a high degree of transformation. The whole of Asia, on the other hand, is a significant market for only three of Québec's top ten exports. In addition, two of these products, iron ore and pork, are exported with a significantly lower degree of Québec added value. The conclusion to be drawn is that the U.S. does not just represent a bigger

Table 7.2 Québec's principal exports

Rank	Product	Total Billion \$	U.S.		Asia	
			Billion \$	%	Billion \$	%
1	Airplanes, helicopters and other aircraft or spacecraft	6.5113	3.9381	60		
2	Unwrought aluminium	6.2099	5.1628	83		
3	Iron ore and concentrates	4.4417			2.9887	67
4	Turbojets, turbopropellers and other gas turbines	3.5585	2.5029	70	0.2270	6
5	Wood sawn or chipped lengthwise, sliced or peeled	1.8419	1.6692	91		
6	Meat of swine, fresh chilled or frozen	1.8416			1.3632	74
7	Motor vehicles for the transport of goods	1.5304	1.5083	99		
8	Refined petroleum oils	1.4328	1.2284	86		
9	Copper wire	1.2673	1.2589	99		
10	Tourism and other vehicles	1.2294			0.3946	32

Source Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec (2021)

proportion of Québec's exports, but also that the goods exported tend to have a greater degree of Québec added value. This added value generates a greater level of economic activity, and hence greater economic benefits—job-creation, investment, industrial activity, etc.—than products with a lower level of Québec added value, such as unrefined ores and minerals which are refined or transformed elsewhere. In other words, the U.S. represents not only the market for a greater quantity of Québec's exports, but these exports tend to generate a greater amount of economic activity in Québec before they are exported.

If the United States is such an important trading partner, what does Québec do to protect its access to the U.S. market? In this regard, we consider how Québec acts to protect its market access in three scenarios: first, when trade relations in the particular sector are robust; second, when relations begin to undergo strain, and a dispute is looming; and, finally, when a dispute has arisen between Québec and the U.S.

THE SUN IS SHINING

In this first case, we examine how Québec ensures that its exporters, particularly those in important economic sectors, maintain access to U.S. markets, in an environment in which trade relations are strong.

An important aspect of Québec's strategy is to develop and maintain positive relations with all levels—local, state and federal—of American government. This is achieved primarily through the ongoing “economic diplomacy” of Québec's network of nine permanent offices in the U.S. Starting at the top, the principal offices, the General Delegations, are located in New York City and Los Angeles, with Delegations, located in Washington D.C., Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston and Miami. In addition, Québec maintains an antenna office in Silicon Valley. Although the size of these permanent offices varies, their roles and responsibilities are similar. For the sake of brevity, we will refer to the general delegations, delegations, bureaus and antennae as “permanent offices”.

First, the permanent offices act as the eyes and ears of the Québec government, providing the latter with useful information on economic developments occurring within their respective territories. These offices pay particularly close attention to local, state and national media, and provide reports on developments which could have an impact, be it positive or negative, on Québec's commercial interests. Second, these offices undertake advocacy with local, state and federal authorities. The objectives of such advocacy is generally to ensure that the local, state and federal governments remain aware of Québec's potential as a partner in particular economic sectors. For instance, if a U.S. state is considering pursuing a policy of promoting clean energy, and significantly reducing its reliance on coal-fired power plants, the permanent office which covers that state would, in close cooperation with the sectoral ministry in Québec, undertake advocacy activities with members of the state government and legislature. They would determine whether the state has access to the necessary technology and resources, and offer to facilitate partnerships with businesses and experts in Québec. In addition, the permanent office would act as a local point of contact for Québec business and experts seeking to gain access to business opportunities in that state, providing them with useful local knowledge, and, where appropriate, facilitating meetings, and promoting the establishment of partnerships. Finally, the permanent offices play an important role in organizing high-level trade missions and exchanges, aimed at promoting

exchanges between Québec, its cities and municipalities, and the local, state and federal levels of American government. In this regard, their work involves identifying appropriate themes for prime ministerial, ministerial or mayoral missions, as well as suggesting what businesspeople, academics and civil servants should form part of the accompanying delegations. The permanent offices also suggest which politicians, businesspeople, academics and civil servants within the state which ought to be solicited for meetings, and then act as intermediaries in setting up those meetings. Inversely, the permanent offices would facilitate trade missions being organized by the states within their territories, by identifying suitable interlocutors in Québec, and facilitating communications with the latter. Essentially, when trade relations between Québec and the U.S. are good, Québec's goal is to develop relationships where none exist, and to strengthen those that are already established.

CLOUDS ARE GATHERING

Another scenario is one in which trade relations are coming under strain, although they have not yet given way to a formal dispute. The approach adopted by Québec is bifurcated: first, advocacy efforts become more focused, in the hopes of avoiding a degradation in the relationship, and second, preparations begin for a potential trade dispute. More focused advocacy involves an increase in direct communications between Québec and U.S. officials, focusing directly on the industry sector which is at risk of trade measures. Such communications take place on both sides of the border, with senior officials in Québec communicating with U.S. officials in the embassy or consulates general, and with Québec officials present in the U.S. communicating with their counterparts on U.S. soil, for the purpose of hearing their concerns and discussing ways to alleviate those concerns. Threats of trade action will also draw the attention of the Canadian federal government, and other Canadian provinces. Coordinated messaging between Québec, Canada and other provinces with the U.S. government often takes place at this stage, with a view to "disarming" the situation. The cooperation and support of the Canadian federal government, with its embassy in Washington D.C., and its network of consulates throughout the U.S., is often invaluable at this point. It must be remembered, however, that the U.S. government's primary concern is the well-being of its citizens and businesses, and so, is more sensitive to

their concerns than those of foreign citizens, businesses, or even governments. After all, foreign governments cannot vote in U.S. elections. This is why the cooperation and support of U.S. stakeholders become essential.

U.S. Stakeholders

When tensions begin, it is important to **identify** U.S. stakeholders whose interests could align with those of Québec. Once these stakeholders are identified, they must be **motivated** and **mobilized**. Motivation takes the form of explaining to them how their interests are aligned with those of Québec, and how those same interests could be prejudiced by the outbreak of a trade dispute, and more specifically, by the imposition of trade measures. Mobilizing, on the other hand, involves getting them to take action.

Identification

The identification of U.S. stakeholders requires the cooperation of a number of parties. The Québec industry which is at risk can provide valuable information by identifying and communicating with its U.S. partners. It should be noted, however, that businesses, in Québec or elsewhere, often treat their customer lists as highly confidential information, and will not be anxious to share this information, even with “friendly” governments. In addition, Québec’s network of permanent offices in the U.S. is often able to identify U.S. businesses and associations which are reliant on imports from Québec and which could be negatively impacted by the imposition of trade measures. Another avenue for identifying potential allies involves trade unions. In many cases, Canadian and U.S. trade unions are closely linked, even being part of the same international federation, and Canadian trade unions whose members’ jobs are threatened by trade actions can call upon their U.S. counterparts to oppose, or at the very least, refuse to support, potential trade actions.

Motivation

Once the potential partners have been identified, they must be motivated. U.S. customers of Québec exporters and other “downstream” U.S. businesses, represent, arguably, the most important category of potential allies. Individual U.S. customers are valuable allies, and when their individual efforts are combined and coordinated through an industry association, their influence grows significantly. A U.S. business who has

a time-tested relationship with a Québec supplier of raw materials or other input products, will, obviously, not wish to pay more for the same product if countervailing or antidumping duties are applied. Nor will this business be anxious to abandon an established relationship with a reliable supplier and start searching for a new supplier, negotiate contracts, adjust his supply chain, and possibly his manufacturing process. In addition to the downstream customers of Québec exporters, other US stakeholders include upstream suppliers of the Québec exporters. Problems for their customers—the Québec producers and exporters—will result in problems for them as suppliers. Again, the influence of U.S. suppliers will be multiplied if they are grouped together in an industry or sectoral association.

Mobilization

Once U.S. stakeholders have been identified and motivated, they must be mobilized. The goal of mobilization is to get businesses, associations, unions and other stakeholders to lobby their elected representatives and the U.S. federal government,⁶ with a view to convincing them that the consequences of proceeding with the trade action far outweigh those of not proceeding.

While direct communication with the relevant federal government departments is important, it is arguably more effective if U.S. stakeholders work together to solicit the intervention of their elected officials on all levels – local/municipal, state and federal. In this regard, it is not uncommon to see letters from mayors, state legislators, governors, members of U.S. Congress (House and Senate), often co-signed by dozens of their peers from both sides of the aisle, addressing their concerns of the potential impact of trade measures for their constituents to the Secretary of Commerce or the United States Trade Representative.

It is easy to imagine how a business owner, with a hundred employees in their manufacturing plant, will have the attention of local politicians, particularly when they point out that the threatened trade measures could result in the lay-off of some or all of these employees. In the same way, an industry association, which represents hundreds of such businesses, and by extension, several tens of thousands of employees, will have an even louder voice, and may be able to solicit the support of federal elected officials. Indeed, in some cases, very large national industry associations can solicit the support of dozens of members of Congress, often in the form of having them co-sign letters addressed to senior officials,

to members of Cabinet, even to the U.S. President. An expression of bipartisan support from members of the U.S. Congress sends a powerful message to senior civil servants and administration officials, who must regularly appear before Congressional committees, such as the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Close coordination amongst U.S. stakeholders in the timing and targeting of their messages, can achieve impressive results. In the pre-dispute phase, Québec officials both in Québec and in the U.S., invest much time and effort in focused advocacy, building relationships, and coordinating actions with U.S. allies.

Legal Preparations

Of course, it would be naïve to think that government-to-government discussions and mobilizing U.S. stakeholders will resolve all issues. So, in parallel with those activities, preparations begin to mount a solid legal defence, in the event of a trade dispute being launched.

It is widely understood that a strong legal team is essential to a successful defence; experienced and successful counsel must be retained and instructed. In the case of Québec, the *Ministère de la Justice* (Ministry of Justice—MJQ) is automatically mandated as counsel to the Québec government. The MJQ maintains a team of lawyers trained and experienced in Canadian and international trade law, particularly with regard to agreements under the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

For proceedings under U.S. trade law, however, it is necessary to retain counsel admitted to practice in those U.S. jurisdictions and instances which hear and decide trade cases.⁷ As a result, Québec mandates U.S. law firms which have proven expertise in U.S. trade law, and related areas, such as trade and economic sanctions. Once counsel is retained, and before any trade litigation is formally initiated, it is critical that they be fully instructed, so that they have a solid understanding of the sector or industry being targeted, as well as of the Québec and Canadian legislation and regulations of that industrial sector. In particular, counsel must be familiar with all government programs, strategies and policies relating to the sector or industry. Instructing counsel will also include a great many meetings with industry experts and government specialists, to allow counsel to have a detailed understanding of how the industrial sector operates. This stage may even involve site visits with counsel, in order

to give them the most complete picture possible of the industry or sector that they will have to defend.

Two other aspects need to be addressed during this phase. First, expert witnesses can be engaged to collate economic, scientific or industrial data and reports, and, if necessary to produce their own expert reports for eventual submission to the instance which will hear the trade dispute. Like counsel, expert witnesses must have a thorough understanding of the industrial sector, and will have to have access to industry and government specialists. The other important aspect to be addressed is the issue of language. Québec is unique in Canada in that the official language is French (*Lois du Québec, Chapitre C-11*), and all government documents are in that language; official English versions are not always available. If the eventual forum for the trade dispute is a WTO panel, this is not a problem, as French is, with English and Spanish, one of the three official languages of the WTO. However, if there is a chance that the dispute will be filed with a U.S. instance, such as the Department of Commerce, then all documents which could be useful to Québec's defence, must have an English translation. Trade disputes before the U.S. Department of Commerce tend to generate enormous amounts of paperwork. It is not uncommon for submissions to include hundreds of exhibits, spanning tens of thousands of pages. In Québec, many documents relevant to the dispute—i.e., policies, strategies, guides, etc.—tend to be produced only in French; these must be translated before they can be submitted. When we consider that trade investigations before the DOC involve very tight deadlines, the identification of significant documents, and their translation into English, is an essential step, and it is better to see to their translation prior to a formal dispute being initiated.

All in all, the period during which trade relations are strained, without a formal dispute having been filed, is a time for earnest efforts to avoid a formal dispute through direct and indirect advocacy. However, time should not be wasted, particularly if the filing of a formal dispute is likely. In other words, Québec has adopted the philosophy of "hope for the best, but prepare for the worse."

A STORM BEGINS

Sometimes, despite all efforts, nothing can prevent the filing of a formal dispute. When that happens, the two-tiered approach in terms of advocacy and legal manoeuvring continues, although the focus is placed on the legal manoeuvrings.

Advocacy

Although the focus will be on the legal defence, focused advocacy, as outlined in the previous section, not only continues, but intensifies. The groundwork of identifying stakeholders and mobilizing them into action must already have been completed. To begin targeted advocacy while concurrently juggling with legal proceedings, is not advisable. The delicate task of identifying potential allies, the time-consuming work of developing the relationship with them, and convincing them that their interests align with those of Québec, needs to be accomplished well in advance of the outbreak of a formal dispute, when time is less of a concern. When strong foundations have been laid with U.S. allies prior to the beginning of the formal dispute, valuable time is not wasted in trying to convince those allies of where their interests lie, or in providing them with legal, economic or other arguments which they can then communicate to their elected officials. They, in turn, will not lose time in the labyrinth of political advisors and functionaries, trying to get introductory meetings with their elected representatives. When the groundwork has been done prior to the beginning of the dispute, U.S. allies can go directly into action, informing their elected representatives that the potential problem which they had previously discussed is now a reality, requiring immediate action on the part of the elected representative.

Equally, on the government-to-government level, advocacy efforts not only intensify, but are raised to the highest levels. Domestically, senior government and elected officials, on both provincial and federal levels, harmonize their messages and seek meetings with senior U.S. diplomatic representatives, with the province focusing on the consulates general in its territory, and the federal government focusing on the embassy. South of the border, senior representatives of Québec's permanent offices will seek meetings with local, state and federal officials in their territories to discuss the dispute, with similar activities being undertaken by Canadian consular and embassy staff. In some cases, delegations of Québec elected officials

and industry leaders, often led by senior ministers, are formed and travel to the U.S. to raise awareness of the negative impacts of the dispute on both sides of the border.⁸ The dispute will also be raised in high level calls and meetings between the Canadian federal and U.S. governments, notably between the Canadian trade minister and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and Secretary of Commerce,⁹ and even between the Prime Minister and President.¹⁰

Legal

A trade dispute can be filed under domestic U.S. law, under bilateral or multilateral agreements or under the rules of the WTO. Québec's approach to defending trade disputes must be tailored to the legal regime, as the rules of procedure vary from one to the other.

While proceedings taken at the WTO can involve Québec's interests, Québec, in its own right, is not a "member" of the WTO agreements.¹¹ The "member" is, instead, Canada.¹² Consequently, Québec does not have standing to appear and defend disputes under the rules of the WTO which target its industries. Rather, it is Canada which appears and defends Québec's interests in WTO disputes. That does not mean that Québec is entirely side-lined for the duration of a WTO dispute which impacts its interests. Québec cooperates closely with the Canadian federal government in all aspects of the defence of its interests, from informal and formal consultations, to responding to the formal complaint, and negotiations aimed at settling disputes. While the Canadian federal government has, arguably, the authority to defend trade cases without involving provinces, in practice, the federal lawyers cannot work in a vacuum, and require the knowledge and expertise of the provinces in order to fully defend Canada's interests. In addition, the federal government would be unable to comply with a panel decision or with a negotiated settlement which requires a province to make legislative, regulatory or administrative changes in areas where the province has constitutional jurisdiction. As a result, while Québec is not a formal party to WTO disputes, when its interests are the subject of a dispute, its lawyers and experts are heavily involved in the defence of disputes before the WTO.

Under U.S. law, it is possible for U.S. businesses, business associations, trade unions and others to file a wide range of trade actions, notably countervailing, antidumping, and safeguard actions. In addition, the Department of Commerce (DOC) can self-initiate these actions.

Furthermore, investigations can be ordered by the U.S. President (under Section 232 of the *Trade Expansion Act*, 19 U.S.C §1862), if there is reason to believe that the importation of certain products could have a negative impact on U.S. national security. Other trade actions utilised in the recent past and which have had an impact for Québec include “Fact-Finding Investigations” in accordance with Section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930. Whilst seemingly relatively harmless, a fact-finding investigation can be fast-tracked to become a safeguard action (Section 332 of the *Tariff Act of 1930*, 19 U.S.C. § 1332).

In most trade actions under U.S. law, notably countervailing duty investigations,¹³ provinces and similar sub-national entities have status as interested parties in many procedures. As a result, Québec has standing to defend U.S. trade actions, independently of the Canadian federal government and other provinces,¹⁴ and can contest the decisions and determinations of the DOC to the appropriate U.S. appellate bodies. Having the status of an interested party is not merely a convenience for Québec, but it is essential for U.S. government departments and agencies, such as the DOC, to undertake full investigations. Remember that, under the Canadian constitution, provinces have constitutional jurisdiction to regulate businesses within their territories. This regulation often includes adopting programs designed to provide an ecosystem in which industries and sectors can succeed and grow. In addition, provinces implement programs as tools of social policy, and in this regard, programs and subsidies are used to influence the behavior of businesses and industries, notably in matters relating to sustainable development, the environment, gender equality, labor standards and health and safety in the workplace. If Québec did not have status as an interested party, the DOC would find it very difficult to obtain the information it requires regarding provincial programs and subsidies.

A quick review of the some of trade disputes which occurred since 2015 and which have directly impacted Québec’s interests illustrates to what extent the province is active. Let us begin with the more traditional antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) cases which have involved Québec.

Supercalander Paper from Canada,¹⁵ was a CVD investigation filed in 2015. Québec appeared as a respondent in the DOC and ITC investigations and administrative reviews, as well as in the NAFTA chapter 19 challenge.¹⁶ In the WTO challenge¹⁷ brought by Canada, Québec was

not a party, but actively supported the Canadian federal government in the preparation and filing of briefs and attended the hearings in Geneva.

Certain Softwood Lumber Products from Canada,¹⁸ the magnificent zombie trade dispute which simply won't die, began its fifth incarnation in November 2016, and at the time of writing, is still shambling on. Québec was a respondent in the initial investigation in 2017, as well as in the expedited reviews, and the six administrative reviews which have taken place since the initial AD and CVD orders were imposed. In addition, Québec is a party to all NAFTA chapter 19¹⁹ and CUSMA chapter 10 challenges,²⁰ of which thirteen have so far been filed. Once again, Québec was not formally a party to the WTO challenges²¹ of AD and CVD orders, but actively supported the Canadian federal government in filings at the WTO and attending all hearings.

100- to 150-Seat Large Civil Aircraft from Canada²² was a CVD and AD investigation taken by the DOC following a petition filed by Boeing against the C-Series limited partnership in April 2017. The final determinations by the DOC would have had duties of over 292% imposed on the imports of the Bombardier C-Series aircraft, now the Airbus A-220, but for the ITC determining that Boeing had not suffered injury. Québec was a respondent to the DOC and ITC investigations. Fortunately, the negative determination of the ITC resulted in the petition being rejected, and no NAFTA, CUSMA or WTO appeals were necessary.²³

Certain Uncoated Groundwood Paper from Canada²⁴ was an AD and CVD trade investigation initiated by the DOC in September 2017. Traditionally, Québec is a very large producer and exporter of paper, notably newsprint, and was very much concerned by this investigation. The province participated as a respondent in the DOC and ITC investigations. As with Large Civil Aircraft from Canada, following a positive determination by the DOC, the ITC issued a negative injury determination which put an end to the dispute in 2019.

In Fabricated Structural Steel from Canada,²⁵ Québec was a respondent in the AD and CVD trade investigations. The ITC final determination that there was no injury or threat of injury has been appealed by the petitioner and will be heard by a panel composed under chapter 10 of CUSMA. Québec is a party to the CUSMA chapter 10 appeal.

The most recent of the AD and CVD cases brought against Québec is **Utility Scale Wind Towers from Canada**,²⁶ which was filed in 2019. Again, Québec was a respondent in the DOC and ITC investigations

and was a plaintiff to the appeal brought before the U.S. Court of International Trade,²⁷ and a plaintiff-appellant in the appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeal Federal Circuit.²⁸

Apart from these AD and CVD cases, the past seven years have seen the U.S. government implement or attempt to implement a wide range of trade measures.

The first of these is safeguard measures,²⁹ notably the action covering **Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Cells** (solar panels).³⁰ Safeguard actions are not country-specific, but rather target imports of certain products from all sources. However, under the rules of the CUSMA, Canada and Mexico can request to be exempted from U.S. safeguard measures if they can establish that their exports are not a significant proportion of U.S. imports of the products in question. In the solar panels case, Québec collaborated closely with both the Canadian federal government and the province of Ontario in seeking to have Canadian solar panels exempted from the safeguard measures imposed by the U.S. When the exemption was not granted, Québec and Ontario supported the Canadian action against the U.S. under chapter 31 of the CUSMA.³¹ However, in July of 2022, Canada and the U.S. concluded an agreement to abolish the safeguard tariffs imposed on Canadian exporters.

In 2019 and 2020, the U.S. initiated a number of **fact-finding** investigations in accordance with section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930. At first glance, fact-finding investigations do not seem all that intimidating. However, U.S. law allows such procedures to be fast-tracked into safeguard actions in certain circumstances. None of the fact-finding investigations which targeted Québec interests over the past seven years gave rise to safeguard actions. The first of these, “Renewable Electricity: Potential Economic Effects of Increased Commitments in Massachusetts”, focused on the impacts of a contract concluded between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Hydro-Québec³² for the provision of electrical power over a 20-year period.³³ This investigation was instigated by the House Ways and Means Committee. Hydro-Québec, the Government of Québec and the Canadian government provided written submissions and appeared before the ITC. In its conclusions, the ITC found that importing hydro-electricity from Québec would help the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to meet its emissions reductions targets, whilst ensuring a stable base load, without exposing energy consumers to volatile energy prices.³⁴

The final category of trade measures which the U.S. applied against Québec exports in recent years, is in the area of **national security**. In

2016, the DOC began an investigation of the consequences for U.S. national security of the continued importation of steel and aluminium products. In March 2018, armed with the Department of Commerce's report,³⁵ the Trump administration imposed duties of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminium imported into the U.S. Initially, Canada and Mexico were exempted from these duties, but the exemptions were removed on June 1, 2018. Québec was greatly preoccupied with the 10% tariff on aluminium, its largest export, as the province exports approximately \$5.1 billion annually of aluminium to the U.S (Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation 2021).

Canada's reaction, fully supported by Québec, was to initiate dispute settlement proceedings at the WTO.³⁶ In parallel with the legal response, Canada imposed retaliatory tariffs on certain U.S. goods. The goods targeted by Canada included U.S. steel and aluminium products, as well as many consumer products, which could be substituted either by Canadian goods or by imports from other sources. The federal government held consultations with the provinces in establishing its list of targeted products. The retaliatory tariffs were imposed by Canada on July 1, 2018; the U.S. immediately challenged the retaliatory tariffs under the WTO agreements.³⁷

There was a strong reaction in the U.S. to the national security tariffs on Canadian aluminium, with many important sectors being heavily reliant on Canadian aluminium, notably in the auto, aerospace and agri-foods sectors. Québec and other provinces, along with the Canadian federal government, opened communications with U.S. industry allies, shared information and coordinated positions.

The national security tariffs are, as of the time of writing, still in place. However, in May 2019, the U.S. reinstated the exemptions in favor of Canada and Mexico. Canada and the U.S. issued a joint statement,³⁸ after which the two countries removed their respective tariffs and withdrew their respective WTO proceedings.³⁹

Negotiation

The final aspect of defending Québec's trade interests involves the settlement of trade disputes through negotiation. There is only one example of successful settlement negotiations between Canada and the U.S. since 2015, that being the Joint Statement on the withdrawal of U.S. National Security Tariff on Canadian steel and aluminium in 2019.⁴⁰ In all of the

other trade disputes, the matters were either decided by the appropriate instances or simply abandoned by the U.S. before completion. Disputes prior to 2015 have been settled by negotiation, notably the second,⁴¹ third⁴² and fourth⁴³ rounds of the Softwood Lumber Dispute.

In this regard, the constitutional jurisdiction of provinces again becomes important. Even in instances where one Canadian province has a dominant position in a particular industry, in no instance will the U.S. government negotiate on a bilateral basis with a Canadian province; the U.S. will only negotiate with the Canadian federal government. When settlement negotiations are initiated between the U.S. and Canada, the Canadian federal government works closely with the provinces and their industries in formulating the Canadian negotiation positions. In addition, although the provinces do not have a seat at the negotiating table, they and their industries are updated regularly on the progress of the negotiations and consulted on the text of the proposed settlement. Once again, the involvement of the provinces in the negotiating process is not merely a courtesy on the part of the Canadian federal government. The involvement of the provinces in the negotiations is crucial to the subsequent implementation of the settlement, notably when that settlement requires the provinces to make legislative, regulatory or administrative changes.⁴⁴ In addition, as previously mentioned, provinces tend to be closer to their industries than the federal government, and so have a better sense of the type of settlement which will best suit their industries, and in particular, the provisions in a settlement which will and will not work for their industries.

Finally, although Québec may not sign the settlement agreement between Canada and the U.S., the province may declare itself bound by the terms of such an agreement (Lois du Québec Chapitre M-25.1.1), when the subject of that agreement is within constitutional jurisdiction of Québec. For instance, following the negotiation and signature of the Softwood Lumber Agreement between Canada and the U.S. of 2006, Québec declared itself bound by the terms of the agreement (see *Gouvernement du Québec 2006*).

CONCLUSION

All relationships require work. Québec places great importance on maintaining good trade relations with the U.S., its neighbor and largest international trading partner. It invests large amounts of time and resources

in maintaining a close and positive relationship, engaging U.S. partners on all levels, notably, with U.S. business, as well as with local, State and federal governments. The U.S., for its part, also invests significantly in its relationship with Québec, maintaining two consulates general in the province, and being very active in the Québec. All relationships have difficult moments and in this regard, both Québec and the U.S. invest time and resources, often at the very highest levels, in order to resolve tensions before they degenerate into disputes. Finally, in the relatively few cases where disputes are inevitable, Québec will use the resources, political, diplomatic and legal, at its disposal in order to defend its industries, within the confines of rules-based systems, be they under Canadian or U.S. law, NAFTA, CUSMA or the WTO.

The conclusion is the appropriate place to summarize the foregoing work, which has focused on the Québec-US commercial relationship and the tools the province has at its disposal from protecting, maintaining, and advancing its access to the American marketplace. No better summation could be offered than the words President John F. Kennedy offered in his 1961 address to the Canadian parliament. Although he was specifically referring to Canada-U.S. relations, the same can be applied to the Québec-U.S. business relationship: “Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath joined together, let no man put asunder. What unites us is far greater than what divides us.” Be it political charm or judicial proceedings, the best means to ensure the effective and successful management of US-Québec trade relations must always be found and applied in order to keep the partners united.

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NOTES

1. With the one glaring exception of the softwood lumber dispute.
2. All the documents related to dispute settlement proceedings initiated under the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement or the North American Free Trade Agreement can be consulted at <https://can-mex-usa-sec.org/secretariat/report-rapport-reporte.aspx?lang=eng>. Publicly available materials for cases under Chapter 10 and Chapter 31 of USMCA/CUSMA/TMEC

- are available via the same Website on the Trade Agreements Secretariat's e-Filing Registry.
3. Indeed, prior to President Trump taking office, 2015 saw a countervail investigation targeting supercalendar paper from Canada, and in early 2016, a safeguard action targeting aluminum was threatened, but fortunately withdrawn.
 4. Canada (AG) v. Ontario (AG), [1937] AC 326.
 5. The international agreements concluded by Québec can be found on the Website of the ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec at <https://www.mrif.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ententes-et-engagements/ententes-internationales/>
 6. Notably, the United States Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).
 7. This includes, notably, the District of Columbia for proceedings before the DOC and the International Trade Commission, and New York for proceedings before the U.S. Court of International Trade.
 8. For example, in November 2017, then Minister of Forests, Fauna and Parks, Mr. Luc Blanchette, lead a mission to the U.S. in order to discuss the Softwood Lumber Dispute. <https://www.newswire.ca/fr/news-releases/bois-duvre---le-ministre-blanchette-en-mission-a-washington-657249103.html> Accessed 10 January 2024.
 9. For example, in March 2018, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland visited Washington D.C. and held discussions with several high-ranking members of the Trump administration and members of Congress in relation to Canada/U.S. trade issues. [Foreign Affairs Minister to hold meetings in Washington on Canada-United States trade - Canada.ca](#) Accessed 10 January 2024.
 10. For example, in April 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised the Softwood Lumber Dispute with President Donald Trump. [Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with United States President Donald Trump Donald | Prime Minister of Canada \(pm.gc.ca\)](#) Accessed 10 January 2024.
 11. While not a member of the WTO in its own right, in 1996 Québec implemented the WTO agreements in accordance with the *Act respecting the implementation of international trade agreements* (Lois du Québec, Chapitre M-35.2).

12. Canada is a member of the WTO since its beginning on January 1, 1995.
13. 19 CFR 351.102(b)(29)(iv)—“The government of a country in which subject merchandise is produced or manufactured or from which such merchandise is exported”. In addition, “Country” is defined under 19 USC 1677(3), as “... a political subdivision ... of a foreign country ...”.
14. It should be noted, however, that the practice in Québec is not to attempt to defend trade cases on its own, but rather to favour the “Team Canada” approach. In this regard, Québec works closely with the Canadian federal government and with other provinces in order to marshal all available resources, share relevant information, coordinate strategies and mobilize allies.
15. C-122-854.
16. USA-CDA-2015-1904-01.
17. World Trade Organization, Dispute Settlement Body, WTO DS505.
18. A-122-857, C-122-858.
19. USA-CDA-2017-1904-02.
20. USA-CDA-2020-10.12-01.
21. World Trade Organization, Dispute Settlement Body, WTO DS533.
22. A-122-859, C-122-860.
23. At approximately the same time as the AD/CVD investigation, Brazil filed complaint DS522: Canada—Measures Concerning Trade in Commercial Aircraft, at the WTO. Québec was not a formal party to this dispute but worked closely with the Canadian federal government in preparing the defence and assisted at the first hearing in Geneva. Brazil withdrew its complaint in 2021.
24. A-122-861, C-122-862.
25. A-122-864, C-122-865.
26. A-122-867, C-122-868.
27. Consol. Court No. 20-0016.
28. 2022-1807.
29. Under section 201 of the Trade Act of 1974.
30. US ITC Investigation No. TA-201-75.
31. Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Cells Safeguard Measures, USA-CDA 2021-31-01.

32. Hydro-Québec is a public utility company, producing and distributing electricity, and is wholly owned by the Government of Québec.
33. US ITC Reference No. 332-574.
34. *Ibid.*
35. FR Doc. 2020-14358. Although the report was published only in 2020, it was filed with the administration on January 18, 2018.
36. World Trade Organization, Dispute Settlement Body, WTO DS550.
37. World Trade Organization, Dispute Settlement Body, WTO DS557.
38. <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/05/joint-statement-by-the-united-states-and-canada-on-section-232-duties-on-steel-and-aluminum.html>.
39. In September 2020, the U.S. briefly reimposed the 10% tariff on certain aluminium imports from Canada, but faced with the threat of renewed retaliatory tariffs, removed them again within 14 days.
40. It must be noted that in the summer and fall of 2017, Canada and the U.S. held high level negotiations aimed at settling the current round of the softwood lumber dispute. However, these negotiations concluded in October 2017 without reaching an agreement.
41. Lumber II was initiated by the U.S. in 1986. Unlike Lumber I in 1982, DOC found that the Canadian industry was subsidized, and the ITC determined that the U.S. industry had suffered injury. Countervailing duties were imposed, but the U.S. and Canada negotiated and concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which governed the lumber trade from 1986 to 1991.
42. In 1996, in Lumber III, the U.S. again imposed countervailing duties against Canadian lumber, and again the two countries negotiated and concluded a settlement, the first Canada/U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement.
43. Lumber IV began in 2001, upon the expiration of the first Softwood Lumber Agreement. After 5 years of litigation, Canada and the U.S. negotiated the second Softwood Lumber Agreement which was in force from 2006 to 2015. A little over 14 months after its expiration, Lumber V began.

44. Taking the softwood lumber industry as an example, the Canadian federal government may negotiate a deal with the U.S. but the implementation of that deal will require the cooperation of provinces, notably in making changes to provincial laws, regulations and policies relating to forest management and provincial programs aimed at helping the forest industry.

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PART III

Migration, Regional Cooperation, Climate,
Energy, and Commercial Interests



The Fantasy of the Québec-U.S. Border

Élisabeth Vallet and Mathilde Bourgeon

Over two centuries of shared border history, the Canada-United States border crossing experience has constantly evolved and been transformed through domestic political practices and international events. The border, as it has in the post-9/11 era, will (and already is) necessarily being redefined in a post-COVID-19 world. Indeed, in 2020, the combination of a pandemic and the lack of health coordination at the continental level placed the border back at the heart of the debate, becoming the national health bulwark at the expense of states' international obligations towards asylum seekers and refugees. The rapid closure of borders, which closed one after the other, trapped many people on the move (tourists, seasonal migrants, snowbirds, refugees, displaced persons) outside their national territory or area of residence, thus underlining the fragility of all mobility.

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This evolution of global borders is decisive for the Québec-American relationship, articulated in recent times around a certain idea of a fluid border demarcation line. In recent times the Québec-US border has changed substantially. This chapter illustrates that not only did the recent pandemic episode confirm an evolution that was initiated on September 11, but that it also paved the way for an inevitable hardening of the Québec-U.S. border.¹

Similar to the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, the current COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent border closures have substantially redefined, once again, our understanding and approach to the concept of “border.” Indeed, in the span of a few weeks, the rapid spread of COVID-19 led to the abrupt closure of borders around the globe. At the height of this closure in March 2020, 91% of the world’s population lived in a country with border restrictions—including 4 out of 10 in countries whose borders were completely closed to non-citizens (Vallet et al., 2021). In North America, closures substantially affected the flows of goods and people, and long-invisible borders (such as between neighborhoods, provinces, communities) materialized, sometimes through more or less impervious checkpoints (Bissonnette and Vallet 2021). Closed to non-essential flows on March 20, 2020, the Canada-U.S. border reopened to non-essential bi-directional flows on November 8, 2021.

However, border practices are sensitive to (geo)political developments (Smith et al. 2018) and to the stickiness of emergency measures: obviously, this specific border (along many others—see Lara-Valencia and Laine 2022) has not quite regained its pre-pandemic fluidity. In the interstitial spaces of borders and borderlands (Newman 2003: 19) the reverberations of the combination of both 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic have been perceptible, but with aspects of their own, thereby reinforcing the view that borderlands are an unstable space (Amilhat Szary and Giraut 2015), and that the border is actually less fixed than it appears (Bauder 2011). Moreover, in a polarized electoral context in Québec, Canada, and the U.S. involving issues of borders and migration, the prevailing discourse has been knitted in a perspective that has de facto incorporated the rebordering effects of the pandemic (Vallet et al. 2020).

The trivialization of the border-walling narrative has grown over the past decade (Vallet 2022), and particularly as democracies have openly embraced this process (spearheaded by former President Donald Trump—David and Vallet 2020). It appears that this has finally made its

way into the Canadian discourse as well. Therefore, the issue of border fencing, frequently invoked south of the Canadian border (see Vallet and Boucher 2019), is now also heard up north in less marginal venues than was previously the case—during the pandemic, for example, fences have even shown up on the U.S.-B.C. border. Paradoxically, however, the very idea of a unique, peaceful, non-militarized U.S.-Canada border (Konrad and Nicol 2008: 79) still seems to prevail while the situation is far more complex than this narrative suggests (Herd Thompson and Randall 2002: 1; Nicol 2015). It is that tension that questions the very idea of what the Canada-U.S. border in a post-pandemic world is. Could a fluid border be more of a fantasy, an element of the past, or does it lie in a category of its own? We examine this question from the specific perspective of the U.S.-Québec border, as it exemplifies most of the issues the entire Canada-United States border is facing, but also raises some more precise questions, that touch on linguistic, and national specificities in electoral times. This chapter argues that not only did the pandemic episode confirm an evolution that was initiated on September 11, but that it also paved the way for an inevitable hardening of this part of the border.

A BORDER LIKE NO OTHER?

The Québec portion of the Canada-U.S. border has remained largely invisible (Di Mascio 2013: 79); research has mostly been limited to the historical aspects of the border (Sanguin 1974; Rodrigue 2003; Manore 2011; Stroup et al. 2015) focusing on flows and Francophone settlement in the region (Brault 1986; Takai 2001; Podea 1950; Bouliane 2013), and to its peculiar topography (Dorion and Lacasse 1974; Slowe 1991; Lasserre et al. 2012).

This border and its study have been gradually redefined by two trends: 9/11 induced a national awareness of the existence of the border demarcation (Andreas 2003; Clarkson 2003), and on the other hand, the impact of the globalization of migration strategies (Dekker and Engbersen 2014; Bourgeon et al. 2017: 150–151). In an English-speaking continent, Québec's border reality was one of double insularity. On the one hand, published studies on the history and geography of the border have long been mainly in French and a bridge between the two solitudes has yet to be consolidated (MacLennan 1945). On the other hand, those on the specificities of the border (and notably its linguistic reality) have often

been limited to the settlement or linguistic acculturation in the area (Hero and Balthazar 1988).

Québec-U.S. cross-border history has indeed been forged by geography, the existence of colonial trade ties, pendular migratory flows (Phaneuf 2013: 121), and constant cross-border family ties (Sadowski-Smith 2005), all of which suggest a definition of a “fluid cross-border community” (Bourgeon et al. 2017). Along this line, the 30 land border crossings between the United States and Québec are mainly located in rural or wooded areas, with the exception of a few twin villages (i.e., Pohénégamook/Estcourt, Rock Island (Stanstead)/Derby Line, Beebe Junction (Stanstead)/Beebe Plain, Akwesasne/Saint Régis). This particular geography has defined the very nature of the Québec-US borderland, through its history, border practices and its folklore.

In an area that remains relatively sparsely populated, the settlement pattern on both sides of the border, as well as population movements that have followed economic and political changes, have contributed to lessening the imprint of the border over time; and simultaneously, both economic interdependence and cultural entrenchment, which are virtually inseparable from the topography of the border region, have helped shape and perpetuate the image of a flexible border (Bourgeon et al. 2017), defined by “petunias, not by a wall” (Bidgood 2018), based on a benevolent dyadic process (see Ramel 2022). However, the specificity of the border does not reside in its flexibility or invisibility but in the impact of its magnification.

A MAGNIFIED BORDER

The very idea of a peaceful and “undefended border” is, indeed, less of a tangible reality—particularly since 9/11 (Herd Thompson and Randall 2002: 1), and more of a fantasy. Although the figures are obviously much lower than those at the southern border, the number of CBP agents (which represent a majority but not the totality of border enforcement agencies) has increased considerably since 2001, from 346 to 2917 in 2019.² This is a fraction of the total CBP agents deployed nationwide but this increase demonstrates a shift in the perception of the northern border, already palpable in political discourses in which the occurrence of the northern border is increasingly frequent (Boucher et al. 2019)—as evidenced by the president-elect allegations and threats in December 2024.

However, the very idea of a peaceful, non-militarized border is a useful image that serves political purposes: this narrative is first and foremost mobilized by Canada to emblemize the state of a sound bilateral relationship, showcasing the density of flows, while minimizing the impact of a political border (Gibbins 2005: 151). Canada is largely dependent on the United States both economically (Gagnon 2021) and militarily (Massie 2007), and the country's ability to manage the tensions that recur in this necessary marriage (Smith 2007) relies on the perpetuation of a necessary and unavoidable union: thus, the discourse of a peaceful border, a soft border, allows for the reinforcement of this inevitable integration.

In that sense, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has been emphasizing the idea that the border cannot be armed and fenced, even in dire times: “We have an enormous border, and we’re not going to start arming or putting fences on it” (Bergeron 2022). Even in the midst of the pandemic, the same narrative has been put forward, when the U.S. government was thinking of deploying troops along the border in March 2020: “Canada has continued to express clearly and forcefully its view that there is no logical reason to militarize our border with the United States and we have been very clear also that such an action would damage our relationship” (Blanchfield 2020).

As directed by POTUS on March 13, 2020 [...] the full power of the federal government is being utilized to combat COVID-19 in the United States [...] Any unknown or unresolved illegal entries into the United States in between Ports of Entry (POE) have the potential to spread infectious disease [...] DHS requests DoD provide up to 1000 personnel in support of CBP operations on the Northern Border [...] the intent of this request is to increase CBP's capacity to protect public health and prevent the spread of COVID-19.³

On the other hand, until recently, a generally dismissive view of the northern border has prevailed in popular imagination the U.S.—a syndrome that also has been perpetuated by academia (Sadowski-Smith 2005). This is complemented by a narrative that depicts the history of smuggling at the Québec-US border in anecdotal and almost folkloric terms (Beck 2001; Busseau 2016), as if the actual border was something that belongs to a magnified past (Vandervalk 2017), where a custom inspector could be tarred and feathered by local traffickers, in a time where borderlands were supposedly self-regulated (Farfan 2009). The

symbolism of the binational Haskell library, the history of Queen Lily's Brothel both seated on the line itself, even the story of the very delimitation of the border (Connors 1972) or in more contemporary terms, the families sitting near the borderline during the pandemic to be with their relatives (Jacobs 2021), can be seen in the same perspective. At the border itself, borderlanders⁴ convey a folkloric narrative on a common borderland disrupted by agents of somewhat distant governments, as well an almost romantic vision of local smugglers and irregular but local border crossers (Beck 2001). It translates concretely in the observation that "before September 11, 2001, more than half the border crossings between the United States and Canada were left unguarded at night, with only rubber cones separating the two countries" (Miller 2013). It has also kept Canada away from the bullseye, relatively insulated from harsher border policies (Papademetriou and Meyers 2001: 36). An event briefly altered this vision when Montreal-based Ahmed Ressay was arrested on his way to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport at Port Angeles, Washington, on December 14, 1999. But the impact was short-lived and Canada clearly succeeded in keeping the border outside of the political realm. Even as border discourses became increasingly securitized after 9/11, Canada "has attempted to resist and reverse the Mexicanization process, making great efforts (with some success) to differentiate and distance Canada from Mexico" (Andreas 2005: 450).

This explains the co-existence between two narratives—of a simultaneously unmilitarized and securitized border—and a more securitized discourse that does not always translate in security measures. In that sense, the border between Canada and the United States embodies a dichotomy between discourses and practices. Unlike the southern border of the United States, where the rhetoric of securitization is accompanied by spectacular security measures (from the deployment of the national guard to the extension of the border wall), the northern border evidences a disconnection between incriminating rhetoric and milder substantive security measures. The last set of security policies implemented at this border dates to the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, and was essentially aimed at reinforcing control at border crossings. Measures such as the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement and the Smart Border Initiative were part of the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Since then, no security measures outside the regular administration of an international border have been put in place.

The lack of strong militarized measures at the Canadian-US border is partly due to the history of this border. Indeed, the creation and institutionalization of the US Border Patrol (USBP) in the 1920s targeted the northern border. At this time, Canada was perceived as a transit country for unwanted immigrants (both European and Chinese), and therefore the patrol's first mandate was to monitor this border (Bavery 2022). Throughout the 1920s, the USBP developed itself and thrived as a para-military institution based on the securitization of immigration. European immigrants were depicted as an economic threat while Chinese were perceived as a racial challenge for the WASP community (*ibid.*). Rapidly, the omnipresence of the patrol in the northern borderlands and their violence towards both immigrants and borderlanders led to protests the organization on the American side of the border. It was only when smuggling started to decline at the US-Canada border and to increase at the US-Mexican boundary, that the Border Patrol missions started to transform in the 1930s. Its attention was redirected to the southern border and, contrary to what happened in the North, the militarized and macho culture of the USBP was (and still is) tolerated in this region (Jones 2022). Even though, from time to time, the Northern border is the subject of a securitized discourse, the strong-handed practices and measures targeting immigration and smuggling of the southern border are nowhere to be seen (Vallet 2025).

The discourse on the need to secure the border has, however, been gaining importance in the Canadian political arena, particularly in Québec, particularly since the beginning of 2017. Indeed, if the discourses of securitization of the Canada-US border emphasize drug trafficking, arms trafficking and irregular migratory flows, it is the latter that particularly attract the attention of politicians and are therefore the object of increased securitization (Bourgeon et al. 2017: 150–151). Thus, we see that the securitization of the Canada-US border is primarily rhetorical in nature and appears limited in the implementation of physical measures. Securitizing this border on the Canadian side relies heavily on the fact that the country, which is not equipped for this, has recently had to deal with tens of thousands of asylum seekers every year. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic created pressure on the Canadian immigration system that led to a backlog; asylum seekers have had to wait more than a year for a work or study visa, leaving them with no choice but to become dependent on state institutions, generating a similar rhetoric to the kind that led to the creation of the USBP in the 1920s (Bavery 2022).

The specificity of this border thus lies in its desecuritized character on the ground, even when it is securitized in rhetoric. One explanation for this distinction between the two land borders of the United States may be the shared history and folklore of Canada and the United States, coupled with a predominant culture of American political life, unlike that shared in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

A GROWING COMPLEXIFICATION OF THE BORDER

The border demarcation is, with regard to the Québec-U.S. portion, much less linear in its eastern part than most softer narratives tend to show. The fact is that even if “this border is often referred to as undefended, it is nonetheless heavily monitored” (Rutkauskas 2017). The Smart Border Initiative is an example of the monitoring going on in the region. While both countries recognize the need for an easy, fluid crossing process—for goods as well as people—the U.S.-Canada border is the site of a powerful surveillance apparatus based on cameras, sensors and local intelligence services. Even though the number of USBP agents on the northern border is significantly lower than in the southern region, the military *habitus* of border protection in the US is present.

However, starting in 2017, when asylum seekers found a safe place to both cross the U.S.-Québec border and bypass the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)—which prevents them from claiming asylum at an official port of entry—the border between Québec and the neighboring states became the subject of harsher narratives. Roxham Road is located between two official ports of entry, only 10 minutes away from the Lacolle, Québec border crossing. Close to Plattsburgh and Montreal, this unofficial border crossing is surrounded by houses and is paved all the way up to the actual border demarcation. In brief, it is a safe way (known by asylum seekers, CBSA and the RCMP) to cross the border between the U.S. into Canada. Therefore, those who choose to cross northward at Roxham Road can report immediately to the Canadian authorities in order to formally claim asylum.

Throughout the twentieth century, political leaders could not help but realize that immigration policy is necessarily transnational and that your neighbour’s regulations dictated which immigrant group could eventually access your territory (Bavery 2022). In that sense, when the United States and Canada signed the STCA in 2002, the intention was to place the “burden” of immigration, and especially asylum seekers, on the first

country of arrival, making one's immigration system less reliable on its neighbor's. However, when asylum seekers discovered the loophole within the STCA, and word spread that it did not apply to irregular entry points, the issue once again took on a transnational focus. On the U.S. side, the Border Patrol makes no effort to intercept the flow of irregular migrants coming to the Québec border, as they do not represent a burden on the American immigration system. On the Canadian side, and especially in Québec, the government has had to learn how to deal with an unexpected immigration influx. Through social media and word of mouth, Roxham Road became over the course of the last few years incredibly popular for asylum-seekers. The Canadian federal government quickly decided to send information pamphlets to U.S. border cities to try to discourage asylum seekers from coming to Roxham Road. This dissuasion strategy, although deployed in collaboration with the Québec government and American authorities, proved out of touch with the reality of asylum seekers who are looking for a safe place, no matter the cost. In March 2023, after six years of record crossing numbers at Roxham Road, the U.S. and Canadian governments decided to renegotiate the STCA. The agreement now applies to the entire border, preventing asylum seekers from crossing the border outside the usual entry points, an offence which would expose them to deportation. Even though this kind of border crossing is legal according to international refugee law, and the fact that individuals entering through Roxham enter the Canadian asylum system as soon as they cross, this phenomenon is securitized. The media and politicians opposing the arrival of refugees in Québec used Roxham Road to question the management of the border by the federal government. The illusion of the efficiency of border closure is a growing narrative on this side of the border, anchored in specific zones of the border such as Roxham Road. This has led to the development of specific debates on those particular irregular ports of entry: some arguing that irregular border crossings would drop in the midst of a border closure (Hopper 2022). Although flows were greatly limited during the closure of the Québec-U.S. border during the COVID-19 pandemic, the surge in the number of entries at Roxham Road following its reopening in November 2021 confirms that the complete closure of the border did not deter refugee movements. The closure only shifted arrivals over time, resulting in a high concentration of arrivals within a few months. The consequences were dramatic for asylum seekers who had to wait in the U.S. for months, with no certainty that their claim would ever be accepted in Canada, and

with the risk of being sent back to their country of origin at any time by U.S. authorities. The impacts were also felt within the Canadian immigration system, which found itself buried in the claims it had not processed during the pandemic due to successive unplanned lockdowns, but also by the huge number of claims that followed the reopening of the border.

The arrival of asylum seekers has become a sensitive topic in Québec: according to the terms of the Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admissions of Aliens, the province is able to choose its immigrants, including resettled refugees on its territory. The only exception is inland asylum claimants—i.e., those entering via Roxham—for whom the Québec government has absolutely no say. The very existence of Roxham Road creates a space in which the province cannot exercise its jurisdiction over immigration, thus justifying and explaining the calls for the repatriation of immigration and border management to the provincial level of government. Québec's exceptionalism when it comes to immigration is precisely why Québec politicians have reacted so strongly. The issue quickly gained momentum and became one of the main elements of the political discourse, both under the Couillard government and its successor François Legault, echoed sometimes clumsily in the mainstream media. For instance, center-leaning Radio-Canada International published an article on its website on October 12, 2022, entitled "Human Smugglers are cashing into Canada's border to move people from Mexico to the US," visibly unaware of the biases of this headline while relying heavily on one type of source—namely, law enforcement.⁵

Several politicians in Québec, firstly Jean-François Lisée (PQ), have suggested the construction of a barrier at this point of entry, as most irregular entries took place in Québec: "Si 91% des entrées irrégulières ont lieu au Québec, c'est parce qu'on a le chemin irrégulier le plus connu au monde. Une clôture sera amplement suffisante. On a plusieurs très bons constructeurs de clôtures au Québec, on a l'embarras du choix."⁶ This idea has been echoed in social media in both English (#fence #roxhamroad) and French (#clôture #cheminroxham), attesting to the platformization of moral panic (Walsh and Hill 2023).

SEALING THE BORDER

The trivialization of the border-walling narrative has grown over the past decade, involving issues of borders and migration. The prevailing discourse has been knitted in a perspective that has de facto incorporated the rebordering effects of the pandemic. The very fact that it is the longest unguarded border in the world backlashed when it came to making it a security issue. The border itself is being constructed as a shadowy space, where complete monitoring is impossible yet should be aimed for. Over the years, this border has been the subject of security fantasies, coming from both sides. On the U.S. side, such was the case in the aftermath of 9/11 when the Canada-U.S. border was closed, and Washington feared a terrorist invasion from the North. At this time, U.S. authorities thought the terrorists had crossed into the country through Canada, and on 9/12, the border was almost completely sealed off, hence the Smart Border Initiative that allowed for greater monitoring while facilitating cross-border flows.

On the Québec side, the description of this border is deeply related to migratory flows and illegal trafficking—which are often depicted as intertwined issues in the media. The rise in asylum seekers crossing from the U.S. paved the way for a mediatization of the border. In Québec, politicians have called for the walling of Roxham Road, and the federal government has implemented a strategy of deterrence in the U.S. by trying to discourage asylum seekers from crossing outside the regular ports of entry—knowing very well that they could not claim asylum at the regular ports of entry under the very terms of the STCA. For instance, shortly after he was appointed Minister of Immigration, Francisation and Integration of the government of Québec, Jean Boulet tweeted, on December 10, 2021, that the federal government should take up its responsibilities and shutter Roxham Road: “Le gouvernement fédéral doit prendre ses responsabilités. Il faut fermer le chemin #Roxham. Nous devons tous nous mobiliser devant la remontée des cas de #COVID19 #Omicron afin de ne pas surcharger notre système de santé! #polqc.”

Cartographic narratives go along the same lines, where cartographic semiology is clearly designed to convey a specific message (van Houtum and Bueno Lacy 2019), as illustrated in a map published by the *Journal de Montréal* on February 13, 2023, titled “Where the Roxham Road migrants are coming from;” it is essentially red and black, featuring only

numbers, in large letters, attached to the names (in a smaller font) of the countries from which the migrants originate.⁷ The graphic tone is both apocalyptic and overwhelming.

And then again, as the COVID-19 pandemic made its way in North America, the border was defined as a weakness in the “fight” against the spread of coronavirus (Vallet et al. 2021). Following a path similar to what the U.S. had done with the implementation of Title 42, Canada closed Roxham Road—except for unaccompanied minors and people who had family in the country—forcing asylum seekers to wait in the borderlands until the border would reopen... 18 months later.

Calls for additional border fencing have come into play. As early as March 2011, a draft report from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection called for a scenario of “selective fencing” of the international boundary between the two countries—a recommendation dismissed the following year (USCBP 2012). Things quickly changed in the midst of the nomination of Donald Trump as the Republican presidential candidate in the summer of 2015, contributing a renewed rhetoric and gradual normalization on the need for a border fence (Jacobs 2015; *The Economist* 2017; Demata 2023: 5–6). The idea of physical barriers made a comeback in a transitional document at the end of 2016, showing potential fence locations over a large portion of the Québec-U.S. border blackened on a map. This perspective was reiterated in a May 2018 declassified internal publication on the Northern Border Surveillance Technology and Tactical Infrastructure, where one scenario envisioned the construction and erection of 179.5 miles of primary pedestrian fencing, and 266 miles of vehicle fencing—a much more substantial walling of the border than the current road blocks than can currently be seen on the line (Vallet and Boucher 2019).

In recent years, voices advocating increased fencing have emerged during electoral campaigns, be it in Québec (Radio-Canada 2018) or the U.S. (as recently as the fall 2023—RCI 2023). Irregular immigration and the management of the Québec-US border are intrinsically linked, at least in the discourse of Québec politicians. Because immigration is more visible than other border management issues, and because it is linked to other key elements central to Québec’s electoral context—notably the protection of the French language—it has become an ideal source of border securitization. During the 2022 Québec election campaign, François Legault and immigration minister Jean Boulet did not hesitate

to amalgamate immigration and violence in Québec, refusing to apologize afterwards. These statements set the tone for the entire political debate on this issue, including leading Conservative Party leader Éric Duhaime to advocate the building of an actual wall on the Québec-US border to block the arrival of asylum seekers. This legitimization of an anti-immigration discourse stems from a political culture that has taken hold since the arrival of asylum seekers at Roxham Road in 2017. In 2022, faced with a surge in the number of asylum applications and the overflow of Québec reception agencies and the slowdown of the federal asylum system, François Legault repeatedly asked the federal government to close Roxham Road, but Justin Trudeau refused. Thus, the securitization of this border seems to be more of a concern at the provincial level and in rhetoric, while the federal government is taking a more moderate approach to the issue.

Fencing the Québec-American border, which has proponents in both communities, could alter substantially the very nature of the border and the borderlands as it would reduce the narratives to one. How much of this process will affect the twin villages of Québec remains to be assessed. The thickening of the border is, however, already perceptible through added checkpoints in the northern states, and has already had an impact on flows and borderlanders' behaviors. At times, the depiction of this border as a peaceful junction between two allied countries, and speeches calling for increased security measures might seem like a dichotomy. Throughout the history of this border, both narratives coexisted and reinforced each other (Bourgeon et al. 2017). Indeed, because this border is the subject of security issues, it should logically remain a place of international cooperation. Even more so in places where borderlands have operated—and still do in some ways—as integrated spaces, as we can see along the Québec border (i.e. with the maple industry). Although borderlands seem to have adjusted to exogenous events that have impacted the border in recent times, they could show less and less elasticity as the border hardens and thickens.

CONCLUSION

When some hypothesize a slowbalization, a deceleration of globalization (Wang and Sun 2021), or a form of re-globalization (Madhok 2021), others postulate the advent of a “machine-society with totalitarian tendencies” (Amiech 2021). The fact is that the process of rapid

closure of territories is not an anomaly of the global world. Indeed, in the wake of September 11, 2001, the consubstantiality of borders and globalization has become apparent: borders are what define the terms of the global world. Before September 11, the trend had been towards the creation of regional groupings free of barriers, reinforced on the outside (the Schengen area and Fortress Europe, NAFTA and Fortress America): borders, although real and tangible, were then peripheral to the predominant discourse in political science. The turn of the millennium has been marked by a caesura—September 11, when borders hardened and expanded inward and outward: they became introverted within the territory with the densification of internal controls and checkpoints and extroverted outside national territory in places far from the borders where border controls are carried out. It is their sealing, opening and closing that determine the speed of cross-border exchanges (whether financial, human, merchandise etc.). Thus, borders can be wide open to capital, closed to certain human migrations, while open to selected mobilities—as for example during the COVID-19 pandemic, to essential workers. In addition, globalization is far from uniform: it does not define flows in a homogeneous way and there are significant geographic variations. Rapid and dense in some places, or for certain types of flows, global movements may be slow or almost non-existent in others. Thus, borders, which are now mobile, reticular and complex, delimit exceptional spaces that are the bearers of differential inclusion (Kasperek 2016): from then on, it is (im)mobilities that define the nature, the density and the drifts of globalization.

These mobilities and immobilities have embodied the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mobility was imposed on essential workers (e.g. care workers in homes for the elderly, slaughterhouse workers), facilitated for health care workers, whereas immobility could be chosen by the wealthier and those who could work remotely during the pandemic. Mobilities were thus profoundly altered (Adey et al. 2021): some were seen as carrying a health threat (Lin and Yeoh 2021), while others were defined through their essentiality. Moreover, the management of the pandemic saw the mobilization of a bellicose language articulated around metaphors related to war and the military (Demata and Vallet 2021), aiming to convey the urgency of the situation and to facilitate the mobilization of resources (Brencio 2020; Varma 2020). This semantic choice has defined national borders as the national lines of defense against the virus, restoring border lines in their function as a tool for defining

sovereignty. This is how some states have deployed military forces at their national borders, a sort of vain staging of the fight against the spread of the virus, based on the amalgamation of two securitization processes, one sanitary and the other border-related, through a discursive mechanism that defines the virus as a foreign phenomenon, a threat coming from outside (Nossem 2020), in a similar manner to the way in which the AH1N1 influenza has been identified in 1918 (as the “Spanish flu”—Shafer 2020). Thus, COVID-19 was presented as a national security threat, not a global issue, which partly explains the weakness of coordination at the international level. Moreover, the fight against this “enemy” from elsewhere, which could jeopardize social structures and health systems, was used to legitimize the implementation of exceptional policies, a permanent state of emergency throughout the world (Amiech 2021; Garrett and Sementelli 2023).

The pandemic has come to superimpose itself on a process of border manipulation rooted for several decades in the anxieties of globalization (Slack et al. 2016; Simmons and Shaffer 2023), where mobility is seen as a threat (Chebel d’Appollinia 2012) and trade routes as pandemic vectors (Roberts 2020: 9). The state of emergency, already perceptible on the periphery of many states (see Garrett 2020), has not only become more entrenched, but has also spread beyond the border areas like an oil spill. On the one hand, we have seen “the revival of borders that have been long disregarded or backgrounded (...or the) creation of new borders where they previously had not been meaningfully present” (Radil et al. 2021). On the other hands borders, thus multiplied into networks, have stretched far beyond national peripheral spaces (Scott 2020: 7), becoming places of increased regulation—“health regulation of population mobilities, regulation of capital inflows so as not to fall into economic dependence, regulation of goods inflows so that competition is not unfair, regulation to ensure industrial sovereignty, especially of health products” (Dumont 2020)—pointing toward a new multi-layered global border regime which is being reproduced.

In conclusion, it seems that there is no lack of desire for securitization in Québec politics. On the contrary, for more than five years now, the securitization discourse has been omnipresent, strongly linked to immigration, and an opportunity for the province to criticize the federal inaction. In this sense, one might wonder if the absence of measures in line with this process of securitization of the Québec-US border stems

from a shared border history and culture, or rather from the contrasts between provincial and federal perceptions of the border.

NOTES

1. This chapter draws on research supported by *Borders in Globalization*, a partnership grant funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).
2. The last detailed official figure dates back to 2019, when the breakdown between the two borders was last specified in official documents—however it seems that the numbers have not significantly varied since.
3. Request for Department of Defense Assistance in Support of US Customs and Border Protection on the Northern and Southwest Borders to Prevent the Spread of the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Maintain Public Health. Memorandum from Executive Secretary, US DHS to Executive Secretary US Department of Defense. Accessible at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/border-coronavirus-military-immigration/>.
4. The word “Borderlander” is a neologism, coined in the field of Border Studies—as a quick survey of 817 articles published in the *Journal of Borderland Studies* shows.
5. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/1924035/human-smugglers-are-cashing-into-canadas-border-to-move-people-from-mexico-to-the-u-s->.
6. <https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/526148/demandeurs-d-asile-lisee-veut-une-cloture-pour-bloquer-le-chemin-roxham>.
7. “D’où viennent les migrants du chemin Roxham,” *Journal de Montréal*, February 13, 2023. <https://www.journaldemontreal.com/2023/02/13/dou-viennent-les-migrants-du-chemin-roxham>.

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Adapting to Distinct Societies: Québec Policy and Paradiplomacy in Migration

Neal Carter

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2022, Republican governors of states such as Texas and Florida were transporting migrants to states with Democratic governors such as Massachusetts. At the same time, thousands of migrants were making their way to northern New York in order to cross the border into Québec, Canada without going through the official border crossings. As in other parts of the world, debate rages in Québec and the United States over the tensions caused by national jurisdiction over international issues that have disparate regional effects.

Migration is increasingly important. Canada and the United States both face challenges of aging populations, rapidly shifting ethnic diversity, and regionally diverse economic and social pressures of migration. Any investigation of such issues should be placed in a larger context of demographics, nation building, federalism, and paradiplomacy. Regional

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differences of migration flows and opposing visions of what society should look like have produced divergent migration and integration strategies in Canada, Québec, and the United States. Canada and Québec share constitutional responsibility for immigration, which makes it an excellent case study for paradiplomacy.

This chapter examines Québec's efforts surrounding migration and the construction of its society, emphasizing both the dynamics of the US-Québec relationship and the contrast between Québec and the rest of Canada. Discussion of migration between Québec and the United States must be couched in an understanding of Québec's historical attempts to shape its society within the international and demographic context. Québec's distinctiveness strains traditional notions of sovereignty and national control of migration. To set the stage, this chapter first reviews the concept of paradiplomacy and its identity-focused variant. It then summarizes Québec's history of migration. Next, it examines ways that identity politics in Québec differs from the rest of Canada, highlighting several ways in which Québec has attempted to shape its distinct society. The argument then turns to federalism and constitutional law as they simultaneously enable and restrict Québec's ability to pursue its own immigration strategy. This chapter uses this framework to examine current considerations regarding migration and refugees, especially regarding the United States. This case shows how understanding paradiplomacy requires sensitivity to the multiple levels of local, regional, national, and international factors affecting a policy domain.

Québec is using all the tools at its disposal to regulate its society in the challenging circumstances of decreased birthrates and increased migration from non-francophone areas, but significant constitutional constraints limit its ability to pursue direct paradiplomacy regarding migration. At the same time, Canada and the United States are both struggling to cope with regional disparities caused by national policies over migration. This tension is likely to increase demands for increased paradiplomacy in several federations, including Canada and the United States.

PARADIPLMACY

Migration spans individual, regional, national, and international levels of analysis. Movements of populations can have drastic effects on the composition and self-conception of local communities. Migration poses significant challenges for Canada and Québec, as federalism, international

law, and constitutional division of powers intersect to constrain action, providing an excellent domain for the exercise of paradiplomacy.

Paradiplomacy refers to “direct and, in various instances, autonomous involvement [of substate actors such as provinces] in external relations activities” (Soldatos 1990, cited in Paquin 2018; Paquin 2020). Traditional diplomacy is conducted among sovereign states, who are expected to behave as unitary actors with control over their own territory. Paradiplomacy challenges this traditional view of sovereignty and international relations by allowing parts of countries to take an active role in international relations. This is especially important for federal states, which divide areas of responsibility among the levels of government. The ways in which they assign these responsibilities can have tremendous implications (see Paquin 2010). Some substate actors seek to preserve or promote a particular view of their society. The emphasis on social conditions and characteristics that justify a paradiplomacy approach characterizes identity paradiplomacy (Paquin 2018). Canadian provinces’ use of paradiplomacy has expanded in recent years, especially with regional organizations spanning the US-Canada border (Vengroff and Rich 2006).

The shift in attitudes toward provincial involvement in international relations is reflected quite clearly in the difference between current activity and Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s 1968 comment that “There are no half-countries!” in response to early French and Gabonese invitations to include Québec (and not Canada) in developing what is now the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) (see Donaghy and Carter 2006). Canada, Québec, and New Brunswick are now each separately considered member governments of the OIF, with Ontario accorded observer status (Organisation internationale de la francophonie 2022). While Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau insisted that Canada should be represented only by Ottawa, the situation has clearly changed.

Québec currently has thirty-three missions abroad, including nine in the United States (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2021). Québec’s *délégation générale* is in New York City, with *délégations* in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, *bureaux* in Huston and Washington, D.C., and *antennes* in Philadelphia and Silicon Valley. The placement of these missions indicates the importance for Québec of economic relations. The *Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie* (MRIF) emphasizes economic and cultural outreach. Its prime goal is to promote Québec’s interests, culture, values,

and identity on the international scene. Secondly, it centers its international relations on Québec's economic development (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2020).

In its 2019 vision statement, MRIF enumerated five priority areas: (1) investments and exports; (2) immigration and recruitment of workforce; (3) innovation; (4) education and youth; and (5) climate change and sustainable economic development (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2019). MRIF views migration to be essential, noting that the portion of world population housed in the Americas and Europe has shrunk from 35% in 1950 to about 20% in 2019. Compounding this problem is the aging population of Québec, with a declining percentage of residents of working age. Québec clearly recognizes the difficulties involved with balancing the need for robust working population with the desire to maintain a French-speaking community (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2019).

Québec's "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s emphasized taking advantage of federalism to expand the province's ability to shape Québec's economic, social, and cultural society. This included increasing Québec's international activity. Since 1964, Québec has entered into 1127 international agreements, multinational conventions or accords, including Canadian accords. Of those, only four fall into the "Population" sector, with France being the most common partner (Government of Québec 2022b). While Québec's government is not entering directly into agreements on immigration, it is working with the Canadian government to affect migration. Québec takes an active role in the recruitment and selection of migrants, often dealing directly with individuals, but it faces significant restrictions largely due to Canadian constitutional arrangements.

FEDERALISM AND MIGRATION

Section 95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* gave the Canadian Parliament and provincial legislatures concurrent powers, stating:

In each Province the Legislature may make Laws in relation to Agriculture in the Province, and to Immigration into the Province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from Time to Time make Laws in relation to Agriculture in all or any of the Provinces, and to Immigration into all or any of the Provinces; and any Law of the Legislature of a Province relative to Agriculture or to Immigration shall have effect in

and for the Province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.

This link between agriculture and immigration began even before confederation. In the colony of Canada, immigration was placed under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Agriculture which began sending emigration agents overseas in 1854 (Hilliker 1990). With the Quiet Revolution's increased emphasis on using provincial powers to engage in nation-building, Québec established its own department of immigration in 1968. Canada and Québec subsequently entered into several agreements concerning how to handle these concurrent powers over immigration. The 1971 Lang/Cloutier agreement allowed Québec representatives to operate in Canadian embassies. The 1975 Andras/Bienvenue accord permitted Québec to conduct interviews and make recommendations to visa officers. In 1978, the Cullen/Couture agreement enabled Québec to define its own immigrant selection criteria (see Joyal 1994). These agreements set the pattern of cooperation and coordination.

The 1991 Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, (also known as the Gagnon-Tremblay/McDougall Accord) states that its goal is to “provide Québec with new means to preserve its demographic importance in Canada, and to ensure the integration of immigrants in Québec in a manner that respects the distinct identity of Québec” (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 1991). Under this agreement, Canada remains responsible for establishing the national categories, criteria, and numbers for immigration. The share of immigrants and refugees admitted to Québec is expected to be proportional to Québec's share of Canada's population but could exceed that mark by as much as five percent. Québec could thus qualify for about 27.5% of immigrants or about 70,000 immigrants (calculated from Statista 2022; Statistics Canada 2022b). Québec's goal for 2022 was only 52,500 immigrants, plus an extra 18,000 to make up for the Covid shortfall (Miekus 2021). As discussed below, Québec has consistently been under their limit, thereby further reducing its portion of the Canadian population and subsequently its share of seats in Parliament.

Québec is solely responsible for selecting some categories of immigrants destined for Québec, provided they are “not in an inadmissible class under the law of Canada.” For these categories, Canada cannot allow anyone who does not hold a Québec Selection Certificate to immigrate directly to Québec. Different paths include the Québec

Skilled Worker Program, the Québec Experience Program, the Québec Investor Program, the Québec Entrepreneur Program, and the Québec Self-Employed Worker Program (Canadim 2022). Canada retains sole responsibility for the *admission* of immigrants. Thus, the main issue for Québec is selection criteria for those who are entering primarily under the economic categories. Canada retains sole responsibility for establishing selection criteria for family class immigrants. Québec and Canada may establish their own criteria for the assisted relative class, and immigrants may be admitted if they meet either Québec's or Canada's criteria, unless they are deemed to be in an inadmissible class.

Québec and Canada share responsibilities for refugees seeking entrance to Canada. Canada determines who qualifies as a refugee, based on the *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Québec may establish selection criteria for those seeking Québec residency, provided they meet the federal requirements. If the person seeking asylum is already in Québec, then Québec's consent is not required. That is, the person does not need to meet Québec's selection criteria to stay in Québec as an asylum seeker. As discussed below, this is a source of contention exacerbated by the thousands of asylum seekers crossing the New York—Québec border irregularly.

Québec's consent is required for most foreign students, temporary foreign workers, and medical patients seeking temporary admittance into Québec. Further, any sponsorship or assistance or financial criteria established for family or assisted relative classes fall under the responsibility of Québec.

Canada has withdrawn from providing services of reception and linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residents in Québec. Canada also agreed to provide compensation to Québec for the administration of these programs. Immigration services in Québec are provided freely to immigrants. *Accompagnement Québec* provides individualized plans to help immigrants with settlement, community life, francization, and employment (Ministère de l'Immigration 2022).

The *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* (MIFI) provides services throughout the process, from recruitment to integration. As opposed to Ontario's multicultural approach that encourages the retention of cultural distinctions, Québec focuses on integration, emphasizing the importance of using French as the communal language. Québec's government does its best to increase immigrants' competency

in French and quickly transition its interactions with immigrants from multilingual to French only.

This system of institutional responsibilities and policies has been developed over time due to demographic factors and the social effects of those changes. Québec's strategies have adapted to social and demographic changes.

QUÉBEC'S HISTORY OF MIGRATION

When New France was ceded to Great Britain in 1763, its population was only around 65,000 non-indigenous people (Carrothers 1948). Soon after, Scots, American Loyalists, and Irish immigrated to Québec. By the mid-1800s, Anglophones (those whose native language is English) accounted for about one-quarter of Québec's population, but have since dropped below 10% (Bélanger 1999a). From 1840 to 1930, the most intense period in terms of Québec-US migration, many more Québécois and Canadians moved to the United States than vice-versa. During this period, net migration from Québec to the US was about 925,000 people, out of the estimated 2,800,000 net migration from Canada (Lavoie 1979). Québec accounted for 29–47% of Canadian emigration to the US, depending on the decade (Bélanger 1999b). Québec was losing a disproportionate number of migrants to the United States, compared to the rest of Canada. Most Québec emigrants settled in New England and New York. Many of the border communities saw the boundary between the two countries as very porous.

In the 1920s, 949,286 people migrated from Canada to the US and 238,632 traveled in the opposite direction. These numbers dropped in the 1930s to 162,703 and 96,311 respectively. Migration slowed significantly in the 1940s due to World War II and subsequent legal restrictions on migration. The numbers declined even further during the 1950s before rebounding in the 1960s (US Bureau of the Census 1990).

Québec has consistently attracted lower net migration than would be necessary to sustain its proportion of the overall Canadian population. Indeed, before 1971, Québec sometimes lost more people internationally than it gained. As shown in Table 9.1, Québec has had consistently positive net migration since 1970. In the five most recent decades, Québec has received between a low of 4.9% of total Canadian net migration in 1971 and a high of 24.8% in 1986. Québec has averaged under 17.5% of Canada's net international migration (these figures are calculated

Table 9.1 Net migration in Canada and Québec, 1970–2021

<i>Time</i>	<i>Canada net migration</i>	<i>Québec net migration</i>	<i>Québec's % of Canadian</i>
1970–1979	759,378	97,656	12.9
1980–1989	764,859	143,033	18.7
1990–1999	1,722,588	280,101	16.3
2000–2009	1,840,751	338,869	18.4
2010–2019	2,227,645	419,593	18.8
2020–2021	515,212	64,919	12.6

Compiled from Statistics Canada (2022)

from quarterly data provided in Statistics Canada (2022). Immigration has consistently reduced Québec's portion of the Canadian population. Despite its desire to use immigration to maintain or augment its share of the population, as well as the Canadian government's commitment to allow Québec to recruit up to 5% more immigrants than its current population would warrant (thus being entitled to about 27.5% of immigrants), Québec has garnered less than 20% of net migration since 2015, and less than 15% since 2019. This dramatic gap is portrayed in Fig. 9.1. The gap between Canada's and Québec's migration numbers is reflected in their relations with the US and other key countries.

RECENT US-CANADA AND US-QUÉBEC MIGRATION IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

Currently, Canada has about 8,050,000 immigrants, counting for about 21% of its population. The United States is host to 50,600,000 immigrants—15% of its population (International Organization for Migration 2022). Migration produces significant provincial and state disparities that affect current political discourse.

In 2016, about 783,000 Canadians were living in the US, comprising less than 2% of immigrants in the US (Alperin and Batalova 2018). At that time, about 254,000 Americans were living in Canada—about 3.5% of all immigrants in Canada. Only about 10% of the American immigrants in Canada live in Québec (Statistics Canada 2017a). Despite the many jokes about fleeing across the border during each election season, relatively few people actually follow through with their threats.

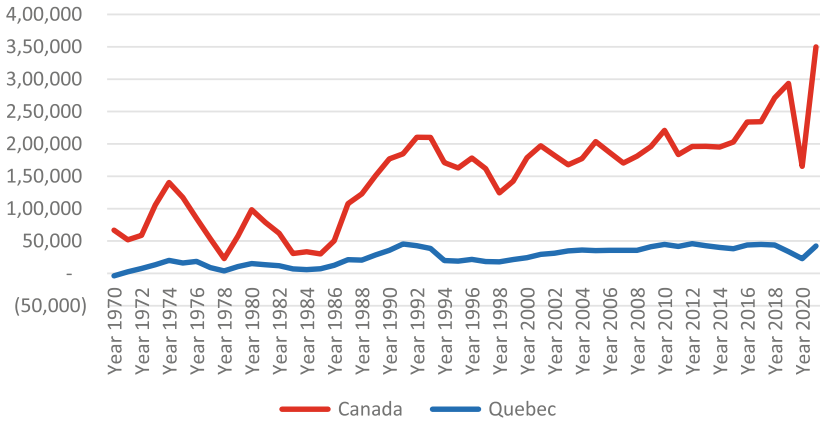


Fig. 9.1 Net migration in Québec and Canada, 1970–2021 (Compiled from Statistics Canada [2022](#))

In a comparative perspective, the Canada-US and Québec US relationships are important, but not dominant. Between 2016 and 2020, China and France were the largest sources of immigrants to Québec, accounting for 9.2% and 8.4% of the 222,558 migrants of that time. The United States was ranked as the 14th country of origin, accounting for 3803 people, or 1.7% of the total. In the year 2000, France (11.8%), Algeria (6.9%), and Morocco (6.5%) were the top sources of immigration to Québec, with the US in 13th place with 583 (1.8%) immigrants. Five of the top fifteen countries of origin of immigrants to France are members of *La Francophonie*, and others had French connections (Institut de la statistique du Québec [2022](#)).

The relatively low levels of US-Canada and US-Québec migration may be partially due to the ability to cross the border for work. There could be room for improvement in the emphasis that Québec places on seeking immigrants from the US. In addition to the goal of recruiting a quality workforce, Québec also desires to maintain its French culture, which may work at cross-purposes with its economic development goals, especially considering potential workers from English speaking countries.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND IDENTITY IN QUÉBEC POLITICS

Demographics have been a concern for Québec since the Conquest. As immigration from France dried up after the colony was ceded to the English, Québec had little hope of renewing the French speaking population from abroad. With the support of the Catholic Church, the “revenge of the cradle,” strategy advocated large families. In some ways, the strategy was too successful, tripling Québec’s population between 1900 and 1960 (“The Cradle’s Costly Revenge in Québec” 2009). While family size was large, economic opportunities for francophones remained limited, producing the large net emigration figures discussed above, with many moving to New England and New York to find employment.

The Quiet Revolution (starting around 1960) marked a shift in strategy for French Canadians living in Québec. Recognizing the economic, educational, and social disadvantages of being francophone even in Québec, Québec provincial governments moved their focus to crafting and re-shaping a “distinct society” in which French could flourish. This strategy included shifting self-identification from “*Canadien-français*” to “*Québécois*,” moving away from Catholicism to secularism, regulating language use, employing provincial powers to intervene in the economy, and shifting education and health care into the provincial (as opposed to private) realm of responsibility (see Cairns 1983, 1991; Russell 1992; Byrne and Carter 1996; Carter 1999). The meaning of “distinct society” has shifted over time. Québec has generally accepted the Anglophone minority, focusing attention on the assimilation (or francization) of allophones (those whose first language is something other than English or French). Reforms during the Quiet Revolution sought to strengthen the position of French and increase the economic well-being of francophones. Québec faces a difficult position of trying to maintain its demographic strength in proportion to the rest of Canada when fertility rates have dropped. The “revenge of the cradle” strategy was abandoned during the Quiet Revolution. Québec’s fertility rate dropped to 1.36 (average lifetime births for women aged 15–49) by the mid-1980s, which is far below the 2.1 rate needed to maintain population stability in the absence of migration (“The Cradle’s Costly Revenge in Québec” 2009). In Canada, only Nunavut has a fertility rate above the population stability level. Québec’s current rate of 1.52 places it as the province with the third highest rate in Canada, behind Saskatchewan (1.78) and Manitoba (1.61) (see Cox 2022). The yearly birthrate in Québec dropped from 40.6 births

per 1000 women in 1909 to a low of 9.7 per 1000 women in 2002 (Rocha 2015). Québec has tried, with limited and temporary success, cash rewards and childcare subsidies to increase the fertility rate. Québec's rate of demographic increase, sustained by immigration, has consistently fallen below that of Canada as a whole (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2021, 15). Québec's share of Canada's population decreased from 27.9% in 1971 to 22.5% in 2021 (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2021, 24).

The low birthrates and immigration produce important changes in the ethnic demographics of Québec. In 1980, 86.6% of births in Québec had both parents born in Canada. By 2020, that figure had dropped to 67.2%. Babies with both parents born outside Québec increased from 7.3% in 1980 to 21.1% in 2020 (Institut de la statistique du Québec 2021, 46). Québec's population, according to the 2021 Census, was 8,501,833—a 4.1% increase since 2016. Canada's population grew 5.2% in the same period, reaching 36,991,981 (Statistics Canada 2017a, 2022a). With a fertility rate lower than that required for demographic stability, Québec must focus on immigration. However, immigration necessarily poses challenges to the maintenance of Québec's distinct society. This tension indicates that Québec should seek more control over, and involvement in, immigration policy.

Given that immigration will continue to alter the ethnic demographics in Québec, the government seeks to support linguistic and cultural stability. Québec desires to maintain its proportion of francophones. As of 2016, about 85.4% of Québécois were francophone, while about 22.8% of all Canadians were francophone (Government of Canada 2019). According to the 2011 Census of Population, about 87% of people in Québec claimed to speak French at home, while only 82.5% indicated that French is the language they use most often (Statistics Canada 2015). By 2021, only 76.6% of Québécois said French was the language spoken most often at home while 10.3% chose English (Statistics Canada 2022a). In Québec, about 92% of the population claims to know French, while just over half claim to know English (Statistics Canada 2022a). There has been only a slight decline since 1970 in the percentage of francophones, but the proportion of anglophones has shrunk while the percentage of allophones increased (Castonguay 2011). While the position of the French language appears stable in Québec, Québec's share of the Canadian population is in decline, as is the percentage of children born to francophone Québécois. If francophone Québécois wish to maintain their

position within Canada, they must look to immigration and integration, which has a complicated constitutional arrangement in Canada.

Immigration poses significant challenges to the host. Newcomers often have different languages and customs. For Québec, striving to maintain its distinctiveness as an island of French in a sea of English, the challenges are compounded. Before the Quiet Revolution, it made sense for most immigrants to use English even in Québec. Schools were organized based on religion, so most French schools were Catholic. Other religions tended to educate children in English. Economic disparities, with English dominating the business world, also worked against francization. Reacting to these challenges, Québec governments of various parties have passed laws dealing with education, language, and culture in order to shape Québec society. Much of this nation-building can be seen as action to offset the challenges of migration (this section relies primarily on Busque 2022).

Attention to promoting the use of French increased in the 1960s. The *Office de la langue française* was created in 1961, reflecting Liberal Premier Jean Lesage's belief that "*bien parler, c'est se respecter*" by cooperating with France to increase the quality of French used in Québec. The government increased its interactions and exchange programs with France during the 1960s. In 1969, the National Assembly passed Bill 63, *Act to Promote the French Language*, which continued to allow parents to choose the language of instruction for their children but required a working knowledge of French for all students.

Québec continued to strengthen the role of French in Québec society. Bill 22, the *Official Languages Act*, was passed in 1974 to establish French as the official language of Québec and to limit access to English education in Québec. In 1977, The *Parti Québécois* government's Bill 101 *Chartre de la langue française* extended requirements to use French in business, legislation, and government. It also limited attendance in English schools to students whose parents had been educated in English in Québec, although this provision was expanded to parents educated in English in Canada after a Supreme Court decision. Bill 101 was intended to increase the francization of allophones. This provision may pose a significant barrier to American immigrants, as they would not be able to access English education in Québec but could do so in other provinces. Bill 101 also significantly restricted the use of any languages other than French on signage, leading to debate and criticism of the "language police." In 1988 the Supreme Court of Canada heard *Ford v. Québec*, striking down sections in Bill 101 that required exclusive use of French

in signage. The Liberal-controlled National Assembly responded quickly with *Bill 178*, invoking the Notwithstanding Clause to prevent judicial review of its requirement for signs to be in French, with some limited exceptions. Outrage in the rest of Canada over the Québec government's employment of the Notwithstanding Clause to restrict the use of English was critical in the failure to ratify the Meech Lake Accord as an amendment to the Constitution. Bill 86 replaced Bill 178 in 1993, allowing bilingual signs if French is prominent.

Québec's language policy appears to be working. The courts have supported Québec's right to protect the French language. The number of French speakers is increasing, although the percentage of the population that has French as a first language is slipping. The percentage of people in Québec who are proficient in French appears to be stable.

Despite the general success in meeting the linguistic challenge of migration in Québec, significant cultural challenges remain. Considerable debate has emerged over the question of accommodating various religious practices. Immigration has increased the percentage of Muslims in Québec, but the level of religiosity of Catholics has decreased. Québec has faced questions of how to deal with demands for religious accommodation.

Debate surrounding "reasonable accommodation" started in the 1980s as the Supreme Court dealt with legal challenges based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Constitution Act, 1982), but continued to intensify in the 2000s with cases about accommodating diverse groups such as Sikhs and Hasidic Jews. Premier Jean Charest established the Bouchard-Taylor commission on reasonable accommodation in 2007. In 2013, the *Parti Québécois* government proposed a *Chartre des valeurs Québécoises* that would have done much to establish *laïcité* (strict adherence to a separation of religion and governance) in Québec, but was met with significant opposition (Dagenais 2014). In 2017, Philippe Couillard's Liberal government passed Bill 62, moving more fully toward *laïcité* by limiting the use of religious symbols such as the niqab and turban while engaging in the delivery of public services (see Narain 2018). In 2019 François Legault's *Coalition Avenir Québec* (CAQ) passed Bill 21, the *Loi sur la laïcité de l'Etat* establishing Québec as a secular state, banning the use of religious symbols and clothing by specific public employees, including teachers and legislators. The CAQ continued their nation-building efforts. Bill 96 (2022) established French as the Québec

government's exclusive language of communication, with limited exceptions such as health care and the courts. Bill 96 also affected language use in businesses in Québec, limited attendance at anglophone CEGEPs to 17.5% of student population and restricted government communication with immigrants in languages other than French to six months (Busque 2022).

These ongoing changes in the law indicate the great care that Québec governments of all political shades have taken to shape Québec's society as it evolves economically and socially. In an effort to promote social unity, the CAQ government has opted for immigration that is lower than would safeguard Québec's percentage of the Canadian population despite relatively high demand for new workers (see Lampert 2022).

The tensions between social cohesion, economic prosperity, and migration provide an analytical thread for the study of Québec's history. These distinctions can be further shown in an analysis of the differences between Québec and Canada as a whole.

DIFFERENCES IN MIGRATION: QUÉBEC COMPARED TO CANADA AS A WHOLE

Some key differences in the effects of immigration policy are apparent in the differences between Québec and Ontario or Canada as a whole. According to the 2016 Census, about 7,540,000 people living in Canada were born outside the country. Of these, about 1,091,000 were in Québec and 3,852,000 resided in Ontario (Statistics Canada 2017b).

Table 9.2 compares the number of immigrants living in Québec and Canada as a whole in 2016. In addition to the overall number of immigrants, the figure details immigrants coming from the USA, France, and China. All three are significant sources of migrants, although there is clearly a difference in the attractiveness of Québec for these immigrants. Note that since migrants are free to move within Canada, there is no way to tell which province was the original destination. There may also be migrants who returned to their country of origin or continued to a third country.

Québec is host to less than 15% of immigrants living in Canada. As stated above, this means that immigration is reducing their demographic power in the Canadian federation, reducing their weight in Parliament. Québec has over 15% of those who immigrated after 2000, perhaps indicating somewhat better targeting of potential immigrants. Although

Table 9.2 Number of immigrants living in Québec and Canada, 2016, by origin

<i>Residence</i>	<i>World</i>		<i>USA</i>		<i>France</i>		<i>China</i>	
	<i>Québec</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Québec</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Québec</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Québec</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Before 1980	223,590 (12.2%)	1,836,775	9755 (9.4%)	103,825	19,105 (65.3%)	29,255	2510 (5.0%)	50,030
1980–1990	142,310 (14.0%)	1,019,695	3305 (10.4%)	31,650	6245 (73.3%)	8635	3370 (5.9%)	57,525
1991–2000	187,835 (12.6%)	1,486,445	3165 (11.0%)	28,655	12,395 (80.2%)	15,455	10,975 (7.4%)	148,960
2001–2005	140,165 (15.1%)	928,850	2155 (9.3%)	23,095	10,025 (83.8%)	11,965	12,560 (8.9%)	140,605
2006–2010	182,105 (17.2%)	1,056,055	3585 (10.7%)	33,440	13,425 (83.4%)	16,105	9450 (7.7%)	123,125
2011–2016	215,160 (17.8%)	1,211,995	4000 (12.1%)	33,060	20,035 (83.0%)	24,150	10,700 (8.3%)	129,015
Total	1,091,170 (14.5%)	7,539,785	25,960 (10.2%)	253,715	81,225 (76.9%)	105,565	49,555 (7.6%)	649,265

Adapted from Statistics Canada (2017a)

Percentages indicate Québec's share of the Canadian total for that category

Canada draws a large number of migrants from China, Québec is not their primary destination. Québec hosts only 7.6% of immigrants from China. Again, that average is higher for those who immigrated after 2000.

The opposite pattern holds for France, reflecting Québec's desire to foster a vibrant French-speaking society. Québec is home to almost 80% of French immigrants to Canada. Only for those who came to Canada before 1980 does Québec drop below 70% of the Canadian total.

Québec hosts a disproportionately low number (10.2%) of American immigrants. Language barriers and Québec's cultural and educational policies likely pose a significant hurdle for Americans to settle in Québec. Québec's decision to regulate language use in order to maintain its distinct society is also often cited as a reason for Montreal losing its status as Canada's largest city in the mid-1970s. Of the 253,715 Americans living in Canada in 2016, 108,885 lived in Ontario (almost 47,000 of those in Toronto), 57,780 in British Columbia, and 30,455 in Alberta. Québec is home to 25,960 American immigrants.

While regular immigration is not a major issue of concern for Québec-US relations, refugees are a different story. The Québec—New York

border was the site of an important irregular crossing between the two countries, attracting thousands of asylum seekers. The number of those apprehended in Québec for crossing the border irregularly in 2021 and 2022 was larger than the total of all American immigrants living in Québec in 2016.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, SAFE THIRD COUNTRIES, AND IRREGULAR CROSSINGS

There is much confusion about asylum seekers, refugees, and illegal immigrants. Asylum can be sought either before or after entering a host country. Those granted asylum receive refugee status. Ideally, asylum seekers receive refugee status before entering the host nation. In this case, Québec would be able to select applicants for admission and settlement in Québec. Under the *1967 Protocol*, which amended the 1951 *Convention on Refugees*, if someone enters a country irregularly (not at an official crossing), he or she has the right to appeal for refugee status (in other words, to seek asylum). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 14(1) states, “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” To be granted the status of refugee, migrants must demonstrate that they experienced a “well-founded fear of being persecuted” for reasons such as race, nationality, religion, or political opinion which prevents them from returning to their country of origin (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2022a). Natural disasters and armed conflict have also been used to justify refugee status. If granted, refugee status protects the person against being prosecuted for entering a country irregularly (Hurd 2021: 195–205). However, Canada has sole authority over this process once the migrant is on Canadian soil, and Québec can have no part in selecting these asylum seekers. Currently, the decision process takes about 14 months (Serebrin 2022), during which time, the applicant must still be fed and housed. While asylum seekers are waiting for the determination of their cases, Québec provides such services as temporary shelter, education for children, employment services, legal aid, French courses, and healthcare (see Government of Québec 2022a) Québec is seeking compensation from the federal government for these costs.

According to the 2016 data (Statistics Canada 2017a), there were 140,510 refugees in Canada. Of these, 26,435 (18.8%) were residing in Québec. Of those residing in Québec, 11,575 (43.8%) came from

Asia, 7345 (27.8%) from the Americas, and 7000 (26.5%) from Africa. In Canada as a whole, 80,515 (57.3%) came from Asia, 18,660 (13.3%) from the Americas and 35,975 (25.6%).

To further complicate the picture, in 2004 Canada and the United States started enforcing the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA), which mandates that asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first of the countries they enter. However, until the March 2023 expansion of the STCA, the mandate was enforced for refugee claimants who attempted to enter Canada from the US (1) at land border crossings, (2) by train, (3) at airports only if the claimant had been refused refugee status in the US and was in transit through Canada after being deported from the US, or (4) after crossing between ports of entry and making a claim for refugee status less than 14 days after the entry into Canada. Exceptions were granted for (1) unmarried, unaccompanied minors without a parent in either the US or Canada, (2) those with close relatives in the receiving country who meet specific requirements, (3) those holding specific documents such as a valid work or study permit, or (4) those who have been charged with or convicted of an offence that could subject them to the death penalty, unless found inadmissible on the grounds of security, violating human or international rights, serious criminality or if the Minister finds the person to be a danger to the public (Canada 2023).

The tension between the 1951 Convention on Refugees and the Safe Third Country Agreement led to the somewhat paradoxical situation in which migrants attempting to cross at the official border crossings would be turned back, but those who crossed where there were not official sites were guaranteed a hearing. As discussed below, this arrangement placed great strains on Québec. These attempts to cross irregularly were often incorrectly called “illegal.” The label “illegal immigrants” is often used to refer to those legitimately and legally seeking asylum, thereby increasing popular resistance. In the face of popular and political discontent, the US and Canada renegotiated this agreement in March 2023 to apply across the entire land border, including waterways (Canada 2023).

While the Safe Third Country Agreement may seem a bit strange given this legal loophole, there are reasons for supporting such an idea. Receiving refugees can be costly and does affect the host community. It is preferable to handle these cases before admitting the migrants into the country. The idea of the “race to the bottom” indicates that without such limitations, countries might have incentives to make life harder for refugees.

Although there are short-term costs of hosting refugees, there are long-term benefits. While refugees eventually pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits, they place a short-term strain on resources to provide services. More than half of refugees in Canada hold high-skilled jobs. A higher percentage of refugees become Canadian citizens than do family class or economic class immigrants (See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2022b).

In the late 2010s, more than 49,000 of the 52,000 migrants who were apprehended by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for irregularly crossing the Canadian border were detained in Québec, while there were zero apprehensions in Ontario and only one in New Brunswick (see Table 9.3). This trend continued in the early 2020s. Migrants apprehended in Québec constitute about 90% of apprehensions of irregular border crossings. Between 1917 and 2022, apprehensions accounted for between 12 and 44% of asylum claims processed. Although numbers dropped due to COVID-19 in 2020–2021, they rebounded to new heights in 2022. This led to a significant revision of the STCA.

Table 9.3 RCMP apprehensions of irregular border crossers by province, 2017–2023

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Aug)
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
New Brunswick	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Québec	18,836	18,518	16,136	3189	4095	39,171	13,726
Ontario	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Manitoba	1018	410	180	28	19	72	62
Saskatchewan	14	0	4	0	0	4	0
Alberta	6	12	1	0	0	4	0
British Columbia	718	479	182	84	132	289	285
Total	20,593	19,419	16,503	3302	4246	239,540	14,076
apprehensions							
Total claims processed by CBSA and IRCC	50,380	55,040	64,035	23,720	24,900	91,710	81,170

Adapted from Government of Canada (2022, 2023)

Numbers are often rounded to nearest multiple of 5 by the government of Canada

The most notorious irregular route into Québec is Roxham Road, a 5-mile rural road between Champlain, NY and Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, Québec (Banerjee 2018; CBC News 2018; Serebrin 2022). In 2017 it became a major route for asylum seekers, with a group of locals “Bridges Not Borders” providing advice and supplies (Banerjee 2018). Over 7000 people used this route in the early part of 2022, averaging about 100 apprehensions per day (Serebrin 2022). Premier François Legault, whose Coalition Avenir Québec’s election campaign had promised to reduce all immigration by 20%, demanded that Ottawa compensate Québec for services provided to the migrants (Banerjee 2018). The Canadian government provided up to \$25,000 financial compensation to residents near the area (CBC News 2018).

As a result of this crisis, the governments of Canada and the United States revised the STCA in March 2023. The zone for deporting asylum seekers entering from the other country was expanded from official points of entry to include the entire border including waterways (Vega 2023). The 2023 data, depicted in Table 9.4, shows dramatic results from the extended STCA. Apprehensions in Québec dropped from over 100 per day to about 50 per month. British Columbia also experienced a drop in apprehensions. Fewer apprehensions are likely to reduce the perception of “illegal migration.” The area around Roxham Road obviously felt reduced pressure. This apparent success only tells part of the story, however. The revised STCA kept the 14-day limit between entering Canada and making a claim for refugee protection. If someone can avoid being apprehended for 14 days, he or she can file without fear of being returned to the US. Thus, people might take less known, and more dangerous, routes (Steiner 2023). The deaths of 8 migrants in the St. Lawrence River in March 2023 were linked to the expansion of the STCA (Steiner 2023; Woods and McKinley 2023), although some claimed the deceased were actually trying to get into the US (Feith 2023).

Although apprehensions have declined, the number of pending asylum cases has not. Rather than continue to pursue the same strategy, potential asylum seekers appear to have switched tactics. One option is to pursue more risky routes and attempt to hide for more than two weeks in order to avoid being returned to the US. Alternatively, many arrive at airports and seek to claim asylum there. Positively, these people are less likely to be considered as “illegal immigrants.” However, the other stresses of dealing with people seeking refugee status are unlikely to change.

Table 9.4 RCMP apprehensions of irregular border crossers by province, 2023

	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug</i>	2023 (<i>Jan–Aug</i>)
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Brunswick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Québec	4875	4517	4087	69	46	30	49	53	13,726
Ontario	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Manitoba	19	5	15	8	3	1	8	3	62
Saskatchewan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alberta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
British Columbia	100	59	71	8	1	3	16	27	285
Total	4994	4581	4173	85	50	36	73	84	14,076
Apprehensions									
Total claims processed by CBSA and IRCC	10,735	9790	10,085	6885	8840	10,540	11,675	12,620	81,170

Source Government of Canada (2023)

CONCLUSION

Migration is an area of increasing concern. As birthrates have fallen below the stability level in the global north, it will be increasingly important to consider ways of maintaining the economy, providing for an aging population, and fostering national identity. In federations such as the United States and Canada, regional disparities caused by patterns of migration, economic conditions, and socio-cultural communities will continue to create political tensions and demand local solutions.

This chapter has placed the question of Québec—US migration patterns in a larger context of Québec’s attempts to build its society. Québec has transitioned from the traditional large families and significant net emigration to the United States to a secular society recruiting modest amounts of immigrants mostly from countries with ties to *La Francophonie*. Québec faces counter-pressures from the goals of maintaining Québec’s demographic weight in Canada (and Parliament), bolstering its economy, and developing its distinct, French-speaking society.

In the grand scheme of things, the relationship is much more important for Québec than it is for the United States. While there is not much direct Québec—US intergovernmental interaction concerning migration,

Québec spends much of its paradiplomacy resources in the United States. Roxham Road and irregular border crossings pose significant challenges, especially for Québec. The revision of the STCA reduced these tensions significantly, although mostly just shifted methods asylum seekers will use to enter Canada. While Québec is limited constitutionally in the field of migration, it was able to work with the government of Canada to change policy.

The United States and Québec confront significant challenges with immigration. While immigration is primarily an international issue, both Canada and the USA must cope with significant regional disparities, which are compounded by variations in control by different political parties. The actions taken by governors of southern states to move migrants and asylum-seekers to other states exemplify the tensions in the US. The vast disparity of apprehensions of irregular border crossings also placed a disproportionate burden on Québec. These challenges indicate that immigration is an area in which federal states are likely to develop creative paradiplomatic arrangements.

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Québec's Participation in the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and the Council of Great Lakes Governors, 2012–2022

Christophe Cloutier-Roy

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Québec's participation in the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (CNEG-ECP) and the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers (CGLG).¹ We study this participation over a 10-year period corresponding to the mandates of the governments of Pauline Marois (Parti Québécois—PQ, 2012–2014), Philippe Couillard (Parti Libéral du Québec—PLQ, 2014–2018), and François Legault's first term (Coalition Avenir Québec—CAQ, 2018–2022). The participation of the Marois and

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Couillard governments in these regional forums is consistent with that of previous governments, prioritizing environment and economic development. The Marois government, for its part, emphasized environmental issues, while the Couillard government subordinated them to concerns focusing on economic development. This emphasis on economic objectives became more pronounced during the Legault government's first term. At the same time, Québec's interest in the Great Lakes region grew, shifting its historical focus from the New England region. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first demonstrates the importance of the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG in Québec's strategy towards the United States. The second, third, and fourth parts emphasize the respective policies of the Marois, Couillard, and Legault governments toward these two organizations. Finally, the conclusion presents three challenges that Québec could face in the short to medium terms regarding its participation in the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG.

THE CNEG-ECP AND THE CGLG AT THE HEART OF QUÉBEC'S STRATEGIC VISION

In early 2001, while the Parti Québécois was in power, its Ministry of International Relations published a three-year strategic plan to guide its actions. The document emphasized the importance of the economic relationship between Québec and the United States, particularly since NAFTA came into effect in 1994. It stated that “the American states represent [...] partners of choice. Québec is called upon to forge close ties with several of them, [...] within the framework of consultations open to several states” (Ministère des Relations internationales 2001: 37). Nine years later, Jean Charest's Liberal government published a document titled *Stratégie du gouvernement du Québec à l'égard des États-Unis*, which codified Québec's approach to its neighbor. Five objectives were identified, two of which related to Québec's participation in regional forums. The first goal focused on the development of economic exchanges, calling for active participation within the CNEG-ECP (Ministère des Relations internationales 2010: 17–18). The second objective concerned energy and the environment, highlighting the need to work with ENEG-ECP partners to combat climate change, and with CGLG partners to manage the waters of the Great Lakes Basin (ibid.: 26).

The Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers was created in 1973, bringing together the member governments of the Conference of New England Governors (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and the Council of Atlantic Premiers (New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island), along with Québec. The CNEG-ECP quickly distinguished itself from other North American paradiplomatic forums by its institutional solidity. From the outset, annual meetings were organized within a formal, predictable framework. In addition, the CNEG-ECP employed a permanent staff to coordinate these meetings, facilitating continuity on the issues discussed and commitments made at each meeting (Colgan 1991: 124). Energy and the environment are the two principal subjects that have occupied the attention of officials since the creation of this forum (Paquin 2016: 157). The first CGNA-PMEC meeting took place just a few months before the oil crisis of October 1973; this major energy crisis provided momentum for these annual meetings, during which partnerships were negotiated between New England states anxious to secure their energy supply and Canadian provinces able to sell them hydroelectricity (Richard Nossal et al. 2015: 335). In 1979, René Lévesque took advantage of the CNEG-ECP meeting held in Québec, for instance, to try to convince his American counterparts to obtain supplies from the James Bay surplus (Colgan 1991: 121).

This interest in energy issues naturally led member governments to take an interest in environmental issues. The creation of the CNEG-EPC came at the heart of what Annie Chaloux (2018: 90–91) describes as the first phase of Canadian environmental paradiplomacy, characterized by a regional and cross-border approach. Issues such as river protection, the fight against acid rain (a significant issue that adversely impacts the region), and the question of climate change (Selin and Vendevier 2005: 355–357) has been on the CNEG-EPC agenda for several years. Indeed, the CNEG-EPC was one of the first institutions to feature sub-national actors addressing this issue (Chaloux 2016: 87–88). As early as 1989, the first resolution on climate change was adopted, followed in 2001 by the adoption of a *Climate Change Action Plan*, the first in the world to include specific commitments by government to meet their GHG emission reduction targets (Tennis 2007: 419). Political scientist Debora VanNijnatten points out that the cooperation of the six states and five provinces on environmental issues goes beyond the climate question, as

their government have, for example, to implement strict measures to limit the presence of mercury in the environment (VanNijnatten 2008: 302).

The Great Lakes Commission was created in 1955, bringing together the eight states bordering the Great Lakes (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin). This commission was made up of representatives, who issued recommendations concerning the region's economic development and the management of Great Lakes waters (Valiante 2008: 249). In 1983, the Council of Great Lakes Governors was created to coordinate the actions of the executives of the eight states. From the outset, the governments of Québec and Ontario participated in the Council's activities as observers, and in 1985 they co-signed the Great Lakes Charter, a document recognizing the essential character of the Great Lakes basin as a freshwater reservoir, which the signatories pledged to protect (Council of Great Lakes Governors 2001 [1985]). In 1997, the two provinces became associate members of the CGGL, and in 1999 were granted the same status within the Great Lakes Commission (Great Lakes Commission 1999). This binational collaboration has repeatedly been described as an example to follow for the preservation of a freshwater source shared by at least two countries (VanNijnatten 2004: 656).

THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE HEART OF THE MAROIS GOVERNMENT'S U.S. POLICY, 2012–2014

The brief tenure of the Marois government makes it difficult to assess its U.S. policy; in fact, one might mistakenly assume that the United States was not a priority let alone a point of focus. Consider Jean-François Lisée's tenure as head of the newly branded Ministry of International Relations, Francophony, and Foreign Trade, during which he devoted little time to U.S. issues. In a speech to the Montréal Council on Foreign Relations, he stated that his focus was on "Europe [...], Africa, the BRIC countries, the revival of foreign trade and a reflection on humanitarian issues" (Lisée 2014: 181). In the same speech outlining the Marois government's international policy priorities, he briefly mentioned Québec's participation in the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG, which he placed essentially on the same level as "the alliances forged with Europe's leading regions—Bavaria, Catalonia, Rhône-Alpes, Flanders, Wallonia - and around the great table of the political Francophony" (ibid.: 185). In his *Journal*, he describes what he perceived to be his role as Minister of

International Relations, without specifically mentioning any policy objectives regarding Québec-U.S. relations and, above all, without recognizing the significance of the objectives put forward in the *Québec Government's Strategy Towards the United States* set out by his ministry in 2010, two years before his tenure began (ibid.: 238–261).

Lisée's apparent lack of engagement on U.S. issue did not, however, signal disinterest on the part of the Marois government on the Québec-U.S. relationship; indeed, it placed environmental issues at the heart of its U.S. diplomacy. In May 2013, at the first meeting of the CLGL since 2005 held on Mackinac Island, Michigan (Le Cours 2015), Québec was represented by its Environment Minister Yves-François Blanchet. At the conclusion of the meeting, Blanchet expressed his satisfaction with the progress made on the issue of invasive species in the Great Lakes basin, noting that he had been able to speak with four governors: Mike Pence (Indiana), Pat Quinn (Illinois), Rick Snyder (Michigan), and Scott Walker (Wisconsin) (Cabinet du ministre du Développement durable, de la Faune et des Parcs 2013).

Pauline Marois proved herself to be an active participant in Québec-U.S. diplomacy, as Québec was the host of the 2013 annual meeting of the CNEG-ECP in La Malbaie, in the heart of her riding of Charlevoix. In the weeks leading up to the meeting, she undertook a preparatory tour of New England to meet her gubernatorial counterparts Lincoln Chafee (Rhode Island), Maggie Hassan (New Hampshire), Dannel Malloy (Connecticut), and Deval Patrick (Massachusetts). The themes announced and discussed at the 2013 forum (energy, transportation, adaptation to climate change) were indicative of her government's interest in the environment (Cabinet de la première ministre 2013a). In the wake of the Lac-Mégantic disaster, the issue of rail safety for hazardous products was included on the agenda (Lavallée 2013). Present at the Charlevoix meeting, Deputy Minister for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs Alexandre Cloutier asserted that the sale of surplus hydroelectricity to the New England states represented a golden opportunity for Québec (Richer 2013). Hydro Québec CEO Thierry Vandal's participation at the meeting was focused on promoting the Québec state-owned company, while the Premier herself gave a presentation about Québec hydroelectricity (Corbeil 2013; Lebel 2016). The day after the conclusion of the Charlevoix meeting, the partners agreed to achieve a GHG reduction target of 75% to 85% below 2001 levels by 2050. Six resolutions were adopted, two of which were initiated by Québec: the first urging Ottawa

and Washington to strengthen the safety of rail transport of hazardous materials; the second confirming the commitment of member governments to increase the use of fuel-efficient vehicles (Cabinet de la première ministre 2013b). The Marois government arguably succeeded in gaining a foothold within the CNEG-ECP by having its priorities heard.

Nineteen months in power left little time for the Marois government to leave a lasting mark on Québec-U.S. diplomacy. It is possible, however, to gain a glimpse of what her government's long-term orientations towards the United States might have been by consulting a document that the Ministry of International Relations, Francophony, and Foreign Trade was working on during the 2014 election campaign, titled *Guide de positionnement stratégique du Québec à l'égard des États-Unis 2014–2017*. In his introductory remarks to the document, Minister Lisée took note of the evolving economic context since the Charest government's adoption of the *Québec government's Strategy Towards the United States* four years earlier: Québec companies, he maintained, should take advantage of the economic recovery in the United States, as they should be able to diversify their export markets thanks to the upcoming entry into force of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement² and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.³ On the other hand, as Lisée noted “[t]he environment that Québec shares with its North American neighbor knows no borders” (“Guide de positionnement stratégique du Québec à l'égard des États-Unis 2014–2017”: 2). It is therefore of the utmost importance, he stresses, to keep environmental issues at the heart of Québec's American diplomacy.

In the version of the document dated February 5, 2014, three strategic orientations for Québec in the U.S. are identified: “ensuring the deployment of Québec's economic policy”; “exercising concerted diplomacy adapted to American diversity,” and “strengthening [Québec's relations] with the United States by leveraging [its] network of representation.” Five areas of intervention are identified: trade and investment; higher education, research, and innovation; energy, the environment and transportation; security, justice, and governance; and culture and identity. The document makes little mention of the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG, but emphasizes their importance in the fields of energy, environment, and transportation. The document points out that Québec can count on reliable partners for its electromobility objectives, as evidenced by the resolution to this effect adopted in La Malbaie (ibid.: 13). Québec's presence within the CGLG is presented as a pathway for the province to

participate in the sustainable management of waterways shared by Canada and the United States. The document specifies that Québec “will deepen its collaboration with the Midwest and Northeastern states on issues related to marine transportation, the fight against invasive species, natural disaster prevention and the long-term management of water resources in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region (*ibid.*: 14). In the accompanying appendix, an annual action plan (2014–2015) for Québec’s diplomatic representations in the United States is included. It calls for the Québec delegation in Boston to “maintain its leadership role within the [CNEG-ECP] and ensure that Québec’s interests are taken into account on priority issues such as energy, transportation, climate change, and security” (*ibid.*: a-8). As for the Québec delegation in Chicago, it is expected to “exercise Québec’s leadership in the management of the waters of the Great Lakes basin and the St. Lawrence River [...] by participating in 30 meetings of the region’s multilateral forums (Great Lakes Commission, GLC)”. This office is also asked to ensure “that Québec’s interests are taken into account at the [GLC] meeting scheduled to take place in Chicago in April 2014” (*ibid.*: a-9).

While not officially published and in effect a working document that remained unimplemented, the guide gives a fairly good idea of what Québec’s U.S. diplomacy might have looked like had the Marois government been returned to power for a second term. It clearly indicates that environmental priorities would have remain at the heart of Québec’s participation in the CNEG-ECP and the CGGL.

AMBITION AND URGENCY: THE U.S. POLICY OF THE PHILIPPE COUILLARD GOVERNMENT, 2014–2018

The Québec general election of April 7, 2014, concluded with the Liberal Party returning to power, led by Philippe Couillard who ran on a platform of cutting government expenditures and eliminating the province’s burgeoning deficit. It was with these objectives in mind that a demotion of the Ministry of International Relations to the rank of a secretariat was briefly considered (Bélaïr-Cirino 2014). In the end it was maintained, albeit in “economy mode” (Lavallée 2014). It also lost its “foreign trade” mission and was renamed the Ministry of International Relations and Francophony, a name it had kept to this day. Despite funding cuts, the Couillard government was heavily involved in the development of U.S.

partnerships, a re-engagement led by the Premier's office. While environmental issues remained an important issue, it was now clearly subordinate to economic interests, reflecting a determination to increase revenues for the province.

The Couillard government attached great importance to the CNEG-ECP. The Premier himself actively engaged in each of the five annual meetings held during his term of office. The themes announced for Couillard's first meeting in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, were the economy, investment, and technology—a clear break with the Charlevoix meeting, focusing first and foremost on environmental issues (“Couillard rencontre ses homologues de la Nouvelle-Angleterre et de l'Est canadien” 2014). Premier Couillard travelled to the Granite State with the intention of finding opportunities in New England to export hydroelectricity surplus (Teisceira-Lessard 2014) and to convince governors to join Québec in creating a carbon exchange (Pelletier 2014a, b, c). The Prime Minister's Office provided a positive assessment of the meeting, noting that Couillard was able to meet with five governors to discuss the possibility of setting up a greenhouse gas emissions trading and cap-and-trade system (Cabinet du premier ministre 2014). A year later, at the annual meeting held in Saint-John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Couillard once again reached out to his counterparts to convince them to join the carbon market to which Québec, Ontario and California then belonged.⁴ While New England states were already partners in a carbon market limited to energy companies (the *Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative*), the Premier tried to convince them that a common market would be beneficial to all, both for economic development and to fight against climate change (“Couillard tend la main aux États de la Nouvelle-Angleterre pour élargir le marché du carbone” 2015). It was also at the 2015 meeting that Hydro-Québec CEO Éric Martel unveiled the details of the *Northern Pass Transmission Project*. Developed in collaboration with the American company Eversource Energy, this project revolved around the construction of a high-voltage line running from the Eastern Townships region of Québec through New Hampshire to supply hydroelectricity to Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island (“Hydro-Québec en route vers le plus gros contrat de son histoire” 2015). The fact that Martel's announcement came in Newfoundland and Labrador—Québec's main rival for hydroelectric power exports in New England – was likely no coincidence.

While New England, with its large potential market for Québec hydro-electricity was an area of interest for the Couillard government, it also sought to increase its ties with the Great Lakes states. This was viewed as a gateway to boost a trade relationship vital to Québec's economy. In 2014, the province's trade surplus with the eight Great Lakes states was \$10.4 billion, while Québec's global trade deficit stood at \$14.9 billion (Le Cours 2015). With an annual GDP of \$5 trillion, the states and provinces of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region constitute the third-largest regional economy in the world and were therefore seen as part of Québec's "strategic perimeter" (Bergeron 2015a). The Couillard government had a great opportunity when it played host to the annual meeting of the CGLG in Québec City in 2015. It was during this meeting that Québec and Ontario became regular members of the Council—which changed its name to the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers. The Québec City meeting allowed the Couillard government to present its maritime strategy for the economic development of the St. Lawrence River. The Premier met with some of its counterparts, including Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, who was then considered to be a frontrunner to win the Republican presidential nomination in the 2016 presidential election (Bergeron 2015b).⁵ In the eyes of the Premier, the meeting proved to be a success, and Québec's official entry into the Council of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors was in line with the province's main interests in terms of its American diplomacy: "The creation of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers Conference will enable us to showcase our expertise and share best practices in the areas of infrastructure, research, innovation and maritime transportation, as well as sustainable development" (Cabinet du premier ministre 2015).

The focus on the economy, and especially the Québec-U.S. relationship, intensified in the second half of Philippe Couillard's term, as the province had to contend with the threat posed by the protectionist rhetoric of Donald Trump who, during the 2016 election campaign, repeatedly described NAFTA as the worst international trade and investment agreement ever signed by the United States. Even before the election, the Prime Minister took advantage of the CNEG-ECP meeting in Boston in the summer of 2016 to defend Québec's softwood lumber sector against the possible imposition of American tariffs. The Premier found an unexpected ally in Republican Maine Governor Paul LePage, an early Trump supporter who nonetheless publicly defended Québec's

forestry regime (Conseil de l'industrie forestière du Québec 2016). The two men took advantage of the meeting to announce the creation of a corridor of charging stations for electric cars linking Québec City to Portland (La Presse Canadienne 2016). At the meeting, Couillard strongly advocated for NAFTA, pointing out that all CNEG-ECP economies were benefiting from it and would suffer if it were to disappear (Lavallée 2016).

Donald Trump's victory in November 2016 added to the urgency for Québec to consolidate its partnerships south of the border. By moving forward to renegotiate the NAFTA agreement, the new President plunged the whole of North America into a period of economic uncertainty. For the Couillard government, the survival of Québec's economy was at stake. From January to August 2017, the number of diplomatic initiatives targeting the United States multiplied, including 24 ministerial missions, an increase in the number of staff at Québec representations in the U.S., and the opening of a new delegation in Philadelphia (Cabinet du premier ministre 2017). To counter Trump's unpredictability and protectionist leanings, government officials stepped up their outreach to state governors (Gagnon 2017). At the CNEG-ECP meeting in Charlottetown in 2017, the economy and trade with the United States were Philippe Couillard's only concerns (Cabinet du premier ministre 2017); the meeting ended with a joint declaration by the five premiers and six governors⁶ in favor of free trade (Dufault 2017).

A few months later, at the annual meeting of the CGLG in Detroit, the Québec government was represented by its Minister of Transport, André Fortin. Alongside Ontario Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne and Michigan Republican Governor⁷ Rick Snyder, he pledged to join forces with representatives of the Great Lakes states to defend free trade between Canada and the United States ("Les négociations de l'ALÉNA s'invitent à la rencontre des dirigeants des Grands Lacs" 2017). Fortin made it known to CGLG members that the Québec government was strongly committed to investing in the development of its maritime infrastructure (Cabinet du ministre des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports 2017). Finally, the CNEG-ECP meeting in Stowe, Vermont, in the summer of 2018, proved to be the swan song of the Couillard government's prolific American diplomatic efforts. With uncertainty still looming over the future of free trade in North America, Philippe Couillard once again called on his counterparts to maintain a united front in defense of NAFTA (Cabinet du premier ministre 2018). He found a sympathetic ear among governors keen to maintain economic ties with

Québec; Governor Phil Scott of Vermont, for example, signed a joint declaration on economic cooperation with Premier Couillard (“Couillard appelle les gouverneurs de la Nouvelle-Angleterre à défendre l’importance de l’ALÉNA” 2018). On October 1, 2018, a few weeks after the Stowe meeting, Philippe Couillard’s Liberal government was defeated in a general election that brought the Coalition Avenir Québec and its leader, François Legault, to power. On the same day, a tripartite agreement was announced between representatives of Canada, the United States and Mexico to establish a new free trade agreement, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which was subsequently signed two months later by President Trump, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto.

THE LEGAULT GOVERNMENT: CONTINUING AND ACCENTUATING THE DIRECTION TAKEN BY THE COUILLARD GOVERNMENT

The election of the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) marked the end of almost 50 years of alternance between the Parti libéral and the Parti Québécois in power in Québec. The American policies of the Legault government have been marked by a strong emphasis on economic relationship and a greater focus on the Great Lakes region. The CAQ took credit for “refocusing international action on Québec’s economic development” (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2020), even though this shift had already been underway for several decades (Paquin 2006: 174) and was accentuated under the Couillard government. In the eyes of the Legault government, developing Québec’s exports market should be the cornerstone of its international policy. Aware of the province’s dependence on the United States, the Premier called for a strategy of consolidation and diversification: while Québec must maintain its access to the U.S. market, it must also seek to diversify its foreign markets (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 2019). In 2021, the Ministry of International Relations published its new territorial strategy for the United States. Then minister Nadine Girault noted the need to “breathe new life into Québec’s relations with its main trading partner, at a time when the States are working hard to revive their economies, which have been damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic” (Ministère des Relations Internationales et de

la Francophonie 2021). The CAQ's American strategy consisted of simultaneously pursue two distinct objectives: first, increase hydroelectricity exports in the Northeast to enable Québec to become the "green battery of North America" (Gagnon 2019) and, second, develop the economic potential of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes maritime corridor to its maximum.

The CAQ's first term in power coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted the Québec government's paradiplomatic activities. Even before the onset of the pandemic, the 2019 annual meeting of the CNEG-ECP, scheduled to take place in Saint John, New Brunswick, was cancelled due to Hurricane Dorian. It was not until May 2021 that a virtual meeting was held again. Unlike Philippe Couillard, who made a point of attending every meeting, François Legault was represented by Minister Girault. In fact, he was the only head of government absent from this annual conference, from which little ultimately emerged, apart from a declaration in which the member governments reiterated their shared priorities of "strengthening our economies, combating climate change and addressing the unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic" (43^e conférence annuelle des gouverneurs de la Nouvelle-Angleterre et des premiers ministres de l'Est du Canada 2021).

The pandemic had not, however, prevented the Legault government from seeking to strengthen its relationships with its partners in the Great Lakes region. For a government keen to promote Québec's economic development, this was a logical choice, given the region's demographic and economic weights compared to New England. Indeed, the Prime Minister has shown a certain consistency, having announced as early as 2013 that he wanted to capitalize on the river's economic potential as part of his "St. Lawrence Project" (Legault 2013). As a sign of the importance accorded to the region, Minister Nadine Girault travelled to Chicago and Detroit in February 2019 as part of her first diplomatic mission. She met with the Director of the CGLG to discuss, among other things, the development of the maritime economy ("On mission in Chicago and Detroit for Minister Nadine Girault" 2019). At the annual meeting of the CGLG in Milwaukee in June 2019, the government dispatched Chantal Rouleau, deputy Minister for Transports, responsible for the Maritime Strategy. This was a contrast to 2013, when Pauline Marois' government was represented by its minister responsible for the Environment. In fact, Minister Rouleau expressed her delight with the CGLG's economic

shift and stressed Québec's interest "in developing the economic potential of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence maritime network" (Cabinet de la ministre déléguée aux Transports 2019). For his part, although absent, the Premier welcomed the measures adopted at the end of the summit, including the launch of an initiative to promote cruise tourism in the region, and the development of a plan to double maritime trade with Europe: "[These announcements] will foster Québec's economic growth by enabling us to use our maritime network to its full potential" (Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers 2019—our translation). In October 2019, Québec City hosted the annual meeting of the Great Lakes Commission. In her welcome address, Minister Girault once again expressed the economic importance of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes basin, reminding her audience that this binational zone, in addition to providing access to the heart of the American continent, constitutes the world's third largest economy after the United States and China (Girault 2019).

CONCLUSION: THREE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES FOR QUÉBEC

Having long understood the importance of pursuing and maintaining paradiplomatic relations with the United States, Québec has over the years developed tools that enable it to assert its interests south of the border. Participation in forums such as the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG has enabled Québec to advance its environmental, economic and energy priorities since the early 1970s. These three areas constitute the pillars of the province's involvement in these two forums. From the outset, the CNEG-ECP has placed energy and environmental issues at the heart of its interests. As for the CGLG, it is the place where the Québec government can discuss Great Lakes management and partnerships to break into this important market. While the PQ government of Pauline Marois made the environment the keystone of its involvement in these two forums, under the Liberal government of Philippe Couillard and the first mandate of François Legault's CAQ government, we have been witnessing an ever-greater prioritization of the economy, which is leading Québec to turn increasingly its attention to the CGLG.

Every indication suggests that participation in these forums should continue to be a key part of the Québec government's U.S. diplomacy arsenal, alongside the opening of delegations and offices. In the

short to medium terms, however, at least three obstacles could complicate Québec's task. The first potential obstacle concerns the maintenance of face-to-face meetings between heads of government. One of the strengths of the CNEG-ECP was the institutionalization of annual meetings from the outset. However, after the cancellation of two meetings in 2019 and 2020, the 2021 gathering was virtual (without the participation of the Prime Minister) and no meeting was scheduled in 2022. In September 2023, the Legault government hosted the first in-person summit since 2018, and the first held in Québec since 2013. Government leaders met to discuss issues of common interest, including trade, national security, sustainable development, energy, and transportation (La Presse canadienne 2023). While this two-day summit was marked, from Québec's perspective, mainly by tensions with the Newfoundland and Labrador government over the Churchill Falls issue (““Montrez-nous l'argent!” lance le premier ministre terre-neuvien Andrew Furey” 2023), the resumption of face-to-face summits may enable Québec to continue to forge closer ties with New England governments.

As for the CGGL, its meetings, sporadic through 2013, then took place on a biennial basis until the cancellation of the 2021 meeting due to the pandemic before resuming in October 2023. Québec was represented at the Cleveland Summit by Martine Biron, the new Minister of International Relations and Francophonie. The press release issued following the meeting highlighted the high economic value of the Midwest region in the eyes of the Legault government. It pointed out that the region accounts for a third of Québec's trade with the United States, and Ohio alone represents an annual export volume of some \$4.8 billion for the province. The Minister herself highlighted the possibilities offered by the region, particularly for the development of the battery industry, which is a sector prioritized by the Legault government (Cabinet de la Ministre des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie et Ministre responsable de la Condition féminine 2023). Québec has announced that it will host the next summit in 2025, which fares well for the continuation of in-person meetings.

The second hurdle is the resurgence of protectionist sentiment in the United States, with Canada bearing the brunt. The last few years have shown that economic nationalism is now a majority position within the two major American political parties. Donald Trump's “America First” has given way to Democrat Joe Biden's “middle-class foreign policy.” Economic nationalism is one of the arguments put forward by Americans

when it comes to opposing projects by Canadian companies in the United States, be they mining companies wishing to exploit metals from the Iron Range region of Minnesota, or Hydro-Québec projects in Maine, New Hampshire, or New York (Gagnon and Cloutier-Roy 2020). Should this sentiment continue, it is possible that Québec will find less openness to its projects from the New England and Great Lakes governors over the next few years.

Finally, the third potential obstacle concerns the Canadian and American constitutional frameworks within which these paradiplomatic forums operate. On the Canadian side, the vagueness of the British North America Act of 1867 regarding the provinces' capacities in foreign policy matters (Allan and Vengroff 2012: 283), as well as the country's political evolution, which eventually gave the provinces very extensive powers (Cros 2005), mean that Québec enjoys a good deal of leeway regarding its participation in the CGLG and the CNEG-ECP. This is less true in the U.S., where the Constitution of 1787 establishes the federal government as the sole arbiter of foreign policy. Even the creation of an interstate pact (such as the Great Lakes Commission) requires federal legislation. Yet, as Charles Colgan (1991) points out, the creation of the CNEG-ECP in 1973 was an exception in the history of American federalism, since it led to an unprecedented extension of the role of governors in government-to-government negotiations. It took place against a backdrop marked by the establishment in Washington of *New Federalism*, a more restricted approach to federal government that left more freedom to the states. However, the dynamics of federalism are constantly evolving in the United States, and it's not out of the question that a more interventionist federal government could eventually seek to stick its nose into the discussions taking place at the CNEG-ECP and the CGLG. In 2019, for example, the Trump administration launched a lawsuit against California, arguing that its participation in the carbon exchange with Québec constituted an independent foreign policy and was therefore unconstitutional. While the courts ruled in California's favor, this incident still exposes the narrow framework within which paradiplomatic activities involving American states unfolds, something the Québec government must keep in mind.

NOTES

1. Until 2015 (when Québec and Ontario were officially admitted as full members), the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers was known as the Council of Great Lakes Governors. To avoid using too many acronyms, this chapter utilizes the same acronym (CGGL) to refer to these two versions of the same institution.
2. This free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, negotiated in 2013, came into force in 2017.
3. Signed in 2016 and coming into force in 2018, the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement is a free trade agreement linking Canada and 10 other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. After signing the text of the agreement in 2016, the United States withdrew from it in 2017 after Donald Trump came to power.
4. Ontario has since left the carbon market.
5. Four days after the Couillard-Walker meeting, businessman Donald Trump announced that he was entering the Republican race. Walker's campaign struggled to take off, so much so that the candidate withdrew from the race on September 15, 2015, several months before the Iowa caucuses.
6. Including four Republican governors: Charlie Baker (Massachusetts), Paul LePage, Phil Scott (Vermont) and Chris Sununu (New Hampshire).
7. At the time, the GLGC was made up mainly of Republican governors. In addition to Snyder, Eric Holcomb (Indiana), John Kasich (Ohio), Bruce Rauner (Illinois), and Scott Walker (Wisconsin) came from this party. Their commitment to free trade illustrates the widening gap on this issue between Republicans at state levels and Republicans in Washington.

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20 Years of Climate Paradplomacy Between Québec and the United States

Annie Chaloux and Jennyfer Boudreau

Climate change is considered one of the most important challenges societies around the world must face in the coming century, leading a growing number of actors at all levels of governance to introduce policies and increase international collaboration. In North America, federal authorities have addressed climate change with varying measures and to fluctuating degrees over the past few decades. However, several Canadian provinces

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and US states have also taken up the challenge, developing an important web of actions, commitments and cooperative efforts that transcend the political borders of states, bringing into being large-scale climate paradiplomacy between the two countries and multi-level climate governance (Chaloux 2016b; Dorsch and Flachsland 2017; Healy et al. 2014; Schwartz 2019).

Québec has been particularly active in the deployment of North American climate paradiplomacy, building on a history of cross-border environmental paradiplomacy that dates back to the late 1960s. Climate change gained prominence in the 1980s, becoming a central focus of Québec's environmental relations internationally, and most especially with the US (Paquin 2005; Chaloux 2010, 2016). The commitments made by the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP) since 2001, and the creation of the Québec-California carbon market—also known as the Western Climate Initiative (WCI)—are the two most significant cases, and are examined in this chapter to trace and document the growing cooperation on climate issues between Québec and American states. This chapter argues that climate change is a significant area of cooperation between Québec and US states, as their relationship in this field has been institutionalized, consistent, and growing for over 20 years, and this, despite the vagaries of the climate policies of their central governments. To advance this thesis, the chapter draws on the scholarly literature focusing on paradiplomacy and federalism in the field of climate change, which is also considered a cornerstone of the Québec's contemporary international activities. We examine the deployment of Québec's climate paradiplomacy on US territory, through two case studies: (A) the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP) and (B) the Western Climate Initiative. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the constitutional division of powers in Canada related to the environment in order to explain the development of Québec's paradiplomacy. The second describes the evolution of Québec's climate paradiplomacy since the late 1980s in the North American context. The third and final section, examines both case studies. We conclude with a broader reflection on Québec-US relations around climate change, their importance and the questions they raise.

THE ENVIRONMENT, CANADIAN FEDERALISM AND PARADIPLMACY

Environmental governance is a serious challenge in Canada. The Canadian Constitution Act of 1867 does not specify the environment as either a federal or provincial jurisdiction; the division of powers related to environmental issues is therefore highly fragmented between the federal government and the provinces. The Supreme Court, in its decision *Friends of the Oldman River Society v. Canada (Minister of Transport)*, highlights the complexity of environmental governance in Canada:

It must be recognized that the environment is not an independent matter of legislation under the *Constitution Act, 1867* and that it is a constitutionally abstruse matter which does not comfortably fit within the existing division of powers without considerable overlap and uncertainty. A variety of analytical constructs have been developed to grapple with the problem, although no single method will be suitable in every instance [...] In my view the solution to this case can more readily be found by looking first at the catalogue of powers in the *Constitution Act, 1867* and considering how they may be employed to meet or avoid environmental concerns. When viewed in this manner it will be seen that in exercising their respective legislative powers, both levels of government may affect the environment, either by acting or not acting. This can best be understood by looking at specific powers. (*Friends of the Oldman River Society v. Canada* 1992)

Thus, the Canadian constitution grants both levels of government the power to act on environmental issues, as outlined in the Table 11.1.

Nevertheless, provinces have historically been the first to address environmental issues. This can be explained, in part, by the fact that these issues were originally linked to health, natural resources and property and civil rights, which are under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, provinces quickly became the predominant actors in this area (De Lassus Saint-Geniès 2019; Holland et al. 1996; VanNijnatten 2006). The federal government was slow to take an interest in environmental issues and initially played a minimal role, leaving the provinces at the forefront of environmental protection (Bélanger 2011; Harrison 1996: 4). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Québec implemented its first environmental protection policies, conceptualized from both domestic and international perspectives. The Gérin-Lajoie doctrine (first expressed in 1965) made it quite clear that Québec should take up its responsibilities with regard

Table 11.1 Summary of federal and provincial jurisdiction over environmental issues

<i>Federal jurisdiction</i>	<i>Provincial jurisdiction</i>	<i>Shared jurisdiction</i>
Fisheries, marine biodiversity and ocean sea beds	Management of non-renewable natural resources	Pollution of international and interprovincial waters
Boundary waters	Property and civil rights in the province (which includes the regulation of most types of commercial and industrial activities)	Environmental assessments for projects with significant environmental impacts
Lands reserved for First Nations	Management of lakes, rivers and other water resources within their borders ^a	Agriculture Greenhouse gases and climate change
Public property owned by Canada (e.g. federally owned land)	Municipal institutions in the province ^b	Terrestrial protected areas (jurisdiction is based on which level of government owns the lands)
Aviation	Management of provincial Crown lands (allowing provinces to regulate activities such as mining and forestry)	Endangered wildlife and species
Waterways, maritime transport and spills (sewage, oil, and ballast water discharges)		Waste management ^c
Criminal law (e.g. prohibition to emit certain pollutants)		Nuclear activities Drinking water management

^aLakes and rivers located on federal public lands are under federal jurisdiction

^bProvinces have the authority to delegate to municipalities the power to regulate environmental matters such as zoning, development, waste management and recycling, drinking water and wastewater (Becklumb 2019)

^cWaste management is an area where the federal, provincial and municipal governments all have jurisdiction. Specifically, the federal government legislates the international movement of hazardous waste; the provincial government controls the powers of municipalities in this area and regulates the management of hazardous materials; and municipalities manage and regulate waste within their jurisdiction (Becklumb 2019)

to environmental issues at the international level. Moreover, a number of intermestic environmental disasters and tragedies which took place during this period emphasized the need for collaboration with transborder and international actors to respond to problems that affected both Québec and other territories (Chaloux 2016a).

Several initiatives between federated states on either side of the border were launched around this time, and cross-border relations increased

considerably thereafter. VanNijnatten considers that, from this point on, cross-border and regional governance approaches between federated states in North America became very significant in regulating environmental issues:

Indeed, case study work over the past decade indicates that it is subnational governments, particularly US states and to some extent Canadian provinces, often acting through cooperative cross-border mechanisms, that have been the primary locus of environmental policy initiatives and innovation to address environmental problems. This literature shows that subnational cross-border interactions became increasingly formalized and multilateral or regional, as well as more ambitious in terms of the projects undertaken. (VanNijnatten 2009: 97)

From the 1970s on, Québec pursued green paradiplomacy with partners south of the border. These bilateral and multilateral relations were rapidly institutionalized through regional organizations such as the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP) and the Council of Great Lakes Governors (CGGL).¹ Québec also undertook international commitments on environmental issues, such as water management and pollution, acid rain, mercury and chlorofluorocarbons (Chaloux 2009; Chaloux and Séguin 2011; Selin and VanDeveer 2009; VanNijnatten 2006). In this way, Québec contributed to shifting traditional hierarchical environmental governance models in North America to more collaborative multi-level governance approaches (Bruyninckx et al. 2012; Chaloux 2016c; Norman and Bakker 2009; VanNijnatten and Craik 2015).

EVOLUTION OF QUÉBEC-UNITED STATES CLIMATE COOPERATION

These early efforts provide the context for Québec's development of climate paradiplomacy with US states. Québec and the NEG-ECP had, for instance, already adopted several action plans and commitments on environmental issues before collaborating to address climate change. In 1989, NEG-ECP members adopted the first common resolution on climate change; a full three years before the adoption of the first international climate regime known as the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The NEG-ECP can therefore be seen as an early leader, since climate change was not yet a major concern in the world. In 2001, members of the NEG-ECP agreed on a regional action plan to fight climate change, a plan that was the very first of its kind in North America and in the world, and illustrated the high level of cooperation among subnational partners (Tennis 2007).

In the years that followed, Québec became even more invested in this sphere of international activity on the North American continent and developed a strong web of cross-border and regional cooperation networks. In 2003, it became an observer in the first North American carbon market, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which focused specifically on GHG emissions from thermal electricity generation.² In addition, in 2008, Québec became part of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), which aimed to establish a multi-sectoral carbon market for federated states in North America. In 2012, Québec participated in a North America 2050 initiative to coordinate climate action among national and sub-national governments in Canada, the US, and Mexico to promote the transition to a low-carbon economy. This effort did not, however, come to fruition (C2ES, n.d.).

After 2010, climate change became an integral part of Québec-US relations. Through its network of representatives in the US, Québec increased exchanges and collaboration on renewable energy and energy exports, the electrification of transportation, carbon pricing, carbon markets and land use planning with several American states, including Washington, Oregon and Georgia, as well as with states in the Northeast and around the Great Lakes (Interview 2, 2021; Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie, 2017; Québec, 2019, 2021). These formal³ and less formal collaborations contributed to the coordination of climate issues and concrete actions against climate change all across North America.

Québec progressively intensified its international climate actions, venturing beyond its relations with US states. In addition to participating in international climate negotiations as part of the Canadian delegation,⁴ Québec expanded its involvement in several state and local government organizations, including the *Climate Group* and the *Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development* (NRG4SD), which later became *Regions 4*. Québec also committed to implementing most of the provisions of the global climate regime (i.e. the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and more recently the Paris Agreement) on its territory (Chaloux et al. 2022), and created or joined many international

alliances and efforts to fight climate change in which some US states also participate. These include the *International Zero-Emission Vehicle Alliance* (ZEV Alliance), launched in 2015, and the *Glasgow Declaration on Carbon Pricing in the Americas*, adopted in 2021.

In short, from 2000 onwards, we see the intensification and internationalization of Québec's climate paradiplomacy, with the US constituting an important hub in the deployment of this pillar of Québec's international action. The next section focuses on two major initiatives that contributed to solidifying Québec's international climate action in the US.

QUÉBEC'S CLIMATE PARADIPLMACY IN THE UNITED STATES TAKES SHAPE: THE NEW ENGLAND GOVERNORS AND EASTERN CANADIAN PREMIERS, AND THE WESTERN CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Québec's participation in the *New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers* (NEG-ECP) and the *Western Climate Initiative* (WCI) are arguably the two most important paradiplomatic initiatives on climate issues between Québec and the US. These key partnerships laid the groundwork for Québec's international action on climate change in the US and demonstrated the relevance of federated states in North American and global climate governance. This section presents the development and outcomes of Québec's climate paradiplomacy in the US through these two cases.

NEG-ECP and Climate Change

The NEG-ECP is a cross-border organization that has enabled cooperation on a variety of issues for nearly 50 years. Its 11 members include all New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) and eastern Canadian provinces (Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Québec, and Newfoundland and Labrador). Environmental and energy issues were its initial focus (Chaloux and Paquin 2012), with climate change entering into the picture in the late 1980s. A first resolution specifically addressing climate change was adopted in 1989 (NEG-ECP 2008a). However, it was not until the end of the 1990s that climate change substantively emerged

on the organization's agenda. Thereafter, climate change became central to the NEG-ECP's work, with many commitments adopted by premiers and governors (Chaloux, 2014).

In 2000, NEG-ECP members began to work on a regional approach to addressing climate change. At that time, neither the US nor Canada had yet confirmed their intention to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which had been negotiated in 1997 but was not yet in force. Despite US refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, the NEG-ECP continued its work, adopting a final action plan a few months later at the 26th annual conference held in Connecticut in August 2001. The 2001 *Regional Climate Change Action Plan* was very ambitious. It essentially targeted three phases of GHG emission reduction, aiming first, to stabilize GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2010, then to reduction emissions to at least 10% below 1990 levels by 2020, and finally, to reduce emissions to 75–85% below 2001 levels by 2050. These targets were established based on scientific modelling with the goal of eliminating any serious threat to the climate (NEG-ECP 2001: 7). The reduction targets were adopted at regional and not individual levels, inviting collaboration between the various actors and acknowledging the particularities of each member state. Tennis describes the action plan adopted by the premiers and governors as highly ambitious for its time:

At the time of the NEG-ECP *Climate Change Action Plan's* signing, no governmental official had ever committed to long-term deep reductions in GHGs, i.e., the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers were the first leaders worldwide to promise to reduce emissions at whatever level was needed to protect the climate, and to put a number on the anticipated extent of necessary emissions reductions. While this monumental step in worldwide climate policy was not attached to a specific timeline, it has nevertheless helped inspire a longer-term perspective on climate change policy-making and has been echoed subsequently in the targets set in other countries. (Tennis 2007: 419)

In the years that followed, this action plan was lauded in North America and served as a model collaborative cross-border approach (Chaloux 2014; Tennis 2007). Its success, coupled with the development of climate science, paved the way for the deployment of climate change action in the region (Chaloux 2014; Ryan et al. 2009).

Bolstered by the success of this first climate change action plan, the premiers and governors increased their commitments around climate

change with strategies addressing transportation, habitat connectivity and adaptation to climate change (Chaloux 2014). In 2008, NEG-ECP members also adopted a first action plan on transportation and air quality aimed at reducing GHG emissions in this sector (NEG-ECP 2008). In 2013, the governors and premiers renewed their commitments to lowering GHG emissions and adapting to climate change with the 2013 *Regional Climate Change Action Plan: Strategic Overview*. That year, the NEG-ECP also adopted an intermediate regional GHG reduction target of 35–45% below 1990 emissions levels by 2030 (NEG-ECP 2015). Lastly, in 2017, the NEG-ECP updated its 2001 climate change action plan in a document entitled *Update of the regional climate change action plan: building on solid foundations*. It details new actions agreed by members, and presents evidence-based scenarios, building on qualitative and quantitative analyses, of achievements to date and further action needed to achieve regional targets. However, no new target was set. The updated plan was designed mainly to assure consensus among members, with the understanding that resolutions would be adopted over the coming years to improve and refine measures (Interview 1, 2020). Two new fields of actions were incorporated into the 2017 plan: adaptation and habitat connectivity. Climate change became one of the NEG-ECP's priorities, with members jointly adopting ambitious GHG reduction goals and multi-sector action plans to ensure regional targets could be met. In effect, a study of the climate policies adopted by NEG-ECP members revealed that they had implemented an average 88% of the 29 recommendations in the 2017 action plan (Larivière 2020). In sum, the NEG-ECP highlighted the leadership of federated states in the fight against climate change in North America and the potential impact of their paradiplomatic activities.

The Western Climate Initiative and the Québec-California Carbon Market

The Western Climate Initiative (WCI) was created in 2007 when the governors of the US states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington signed a mutual agreement to adopt a regional GHG reduction target, participate in a multi-state registry to track regional emissions, and develop a cap-and-trade system to achieve their shared GHG mitigation target (Western Climate Initiative 2013). The *Western Regional Climate Action Initiative Agreement* (which would

later become known as the Western Climate Initiative) aimed to create a regional carbon market on the West Coast of the US. It would be the second carbon market project initiated in the US, after the *Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative* (RGGI) operating in the Northeast of the country since 2003 (RGGI 2009).

The launch of the WCI initiative had a significant impact on the entire North American continent. After the organization's inception in 2007, federated states in Canada, the US and Mexico expressed their interest in establishing a carbon market in order to compensate the weak climate policies of their national governments (i.e. *vis-à-vis* the Kyoto Protocol) (Barnett 2010; Chaloux 2017; Chaloux et al. 2021). British Columbia and Manitoba joined the initiative in April and June 2007, respectively. Other American states and Canadian provinces followed: Utah, Montana, Québec and Ontario (Chaloux 2014). Several Mexican states became observers in the organization. At its peak, the WCI counted 11 member states and 14 observer states, which constituted a potentially massive carbon market, involving 19% of the population and 20% of GDP in the US, and 79% of the population and 76% of GDP in Canada (Hight and Silva-Chávez 2008; Western Climate Initiative 2010).

WCI members agreed to establish, by 2012, a common GHG emissions trading program based on harmonized legislation. In 2011, an independent not-for-profit organization named the WCI Inc. was created to provide administrative support and highly technical services to help member states develop the carbon market and link their respective cap-and-trade systems. However, the initial enthusiasm waned, and several events undermined progress towards the establishment of a multilateral carbon market. Negotiations became more difficult as many states and provinces faced serious opposition from political, social, and economic sectors (C2ES 2013; Hamilton 2011; Kahn 2011; Klinsky 2013; Mercure 2011). Slow economic recovery from the 2008 economic crisis in the US and Canada, financial difficulties in many federated states, and the resurgence of debate in the US challenging the anthropogenic origins of climate change diminished the priority given to the issue of global warming and the creation of a carbon market in several US states and Canadian provinces (Hamilton 2012). In addition, the 2010 US elections and the arrival of new Republican governors significantly hindered WCI's work (Klinsky 2013). Similar situations occurred on the Canadian side. By the end of 2011, all US states except California had formally withdrawn

from the WCI, and the Canadian provinces postponed WCI implementation on their territory. Québec was the exception, intent on pursuing work on the issue and benefitting from significant consensus among political parties in the province on the importance of climate change action. As a result, in 2011, only Québec and California remained actively engaged in this regional initiative.

Over the next two years, Québec and California pursued collaboration and adopted regulations needed to set up a cap-and-trade system in their territories (Government of Québec 2013). In November 2013, the *Harmonization and Integration of Cap-and-Trade Programs for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions between Québec and California* was approved by the National Assembly of Québec. This agreement was designed to harmonize and integrate Québec and California cap-and-trade programs (Government of Québec 2013). In 2017, the *Agreement on the Harmonization and Integration of Cap-and-Trade Programs for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions* was signed between WCI partners (now including Ontario) and replaced the 2013 agreement. The 2017 document (like the 2013 agreement) aimed for greater transparency as well as deeper integration of cap-and-trade programs (aligned with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement) among WCI members (Paris Agreement 2015; Chaloux et al. 2021; Roch and Papy 2019).

On January 1, 2018, Ontario joined the WCI regional carbon market, but its participation was short-lived. In February, the first tripartite emissions auction took place. However, Ontario repealed its cap-and-trade regulation and left the carbon market after just six months (MELCC 2018). Today, despite the fact that Québec and California are the only official members of the initiative, the WCI carbon market provides important leverage to help them achieve their GHG reduction targets. Indeed, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) identified its cap-and-trade program as the largest national GHG reduction initiative, and it is expected to provide 47% of the reductions needed to meet its 2030 goal (California Air Resources Board 2017). The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in Québec has also identified the cap-and-trade program as the province's primary tool for achieving its emission mitigation targets (Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatiques 2018). The current reduction targets for both governments are:

- California: 40% by 2030 below 1990 levels and carbon neutrality by 2045 (CARB 2021).
- Québec: 37.5% by 2030 below 1990 levels and carbon neutrality by 2050 (Government of Québec 2020).

In addition, the carbon market has contributed over \$5 billion to date to the Québec government's Electrification and Climate Change Fund (MELCC 2021). In California, US\$15.4 billion have been raised since 2013 for the California Climate Investments fund (CARB 2021). The WCI carbon market has also increased international recognition for Québec and California, and opened the door to deeper cooperation between Québec, California and other international partners as they share their skills and best practices. For example, in 2018, Québec and Oregon signed a memorandum of understanding for Québec to share its carbon market know-how. Québec signed joint declarations to the same effect with Chile in 2019 and with New Zealand at COP-26 in Glasgow in 2021 (MELCC 2021).

Overall, the consistent and growing cooperation between Québec and California through the WCI since 2007 clearly reveals the province's desire to conduct climate paradiplomatic activities with US counterparts, not just in bordering states, but all across the country. The Québec-California carbon market also demonstrates that federated states can work together to develop mechanisms to tackle climate change issues and achieve their respective GHG reduction targets. Given the diffuse and transboundary nature of greenhouse gas emissions and their impacts, cooperative ties can be created regardless of partners' geographic location.

QUÉBEC-US CLIMATE COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL CHANGES

Over the past 20 years, ruling parties in the United States and Canada have changed, both at the national level and in the 11 states that make up NEG-ECP. However, these election cycles have not affected the willingness of conference members to work together, as they continue to share common strategies and commitments to address climate change. On the contrary, states' commitment to climate policy peaks at a time when federal involvement is at its lowest (Farber 2021). For example, in 2001, in response to Bush's opposition to the Kyoto Protocol, the

NEG-ECP members announced a goal of a 10% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (Arroyo 2017) and in August 2017, less than a year after the election of Donald Trump, NEG-ECP released its updated climate plan (NEG-ECP 2017). In addition, annual meetings between New England states and Eastern Canadian provinces have been held for nearly 50 years. Consequently, NEG-ECP ties of historical cooperation are stronger than political disagreements, and the committees work is not directly hampered by politics (Interview 2020). Moreover, with “shared cross-border priorities” (CONEG 2021), conference members have common interests related to climate that transcend partisan lines, such as emergency response to cross-border natural disasters and, more recently, the creation of an electric vehicle corridor (Le Devoir 2013; NEG-ECP 2017; Radio-Canada 2016). Energy, too, has always been a key issue among members since NEG-ECP’s inception. Today, Québec’s export of hydroelectric power is a win–win situation: exporting hydroelectric power helps the New England states move away from fossil fuels while boosting Québec’s economy (Dimanchev et al. 2021). Overall, NEG-ECP historical ties between the members, institutionalization of their cooperation, and the pursuit of common interests that go beyond political mandates have created an effective model for transboundary climate governance (Konrad and Widdis 2021).

The case of WCI is different, as it experienced significant disruption in 2011 in part because of political changes (Klinsky 2013). Unlike NEG-ECP, the specific and structuring measures required by a cap-and-trade program were more subject to criticism and political volatility (Rabe 2016). However, for the two remaining and actual members, Québec and California, common interests have allowed this collaboration to overcome the political changes of those two federated states. In Québec, the three parties that have been in power since the introduction of the carbon market (the Liberals, the Parti Québécois, and the Coalition Avenir Québec) have never sought to abolish it (unlike BC and Ontario), demonstrating that this collaboration with California has cross-partisan consensus (Houle and Lachapelle 2019). Indeed, the linking of Québec and California carbon markets was unanimously endorsed by the National Assembly in 2013 (MELCC 2013). On the California side, even the Trump administration’s lawsuit seeking to invalidate the state’s constitutional right to enter into a climate agreement with another government in 2019 has not deterred the state’s desire to continue the cap-and-trade system (State of California 2019). Indeed, for many years, the

two governments have shared an interest in paradiplomatic activities on climate change and serve as leaders in their country on this issue (Chaloux et al. 2022; Paquin 2020). In fact, the California-Québec carbon market makes them benefit from significant international influence since it is seen as a model to follow (Roch and Papy 2019).

To compare, political volatility significantly changed Canada-U.S. relations on climate change. For example, the Justin Trudeau and Barack Obama administrations jointly made several commitments, such as reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sectors by 40–45% below 2012 levels by 2025 and protecting at least 17% of land areas by 2020 (Government of Canada 2016). However, in 2017, under the Trump administration, climate cooperation froze in favor of fossil fuel development cooperation (Brooks 2020). Finally, since the election of Joe Biden, both countries have committed to reinvigorating the U.S.-Canada relationship through the *Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership* (Ottawa 2021). However, in Québec, while three different parties have been involved in the provincial government during the last two decades, none of these governments have challenged Québec's climate partnerships with the US states. On the contrary, Québec's climate commitments to its U.S. partners have grown and become more institutionalized over time. This uninterrupted cooperation is partly explained by two factors: cooperation is strengthened by institutions such as NEG-ECP and the WCI (1) and Québec and the U.S. states pursuits of certain common interests that transcend party lines (2).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, over the past 20 years Québec and several US states have developed significant relationships around efforts to mitigate climate change. Cooperation has increased significantly over time within partnerships such as the NEG-ECP and the WCI. The two cases discussed in this chapter demonstrate that international activities in the field of climate change can be developed and consolidated with relative ease, since US states and Canadian provinces have similar areas of jurisdiction. Moreover, this study reveals that Québec's paradiplomatic instruments have been reinforced through initiatives with US counterparts. Instruments that were more or less coercive at first, such as the NEG-ECP resolutions and action plans, evolved into a true harmonization of internal rules with California through the WCI.

While international activities between Québec and US states on climate change have intensified over the past 20 years, the same cannot be said of their central governments. In fact, cooperation on climate change between Canada and the US has been inconsistent and suffered a major disruption under the presidency of Donald Trump. Politics constitute an important wild card in cooperation on climate change between the two states (Brooks 2020). This lack of constancy in Canada-US climate policy has not, however, deterred North American states from adopting ambitious climate policies. Rather, it has demonstrated the significant autonomy of federated states and provinces to act on climate issues and highlighted the multi-level nature of climate governance in North America. This analysis underlines the importance of pursuing academic research to better understand how different scales of climate governance contribute to dealing with this challenge of our century.

NOTES

1. Note that although Québec did not become an associate member of this organization until 1997, it had close ties with the organization since its creation in 1983 (Chaloux 2014).
2. Québec does not participate as a member of the RGGI: this carbon market regulates GHG emissions from thermal power producers only and Québec produces almost no GHGs of this type as its electricity comes, for the most part, from hydroelectricity, which emits small amounts of GHGs.
3. It should be noted that Québec has signed several memorandums of understanding with different jurisdictions around the world in order to share information and expertise regarding carbon markets and thus promote Québec's expertise in this area (Québec 2022).
4. Québec decided to actively participate in international climate negotiations as soon as the global climate regime was created. It has participated in most of the Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC that have taken place since 1995 through the Canadian delegation. Québec officials, ministers and even the premier have been present and had access to the negotiation forums and side events of these important annual meetings (Chaloux 2016a, b).

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Decarbonization and Electrification in the Northeast: The Climate Crisis Will Foster a New Québec-United States Relationship in Electricity

Pierre-Olivier Pineau

INTRODUCTION

There is a long history of electricity interdependence between Québec and its U.S. neighbor, based on hydropower exports to New York and New England (LeMay 1980; Bernard 1988; Averyt 1992). Rising oil prices in the 1970s, along with large low-cost hydropower projects in Québec, have created a strong rationale for “power from the North” (Abelson 1985; Abbott 1992). However, the relationship between Québec and its U.S. partners in electricity trade has: it’s “the relationship that has never been simple”. Voices in the U.S. regularly denounce

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the “mounting evidence of negative social, ecological, and environmental health impacts” of hydropower projects in Québec (Maxwell et al. 1997; Abel 2018), especially on Indigenous groups – the Crees and Inuits in particular (Abbott 1992). Such opposition has nevertheless never stopped Québec exports to the U.S. from growing, from 5.1 terawatt-hours (TWh) in 1990, to 24.3 TWh in 2021 (CER 2022). What has not been expanding between Québec and the U.S., however, are more harmonized electricity institutions and markets, under a clear and well-established framework. While the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA), enacted in 1994 (ITA 2022), created stronger relationships in oil and natural gas markets (Hale 2019), the electricity sector remained largely unaffected. Neither the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, created in 1994 at the same time as NAFTA and based in Montreal (CEC 2022), nor the North American Energy Working Group (U.S. DoE 2006) have succeeded in creating more regional cooperation in electricity markets. This is despite their early work on the benefit of electricity market integration (CEC 2002) and explicit recognition that it would be desirable to “enhance North American energy trade, development and interconnections; and promote regional integration and increased energy security for the people of North America” (U.S. DoE 2002). Beyond some long-term supply contracts and short-term spot trading in the New England and New York markets, the Québec-U.S. electricity relationship remains very shallow.

Climate change may be a trigger for a renewed relationship. Climate change being a global problem – which is particularly well acknowledged in Québec and the U.S. Northeast – cooperative solutions make sense. There is also an increased recognition that integrated approaches can increase the effectiveness of policies and practices to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Global carbon prices and more interconnected electricity markets can be used as the backbone of electrification and decarbonization (IEA 2016). This chapter argues that there has never been a better moment than the current context to forge a stronger and more integrated Québec-U.S. relationship on electricity, given the shared commitment on the fight against climate change and the potential electricity synergies Québec can offer to its U.S. neighbors.

Section one of this chapter presents the Québec electricity sector, in contrast to the New York and New England ones. It then reviews the climate goals in the U.S. Northeast and documents the demonstrated official will of Northeastern U.S. governors and Canadian premiers to work

more cooperatively. Section two examines the current state of isolated planning in climate and electricity, making the case that there is a very thin Québec-U.S. relationship in climate policies. It also highlights the fact that once again, there is an explicit recognition of the value of regional cooperation. Finally, section three offers some perspective on how the Québec-U.S. relationship in electricity could evolve toward a more regionally integrated system, which is a seemingly shared goal.

THE UNIQUE SITUATION OF NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA

Québec's Electricity Market: Current and Potential Regional Role

With 99.8% of its electricity coming from hydropower, wind and biomass in 2021 (see Table 12.1), Québec is among the few places in the world where more than 99% of the electricity is produced from renewable sources (Ritchie et al. 2022). Only Iceland had a higher proportion of renewable energy in its electricity mix, among developed countries.¹ Electricity generation in Québec is also extremely large for a population of 8.5 million: close to 213 TWh. This would make of Québec the 22nd largest electricity producer in the world if it was a country, and the 7th largest renewable electricity producer in the world – only behind China, the United States, Brazil, India, the rest of Canada and Germany (EIA 2022b). In comparison, Québec's U.S. neighbors, New York and New England, while both more populous (19.8 million in New York and 15 million in New England; Brinkhoff 2022), have a much smaller generation and a low percentage of renewables in their mix: 29.8% in New York and 21.6% in New England – see Table 12.1. With such high levels of power generation, Québec's role in regional electricity is not surprising. The generation surplus in Québec, combined with access to hydroelectricity from Labrador (Hydro-Québec 2022), could clearly address the generation deficit in New York and New England.

Québec's large and growing generation allowed exports to the U.S. to increase over the years, as illustrated in Fig. 12.1. It has been the leading province in electricity exports, outpacing Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba. This places Québec in a different relationship with U.S. states, as its importance in supplying electricity, is larger than other Canadian provinces.

Table 12.1 Electricity generation and consumption in Québec, New York and New England, 2021 (EIA 2022a; Statistics Canada 2022a, 2022b)

	<i>Québec</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>New England</i>
Total Generation, TWh	212.9	128.3	106.8
<i>Coal or petroleum liquids</i>	0.2%	0.7%	0.8%
<i>Natural gas</i>		44.5%	50.5%
<i>Nuclear</i>		24.3%	25.4%
<i>Hydroelectric</i>	94.2%	21.8%	6.0%
<i>Wind</i>	4.9%	3.4%	3.6%
<i>Biomass</i>	0.7%	1.5%	5.5%
<i>Solar</i>	0.0%	3.1%	6.6%
<i>Other</i>	0.0%	0.8%	1.7%
<i>From renewables</i>	99.8%	29.8%	21.6%
Consumption (Retail Sales), TWh	201.5 (2019 value)	141.0	113.4
Generation surplus/deficit (TWh)	11.4	-12.7	-6.6

In addition to a location allowing high generation and exports, Québec has two key assets for further renewable generation growth: existing storage capacity, and a large territory with a low population density. Reservoir storage associated with hydropower generation is extremely important in Québec. Hydro-Québec states it has 176 TWh of storage capacity (Hydro-Québec 2022) associated with its fleet of dams, while another assessment estimates at 228 TWh the total storage capacity in Québec dams, owned by Hydro-Québec and by private hydropower producers (Séguin 2017). This storage capacity can play a major role in the deployment of new intermittent renewable sources, such as wind and solar, by saving the water behind dams when the wind blows or the sun shines, and by generating from these hydropower sources when there is no wind or sun. Cárdenas et al. (2021), among many other, have illustrated the importance of storage for renewable energy penetration. Rodriguez-Sarasty et al. (2021) and Dimanchev et al. (2021) quantify the benefits of using Québec's hydropower reservoirs to decarbonize the Northeast region. Significant cost reductions are obtained when Québec's hydropower storage can be used to facilitate regional decarbonization goals.

Québec's large territory (1,356,625 km²) and low population density (6.3/km²) can also be an important asset to install new renewable

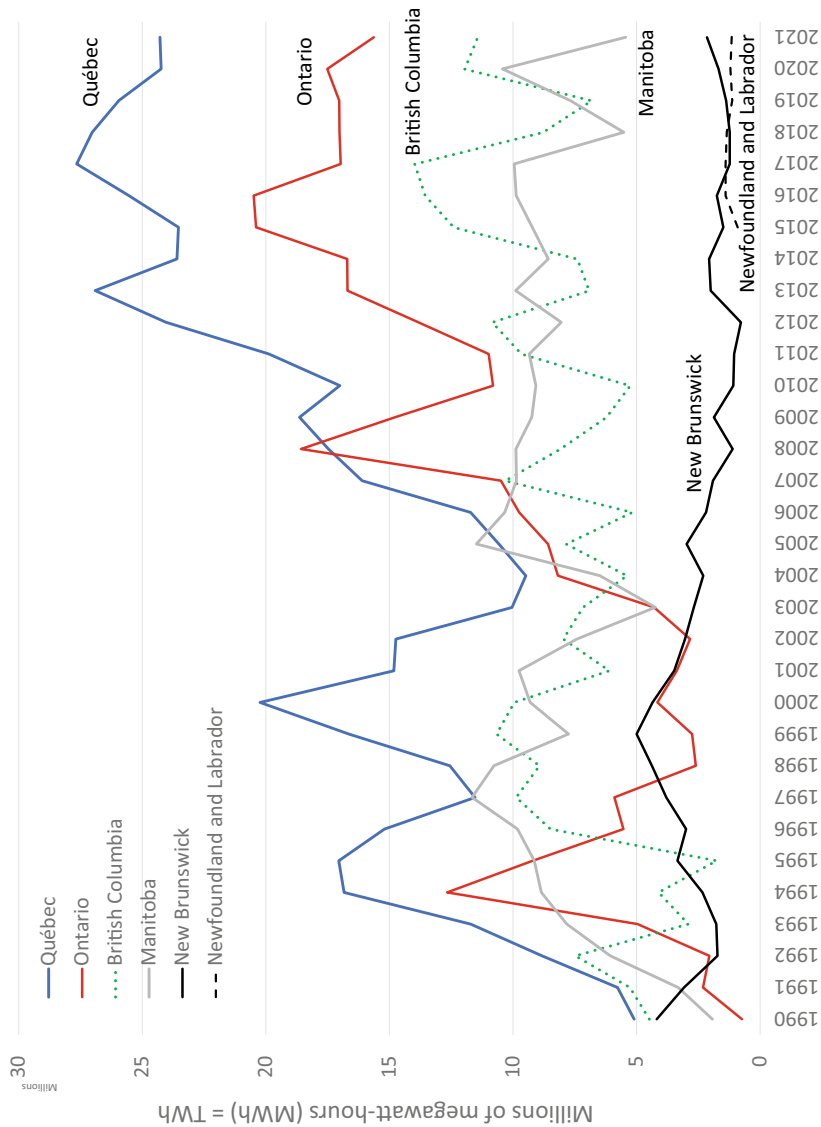


Fig. 12.1 Electricity exports from Canadian Provinces to the U.S., 1990–2021 (CER 2022)

generation capacity. The state of New York is about 10 times smaller (122,050 km²) and has a much higher population density (162.5/km²); see Brinkhoff (2022). New England is in a similar situation, with population densities ranging from 17.2/km² in Maine to 409.2/km² in Rhode Island. Given the large areas required to install wind and solar farms, the land costs and the social resistance often observed when renewable projects are constructed, Québec has a comparative advantage over New York and New England in deploying wind and solar generation.

Québec's growing electricity exports and future potential in assisting U.S. renewable generation growth can however be limited by the large market differences and asymmetries. The Québec electricity sector is largely regulated and dominated by Hydro-Québec, a vertically integrated state-owned company. In New York and New England, the electricity sector is largely deregulated and counts many companies, operating either in the generation, transmission, or distribution segments of the sector.² Such heterogeneity in institutions can represent an obstacle to building a closer more integrated relationship.

Shared Climate Goals and Political Will

Québec and its geographically closest U.S. neighbors nevertheless share ambitious climate goals. The U.S. Northeast is particularly engaged in the fight against climate change. As illustrated in Fig. 12.2, there is a concentration of states with greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and reporting requirements and market-based policies. Québec, New York and New England all have a target that is close to reducing GHG emissions by 40% in 2030 (compared to the 1990 level) and by over 80% in 2050 (see Bouchet and Pineau 2022, for more details).

Since 1973, the six New England states and the five Eastern Canadian provinces meet almost annually at the New England Governors and eastern Canadian premiers (NEG-ECP) forum to discuss trade, energy security and affordability, environmental sustainability and modernizing transportation and industry (CAP-CPMA 2022). The 2022 meeting is the 44th meeting over 49 years; only major events such as Hurricane Dorian (in 2019), or the COVID-19 pandemic (starting in 2020) have led to cancellation of the binational forum. Since 1997, almost all meetings have featured a resolution on energy and the environment.³ Since 2000, a specific focus on climate change is explicitly included, as

the NEG-ECP “[agreed] that global warming, given its harmful consequences to the environment and the economy, is a joint concern for which a *regional approach* to strategic action is required” (NEG-ECP 2000, emphasis added). The joint recognition of the regional importance of energy led even to a NEG-ECP decision, as far back as 1997, that its “Northeast International Committee on Energy (NICE) [should] monitor changes in the electricity market place regarding competition and deregulation” (NEG-ECP 1997). In 2005, the NEG-ECP stated that they “wish to reinforce and expand their cooperative efforts on energy matters” (NEG-ECP 2005) and in 2007 they acknowledged that “the initiatives of the Northeast states and provinces to achieve specific environmental targets *must be integrated* with actions at local, regional, and national levels” (NEG-ECP 2007, emphasis added). This focus on regional action was not just a trend, but a recurring theme, as in 2011 there was a clear recognition that the “exploitation of the region’s hydro-electric, wind, bio-mass, and tidal energy potential can be facilitated by expanding the capacity and operation of transmission assets in *a coordinated manner*” (NEG-ECP 2011a, emphasis added). For GHG reduction, they also valued a regional approach by identifying the need to “direct environment officials to undertake an assessment of operating and proposed regional GHG reduction programs in the U.S. and Canada and make recommendations to the 36th NEG/ECP Conference on expanding coverage to the entire northeast region” (NEG-ECP 2011b). In 2014, NICE, the Northeast International Committee on Energy, was asked to organize a Regional Energy Forum to “identify the strong collaborative actions to put in place” (NEG-ECP 2014). Such a forum either did not take place or did not lead to any publicly available report or discussion. While resolutions made by the NEG-ECP since 2014 have been slightly less explicit about the value of regional integration for energy and climate policy, every meeting mentioned the need to collaborate and to aim at regional plans. Despite repeated recognitions of the regional potential to foster renewable energy penetration and reduction of GHG emissions, actual progress on joint initiatives and shared programs across the border in the Northeast remain to be seen. Political will was evidently strong enough to continuously bring the topic of regional energy and climate cooperation to the forefront of joint discussions, but there is scant evidence of any substantive action being implemented. An internet search for documents produced by the NICE does not lead to any accessible

documents, illustrating that beyond official recognition, little work was done.

While strong regional action never materialized in the key Québec-U.S. Northeast forum (the NEG-ECP), some regional initiatives in electricity have taken place in the U.S.: the creation of the New England Independent System Operator (ISO-NE) in 1997, and the establishment of a multi-state cap-and-trade system for the power sector: the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Québec also joined the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) with California, which is also a cap-and-trade system, like RGGI, but covering GHG emission from most emitting sectors (unlike RGGI that is limited to electricity generation).

The ISO-NE emerged from a history of power pooling among New England states, a recognition that trading capacity and energy could save everyone precious resources. The RGGI, on the other hand, succeeded in securing the participation of states beyond New England: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia (RGGI 2022a). This initiative was launched in 2009 and is planned to continue until at least 2030. What is perhaps most surprising, as a climate policy tool, is the hard and declining cap placed on power sector emissions, and the fact that emissions allowances⁴ are entirely auctioned, at a financial cost for emitting power producers (as basic economic theory principle would recommend). Total proceeds in 2022 amounted to about \$5 billion, from more than 50 auctions where the price per tonne ranged from less than \$2 in the early years to above \$13 in 2022. Hubert (2013) links this improbable carbon pricing success to dedicated entrepreneurial state-level bureaucrats and to the already competitive power sector, that was already using auction mechanisms to set power prices (in the ISO-NE, ISO New York and PJM in the case of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia). This familiarity with auctions led to little opposition to that principle. Furthermore, the fact that the carbon price was put upstream of consumers and was invisible to them, while all proceeds are spent on programs helping consumers reducing their consumptions (and therefore emissions), likely made RGGI a more acceptable approach for different state populations. RGGI could hardly include Canadian provinces, because there is much less familiarity with auctions in the power sector (indeed, only Ontario and Alberta have implemented a competitive power system, see Pineau 2021). In some provinces, like Québec, there are almost no power sector emissions, as more than 99% of generation comes from renewables; there is no need to therefore have

a cap on these emissions. Finally, as there is no history of significant cooperation in the power sector across Canada (perhaps most obviously characterized by a complete absence of joint institutions to facilitate or manage power), there was very little to build on.

Against most odds, Québec was nevertheless able to implement a larger cap and trade system with California, under the umbrella of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI 2021). This cap and trade system covers less than 80% of the province and state's emissions in 2022, starting from around 20% in the initial two years (2013–2014), that only covered industrial emitters. Since 2015, all other emitting sectors, except waste, agriculture, and some transportation subsectors like aviation (and those with international activities) have to comply with this carbon market. This “Western” cap and trade is often simply referred to as the California cap and trade given the larger importance of California, compared to Québec (see C2ES 2022). The WCI emerged from a 2007 initiative of the governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington. Only California, however, implemented the cap and trade, along with Québec. The participation of Québec is probably due to the interest of the Québec government, led at the time by Jean Charest who identified itself as a Canadian climate leader and willing participant. Nova Scotia later joined the WCI in 2019 but does not link its market to the one of California and Québec. This means in practice that Nova Scotia emission allowances are not tradable in other participating jurisdictions, and that its price is distinct from their price. Nova Scotia withdrew from the WCI at the end of 2023.

The RGGI and the WCI illustrate the fact that beyond stated intentions, some real regional collaborative policies can be developed. The exact enabling conditions of both policies are difficult to identify, but initial interest, low political costs and the dedication of certain public servants are certainly at the center of the reasons for their emergence.

FRAGMENTED APPROACHES, TRAPPED IN A LOCAL STRUCTURE

As noted earlier, Québec and its Northeast neighbors share ambitious climate objectives. To develop an understanding of what has to be done to solve the global environmental crisis, almost each Northeast U.S. state and Québec have developed their own energy-climate action plan. In

this section, we review some key features of these plans, with the objective being to assess how much they recognize and integrate an existing regional potential to foster renewable energy sources and reduce GHG emissions more effectively.

Québec's Non-Energy Plan

Québec does not have a comprehensive energy-climate plan: instead, Hydro-Québec, a provincially owned and operated corporation, has an Electricity Supply Plan 2020–2029 (Hydro-Québec 2019). The Québec Ministry of the Environment (Ministère de l'environnement et de la lutte contre les changements climatiques, MELCC) also commissioned a study to explore possible paths to net zero by 2050 (Dunsky and ESMIA 2021); this study which models possible paths to net zero, does not provide a comprehensive energy action plan. The MELCC's climate action plan, the "2030 Plan for a Green Economy" (MELCC 2022a) is a bundle of about 100 different energy efficiency and GHG abatement programs that, together, can only achieve 51% of the 2030 target, according to the government own's assessment (MELCC 2022b). The electricity supply plan, as its name indicates, only considers electricity and does not fully plan for large scale electrification – which is necessary if we consider the scenarios presented in Dunsky and ESMIA (2021). How decarbonization will happen in the transportation and industry sectors, and how Québec will manage the pressure on its electricity system, remain unanswered questions. Freight transportation, in particular, remains a challenging sector as direct electrification is made more difficult with the weight of batteries and charging logistics.

Parallel to its ambitious climate goals for 2030 and 2050, and in the absence of a comprehensive energy plan, both the Government of Québec and Hydro-Québec envisage a regional role for the province: to become the green battery of the Northeast for the Québec government (Gouvernement du Québec 2021). Indeed, in the view of Hydro-Québec (2022), Québec has already "become the green battery of northeastern North America." It remains undocumented, however, as to how this future role will evolve, as electricity demand is likely to grow in Québec (Hydro-Québec 2019) and as large-scale wind projects come online in New York and Massachusetts. Exports from Québec will also compete with growing internal needs. In addition, the potential to balance increased generation from variable energy resources in the U.S. with

Hydro-Québec’s large reservoirs (offering a combined storage capacity of over 176 TWh, Hydro-Québec 2022), is neither officially discussed nor possible under the current state of energy markets and the transmission network.

State Comprehensive Energy Plans

The National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) in 2018 developed a database of energy plans across the United States. Out of 50 states, 42 identified an energy plan, to “[provide] an assessment of current and future energy supply and demand, examines existing energy policies, and identifies emerging energy challenges and opportunities” (NASEO 2018). All Northeast states have their own energy plan⁵; each of these plans, as we detail below, are mostly centered on the needs and practices of a single state.

New York

With its 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA), New York has set particularly ambitious climate and renewable energy targets for itself. It aims to reduce GHG emissions by 40% in 2030 (compared to 1990 levels), and to have 70% of renewable electricity by 2030 (up from close to 30% in 2021, see Table 12.1). While the study “Pathways to Deep Decarbonization in New York State” (E3 2020) commissioned by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) clearly indicates that net zero emission is achievable with current technologies, it also explicitly mentions that “new hydro imports from Québec” as well as “additional transmission to deliver renewable resources from other regions, especially Québec” will be needed. Such considerations were, however, not taken into account in studies commissioned by the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), the body in charge of operating the New York power system. The Climate Change Impact Study Phase 1 (Itron 2019) and Phase 2 (Analysis Group 2020), as well as the NYISO Grid in Transition Study (Brattle Group 2020) do not consider additional imports and/or interties with Québec or the region. The solution identified is essentially a “New York only” solution. Despite the fact that New York is not part of New England, and therefore not in the NEG-ECP annual meetings, New York state has a long history of electricity imports from Québec, receiving close to 10 TWh of electricity imports every year, about 7% of its

close to 150 TWh consumption (see Table 12.1 and Bouchet and Pineau 2022). A new transmission line has recently been approved between New York City and Québec by the New York State Public Service Commission (NYPSC), see CHPE (2022); the regulatory approval process in New York did not consider the state’s climate policy (CLCPA) and NYSEER-DA’s contract with Hydro-Québec for the transmission line. It remains clear that internal planning and regulation in New York are in effect not yet aligned with ambitious state targets, and even less so with possible regional opportunities.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs commissioned a “2050 Decarbonization Roadmap” (MAEOEE 2020) that clearly highlights the paths to decarbonization. Among the identified set of solutions, the report explicitly mentions the region’s hydropower availability and the potential complementarity of hydropower and wind (MAEOEE 2020: 64):

the ability to export offshore wind power to Québec can enable the optimal use of hydropower and offshore wind resources across the broader Northeastern region, with Canadian hydropower serving effectively as a regional storage resource for hours when wind is less abundant in New England. This sharing of resources has an added benefit of reducing costs for ratepayers.

To implement this solution, new transmission lines are needed to allow energy transfers from New England to Québec. The construction of such new interconnections, however, faces significant opposition. The New Hampshire project Northern Pass, connecting Québec and Massachusetts, was indeed rejected by the state Site Evaluation Committee in 2018, a decision upheld by the New Hampshire Supreme Court (see Brooks 2019). An alternative project, the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC), following a route in Maine to again try to connect Québec and Massachusetts, initially received all the regulatory permits, yet a 2021 referendum in Maine halted the construction by retroactively banning the project (Reuters 2021). A complaint has been filed with the Maine Superior Court to reverse the ban (NECEC 2021), and an initial victory has been recorded for that complaint in

August 2022. The court stated that the referendum was likely unconstitutional (Miller 2022). Ironically, despite advanced regional collaborative initiatives in New England, through the ISO-NE and RGGI, two New England States, New Hampshire and Maine, recently worked to prevent Massachusetts from obtaining hydropower from Québec and from strengthening the transmission network to allow more trade—that could notably allow bi-directional flows of wind and hydro power across regions, to minimize wind curtailments.⁶

Connecticut

An Integrated Resources Plan was released in 2021 by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CDEEP 2021), with regional modelling focused on New England and some Canadian sources. This plan explicitly acknowledges the issues faced by additional transmission lines, and notes that hydropower imports could be valuable for the state (CDEEP 2021: 178):

Should additional hydroelectric imports materialize in the future, it is important to note that this could serve as a scalable alternative to nuclear resources and could potentially reduce the quantities of additional renewable resources and reserves needed to meet the Regional Emissions Target.

The Connecticut government realizes the value of regional trade to achieve climate goals, but appears to be committed to an observational mode, instead of moving forward to truly transform its energy policies.

Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine

Vermont released a “2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan” (VT Department of Public Service 2022) highlighting the potential synergies with Québec, for the penetration of additional variable energy resources. While acknowledging the importance of regional supply, it does not specifically call for more regional planning. New Hampshire has no decarbonization plan, but recently tasked its Department of Energy, to “promote and coordinate energy policies and programs in the state” (NH 2021). This department will oversee the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, Site Evaluation Committee, Office of Consumer Advocate and the Energy Efficiency & Sustainable Energy Board. Such development is a recognition that local coordination can be beneficial. Applying the same

logic a step further could lead to recognizing that regional coordination can also be useful. Maine released in 2020 the “Maine Won’t Wait, A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action” (Maine Climate Council 2020). While the focus of the plan is on Maine and little mention is made of regional collaboration, one of the eight key strategies mentioned in the document is to “Reduce Carbon Emissions in Energy and Industrial Sectors.” Among the different actions involved in this strategy is a “Stakeholder Process to Transform Maine’s Electric Power Sector,” that calls for reconsidering how the grid is managed and planned, calling for attention to “integrated grid planning, regional and local electricity markets, regional collaboration, reliability and resiliency, and changes in law and regulation”.

While each of these state-level initiatives has a limited scope, most of them point toward the potential that regional solutions can offer. They all fall short, however, of identifying let alone embracing a more regional approach to decarbonization and electricity planning.

THE WAY FORWARD

The existing important, while shallow, Québec-U.S. relationship in electricity will inevitably evolve in the future. Considering the existing climate goals in New York and New England, and the recognition that regional energy collaboration and integration are beneficial, both within the scientific literature and in official energy-climate policy documents, there is growing momentum for a closer relationship. The difficult energy relationships in North America, linked to the balkanized nature of state and provincial energy policies, have been well documented: see Dukert (2007), Gattinger (2012) or Hale (2019). Past crises have helped reshape these relationships, to develop new models of cooperation. For instance, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), a multinational non-profit organization to manage reliability and supply adequacy issues in North American power markets, was created following a major power outage in the Northeast in 1965 (Gattinger 2011). Hale (2019) also conjectures that energy shortages and environmental catastrophes could foster more cooperation, especially in environments where there are shared policy goals and complementary interests. The climate crisis, while being a slow motion crisis (Fitch 2011), will inevitably create a suite of problematic circumstances that could foster more collaboration. Extreme weather events, floods, droughts... almost each manifestation

of climate change will bring some evidence that a more interconnected grid can be more robust and cheaper than purely local solutions—even though local solutions will also play a role in resilience. Furthermore, the addition of new renewable generation capacity in New York and New England will inevitably face some resistance, over cost and social acceptance. The comparative advantages of Québec will then gain in relevance and visibility. Both environmental problems and issues related to renewable energy infrastructures will underscore the case for more regional collaboration.

Different pathways are possible to build a closer electricity relationship between Québec and the U.S. All would benefit from a clear crisis in order to mobilize politicians and the public opinion; but one does not have to wait for such event to prepare. A first available option is to revitalize the existing NEG-ECP Northeast International Committee on Energy (NICE) and mandate it to study the potential and challenges of a more integrated electricity sector in the Northeast, building on the many state and provincial studies identifying regional benefits. Such a step would be perfectly aligned with past regional electricity discussions and could identify future actions to take. Such actions could range from more joint planning of generating capacities and transmission lines, to the creation of an “Eastern Energy Imbalance Market.” Such a market could be similar to the Western Energy Imbalance Market (WEIM), created in 2014 from British Columbia to Arizona and including California (WEIM 2022). The WEIM allows a more efficient dispatch of increasingly abundant renewable energy. Another pathway, independent and complementary, could be to work through the only existing formal regional institution in the Northeast, the Northeast Power Coordinating Council (NPCC), associated with the NERC. Through its mandate to promote and enhance reliability of the power system, in a context of increased renewable and intermittent energy supply, it would be natural for this organization to look at areas of collaboration that should be further developed. All concerned players in Québec, New York and New England should request the NPCC to consider grid decarbonization challenges in its activities, if only because of reliability and supply adequacy issues. Finally, Québec, New York and New England have made the choice to use the same carbon pricing approach to put a price on GHG emissions: a cap and trade market. While the WCI and the RGGI are distinct, they both operate on the same principles, with a declining cap of emission allowances and auctions for these allowances. As these cap

and trade markets become more familiar to the public and politicians, the benefits of greater collaboration should emerge naturally. Flexibility in allowance procurement, savings in administrative costs, simplicity of using a single system are all advantages that will become more salient in the future – as climate constraints and events will gain in visibility.

No specific player has the mandate to reinforce the Québec-U.S. electricity relationship. For most of them (i.e., governments, power sector institutions, many power companies, regulators, system operators and environmental and consumer groups), the benefits of increased collaboration are important. These benefits will become more obvious as climate change continues to evolve and renewable energy sources are deployed. Through a stronger relationship, Québec, New York and New England can each ease their decarbonization progress. Whether we anticipate the crises or wait for it before acting is a matter of policy choice –the existing energy ties and geographic proximity leave no other choice than to develop a closer relationship. The sooner it is prepared, the easier decarbonization will be.

NOTES

1. Some developing countries, with much smaller electricity generation per capita, have an electricity generation mix 100% renewable: Albania, Bhutan, Paraguay, Nepal, Lesotho, Central African Republic and Ethiopia (Ritchie et al., 2022).
2. See Bouchet and Pineau (2022) for an overview of the key differences between the U.S. and Québec electricity sector.
3. Documents from meetings prior to 1997 do not seem to be archived on the various related websites: the Coalition of Northeastern governors (CONEG, <https://www.coneg.org/who-we-are/about-neg-ecp/>), the Council of Atlantic premiers (CAP-CPMA, <https://cap-cpma.ca/negecp/>) and the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (<https://scics.ca>).
4. Emissions allowances are virtual rights that emitters must obtain to comply with the regulation. For every tonne of emitted GHG, one emission allowance is required. See EDF (2022) for more on the basics of cap and trade.
5. States without an energy plan in 2018 were South Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida (NASEO 2018).

6. When wind generation is higher than the local electricity demand, generation has to be curtailed if it cannot be transmitted to other region or stored locally.

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The Dairy Industry as a Source of Conflict between Québec and the United States

Kenneth Holland and Julie Holland

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant sources of conflict between Québec and the United States is lack of full access by American producers of dairy products to the Québec market. Although the law that limits imports is federal, the influence of Québec's dairy industry, the largest in Canada, in Ottawa means that the policy reflects the interests of *La belle province*. The dairy industry of Québec, along with that of Ontario, the two dominant provincial milk producers, do not have a complete lock on federal policy, however, as Ottawa has signed several free trade agreements in recent years, including with the United States, that partially open the Canadian market to imports of milk products. The federal government has tried to

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soften the blow of U.S. competition by promising to compensate dairy farmers and limiting access to the Canadian market by narrowly interpreting the agreements. This approach, however, has exacerbated tensions between the government of Justin Trudeau and the administration of Joe Biden, which has filed two challenges against Canada's actions to protect the dairy industry under the dispute resolution provision of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). The strategy of Québec's political parties, including the Bloc Québécois, which is solely dedicated to representing the interests of the province in the federal parliament, has been to pressure Ottawa to desist from continuing to open the Québec market to American dairy exporters and to make the preservation of the supply management system, which bans most dairy imports, a red line in Québec City-Ottawa relations. Protection of milk producers and processors from foreign competition has become such a salient issue in Québec politics that both federalist and separatist parties vow retaliation against any effort by Ottawa to weaken it. The Québec government has two choices regarding how to manage this growing conflict with the United States. It can continue its current approach of pressuring Ottawa to stop granting access to American exporters of milk, cheese, yogurt, butter and ice cream, through trade agreements and to maintain supply management, or it can choose pursuit of reciprocal trade arrangements under which Québec dairy producers and manufacturers gain access to the large American market in exchange for opening its market to American products. The latter option fits well with Québec's policy of growing its exports to the United States, and to reduce its reliance on trade with English Canada. Yves-François Blanchet, leader of the *Bloc Québécois*, calls this policy "economic nationalism" (Remiorz 2019). Québec, in fact, was the strongest supporter of free trade with the United States, in stark contrast with Ontario, where public opinion opposed CUSMA's predecessor, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Holland 1995). The end of protection, however, is likely to cause a major restructuring of Québec's dairy sector. Some politicians have estimated that as many as half of all dairy farms would close. The case of New Zealand, however, demonstrates that there is a large and growing international market for milk products and that farmers and processors can adapt to and prosper from foreign competition. If Québec chose the New Zealand model, tensions with the United States would relax and the province's reputation as an export-led economy would strengthen. The power of the dairy lobby, the intense commitment to protection for the industry among all

political parties, both federal and provincial, and the importance of the province to the governing federal Liberal Party suggest a continuation of the status quo and ongoing conflict with the United States over market access. Québec's satisfaction with supply management is indicated by the fact that Québec has never asked for constitutional power over agricultural imports to be devolved to the province while it has requested devolution in other areas such as immigration.

PROTECTION OF QUÉBEC'S DAIRY INDUSTRY

Milk production in Canada is concentrated in two provinces—Québec and Ontario, with Québec the larger producer (see Table 13.1); the two provinces are home to eighty-one percent of the country's dairy farmers (Charlebois 2020). The most important type of small-scale agriculture in Québec is the dairy farm, protected since 1972 from domestic and foreign competition by the federal government's supply management system. Dairy farming is the most productive sector of Québec agriculture, and Québec's agricultural economy depends far more on dairy production than that of any other province. In contrast to the next highest producing province, Nova Scotia, at 26%, 42% of Québec's farm cash receipts come from the dairy industry (Scullion 2006: 16). In 2020 there were 5,120 dairy farms, 363,000 dairy cows and 141 dairy manufacturing establishments in Québec (Shahbandeh 2022). Dairy production and processing supported around 83,000 jobs in Québec in 2019 and contributed US\$4.7 billion to Canada's GDP and US\$1 billion in taxes (Cornall 2019). In 2021, Canadian dairy producers and processors generated C\$24 billion in sales, including C\$8 billion in Québec (AAFC 2022).

The origin of supply management lies in the 1950s and 1960s, when there was a crisis in the dairy industry in both Québec and Ontario. Dairy farmers were producing a surplus of milk which they sold to dairy processors who could bargain for low prices. Producers had to compete with milk coming from other provinces and foreign countries. In the words of one historical study of the Canadian dairy industry that describes the 1960s, "It was virtually impossible for most dairy producers to make a decent, stable living, with the possible exception of some fluid milk producers who lived close to large urban markets" (Scullion 2006: 3). The Government of Québec was a pioneer in enabling dairy farmers to work together on setting prices for their milk through a law enacted in

Table 13.1 Milk production, by province, 2023

<i>Province</i>	<i>Hectolitres (million)</i>
Quebec	35.4
Ontario	31.6
Alberta	8.4
British Columbia	8.1
Manitoba	4.1
Saskatchewan	2.9
Nova Scotia	2.1
New Brunswick	1.6
Prince Edward Island	1.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.5
Total Canada	95.9

1956 (Scullion 2006: 15). In 1965, of the 204 dairy co-operatives in Canada, 109 were in Québec and 63 in Ontario (Scullion 2006: 9).

Although the British North America Act of 1867 gave the provinces jurisdiction over production and marketing of goods within their own boundaries, it gave the federal government jurisdiction over inter-provincial and international trade. Because milk prices within a province are affected by domestic and international imports, the federal government took responsibility for raising incomes of dairy farmers across Canada in 1972, with enactment by Parliament of the Farm Products Agencies Act. Several national agencies were established to administer the scheme, called supply management. The concept is that by limiting the supply of milk, through farm quotas and bans on imports, the price of dairy products could be kept higher than a free market would support. Farmers could predict the prices they would be paid, assured that their production costs would be covered, and enjoy a pre-determined income. Milk processors could no longer negotiate with dairy producers but had to pay a price that remained stable; how much milk is produced is regulated by provincial marketing boards using a quota system. Entering the industry became difficult, since any new entrant must purchase a quota from an existing dairy farmer; by regulating the amount of milk produced according to demand, dramatic fluctuations in the price and supply of milk could be avoided. The Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada administers supply management through the Canadian Dairy Commission, a Crown corporation. In 2020, the total net farm cash receipts in the dairy sector were C\$7.13 billion, from production at

10,095 dairy farms, almost half of which were in Québec (USTR 2021: 11). Supply management also extends to poultry farms, including egg production; supply managed enterprises constitute about 12% of all Canadian farms. As Canada is the only major agricultural producing country in the world that practices supply management (Roy 2022), with its market excluding effects, there is constant friction with the United States, its largest trading partner. Both Australia and New Zealand, major dairy producers, abandoned supply management in 2000 and 2001, respectively, and saw their exports of milk products grow significantly (History of the industry 2022; Timeline of dairy in NZ 2017).

Proponents of supply management claim that it is designed to ensure that dairy farms are profitable and do not produce surpluses. Opponents argue that dairy farming is a publicly supported cartel and that dairy farmers are profiting at the expense of consumers, who pay higher prices for milk than in the United States and other advanced countries. By controlling the supply of milk, Canada avoids having to pay subsidies directly to dairy farmers as is done in the European Union and the United States. Canada's trading partners, especially the United States, Australia and New Zealand, point out that supply management denies them access to the Canadian market for milk products. A 2012 report published by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute argued that agricultural supply management impedes trade opportunities and transfers wealth from low-income Canadians, a higher percentage of whose limited income is spent on food, to a small group of affluent dairy producers concentrated in two Eastern provinces, Ontario and Québec. Canada's trade partners regard supply management as a subsidy system that unfairly supports both domestic production and export of dairy products (Dufour and Hurdle 2022). By insisting on maintaining supply management with its denial of market access, Canada has had to make concessions in other areas to its trading partners, especially the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Clemens and Crowley 2012). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that supply management costs Canadian consumers billions every year (OECD 2017). A 2016 study by the Montreal Economic Institute found that supply management pushes up to 190,000 Canadians into poverty (Trichur 2022). Consumers in Canada face 300% tariffs on some dairy products and pay up to 30% higher prices for a litre of milk (Corcoran 2022); supply management is estimated to add upwards of C\$500 to the average family's grocery

bill each year (Clement 2022). Within Canada, milk is most expensive in Québec (Stewart 2022). In 2021, the average retail price of one liter of milk in Canada was C\$1.68, compared to C\$2.06 in Quebec and C\$1.56 in Ontario. One reason is that, unlike other jurisdictions, the retail price of milk is set by the provincial government, through the *Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires*, in a separate process from supply management. The coronavirus pandemic, which led to severe disruption in international supply chains, provided the dairy lobby with another argument in favor of supply management, viz., Canada must support domestic production and not be reliant on foreign sources for its food supply (Chicken Farmers of Canada 2022).

Both the national Conservative and Liberal Parties are strong defenders of supply management, even though it is inconsistent with free market principles (Naylor 2021). In his defense of the controversial policy, a major source of friction between Canada and its international trading partners, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberals, maintains that its purpose is to prevent surpluses of milk. Countries only have a few bad options, he suggests, when confronted with a surplus:

1. Allow it to be sold in the domestic market, suppressing prices to farmers.
2. Store it, at great expense.
3. Dispose of it, generating undesirable waste.
4. Export it to other countries, depressing prices in those markets, with special damage to the economies of developing countries.

He contends the United States and European Union subsidize the dairy industry by making direct payments to farmers. The genius of supply management, he boasted, was that there are no government payments to farmers (Trudeau on Dairy Disagreement with USA 2017). What he does not boast of, however, is that consumers finance the system by paying higher prices for milk. Despite supply management, dumping of large quantities of milk in Canada does occur; a labor dispute at a milk processing plant in Granby, Québec, in 2022, for example, resulted in the dumping of millions of litres of milk. Sylvain Charlebois, a food industry analyst at Dalhousie University, argues that it would be feasible to store surplus milk if Canada invested in plants that could freeze it, powder it or subject it to ultra-high temperature processing (UHT). The supply

management system, however, he notes, discourages these investments since it is not illegal to dump milk and producers know they will be compensated for any forced dumping (Roy 2022).

THE IMPORTANCE TO QUÉBEC OF TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES

The dispute with the United States over access to the market for dairy products is, in many respects, an anomaly in the U.S.-Québec relationship. Québec, in fact, is known more for its export-oriented policy preferences than for protectionism. The Quiet Revolution led to a new formulation of national identity advocating the autonomy or independence of Québec, both of which required freedom from reliance on English-speaking Canada. The two economic goals of the Quiet Revolution were the growth of the economy and the participation of francophones in the highest levels of business and commerce. The Parti Québécois, a separatist party led by René Lévesque, came to power in 1976 embracing free trade with the United States to grow the economy and make the province less dependent on the rest of Canada, “therefore facilitating the road to political independence” (Doucet 2011). An April 2009 Harris-Decima poll found that 73% of Québeckers thought Canada “should pursue the establishment of more free trade agreements” (Doucet 2011). Supporters of the federal separatist party, the *Bloc Québécois*, also supported free trade. Between implementation of the Canada United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), or FTA, in 1988 and 2020, exports from Québec to the United States grew by 245%, a much higher rate of increase than exports to the rest of Canada, while U.S. investments in the province increased by 190%, amounting to more than C\$2 billion in 2019, with almost 700 U.S. subsidiaries operating in Québec generating 228,000 jobs. Sixty percent of all Québec exports are international (more than 70% of Québec’s international exports go to the United States), and only 40% interprovincial, worth C\$60.1 billion in 2020. More than 20% of Québec’s GDP depends on exports to the United States (Trade between Québec and the United States 2017); top exports to the American market are aluminum, aerospace, pulp and paper, computers and electronics, lumber and steel. The government of François Legault launched a “United States Strategy” to increase exports to and investment from the United States. Missing from the strategy, however, is an increase in exports from the dairy sector. The products targeted for

an increase in cross-border sales in the agri-food sector, 69% of which are to the United States, are all outside the supply management system—pork, fruits and vegetables, grain products and beverages (*Gouvernement du Québec* 2022a).

Québec nationalists viewed protectionism as contrary to the state's ability to grow a strong economy, which requires that manufacturers and service providers have access to the world's largest markets, the United States, Europe and China, and be able to attract investment in Québec's export industries from them as well. Trade, however, is reciprocal. Québec cannot ask its trading partners to open their market to its aircraft, aluminum, lumber and pork without opening its market to their manufacturers. The protection enjoyed by Québec dairy farmers against international competition under Canada's supply management system contradicts one of the basic principles of the contemporary nationalist agenda. Naturally, while Québec's political, business and intellectual elites supported CUSFTA in 1989 and NAFTA in 1994, dairy farmers were opposed, concerned about a loss of protection (Lachapelle 1995). When the milk producers asked François Legault, the leader of the governing Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) to oppose NAFTA 2.0 (CUSMA) in 2019 because it gave limited access to American exporters to the Québec dairy market, he refused, pointing out that the agreement was good for the province's aluminum industry and that it did not compromise supply management (Cornall 2019). His current "International Vision" document emphasizes increasing exports and attracting investments (*Gouvernement du Québec* 2022b).

FRICTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND QUÉBEC OVER PROTECTION OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY DURING THE TRUMP AND BIDEN ADMINISTRATIONS

Free trade agreements, however, have introduced some uncertainty into the supply managed dairy industry. In 1989, CUSFTA resulted in more competition from processed dairy products. The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), that resulted in the Agreement on Agriculture in 1995, led to a freer trading environment for agricultural products, including dairy. The aim of the Agriculture Agreement, now administered by the WTO, is to generate fairer competition and a less distorted trade sector by increasing market access, through

reduction of tariffs on imports, reducing the use of subsidies, which stimulate production and distort trade, and reducing export subsidies (Agriculture 2022). As a result of the round, Canada lost its right to use GATT's Article XI, which had allowed it to ban outright the import of certain products, such as dairy. Henceforth, Canada would need to impose prohibitive tariffs on any product that it did not want imported, a policy known as tariffication. The goal of tariffication, according to the WTO, is to convert all existing agricultural non-tariff barriers to trade into bound tariffs, tariffs that cannot be increased, and to reduce these tariffs over time (Non-tariff Barriers 2022). Canada chose a bound tariff of 300% for certain dairy products.

RENEGOTIATION OF NAFTA

During the 2016 presidential campaign, the Republican nominee, Donald Trump, complained about NAFTA and promised either to get a much better deal for America or walk away from the agreement. In November, he narrowly won the electoral votes of two major dairy states, Wisconsin and Michigan, that had voted for the Democratic candidate in every presidential election since 1992. In January 2017, following his inauguration, President Trump issued an executive order pulling the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations and then turned his attention to NAFTA. In April 2017, he met with Wisconsin farmers who complained about the unfair practices of the dairy industry in Canada. After the meeting he called NAFTA “a total disaster” for the United States (Soroka 2021). In August 2017 representatives from Canada, Mexico, and the United States began renegotiating the agreement. The night before the G7 meeting hosted by Canada in June 2018, Trump accused Prime Minister Trudeau of “being so indignant for talking about the relations between the U.S. and Canada without recognizing that Canadians charge us up to 300% on dairy – hurting our Farmers, killing our Agriculture!” The United States “was not the piggy bank that everybody is robbing,” he added (Soroka 2021: 109). If Trump had not withdrawn from the TPP, the U.S. would have had additional access to the Québec dairy market (McGregor 2022). Trump attempted to regain these concessions through the renegotiated NAFTA.

Although the federal government involved the provinces directly during the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the European Union (the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement [CETA]

in 2014), it chose not to include the provinces in the renegotiation of NAFTA in 2018, despite a request from Québec. Québec and Ontario knew that one of the U.S. demands was to modify supply management and open the Canadian dairy market to U.S. milk products. Any changes to prevailing dairy policies have the biggest impact on Québec. Ottawa argued that involving the provinces in the renegotiation would slow down the process and impede its ability to make concessions (Paquin 2019). The final decisions in the NAFTA renegotiations were made by Ottawa in the middle of the Québec elections, when every political party opposed giving concessions on dairy. The trade deal was announced on September 30, 2018, and Québec voters went to the polls the following day.

Under pressure to make concessions, Trudeau opened 3.6% of Canada's dairy market to the United States and canceled Class 7 milk products. The Class 7 scheme priced Canadian skim milk low to remove the incentive for dairy factories to buy American products (McGillivray 2018). Access for U.S. dairy products in CUSMA was considerably higher than that in CETA (1.4%) and CPTPP (3.1%). Together, the three preferred trade agreements opened 8.1% of the Canadian dairy market (PLQ 2018). Once the three agreements are fully implemented, around 18% of milk products consumed in Canada will come from abroad, representing an annual loss of C\$1.3 billion for dairy farmers alone (PLQ 2018). Ontario and Québec dairy farmers were most incensed at the abolition of Class 7 products, since they were producing large surpluses of non-fat solids, a by-product of milk production. The agreement, moreover, limited Canadian dairy producers' ability to export skim milk powder, milk protein concentrates and infant formula (Dufour and Hurdle 2022: 54). The premiers of both Québec and Ontario denounced the new NAFTA. Francois Legault said he would look at every option to oppose it; Ontario Premier Doug Ford, instead of trying to block it, demanded compensation for the province's dairy farmers and processors, a call soon joined by Legault (Paquin and Marquis 2022).

The revised NAFTA, now called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (known as CUSMA in Canada) was signed by Trump, Trudeau, and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto in November 2018. The agreement, following approval from each member state's legislature, went into effect on July 1, 2020. In November 2020, Trump lost his bid for re-election to the Democratic nominee, Joe Biden. Trump failed to repeat his 2016 wins in Wisconsin and Michigan, notwithstanding

his success in winning dairy concessions from Canada in the NAFTA renegotiation.

As events proved, the Canadian negotiators were disingenuous. Trudeau found a way to take back what his team had given away. After the deal was implemented, Trudeau continued ardently to defend supply management and found a way to evade the concessions that he had made to secure free trade deals with major economies. Trudeau's pattern is to please the export-dependent industries in Canada by joining free trade agreements with several of its principal trading partners, including Europe through CETA, the United States through CUSMA, Pacific nations through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Britain through a proposed Canada-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (Government of Canada 2022a) and India through a proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (Government of Canada 2022b). In the negotiations, the Trudeau government makes small concessions to open the Canadian dairy market through limited tariff rate quotas (TRQs). TRQs establish a limit on the quantity of a product that may be imported duty free. The higher tariff on dairy products, peaking at 300%, applies to any imports above that quota.

The power of the milk producers' lobby in Québec was demonstrated during the 2018 and 2022 provincial elections. During the 2018 campaign for the premiership of Québec, the major party leaders vied to position themselves as the defenders of the Québec dairy industry as it was coming under scrutiny during the negotiations to revise NAFTA. In August 2018, the leaders of Québec's principal political parties met at the headquarters of *l'Union des producteurs agricoles* (UPA), an organization representing Québec farmers. Philippe Couillard, leader of the provincial Liberal Party said that he would reject any trade agreement not agreeable to the province's dairy farmers. Opening Canada to U.S. milk imports would result, he claimed, in the disappearance of half of Québec's dairy farms. He said the dairy industry is as important to Québec as the auto industry is to Ontario (*National Post* 2018). *The Globe and Mail* reported in August that the Canadian negotiators were prepared to make concessions to the United States to open Canada's dairy sector to imports. During the election campaign in Québec, Couillard warned "of serious consequences" if there is any further dismantling of supply management. Couillard said that he was willing to sign a *Parti-Québécois*-proposed

declaration in support of supply management once he had studied it. PQ Leader Jean-François Lisée invited leaders of other parties to sign a declaration to defend supply management “at all costs.” With regard to one of the CAQ candidates for a seat in the National Assembly, Youri Chassin, an economist who had spoken out against supply management, party leader François Legault said “he has revised his position.” Legault assured his audience that the system is “non-negotiable” (Dougherty 2018). Strong support for supply management by Legault is reinforced by the fact that the CAQ, like Maurice Duplessis’s *Union Nationale* party in the twentieth century, is overwhelmingly strong in rural, suburban and small-town Québec, with much weaker support from Montreal (Fraser 2022). Manon Masseé, leader of *Québec Solidaire*, also opposed concessions on dairy.

Roughly 60% of Québec’s agricultural interests are affected by dairy supply management. Pascal Theriault, an agricultural economist at McGill University, pointed out that the popularity of supply management among Québec voters is based on several factors, including the fact that it contributes about C\$6 billion to Québec’s GDP and supports around 80,000 jobs. He said farmers are perceived as hard-working and “smaller family farms also play a vital role in bringing jobs and life to sparsely populated rural regions.” He also emphasized that Québec has some of the strongest agricultural unions, a powerful constituency in the pro-supply management lobby. Theriault believes the disproportionate interest in supply management by the candidates is due as much to their desire to be viewed by the voters as strong defenders of Québec’s interests against the federal government as it is to economics (Lowrie 2018). Within a theoretical perspective, the Québec parties’ diehard commitment to supply management is not the optimal outcome for the goal of promoting economic growth and decreased dependence on English Canada, a calculation suggested by rational choice theory (Downs 1957). A better theoretical explanation is the power of symbolic politics, in which opposition to free trade in dairy products is a symbol of a party’s commitment to the interests of Québec, threatened by the policies of the federal government, opposition in which the dairy farmer plays a central, mythical role (Harrison 1995).

The dairy farmers, in fact, were not supportive of NAFTA 2.0. The president of Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), Pierre Lampron, quickly reacted to the news that Legault had urged the *Bloc Québécois* to move quickly to help pass CUSMA. He pointed out that “the agreement would transfer the equivalent average production of some 520 Québec dairy

farms to the United States [and that in turn] this US milk would replace the domestic production currently used in dairy products sold throughout Québec.” He further observed that the milk products from the United States will not have to adhere to the same standards as those produced in Québec, including the absence of bovine growth hormones (BGH) (DFC 2019). The Québec dairy farmers charged that Trudeau had sacrificed them for the benefit of Ontario’s automobile industry (EDC 2018). Supply management was not a visible issue in the 2022 provincial election campaign, in part because of the federal government’s commitment to compensate dairy farmers and processors for loss of market due to increased foreign competition and Trudeau’s pledge not to make any more market access concessions in future trade deals.

THE UNITED STATES LAUNCHES OFFICIAL CHALLENGES TO CANADA’S PROTECTION OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

Canada’s trade partners have challenged the denial of market access in the dairy sector several times. Although the dairy industry hoped that the status quo would remain, the United States began challenging protection of the dairy sector in 1995, when it launched a formal challenge under NAFTA, claiming that Canada was prohibited from establishing new tariffs on dairy, poultry and egg products. Canada won the dispute (Scullion 2006: 156). Undeterred, the United States, joined by New Zealand, filed a complaint in 1997 alleging that Canada was subsidizing the export of its milk products in violation of its obligations under the WTO. In March 1999 the WTO Dispute Settlement Panel ruled in favor of the complainants. Canada appealed to the WTO Appellate Body but lost there as well (Scullion 2006: 157).

CUSMA imposed four new obligations on Canada regarding the dairy industry (USTR 2020):

1. It granted new shares of the Canadian market to U.S. dairy producers.
2. It abolished milk Class 7.
3. It capped Canadian exports of certain dairy products.
4. It imposed new transparency requirements.

The Biden administration, which took power in January 2021, received vocal complaints from the U.S. dairy industry that Canada had refused to honor its obligations under CUSMA to open partially the Canadian dairy market to U.S. producers. On May 25, 2021, the United States requested that a panel be established under Chapter 31 of CUSMA. In January 2022, this first dispute resolution panel convened under the agreement made public its decision on a complaint brought by the United States against the way in which Canada allocated the quota for U.S. dairy imports. The panel concluded that certain practices of the Canadian government relating to the dairy industry violate the government's commitments under CUSMA. As part of its commitment in the agreement's Chapter 2, Canada maintains TRQs in 14 categories of dairy products. Canada, however, reserved between 85 and 100% of each of the TRQs for Canadian processors, who have little incentive to import. The United States challenged this practice as denying the ability of U.S. dairy farmers and factories to export to Canada. The U.S. Trade Representative pointed out that many of the TRQs were unfilled. The panel determined that Canada was in breach of its CUSMA commitments by reserving TRQs exclusively for Canadian processors. Canada had until February 3, 2022, to comply with the panel's decision, but the Trudeau government did not meet that deadline. In March, Canada submitted its proposal on how it would change tariff rate quotas for imports on dairy, but dairy groups in the United States were disappointed and called for more reforms. The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) rejected the proposal issued by Global Affairs Canada. NMPF and USDEC said they would work with the Biden administration and U.S. Congress to seek to ensure that the CUSMA dispute resolution system produced actual results (AGDAILY 2022). The Office of the United States Trade Representative and the U.S. Department of Agriculture rejected these changes and claimed that Canada remains out of compliance with its CUSMA obligations by limiting TRQ allocations to Canadian processors of dairy products. Canada continues to exclude eligible applicants for allocations of dairy TRQs, they said, including Canadian retailers and food service operators, who have the strongest incentive to import U.S. dairy products. The United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Katherine Tai, stated in response to Canada's policies:

We communicated clearly to Canada that its new policies are not consistent with the USMCA and prevent U.S. workers, producers, farmers, and exporters from getting the full benefit of the market access that Canada committed to under the USMCA. We will continue to work with USDA to ensure that our dairy industry can bring a wide range of high-quality American products to Canadian customers. (USTR 2022)

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, observed:

Canada's protectionist dairy policies are a top concern for the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the Biden-Harris Administration. Canada has failed to honor and implement its USMCA commitments by removing the trade restrictions that disadvantage and deter U.S. dairy producers and exporters from enjoying real and meaningful access to the Canadian market. Obtaining that access remains a top priority for the Administration and we are considering all options available to achieve this objective. (USTR 2022)

In its submission to the panel, Canada noted that it has long taken the approach of administering its quotas by reserving a portion of its TRQs for Canadian processors. It started the practice in 1995 in administering the WTO TRQ for chicken. Canada continued the practice under CETA, when Canada established TRQs for the first time for cheese under a free trade agreement. Again, under the CPTPP, Canada established 16 dairy TRQs, which, again, it administered by reserving them largely for Canadian processors. Australia and New Zealand, two large exporters of dairy products, are signatories to the CPTPP and took notice of the CUSMA panel's decision and indicated that they would work with the United States to try to bring an end to Canadian non-compliance with its obligation to open the dairy market to duty free imports. In May 2022, New Zealand launched dispute settlement proceedings against Canada under the CPTPP regarding Canadian quotas on dairy imports which deny New Zealand exporters of milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream and other milk products access to the Canadian market (Willis 2022).

During a visit to Ottawa in May 2022, United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai called access issues with Canada's dairy market a "source of great frustration." Tai said "it's been a thorny issue for decades, for sure" (McGregor 2022). On May 25, 2022, the USTR requested dispute settlement consultations with Canada under USMCA to address

dairy restrictions by Canada that are contrary to its USMCA commitments. This was the second dispute the United States brought under CUSMA regarding Canada's allocation of its dairy TRQs. In January 2023 the United States established a second panel under USMCA, with the panel issuing its final report on November 10, 2023. In a 2–1 decision, the panel found that Canada's measures in response to the first panel's findings were not inconsistent with the CUSMA provisions cited by the United States. The dissenting panelist agreed with the American claim that Canada's exclusion of Canadian restaurant owners and dairy product retailers, who have an incentive to import U.S. dairy products, from eligibility for TRQs, violated CUSMA. Ambassador Tai said:

I am very disappointed by the findings in the USMCA panel report released today on Canada's dairy TRQ allocation measures. Despite the conclusions of this report, the United States continues to have serious concerns about how Canada is implementing the dairy market access commitments it made in the Agreement. . . We will not hesitate to use all available tools to enforce our trade agreements and ensure that U.S. workers, farmers, manufacturers, and exporters receive the full benefits of the USMCA. (USTR 2023)

Because the Québec parties support Trudeau's obstructionism, the dispute has the ability to potentially damage U.S.-Québec relations and Québec's credibility as an advocate of free trade. Québec appears to Americans as inconsistent by both demanding greater access for its goods to the American market while barring access of U.S. products to its market. Dairy farmers and processors have been called "the most powerful lobbying organization" in Canada (Gurney 2021). The failure of the Trudeau government to meet its commitments under CUSMA, say critics, reflects the influence of the dairy industry and the pressure it brings to bear on the Canadian government and the importance of rural constituencies in Québec and eastern Ontario to both the Liberal and Conservative Parties (Hui 2022).

TWO PATHS TO RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

The Québec government has two basic options regarding how to manage this growing conflict with the United States. It can continue its current approach of pressuring Ottawa to stop granting access to American manufacturers of dairy products through trade agreements, to continue to compensate dairy farmers and processors for loss of market under these trade deals, and to maintain supply management, or it can instead choose to pursue reciprocal trade arrangements under which Québec dairy producers and processors gain access to the large American market in exchange for the province's opening of its market to American products.

PROTECTION AND COMPENSATION STRATEGY

Québec dairy farmers oppose any free trade agreement that grants access to Canada's market for dairy products and advocate for federal legislation such as Bill C-282, a private member's bill introduced by Bloc Québécois MP Luc Thériault in November 2021, that seeks to block federal negotiators from granting foreigners further access to Canada's protected dairy, egg and poultry markets in future trade deals (Trichur 2022; Chicken Farmers of Canada 2022). In November 2020, Trudeau pledged not to sacrifice any more dairy market share in future free trade agreements (AAFC 2020) and renewed his commitment to make whole dairy producers who, in theory, must compete with new imports. In 2019, the Trudeau government pledged C\$1.75 billion in compensation to Canadian dairy producers (DFC 2020). One compensatory initiative is the Supply Management Processing Investment Fund (SMPPIF) which helps processors of supply-managed commodities adapt to market changes resulting from the implementation of free trade agreements (Government of Canada 2022c). The C\$292.5 million program provides grants to support investments in dairy, poultry, and egg processing facilities that improve efficiency through the purchase of new automated equipment and technology. In addition, Canadian farmers are receiving C\$1.75 billion in direct payments over the first four years of the implementation of both the CPTPP and CETA. The owner of a farm with 80 dairy cows, for example, will receive approximately C\$38,000 annually (McGregor 2022). In 2022 the Trudeau administration worked with the dairy sector to determine full and fair compensation for the impacts of CUSMA, to be introduced in the 2023 budget (Cornall 2022). Because CUSMA opens

a larger share of the Canadian market to American dairy imports than CETA and CPTPP, the compensation package is expected to be even larger.

EXPORT STRATEGY

The second option available to Québec's leaders, transforming dairy farming into an export-oriented sector, fits well with the government's international vision and United States strategy, which emphasize growing exports and attracting investment. The end of protection, however, is likely to cause a major restructuring of Québec's dairy sector. Some politicians have estimated that as many as half of all dairy farms would close. The case of New Zealand, however, demonstrates that there is a large international market for milk products and that dairy producers can adapt to and prosper from foreign competition. If Québec chose the New Zealand model, tensions with the United States would relax and the province's reputation as an export-driven economy would strengthen. An outward looking dairy industry would attract substantial U.S. investment, such as Coca-Cola's 2020 \$85 million investment in a new production facility in Peterborough, Ontario, to produce Fairlife Ultrafiltered Milk (Coca-Cola Company 2020). Consumers would benefit from greater competition; without full access to foreign dairy products, Québeckers will continue to pay higher prices. In May 2022, the price of milk in Canada was 7.9% higher than a year earlier (Trichur 2022).

The OECD found that Canada's export growth would be boosted if it phased out its supply management system, most likely through "renegotiation of trade agreements" (OECD 2017: 128). Although Canada is a major producer of cow's milk, it is mostly for domestic consumption. It is not one of the world's principal exporters of milk. In 2023, the seven biggest suppliers of milk on global markets, in rank order, were New Zealand, Germany, Netherlands, United States, Belgium, France, and Australia (Workman 2024).

According to the OECD, prohibiting any serious competition with producers outside the country costs Canadians an average of US\$2.6 billion a year. The OECD predicts that global demand for dairy products will grow by about 1.6% annually between 2020 and 2029, faster than for most other agricultural products. Doing away with supply management would mean more competition for Québec dairy farmers, but it would also mean more export opportunities abroad. The OECD points out

that globalization is lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and into the middle class, and thereby increasing demand for products made from milk. A U.S. Trade Commission report estimates that American imports of Canadian dairy products would increase by US\$161.7 million if the terms of the CUSMA were enforced, and CUSMA only opens 3.6% of the Canadian market (Clement 2022). New Zealand offers a model of how exchanging supply management for a free trade policy could greatly increase exports. In 2020, New Zealand's dairy industry generated US\$16 billion in foreign sales, accounting for one-third of the country's exports and constituting the single largest export sector; the top destinations were China, Australia and the United States (Willis 2022). Canada would have a comparative advantage in competing with New Zealand in the U.S. market. Eliminating supply management would also offer an opportunity for Canada and Québec to reverse the current trade deficit in dairy products. In 2019, dairy imports were valued at around C\$517 million more than dairy exports, with the bulk of these imports coming from the United States (Shahbandeh 2022).

Increasing exports of milk products to the United States, however, presents Québec with several challenges. Because the dairy sector is highly subsidized in the United States, it will be difficult to compete in the U.S. market on price. The huge surpluses that American farm policy generates keep milk prices low. Greater access would require a complete scrapping of supply management, since Washington considers it to be a subsidy system and CUSMA prohibits the export of subsidized agricultural products (Article 3.4). CUSMA, moreover, erects barriers to export of Canadian dairy products to third countries (Dufour and Hurdle 2022). For Québec to transform its dairy sector into an export leader, the federal government would need to renegotiate CUSMA. The promise to dismantle supply management would be well received by Washington as a prelude to the talks.

The OECD forecasts that Canada will end supply management only in exchange for increased market access. Québec is vulnerable to unilateral action by the United States; witness the Trump administration's decision to escalate tariffs on Canadian lumber, steel and aluminum, sectors vital to Québec's economy. The demand for Québec products is also threatened by Biden's preference for "Buy American" restrictions in large government programs such as the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Biden also proposed granting a tax credit for purchase of electric vehicles made in the United States but after intense

lobbying by Ottawa extended the credit to cars and trucks made in North America, a restriction opposed by the European Union, Japan and South Korea. The value that Washington places on access to the Canadian dairy market was highlighted by the threat of Canadian Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and International Trade Minister Mary Ng to impose retaliatory tariffs and reverse “certain dairy-related trade concessions” if the U.S. Congress approved the made-in-America incentives for electric vehicles (Lee 2021). Canada could, with Québec’s encouragement, offer open access to Canada’s market for dairy products in exchange for Washington’s elimination of tariffs on lumber, aluminum, and other Québec exports (Clement 2022). Premier Legault is attempting to revive the automobile industry in Québec by establishing a supply chain connecting the province’s mineral deposits needed in the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles, including nickel, lithium and cobalt, to their mining, processing and use in manufacture of finished vehicles for distribution in the American market, processes powered by the province’s hydroelectricity. Québec’s ambition is to become the “green battery of North America” (Maple Business Council 2021; Montpetit 2021), thereby helping to fulfill Legault’s vision for Québec to reach a level of wealth similar to that of Ontario (Berard 2021). Québec could also use the promise of access to its market for Maine dairy farmers and processors in exchange for a green light from Maine for Hydro-Québec to complete a transmission line across the state so that it can supply electricity to Boston and New York City (Hanes 2022). As Maine’s governor, Janet Mills, says, “Dairy farms are a cornerstone of Maine’s agricultural industry, of our rural communities, and of our economy as a whole,” with an almost US\$2 billion in direct and indirect economic impact (Sands 2022).

CONCLUSION

If Québec were to remove its staunch defense of supply management, the Trudeau government would be in a strong position to phase it out, while compensating dairy farmers and processors for their losses, which would be substantial for Québec’s 5,000 dairy farms. One loss would be a drop in the value of the farms. Because of supply management’s licensing scheme, those desiring to enter the dairy business must purchase quotas from existing farms. The quotas are typically worth more than the land, structures and cows combined. As a result, the average dairy

farm in Canada is worth almost C\$6 million (Charlebois 2020). The end of supply management could have immense benefits for Québec's trade relationship with the United States. The power of the dairy lobby, the intense commitment to protection for the industry among all political parties, both federal and provincial, and the importance of the province to the federal Liberal Party suggest, however, a continuation of the status quo and ongoing conflict with the United States over market access.

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PART IV

The Role and Place of Cultural and Social
Environments



Québec's Cultural Policy in the United States: From Diplomacy to Industries

Alexandre Couture Gagnon

INTRODUCTION

Québec does not do foreign policy for fun. Promoting its identity is important in case of problems with the federal government, or to make sure that the federal government is aware of Québec when negotiating with the United States. If the federal government were to return to a non-respect of Québec on the international scene, as in the 1960s or 1970s, Québec officials would be ready to intervene. But much more acute is the need for the economic benefits from Québec exports in the United States. As Paquin argues, the objective of this “identity paradiplomacy” is “to work internationally to further the strengthening or building of [Québec’s] nation within a multinational country” (2020: 51) and is “more intense than typical paradiplomacy” (2018: 3). In Québec, foreign policy blends with a core identity public policy, culture.

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Québec spends more in culture than any other province. Cultural industries account for 4.3% of Québec's GDP. By comparison, they represent 4.1% in Ontario and 3.3% in Canada as a whole (Statistics Canada 2016). Statistics Canada stopped reporting data on government cultural expenses in 2012 (Statistics Canada 2019). For the last year for which there are data, that is, in 2010, the Québec government spent 982 million CAD on culture, while all provinces together spent 3 billion CAD. The Québec provincial government spent more than any other province (the second one was Ontario, with 819 million CAD). Adding expenses from municipal governments to provincial expenses on culture, Québec also spent more than other provinces. In 2010, Québec municipalities spent 594 million CAD, while Ontarian municipalities spent 1,271 million CAD. Combining provincial and municipal expenses on culture, Québec spent 1,576 billion CAD and Ontario, 2,090 billion CAD (Statistics Canada 2015, author's calculations). In sum, provincial and municipal expenses in culture reached 199 CAD per capita in Québec in 2020, while they were only 172 CAD in Ontario (author's calculations).

The Québec state apparatus developed in the 1960s. Starting then, the objectives of Québec's cultural policy in the United States were mainly interested in the promotion of nationalism and the building of a national identity. After the 1990s recessions, the Québec government partly focused its cultural policy on the marketing of cultural industries. Cultural industries have increasingly been promoted as helping build the national identity while providing jobs and contributing to Québec's GDP. Today, the Québec government's main objective in the United States is business opportunities. It explicitly pursues its cultural policy in the United States with this objective at the forefront.

This chapter seeks to answer the following question: How has the Québec government's cultural policy in the United States evolved since the 1960s? This research question is important because the Québec government defines its identity with culture as its main characteristic. Québec's politics have an impact on the U.S. economy, with trade at some 80 billion USD yearly (ISQ 2020). Gagnon (2016) has shown that Québec politics have had an impact on U.S. elections in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. Kirkey (2022) argues that the U.S. must study Canada, notably because of the links between the two countries. The basis or the foundation of Québec's politics is its key identity

policy, that is, cultural policy. To put it simply, when the Québec government changes its cultural policy, it signals a broader or deeper change in Québec's politics (Couture Gagnon and Saint-Pierre 2020).

Cultural policy consists of what the government does or does not do in the field of culture. Our definition of cultural policy is in line with Dye's general definition of "public policy": "anything a government chooses to do or not to do" (1972: 2). Scholarly literature often defines "culture" as "the cultural identity of any community – small or large" and uses as its main variables religion, racism, and relations between genders, thus making "culture" and "political culture" almost synonyms (Lane and Ersson 2007). In this paper, culture does not refer to the moral values of a society on religion or other contentious issue nor does it have to do with its moors; culture here has to do with the interpretation of a nation's identity through the arts, heritage, and language. American scholars have defined cultural policy succinctly, that is, mainly the arts, or broadly, that is, including all social activities that are not restricted to the household. Schuster defines cultural policy as including only "the arts (including the for-profit cultural industries), the humanities, and the heritage" (2003: 1). Mulcahy adds many other activities: "publicly supported institutions such as libraries and archives; battlefield sites, zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, aquariums, parks; community celebrations, fairs, and festivals; folklore activities such as quilting, country music, folk dancing, crafts; and perhaps certain varieties of circus performances, rodeos, and marching bands" as well as government broadcasting (2017: xiv).

The rest of this paper is divided as follows. The first section describes the methodology. The second section presents a historical analysis of Québec's cultural policy in the United States. The last section discusses the three elements of analysis: (1) How does Québec's position as a subnational actor that is committed to pursuing paradiplomatic activities impact, influence and explain its engagement with the United States vis-à-vis cultural policy?; (2) How do the origins, development, and current state of Québec-U.S. relations help to explain the dynamics of Québec's cultural policy?; and (3) Does the Québec-U.S. relationship in cultural policy essentially replicate or echo relations between Canada and the United States on the same policy field? How, and in what ways does it depart from the substance and tone of Canada-U.S. relations regarding cultural policy?

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on three main sources of data: academic literature, government documentation, and archival funds. The first two sources consist of documents available online, books, and printed government papers. The author used the online database of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec to research the following keywords (in French) in the archival funds “Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie 1951–2014 (E42)” and “Fonds Ministère du Conseil exécutif 1662–2017 (E5)”: “Direction des États-Unis;” “ententes;” “coopération;” “échange(s);” “relations;” “bureau des sous-ministres;” “Cabinet du ministre.” The author read the description of all containers with these words and requested those that also included a mention of the United States. The author consulted the requested containers in person on three occasions: 48 containers from the archival funds E42 in August 2019; 45 containers from the archival funds E42 and 6 containers from the archival funds E5 in November 2019; and 27 containers from the archival funds E42 in November 2021.

SAVING U.S. FRANCOPHONES

In the 1960s, Québec experienced a rise of nationalism. A multitude of factors led to the phenomenon. At the domestic level, there was a large base of young baby boomers more educated than their parents, hoping for more representation from their government. The GDP was growing rapidly, leading to a sentiment of hopeful future. At the international level, groups were requesting more rights (the most obvious illustration probably being African Americans in the United States). Additionally, the Francophonie was organizing. Québec transitioned from the *Grande noirceur*, a period associated to the 1950s when the province was controlled by Prime Minister Duplessis, with strong ties to the Catholic Church. The decade of the 1960s is called the *Révolution tranquille* and explicated as the withdrawal or removal of the Catholic Church from public institutions (education, healthcare, welfare) and its replacement by the Québec government, combined with an opening to the rest of the world. The presentation is probably simplistic but reflects the historiography and the “mythistory” of the minority nation (Turgeon 2013). In other words, the *Grande noirceur* and the *Révolution tranquille* are how a large portion of Québécois understand their history and this, in

turn, is important because ousting the Catholic Church and enlarging the Québec government intervention across policy fields justify the role of the government in defining Québec's identity.

The Québec government created the *ministère des Affaires culturelles* (MAC) in 1961. This department, responsible for culture, was the first in North America (MCC 2019). Québec's organization for cultural policy was then based on France's model. The structure was full of large, important institutions designed for the *haute culture* (Saint-Pierre and Couture Gagnon 2017). The MAC was not present in the United States. The only Québec department present in the United States was the *ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales* (MAIQ).

The MAIQ sent French teachers to Louisiana starting in the 1970s. It did so to promote the French language in one of the last bastions of Francophonie in the United States. In 1972, the Québec office in New York City explained that it was not seeking to promote cultural goods from Québec but that it hoped to help Francophones in Maine (BAnQ 1972). The Québec office in Louisiana clearly wrote in a confidential 1980 document that its objectives were to represent Québec and to save Acadians in Louisiana (BAnQ January 1980). The benefits for Québec were that the Québec teachers were also able to learn English while in the United States. There were no political or monetary reasons (Bernier 1996: 115).

Elsewhere, we explained that the first structured and large foreign program of Québec in the United States was *Opération Amérique* in the late 1970s (Couture Gagnon and Chapelle 2019). The government established the program after the election of the pro-independence *Parti Québécois* as a majority government in 1976 and the speech of Québec's Prime Minister René Lévesque before the Economic Club in New York City (where he, *inter alia*, compared the independence of Québec to the United States' one from Great Britain). Given the risk that U.S. companies might withdraw their investments from Québec for fear of political turmoil, the government embarked on the subtle promotion of a trait of Québec that Americans viewed favorably, the French language and culture. A drastic program might have induced negative feedback, from Americans or Canadian government officials. *Opération Amérique* focused on government officials, artists, French teachers, and other "rational" Americans susceptible of promoting a positive image of Québec in the United States (Couture Gagnon and Chapelle 2019).

Cultural industries began to surface in government documentation in the late 1970s. In 1978, in a Cabinet meeting, the *ministre d'État*

du développement culturel Camille Laurin handed a “mémoire” to recommend the creation of a government office responsible for cultural industries. In it, Laurin wrote that the market of Québec cultural goods must find avenues outside Québec to survive (BAnQ 1978). In 1979, the Québec government had no official policy on international cultural relations (BAnQ May 1979). An internal MAIQ document in 1979 listed the arguments in favor of foreign cultural promotion by Québec. The main reason was related to nationalism: 1) Québec was the only one defending French in North America (BAnQ September 1979: 2). The second reason had to do with the balancing of market forces and made a reference to the White paper on cultural development (BAnQ September 1979: 3). In a list of four reasons, the economic interest appeared in fourth place. The author argued for a strong leadership by the MAIQ, not the MAC, in foreign cultural promotion (BAnQ September 1979) Why? The goal of foreign cultural promotion was economic, not cultural. There was a mention of cultural industries, as part of a future policy on foreign cultural relations (BAnQ September 1979).

Still in 1979, an internal memo stated that the first reason for cultural relations with the United States was political (BAnQ August 1979). At that time, all of Québec government was preparing for potential sovereignty. The second reason was that Québec was the only Franco-phone entity in the continent. This reason was related to the 1978 White paper titled “La politique québécoise du développement culturel.” Meetings in 1980 of Québec civil servants posted in delegations in the United States indicated that they wanted to promote Québec cultural goods, but there was no structured action or policy (BAnQ June 1980). In 1980, one of the priorities of the Direction États-Unis (DEU, the office in charge of Québec’s affairs in the United States) was the growth of the diffusion of Québec cultural goods (in the United States) (BAnQ October 1980).

Cultural industries became important for the Québec offices in the United States in the 1980s. The Opération Amérique (the program that institutionalized the promotion of the identity of Québec in the United States starting in the late 1970s) ended after the first referendum on sovereignty, in 1980. In a 1980 memo titled “Orientations post-référendaires,” it is expressly written and underlined (which was rarely used in this type of documentation) that the objective of Québec-U.S. relation is henceforth economic (BAnQ July 1980). Also in 1980, another internal memo stated that the MAIQ wanted to oversee the promotion

cultural industries outside Québec and that the Québec office in the United States was hoping to take the lead (BAnQ August 1980).

In 1981, the Direction États-Unis mentioned that its budget was decreasing and that it was researching its mission (BAnQ April 1981). In 1982, the priorities of the Québec government office in New York City were still all related to education, although there was a mention of promotion of cultural goods (BAnQ August 1982). In 1984, the MAIQ became the ministère des Relations internationales (MRI). Internal documentation complained of the absence of a cultural policy for Québec in the United States. In 1984, a high civil servant wrote: “Le MRI, ou plutôt son prédécesseur le MAIQ, n’a jamais défini de politique culturelle d’ensemble spécifique à son orientation propre. Par contre, il a soutenu traditionnellement le MAC et collaboré à la diffusion de l’image culturelle du Québec à l’étranger et à la promotion de ses biens culturels.” (BAnQ November 1984a: 1) The Québec government’s office in New York City did little in culture, basically not more than organizing a reception when an artist from Québec was in town:

Sous ces énoncés assez vagues, l’entente tacite avec la DEU a donc toujours été que la DGNY devait apporter une aide technique et professionnelle aux artistes québécois de passage sur notre territoire, et souligner les événements culturels en offrant une réception pour permettre une meilleure diffusion de l’image culturelle du Québec et aider l’artiste à créer des contacts dans le milieu précis de sa compétence. Les réceptions sont donc un outil de promotion au même titre que l’assistance technique et professionnelle. Dans le passé, la DEU a tenu compte de ces incidences au niveau du budget annuel alloué à la DGNY pour les réceptions. (BAnQ November 1984a: 2)

Also in 1984, the Direction États-Unis evaluated its public affairs program and noticed that more and more Québec artists were requesting support to develop the U.S. market, but that this was costly and that the Direction did not know what to do, since neither the MAC nor the MRI had a policy related to cultural industries (BAnQ November 1984b).

SHIFT TO CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Things changed in the early 1990s. Globalization was increasing and free trade agreements menaced the foreign promotion of culture. In 1986, the MRI published an internal paper to stress the importance of protecting

cultural industries in the future agreement on free trade (BAnQ 1986). Increasing international trade, recessions in 1989 and in 1990–1992 (Bérubé 2008; Kabore et al. 2014), and official statements on foreign policy and on cultural policy changed how—or why—Québec decided to promote culture in the United States. In 1991, the ministère des Affaires internationales du Québec (MAIQ) published the foreign policy statement “Le Québec et l’interdépendance, le monde pour horizon.” The focus was on preparing Québec for globalization, afraid of negative economic impacts if it did not. The MAIQ’s own statement cited, at the beginning, the fall of the Berlin wall as an example of how a given event can have consequences rippling on other countries (MAIQ 1991: vii). The introduction to the policy announced how cultural goods are tied to economic prosperity:

La vitalité artistique et la production culturelle du Québec témoignent d’un dynamisme indéniable. Sur ce plan également, les Québécois ont déjà compris que la création de qualité et le dynamisme de leurs entreprises de culture et de communication sont indispensables s’ils veulent non seulement réussir sur leur propre territoire, largement ouvert aux artistes et aux produits culturels étrangers, mais également avoir leur place sur les marchés extérieurs. (MAIQ 1991: 3)

The policy counted five objectives, two of them related to culture (MAIQ 1991: 20–22). The Québec Cabinet decided in 1991 to force all departments to include this foreign policy statement in their activities (BAnQ 1991).

In 1992, the MAC published its first cultural policy statement. The document “La politique culturelle du Québec, notre culture, notre avenir” was unambiguous: it aimed at promoting cultural industries (MAC 1992). Québec was becoming increasingly worried of the future trade agreements and the 1992 policy statement made a significant mention of it (MAC 1992: 92). Until then, the department responsible for culture had not been involved in the promotion of Québec’s culture in the United States. One year later, in 1993, the MAIQ issued the first action plan in foreign cultural policy. The action plan, titled “Promotion commerciale du livre, du matériel didactique, des logiciels et des services afférents québécois auprès des clientèles américaines,” established that the Québec office in charge of culture in the United States would seek to increase sales of Québec cultural industries in the United States, especially

textbooks and other instructional material (BAnQ 1993: 1). The plan listed partners, by level of priority, and focused on the U.S. Northeast.

QUÉBEC AND THE 2005 UNESCO CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

The climax of Québec's focus on cultural industries appears in its negotiation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Québec government was one of the instigators of the 2005 Convention (Beaudoin 2006). The Québec government argued as early as 1984 for the exclusion of cultural industries from the future North American Free Trade Agreement (Le Devoir 2005). Québec created, with France, a working group of cultural diversity within the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in the early 1980s (Beaudoin 2006). At that time, the Québec government was notably afraid that its cinema industry would not survive the increasing globalization (Mattelart 2005).

The Québec government created many organizations to promote the future UNESCO Convention. In 1998, it helped set up the Coalition pour la diversité culturelle (for cultural groups in Québec) and the Groupe de travail franco-québécois sur la diversité culturelle (mainly to formalize negotiation between Québec's Prime Minister Lucien Bouchard and France's Prime Minister Lionel Jospin) (CDEC 2022; Québec 2018). Québec pushed for the future 2005 Convention at the OIF (Gagné 2013; Mattelart 2005). Meanwhile, the Québec government pleaded with federal Minister of Heritage Sheila Copps so that the Canadian government could push for the issue on the international scene, focusing first on Francophone countries (Le Devoir 2005). The federal government created in 1998 the Réseau international sur la politique culturelle (RIPC)—and agreed to welcome the Québec government in it—to facilitate discussions between ministers responsible for culture willing to promote an exception for cultural diversity in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (whose negotiation failed) (Gagné 2013).

The Groupe de travail franco-québécois sur la diversité culturelle ordered recommendations to assess the potential of an international text protecting cultural diversity (Bernier and Ruiz Fabri 2002: v). In their report, Bernier and Ruiz Fabri (2002) suggested that the legitimacy and

the consensus that would support a potential agreement on the protection of cultural diversity would likely prevent problems with the WTO. They underscored that the potential agreement should avoid complaints that it was a disguised protectionist tool. They recommended: “to insist on the double dimension of cultural diversity (protection of national or infranational cultures, and openness to other cultures and non-discrimination); to ensure a great transparency with regard to the intervention and protection mechanisms (to show that cultural diversity is not a pretense to ‘disguise’ a protectionist policy); to show that the intervention mechanisms are negotiated and concerted [...]” (Bernier and Ruiz Fabri 2002: 40–41, author’s translation).

The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions does exactly what the Québec government had hoped for: it protects the Québec government’s promotion of cultural industries across the world—including in the United States—without any fear of being accused of not respecting agreements on trade. Showing consensus and pride that the Québec government was among the catalysts of the international agreement, the *Assemblée nationale du Québec* voted unanimously to approve the Convention only a few weeks after its adoption by the UNESCO, in 2005 (Québec 2018). It was the first government in the world to do so.

FOCUS ON CULTURAL INDUSTRIES: STILL ONGOING

The focus on cultural industries that occurred in Québec’s cultural policy in the United States in the early 1990s is still implemented, still prevailing. Québec’s current international policy statement reads under thrust #3 that it wants to “promote creativity, culture, knowledge and Québec’s specificity” (MRIF 2017). Thrust #3 is divided into three areas: research, culture, and language. The first goal in terms of culture is to “support Québec arts organizations, cultural enterprises, artists and writers in their efforts to develop international markets.” The fourth and last goal in terms of culture has to do with the “effective implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and promote its principles and objectives.” Both goals are related to the promotion and protection of Québec’s cultural industries outside Canada. In terms of the French language, also an area in thrust #3, it is stated that the goal is to “showcase Québec’s expertise in language management and the development of French language

knowledge tools, as well as Québec studies, and ensure that Québec's linguistic and cultural specificity is promoted in such a way as to facilitate the attainment of Québec's international objectives." Again, culture and language are tools to enhance Québec's exports of cultural goods.

The *ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie* (MRIF) is explicit when it comes to its objectives in the United States. After markets for hydroelectricity and a partner in combating climate change, Québec seeks markets for its cultural industries. To be more precise, "Québec's cultural efforts in the United States are aimed at three broad objectives related to the economy, culture and cultural diplomacy, as follows: develop markets for Québec creators and cultural enterprises; promote Québec productions in the United States, to enable the American public to get to know and appreciate Québec's cultural vitality; by means of culture, favorably position Québec, its modern society and its expertise" (MRIF 2019).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From a rational perspective, cultural industries serve a triple purpose. First, they increase the legitimacy of Québec's culture in Québec. Québec music, Québec cinema have international success and help Québécois feel proud. This encourages Québécois to buy Québec cultural products. Second, managing cultural industries rather than diplomacy is believed to lighten government bureaucracy, allowing savings on human resources. Since the 1990s, the Québec government has not been the manager of culture—Québec's artists have been, albeit thanks to the Québec government's support. Québec sought inspiration from English Canada and the United Kingdom and developed arm's-length organizations that distribute funding from the government (Saint-Pierre and Couture Gagnon 2017). Third and most importantly, cultural industries promote a positive image of Québec across the world. A positive image of Québec outside its frontiers serves to sell more Québec cultural products and opens foreign doors to Québec's emerging artists. For example, the *Cirque du Soleil* has arguably opened doors for other Québec-based circuses.

The rest of this section offers three elements of analysis. Firstly, how does Québec's position as a subnational actor that is committed to pursuing paradiplomatic activities impact, influence and explain its engagement with the United States vis-à-vis cultural policy? The Québec

government has demonstrated since the 1960s that its cultural policy in the United States does not need approval or even collaboration with the Canadian government. One of the foundational documents of the Canadian constitution, the British North American Act of 1867, stipulates that culture is a jurisdiction of provinces. Québec started its foreign relations with France in the 1960s (Bernier 1996). It angered the federal government when signing cultural and education agreements with the European country in 1965. Québec's Vice Prime Minister Gérin Lajoie enunciated what has since been called the Gérin-Lajoie Doctrine later that year, in 1965: Québec can do foreign relations that have to do with its provincial competences, such as culture and education (Lajoie founded his doctrine on a 1937 judgment by the then highest court of Canada, the Judiciary Committee of the Privy Council in London). With the support of France, Québec went on to participate in the Conference of the Ministers of Education of French African Countries in Gabon (after which Canada recalled its ambassador from Gabon as a form of protest) and the General Conference of the Francophonie in Paris, both in 1968. Québec was a member of the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique when it was created in 1970 and of the 1985 Conférence des chefs d'État et de gouvernement des pays ayant en commun l'usage du français. These later became the current Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). To officialize its gains in foreign policy, the Assemblée nationale du Québec voted the 2000 Act respecting the exercise of the fundamental rights and prerogatives of the Québec people and the Québec State, in which Québec essentially reserves the right to agree or disagree with the federal government on foreign agreements or treaties when its competences are involved. The federal government has taken note of Québec's and other provinces' (although to a lesser extent, see Lecours 2009) implication in foreign relations.

Secondly, how do the origins, development, and current state of Québec-U.S. relations help to explain the dynamics of Québec's cultural policy? Québec's cultural policy in the United States commenced in the 1960s with the objective of saving French speakers in the United States but changed in the 1990s, to the promotion of cultural industries. While the Québec government embarked on cultural policy in the United States to help Francophones in Louisiana and Maine, it then pursued cultural policy in the United States to prevent political troubles and withdrawal of U.S. investments, and now continues cultural policy in the United States to increase its GDP and support artists' employment in Québec.

Economic recessions and shrinking government budgets forced a realignment toward the goals of employment. Cultural industries have since become the cornerstone of the Québec government's cultural policy in the United States.

Thirdly, does the Québec-U.S. relationship in cultural policy essentially replicate or echo relations between Canada and the United States on the same policy field? How, and in what ways does it depart from the substance and tone of Canada-U.S. relations regarding cultural policy? The Canadian government has probably never promoted Canadian culture in the United States to the extent that the Québec government has. Canadian cultural diplomacy has been meager (especially since 2012, when the federal government cut programs of Canadian cultural diplomacy). However, the 2015, 2019, and 2021 letters of the current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to ministers responsible for international affairs and heritage have mentioned the need for greater Canadian cultural diplomacy.

Cultural policy is the interpretation of a nation's view of itself and the world through arts and heritage. This chapter has argued that Québec's cultural policy in the United States no longer seeks to promote its culture, its language, its identity just because it is a noble objective. Rather, Québec's culture is now promoted (and perceived) in the United States through the lens of cultural industries with the goal of increasing employment, government revenues (through greater production, thus taxes), and economic output (i.e., GDP). This change is obviously reflective of a deeper, larger understanding of the use of public policy in general and of the utility of government intervention. If culture becomes merely a good of economic rather than identity benefit, does not this lower the support for its promotion? Does a utilitarian understanding of cultural policy risk changing culture? Does culture change when its goal becomes pecuniary? Lachapelle (2000) argues that Québécois have no trouble navigating an economic or rational use of their French culture. But when cultural policy is seen as money making (or not money making), how does it compare to other government intervention? Put differently, if cultural policy is evaluated with job numbers (as any other industry), will it still be considered useful when compared with other policy fields?

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7 Fingers Back and Forth Across the Border: A Tale of Two Countries and Their Circus Collaborations

Louis Patrick Leroux

Contemporary, acrobatics-based circus has thrived in North America since the 1980s. While this commercial new circus grew out of Québec, under the initial impulse of Cirque du Soleil, it was mostly made possible thanks to the financial and cultural capital, the audiences and opportunities that America has offered Québec's home-grown reconsideration of circus. New or contemporary circus is a billion-dollar industry that mostly emerges from Montreal's big three companies, Cirque du Soleil, Cirque Éloize, and 7 Fingers, companies whose activities are greatly supported by ticket sales of touring shows and resident productions in the US. This chapter explores some of the implicit and explicit cross-border collaborations and circulations that characterize the contemporary circus scene, notably focusing on *Les 7 doigts de la main* (7 Fingers), a collective based

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in Montreal made up of artists from Québec, France and America. There is a long history of cross-border circus activity (Leroux 2014; Leroux and Moss 2014). American circuses dominated the market until the 1990s, touring across Canada, recruiting its talent, but with the success of Cirque du Soleil, the founding of the National Circus School in Montreal, and the growing difficulties of traditional American circus companies, Québec became the new reference in circus production, training and trends. A narrative developed around Québec creativity and know-how feeding an insatiable American market. Yet, as we'll see with examples drawn from the 7 Fingers' experiences in the US, the Montreal-based and funded collective offers a particularly interesting narrative of binational collaboration and local rootedness, in Montreal, New York, and San Francisco. Cirque du Soleil's resident shows in Las Vegas and Orlando offered a sense of limitless creative and financial possibilities, while the recent 7 Fingers' resident show at Club Fugazi rather brings up the question of contributing to a local community and establishing a formal connection between the San Francisco and Montreal circus communities. We will explore how the foundational roots and current, ongoing cross-border dynamics have crafted an effective new form of circus, rooted in community, but with mass appeal.

HISTORICAL PEREGRINATIONS

Despite many claims, the social phenomenon known as circus did not suddenly emerge in Québec, to be “reinvented” by Cirque du Soleil starting in 1984. There is a rather interesting and long tradition of circus practice in Québec spanning back to early modern circus and the happenstance visit by Rickett's Circus in Montreal and later Québec City in 1797–1998. While it took a long time for circus to develop its own companies and sites in Québec, they did export a great deal of highly accomplished talent, from strongmen Louis Cyr and Horace Barré, to the versatile and cosmopolitan performer Louis Durand, including the hyperactive Léon DuPerré, the athletic and accomplished Louise Armaindo, and the Baillargeon Brothers who would also become household names to North American boxing enthusiasts (see Leroux 2022, *Place au cirque!* 2019).

Many articles, chapters, and theses have broached the topic of Cirque du Soleil's “reinvention” of circus in the 1980s. My contributions on this subject matter have aimed to first historicize the claim and, especially

to understand the significance and impact a group of fire-throwers and stilt-walkers committed to street-theatre would have on the creation and renewal of circus world-wide. Suffice to say, for our current purposes, that Cirque du Soleil's success could not have been possible without initial government support (i.e., substantial discretionary funding from the Premier for the Québec 1984 festivities¹), the particular combination of theatre, clowning, acrobatics and gymnastics and traditional circus acts that emerged in the late 1970s, and the ebullient sociopolitical context and cultural transformation of the early 1980s (Leroux 2016a, 2016b).

Cirque du Soleil's explosive expansion into the American market in the late 1980s and early 1990s, set it deeply into the American pop psyche. They wowed Los Angeles with their animal-free, high-culture offerings aimed at wide audiences, took a gamble on transforming the city of sin into a family-friendly mecca for entertainment, tested the limits of market elasticity with up to 8 simultaneous resident shows in Las Vegas,² and offered hyper-America what it had not realized it really wanted: a renewed, refreshed, guilt-free version of acrobatic circus (Leroux 2009).

CIRQUE ELOIZE: A PIONEERING QUÉBEC PRESENCE FOR CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS IN THE NORTHEASTERN US

After Cirque du Soleil's rapid and sustainable transformation of the circus (and live arts) landscape, a small number of smaller companies emerged, including Cirque du Tonnerre, offering more modestly sized shows, connecting circus tradition with the emerging new commercial circus model (Lévesque 2010). However, it is Cirque Eloize that proved the most durable, in great part through its early success in securing its position and developing a place for new (and later contemporary) circus in theatre venues across the US. Cirque Eloize connected with the US markets thanks to the initial support and networking of the Délégation générale du Québec à New York (Jacob 2019). It developed a strong, personalized relationship with theatre and dance programmers in the northeastern states, bringing contemporary circus to regional theatres, campus auditoriums and a few choice urban theatres. American programmers over the years regularly brought Eloize back to their venues, given the success of this Québec version of acrobatic circus. They also became trusted co-producers, instigators of new shows fronting development funds to ensure that Cirque Eloize would regularly return to their performance venues (Jacob 2019). This early success, secured through regular

touring in traditional theatres in New England college towns, proved transformational as it reframed the performative space for circus from the big top to a more intimate, theatrical setting.

Early American performances, in 1994, were held at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, but it was truly its breakthrough “discovery” in February 1995 by over 300 performing arts programmers and agents at a marketplace in Philadelphia that established Eloize’s place on the American touring landscape, as they secured over 125 dates thanks to that one presentation. A subsequent booking as the opening performance of New York’s refurbished New Victory Theatre allowed Eloize and the Manhattan theatre devoted to children and adolescent programming to complement what each other was looking for in an artistic relationship. Interestingly, from the moment the subsidized, non-commercial New Victory Theatre introduced New Yorkers to the acrobatic theatrical circus stemming from Québec (distinct from its flashier, grander and more commercial counterpart, Cirque du Soleil, but as well-received), contemporary forms of circus were regularly introduced. In a sense, that one performance by Cirque Eloize at the American marketplace for the performing arts, helped establish decades worth of touring development and opportunities for coproduction of this contemporary circus company, as well as many others. In addition to Cirque Eloize shows, the New Victory Theatre has regularly programmed Australia’s Circus Oz and Circa as a recurring presence, and it has presented Québec companies such as 7 Fingers (*Traces*, 2007–2008, which later had a year-long off-Broadway run) Flip Fabrique (2014–2015), Machine de Cirque (2018–2029), as well as Québec-inspired contemporary circus from the US such as Las Vegas-based Cirque Mechanics and Arizona-based Ricochet.

If Cirque du Soleil paved the way for America to reconsider circus in its new acrobatic, animal-free, high-value format, Cirque Eloize did much of the grunt work of developing a touring network of trusted venues and partners who would regularly program “cirque” in their artistic performance seasons (interview with Jeannot Painchaud 2016). This is important as it allowed circus to develop without tents and within the particular framework and limitations of theatre spaces. Québec circus would not only be limited to touring tent show extravaganzas, it would also—because there was a healthy and keen market for it—develop acrobatic theatre drawing on circus technique and tradition and excluding animals and much of the nostalgia of American circus. It would also

feature extensive sets, dance lighting, multimedia, the use of scrim, everything a modern theatre can offer in terms of visual complexity.

In the early 2000s, Cirque Eloize brought in Swiss-Italian director Daniele Finzi Pasca who developed a masterful and poetic trilogy: *Nomade* (2002), *Rain* (2004), *Nebbia* (2007). The company and Finzi Pasca explored new partnerships in California, creating shows in residence in Irvine and Santa Barbara. *Rain* had been slated to become a resident show in New York, following Cirque du Soleil's model in Las Vegas. However, one producer (as recounted in Jacob, 2019), after attending a rehearsal, abruptly reneged on her financial support. The show was "too European, too aesthetic," and she felt that New Yorkers would never be interested in such a venue. Work on *Rain* resumed in Irvine, California, far from the hustle and bustle of New York, and it has since become Eloize's signature piece, touring the world, seen by some 750,000 spectators in over 190 cities. This early "artification" of Québec circus (based on deliberate aesthetic choices rather than many usual commercial tropes), along with the emergence of 7 Fingers around the same time, has had a durable impact on the direction our circus has pursued. If anything, the New York producer's reaction prompted the creation of a masterpiece, in part because all of the external pressure to conform to a commercial model was lifted. In the end, New York did see *Rain*, but in a not-for-profit theatre. Its career would mostly be European, South American, on the international touring market, which usually takes on financial risks—unlike New York commercial venues that would resist Québec circus, until the 7 Fingers found a way into the Big Apple. Another important aspect is the role that the Bureau du Québec network had in facilitating this and other Québec circus companies' circulation through the US. Interestingly, Eloize's director general, Jean-Pierre Dion, left the company to later head the New York Bureau du Québec's cultural office, continuing its long tradition of supporting Québec circuses as they slowly but consistently contributed to transforming the circus landscape in the US.

7 FINGERS: WEAVING ITSELF INTO THE NEW YORK AND WEST COAST ARTISTIC CONTEXTS

From their foundation in 2002, the 7 Fingers brought credibility, artistry as well as an extremely high level of acrobatic accomplishment to the emerging contemporary circus scene. They are known for their youthful, energetic shows infused with an equal part of prodigious virtuosity and

individual talent that we can relate to. They stage humans simply as humans with exceptional abilities; they do not hide faces or bodies. The performers usually wear street clothes and feature monologues and dialogue. They share something about themselves and develop an attachment with the audience. We have seen this in various performances including *Psy*, *Passagers*, *Réversible*, *Triptyque*, *Cuisine et Confession*, *Séquence 8*, *Intersections*. The performers are both relatable and multi-talented; they speak, sing, play instruments, they juggle, tumble, master circus disciplines while offering “un cirque parlant” (*a speaking circus*, F. Boudreault 2012; Batson 2016).

Drawing from European “nouveau cirque”—an aesthetic and socially-minded form of acrobatic circus without animals and moving away from classic acts, focusing rather on a global narrative and exploring themes of consequence, also having learned the economic lessons of commercial circus, and drawing on North American entrepreneurship while tapping into a thriving ecosystem of contemporary circus training and convergence of talents in Montreal—7 Fingers marks the beginning of what Pascal Jacob names “The Québec Era of Circus,” (2016) as a distinct period where Québec-based sensibilities came to dominate the contemporary circus world for close to two decades after long periods of American, French and British dominance. Interestingly, the 7 Fingers’ training and sensibilities are equally shared between their Montreal and San Francisco origins. Paradoxically, the “Québec Era of Circus” could never have come into being without experiences in and contributions from the US.

The 7 Fingers all knew each other through the informal contemporary circus milieu mostly centered in Montreal, but that spans a wide web over the globe. Cirque du Soleil performers Samuel Tétreault and Isabelle Chassée were considering creating their own circus company in Montreal. Former Cirque du Soleil performers, Shana Carroll, Gypsy Snider, Sébastien Soldevila and Patrick Léonard, after extensive touring with other circuses as well, were then based in San Francisco—Shana and Gypsy’s hometown, and the centre of a thriving community-based circus scene. They were also considering starting their own contemporary circus company. The friends sent out a call to a few other possible partners. Phaon Shane, a long-time child and later adult performer with Cirque du Soleil, joined them in San Francisco. The seven of them met in Shana Carroll’s parents’ house in San Francisco and decided to form a collective.³

Shana and Gypsy developed their circus skills at an early age with Pickle Family Circus, an acrobatic theatrical troupe that grew out of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, a satirical, politically engaged theatre. Given that Gypsy's parents co-founded the Pickle Family Circus, she grew up a child of the circus in its collectivist, socially engaged, theatrical form. Shana's father was the major theatre critic in the Bay Area and when she discovered the Pickles, switched from theatre to circus, learning and mastering the trapeze, later studying circus technique in France and in Québec. While the inaugural foundational moment occurred in San Francisco, les 7 doigts de la main, as they would call themselves, would be based in Montreal, the epicentre of contemporary circus and ultimate *port d'attache* for five of them. Also, with the recent recognition of circus as a legitimate art form in Québec in 2001 (the result of years of lobbying and coinciding with France's international year of the circus), basing a company in Montreal allowed them to access public subsidies for the creation process and for touring at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels, whereas the financial options in the US were limited to commercial production in an environment dominated either by traditional circus or by Cirque du Soleil's large, extravagant productions. Montreal has been a natural and economically viable base for the 7 Fingers, but the founding artists maintained constant ties with the US, building cultural capital on the one hand, and remaining connected to its zeitgeist and socio-political concerns.

Their first show featured the 7 artists in their shared Montreal loft, wearing nothing but their underwear, exposed without excessive make-up, without anonymizing costumes, without artifice. Think *Friends* but with circus artists doing incredible things, circus for the Facebook generation, circus featuring multi-talented individuals that we can see, hear, identify with, and care about, as they engaged in unreasonable risks with panache. *Loft* would travel and establish the 7 Fingers as a viable alternative to commercial circus and an initial rejection of most of what Cirque du Soleil represented, despite the fact that to this day, the 7 Fingers founders state in private and public interviews that they owe them their careers.

The major difference between 7 Fingers and Cirque du Soleil (or any other similar company) is the fact that they share artistic directorship. They fundamentally work as a collective, sharing duties, responsibilities and each take on the lead or shared lead on each 7 Fingers project (see, Courcy et al. 2022; Leroux-Côté et al. 2022a, 2022b). They have

tried to always ensure that there are two “fingers” (two artistic directors) involved in each show, either as co-directors, or one director and one assistant director. The Fingers still performing (Samuel Tétréault, Isabelle Chassée, Patrick Léonard and Sébastien Soldevila) are often cast or involved in the casting process. Interestingly, the artistic directors are salaried and pool their resources. For instance, when Shana, Gypsy or Sébastien are called to work on lucrative projects as acrobatic choreographers or directors-for-hire (as they did on Broadway with *Pippin*, with Cirque du Soleil’s *Iris*, *Paramour*, *Crystal*, commercial shows in Russia, and opening Olympic Ceremonies) the financial rewards are sent to the 7 Fingers pool to ensure everyone is decently and consistently paid. As a consequence, they have also gradually asked for co-producer credit and responsibilities with external projects, ensuring a proper recognition of authorship, rights, financial distribution and a control over their artistic branding. The business model reflects the collective’s social concerns and individual engagements. It is also managed by a highly competent, inventive entrepreneur, Nassib El-Husseini, who has become a de facto “Finger” over the years, adroitly negotiating collaborations, coproductions, and keeping the founding artists happy, busy and actively engaged artistically.

After the impact of *Loft* in Montreal and eventually throughout the North American contemporary circus world, 7 Fingers’ second show shifted the focus away from the founding fingers and opened the company up to an even younger generation of street-smart performers, all of them graduates of Montreal’s National Circus School, most of them originally from San Francisco. It would also be the first show co-directed by Shana Carroll and Gypsy Snider. The Montreal phenomenon would open up to West Coast sensibilities and imaginations.

TRACES: 7 FINGERS’ AMERICAN SHOW

Traces’ origins are to be found in a graduating class at Montreal’s National Circus School. Five students, working on their outcome videos, an exercise in professionalization, decided to film themselves doing what they did best: parkour through the streets, stairs, walls of Montreal, combining skate-board, cycles, basketball and some awesome acrobatic tricks. This urban circus, before Cirque Eloize’s *I.D.*, was devised in the spirit of parkour, a sport of overcoming physical obstacles in an unaltered urban setting, but not necessarily conscious of this tradition. Four of the

five performers, the Brothers Cruz, Francisco and Raphael, and Bradley Henderson and William Underwood, were originally from the San Francisco area. They had been practicing acrobatics in San Francisco, never quite admitting that they were drawn to circus, until they connected with the Pickle Family Circus and got to know Gypsy Snider and Shana Carroll. Both Fingers recognised the group's natural talents and charismatic presence and strongly encouraged them to train at San Francisco's Circus Centre.

Francisco Cruz, today the Assistant Artistic Director to the Fingers, recalls:

We grew up together (his brother Raphael, Brad and Will) at the circus school with Mr. Lu Yi and then we would go around doing tricks and flips in the park and get super excited about it. (...) We'd always shy away from calling it circus. Because, you know... San Francisco...

But surrounding us we saw people doing circus and we saw them get gigs. We were always seeing Gypsy come in between her touring with Cirque du Soleil. (...) Gypsy showed up and said: "you have skills, all of you have skills that you can make into a career." (Patrick Leroux and Wendy Reid interview with Francisco Cruz, June 2017)

After training at the Circus Centre, Gypsy, Shana and Sebastien coached and trained them for their Montreal auditions for the National Circus School. Exceptionally, most of the San Francisco group were accepted and moved to Montreal to pursue elite acrobatic circus training. The National Circus School (usually referred to by its French acronym, ENC) in Montreal is one of the top three schools in the world and has positioned itself as the most important training centre for high-level technicity in most circus disciplines. They are also situated across the street from Cirque du Soleil and have on their teaching and consulting staff many major players from the Montreal and world circus scenes. To train at ENC, to do well and to be noticed by recruiters, coaches, directors is to ensure access to most of the major international circuses given that the American, European and Russian casting agents and directors inevitably attend the public outcomes and ENC end of year shows.

Raphael, Francisco, Bradley and William all moved together to Montreal and took over the apartment the 7 Fingers founders had lived in and were intending to leave. "We all end up moving and we start to become known as the San Francisco group, because we're living together,

we have the same way of moving, way of talking” (interview with Francisco Cruz). Classmate Héloïse Bourgeois joined the San Francisco boys and the foundational cast of *Traces* was established before there was even a show. Shana and Gypsy invited the collective to work with them at 7 Fingers. They co-directed the show, drawing from the collective’s original physical language, their tricks, and also, importantly, their shared cultural references. The cast was expanded and altered over the lifecycle of the show and the contents continued to evolve, in harmony with the performers’ distinctive contributions and traits.

The co-directors had known the artists since childhood, and a new circus clan was emerging and it connected two cities, two cultures and languages and could only have come to fruition in Montreal with this group of Californians. *Traces* demonstrates the ethos and dynamism of Québec contemporary circus, its high technical achievement and desire to blend theatre, dance, circus and sport. It also announced the unfortunate casting model of 4 white men and 1 white woman literally being thrown around, a model often replicated in other Québec shows throughout the early 2000s. Beyond this gendered casting, it was the very idea of working with the next generation of circus creators, kids they had seen grow up and reach a level of achievement that motivated the directors. It was also an early generative gesture towards building a collective that could transcend generations and borders.

Playbill shared the official billing of the show: “If the world ended tomorrow, what would you leave behind? In *Traces*, the human body is pushed to its limits as a group of friends leave their mark in a run-down warehouse through acrobatics, music, and dance. Fusing the traditions of circus with the energy of street performance, *Traces* is an explosive display of raw emotion and physicality in an intimate urban setting. When it counts, will you leave it all on the stage?” (Gioia 2011). *The New York Times* published a very favourable pre-paper on *Traces*, rhetorically asking “Does a circus seem more dangerous when one of the performers confesses that he’s clumsy?” (Pincus-Roth 2011). “Unlike the mega-productions of Cirque du Soleil, writes Zachary Pincus-Roth, which employ dozens of godlike athletes hiding behind costumes, ‘Traces’ asks its seven performers to reveal something of their real selves” (ibid.). The journalist also points out the uncanny coexistence of the extraordinary and the mundane and how the directors drew inspiration from the gang scenes in *West Side Story* to allow the performers some on-stage ‘off’ time

that is witnessed by the audience, and where the artists jostle, blow off steam, wipe off sweat while their peers perform their acts.

From 2005 onward, the show toured and a few “generations” of performers as well as two casts and touring shows were added. *Traces* eventually opened off-Broadway at Union Square in New York, July 29, 2011. It had already played the New Victory Theatre in 2007, but this was a new, commercial context. The limited run was supposed to end early October 2011, but it was quickly extended to January 2012, then again until September 2, 2012, followed by European and American tours. It was unofficially reported that despite a full year run off-Broadway and excellent sales, *Traces* did not prove to be especially profitable. However, its coverage by all the major media outlets, and the cast’s twice repeated presence on *America’s Got Talent* (2011 and 2012), paved the way for widely successful touring and the aura of a New York success that would allow for new productions and collaboration in the city that Cirque du Soleil was never quite able to conquer. 7 Fingers with their urbane, hip sensibility, edge and aesthetics closer to New Yorkers’ own found their way through *Traces*, a Québec circus take on American youthful energy, risk-taking and precision acrobatics and a smattering of athletics. An entire generation of current circus artists was motivated to pursue circus as a cool, sporty activity because of *Traces*. Following Cirque du Soleil’s ubiquitous success, *Traces* managed not only to amaze and entertain, but especially connect with audiences and to offer them a window into how art and sport could intersect and draw us all in.

NYC: THE CITY THAT GAVE 7 FINGERS ITS EDGE

After *Traces*, a number of successful New York based circus performance ventures came about. 7 Fingers collaborated with Diane Paulus on a remake of *Pippin* on Broadway, garnering a Drama Desk Award for Gypsy Snider’s choreography (2013) as well as 10 Tony Award nominations and 5 other Drama Desk nominations. *Pippin* ran at the Music Box Theatre on Broadway, from April 2013 to January 2015, then toured the US, Australia and Japan for a few years. During this time, 7 Fingers worked with Sleep No More producer Randy Weiner in developing a new interactive, bacchanalian dinner-theatre to open the recently-renovated Diamond Horseshoe theatre at the Paramount Hotel. This had been a long-standing Broadway theatre, formerly called the Stairway, Century and the Mayfair over the years. The proposed project was to be a loose adaptation of

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, playing on Masonic secrecy, only allowing small groups of audience members access at any time, prompting them at the last minute by text message, admitting one spectator at a time with a very intimate escort through a destabilizing space. Ultimately, the experience was based on Gargantuan excess, limitless food and wine, proximity to performers and death-defying acrobatics. *Playbill*, again drawing from promotional copy established that the show was "a fusion of dance, music, fashion, circus, culinary delights, theatre and nightlife that welcomes the audience into a wholly interactive entertainment experience. Drinks will flow, dinner is served, and over the course of the gala, guests will be engaged, entertained and immersed in this genre-blurring initiation" (Hetrick 2014). The 7 Fingers were now part of the crowd producing desirable Manhattan happenings.

These two later New York experiences, while putting circus at the service of other genres and clearly as added value to commercial enterprises, rather than allowing a space for individual artistic expression as most 7 Fingers shows proposed, nonetheless allowed the company's name to circulate widely. Success begets success, and audiences' memories are short. Repeated success in New York and elsewhere in the US allowed 7 Fingers major touring shows to attract more audiences by tapping into their role in *Pippin* and *Queen of the Night*. Shows like *Séquence 8* (2012), *Intersection* (2014) and *Cuisines & Confessions* (2014) drew on that memory to attract spectators in the Big Apple.

RECONNECTING WITH SAN FRANCISCO ROOTS

During the 2020–2022 COVID-19 pandemic, which tore through the especially vulnerable circus community since it relies on ticket sales and non-government revenue, most 7 Fingers projects were put on hold, except for its cinematographic project, *En Panne (Out of Order)*, a strategy to ensure that the show they were producing not fall victim to the pandemic. At the same time, Cirque du Soleil was placed under bankruptcy protection and its debt was refinanced as it was sold to new owners. It had gone from 44 simultaneous tent, arena, cruise-ship and resident shows in Las Vegas or China, to none generating no revenue whatsoever. It proved to be saddled with 900 million in debt, and all but a handful of essential employees were furloughed. Cirque du Soleil would eventually restructure itself, but the pandemic has left notable and lasting scars for thousands of artists, for example, who lost revenue,

training, as well as their edge and confidence to continue in a such a fickle environment.⁴

A somewhat unexpected development was the announcement, during the pandemic, that 7 Fingers would be opening a resident show in San Francisco. *Dear San Francisco: A High-flying love story* opened in October 2021 to excellent reviews in the iconic Club Fugazi. While shows in Québec were closing down due to the health situation,⁵ San Francisco was allowing performances. Since 1913, the iconic Club Fugazi was home to *Steve Silver's Beach Blanket Babylon* an ever-evolving satirical musical revue that ran for 45 years and 17,200 performances (1974–2019) making it the longest-running musical review to have ever run. This space was opened as a community center for the Italian colony of San Francisco. The theatre has seen Thelonious Monk record an album and was a home for the Beat Poets in the 1950s and 1960s. All these cultural references are made explicit in the new show, from its edgy satire to its sequence honoring the Beat Poets, the music of the *Doors*, and so on. There are also implicit connections that come from the deep theatrical and circus roots that co-directors Shana Carroll and Gypsy Snider (their origins in the Pickle Family Circus) and their continuation of the acrobatics style learned by Master Lu Yi, a Chinese acrobatics instructor who trained generations of circus performers in San Francisco. Their presence at Club Fugazi, a venue much appreciated by the North Beach community, is seen by the San Francisco circus scene as a community action, a way for the international company to give back to the neighbourhood and to help contribute to the dynamism of the professional circus scene. It anchors the 7 Fingers in the city that saw them come together as a collective.

In Montreal, the 7 Fingers acquired the old headquarters of the Just for Laughs Festival, the very space in which they had produced their first show, *Loft* in 2002—and proceeded to extensively renovate the facility. The new production complex opened in 2018, spans seven floors and offers studio spaces, rehearsal spaces, offices, and access to training for the community. The Fingers were very much aware of the newfound fixed costs and responsibility to pay for this great new foothold in Montreal and they have consequently developed a number of new lucrative collaborations with partners in America. Interestingly, they now have two homes, one in Montreal and a resident show in San Francisco, a local office and executive producer based in the Bay Area. Shana Carroll and Gypsy Snider are sharing some of the limelight with a community they never quite left.

CONCLUSION

The interconnectedness of Québec and American new/contemporary circus scenes cannot be overstated. The informal networks, the circulation of performers and designers, the training methods and references all suggest an integrated market. However, the economic and political realities and state funding of circus production and teaching are diametrically opposed. Despite these fundamental differences, both scenes have found ways to find points of convergence.

Québec's socio-political history, its cultural proximity to Europe, its economy favorable to social entrepreneurship, and generous support of the arts all made the emergence of commercial new circus and its own brand of contemporary circus. None of this would have been possible without the capital, talent, networking opportunities, commercial risk-taking ethos and cultural capital that the US has contributed to Québec's major circus companies, from Cirque du Soleil to Cirque Eloize and perhaps especially, as we have seen, with *7 Fingers*, given its deep roots and continued exchanges between both Québec and the US. Beyond initial appearances, Québec's celebrated home-grown success is also reflective of America's ability to feed and to absorb seemingly heterodoxical forms into its own cultural and industrial melting pot. Québec brought "cirque" to the US and offered an alternative to a moribund, nostalgic form. The US was the feeder pool, the capital investor and the springboard for global success and acceptance. There is a strong movement in the US to develop its own elite circus school or university program, but without government support, it has never quite taken off, despite a few healthy regional initiatives (in Philadelphia, New York, St-Louis, Los Angeles, Chicago, Charlotte). For the time being, Montreal remains a point of reference, a rite of passage, where to connect and to then deploy projects across North America.

This chapter concentrates on some lesser-known stories and connections bridging Montreal, San Francisco, and New York, experienced by the *7 Fingers*. The collective has constantly been juggling multiple affiliations, affections and cultural codes. The artistic directors are becoming more aware of their generative role with the next generations of circus performers and that this will be equally shared between Montreal and San Francisco. As we see with the *7 Fingers* deeper connection with their generative communities, the next decade will see emerge a number of strong locally-based initiatives, connected by a now-established, network spanning across borders.

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NOTES

1. 1984 marked the 450th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's arrival to Canada from St. Malo, France. The Québec government funded large-scale celebrations, which included funding the emerging a local artist's group that would become Cirque du Soleil.
2. Cirque du Soleil's resident Las Vegas shows have included *Mystère* (since 1993), *O* (since 1998), *Zumanity* (2003–2020), *Kà* (since 2004), *The Beatles Love* (since 2006), *Criss Angel Believe* (2008–2016), *Viva Elvis* (2009–2012), *Zarkana* (2012–2016), *Michael Jackson: One* (since 2013), *R.U.N.* (2019–2020), *Mad Apple* (since 2022).
3. This information is taken from interviews conducted by the author with all six artistic directors, Samuel Tétreault, Shana Carroll, Gypsy Snider, Isabelle Chassé, Sébastien Soldevila and Patrick Léonard in October of 2018 with follow up interviews with Shana Carroll in February 2019 and with Gypsy Snider in October 2022. For more context on the foundation narrative, see Leroux-Côté et al. (2022a).
4. For a detailed description of the impacts of COVID-19 on the Québec circus scene, see: Leroux (2024).
5. In Québec, theatrical venues, after having all been closed on March 11, 2020, were briefly, partially reopened in the Summer 2020, but closed again as of October 1, 2020 during the second wave of COVID-19 and only re-opened nine months later on June 28, 2021, with 1.5 m distancing between spectators. In September 2021, a vaccination passport was required to attend public venues and restaurants. October 8, masked and vaccinated spectators could sit within 1 m of each other in Québec venues. This lasted until December 20, 2021 when all public venues were again closed, this would last until February 7, 2022 for reduced audiences with vaccine passports. On March 12, 2022, all sanitary measures were lifted and theatrical venues were again fully accessible. Meanwhile,

Dear San Francisco opened at Club Fugazi on October 12, 2021 without any particular sanitary measures and has run consistently since its opening.

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QAnon's Influence in Québec, from Alexis Cossette-Trudel to Éric Duhaime: Signs of an Americanization of Québec's Political Culture?

Alexandre Turgeon

“I’m running for Prime Minister,” was how Pierre Poilievre (2022) announced his candidacy to succeed Erin O’Toole as leader of the Conservative Party of Canada on February 5, 2022. Given O’Toole’s inability to assert himself during the events surrounding the occupation of downtown Ottawa by the “Freedom Convoy,” a vast movement protesting Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government’s health policies and restrictions to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, Pierre Poilievre presented himself as the right man for the job. Not just to replace Erin O’Toole, but Justin Trudeau himself: after all, he is “running for Prime Minister,” in his own words. This is, of course, technically impossible given Canada’s electoral and

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parliamentary system; party leaders run as candidates in their ridings, not as candidates for Prime Minister. According to convention and custom, the position of Prime Minister goes to the leader of the political party with the largest number of elected members in Parliament, who thus has the confidence of the House, although this confidence can be withdrawn. This can happen when no political party has an absolute majority in the House, commonly referred to as a minority government.

In his announcement, Poilievre ignored these considerations. Addressing his electoral base, he knowingly declares “running for Prime Minister,” a message he hammers home throughout his campaign right up to his decisive victory at the head of the party on September 10, 2022. In fact, this approach can be viewed as “being borrowed” from the United States, where voters are called upon to directly elect a President. The use of such tactics by a Canadian politician in the midst of a pandemic, whose rhetoric and mannerisms are reminiscent of Donald Trump (Fawcett 2022; Agence QMI 2022; Mathis 2022; J.-A. Roberts 2022), is neither trivial nor coincidental.

Since Québec Premier François Legault declared a state of health emergency on March 13, 2020, criticism and dissent quickly emerged in the National Assembly, and in various traditional and emerging media outlets—opposition to the Québec government’s health policies and restrictions were heard with virulence (Plante 2021), if not violence (Handfield 2021). While the occupation of downtown Ottawa by the “Freedom Convoy” was the most high-profile event in this movement that extends beyond Québec’s borders, it was by no means the only one. In Québec, both urban—most notably Montreal and Québec City—and rural centers—e.g., the Beauce region and the Eastern Townships—numerous demonstrations and marches were organized to denounce the measures put in place by the governments of Québec and Canada (see Beaudry 2020; Morin-Martel 2021; Morin-Martel 2022; Lévesque 2022a).

A fascinating phenomenon occurred during these events. Although the governments of Québec and Canada were the primary object of criticism, the flag of the United States, if not that of the Confederate States, rubbed shoulders with the flags of Québec and Canada in the crowd. Flags and banners in support of United States President Donald Trump, including his slogan “Make America Great Again,” were also carried by demonstrators. Such displays were not isolated incidents with a flag or two, placed here and there, whose unexpected presence can be explained by simple

coincidence. The QAnon conspiracy movement was also notably present. In addition to American and Confederate flags, effigies of Trump and his favorite slogan, the letter “Q” was clearly visible among the crowd, as is the rallying cry of the QAnon movement, “Where We Go One, We Go All!,” and its French or acronymic variants, chanted or taken up by demonstrators (Lapierre 2021).

Demonstrators supporting the QAnon movement became a regularized presence in Québec, representing some of the most distinctive signs of opposition, even resistance, to the policies pursued by the Legault and Trudeau governments in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Québec, a number of Canadian, Québec and American flags—some upside down, others merged—appeared on properties and vehicles, to a point where one might be led to believe you were at a St. John’s Day or a Canada Day celebration, if not in the middle of a long Montreal Canadiens playoff run.

As part of this collective work on the Québec-United States relationship, this chapter explores this American presence within social movements opposing the Québec government’s pandemic health measures that have began in 2020. I intend to illustrate that these visual, political, and symbolic borrowings (marked by the seal of QAnon and fostered by the anxiety-inducing aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic that has shaken everything in its path) are part of and reflect an Americanization of Québec’s political culture.

To do so, this chapter first reviews the notion of Americanization, as it is expressed in Québec literature and history. We then turn our attention to the QAnon movement and its influence in Québec. A definition of the movement, as well as an analysis of its usage of the pandemic as a means to a self-interest ends in 2020, is in order. In doing so, this essay focuses on the contribution of Alexis Cossette-Trudel, who as a conduit and thinker for this movement in Québec played a leading role in the dissemination and propagation of QAnon’s ideas. Finally, we examine the involvement of Éric Duhaime, leader of the Conservative Party of Québec, whose use of the language and codes of the QAnon movement in the run-up to Québec’s provincial election on October 3, 2022, can be arguably best viewed as part of a deliberate political calculation and ideological positioning, whose effects could be felt eventually on the benches of the National Assembly of Québec.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NOTION OF AMERICANIZATION AND QUÉBECERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES

The United States, simply put, has always exerted a certain fascination in Québec and Canada, coupled with an irresistible attraction or mistrust that has never wavered. The relationship of Québec to the United States is complex, marked by a tension between two major poles of attraction: Americanness and anti-Americanism (among others: Lamonde 1996). On the one hand, Americanness is “this awareness of belonging to the continent of the Americas, and the steps taken to assume globally this reality of a new world to be shaped,”¹ according to Yvan Lamonde (2004: 23). Many in Québec society embrace their Americanness, and many researchers have claimed it as well, even if others are more critical of this notion (Thériault 2002). On the other hand, anti-Americanism, which broadly refers to all the feelings, received ideas, perceptions, stereotypes, and myths that are conveyed and reported about the United States from a negative perspective (F. Gagnon and Desnoyers 2010: 92), remains very much present in Québec, fueled both by nationalist sentiment that pulses through the province’s history, and by more specific events and policy decisions that can lead Québécois to openly question and criticize the direction of the United States. One recent case in point was President George W. Bush’s war against Iraq, regarded by many Québécois as a badly misguided military decision.

In order to gain a new perspective on Québécois’ relationship with the United States, we find the notion of Americanization most interesting. Embraced by some, critiqued by others, Americanization is, according to Christine Beeraj and Louis Balthazar (1995: 62), “the imposition (intentional or accidental) of a cultural influence at the expense not only of the ‘host’ culture, but also of other possible influences.”² Yvan Lamonde (1996: 11) agrees, calling Americanization “a process of acculturation by which American culture influences and dominates both Canadian and Québec culture - and world culture.”³ Focusing more specifically on the notion of cultural Americanization, Karine Prémont (2010: 116–117) sees it as “the standardization and homogenization of cultural formats due to the preponderance of American commercial ways of doing things”.⁴ To the Americanization of formats, can be added the Americanization of content—i.e., “the transfer of American values to Québec culture thanks

to the strong presence of television, cinema and music from the United States.”⁵

These clarifications are useful when considering the Americanization of political culture in Québec and in Canada. In recent years, many analysts and commentators from Québec and Canada have deplored the Americanization of political culture, particularly the style and manner pursued by U.S. politicians on the campaign trail. In particular, negative election ads aimed at opponents, which, rightly or wrongly, are invariably associated with the habits and customs of U.S. politics (among others: Lévesque 2022b). This was notably the case in Canada during the 2015 federal election campaign when Prime Minister Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, and the Conservative electoral machine, repeatedly launched highly negative attacks against Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada (Millette 2021).

The Americanization of the *content* of political culture is also at work in certain respects; issues, themes, and topics originating in the United States are increasingly being transposed into the Québec political context. Take the case of wokism, the social justice movement that originated in the United States. In Québec, wokism has been at the forefront of political conversation for several years now, as much among “Wokes”—or those who are rightly or wrongly designated as such (among others: Dupuis-Déri 2022)—as among those who criticize them or are critical of the movement (among others: Leroux 2022). These are “borrowings” and “transfers” from American political culture that are now flourishing in the context of Québec. The emergence of QAnon in Québec is part of a similar phenomenon, with regard to both the Americanization of format(s) and content as part of Québec’s political culture.

QANON IN QUÉBEC: THE ROLE OF ALEXIS COSSETTE-TRUDEL

What precisely is QAnon? Given the heterogeneous nature of the movement, it’s not easy to provide a definition. Originating in Internet discussion forums, QAnon is at once a Web creation, a social phenomenon, and a political movement whose ideas are today discussed, criticized, and discredited, if not analyzed, dissected, and praised by a panoply of actors and authors around the world, in a multitude of languages. “QAnon” is a fusion of two words: “Q” and “Anon”. The letter “Q” here refers to an individual whose real identity remains shrouded in mystery, although it

is the subject of much speculation (Hoback 2021). “Q” presents himself as a well-placed informant in the upper echelons of U.S. military intelligence. He first appeared on *Achan* on October 28, 2017. He then moved on to other discussion forums, *8chan* and *8kun*, where he continued to distill his privileged information through enigmatic “drops”—brief publications left on the Web. “Anon” here refers to “Anonymous”, the anonymous mass of followers or adepts of the movement who drink the words—or the drops—of “Q”. In this movement, however, few drink from the source itself. Most know and follow the master’s teachings through his exegetes, who are very active on social media and YouTube in particular, deciphering the meaning of his words to better disseminate them on a large scale (Davies 2020).

In short, the QAnon movement is founded on the idea that the American political world has been irreversibly gangrened by the “Deep State” since the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. The so-called “Deep State”—around which pedo-satanic elites are clustered—is devoted, as the term suggests, to the worship of Satan and the murder of children. The “Deep State” was being fought by Donald Trump, presidential candidate and providential figure all rolled into one. In this decisive battle for the fate of the world, Donald Trump could count on the unfailing support of “Q”, who has made himself the billionaire’s herald on *Achan* first, then on *8chan* and *8kun*. To mobilize the anonymous troops and galvanize *esprit de corps* for the storm on the horizon—“The storm is coming” became one of the movement’s hallowed phrases, originally uttered by Donald Trump (Roose 2021), but taken up by QAnon since (Cassidy 2022)—the formula “Where We Go One, We Go All!”—or “WWGIWGA”—became the rallying cry, if not the slogan, of the QAnon movement (Hétu 2022).

As such, it is a conspiracy theory, as defined by Pierre-André Taguieff (2013: 327–328), who maintains that such a theory “consists of denouncing an imaginary plot or accusing in an abusive manner a group of individuals acting secretly in a concerted manner to achieve an objective deemed reprehensible, the said ‘theory’ presenting itself as a mode of explanation for the unexpected and unpleasant event.”⁶ QAnon is not the first conspiracy theory or conspiracy movement to emerge from the United States, far from it (Andersen 2017). However, it is worth highlighting its great capacity to recuperate other ideas, themes, or theses which, although not directly linked to the “Deep State” and the pedo-satanic elites, are nonetheless drawn into the movement and blend in

quite naturally (Merlan 2020; Argentino and Amarasingan 2020). In this way, local issues or topics, far removed from American political issues, are recuperated by Qanon (Yates 2020). The same proved to be true of the coronavirus pandemic.

The QAnon movement claimed the pandemic as a fundamental part of its narrative: this represented the latest and final attempt by the “Deep State” to undermine Donald Trump’s presidency. From the incidents at the Wuhan laboratory in China to the vaccination campaigns, the border closures, the lockdown, and the ensuing economic slowdown, QAnon viewed these developments as part of a vast machination led by the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum to undermine Trump’s efforts to dismantle the “Deep State”. QAnon’s positioning on the COVID-19 pandemic enabled the movement to strengthen its position in the United States and even expand beyond its borders. This is what has happened in Québec. As Marie-Ève Carignan, co-holder of the UNESCO Chair in the Prevention of Radicalization and Violent Extremism, points out, “the loss of confidence in the government has led to an increase in adherence to conspiracy theories,”⁷ (Balthazard 2021) which contributed to the growth of QAnon. The emergence and growth of QAnon in Québec was, however, not inevitable—members of Québec society actively contributed to it, the most important of these was arguably Alexis Cossette-Trudel.

A leading figure in the conspiracy movement and opposition to health measures in Québec, Alexis Cossette-Trudel was virtually unknown to the public eye before the outbreak of the pandemic, although his appearance on Télé-Québec’s *Les Francs-Tireurs* did not go unnoticed in 2019 (Martineau 2019). Hosting the “Webjournal de Radio-Québec,” a YouTube channel whose name cannot leave nostalgic fans indifferent, remains his biggest achievement.⁸ Cossette-Trudel’s programs—which are shared and broadcast on social media—feature a uniform visual and conceptual approach and style: alone in front of the camera, using images, articles, clips, and screenshots gleaned from all over the Web, Cossette-Trudel dissects the news, an event or a phenomenon for around sixty minutes or so. Although interviews are sometimes held during special programs, they are rare. In the first few months of operation, the number of viewings of Webjournal programs remained stable: a few hundred viewings on average, at most; that’s minor, not to say marginal, for a YouTube channel. Everything changed, however, with the onset and expansion of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Skillfully combining the ideas associated with the QAnon movement (which proved to be his favorite subjects—e.g., Donald Trump’s presidency, marked by his fight against the pedo-satanic elites, and in particular, the moral decay of Western civilization) in the context of COVID-19 and the ensuing health restrictions, the Webjournal’s audience and exposure exploded. From just a few hundred observers, hundreds of thousands tuned in to Alexis Cossette-Trudel’s YouTube channel more than once a week to hear him discuss the pandemic and international news (Péloquin 2022: 25–26). While he was by no means the only person in these circles to occupy a platform on social or alternative media, Cossette-Trudel nonetheless managed to stand out from the crowd quickly and advantageously with his pedagogical style and the richness of his analyses, nourished by his studies in religious sciences and semiology (Geoffroy et al. 2022: 28–29; Carignan et al. 2022: 56). Cossette-Trudel’s growing popularity was unmistakable: not only did other like-minded Québec figures in the movement gravitate toward him, seeking his company, inviting him on their shows, but he was acclaimed at events organized to protest the health measures by the crowds—crowds who harangued him, demanding more. The leader of the People’s Party of Canada and former candidate for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada, Maxime Bernier, even congratulated him on his contribution at a demonstration (Desjardins 2021). Cossette-Trudel’s action quickly caught the attention of the mainstream media, who devoted articles and reports to him in *Le Devoir* and on *Ici Radio-Canada*’s “Enquête” program (Bélair-Cirino 2020a, 2020b; Noël 2020). Although he has been repeatedly condemned by the mass media for serving the purposes of the “Deep State,” Cossette-Trudel never hesitated to engage with and to promote these exchanges. When *Le Devoir*’s feature on him was published, for example, he posted a full recording of the interview on his networks, much to the delight of Webjournal regulars.

A proud supporter of the QAnon movement, Cossette-Trudel openly displayed his attachment to the movement in its early years. The letter “Q” adorned his profile, as did the movement’s slogan, “WWG1WGA.” With the emergence of the movement during the coronavirus pandemic and the misinformation it generated, particularly about the care that could be prescribed or the seriousness of COVID-19, more and more calls went out to the media to ban any account linked to QAnon or those disseminating information related to it. Faced with this persistent

rumor, “Q” asked its followers to withdraw all affiliation with the movement to protect themselves from censorship. Alexis Cossette-Trudel duly complied, even pleading to have no connection with QAnon afterwards, albeit to no avail. When YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter moved to crack down on accounts broadcasting QAnon-related content—the first two in October 2020 (Collins and Zadrozny 2020; Paul 2020) in the run-up to the U.S. elections, and the third in January 2021, shortly after the turbulent events on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021 (Conger 2021)—Cossette-Trudel was among them. That proved to be the end of the “Webjournal de Radio-Québec” on these platforms.

This provocative action did not, however, stop Cossette-Trudel’s efforts. While he occasionally returned to Twitter under one alias or another to spread his ideas—some of his accounts were banned, until 2023—or to call on his followers to take over the network as copycats (Ebacher 2021), he migrated all of his activities to Russian social media—Odyssee, Rumble, and Telegram in this case—where content moderation standards are different. On these platforms, Cossette-Trudel continues to run rampant, dissecting Québec, French, American and international news with a QAnon twist, from the health measures put in place by the Legault government, to the U.S. and French elections, both of which he claims were stolen, to the war in Ukraine. Initially targeting Québécois, Alexis Cossette-Trudel was called upon to revise his approach as his audience became international, French and Belgian in particular. In fact, he is said to have played a leading role in disseminating and spreading the ideas of the QAnon movement in France (Noël 2020; De Lancer 2020). As illustrated, he played a similar role in Québec, where he helped to spread these ideas and theses, first and foremost by translating them, but above all by presenting them tirelessly in his broadcasts on the “Webjournal de Radio-Québec.” This ongoing work, financed through PayPal by his admirers and partisans, also played a role in the arrival of a new player who has not gone unnoticed on Québec’s political scene: Éric Duhaime.

ÉRIC DUHAIME AT THE HEAD THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF QUÉBEC

Unlike Alexis Cossette-Trudel, Éric Duhaime was a public figure with an impressive track record when he entered the race for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Québec on November 22, 2020. In addition to having been a popular radio host on *Radio X* and *FM93* and a

polemical columnist on various media, Duhaime has penned a number of essays that have not failed to provoke reactions, as well as having briefly served as a journalist for the Québec version of *Rebel News*. It came as no great surprise, therefore, that he won a decisive victory on April 17, 2021, when nearly 95% of the party's members voted for him in the race—a race dominated by the impacts of the coronavirus in Québec. As leader of the Conservative Party of Québec, Duhaime succeeded, not without talent, in channeling the discontent and resentment of a segment of the population fed up with the effects of COVID-19 and the accompanying health restrictions. The party called for all health measures to be lifted; indeed, the slogan chosen for the election campaign also reflected this stance: “Libres chez nous” [Free translation: “Free in our own house”], an unsubtle but nonetheless effective reworking of the famous Quiet Revolution slogan, “Maîtres chez nous” [i.e., “Masters in our own house”], albeit with a libertarian twist (see Turgeon 2024).

It's in the Capitale-Nationale and in Chaudière-Appalaches, where opposition to the Legault government's health measures was strongest, that Duhaime gathered much of his support. While the Conservative Party of Québec has never elected a member to the National Assembly—Claire Samson, the party's only MNA to date, was elected under the Coalition Avenir Québec banner before joining the party on June 18, 2021—, the party appeared primed to make a political breakthrough. During the 2022 provincial election campaign, various polls showed that the party could make gains in three ridings: Beauce-Sud, Beauce-Nord, and Chauveau, where Duhaime ran for office (Boisvert 2022). In the end, however, the Conservative Party of Québec fell short of its objective of electing a member to the National Assembly.

As we have seen, opposition to health measures is closely linked to an embrace and promotion of conspiracy theories. In fact, a recent poll indicates that almost half of Conservative Party of Québec supporters adhere, to varying degrees, to conspiracy theories (Carignan et al. 2022: 107)—results that have been echoed in the media (Laberge 2022). Indeed, it was not uncommon for members of the media to point out in passing that Duhaime was playing a dangerous game, to say the least, with this political clientele.⁹ Far from simply accommodating them, he actively sought their support (Montpetit 2022; Lagacé 2022), to the point of “using dog whistles (Perlman 2016) to conspiracy theorists,” as François Cardinal (2022) puts it. In the same breath, *La Presse*'s deputy editor was keen to point

out that this does not make the Conservative Party of Québec an extreme right-wing party, nor does it make *Éric Duhaime* one of its leaders.¹⁰

I argue that Duhaime went even further in his links with the conspiracy movement, and QAnon in particular. Not content with flirting with this movement, or with appealing to this potential political clientele who do not affiliate themselves with other political parties, Duhaime drew on QAnon's rhetoric, even adopting its codes and signs, to ensure the support of its adherents. Far from being subtle or nuanced, the links between Duhaime and QAnon appear to be quite clear.

On the very day he won the leadership of the Conservative Party of Québec, for example, *Éric Duhaime* launched a fundraising campaign for the scheduled October 3, 2022, provincial election campaign. Four days later, on April 21, he wrote the following on his Twitter account (Duhaime 2021): "J'ai lancé le 17 avril dernier, à 17h, à 17 mois des élections, un blitz de financement pour le Parti conservateur du Québec. Je vous invite à contribuer à hauteur de 17\$. Merci de votre générosité!"¹¹ [Free translation: "On April 17, at 5 p.m., 17 months before the election, I launched a fundraising blitz for the Conservative Party of Québec. I invite you to contribute up to \$17. Thank you for your generosity!"] From the outset, let's emphasize what's clear from this tweet, namely the insistence on the number 17. In the world of QAnon, this number has a very special meaning, as the letter Q is the 17th letter of the alphabet. So the use of the number 17—or, conversely, the number 83 if we're talking about percentages—is by no means coincidental; it is part and parcel of QAnon's rhetoric. These are significant and frequent usages favored by followers of "Q" and by Donald Trump himself (M. Roberts 2018).

Does this mean that any use of the number 17 necessarily makes anyone a follower of QAnon's ideas? Of course not. In this world, over-interpretation is a very real risk, whether you're a supporter of "Q", or a critic of the movement. But in this case, it's not simply one isolated use. In this 36-word, 166-character tweet, excluding spaces, *Éric Duhaime* uses the number 17 four times. A closer look at each of these uses is informative.

"J'ai lancé le 17 avril dernier..." ["I launched last April 17..."] *Éric Duhaime* refers to his victory as leader of the Conservative Party of Québec. A victory which, it is true, took place on April 17, 2021. It would therefore be tempting to consider that Duhaime could not be blamed for anything in this context, since all he is doing is evoking a date which, by a happy coincidence, is the 17th day of April. The question is:

what's the point of insisting on this date? For those who aspire to the highest elected position of political life, the only date that counts is the next election. Just look at the most recent leadership races in Québec and Canada—those that led to the victory of Pierre Poilievre, Erin O'Toole, and Andrew Scheer as the successive leaders of the Conservative Party of Canada, Dominique Anglade as leader of the Québec Liberal Party, and Paul St-Pierre Plamondon as leader of the Parti Québécois—it becomes plainly obvious that no other individual references the date of their party leadership victory. Only Éric Duhaime stands out in this respect, to the extent that the date of April 17, 2021, is written out in full in the platform of the Conservative Party of Québec (CPQ 2021: 2).

“à 17h...” [“at 5 p.m....”] How is it relevant, in any way whatsoever, to indicate the precise moment this fundraising campaign was launched? Asking the question is answering it.

“à 17 mois des élections...” [“17 months before the election...”] Now on a fixed date, the next Québec election was scheduled (and held) on October 3, 2022. At this moment, on April 17, 2021, Québec was in fact a little more than 17 months away from the electoral contest.

“à contribuer à hauteur de 17\$...” [“to contribute \$17...”] At this point, it would be futile to claim otherwise: of all the possible amounts that could have been suggested to supporters and partisans of the Conservative Party of Québec as part of this fundraising campaign, the only explanation that can justify the use of \$17 in this context is that it fits into a theme that is articulated and deployed around the number 17. A number whose meaning leaves no room for different interpretations, under the conspiratorial aegis of QAnon.

Other clues suggest that the links between Duhaime and QAnon are very real. In the context of this fundraising campaign, one user on Twitter reported a particular fact: in a personalized e-mail sent to him by Duhaime, a typo slipped in at the very end of the message: “Avec l’aide d’Életions Québec [sic], un don de 17 \$ de votre part donne 34 \$ à votre Parti” [Free translation: “With the help of Életions Québec [sic], a \$17 donation on your part gives \$34 to your Party!”] (Charlebois 2021). As this user points out, the letter C that is missing from the word “Élections” could well be replaced here by the letter Q... Such substitutions are not uncommon in the world of QAnon.

CONCLUSION

Since March 2020, the influence of the QAnon movement in Québec has been increasingly felt (Noël 2020). QAnon has found, as provoked by popular discontent emerging from the pandemic health measures imposed by Québec and Canadian political and health authorities, the ideal soil in which to take root. In return, it fed this discontent by proposing a narrative that seeks to simultaneously offers a critique and pathway forward for a world turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this narrative takes many different forms, it is essentially based on the following idea: QAnon provided a clear and simple explanation¹² of the pandemic, the societal changes it brought about, and the forces and actors—i.e., politicians and members of the scientific community—who were incapable and unwilling to tackle this health crisis. As a result, the QAnon followers or sympathizers are pleased, as they now know what it's all about, and who to blame.

The following tweet from Alexis Cossette-Trudel, the leading figure in the Québec QAnon movement which opposed the imposition of health measures in Québec, illustrates this phenomenon: “Let it be said loudly and clearly: @francoislegault sacrificed his people in participating in: (a) the establishment of a globalist techno-sanitary dictatorship and, (b) to the attempted Coup against @realDonaldTrump Legault no longer leads Québec #FalsePandemic #PolQc #AssNat” (De Larochelle 2020).¹³

Such a QAnon-style reading of current events directly reflects the impact of the Americanization on Québec political culture. When Éric Duhaime uses the language and codes of this movement, he's directly participating in this phenomenon. Owing to his talent and political flair, he made it possible for the Conservative Party of Québec to secure its best showing during the 2022 provincial election—to the point that the party seemed poised to make gains in the National Assembly of Québec a few days before the election (Bossé 2022). Even though no Conservative candidates were elected, the Conservative Party of Québec received 12.91% of the votes, only 60,291 votes less than the Québec Liberal Party, who formed the official opposition. As the popularity of the governing Coalition Avenir Québec is shrinking in the Capitale Nationale—with François Legault's decision to abandon the CAQ's promise to build a third highway link between Québec City and Lévis (M.-A. Gagnon 2023), only to revive the project a few months later (Lavoie 2024)—the Conservative Party of Québec seems well positioned,

in the next election, to challenge the Coalition Avenir Québec—and the Parti Québécois—in the following ridings: Arthabaska, Beauce-Nord, Beauce-Sud, Bellechasse, Chauveau, Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, La Peltrie, Lotbinière-Frontenac, Montmorency, and Portneuf.¹⁴

If there was any reason to believe that the rebirth of the Conservative Party of Québec might be short-lived—i.e., galvanized by the pandemic but likely to fizzle out as COVID-19 recedes as a public health threat to Québec society—make no mistake. Everything points to the fact that this new player on the Québec political scene, who doesn't hesitate to feed off the QAnon movement and draw on the referents of American political culture, is here to stay.

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NOTES

1. Free translation of: “cette conscience d'appartenance au continent des Amériques et par les démarches entreprises pour assumer globalement cette réalité d'un monde nouveau à façonner.”
2. Free translation of: “l'imposition (intentionnelle ou accidentelle) d'une influence culturelle aux dépens non seulement de la culture 'hôte', mais aussi des autres influences possibles.”
3. Free translation of: “processus d'acculturation par lequel la culture étatsunienne influence et domine la culture autant canadienne que québécoise – et mondiale.”
4. Free translation of: “en une uniformisation et en une homogénéisation des formats culturels en raison de la prépondérance des façons de faire commerciales américaines.”
5. Free translation of: “le transfert des valeurs américaines à la culture québécoise grâce à la forte présence de la télévision, du cinéma et de la musique en provenance des États-Unis.”
6. Free translation of: “consiste à dénoncer un complot imaginaire ou à accuser d'une façon abusive un groupe d'individus agissant secrètement d'une façon concertée pour réaliser un objectif jugé condamnable, ladite 'théorie' se présentant comme un mode d'explication de l'événement inattendu et déplaisant.”

7. Free translation of: “La perte de confiance envers le gouvernement a engendré une augmentation de l’adhésion aux thèses complotistes.”
8. This was the first name of Québec’s public television network, created in 1968 by the government of Daniel Johnson Sr., a major institution in Québec’s cultural life and Québec’s answer to CBC/Société Radio-Canada. Since the name was copyright-free, Alexis Cossette-Trudel jumped at the chance. In fact, the name “Radio-Québec” lends both credibility and legitimacy to his company. The fact that the letter “Q” features prominently in the channel’s name no doubt did not displease Cossette-Trudel.
9. To give just one example, when asked who won the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Duhaime refused to answer on the spot, contenting himself with indicating, via his press secretary, that he “recognizes the democratic result of the American election” (Crête 2022). Free translation of: “Je reconnais le résultat démocratique de l’élection américaine”, a indiqué le chef conservateur par l’entremise de son attaché de presse quelques heures plus tard.”
10. Free translation of: “Est-ce qu’Éric Duhaime fait des appels du pied (*dog whistle* en anglais) aux conspirationnistes et à ceux qui sont prêts à se révolter contre le système? Oui.”
11. Note that this fundraising campaign was broadcast on other platforms of the Conservative Party of Québec and of Éric Duhaime.
12. This is one of the keys to its success (Douglas et al. 2017).
13. Free translation of: “Que ce soit dit haut et fort: @francoislegault a sacrifié sa population en participant: (a) à la mise sur pied d’une dictature mondialiste techno-sanitaire et, (b) à la tentative de Coup d’état contre @realDonaldTrump Legault ne dirige plus le Québec #FaussePandémie #PolQC #AssNat.”
14. Created by Philippe J. Fournier (2019), the 338Canada project is a statistical model of electoral projections based on opinion polls, electoral history, and demographic data.

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PART V

Epilogue: The Intellectual Foundations
of the Québec-United States Relationship



The Intellectual Foundations of Québec's Americanness: A Historiographical Examination

Yvan Lamonde

The notion of Americanness and its intellectual application to considerations of Québec society is over 50 years old. The force and impacts of Americanness on Québec has made its way into various disciplines including literature, geography, history, political science and sociology; a clear indication how attractive it has become in different areas of analysis and reflection. The notion has percolated through to television, radio and social media, to the point where it has lost in meaning what it has gained in popularity. As this chapter illustrates, the introduction of the notion of Americanness into the scientific debate in Québec has had the effect of forcing us to revisit the question of modernity, the notion of French America and French Canada, the dimension of a social divide and Québec's relationship to France and the Americas, especially the United States.

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MOMENTS WHEN THE CONCEPT IS FORMULATED: THE LITERARY MOMENT (1947–1980)

Writers, after the war, perceived both the decline of a certain French culture and the rise of the American novel. It took literary critics twenty years to perceive the trend and name it; the 1970s was to be the great decade of literary Americanness.¹ These pioneers are somewhat overlooked; novelist Jacques Godbout is credited with first using the term “North Americanité” in 1966 to describe the situation of Québec writers (Pilon 1967).²

In literature, the 1970s gave impetus to a recognition of the Americanness of literature. In 1971, playwright Jacques Languirand (Melançon 1990) explored the “repressed” America of Québec culture in *Klondyke*, recognizing it as a rich “elsewhere” for the imagination, followed by critic Guildo Rousseau (Rousseau 1972 in Melançon, 1990). In the U.S., Jonathan Weiss of Colby College examined American images in the novel (Melançon 1990), while Marine Leland of Smith College identified the pace at which Québécois have been slow to feel the need to “de-Europeanize” (Leland 1979 in Melançon 1990). Jean Morency (1994), and Jean-François Chassay (1996), then enshrined this dimension of Americanness in Québécois literature, unlike François Ricard (2018: 169–170), a somewhat isolated contemptor, who saw Americanness as “a contemporary sauce” of the search for specificity, a reflex of “provincials who want to be picturesque.”

THE GEOGRAPHICAL MOMENT (1980S)

The geographical approach to Americanness is entirely contemporary with the historical approach. And yet, the two parallels have never met. This is intriguing: space and time that do not intersect. The career of St. Lawrence University geographer Louis Dupont is a milestone in this cultural geography approach (Dupont 1982, 1985). For a decade, his work focused on Québécois in Florida, the “Floribecois” (Dupont et al. 1994). A quarter of a century later, a reading of his thesis at the University of Ottawa (Dupont 1993), Chapter 9 of which recounts the progression of his thinking on the subject, reveals the ins and outs of his approach and that of his colleagues Louder, Waddell and Gilbert. The Floribecois survey is geographical in that it points to a space, “an elsewhere,” where it is possible for these migratory birds to live. Dupont

clearly sees that he is doing for the 20^c century what was done for the nineteenth century: namely, studying a migration, a continental movement. Lowell, Massachusetts and Nashua, New Hampshire earlier, Fort Lauderdale now. He also observes the social divide in and around this phenomenon, just as he would also point out in relation to the appeal of “western music.”

Anne Gilbert’s 1998 article, “À propos du concept d’Amérique française,” sheds welcome light on this notion, which historians and sociologists have wondered whether and how it intersects with their “Americanness.” Gilbert, who also works on French Ontario, illustrates how we moved from “the vision of a French and unalterable America” to “the idea of the plurality of the Francophone space.” Out with French America, in with the Francophonies in America, the “Francophone archipelago,” the “American Francophone space.” Here we move on from an old ideology rooted in the immigration of French Canadians between 1840 and 1930, to geographical analyses that place Louisiana, Florida and the “Franco-Americanie” of anthropologist Pierre Anctil’s New England (1983), under a new banner. All in all, such is the Americanness of the geographical moment: Francophones, “elsewhere,” in America, bearing today a varied link with Québec. For does “French Canada” still exist when “French America” has disappeared? Can French Canada be “American”?

THE MOMENT OF HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Ten years after the literary moment of Americanness, which opened windows onto this phenomenon, the historical and sociological moment emerges. Alongside Louis Dupont and his geographer colleagues, Guy Rocher, Yvan Lamonde and Gérard Bouchard laid the sociological and historical groundwork between 1971 and 2000, before the debate began (Legaré, Thériault), and other perspectives opened up (Guy Lachapelle, Jean-François Côté).

A Harvard-educated sociologist and member of the Parent Commission on educational reform, Rocher examines with remarkable sensitivity and relevance the conditions for an original North American Francophonie (Rocher 1973: 91, 97, 95, 98). He identifies the challenge of building a “cultural identity for a French North American Canada.” According to him, French Canada is becoming “a state of the United States, a Louisiana of the North, a French-speaking star attached to the

American flag” that cannot distinguish itself by its language alone, but must distinguish itself “by a culture of its own.” It must express “a different genius,” “assured of a singular historicity.” French Canada will do this, he notes, on four conditions: to reconcile the aspirations of the working classes and the elite, while recognizing that ties with France are “our oxygen tent” and that it is better to assimilate than to plagiarize; to ensure that the attraction to the United States is critical; to recognize that French Canada and English Canada do not have the same reflexes towards the United States, and that the notion of a united, bilingual and cultural Canada is “a poor political solution to cultural problems that arise in other terms”; and finally, to aim for the greatest possible economic liberation of our great neighbor.

The question is in the air, as evidenced by the heated debate in September 1982 between sociologist Fernand Dumont and *Le Devoir* editorialist Lise Bissonnette. Dumont refused to allow culture to be reduced to language, condemning it to a life in French without being able to affirm it. In his view, we cannot forget that culture is about power, and he wonders whether it’s “still appropriate to live in French in the context of an empire where we apparently count for nothing.”

Bissonnette, who attended the Harvard colloquium on relations between Québec and the United States on September 1–3, 1982, said she found in the remarks of the sociologist consulting for the PQ government nothing but “the deadly repetition” of old fears, of the “supposed ontological difference,” of “true being,” of the “suave imperialism” that comes from Québec. Ironically, she writes of the “foolish missionary hopes of intellectuals”: “If living in French means going through the century with values other than living as an American, it’s about time someone gave us a list of them.” The exchange became more personal, and Bissonnette once again laments the cliché of the “cultural specificity” that would be “inside” Québécois, according to “mandated definers.”

In the social sciences, the analysis of Americanness took off with the Harvard colloquium, the proceedings of which appeared in 1984. There, Lamonde established the cultural framework and periodization of relations between Québec and the United States (Lamonde 1984), and the same year, in Brussels, he developed the importance of the cultural industries and cinema in these relations. In his keynote address to the Royal Society of Canada, Gérard Bouchard shows the cultural disarticulation between the elites and the people, elites who lived on “categories borrowed” from an “obsolete France” and who had to purge the French

Pantheon of its republican figures (Bouchard 1985–1986: 35). These elites created and maintained a misunderstanding of the United States, blocking working-class people's understanding of America and forcing them to “feed on false representations of themselves.” The blind spot between the elites' anti-American rhetoric and the mass migration of working-class people to “the States” was nowhere to be seen. Bouchard had in a way tested this perception in his analysis of comparative historiography of the rural world, where Québec had not seen any break with the past that would have initiated the idea of a new beginning (Bouchard 1990).

From 1993 onward, Lamonde and Bouchard teamed up at the Institut interuniversitaire de recherche sur les populations (IREP) at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Lamonde reviewed the literature on relations between Québec and the United States (Lamonde 1993) and developed an analysis of the social cleavage of Québec's national culture (Lamonde 1995). In November 1993, IREP organized a symposium whose proceedings were published in 1995 (*Québécois et Américains*). The work is a turning point in that it brings together the work of those who work on Americanness in literature, theater, philosophy, painting and architecture. It is a general survey of Americanness. Based on comparative studies with the United States, Australia and New Zealand, Bouchard introduced the idea of “new communities” in this same collective work, proposing that Québec be inserted into a pattern of rupture, appropriation and recommencement, and into the American and pan-American fabric. Lamonde took stock of Québécois' historical ambivalence towards the United States.

In 1996, Lamonde and Bouchard set their own course. The former published the status of his work on cultural relations between Québec and the United States (Lamonde 1996a, 1996b), publicized his formula ($Q = - F + GB + USA^2 - R$) in *McGill News* in November 1996, and developed it for the first time in a book of tributes to his thesis supervisor, a specialist in relations between Québec and France (Lamonde 1996a, 1996b). The formula posits that, in its *external or colonial* political and cultural heritages, Québec owes less to France than commemorative speeches suggest, more to Great Britain than a colonized person can accept, much more to the United States than anyone wants to see, and less to Rome or the Vatican, which made French Canada understand that it was neither the only nor the main defender of Catholicism in North America.

For his part, Bouchard explains his concept of the “new society,” writing: “Unlike the other populations of the Americas, Québec is a new community that has had great difficulty in perceiving and projecting itself as such, in breaking away from its French and European references to establish itself as an original society on the continent.” To the three phases of this march towards American consciousness (rupture, commencement and appropriation) he adds that of political emancipation (Bouchard 1996: 2). The notion of “new communities” invites comparison. Lamonde suggests comparing Québec literature with American and Pan-American literature (Lamonde 1997). A second IREP colloquium in 1997 compared Québec (*La nation dans tous ses États*); Bouchard explicitly introduced Latin America into the comparison at the same time as Marie Couillard and Patrick Imbert explored this avenue (Couillard and Imbert 1996).

Bouchard returned to the theme of *L'histoire comparée des sociétés neuves*, seeing in it a “reform of the scientific gaze” and an opportunity to challenge falsehoods and identify true singularities (Bouchard 1999). In listing the reasons for thinking about Americanness and the obstacles to doing so, Lamonde pointed to an unthought-of American experience, acknowledging the insecure dimension of an approach that calls into question the relationship with France and the notion of a French America, observing with Bouchard that the approach of rupture is characteristic of American countries, and deconstructs the argument that Americanness is a new annexationism. The challenge now is to find out what Québec intends to do politically and culturally with the recognition of its Americanness (Lamonde 1999 and *Québec, un accent d'Amérique* 1999: 12–13).

In 2000 (176), Bouchard published a *magnum opus*, *Genèse des nations et des cultures du Nouveau Monde. Essai d'histoire comparée*, in which he analyzed the development of the colonial framework in Latin America, the United States, North America, Australia and New Zealand since the sixteenth century. He paid particular attention to the formation of imaginary worlds, nations and the state. Lamonde published the first volume (1760–1896) of four of his *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec (Social History of Ideas in Québec)*, which runs until 1965, and in which, among other things, he lays the foundations for his formula on the foreign legacies of Québec identity. In 2001, Lamonde devoted four chapters to the significance of the four members of his formula: France, Great Britain, the United States, and Rome (Lamonde 2001).

THE MOMENT OF SUSPICION AND THE CRITIQUE OF AMERICANNESS

The debate, on two fronts, is launched successively by Anne Legaré and Joseph Yvon Thériault. A political scientist at the Université du Québec à Montréal, familiar with French academic circles, “special advisor” to Québec’s delegate general in New York, and in charge of missions to Washington and Boston for a Parti Québécois government, Legaré understands Americanness as “a cultural alignment” with Québec’s integration with, or economic alignment with, the United States; in *Le Devoir* of April 12, 2001, she believes that with Americanness “the symbolic universe should be inspired by the economic.” This “economic logic” of Americanness would cancel out Québec’s “historical singularity” by, among other things, reducing the French language to a mere means of communication, even though it has a very intimate relationship with culture. Legaré sees the pro-American discourse as “a new norm,” a “new canon of identity truth,” “the spirit of a crusade,” the formation of a new myth (Legaré 2001: 164–165; 2003: 165). At the time of the NAFTA talks, the “Printemps du Québec” in Paris on March 12, 1999 was the occasion, in her view, of a shift in Québec’s diplomatic discourse in France, and she wonders whether we “still needed this émancipation.” Faced with this Americanism, which compels us to rethink Québec’s relationship with Europe and especially with France, and with this new assertion of intellectual independence, she observes a “reciprocal lack of understanding,” a thinking of “rupture,” a “myth of the clean slate.” Legaré deplors the fact that Québec’s identity is confused almost exclusively with that of America, and sees in the social elite-people divide observed by Bouchard and Lamonde “barely disguised populism.”

In *Le Devoir* on April 12, 2001, Lamonde observed that Legaré’s reading of the contradictions in Québec’s discourse on France and the United States since 1945 is partial.³ He does not see himself in the role of crusader or messianic intellectual, and recalls that in his 1996 formula, the United States is *a* component—albeit a newly important one—of Québec’s identity in relation to its external heritages. His reading of the “symbolic rupture” with France is not a “rejection” of France, but the condition for a new beginning in reciprocal perceptions and exchanges (October 1, 2001).

Noting that Americanness was an “inescapable given,” Bouchard points out that it was never presented as a “normative category.” He is

astonished that Québec's dual relationship with France and the continent is "always experienced in the mode of tearing apart, rather than hybridization" (Bouchard 2002: 165, 178). His comparative work with new communities has shown that they have asked themselves the same questions of their metropolises as Québec has of France, and that the "rupture" has been experienced in different ways. As for the future of Québec's relationship with France, he believes it needs to be "stripped of its inhibiting effects," move away from normativity and towards parity, cultivate reciprocity, broaden the relationship with Europe, focus relations on modern aspects and place Québec in the international Francophonie. He leaves his interlocutor with a question: "What should a Québec Francophonie look like, purged of this Americanism?"

This is also the question posed by political scientist Guy Lachapelle (*Politique et sociétés*, 2004)—what alignment with France?—in his review of Legaré's *Le Québec, otage de ses alliés: les relations du Québec avec la France et les Etats-Unis* (2003), while advocating a "diplomacy of balance." Joseph Yvon Thériault's critique of Americanness is a return of fire, that of the notion of French America, in an eclectic way of thinking, that proves that what is received is received in the way of the receiver.

Here, Americanness is perceived through the lens of modernity, an ahistorical concept for Thériault, whose only reality is as an opposition to tradition (Thériault 2002: 13–14, 353). In his view, modernity, which cannot make room for "small societies," is merely "the deployment of rationalizing processes" (industrialization, urbanization, secularization, liberal democratization); like Americanness, of which it is synonymous, modernity "prevents us from thinking about tradition, about the trace," and goes against "the maintenance of a particular historical intentionality." This "intentionality" of and in history is French Canada, which is (was?) "in itself a substantial affirmation, the affirmation of an otherness at the heart of America, the refusal of Americanness." At the very least, Thériault does not say how, and we hardly know what a "modern" French Canada would be in America, a French Canada that has also experienced "the deployment of rationalizing processes."

Having become a new "banner of identity," an "imperialism" of identity, a "commonplace," the "true being of French-speaking Québécois," Americanness "would be an old story, but French Canada didn't know it" (Thériault 2003: 161). This is just one example of the distorted reading, recuperation and instrumentalization of history. How can we ignore or have forgotten that it was French Canada that, at the time of Rameau de

Saint-Père, was asking itself the question of its “vocation in America?”⁴ Another example: for Thériault, modernity is a pretext for speculating on Americanness. One of the discoveries of the study of modernity in Québec was to establish just how challenging the transition from tradition to modernity had been and remains. Placing an imported, undefined notion on the table certainly adds water to the mill of speculation, but does not advance research or understanding of a phenomenon.⁵ One wonders what Thériault has read and retained from the works of Dupont, Waddell, Gilbert and Marcel Martel on the decline and transformation of French Canada.

THE AMERICANNESS OF THE AMERICAS

Nevertheless, studies and publications on Americanness continue during and after the debate. Bouchard and Lamonde explore other avenues, while Jean-François Côté, Léon Bernier and Guy Lachapelle shed new light on the subject. Bouchard writes the entry on “Americanness” in the *Oxford Companion to Canadian History* (2004), focusing on the changing relationship between Québec and France and the reconsideration of Québec’s identity as a new society in the New World. It was at this point that, with Bernard Andrès, he opened up a new field, that of the American imaginary and the myths of new societies in the New World (Bouchard and Andrès 2007). Lamonde clarifies the differences between américanisation and américanité (2004) and writes the entry “americanicity” in the collective *Québec Questions* (2010) edited by Gervais, Kirkey, and Rudy. He studies the arrival of Emerson, Thoreau and Brownson in Québec as part of a comparison of intellectual milieus in New England and Lower Canada between 1830 and 1860 (Lamonde 2018).

Sociologist Jean-François Côté, who began publishing on Americanism at the turn of the century, is well aware of the temporal scissions: the transition after 1960 to something other than “Americanization (Côté 2001: 36) and the moment of NAFTA and the FTAA. He writes: “if, in the space of barely twenty years, continental integration has had a very significant effect on the Québec economy, and on society as a whole, isn’t it only natural that this question should be reflected in political consciousness?” In contrast to Legaré’s reservations, he proposes that it is “this counter-logic of Americanness that is becoming the basis of national political recomposition in Québec.” Côté’s original contribution centers on his search for “the identity of the Americas throughout the continent,”

on “the recognition of the symbolic identity of the Americas as a whole” (Côté 2006: 247), on “the renewal of the grand narrative of the Americas.” Her work with Zilda Bernd and Licia Soares de Souza on relations between Québec and Brazil is a step in this direction of Americanness in its more global, hemispheric sense (Côté 2011). Once again, literature serves as a pathfinder on this trail, and it is this openness to Latin America that makes Côté see, as Bouchard did, the repression of Aboriginal sources in the exploration of Québécois Americanness. Finally, in 2006, Côté was highly critical of J. Y. Thériault’s positions and his “fundamental misapprehension of the question of Americanness.” He considers Thériault’s consideration of Louis Hémon’s novel *Maria Chapdelaine* to be a narrow understanding of tradition. Finally, he questions his theoretical eclecticism and his anthropologization or sociologization of Husserl’s notion of “internationality” (all consciousness is consciousness of).

MEASURING CONTEMPORARY AMERICANNESS

Reflection, analysis and debate on Americanness take a new turn with polls and surveys conducted by Guy Lachapelle, Gilbert Gagné and Léon Bernier in 1997, 2007 and 2019. A new context of debate around the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into effect in January 1994, was created under the Conservative governments of Brian Mulroney from 1984 to 1993. The American experience could not be more concrete and contemporary. Lachapelle and Gagné’s thesis is that NAFTA has transformed Québécois Americanness, revealing salient facets of it (Lachapelle and Gagné 2000). American-ness is no longer scrutinized and affirmed by literary scholars, geographers, historians or academic sociologists, but identified in an approach that analyzes the policies induced by the reality of Québec’s continental economic integration, which NAFTA brings to light.

Surveys seek to measure Québécois support for free trade—two-thirds are in favor (Lachapelle 1998)—and the plurality of their allegiances and identities. The European dropout rate among Québécois is real but relative (47.9%), and the more educated a Québécois is, the more he or she adheres (37.9%) to an American reference, writes Lachapelle in *Le Devoir* of November 21 and 22, 1998. Europeanness and Americanness coexist. With regard to their “second” identification, 16.8% of French-speaking Québécois identify with Canada, 8.8% with the United States, 57% with North America, and when they have 16 years or more of schooling, this

last reference rises to 60.5% (Bernier 2000, 2001). Using and adapting Moréno's index of citizens' dual allegiance in many countries, Lachapelle continued in *Le destin américain du Québec* (2011) to refine Québécois' self-perception of their identity.⁶ He notes that in 2007, 81.8% of French-speaking Québécois considered themselves North American, and 14.3% European. Self-perception as North American has evolved, however; while it was approximately 80% in 2007, then drops to 62% in 2019 under President Donald Trump. In 1997, 56% of Québécois considered themselves different from Americans; the percentage rises to 73 in 2019 (Lachapelle and Lavigne-Descôteaux 2019a, 2019b).

In *Politique et sociétés* (2003: 51), Lachapelle and Gagné delved deeper into these differences, seeking to identify common values and major divergences. It's not so much age as social level, education and income that discriminate against adherence to "materialistic" values in the United States. Intellectuals and trade unionists, among others, value "post-materialist" values of social solidarity. Political scientists point to a different ambivalence to that of Europeanism and Americanism, asserting that "Québécois are resolutely social-democratic, but their societal model draws heavily on North American materialistic values of individual fulfillment." We care as much about our health insurance as we do about our Florida vacations and Sunday soccer.

TWENTY YEARS ON: THE DEBATE, TAKE 2

In 2002, Gérard Bouchard felt that the debate on Americanness was "off to a bad start"; in *Le Devoir* on February 27–28, 2021, he sees it as a "failure." For him, the misunderstanding revolves around the type of relationship that has historically been maintained with "traditional" France, around the misunderstanding that proponents of Americanness had in substituting the United States for France in the identity of Québécois. Québec "has broken away from an overly hierarchical and paralyzing relationship" with France to align the collective imagination with reality. In short, he writes: "we simply wanted to (a) reconcile our imaginary with our reality, (b) clean up our cultural relationship with France and (c) reframe Québec's status as a New World nation. What's not to like?"

The debate is yet again rekindled by Anne Legaré, who observes in *Le Devoir* of March 2, 2021, that Americanness is identified more with the United States than with Latin American countries, and that in all cases, we are faced with an American hegemony. She uses Lachapelle's

data to remind us that in 2007, only 30% of Québécois perceived themselves as Americans, and that they had increased their differentiation from the United States under Donald Trump's presidency. For Legaré, who does not recall the French dropout of current and rising generations of Québécois, "Americanness is a fuzzy notion that a large proportion of Québécois' perceptions believe." She underscores that the "reality" is far from South American, that the relationship with France has been "largely cleansed" and that the reframing of Québec's status stems from "the need for myths." In Québec, which has enough to do with its differentiation from Canada, "Québécois' Americanness is not only a statement of differentiation from Europe, it is also a differentiation from the U.S." Identity "is built in difference," not in similarities. But why not, objectively, in both differences *and* similarities?

THE POLITICAL ENCOMPASSING OF THE NOTION OF AMERICANNESS

The Harvard colloquium of September 1982 served here as a milestone for understanding the rise of the notion of Québec's Americanness in the social sciences. But the milestone was set in a very specific political context. Had the Québec Liberal Party been elected in 1976, there would probably have been no Harvard colloquium in 1982. It was the election of the sovereigntist Parti Québécois that made the difference, as it too had to find its America. But the Harvard moment is first and foremost one of the effects of an identity and cultural diplomacy put in place by the Parti Québécois government, confronted in an unprecedented way with America and the United States.⁷

Two months after his election on November 15, 1976, Premier René Lévesque gave a strategic speech to the Economic Club in New York on January 25, 1977. While the idea of comparing the U.S. independence plans of 1774 and Québec's 1976 plan may have seemed original and promising, it was also audacious, if not disrespectful, to a high-level economic audience. The premier sought to reassure his audience about the projected "quiet independence," but that did not stop the front page of the next day's *New York Times* from headlining "Levesque, in City, Asks Business to Support Separation of Québec."

In November 1977, Claude Morin, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (MAI), presented the Lévesque cabinet with a plan for "Operation America," which he entrusted to Robert Normand, Deputy Minister,

Richard Pouliot, Assistant Deputy Minister, and James Donovan, Director of the U.S. Division.

On May 16, 1978, the MAI produced a 50-page document entitled "Operation America: a critical and analytical examination of the situation." The policy implemented in October was designed to allay U.S. fears, including the nationalization of U.S. companies, and above all to use cultural diplomacy to reach out to opinion-makers: elected officials, journalists, academics, high school and community college teachers, writers and artists.⁸ The operation was timed to coincide with the forthcoming 1980 referendum. For 18 months, spurred on by more than seven interdepartmental meetings, the Operation created a veritable vortex. Political scientist Louis Balthazar was called in to conduct some forty consultations ("Perception américaine de l'évolution du Québec") with senior U.S. civil servants, businesspeople, politicians, journalists and academics.

The initiative was motivated primarily by economic and commercial aims, but was intended to be "multidimensional and multidisciplinary." In the area of cultural cooperation, the founding of a Québec cultural institute in the United States was envisaged. Among the "educational affairs" already in place were Québec studies at Northwestern University, Johns Hopkins University and University of Maine, Orono. The Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS), which had published the *American Review of Canadian Studies* since 1971, was well known, and the plan called for reaching out to teachers of French as a second language.⁹ By July 1980, the SUNY Plattsburgh Summer Seminar on Québec had already become a tradition, before Alfred Hero Jr. of the World Foundation in Boston and Elliott Feldman, director of the University Consortium for Research on North America at Harvard, two somewhat isolated allies of Québec, organized the Harvard colloquium in September 1982.

CONCLUSION

Since the 1850s, questions have been raised about the fate of French Canada in America; in the 1900s, we had been sensitive to the invasion of burlesque and cinema; post-World War II American expansionism swept away French Canada. The accumulation of these experiences had, like a high tide, reached the cultural conscience. It took the political high tide of the election of a sovereignist party in 1976 to prompt a search

for the America that might welcome an independent Québec, to explore the variety and understandings of forms of Americanness, as highlighted in this chapter, that ran through the Québec experience. The scientific dynamics of reflection on the notion of Québec's Americanness were driven by a political context and operation.

Why shouldn't America be an unstable point of equilibrium for Québec between its Americanness and its Europeaness?

NOTES

1. Y. Lamonde. 2016. *La modernité au Québec. 2: La victoire différée du présent sur le passé (1939–1965)*, Montreal, Fides: 409.
2. In *Le couteau sur la table* (1965), Godbout recognized a simple fact: “rather than being *French*, in a personal way, we now prefer to *be ourselves*, in French”. A name and date in brackets refer to the bibliography at the end of the text.
3. Y. Lamonde, *La modernité au Québec. 2*, chapters 19, 20.
4. Y. Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec (1760–1896)*, Montreal, Fides, 2000, chapter XII.
5. Y. Lamonde, *La modernité au Québec. 2*, chapter 18.
6. Between 1998 and 2007, minimum and maximum: only Québécois (16.9% and 27.9%); more Québécois than Canadian (24.9 and 32.2); as much Québécois as Canadian (26.1 and 38.6); more Canadian than Québécois (4.2 and 15.4); and, only Canadian (6.1 and 8.3).
7. Stéphane Paquin. 2004. La paradiplomatie identitaire: Le Québec, la Catalogne et la Flandre en relations internationales. *Politique et Sociétés* 23 (2–3): 203–237.
8. Alexandre Couture Gagnon and Carol A. Chapelle. 2019. Operation America: Québec's Soft Power Applied to French Language Teaching in the United States. *American Review of Canadian Studies* 49, 3: 413–427. I would like to thank Michel Brunet, a former MAI official, for bringing this study to my attention. Documents on Opération Amérique can be found in the MAI archives at the Archives nationales du Québec (ANQ), Centre de Québec under E42, S 10000, D869, 1995-02-001 boxes 60 and 225. Copies are also in the Jean-François Lisée fonds (fonds P684) at ANQ, Centre de Montréal, 2000-09-001\15; they were used in the writing of his

book *Dans l'œil de l'aigle: Washington face au Québec*, Montréal, Boréal, 1990, especially 301-332.

9. Guy Lafleur, Direction des Amériques, "Note to Mr. Richard Pouliot," April 3, 1978.

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INDEX

A

- Acculturation, 194, 376
Act to Promote the French Language, 226
Addison Rutland Natural Gas Project, 52
Afghanistan, 74, 84–88, 95
Afghan War, 86, 87
Agriculture, 165, 218, 219, 266, 294, 311, 316, 317, 322, 323
Agriculture Agreement, 316
Akwesasne/Saint Régis, 194
Alberta, 6, 7, 84, 162, 165, 229, 232, 234, 293, 312
Algeria, 223
Allegheny County, 60, 62
Allophone, 85, 224–226
America First, 10, 254
American Association of Teachers of French, 31
American Consulate General, 22, 31
American Council for Québec Studies, 11, 31, 52
American economic protectionism, 148, 149
American Independent Party, 104
Americanization, 15, 110, 375–377, 385, 403
Americanness, 15, 376, 395–406, 408
Anglade, Dominique, 384
Anglophile, 89
Anglophone, 10, 224
Anti-Americanism, 32, 89, 376
Arizona, 271, 294, 300, 358
Armaindo, Louise, 356
Assimilation, 88, 110, 114, 119, 224
Association for Canadian Studies in the United States (ACSUS), 31, 67, 349, 407
Asylum, 78, 191, 197–203, 220, 230–233, 235
Athens, 134
Atlanta, 5, 30, 52, 133, 151, 164, 169, 217
Australia, 313, 323, 326, 327, 358, 365, 399, 400

B

- Baillargeon Brothers, 356
 Baldrige, Malcolm, 34
 Baldwin, Tammy, 57
 Balthazar, Louis, 11, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29–31, 33, 50, 52, 75, 77, 79, 89, 118, 121, 134, 136, 194, 376, 407
 Barré, Horace, 356
 Baton Rouge, 26
 Bay, James, 26, 134, 243
 Beebe Junction (Stanstead)/Beebe Plain, 194
 Beeray, Christine, 376
 Beirut, 134
 Belgium, 5, 7, 24, 326
 Bernd, Zilda, 404
 Bernier, Léon, 403–405
 Bernier, Maxime, 380
 Bertrand, Jean-Jacques, 26, 134
 Biden administration, 6, 9, 58, 76, 94, 322
 Biden, Joe, 6, 7, 9, 10, 50, 51, 57–62, 64, 65, 67, 76, 92, 94, 96, 137, 206, 254, 276, 310, 316, 318, 322, 323, 327
 Bipartisan, 65, 173
 Biron, Martine, 5, 254
 Biron, Rodrigue, 32, 135
 Bissonnette, Lise, 30, 34, 35, 79, 192, 398
 Blanchard, James J., 38–41, 81, 82
 Blanchet, Yves-François, 245, 310
 Blinken, Antony, 6
 Bloc Québécois (BQ), 84, 310, 315, 325
 Bodman, Samuel W., 23
 Border demarcation, 192, 193, 198
 Border Patrol, 197, 199
 Border restrictions, 74, 192
 Border security, 74, 75, 77, 139
 Boston, 5, 8, 26, 133, 134, 136, 151, 164, 169, 206, 217, 247, 249, 328, 401, 407
 Bouchard, Gérard, 397, 398, 405
 Bouchard, Lucien, 22, 39, 89, 109, 136, 345
 Bouchard-Taylor commission, 111, 227
 Boucher, Marc, 50, 52, 87
 Boulet, Jean, 201, 202
 Bourassa, Robert, 8, 26, 35, 134
 Braddock, 60, 61
 Brazil, 148, 167, 184, 287, 404
 British Columbia, 6, 229, 232–234, 272, 287, 300, 312
 British Empire, 163
 British North America Act of 1867, 163, 255, 312
 Bromont, 9, 58
 Brothers Cruz (Francisco and Raphael), 363
 Brussels, 6, 134, 398
 Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 31
 Burlington, 51, 53
 Bush administration, 23, 84, 87, 89, 95
 Bush, George W., 22, 89, 92, 95, 376
 Buy American, 10, 58, 59, 76, 94, 318, 327
- C**
 California, 9, 33, 139, 248, 255, 264, 271–276, 293, 294, 300, 359
 Canada-Québec Accord, 200, 219
 Canada's "Freedom Convoy", 60
 Canada-United States border, 191, 193
 Canada-United States Safe Third Country Agreement, 78, 196
 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, 35, 75, 135

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 227
- Canadian Constitution, 163, 177, 265, 348
- Canadian Constitution Act of 1867, 265
- Canadian Dairy Commission, 312
- Canadian embassy, 7, 23
- Canadian trade minister, 176
Canadien-français, 224
- Capitale-Nationale, 382
- Capitol Hill, 381
- Cardinal, François, 382
- Cardinal, Jean-Guy, 7
- Carignan, Marie-Ève, 379, 380, 382
- Carlson, Tucker, 63
- Carroll, Shana, 360, 362, 363, 367, 369
- Carter, Jimmy, 29
- Caruso, Liz, 63
- Catalonia, 83, 244
- Catholic Church, 105, 224, 340, 341
- Cellucci, Paul, 85
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 140
- Chafee, Lincoln, 245
- Chaloux, Annie, 14, 137, 243, 264, 266–273, 276
- Champlain, 233
- Charest administration, 9, 140
- Charest, Jean, 9, 23, 84, 136, 154, 227, 242, 246, 294
- Charlebois, Sylvain, 311, 314, 329, 384
- Charlevoix, 22, 245, 248
- Charlevoix G-7 Summit, 62
- Charlottetown, 250
- Charter of Québec Values, 111, 116
- Charter of the French Language, 110
- Chartier, Charles, 24
- Chartre de la langue française*, 226
- Chassay, Jean-François, 396
- Chassée, Isabelle, 360, 362
- Chassin, Youri, 320
- Chaudière-Appalaches, 64, 382
- Chertoff, Michael, 23
- Chicago, 5, 8, 26, 52, 133, 134, 136, 151, 164, 169, 217, 247, 252, 368
- Chile, 274
- China, 10, 23, 60, 141, 147, 148, 166, 167, 206, 223, 228, 229, 253, 287, 316, 327, 366, 379
- Chrétien government, 84, 87
- Chrétien, Jean, 38, 82, 85, 89
- Christopher, Warren, 39
- Ciaccia, John, 35
- Circus, 15, 339, 347, 355–369
- Circus Oz and Circa, 358
- Cirque de Soleil, 347, 355–366, 368
- Cirque du Tonnerre, 357
- Cirque Éloïze, 355
- Cirque Mechanics, 358
- Clean energy, 169
- Climate change, 6, 9, 14, 57, 65, 84, 138–141, 149, 150, 218, 242, 243, 245, 247, 248, 252, 263, 264, 266–274, 276, 277, 286, 290, 300, 301, 347
- Climate Change Action Plan, 243, 270
- Climate group, 139, 268
- Clinton, Bill, 22, 38–41, 43, 82
- Clinton, Hillary, 53, 56, 57, 61
- Clinton Library, 41, 81
- Cloutier, Alexandre, 245
- Club Fugazi, 356, 367, 370
- Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), 102, 110, 137, 140, 227, 233, 241, 251, 275, 316, 382, 385, 386
- Coaticook, 21
- Cold War, 8, 28, 84, 135
- Colgan, Charles, 243, 255
- Commercial and Tourist Bureau, 24

- Commission for Environmental Cooperation, 286
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 179
- Communism, 89
- Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), 139, 142, 246, 317, 318, 323, 325, 326
- Concord, 51
- Confederation, 102, 105, 109
- Conference of Great Lakes, 139, 150, 241, 249, 256
- Connecticut, 152, 154, 243, 245, 248, 269, 270, 298
- Conservative Party of Québec, 96, 102, 112, 375, 381–383, 385–387
- Constitution Act, 163, 164, 218, 227, 265
- Copps, Sheila, 345
- Cossette-Trudel, Alexis, 15, 375, 379–381, 385, 387
- Côté, Jean-François, 397, 403
- Couillard government, 138–140, 146, 200, 242, 247–251
- Couillard, Marie, 400
- Couillard, Philippe, 22, 66, 137, 138, 140, 147, 154, 227, 241, 242, 247–253, 319
- Council of Atlantic Premiers, 243, 301
- Council of Great Lakes Governors (CGGL), 244, 256, 267
- COVID-19, 15, 60, 75, 78, 102, 112, 137, 191, 192, 195, 197, 199, 202, 204, 206, 232, 251, 252, 290, 366, 369, 373, 375, 379, 380, 382, 385, 386
- Crees, 286
- Critical minerals sector, 57
- Cross-border approach, 243, 270
- Cross-border issues, 138, 149, 150
- Cross-border transportation, 149
- C-Series, 178
- Cultural diplomacy, 347, 349, 406, 407
- Cultural industries, 338, 339, 341–349, 398
- Cultural policy, 338, 339, 341, 343, 344, 346–349
- Cyr, Louis, 356
- D**
- Dairy, 10, 14, 55, 56, 58, 64, 309–329
- Dalhousie University, 314
- Dallas, 8, 26, 134
- Declaration of Independence, 88
- Deep State, 378–380
- de Gaulle, Charles, 24
- Delaware, 293
- Délégation Générale, 8, 217, 357
- Democrat, 33, 53, 55–57, 59–61, 64, 65, 104, 108, 122
- Democratic Party, 53, 60, 94, 104
- Department of Cultural Affairs, 26
- Department of External Affairs of Canada, 26
- Derentz, Landon, 23
- Detroit, 59, 68, 250, 252
- Diamond Horseshoe Theatre, 365
- Dion, Jean-Pierre, 359
- Diplomatic influence, 154
- Donovan, James, 407
- Doran, Charles, 52, 67
- Duceppe, Gilles, 84–86
- Duhaime, Éric, 15, 203, 375, 381–385, 387
- Dumont, Fernand, 84, 205, 398
- DuPerré, Léon, 356
- Duplessis, Maurice, 320, 340
- Dupont, Louis, 88, 396, 397, 403
- Durand, Louis, 356

E

Eastern Townships, 248, 374
 East Timor, 82
 Economic Club of New York, 8, 26, 28, 79, 134, 135
 Economic diplomacy, 150, 154, 169
 Economic nationalism, 29, 109, 137, 254, 310
 Economic partnership, 139, 141, 143, 149
 Economic symbiosis, 148
 Edwards, Eddie, 55
 Egalitarianism, 89
 Electricity, 14, 23, 25, 165, 268, 285–290, 292, 293, 295, 296, 299–301, 328
 Electricity supply plan, 295
 Electromobility, 246
 El-Husseini, Nassib, 362
 Emigration, 219, 221, 224, 234
 English Canadians, 37, 93
 Ethnic diversity, 215
 Ethnocultural diversity, 114, 118, 121, 122
 Europeanism, 405
 European Union (EU), 139, 256, 313, 314, 317, 328
 Expansionism, 407
 Expo 67, 24
 Exports, 5, 9, 23, 52, 56, 58, 63, 76, 136, 137, 139, 141, 145–151, 154, 155, 162, 166–168, 179, 180, 218, 246, 248, 251, 252, 254, 268, 275, 285–290, 297, 310, 313, 315–319, 321, 322, 326–328, 337, 347, 356

F

Federal/Provincial/Territorial
 Committee on Trade (C-Trade),
 166

Federalists, 75, 82, 83, 85, 109, 113, 114, 116, 310
 Feldman, Elliot, 407
 Fenno, Richard, 50
 Fetig, James L., 41
 Finzi Pasca, Daniele, 359
 First Nations, 266
 Flip Fabrique, 358
 Floribecois, 396
 Florida, 124, 215, 301, 396, 397, 405
 Ford, Doug, 96, 318
 Ford, Gerald, 27
 Fortin, André, 250
 Fort Lauderdale, 397
 Forum of Federations, 22
 France, 8, 23–26, 53, 81, 88, 118, 133, 141, 147, 148, 167, 218, 221, 223, 224, 226, 228, 229, 326, 341, 345, 348, 356, 361, 369, 381, 395, 398–403, 405, 406, 411
 France-Québec relationship, 25, 133
 Francization, 220, 224, 226
 Francophone, 10, 88, 110, 193, 342, 345, 397
 Freeland, Chrystia, 183, 328
 Free market, 32, 89, 113, 312, 314
 Free trade, 8, 35, 53, 57, 64, 75–77, 81, 94, 95, 135, 136, 154, 250, 256, 310, 315, 319, 320, 324, 327, 344, 404
 Free trade agreements, 10, 74, 75, 139, 251, 256, 309, 315–317, 319, 323, 325, 343
 French, 7, 11, 24, 26, 27, 31, 33, 36, 52, 88, 95, 110, 116, 118–121, 124, 174, 186, 193, 200, 202, 217, 218, 220, 223–227, 229, 230, 234, 340–342, 346, 348, 349, 360, 363, 375, 381, 395–402, 404, 406–408, 410

French Canada Overseas Service, 26
 French-Canadian, 105, 106, 110,
 119–121
 French-Canadian identity, 106, 120
 Fry, Earl, 6, 49

G

Gagné, Gilbert, 77, 345, 404, 405
 Gagnon-Tremblay/McDougall
 Accord, 219
 Gallup poll, 53, 55, 62
 Gaspé, 21
 General delegation, 5, 25, 151, 169
 Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, 24, 164, 265,
 348
 Gérin-Lajoie, Paul, 25, 164
 Germany, 53, 147, 148, 167, 287,
 326
 Gilbert, Anne, 397
 Girault, Nadine, 140, 251–253
 Glasgow, 269, 274
 Global economy, 82
 Globalization, 10, 53, 56, 193,
 203–205, 327, 343–345
 Global pandemic, 137, 138, 148, 206
 Globe and Mail, 319
 Gobeil, Paul, 35
 Godbout, Adéland, 24
 Goldenberg, Eddie, 38
 Goldwater, Barry, 104
 Gomery Commission, 90
 Government of Québec, 4, 15, 136,
 138, 139, 141–146, 149, 150,
 179, 185, 201, 218, 230, 273,
 274, 295, 311
 Grande noirceur, 340
 Great Britain, 24, 53, 118, 221, 341,
 399, 400
 Great Lakes, 56, 242, 244, 245, 247,
 249–253, 255, 268
 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities
 Alliance, 150

Great Lakes Charter, 244
 Great Lakes Commission (GLC), 244,
 247, 253, 255
 Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region,
 247, 249
 Green economic recovery, 149
 Griffith Sr., Wells, 23
 Gutierrez, Carlos, 23

H

Hachigian, Nina, 6
 Hannity, Sean, 60, 62
 Harper, Stephen, 85, 88, 377
 Hasidic Jews, 227
 Hassan, Maggie, 245
 Helms, Jesse, 33
 Hémon, Louis, 404
 Henderson, Bradley, 363
 Hero Jr., Alfred, 11, 407
 House of Commons, 81
 House of Representatives, 23
 House Ways and Means Committee,
 173, 179
 Houston, 5, 133, 151, 164
 Hurricane Dorian, 252, 290
 Hydroelectricity, 9, 52, 94, 149, 179,
 243, 245, 248, 249, 252, 277,
 287, 328, 347
 Hydro-Québec, 28, 52, 63, 179, 185,
 248, 255, 287, 288, 290,
 295–297, 328

I

Iceland, 287
 Illegal immigrants, 230, 231, 233
 Illinois, 50, 56, 59, 67, 152, 244,
 245, 256, 301
 Imbert, Patrick, 400
 Immigration, 3, 5, 6, 24, 50, 52, 78,
 95, 102, 110, 114, 123, 125,
 134, 140, 143, 165, 197–200,

202, 203, 205, 206, 216, 218,
219, 222–226, 228, 229, 233,
235, 311, 397

Imports, 10, 14, 147, 148, 166, 167,
171, 178–180, 296, 298,
309–312, 317, 319, 322–327

Inclusiveness, 123

India, 287, 319

Indiana, 152, 244, 245, 256

Indigenous, 286

Inflation Reduction Act, 58, 59, 64,
76

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs
Act, 59, 327

Institute on Québec Studies at SUNY
Plattsburgh, 52

Integration, 43, 74, 110, 111, 113,
114, 120, 122, 125, 138, 148,
162, 195, 216, 219, 220, 226,
273, 286, 292, 299, 401, 403,
404

Interculturalism, 110

International Conference of the
Forum of Federations, 82

Internationalism, 90

International Joint Commission, 150

International market, 141, 142, 310,
326, 346

International refugee law, 199

International trade, 34, 66, 77, 148,
163, 165, 173, 179, 183, 187,
249, 312, 344

Inuits, 286

Investissement Québec (IQ), 5, 141,
145, 146, 154

Iraq, 74, 84–87, 95, 376

Iraq War, 84, 86–88, 94

Irvine, 359

Italy, 148, 167

J

Jacksonian Democratic Party, 103

Jacob, Pascal, 357, 359, 360

Japan, 141, 147, 148, 166, 167, 313,
328, 365

Job, Brian, 52

Johns Hopkins University, 407

Johnson, Daniel, 22, 26, 134

Johnson, Lyndon, 22, 24, 26

Jospin, Lionel, 345

Journal de Montréal, 201

Judicial Committee of the Privy
Council, 164

K

Kelly, Stephen, 39

Kennedy, John F., 182, 378

King, Angus, 39

Krauss, Clifford, 36, 37

Kyoto Protocol, 268, 270, 272, 274

L

La Belle Province, 51, 55, 63, 65

La belle province, 4, 49, 50, 52, 53

Labour Conventions Reference, 164

Labrador, 165, 232, 234, 243, 248,
254, 269, 287, 312

Lachapelle, Guy, 84, 349, 397,
402–405

Lacolle, 198

Lafayette, 8, 26, 134

La Malbaie, 245, 246

Lamonde, Yvan, 15, 376, 395,
397–401, 403, 408

Landry, Bernard, 22, 34, 35, 39, 40,
81, 84, 109

Languirand, Jacques, 396

Lansing, 59

La survivance, 118, 119, 122

Las Vegas, 356–359, 366, 369

Latin America, 27, 400, 404, 405

Laurin, Camille, 342

Leblanc, Guy, 146

- Legaré, Anne, 397, 401, 403, 405, 406
- Legault administration, 143, 145, 147, 154
- Legault, François, 9, 23, 44, 66, 109, 111, 121, 137, 138, 140, 141, 144–146, 149, 154, 155, 200, 202, 203, 227, 233, 241, 242, 251–254, 315, 316, 318, 320, 328, 374, 375, 381, 382, 385
- Léonard, Patrick, 360, 362, 369
- LePage, Paul, 249, 256
- Les 7 doigts de la main, 355, 361
- Lesage, Jean, 24–26, 109, 134, 226
- Lévesque, René, 8, 22, 27–35, 79, 80, 89, 135, 243, 341, 357, 374, 377, 406
- Liberals, 8, 35, 77, 86, 102, 105, 106, 109, 111, 124, 136–138, 140, 226, 227, 242, 247, 250, 251, 253, 275, 311, 314, 319, 324, 329, 373, 377
- Lisée, Jean-François, 25–27, 29–31, 33, 36, 39, 50, 75, 79, 80, 200, 244–246, 320, 408
- Los Angeles, 5, 8, 26, 133, 134, 136, 164, 196, 217, 357, 368
- Louisiana, 26, 124, 134, 301, 341, 348, 397
- Lowell, 206, 397
- M**
- Machine de Cirque, 358
- Mackinac Island, 245
- Made in America, 10, 59
- Madison, 59
- Maine, 39, 50, 56, 62, 63, 140, 150, 243, 249, 255, 269, 290, 297–299, 328, 338, 341, 348
- Maison du Québec, 24
- Malloy, Dannel, 245
- Manchester, 51
- Manhattan, 8, 24, 358, 366
- Manitoba, 124, 224, 232, 234, 272, 287, 312
- Marleau, René, 39
- Marois, Pauline, 111, 241, 242, 244–247, 252, 253
- Martel, Éric, 248
- Martin, Pierre, 76, 77, 86, 87
- Maryland, 293
- Massachusetts, 9, 39, 63, 140, 150, 152, 179, 215, 243, 245, 248, 256, 269, 295, 297, 298, 397
- Massée, Manon, 320
- McCahill, William, 37
- Meech Lake Accord, 35, 36, 227
- Melby, Everett, 27
- Menezes, Mark, 23
- Mercier, Honoré, 106, 124
- Mexicanization, 196
- Mexico, 53, 139, 141, 147, 148, 167, 179, 180, 196, 200, 251, 268, 272, 317
- Miami, 5, 133, 136
- Michigan, 50, 53, 56, 59, 67, 152, 244, 245, 317, 318
- Migration, 13, 14, 22, 78, 84, 192, 193, 201, 215, 216, 218, 221–224, 226–228, 233–235, 397, 399
- Mills, Janet, 328
- Milwaukee, 59, 60, 67, 68, 252
- Minister Delegate for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs, 245
- Minister for Education, 24, 164
- Minister for Transport, 252
- Ministère des Relations Internationales de la Francophonie et du Commerce extérieure, 50, 66
- Ministère des Relations Internationales du Québec (MIRQ), 11

- Minneapolis, 56
 Minnesota, 50, 56, 67, 244, 255
 Mondale, Walter, 31
 Montana, 272
 Montérégie, 64
 Montpelier, 51
 Montreal, 15, 21, 22, 25, 31, 82,
 144, 164, 196, 198, 229, 286,
 320, 355, 356, 360–364, 367,
 368, 374, 375
 Montreal International, 146
 Mont-Tremblant, 22, 43
 Morency, Jean, 396
 Morin, Claude, 31, 32, 80, 374, 406
 Morin, Jacques-Yvan, 32, 33, 135
 Morocco, 223
 Moscow, 138
 Mulrone, Brian, 35, 404
 Muskie, Edmund, 31
- N**
- Nashua, 397
 National Assembly, 13, 22, 84, 86,
 101, 106, 108, 110–112, 226,
 227, 273, 275, 320, 374, 375,
 382, 385
 National Circus School, 356, 362,
 363
 Nationalism, 28, 33, 43, 44, 106,
 108, 121, 338, 340, 342
 Nationalists, 79, 89, 105, 106, 116,
 121, 122, 124, 316, 376
 National security tariffs, 162, 180
 National unity, 74, 87
 Natural gas, 52, 286, 288
 Natural resources, 4, 138, 139, 162,
 165, 265, 266
 Netherlands, 147, 166, 167, 326
 New Brunswick, 6, 217, 232, 234,
 243, 252, 269, 312
 New Deal coalition, 103
 New England, 14, 26, 39, 50, 52, 63,
 134, 150, 151, 206, 221, 224,
 242, 243, 245, 248, 249, 252,
 254, 255, 264, 267, 269, 270,
 275, 285–288, 290, 293,
 296–301, 349, 358, 397, 403
 Newfoundland, 165, 232, 234, 243,
 248, 254, 269, 312
 New Hampshire, 50–52, 55, 63, 67,
 140, 243, 245, 248, 255, 256,
 269, 297, 298, 338, 397
 New Jersey, 152, 293
 New Mexico, 271, 294
 New Victory Theatre, 358, 365
 New York, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 25, 30,
 50–56, 67, 76, 79, 80, 133, 134,
 140, 150–152, 164, 215, 220,
 221, 224, 244, 255, 285–288,
 290, 293, 295–297, 299–301,
 338, 356–359, 365, 366, 368,
 401, 406
 New York City, 24, 80, 134, 169,
 217, 297, 328, 341, 343
 New Zealand, 274, 310, 313, 321,
 323, 326, 327, 399, 400
 Ng, Mary, 328
 Non-interference policy, 81
 Non-militarized border, 195
 Normand, Robert, 406
 North American Energy Working
 Group, 286
 Northern Pass, 52, 63
 Northern Pass Transmission Project,
 248
 North-south economic axis, 136
 Northwestern University, 407
 Nova Scotia, 243, 269, 294, 311, 312
 Nunavut, 224
- O**
- Obama administration, 74, 90, 92,
 93, 96, 276

Obama, Barack, 51, 53, 57, 64, 83, 88, 90–92, 94
 Obama/Harper era, 74
Office de la langue français, 226
 Official Languages Act, 226
 Ohio, 50, 56, 59, 67, 152, 244, 254, 256
 Ontario, 6, 7, 30, 84, 96, 139, 179, 183, 186, 187, 206, 217, 220, 228, 229, 232, 234, 244, 248–250, 256, 272, 273, 275, 287, 293, 309–314, 318, 319, 321, 324, 326, 328, 338, 397
 Open borders, 37, 74, 75
 Opération Amérique, 8, 341, 342, 408
 Oregon, 268, 271, 274, 294
 Orlando, 356
 Orono, 407
 O’Toole, Erin, 373, 384
 Ottawa, 6, 11, 22, 30, 31, 37, 41, 53, 58, 60, 74, 77, 84, 85, 96, 136, 139, 163, 206, 217, 233, 245, 276, 309, 318, 323, 325, 328, 373, 374, 396, 409, 410
 Ouellet, André, 38, 39, 120

P

Paradiplomacy, 4, 5, 14, 24, 51, 64–66, 73, 215–217, 235, 243, 264, 267, 269, 337
 Paramount Hotel, 365
 Parent Commission, 397
 Parizeau, Jacques, 8, 38, 39, 76, 80, 81, 89
 Parliament, 38, 53, 105, 112, 163, 164, 182, 218, 219, 228, 234, 310, 312, 374
 Parti Québécois (PQ), 7, 8, 27–29, 32, 50, 84, 102, 106, 121, 124, 135, 136, 241, 242, 251, 275, 315, 341, 384, 406

Party realignment, 12, 103, 104, 106, 112
 Patrick, Deval, 245
 Patry, André, 25, 26
 Paulus, Diane, 365
 Peña Nieto, Enrique, 251, 318
 Pence, Mike, 245
 Pennsylvania, 50, 53, 59–62, 67, 68, 152, 244
 People’s Party of Canada, 96
 Peterborough, 326
 Peter, Mary A., 41
 Pew Research, 77, 85, 90, 91, 93–95
 Philadelphia, 5, 133, 151, 164, 169, 217, 250, 358, 368
 Pickle Family Circus, 361, 363, 367
 Pines, Robert, 35
 Pittsburgh, 59, 60, 67, 68
 Plattsburgh, 51, 53, 54, 67, 198
 Pluralism, 111, 113, 122
 Pohénégamook/Estcourt, 194
 Poilievre, Pierre, 96, 373, 374, 384
 Political border, 195, 264
 Port Angeles, 196
 Portland, 250
 Pouliot, Richard, 407, 409
 Powell, Colin, 23
 Prémont, Karine, 376
 President, 9, 12, 22, 23, 51, 56, 57, 65, 82, 90–93, 320
 Prince Edward Island, 243, 269, 312
 Progressive party, 104
 Protectionism, 10, 33, 53, 56–58, 60, 61, 64, 66, 75, 94, 137, 139, 146, 147, 155, 315, 316
 Protectionist realignment, 137
 Proulx, Marie-Ève, 146
 Provincial jurisdiction, 77, 265
 Provincial legislatures, 163, 164, 218

Q

QAnon, 15, 375, 377–381, 383–386

- Québec Act, 1774, 88
 Québec City Summit, 22
 Québec delegation, 6, 25, 30, 247
 Québec Department of
 Intergovernmental Affairs, 27
 Québec Diplomacy Institute, 144,
 145
 Québec federalists, 75
 Québec International, 140, 146
 Québec Liberal Party, 85, 138, 384,
 385, 406
 Québec Ministry of the Environment,
 295
 Québec Ministry of Health and Social
 Services, 140
 Québec-New York border, 230
 Québécois, 52, 88, 340, 347, 349,
 396
 Québécois identity, 120
 Québec Solidaire (QS), 102, 109, 320
 Québec sovereigntist movement, 29
 Québec sovereignty referendums, 50
 Québec-United States relations, 5, 9,
 11–13, 16, 27, 375
 Québec-US border, 53, 192, 195,
 202, 203, 205
 Québec-US migration, 221
 Queen Lily's Brothel, 196
 Quiet Revolution, 8, 21, 24, 26, 88,
 108, 109, 120, 121, 134, 154,
 218, 219, 224, 226, 315, 382
 Quinn, Pat, 245
- R**
- Ralliement Créditiste (RC), 117, 121
 Reagan, Ronald, 22, 32, 33, 35
 Refugees, 75, 78, 191, 199, 200,
 216, 219, 220, 229–232
 Regional Climate Change Action
 Plan, 270, 271
 Republican, 16, 33, 51, 54–56, 59,
 60, 62–65, 68, 104, 108, 110,
 122, 202, 215, 249, 256, 272,
 317, 399
 Republican party, 12, 33, 56, 62, 65,
 94, 95, 103, 104, 120, 123
 Ressay, Ahmed, 196
 Révolution tranquille, 340
 Rhode Island, 243, 245, 248, 269,
 290
 Rickett's Circus, 356
 Ricochet, 358
 Riel, Louis, 106, 124
 Rimouski, 21
 Rivière-du-Loup, 21
 Roby, Yves, 49, 52
 Rocher, Guy, 397
 Rock Island (Stanstead)/Derby Line,
 194
 Rome, 134, 399, 400
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 103
 Ross, Wilbur, 23
 Rouleau, Chantal, 252
 Roxham Road, 78, 198–203, 233,
 235
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 232
 Roy, Mario, 89
 Russia, 87, 95, 362
- S**
- Saguenay Lac-St-Jean, 64
 Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, 233
 Saint-Hyacinthe, 21
 Saint-Jean, 21
 Saint-John, 248
 Samson, Claire, 382
 Sanders, Bernie, 57
 San Francisco, 15, 33, 136, 356,
 360–363, 366–368, 370
 San Francisco Mime Troupe, 361
 Santa Barbara, 359
 Santiago, 138
 Saskatchewan, 6, 224, 232, 234, 312

Saviello, Tom, 62, 63
 Scheer, Andrew, 384
 Scotland, 83
 Scott, Phil, 251, 256
 Secretary of Commerce, 23, 34, 172, 176
 Securitization, 13, 196, 197, 205
 Securitized border, 196
 Shane, Phaon, 360
 Sherbrooke, 21
 Sikhs, 227
 Silicon Valley, 5, 133, 164, 169, 217
 Smart Border Initiative, 196, 198, 201
 Smuggling, 195, 197
 Snider, Gypsy, 360, 362, 363, 365, 367, 369
 Snyder, Rick, 245, 250, 256
 Soares de Souza, Licia, 404
 Social cleavage theory, 107
 Social media, 15, 199, 200, 378, 379, 381, 395
 Softwood Lumber Agreement, 162, 181, 185
 Softwood lumber dispute, 162, 181–183, 185
 Soldatos, Panayotis, 4, 217
 Soldevila, Sébastien, 360, 362, 369
 Sovereignists, 12, 27, 28, 39, 73–77, 82, 87, 94, 95, 108, 113, 117, 122, 134, 154
 Sovereignty, 8, 28, 30, 32, 42, 43, 75–77, 80, 83–86, 88, 90, 92–96, 102, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 121, 122, 135, 205, 216, 217, 342
 State of emergency, 205
 Statue of Westminster, 164
 Stefanik, Elise, 53, 54, 56
 St. Lawrence River Governors and Premiers, 139
 St. Lawrence Seaway, 81

Stowe, 250
 St-Pierre Plamondon, Paul, 384
 Stratégie du gouvernement du Québec à l'égard des États Unis, 242
 Summit of the Americas, 22
 SUNY Plattsburgh, 407
 Supreme Court of Canada, 164, 226

T

Taguieff, Pierre-André, 378
 Tai, Katherine, 58, 322–324
 Taiwan, 9, 138
 Taliban, 85
 Tariff Act of 1930, 177, 179
 Tariffs, 10, 55, 56, 58, 59, 62, 64, 66, 74, 76, 179, 180, 185, 249, 313, 317, 319, 321, 322, 327, 328
 Terrorist, 9, 50, 196, 201
 Tétreault, Samuel, 360, 362, 369
 Texas, 124, 151, 152, 154, 215, 350
 Thatcher, Margaret, 32
 Thériault, Joseph Yvon, 376, 397, 401–404
 Thériault, Luc, 325
 Third Option policy, 28
 Tokyo, 134
 Toronto, 11, 206, 229
 Trade deficit, 142, 147, 155, 166, 167, 249, 327
 Trade disputes, 76, 162, 165, 166, 174, 176, 177, 180, 181
Trade Expansion Act, 177, 187
 Trade litigation, 173
 Trading partner, 8, 37, 40, 75, 94, 137, 147, 148, 150, 154, 163, 166, 168, 181, 251, 313
 Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), 246, 256, 317
 Trois-Rivières, 21

Trudeau, Justin, 57, 60, 62, 183,
195, 203, 251, 276, 310, 314,
349, 373, 377
Trudeau, Pierre, 28, 217
Trump, Donald, 10, 12, 16, 22, 23,
50, 51, 53–67, 74–76, 78, 83,
88, 90–92, 94–96, 123, 137,
180, 183, 192, 202, 249–251,
254–256, 275–277, 316–318,
327, 374, 375, 378–380, 383,
405, 406
Trump/Trudeau years, 74

U

Ukraine, 87, 95, 381
Underwood, William, 363
Unilingual, 89
Union Nationale, 26, 32, 106, 109,
117, 121, 124, 134, 135, 320
Union Square, 365
United Kingdom (UK), 6, 83, 147,
148, 313, 319, 347
United States Consul General, 25, 31,
39
United States missile defense
program, 86
United States national security, 55,
177, 180
United States stakeholders, 171–173
United States suppliers, 172
United States Trade Representative
(USTR), 172, 176, 183, 313,
321–324
Universal Declaration of Human
Rights, 230
University of Maine, Orono, 407
Unmilitarized, 196
Uruguay, 316
US-Mexico border, 198
Utah, 272
Utility Scale Wind Towers, 178

V

Vance, Cyrus, 31
Vandal, Thierry, 245
VanNijnatten, Debora, 243, 244, 265,
267
Vatican, 399
Vermont, 50–53, 55, 67, 140, 243,
250, 251, 256, 269, 298, 338
Vice-Premier, 39, 164
Vilsack, Tom, 58, 323
Virginia, 23, 124, 293

W

Waldorf Astoria, 358
Walker, Scott, 245, 249, 256
Wallace, George, 104
Washington, 5–7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 22,
23, 25–28, 30, 31, 34, 37, 39,
40, 43, 64, 79, 80, 133, 196,
201, 246, 255, 256, 268, 271,
294, 327, 328, 401
Washington D.C., 151, 164, 170,
183, 206, 217
Wealth redistribution, 109
Weiner, Randy, 365
Weiss, Jonathan, 396
Weld, William, 39
Western Climate Initiative (WCI), 9,
139, 150, 264, 268, 269,
271–276, 293, 294, 300
Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative,
77
*Western Regional Climate Action
Initiative Agreement*, 271
White House, 9, 23, 28, 31, 33, 37,
39–43, 50, 51, 53, 56–58, 60,
64–66, 137, 148, 149
Wisconsin, 50, 53, 55–57, 59, 64, 67,
244, 245, 249, 256, 301, 317,
318
Woods, Bretton, 248
Wolf, Aaron, 53, 54

World Economic Forum, [379](#)
World Health Organization, [379](#)
Wuhan, [379](#)
Wynne, Kathleen, [250](#)

Y
Yankébécois, [89](#)
Yi, Lu, [363](#), [367](#)
Yugoslavia, [82](#)