



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

FROM YANKEES TO QUEBECOIS:
NATION-BUILDING AND NATIONAL IDENTITY
IN QUEBEC'S EASTERN TOWNSHIPS



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7 Chapter VII: 'Always in Harmony- Toujours en harmonie'?¹ Relationships between anglophone and francophone Townshippers.

I have already stated on a number of occasions that Townshippers, both past and present have enjoyed for the most part harmonious relationships between French-speakers and English-speakers. This chapter therefore briefly identifies and examines some of the important arenas in which speakers of English and speakers of French have come together in the Township communities. I also seek to identify the arenas in which anglophones and francophones are kept apart. Through identifying these segregated and integrated social spaces, I will demonstrate the serious pitfalls of placeless nationalism. English and French Townshippers are not in state of war (metaphorical or otherwise). Battles do not take place over historical texts on a day-to-day basis. There is little hostility between the neighbouring cultural groups and perhaps more interestingly spaces of togetherness and separateness are very often locally situated serendipitous occurrences rather than being the results of concerted efforts to bring anglophones and francophones together. In this chapter I identify and examine these spaces in terms of both formal organisations and through more serendipitous practices. I then examine the role played by bilingual residents in bridging and reinforcing these spaces of separateness and togetherness.

My first thought in writing this chapter was to openly identify spaces of togetherness and spaces of separation between the two linguistic groups. However, in thinking about the relationships between anglophones and

¹ This was the slogan for Townshippers Day, held at Saint-Félix-de-Kingsley 16th September 1990. In light of my findings I find the slogan neither true, nor contrived.

francophones further, I began to see that these social spaces were more often than not, simultaneously spaces of inclusion and exclusion. It is with this in mind that this chapter is written.

7.1 Township Organisations

Some organisations actively promote meeting between anglophones and francophones, even if this was not within the original mission statement of the organisation. In this section I will draw attention to two such organisations, both of which have an anglophone heritage, but are now active sites of engagement between anglophones and francophones. These organisations seek to promote themselves to both communities, not because there is believed to be any problems per se, but because they are seeking to address issues that are of relevance to both communities.

7.1.1 Townshippers Association

The *Townshippers Association* (often referred to as Townshippers) was founded in 1979 and according to their promotional leaflet is "... dedicated to creating, supporting and promoting ideas and actions that contribute to the vitality of the English-speaking community in the Eastern Townships". It is concerned with issues of access to health services, jobs and the promotion of the heritage of the Townships in English. However, unlike Alliance Quebec in Montreal, Townshippers has attempted to avoid constitutional and legal battles over the English and French languages. Instead Townshippers promotes co-operation and understanding between French-speakers and English-speakers and acknowledges the common issues that Townshippers of both languages face.

The Townshippers Association has a very strong ideology of community development and whilst acknowledging that it is an English organisation they acknowledge that many of the same issues are faced by Townshippers of both linguistic communities. Community conflict is often along lines other than the linguistic dimension. As rural areas the Townships, are sites of conflict between preserving the rural character of the Townships and 'development' as a means of creating job opportunities.

There's people in these communities that want to bring in the Wal Marts, McDonalds, the Subways all that kind of stuff. They see them in larger thriving centres like Sherbrooke, so development for them is only a matter of progress, but they have a linear vision of that. You'll have other people who have experience of, you know different kinds of situation, who have a more balanced approach to development then you have the other extreme again who, you know maybe people who've come out to the Townships to retire precisely because there is not a lot going on here. And they want this. *You know I'm really happy that a lot of the issues we are dealing with in the Townships are, do not have a lot to do per se with the linguistic divide, the two sides that are often said to define the character of Canada.* [Grant].

Sheila Quinn, a member of the Townshippers Association Youth Committee emphasised that their 'Bridges' project, although based in English was open to all. The needs of English-speaking and French-speaking youth themselves do not vary.

It's just that in order to make sure it [the need] gets met in certain way. Sometimes that means basing it in one language and accommodating the other at the same time. That's what I plan on doing [Sheila].

I was invited to attend a meeting in Knowlton, organised by Townshippers which sought to identify the needs of the young people in the community. Whilst the meeting was held in English and all the young people anglophone, if young people's ideas were implemented the benefits would be felt by both the English and the French-speaking communities. The issues raised by the young people

were related to what they saw as shortcomings in their community. The first issue raised was that of the skate-park and basketball court, which were poorly maintained. Other issues identified were the relationships between young people and the police² and the need to travel to get anywhere (even the skate-park is 3km from the town centre). So, although the meeting took place in English, French-speaking youth would also be able to enjoy the benefits of any improvements made.

However, the fact that the meeting was held in English also makes the Townshippers Association a space of separation. Francophone youth were excluded from the meeting on two counts. Firstly, the young people who are unable to speak English would not have been able to make a contribution if they had attended the meeting.

Secondly, the group was recruited through a local anglophone high school so even if francophone children did speak good enough English to participate, they were far less likely to have heard that the opportunity existed to make their views known. Therefore, although Townshippers has a strong discourse of being a bridging organisation, it continues to exclude a majority of the population of the Eastern Townships through its functioning being in the English language.

Although Townshippers is an organisation, which works principally through the medium of English and promotes English language access to services, it nevertheless focuses upon issues that affect both linguistic communities. Whilst the organisation committee of the 2000 Townshippers Day (see Chapter 5) was

² This seemed to be related to a feeling that police were suspicious of young people rather than related to actual problems.

mostly francophone, by its English language nature, Townshippers is a space of linguistic exclusion as much as it is a space of inclusion.

7.1.2 Bishop's Centre.

The Bishop's Centre is a small building on Knowlton Road and is a 'campus' of the English language Bishop's University in Lennoxville. The centre was the personal vision of Louise Jamet, a fine art professor at Bishop's who saw the potential of Knowlton, with its well-educated and wealthy population as a good place to develop adult education. She told me that well-educated retired people want to do 'more than just play cards.'

The reason we have this here in Knowlton, is because this is a resort town. All this area is a place for people who retire early and those people are typically very well educated and they want to do something more than just play cards. They want to do something interesting when they retire and they would usually take one course per semester and a lot of them are interested in art. We have a lot of people who are doctors, nurses, teachers; you know a lot of professionals come here. They want to do something that they find relaxing, enjoyable. Our courses are the same as they are on campus, credited and everything, just because the place is different, the environment is different people seem to like taking courses here and again. [Louise Jamet].

Although the English language Bishop's University administers the courses, most of the courses are taught bilingually. The centre has therefore become a place where anglophones and francophones meet, sometimes for the first time.

She does her whole class bilingually and among all the women³ who are learning stuff and there 80% francophone and 20% anglophone. The francophone community have a very different attitude to arts and culture and since she began I think she has attracted a lot more anglophone people to the courses and they're actually learning to speak French, where they never had to before. Whereas before they would refuse to speak French in shop or something, now they're on an equal level as students in a class with francophone women. They may never have sat next to a francophone women for 4 hours before,

³ The courses are open to men as well.

now they're trying to chat so out of this kind of background. I think she's done that for about 10 years there's people asking for French conversation classes [Anne].

I think my way of helping is the cause of unity in a way is that fact that this place is bilingual [...]. Sometimes I have anglophones who don't speak one word of French; sometimes it happens that they can just relax and try to speak the other's language and usually it happens. After a year or two of taking courses here [...] people from both linguistic groups become friends after a while. They make an effort they each make an effort to understand each other and for me that is a great victory [Louise Jamet]

The Bishop's Centre is being presented as a site where prejudices can be broken down. Anglophones and francophones are coming together in a totally new situation. For many people this is the first time they have actually had to engage with people who speak the other language for any period of time. The Bishop's Centre has therefore added a new sphere of engagement between anglophones and francophones. Many older people in Knowlton are not bilingual, thus face a certain amount of difficulty when having to spend 4 hours with somebody who does not speak their language. The appearance of this new sphere means that a new vocabulary needs to be learnt. Individuals learn to negotiate different contexts in different languages (Laponce 1987), but a new sphere does mean a new language needs to be learnt. Students may possess the vocabulary to cope with everyday tasks as shopping (even if this vocabulary is unspoken), but new situations lead to the need to acquire new vocabulary.

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7.2 National festivals.

Another example of anglophones and francophones coming together is in the celebration of Canada Day (1st July) and St Jean-Baptiste (24th June). As 'historical texts' they represent a source of division but in Lac Brome these events are reappropriated to become symbols of community unity instead. As the mayor of Lac Brome told me,

Anytime there's a major fundraiser, anytime you are trying to do something, like Canada day you'll be bringing the anglophones and francophones together [...] so you see people coming together on most issues now. I mean they're going to have a St Jean Baptiste celebration over here in Foster and I'm willing to bet that 50% of those will be anglophones and St Jean Baptiste is known as a francophone thing you know so, generally speaking it is a fairly good marriage [Stanley Neil].

Emma, said the same about her community

And the parties that are on Christmas Eve and stuff like that. I love that mingling, its so great, it's awesome how do you parades for Canada Day and have a parade for St Jean Baptiste everybody's just looking for a good time so parties are what gets people together.

[...]

More festivals and parties and everybody would be in a much better situation because that's what the whole friendliness thing ((laughs)). That's one the biggest most important parts is that everybody gets so caught up with politics, its not really the politics, its what's going on at home and in the community [Emma].

Thus in local contexts even the most poignant symbols of conflicting nationalisms are reformed and renegotiated in local contexts. The above examples of religious communion and national day celebrations do not possess any meanings in themselves which are free from local context. Even these important symbols of Quebec and Canadian nationalism can take up very different meanings in a local context from the conventional wisdom acquired through the reading of newspapers, history books and other 'big-picture'

representations of nationalism. These events clearly do not mean the same thing to all people and all communities. On the contrary the joint organisation of such celebrations demonstrates a desire to appropriate even the most unlikely symbols for the cause of unity within the community. This re-appropriation does not lead to the death of nationalisms; rather nationalism is shaped and reshaped by local activity (see Smith 1990). Moreover, joining together in these ways does not necessarily result in a denial of difference; it can often become an active celebration of difference. There is nothing intrinsically unique to Quebec or the Townships about celebrating difference or joining in the customs of 'others'.

7.3 Theatre Lac Brome.

Theatre in Knowlton has a long heritage as is testified by their web site.

Professional theatre and Lac Brome have long been synonymous, dating back to the 1930s when Montreal Repertory Company co-founders Madge and Filmore Sadler established in Knowlton what became Brae Manor Theatre, one of Canada's finest summer stock theatres, repertory companies and training school. Actor Christopher Plummer and Globe and Mail critic emeritus Herbert Wittaker are just two of Canada's most famous theatrical talents who passed through its doors. (Theatre Lac Brome 2001)

Although more and more bilinguals have come along to the theatre over the past few years, the theatre has remained an English space. The theatre has begun to stage plays by Quebec playwrights translated into English as well as some French language plays, but there has been very limited interest in the theatre from francophones.

There is this cultural element which is strictly English you know. There's no French group that uses the theatre and yet we found that though over the past 10 years more and more bilingual people come and the director has chosen Quebec playwrights who have been translated into English and that's an interesting angle from the bilingual point of view [Margaret].

The translation of Quebec plays into English may represent a gesture of respect of French-Canadian playwrights, but it still does not help those who are unable to understand English. Margaret went on to suggest that the theatre has difficulty in promoting itself to French-speakers, notably through a lack of access to publicity.

I think he's had a couple of French productions but nobody went you know, he didn't have the access to that publicity machine you know. You didn't have the visibility in the French ... they just don't know there is a theatre there. [Margaret]

The situation regarding the theatre demonstrates that it is necessary to have more than a simply willingness to stage French language plays in order to bring francophones into the theatre. Margaret puts forth the idea that the director does not have access to the 'publicity machine' for the French-speaking community. Clearly the theatre is not prevented from advertising in French newspapers and does indeed have visibility through the bilingual *Tempo* newsletter. However, there is more to publicity than the ability to advertise; there also seems to be an issue of the non-presence of the theatre as part of the francophone consciousness in the community. Margaret maintains that efforts have been made to bring francophones into the theatre but thus far this is proving difficult.

In reference to the Bishop's Centre, Anne contended that francophones have a different (i.e. more positive) view of arts and culture to the anglophones. It is therefore surprising that the theatre should appear to be such a strongly English space. It follows that there is much more to creating spaces of engagement between anglophones and francophones than intent alone. I have been unable to explore the local perception of the theatre amongst local people. There may be issues of individual personalities within the group, or a perception of the elitism

of the theatre. The past heritage of theatre in Knowlton may have left a legacy that is proving more powerful than present efforts to expand theatre. Kate had suggested that it was anglophones at the theatre group who were most hostile to any government involvement in culture, even if government funding were to be available for groups which participate. Margaret did claim initially that more and more bilinguals were coming along to the productions, implying that the group is becoming more inclusive. Although bilinguals are coming into the theatre, Margaret thinks of it as an English space with reference to the people she perceives as 'controlling' the group. Although Margaret is involved in the group, she implies that 'the director', not herself, is defining the space. "The director put on plays by Quebec playwrights; He [the director] couldn't get access to the publicity machine".

7.4 Religious divisions, Religious unity and Religious death.

7.4.1 Church division

Anne suggested that the Protestant churches and the Women's Institute (WI) were anglophone institutions for historical reasons and the Catholic churches francophone (though the latter judgement was clearly speculative).

So its very interesting if you manage to spend time in there you'll see all kinds of interaction which doesn't happen anywhere else very regularly. I guess it happens in the fitness classes, but most of the groups exist for the older women, the women who have leisure. I guess it's the WI and the churches, just by their historic nature. Protestant church [has] always been solely anglophone, you don't really find French women in there who mingle in and I guess in the Catholic Church there is a group of francophone women who do their social activities, so it has always been historically separate and its been two classes [Anne]

1.4.2 Unity

Emma presented a different perception of religion in her community. The emergence of ecumenical practice represents an import shift in the central symbols of Quebec's history. It is evident from Ross' work that it was as much Catholicism as the French language which caused hostility from English-Canadians in the Eastern Townships. The building of a Catholic Church in any given community was seen as showing that the French were 'here to stay' (Ross 1943). Only one of my respondents really discussed religion in any detail, but Emma's description of a recent Good Friday celebration demonstrates how different denominations have been able to come together. I do not know if all of the churches in the community were involved, but it demonstrates in a small way how English and French have come together on an issue that was once a cause of division between English-speakers and French-speakers.

We do an ecumenical service for Good Friday. It was absolutely incredible and it was so neat because it was the French and English communities together [...] He [the minister] started at one end of the town at the humungas Catholic church as the one end of the town. All of the denominations and everybody started there, there were two readings, no a reading and 2 hymns or something and they had, they had one of the ministers, who's a United church minister in [-----] made a cross made of softwood [Emma]

Emma's description places more emphasis on the linguistic aspects of the parade, rather than upon any theological statement being made in the practice of an ecumenical church service. Through the practice of the service a number of interesting statements are being made. Firstly, there is the idea that English and French are being brought together, which is significant in terms of community togetherness.

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, there is a shift from religion as difference to religion as a form of unity. Whilst ecumenicalism has been

increasingly common throughout the western world, the situation in Quebec represents a challenge to a once important symbol of French-Canadian and Quebec nationalism. Here, even if only for one day, a division which once was viewed as the most significant force of division in Quebec society is being presented as a source of unity. In this practice, the people involved were celebrating a common Christian heritage using the same symbolic forms (church buildings for example), which once were the symbols that helped to preserve their distinctiveness. Whilst church attendance in Quebec has declined over the past 30 years, about 200 people had come together in celebration of what was presented as a common Christian belief.

7.4.3 Death

When I interviewed community development advisor Bill Pardy, he reminisced about his time in a rural community in Scotland where a resident showed him around the local cemetery. It could be argued that cemeteries are the ultimate memorial places or *lieux de mémoire* for a locality. As Edna noted, the Township cemeteries bear testimony to former English domination. English names are literally cast into stone. All the signs on the shop fronts and the road signs may be in French today, but the cemeteries mark in the landscape the truth of an English Quebec.

Lac Brome has two cemeteries next door to one another. One is Catholic and one is Protestant. In the older Protestant cemetery, a vast majority of the gravestones have English inscriptions and names. In the newer Catholic cemetery most of the gravestones have French inscriptions and names. This division in Lac Brome, and elsewhere in the south of the Townships is more prominent than other places

the Townships. There was not the widespread settlement of Irish Catholics and Brome Lake as there was in the more northern Townships (see Kesteman *et al* 1998, 247).

Although this division is a reflection of past religious allegiances, declining church attendance in both types of church over the past thirty do not have appeared to influence burial practices. Death is an experience that unites people of all languages. However, their language had defined the places in which they are remembered.



Figure 7-1: Roman Catholic Cemetery: Ville de Lac Brome



Figure 7-2: Protestant Cemetery: Ville de Lac Brome

7.5 *Bilingualism as a dimension of sexual politics.*

Many comments have been made about mixed (French-English) marriages in the context of Quebec (e.g. Schulte 1985). Mixed marriages are often seen, not as nurturing bilingual children, but bringing about assimilation into one of either community (Adler 1977). However, the emphasis on marriage often detracts from the conditions which make mixed marriages possible. Evidence from Emma about growing up in a bilingual context, produces some interesting insights about how young people welded a sense of otherness about gender and sexuality, with a sense of otherness about language. Emma's example represents a highly serendipitous example of how spaces of togetherness and spaces of separation are formed.

One night there was myself and only girlfriends, there were about 5 of us. We're still all friends; six of us and then this whole gang of French boys and who we all became really close with and my parents really liked them all [Emma]

Hanging out with the French boys added a linguistic dimension to which boys hung around with which girls. Emma presents the sense of otherness about the

other language group as a source of both fascination and conflict for herself and her peers. English boys considered the French boys to be on their territory. Linguistic difference appears to have set the ground rules for interaction between young people. However, the English boys, feeling these rules had been violated responded in kind.

So it was so funny like and it was I look back on it, because all sitting there one night and a whole bunch of the English guys would be near, some of them were in our grade some of them were older, they walking down the middle of our street, it was ooh there's going to be a rumble so, because they were kind of like territorial; French guys hanging out with all these English girls, what going on with all this 'nah nah nah' and all this. It was just funny because they would go back and forth and the French girls would hang around this the English guys, we would be like *'What are they doing?'* But it was funny and then somebody would have a huge party and everybody would hang out together so, I don't know its so, so and I love, I love being so close to another culture. [Emma]

In the end the transgression was not considered serious even though Emma describes the English boys as 'territorial'. The bilingual community in which Emma grew up presented a setting in which language created boundaries and in which these boundaries were transgressed. Teenage life therefore was concerned with the transgression of linguistic boundaries as well as other boundaries. Again, like Canada Day and St Jean Baptiste day, teenage parties brought everybody together. Thus the idea that 'events' bring about unity is used again, this time without recourse to 'national' celebrations, yet a sense of division is maintained. However, Emma's story shows that the mixing of French and English young people can occur in very informal settings rather than through organised and defined spaces.

7.6 Bilingual privilege in negotiating space

In Chapter 2 I cited Adler (1977) who emphasised the importance of individual bilinguals who are able to gain prestige and status through their ability to interpret and mediate between linguistic groups. In reference to the work of the local council the mayor of Lac Brome told me that only one of the elected councillors is not bilingual. In a council meeting an individual is entitled to ask a question either in English or in French, therefore bilinguals are in the best position to take on leadership roles in the community.

In some of our council meetings, you'll see, like what happens a person asks a question in English it will be responded to in English and if in French in French. We have more anglophones coming to the meetings than francophones. [...] You will quite often have a francophone who gets a little annoyed because he doesn't understand the question or the answer so we try, but we can't do every single one of them. We try if we see that someone has an interest to make sure they understand the question and the answer [Stanley Neil].

The mayor acknowledges that more anglophones than francophones attend the meetings, which presumably means that more questions are asked in English than in French. He says that if somebody is known to have an interest in an issue which is being debated in another language, the councillors will make every effort to make sure that that person understands what is going on. Whilst this generally succeeds there is often antagonism. The mayor went on to suggest that good humour has often dealt with the situation.

But you will quite often have someone who will try to be antagonistic, OK, because you're always going to have your radicals some of them think that they will be the antagonistic. So far there has been no success on their part, so you will see it, other than that, I can't really think when there has been. People joke around here too about like if I'm doing something you don't understand I'll say 'I'm an anglophone', so 'I'm an anglophone, don't forget', ((Laughs)) but it's always been done in good humour. [Stanley Neil]

Bilingualism places certain individuals in a place of power. Bilinguals are trusted with the task about ensuring fairness and that unilinguals are aware of the issues. The bilinguals are in the position of being gatekeepers and they can decide to explain or not explain the arguments to non-bilingual parties. They also have the power to judge whether an individual does have an interest in a particular issue instead of the residents present being able to decide for themselves whether they have a stake in what is being discussed. This position of power is bound to raise suspicions and concerns from time to time, as there is no guarantee that bilingual councillors know enough about the residents at a meeting to know for sure if they have an interest or not.

Bilinguals can also be gatekeepers in the workplace, even if they so not have senior positions within the company. Anne's son worked part-time in a supermarket where he was the only non-francophone.

I mean all the staff at the supermarket was francophone and my son worked down there. He was the only one who spoke any English at all, among 20 workers, so if anyone had a problem at the desk he had to be got hold of, because nearly everybody shopping there was English. Probably 60-40 or whatever, but certainly once they had a problem he was the only one who could sort them out [Anne]

In this situation Anne's son was in a position of being an intermediary between the supermarket and problems encountered in the supermarket. As I did not speak to Anne's son I cannot know exactly how he would have experienced this position, but this is good example of a bilingual person becoming a gatekeeper, ensuring understanding between francophone staff and anglophone customers. There may be a case for suggesting that he was in a position of exploitation rather than of power. He was left to deal with customer problems and complaints, whilst the francophone staff was able to stand back

7.7 Linguistic division in geographical space.

As I noted in Chapter 3, one of the challenges I faced as an outsider, was to work out when to use English and when to use French. I soon discovered that certain geographical spaces could be described as being anglophone spaces and others as being francophone spaces.

In Knowlton specifically local organisations and businesses operated predominantly through the medium of English, whilst local branches of Quebec or Canada wide institutions tended to operate more in the French language. There also appears to be a cultural division of labour between the predominantly francophone eating establishments and the mostly anglophone boutiques and independent stores. For instance, there appears to be a distinction between the language of the eating establishments and the language of the many antique and gift shops, with many of the small shops advertising in English only or bilingually.

Most all of the archives kept by the Brome County Historical Society are in English and the museum exhibits and displays reflect this heritage. The articles written in the society's publication *Yesterdays of Brome County* are in English, though in today's county of Brome-Missisquoi only 25% of people are first-language English-speakers.

In contrast, the Town Hall administration functions primarily through the use of French. Anne told me that she had applied for a job as a receptionist in the Community Services department, but was not considered bilingual enough.

Most workers in the Town Hall are francophone. Most of the workers in the community services are francophone because when they actually want bilingual people in a municipality it just seems that the people who are most fluent in French are the francophones and they manage in English. Anglophones who apply for the jobs, they are not

fluent enough in written French [...] They know all the written work has to be French so that has to be perfect and not many anglophones are going to be perfect in written French, even though they are educated in French. Its just not going to be up to the level so if you've already got a minority in the applications then you are going to end up with a francophone who can manage in English rather than the other way round. I know this from experience because I applied at community services for the reception job and I'm sure out of 10 applicants, my spoken French was OK, but they told me it had to be more. I have to be more bilingual if I am to have a job like that. I can understand why. You can't screw up in that position, if you've got both halves of the municipality, you're going to get into all kinds of trouble if you're not fluent in their language. [Anne]

Even in a predominantly anglophone community, the French language dominates the civil service. An able receptionist would not only have to speak to the French-speaking public, but would also have to deal with the MRC and the provincial government through the medium of written as well as spoken French. This makes it more likely that a francophone who can cope with enquires in English, is going to be preferable to an anglophone who can cope with enquires in French. As so few people can write well in both English and French, to be a bilingual anglophone is to be bilingual the 'wrong way'.

The linguistic segregation of the shops does mean that services are available to one linguistic community, but not the other. When I asked Celine, a unilingual francophone, if she felt that there were any needs in the community, she was rather taken aback. "Besoins? Il n'y a pas de besoins!" However, Celine did feel that one thing she would like to see locally was a French bookshop. The presence of an English language bookshop in Knowlton exposes the fact that there is no French language bookshop. Whilst not a severe shortcoming in the service provision of the community, Celine was aware that her anglophone neighbours were able to buy their books locally, whilst she had to go to Cowansville or Granby.

In dealing with customers I found that workers in shops did appear to be accommodating. 'Can I help you? Puis-je vous aider?' one shopkeeper said to me as I walked into his shop. Phil explained that he has learnt enough French in order to deal with customers in his shop. He has learnt the necessary vocabulary for dealing with the needs of his customers. This returns to the point made by Laponce (1987) about the cultural territories of language. He is able to successfully negotiate his business in French, whereas there were certain spheres of life and subjects in which he would find it very difficult to negotiate in French.

7.8 The referendum

The generally harmonious discourse between anglophones and francophones presented in this chapter is maintained through the description of the referendum process. This English and French harmony discourse is set up in strong contrast to an imagined idea of conflict elsewhere. Phil explained that there is a contrast between his community's way of dealing with the referendum process and that of what he refers to as 'the city', presumably meaning Montreal.

To some extent you know it always does but I think that, very less here than in the city and there might be certain areas of the Townships that are more nationalistic. [...] I mean the real tensions [are] in the city where your balcony's got a 'no' sign and their balcony's got a 'yes' sign. We're not talking about sports affiliation or a zoning by-law, we are talking about your country. That's a pretty big question to be asking at the neighbours sort of saying, disagreeing, pretty serious. [Phil]

Phil is presenting several discourses here in this short extract. Firstly, he cites the main areas of conflict as being away from his community. The 'real conflict' is in the city. His implication is that publicly announcing one's affiliation through the signs is an indication of city tensions. A Montreal-Townships contrast is

outlined by Caldwell (1992) in his response to Josée Legault's critique of the

'Anglo-Québécois' (1992). He claims that the organisations criticised by Legault are concerned with promoting the English language, whereas organisations like the Townshippers Association are concerned with the English community (Caldwell 1992, 209). This distinction seems to be played out in the referendum discourse too.

Secondly, Phil views 'the country' as something serious to be arguing about. He places this in contrast with zoning laws and sports affiliation. This is a strong argument in favour of Billig's (1995) banal nationalism as Phil does not challenge his own supposition that the country is an important thing to be arguing about. Phil is othering the city in this contrast. The 'silent' arguments of the Townships are as presumably as much arguments about 'the country' (Canada/ Quebec) as the arguments in the city. The hostility and territorial manifestation of the debate in the city means that the city residents are arguing about a 'big question'. This implies that the city's residents are arguing about a *different* question to those in Phil's community, who remain silent. If the question is such a 'big question', then why is it a problem that people are so passionate about it? He is suggesting that in his community, the country is too important a question to have strong arguments about.

With the disassociation of conflict from the local community, it follows therefore that ~~there was~~ a disassociation between local 'nationalists' and other 'nationalists'.

There are people here that still support the Parti Québécois, the separatist party [...] French nationalists in this community tend to be less aggressive than other nationalists [Phil]

Phil acknowledges that there are 'nationalists' [separatists] in his community, but these 'nationalists' are somehow different from other 'nationalists'. The implication remains that the 'problem' was not with separatists they knew and

respected, but largely unidentified other separatists living elsewhere. In all the interviews that I undertook, the only separatists named with hostility were politicians. The debate, the conflict and a sense of consequence are all placed outside the Townships. Local discourses of harmony and good relationships are being set up in contrast to the idea of disharmony and poor relationships elsewhere. Quebec politics is being contextually divorced from the locality. The cultural politics of sovereignty are being spatially re-situated into other areas of the province.

Ken presents a similar discourse to the one presented by Phil. Like Phil, Ken places the battlegrounds and the problems associated with the sovereignty debate elsewhere. Anglophone-francophone relations are too good in the community to be disrupted. Whilst the residents of Montreal are putting up their 'Yes' and 'No' signs, the residents of Knowlton are biting their lips:

Well, you can see people certainly bite their lips when they are having discussions. Because we have a good relationship between the anglophones and the francophones you become even more sensitive to the fact that you might be insulting, whereas under normal conditions we joke around about anything, and nobody gets overly uptight about it, whereas everybody gets a little more sensitive. [Ken]

Ken is not denying tension between the 'yes' and 'no' camp, but is outlining a different way of dealing with the conflict. In contrast to staking out territory through the use of signs, the residents of Knowlton are seeking to maintain good relationships by withholding their opinions. The issues at stake are perceived as being very serious so the referendum contrasts to 'normal conditions'; but people are very keen that good relations should be maintained. To some extent Ken is producing a 'rural idyll' in which everybody knows one another and the personal relationships within the community transcend contrasting ideas about

nationhood. I believe that this was not simple pragmatism based on the knowledge that whatever the result people would still be neighbours. The concept of local democracy and local identity appears to be well engraved into the identities of residents.

In chapter 5 I outlined the mythology of Knowlton being a 'New England' town with a long history of local democracy, contrasted with the theocracy of Catholic Quebec. It is not possible to discount this factor as being of importance to this discourse of the referendum as these historical aspects have long been an important part of the identity of the Townships. A history of linguistic (and religious) harmony and strong local democracy in the Townships is reproduced in commentaries as diverse as those of Dresser (1935), Taylor (1941), Blanchard, (1947), Ross (1950), Gmelch (1980), Caldwell (1992) and The Granby and Bromont Development Corporation (1994). Moreover, strong local identities are facilitated by a strongly decentralised Canadian state (Fairfield 2000, 99). I expand on these points further in the next chapter.

Phil even suggested that the referendum was beneficial, as people gained respect for each other. Began to see where the 'other side' was coming from, at least after the referendum.

I think oddly there's more respect for the other side now than there was. We're a separate point of view, when you're exposed to a point of view it will eventually sink in the way people see it, for the vast majority, not for whatever, legitimate, yeah people I think respect it [Phil]

The referendum created a new context in which residents were able to take into account the views of the 'other side'. Residents were able to review and consider their identities not only in light of their neighbour's identities, but also relation to the discourses promoted by the Quebec government. D. J.

creating a new space of local conflict, the referendum created a space in which to emphasise harmonious relations. There is not any suggestion that the process changed the way in which people voted, so there remains a discourse of 'the other side'. This 'other side' concept suggests that the boundaries between the sides are static. Seeing the 'way people see it' does not constitute the same process as a process in which debate occurs and the sides are redefined in retrospect. A further implication is that the question of Quebec sovereignty is not an open question that will be considered by each voter in light of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of sovereignty. There does not appear to be a space of a 'not decided' or 'don't know' voter, although every opinion poll taken on the subject suggests that there are a significant number of 'undecided' voters.⁴

7.9 Division and integration in the education system.

In the previous chapter I drew attention to the existence of English schools and French schools and made reference to legislation restriction rights to attend English school. The English High School attended by Knowlton's eligible anglophone children is in Cowansville. Anne informed me that the school was built in the late 1960s. However, the school is very unusual in that there are two schools which share the same site. One of these schools is an English language school, the other a French language school. The two schools share sports and theatre facilities, but the classrooms are segregated. The schools therefore simultaneously represent a shared and a divided geographic and social space between anglophone and francophone children.

⁴ The 'Don't know' category stands at between 1 and 10% in polls taken (see Léger Marketing 2002).

Anne informed me that this divided, yet shared social space, is a site of many conflicts between anglophones and francophones. Education in Canada is not administered by local government, but by publicly elected school boards. Despite the decline of the Catholic Church in Quebec over the past 40 years, it was not until 1998 that French and English School boards replaced the former Protestant and Catholic School Boards. Although the idea of building two schools on the same site must have had the consent of both school boards at the time the school was built, Anne said that the two schools had developed different philosophies and strengths. The French school had developed a good reputation for cultural activities, whereas the English school had built a reputation for being strong at sports.

I think the anglophone side has always put their budget into sports, [ice] hockey and they've got really amazing teams and go and do stuff and there's parent support for that and bus trips. They go and have competitions all the time. The French side puts a lot of money into cultural arts activities so they have a whole a music academy which is very well funded and they have a lot of activities in the auditorium. But if the person wanting to do Shakespeare on the anglophone side wants to use the auditorium he has major problems getting use of it because its supposed to be shared space, but its very difficult for them to. They've just got different priorities, and I think that's where the division has always been. [Anne]

Anne remembers that the differing philosophies and values of the two school boards came into a strong conflict in the early 1980s, when one school board permitted smoking on the premises.

The different school boards have different rules and all kinds of different things that happen. I can't remember if it was the francophone side that allowed smoking in the school and the anglophones figured they couldn't do much about it, if the francophones were going to smoke the anglophones were going to smoke. They made the whole school a smoking zone and when I visited it in 1980 their kids were hanging out smoking all over the place ... it was absolutely terrible. [Anne]

Whilst certain areas of the premises were shared between the two school boards, the corridors and classrooms were segregated. Anne recalls her son telling her that the French school lockers were a different colour from the English school lockers. She also remembers that there was fighting between children at the two schools. During the 1995 referendum, Anne's son who attended the French school became a victim of bullying.

I think the fighting has dried up. My son who went there at the time of the referendum, he started school and they were spitting at him and they did have fights, I don't think they had weapons but they did certainly shed blood. Historically this had always been happening so its potentially, that's where you can really see the division because the kids do not mingle, they totally do not mingle, do not have activities together. [Anne]

In the French school, Anne's son was deemed to be 'out of place'. The children do not mingle, except (it appears) to have fights with one another. This picture of a tribal relationship between anglophone and francophone children seems to stand in contradiction to a positive picture painted in most other spheres of life. Anne's notion that the children 'do not mingle', suggest that severe problems arise when children are forced to.

It is difficult to say for sure if the boy was bullied because he was an anglophone or for some other reason, which Anne may or may not have known. As there are relatively few immigrants in the Eastern Townships, a huge majority of pupils in French schools are francophones; this situation contrasts strongly with many French schools in Montreal. However, the bullying (which Anne remembers as severe and on going) gives weight to the view of the teenage years as a time of moving from the acknowledgement of difference into prejudice (Cullingford 2000, 216).⁵

The bullying led Anne and her husband to seek an exemption so that the boy could go to an

The incident Emma describes represents another situation which centres on a conflictual encounter with a young person.

I was on a bus one day and well I was so mad I almost got into a fight and I could probably kicked her butt but I didn't ((laughs)). I was sitting there and it and Bill and our friend David were speaking in English and this young girl of 14 or 15, shooting her mouth off to her friends in French talking about how they were stupid and how they should 'go back to Ontario blah blah blah', and making a whole show of this thing, expecting that because she couldn't speak English they couldn't speak French. But they weren't paying attention, they were talking to each other, so I kept glaring at her and her friend noticed that this was happening. I was thinking and thinking and thinking about how express myself and get my point home. So I got up and I said, I'm trying to think, I'm so bad at remembering dialogue afterwards but it was something to the effect that she had insulted myself and six generations of my family that had lived in the Townships

In Quebec!

I said she was ignorant and that she should realise that just because she may have difficulty with the language... it doesn't mean that they don't understand her. [Emma]

The teenager's discourse represents a popular caricature of the referendum's issues. In many respects it was an unfiltered relaying of the Quebec government's unsaid beliefs. If Quebec is 'French first in its language and culture' (Parti Québécois 1971) then the English-speaker is either a challenge to this conception of Quebec or the English-speaker is 'out-of-place' in Quebec. However, the PQ claims that Quebec is French first, but does not explicitly say that English is second (or out of place). The implication that they should 'Go back to Ontario or the States' suggests that the girl saw them as living in Quebec, but who 'belonging' elsewhere. However being understood by Emma appears to have shocked the girl as well as upsetting Emma.

And anyway she kind of sat there [dropped jaw expression] and her friends were kind of like..., because they saw it coming and I was so

English school. Eventually he was permitted a transfer on the grounds of 'evidence of dyslexia'.
 It was suggested that this 'official' reason for his transfer was logic what continued.

furious I cried, I was so upset afterwards because I think it just ridiculous. I think everybody should just get along and I think together is way better than apart and I think that everybody that so many people realise that, especially here [Emma]

It appears that the schoolgirl had not thought of the possibility that somebody who disagreed with her might have understood what she was saying. This is an example of an individual using language as a framework of analysis. It appears that either she supposed only her friends were listening to her or that anybody who did understand her would agree with her. Cullingford (2000, 216) contends that, "...prejudice against others is formulated into single categories... the sense of self is far more complicated to start with, and only gradually becomes simplified into prejudice." In other words the development of such prejudice is a part of child development. In a focus group of anglophone youngsters in Richmond, I found that it was the teenagers who were subject to the most extreme opinions about Quebec politics. It was the teenagers who told me the jokes and who appeared to be most socially alienated from their francophone counterparts despite most of them being 'bilingual' and in one case attending a French school.

Trevor, a nine-year-old participant was not yet at this stage in his analysis of the situation. He moved to Richmond from Toronto, where 'hundreds of languages are spoken.' As he knew there were only two languages spoken in his new town, he viewed his new situation as being quite simple in comparison. It seemed that Trevor was not yet at the stage where he could go beyond seeing that there were differences in the languages. He was unable to comprehend the wider context of issues about language different in his community. "The association of some with the ability to speak a different language, or a habit of dress or a style of talking

can be powerful and interesting long before they are threatening." (Cullingford 2000, 218).

The discourses of these young people suggest that people refine what they say more as they get older. Whilst the teenagers present a crude polarised conception of issues in Quebec society, the older people I spoke to were far more likely to see beyond crude linguistic polarisations in judging friends and enemies. As Phil said:

I think relations between individuals here are really don't have anything to do with language. There's very very few instances where language is an issue [...] it comes down to you like this person because they are a nice person or not ((laughs)) language is nothing to do with it you know, you know [Phil].

Michelle explained that although she had a bilingual schooling in the private education sector, she had become 'very French' when she was a young adult. As a young adult she had turned away from her childhood of liking and respecting the anglophones she knew and moved towards a more exclusive French identity. Although Michelle did not detail the process of her conversion towards what she referred to as 'biculturalism', it is evident that as a young adult she had been through a period of non-tolerance and non-engagement with anglophones. Living in Knowlton, was in a way, a nostalgic return to her childhood.

That's how I learnt to speak English. When I was a child I always found that I always liked English kids. I was used to playing with them, for me it was not difficult. I went to a bilingual private school in Montreal and so again I was exposed to a lot of anglophones. Later on I became very French, [...] for a part of my life I was living only in French and when I started working I did study translation too. When I started working at [-----] I felt that I had to practice my English again as I had trouble expressing myself in English as I had not spoken English for a number of years. I started reading and watching TV in English and I still do that. I consider myself to be bicultural. One of the things that attracted me here was to Knowlton is because this area is very much like that so I found an area which is

very much like the neighbourhood of my childhood where anglophones and francophones live together and are very comfortable in doing so [Michelle].

It appears to be the teenagers and young adults who are most prone to what could be described as open conflict. Emma's experience with the French boys suggests that these prejudices are overcome by getting to know people of the other language group. Otherwise, the teenage years are presented as being a time of strong conflict between the two groups. These conflicts appear to moderate as young people mature into adulthood, or at least these conflicts become more muted. The designated fight areas at the school in Cowansville suggest that conflict amongst teenagers is highly unsophisticated in its nature.

Cullingford (2000, 205) states, "The less secure the feeling of personal identity, the more profound are the discriminations against others." As children become older their personal identities become increasingly insecure. Emma suggested that this feeling of insecurity could develop into a 'redneck' mentality in adults, if it persisted beyond the teenage years. I will expand on this further in the next chapter.

7.10 Conclusion

The failure of theorists of nationalism to engage with thinking about local context has meant that the local formation of nationalisms has been overlooked. This has been at the expense of a macro-historical discourse, which is in fact negotiated and renegotiated at the local level and not merely by historians, political theorists and politicians. In practice the spaces of engagement between francophones and anglophones are often serendipitous. It is easy to come to the conclusion that certain spaces are anglophone or francophone, but these

designations are crude, as the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are rarely straightforward. For example the Townshippers Association is exclusionary of francophones inasmuch as it operates through the medium of English, but many of the issues it address seek to benefit the whole community- anglophones and francophones alike. The fact that the Town Hall administration is mostly francophone does not mean that anglophones are unable or unwilling to make use of the services offered.

The forming of new spaces such as the Bishop's Centre in Knowlton, demonstrate that anglophones and francophones can come together for the first time, even if they have felt very separate in previous occasions. Like Gmelch (1980) and other writers before her, I have found that both anglophone and francophone residents get on to together well. In this process of coming together bilinguals are able to occupy privileged positions, but none of my more unilingual respondents seemed to feel that bilinguals were abusing their 'privileged' position.

The two-language nature of Township communities is seen as something to be celebrated, rather than as a source of division. The multicultural character of the Townships has long been celebrated and become something which has become woven into the social fabric of the Townships. This is a weaving which has taken place over a century and a half and it is not the outcome of a new attempt to promote understanding.

This chapter shows that the coming together and separation of anglophone and francophone spheres in the Townships is a matter that is related to local context, rather than to 'national texts'. National historical events such as Canada Day and