The Importance of Language to Minorities in Urban Areas: Acadian Identity in Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Acadians in Halifax Regional Municipality use French to index their identity, including the importance of language in doing so. Halifax, Nova Scotia is home to an English majority as well as immigrants from other provinces and all over the world. The Acadians are a community held together by their culture, language, historical context, and shared trauma from the 1755-1763 deportations. This thesis also explores how Acadians are maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity here and the hurdles they face in doing so. One such hurdle that this research suggests is that Acadian varieties of French may be at risk when confronted with language ideologies that can lead to assimilation and pressures such as a move towards a standard French. This can be seen in results from qualitative interviews with Acadians in Halifax and in statistics such as the decline in French as a first language which from 1971 to 2016 has gone from 3.5% to 1.7% of the province's population (Statistics Canada 2017b). This thesis applies linguistic and anthropological theories of identity to analyze the current situation of the Acadian community in HRM and to look at the potential situations in the future. This research suggests that French can be a tool used by Acadians, but it is not the only tool. Additionally, you can identify as Acadian without having any knowledge of the French language so it may be a more important tool to some than to others. Finally, this thesis suggests that the Acadian identity as a whole is not at risk of being lost in the mix of other minority and majority identities that make up the city.

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Introduction

> "It was those preceding us that, like this kind of generational trauma of 'you must maintain your language,' 'you must maintain the quality of your language' to my generation being like 'it has nothing to do with the language' … it is how we *exist*."

This quote comes from my interview with Louis, an Acadian living in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Nova Scotia. The generational trauma he's referencing is the passing down of ideas or ideologies surrounding language. Louis says that older generations, such as his parents, placed a heavy importance on Acadian French dialects and their identity, or who they are, as Acadians. By passing down these types of ideologies, they can become naturally part of societal views by minority groups such as the Acadians, though Louis says subsequent generations have realized that this is not the case. Louis and younger generations argue that it is not the language that makes someone Acadian, though it can be used to index one's Acadianess, but that there are other factors that 'make someone Acadian.' This shift overall is a reflection of how a community sees and understands their place in the world and, more specifically, in a city full of other minority and majority identities. 34,585 of Canada's 119,675 self-identifying Acadians live in Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada 2017a). Further, 10,120 live in HRM (Statistics Canada 2017c). This shift also shows how the community sees and understands what makes them unique when compared to these other identities.

The Acadian identity was made in and born out of conflict in *Acadie* between the British and French in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The people who would be the first to identify as Acadians first arrived in the late 1620s (Faragher 2005, 64-65). They were forcibly removed from their homeland of *Acadie* from 1755-1763 (Faragher 205, 7;

Hodson 2012, 18-19). Migrations back to *Acadie* began in 1763, but continue even today (Hodson 2012, 18-19). It is because of these deportations that Acadian identity is not tied to one specific place or land. *Acadie* was lost during those years of deportation and the political boundaries changed by others. Being Acadian is geographically fluid as Acadians are found all over the world today. Acadians remain connected through their culture, language, historical context, and shared trauma to create and reinforce their community and identity as a distinct people.

Throughout this thesis I explore how Acadians in urban areas, namely HRM, use French to index their identity, including the importance of language in doing so. Halifax is home to an English majority as well as immigrants from other provinces and all over the world. This thesis also explores how Acadians are maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity here and hurdles they face in doing so.

To answer this question, I conducted eight interviews with Acadians living in the greater Halifax Regional Municipality. Interviews were semi-structured, and consent was given orally. Due to the nature of this question, a qualitative approach was best as the results allowed for analysis on what Acadians in Nova Scotia are doing to maintain their identity and cultural practices, as well as what the province of Nova Scotia is doing to aid or diminish this. Furthermore, interviewing Acadians who are not living in Acadian regions will provide insight as to what they are doing as individuals and, potentially, as a group to keep their cultural practices and identity alive. A quantitative approach, such a survey, would not allow for a comprehensive view of what Acadians are doing and feeling today, and would not allow for follow-up questions. The interviews were

conducted over the phone or by Zoom in order to avoid COVID-19 risks of meeting in person.

Methodology

To answer the question of if the Acadians living in urban areas use language to index their identity, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews with self-identifying Acadians who reside in the greater Halifax Regional Municipality region of Nova Scotia. Chezzetcook and surrounding areas were excluded from this study as they are established Acadian communities. Interviews ranged from 23 to 55 minutes as participants responded to these topics in various ways. The age and gender of participants also varied (Table 1), which likely impacted how they responded to these topics, as well as other factors. Results from these interviews allowed for responses from Acadians in Nova Scotia on how identity and cultural practices are being maintained as well as give opinions and information on other topics. My interview guideline is attached (see appendix A).

There has been research of a similar nature conducted in Acadian regions in Nova Scotia, such as Clare (Boudreau and Dubois 2008), and in other provinces, such as New Brunswick (Bourgeois and Bourgeois 2005) and Alberta (Roy 2004). By focusing on an urban area rather than a traditionally Acadian region, this question of how language and identity are tied together can be looked at under a different lens and, hopefully, shed some light on the minority Acadian population in urban areas. It is also important to note that this research and subsequent data gathered does not allow me to make full and concrete generalizations for all Acadians living in urban areas, but rather allows for a glimpse into what people are actually doing and have experienced.

Table 1: Summary List of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender
Lisa	40s	F
Gabriel	60s	M
Sylvie	60s	F
Catherine	20s	F
Philippe	60s	M
Esme	70s	F
Louis	40s	M
Brigitte	50s	F

Lisa grew up in Kings County, spoke English at home and at school. Lisa went on to study French at *l'Université Sainte-Anne*, the only French university in Nova Scotia. She did not find out that she was Acadian until her 20s while working for the federal government.

Gabriel was an artist and also worked for the federal government. He grew up in the municipality of Clare, an Acadian community in Digby County in southwestern Nova Scotia. He spoke French at home. All Nova Scotia schools were under one, English school board at the time so all of the books and materials were English, though since the school Gabriel attended was in an Acadian community, they spoke French most of the time.

Sylvie was born in HRM and knew she was Acadian from birth. Her parents and older brother could speak French, but she and her sister were not taught as children. She attended school in English and did go on to learn French later in life, such as while she was working with various levels of local government in Nova Scotia.

Catherine grew up in the same Acadian community as her father's family on PEI. She discussed how the community, and her father's side of the family, were Acadian but had both "lost their French language." Her mother was not Acadian and so she learned both French and English simultaneously as a child. She attended a French school and went to Université de Moncton, a French university in New Brunswick. She had moved to Nova Scotia for a job with the federal government after graduating.

Philippe grew up in Quinan, a small Acadian community outside of Yarmouth, NS. The Acadian French variety of the region was used at school but most of the materials were in English. He passed on his French to his kids and grandkids.

Esme, a retired teacher, grew up in a small Acadian village in the municipality of Clare. Esme spoke French until she went to school where she learned English. School after grade six was a mix of classes in both French and English, and in high school when almost all classes were in English. Her mother especially was a proud Acadian and was involved in parades, masses, and festivals put on by Acadians for Acadians and passed on this pride to her children.

Louis grew up in an Acadian community in the municipality of Clare and had moved to Halifax as an adult. He grew up speaking French at home as both his parents were Acadian, and his schooling was all in French as well. He also attended *l'Université*

Sainte-Anne and was working as a journalist. Louis also had written a cookbook about being Acadian and the Acadian diaspora.

Brigitte was born in New Brunswick and began school in French in Africa before returning to an all-French school in New Brunswick. She had moved to Nova Scotia later in life and worked for the *La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (the Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia). She also passed on her Acadian French to her son.

Acadian Context

Introduction

Acadien(ne) is an identity that was born out of conflict, separation, trauma, and resilience. The Acadians – using here the anglicized term – were people of French, Scottish, British, Mi'kmaq, Huguenot, Irish, and Spanish descent who all came to live in, as it is known today, Nova Scotia (Faragher 2005 92; Griffiths 1992, 30). This mix, as we have seen, led to a unique people with a unique culture. The colony of modern-day Nova Scotia would change hands between the French and the British numerous times, and bear witness to six colonial wars which the majority of Acadians refused to take part in as the Acadians had claimed to be '*neutres*' (neutrals) as early as 1692 (Faragher 2005, 121; Gallant 1985, 20-21). The Acadians were then deported to places such as the British colonies in the United States, France's colonies in the Caribbean and on the South American coast, the British Isles, Britain, France from 1755-1763 (Hodson 2010, 19-20). This deportation is also referred to as the expulsion and *Le Grand Dérangement* (Faragher 2005, 7, 501; Hodson 2012, 17). The history of the Acadian people is complex, just as their identity and political situation is today. The Acadians are still a people caught in the middle.

History

French colonization began in 1605 when Pierre du Gua Sieur de Monts, Viceroy and captain-general, arrived in Port Royal (now Annapolis Royal); this kickstarted French control of *Acadie* (MacLeod 2015, 54-55; Faragher 2005, 17-18; Griffiths 2005, 4). In addition to establishing settlement, De Monts was also under orders to continue the good relationship that fisherman and fur-traders had begun in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the Mi'kmaq; despite the French nobility's desire to convert the Mi'kmaq to Catholicism, the two groups forged a strong friendship that was crucial in the survival of the French in their new home and lasts even today (Griffiths 2005, 10-11, 33-34; Ross and Deveau 1995, 12-13, 15, 45-46). The two mutually benefited from the relationship as Faragher (2005, 13) shows: "In exchange for the pelts of beaver, otter, marten, seal, moose, and deer, the Mi'kmaq wanted needles, awls, knives, hatchets, and copper kettles, which they frequently cut up into arrow points and other implements of their own manufacture." They additionally got along well as the French did not encroach on their territory and had a respect for the land that the British did not (MacLeod 2015, 57-58).

This initial colony would not last. In 1613 Port Royal was destroyed by the British (Faragher 2005, 50; Griffiths 2005, 24; Kennedy 2014, 53).

In the late 1620s, the men, women, and children who would become *Acadiens*, arrived in Port Royal in response to the promise of land and a better life (Faragher 2005, 64-65; Kennedy 2014, 5, 53, 208). Many came from places in southwestern France, such as La Rochelle and Poitou (Faragher 2005, 65; Kennedy 2014, 11). The Acadians, though French-speaking and mostly composed of French settlers, were also made up of Scottish, British, and Mi'kmaq, Huguenot, Irish, and Spanish people as well (Faragher 2005 92;

Griffiths 1992, 30). Some resettled the Port Royal area, but others moved out along *La Baie Française.* It was also around this time that British settlement in Massachusetts was flourishing and soon had five times the population than the French in *La Nouvelle France* (Faragher 2005, 74). The Acadians grew their own crops, created farmland from nothing by means of creating dykes (mud walls that were taller than the highest tides), raised their own livestock, and even made their own clothes from yarn, flax, and wool (Faragher 2005, 70-71, 82; Kennedy 2014, 18, 24; Young 2000).

A trade relationship was established with the British colonies of New England in the mid-1600s (Faragher 2005, 76, 83-84, 92; Kennedy 2014, 102). Despite the disdain from French and British officials in Europe at this, it would be a beneficial relationship when France, again in political turmoil, was unable to send adequate supplies (Faragher 2005, 137; Kennedy 2014, 102). Additionally, when the colony was taken over by New England briefly in the 1640s-50s, the shipping of supplies and migrants ceased from France, which contributed to the political distance between France and the Acadians (Faragher 2005, 84; Griffiths 2005 96-98).

Due to the end of the steady flow of new migrants to *Acadie*, there was a shortage of men and women who could marry that were not related to each other in some way (Faragher 2005, 84-85). Earlier Acadians and French had married Mi'kmaq, but this declined as time went on and seems to have been replaced by people convincing those who came to port to stay and marry (Faragher 2005, 85; Griffiths 1992, 24-25; Griffiths 2005, 56). Faragher (2005, 85) supports this claim by saying, "The surviving records suggest that about a third of all marriages in the late seventeenth century united a local woman with a man from the outside, often a man of contrasting ethnic background." For

example, one of the first recordings of settler-Mi'kmaq marriages was in 1635 between François Gatrot and a Mi'kmaq woman named Marie (Faragher 2005, 66). The good relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the French would later become a problem when the territory was contested by the British as they saw both groups as a threat. Faragher (2005, 108) argues that this relationship may have contributed to the deportation of the Acadians, beginning in 1755.

The Acadians did not want to get involved in the British-French disputes and, in 1692, declared themselves neutral in such disputes, a position they would maintain in all colonial conflicts (Faragher 2005, 121; Gallant 1985, 20–21). This meant that they would not take up arms against – or for – either side. Despite this, the British tolerated the Acadians but continued to refer to them as French, as they did not believe they were a distinct, separate people from their perceived homeland of France and due to cultural factors, such as their French language (Plank 2003, 104). The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ended the war and the British gained control over "the American colonies of St. Kitts, Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and 'all Nova Scotia or l'Acadie'" (Faragher 2005, 162; Kennedy 2014, 60). The British, now more than ever, did not believe the Acadian neutrality stance but nothing was done about it until the mid-1700s (Kennedy 2014, 87, 92).

In 1730 British Governor Richard Philipps accepted an oral oath of neutrality from the Acadians but did not pass this information on to London (Faragher 2005, 211). Tensions rose and the Acadians then had one final chance to swear an oath to the British king, which they did not. From 1755-1763 the Acadian deportations took place all across the Maritimes (Faragher 205, 7; Hodson 2012, 18-19). The British military forcibly

removed the Acadians from their lands and loaded them onto waiting ships which took them to the 13 colonies in the United States, England, France, among other places (Faragher 2005, 420-435; Leblanc 1967, 528-530). This led to what scholars call "years of wandering" (Faragher 2005, 515; Griffiths 1992, 102; Hodson 2012, 19-21; Ross and Deveau 1995, 50, 64). The Acadian population were in limbo, not welcome home, strangers in France, and unwanted in the British colonies.

A few Acadians managed to escape deportation by hiding with the Mi'kmaq or moving to Northern New Brunswick or Quebec (Griffiths 1992, 125; Leblanc 1967, 528). The British referred to these deportations as Expulsions while Acadians referred to them as *Le Grand Dérangement*, which translates to The Great Disruption or The Great Disturbance (Ross and Deveau 1995, 64). These different terms for the events of 1755-1763 reflect the ideologies of both groups: the British drove out the Acadians, and the Acadians were forced to abandon their homes and lands. In some cases, families were separated entirely as they were put on different ships going different directions. The exact number is unknown, but it is estimated that between 7000 and 10,000 Acadians were deported to the 13 colonies in the United States, England, France, among other places (Faragher 2005, 413, 478; Leblanc 1967, 527-528; White 2005, 55-56).

It was not until 1764, after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, ending the Seven Years' War between the English and French, that the Acadians were permitted to return to Nova Scotia and own land; however, again, this was only if they took an oath of allegiance to the British crown (Ross and Deveau 1995, 74-76). During this time, some Acadians who had escaped deportation moved to other places within Canada, but also to the southern United States and the Caribbean (Leblanc 1967, 533-535). In the early

1760s, Acadians who had been wandering the United States in search of a new place to call home travelled to Louisiana to join the French who had been there since the territory was under French colonial rule in the 1690s (Brasseaux 1986, 27). The Acadian community in Louisiana jumped from just 300 people in 1763 to 4000 in 1800 (Leblanc 1967, 530, 535).

These Acadians and migrants from other parts of the world are now known as Cajuns. The definition of ‘what’ or ‘who’ is Cajun differs; Dubois and Melançon (1997, 63) argue that “There exists no single definition of the ‘Cajun community’ acceptable to all researchers. For many, the Cajun collectivity includes only descendants of the Acadians deported from Nova Scotia, others argue that it encompasses any white person of francophone origin, and still others claim that it also includes Creole speakers as well as immigrants (Germans, Italians, etc.) who have assimilated to the culture.” These sentiments also surround the ‘who’ and ‘what’ debates of Acadians.

With Acadians allowed to return to their former homeland and despite lingering hostilities between the government and the Acadians, around 100 took the oath of allegiance to the British king and The Lords of Trade ensured they were given appropriate lands (Leblanc 1967, 528). The Acadians wanted to return to the lands they’d been forced out of but, while they were in exile, the British had brought the New England Planters to occupy and farm the lands. Some stayed and re-settled primarily at the northern and southern ends of the province while others moved on again, searching for a new home. In 1800 there were around 8000 Acadians living in the Maritime provinces (Leblanc 1967, 535). Those who returned to the Maritimes brought back with them

influences from France, England, the United States, and paired with the trauma from all they'd gone through, who they were was forever changed.

Acadian French

Languages change over time on their own and also due to outside influence. Thus, the French being spoken in this new land was not the same as that in their French homeland. This is not to say that all French spoken in France is homogenous – there are regional dialects even there – though, arguably, they differ less from one another (Flikeid 1988, 99; Griffiths 1992, 28-29). Acadian French is different also from the French spoken in Quebec and other francophone areas of not only Canada, but the world. As for Nova Scotia, Newell (2019, 5) says "there are often as many variations as there are Acadian villages." Flikeid (1988) argues that regional dialects do not adhere to political borders of the pre-deportation period nor of today. Acadian French varieties developed in part due to linguistic isolation. This isolation occurs when speakers are cut off from other French speakers (of any variety) and may have retained older features and developed in their own way based on influences from other languages (Van Herk 2018, 32-37).

Due to this linguistic isolation, some historians argue that the French of *Acadie* has preserved features of French spoken in France in the seventeenth century (Faragher 2005, 101-102; Flikeid 1988, 100; Leblanc and Boudreau 2016, 91-93 Ross and Deveau 1995, 100). One feature of Acadian French that forms the basis of this argument for Acadian varieties, especially in Nova Scotia and PEI, is the use of *je* (the first person singular subject pronoun) with these ending *-ons* which is typically used with *nous* (the first person plural subject pronoun) (Comeau, King, and Butler 2012, 317; Flikeid 1997,

267; Fritzenkötter 2014, 50). In some places, such as NB, *je* is paired with *-ont*, the third person plural subject pronoun ending (Beaulieu and Cichocki 2008).

A second example of Acadian French retaining features of seventeenth century France French is the sustained use of *passé simple*, a type of past-tense that was traditionally used for things such as storytelling. French varieties today, including the standard, use *passé composé* (present perfect) for precise and finished actions, and *imparfait* (imperfect) for ongoing or incomplete actions, when talking about the past. *Passé simple* use in Acadian varieties has declined over time but it remains one of the key features in Baie Sainte-Marie French (Flikeid 1997, 267-268).

Others, such as Duchene and Heller (2008, 110), dispute this, saying that this is an ideology created to connect the Acadians to France and French in order to legitimize their dialect. It is important to note that the Acadians may not have been all unilingual during the colonial period and may have also spoken both the Mi'kmaq language and English (Faragher 2005, 101-102). Whether all Acadians spoke Mi'kmaq and/or English is unclear but both likely influenced the evolution of the French language varieties in Nova Scotia.

English influence can be seen in loanwords and King (2008, 253) looks specifically at *Chiac*, a language variety from New Brunswick that "involves use of traditional dialect features and is not just a mix of some school variety of French with English." This is also seen in loanwords in Nova Scotia varieties. King (2008, 204) argues that the more time a community is in contact with English speakers, the more loanwords they will use. Some examples from the Baie Sainte-Marie area are: *crois-tu que le français va* fade-r out *par icitte*? (do you believe French will fade out [of use]

here?" and *"c'était un voyage qu'était* awesome" (it was a trip that was awesome) (Fritzenkötter 2014, 50, 52). This is what is known as code-switching (also referred to as code switching and code-mixing), is the shift between using one language, in this case French, and substituting or changing the language of a particular word and is seen in places other than the Baie Sainte-Marie, indicating that it is not only a characteristic of Acadian language habit, but habits of speakers with some level of understanding in more than one language.

Code-switching and Loanwords

Using a word in a different language than standard French is an example of code-switching. Code-switching is when a speaker switches between two (or more) languages within a conversation. Code-switching can either be exchanging a word from another language in a sentence or changing the language for an entire sentence. This is not a lack of competence by a speaker; code-switching is used as a tool and can "represent (and build) community identity" (Van Herk 2018, 152). Active knowledge – that includes the ability to produce and use that variety, and not only understand it – is necessary when code-switching in this way (Meyerhoff 2006, 119).

Louis brought up code-switching in our interview and said that it "is very much something that I understood intrinsically as an Acadian." He brought up the specific example of how his mother used to ask *"veux-tu une autre tranche de pain?"* (do you want another piece of bread) and his father would respond with "*une autre* slice *de pain?*" – 'slice' here is an intentional code-switch by his father to "poke fun" but also shows proficiency in both languages. Louis also said that this 'poking fun' was one way

they coped with their linguistic insecurity. Additionally, for children growing up in bilingual households – such as Catherine and Louis – Harding and Riley (1986, 119) have found that code-switching comes "more naturally." A parents' attitude toward their own language is "more important than the objective situation of that language in the foreign society" (74) meaning that language ideologies and attitudes, as well as their use, are passed down to succeeding generations.

Another example of the influence of other languages on French can be seen in the integration of English loanwords into the Acadians vocabulary. This likely coincided with the extensive contact and trade with New England during the colonial period. Loanwords are words or terms that are first borrowed from another language and used without, in this case, translating into French. This 'borrowing' can come from constant code-switching between, in this case, French and English. Faragher (2005, 101-102) notes examples of English loanwords from the late 1600s, such as "*pas* yet" rather than "*pas encore"* to say, "not yet," and "*vous* too" instead of "*vous aussi"* for "you too." This characteristic of Acadian French varieties is still present and Newell (2019, 26) highlights four different syntactic categories of English loanwords that are used by Acadians in West Pubnico and Wedgeport. The groups are: adverbs and prepositions (*about*, *back, now*, *right*); connectives, pragmatic markers, and particles (*but, ok, ya, well)*; nouns and adjectives (s*omething*); and verbs (*hauler* 'to haul, pull', *passer by* 'to pass by').

The use of loanwords and code-switching are seen in many languages around the world and are one way that languages evolve over time and differentiate from one another. Without the inclusion of certain words in the past or even the present - in other

words, without other languages influencing the language in question, - languages would be stagnant and have little variety.

Conclusion

The Acadian people were born out of the joining of different groups and conflicts between European powers, namely France and Britain. The group became independently sufficient and were able to create a flourishing colony in *Acadie*, including creating trade relationships and friendships with the Mi'kmaq and New Englanders. Despite the deportations of the Acadian people from 1755-1763, the Acadian community remains strong in Nova Scotia and throughout the world today.

The group is distinct in a number of ways from their cultural traditions to their language. The Acadians mainly spoke French, but a different French then was (and is today) seen in other parts of the francophone world. Acadian French may have features of old seventeenth century French (Faragher 2005, 101-102; Flikeid 1988, 100; Leblanc and Boudreau 2016, 91-93 Ross and Deveau 1995, 100) and was also influenced by other languages it came into contact with, especially English and Mi'kmaq. This relationship is seen in loanwords, such as "*pas* yet" rather than "*pas encore"* (Faragher 2005, 101-102). Another notable aspect of this French variety is the speaker's use of code-switching. This feature comes naturally to bilingual speakers as they understand two languages enough to code-switch strategically to express themselves to people who can understand the meaning of the switched word or words (Harding and Riley 1986, 119).

The Acadian people are resilient and over time have created schools, colleges, newspapers, and more to create Francophone environments in which they could differentiate themselves from the English majority and also be free to use their language

(Leblanc and Boudreau 2016, 84). One example is the *Société nationale de l'Assomption*, created in 1881, to advocate for Acadian rights (Leblanc and Boudreau 2016, 84). Leblanc and Boudreau (2016, 84) say that this was "a conscious effort by the Acadian elite to perpetuate Acadian identity (acadianité, or Acadianness)." To sum up Leblanc and Boudreau's argument then, Acadian French is used to assert Acadian identity - but is this true in all cases?

Linguistics

Introduction

As this research pertains to language use by Acadians in terms of their identity, it is necessary to mention the first languages of the eight participants. Speaking French – or not – may have impacted how they responded to questions and identify as well. Six were first language French or bilingual speakers. The reasons they learned English varied from bilingual parents who educated them in both languages, moving to other countries and areas throughout life, learning English in school or needing to know English to go to school at all, and needing English in order to "get a good job."

The belief that English is necessary to get a good job is called a language ideology. Language ideologies are defined as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979, 193). Language ideologies are ideas held by a speech community about language, though they are not usually supported by evidence. One way that this ideology

manifests that is relevant to the Acadian example is that one language is believed to be better than another, in a sort of made-up hierarchy, by the majority. Ideologies can also lead to things such as language assimilation by the minority, meaning that they believe these ideologies and implement them into their views of society because they think it is necessary for upward social mobility (Van Herk 2018, 54, 196). These ideologies about language are deeply rooted in the institutions, morals, identity, aesthetics, and epistemology of the place (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994, 55-56).

One potential consequence of these beliefs is linguistic insecurity. Meyerhoff (2006, 292) defines this as "speakers feeling that the variety they use is somehow inferior, ugly or bad." This ties in to Labov's definition of who suffers from linguistic insecurity: "those who adopt a standard of correctness which is imposed from without, and from beyond the group which helped form their native speech pattern, are bound to show signs of linguistic insecurity" (Labov 2006, 318). William Labov was one of the first to conduct a study on linguistic insecurity in New York City (NYC) in 1966 using the Index of Linguistic Insecurity (ILI). Labov's study consisted of an interviewer pronouncing a list of words in two different ways, which were both shown on a questionnaire (Labov 2006, 319). Participants then would circle which of two forms was correct and which they used themselves. Labov found that members of the lower-middle class and women had the highest level of linguistic insecurity and would hypercorrect themselves and use the local prestige terms more than members of the upper-middle class (Labov 2006, 309).

Owens and Baker (1984, 343) expanded on the ILI by adding twenty-two more terms to create a Canadian Index of Linguistic Insecurity (CILI). They also found that

members of the low-middle class and women suffered from the most insecurity. In Michigan, terms from both the ILI and CILI along with new ones were used to create the Michigan Index of Linguistic Insecurity (MILI) in a similar study. One key difference is that Preston (2005, 2006, 2007) did not say the words out loud but instead had each word written two ways with emphasis showing how each was said (2013, 312). He could not confirm the social status of the participants as all were undergraduate students, but results showed that women had higher levels of linguistic insecurity than men (2013, 312-313). Preston (2013) then compared Labov's study in NYC, Owens and Baker's (1984) study in Winnipeg, and southeastern Michigan in 2005, 2006, and 2007 to determine which group is the most linguistically insecure. He concludes Michiganders are the most insecure, followed by New Yorkers, and finally, Winnipeggers are the most secure of the three presented. Preston further argues that there are different sorts of insecurities found based on factors including: location, identity, and individuals themselves. These differences can then be divided into categories: as seen in NYC, those who find their region/ group incorrect and apparently extend that to personal insecurity; in the case of Winnipeg, those who find their own region/group relatively correct and extend that to their personal security; and also, those who find their own area correct but may find their individual performances lacking, particularly when local norms do not guide them. Admittedly, Labov, Owens and Baker, and Preston's studies all rely on self-reporting for their data; this means that the individual has to be aware and honest about which words they use and/or how they pronounce them. Further, based on Preston's findings Wolfram and Fasold's (1974, 19) belief that "there is a general agreement about what forms of language are preferred above others within a language community" seems to be

presumptuous and not always true. In other words, the statement is a broad generalization of entire speech communities. Preston (2013) concludes that there is more than one way, and reason, that individuals can experience linguistic insecurity. Thus, "sociocultural prescription surrounding language is a primary contributor to insecurity, and much social-psychological, sociolinguistic, ethnographic, language-ideological, folk-linguistic, and perceptual-dialectological research would confirm that" (Preston 2013, 325).

Both language ideologies are an unseen part of everyday life and individuals may integrate them into their world views and pass it on to others around them. Again, once accepted as true these ideologies can lead to linguistic insecurity. This connection can be seen in the Acadian community and in examples brought up by the participants of this thesis.

Language Ideologies

One language ideology that is seen around the world is that of prestige languages and language varieties. Languages, through use, become associated with high-status groups and things such as the government, education, and so forth; in other words, languages with prestige are related to who holds power in society. These languages then have high prestige and those who cannot speak it are associated with lower-status groups and are often stigmatized. One language that is associated with prestige today is English. English is a marketable language and a requirement for many jobs (Heller 2010, 106).

English has the most prestige in Nova Scotia today; it is the language associated with government, education, occupations, and more.

Six participants were first-language French or bilingual speakers. The reasons they learned English varied, including: having bilingual parents, moving to other countries and areas throughout life, or learning English in school. This ideology is not unique to Acadians or French language speakers but has also been seen in Singapore. Li, Tan, and Goh (2016) have found that there is a shift towards using English at home. They surveyed preschool children and their parents to see what is really going on in Singaporean Chinese households. Most households in the study reported that their children were bilinguals who use English and Mandarin in some capacity every day. They found that 30% of the children were more likely to speak English with their siblings and peers, 30% were more likely to speak more English and less Mandarin with the same group, and the combined 60% were more likely to speak Mandarin with their parents (Li, Tan, and Goh 2016, 8). Li, Tan, and Goh (2016, 8) argue that if the trend continues, the shift to English home-use will be greater with succeeding generations. They also highlight the possible reasons for this shift are likely because English is promoted in terms of national unity, is the language used to converse with those with other mother tongues in Singapore, is used in higher education and subjects like the sciences and is associated with "economic advancement and social success" (Li, Tan, and Goh 2016, 12). Mandarin, on the other hand, is promoted as only a tool in sustaining one's cultural identity and showing in-group membership with other Chinese (Li, Tan, and Goh 2016, 12).

With this ideology of household shifts to English in mind, there are societal pressures to conform. Thus, Acadians in [urban areas] make an active/conscious choice to speak French respectively, they index to in-group members and others their identity, as it is connected to their language use. Index (or indexicality) is a link or relationship link to particular ways of being. In linguistics this definition can be applied when looking at the relationships between language ideologies and the ways individuals or groups interpret these ideologies. It is also possible to choose one's way of speaking then to create how an individual wants to be interpreted by others (Van Herk 2018, 127). For example, avoiding using Acadian terms and phrases when speaking to other francophones would influence others to perceive the person to not be Acadian if they were considering language choice alone. Indexicality happens on micro and macro levels. Micro levels are those that occur in individual interactions, such as in everyday conversations, and encompass things such as stance markers, interactions, and style features (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 594-97). Marco level indexicality looks at entire languages and dialects that are used to index an identity and looks at how things such as globalization and nationalism form identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 597-598). Both types (micro and macro) work simultaneously to index identity through habitual language use (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 594). Irvine (1989, 253) further argues that the indexical connections between linguistic and social differentiation are not arbitrary and reflect ideas of the culture and history of people and larger groups. Thus, when Acadians make an active choice to speak French, they index to in-group members and others their identity, as it is connected to their language use. In terms of language ideologies and indexicality then, language ideologies can be seen as

One example that contests the theoretical model above can be shown by Sylvie. She could not speak any French as a child; she had never been taught because her parents had been taught that their Acadian French dialect was “the bad French,” and that English was the “more useful” language to have. This decision to not teach Sylvie French was likely because, before she was born, the family had moved to Halifax from their Acadian community and her older brother could not speak any English. This was a problem because, as Sylvie said, “Halifax at the time was totally English: the school systems were English, the radio was English, the TV when it did come was English.” Sylvie said that her parents decided that English was “better” and “more useful” when referring to things such as getting a good education, going to university, and getting a good job. She and her sister were invited during their teens to participate in an exchange program with Quebec through the Acadian Cultural Federation. Sylvie said, “I remember saying to my cousin, ‘well why us? We don't speak French,’ and he said, ‘you’re still Acadian.’” Sylvie, then, is acknowledging that for some, language is a significant factor for Acadian identity but, for her, it is not the main tool she uses in expressing her identity. In other words, Sylvie sees language as having a significant role in the overall Acadian identity, but language also is not used to determine if someone can or cannot be Acadian. Some others can put a lot of pressure on themselves or feel societal pressures to speak French to index their identity to the world, or they may feel insecure in indexing their identity through their language. Her parents additionally referring to their own language use as “the bad French” indicates a level of linguistic insecurity.

Linguistic Insecurity

Philippe described how he had to travel to Quebec for work and would consciously think about what words to use to not alienate himself further than necessary from the *Quebeçois*:

> My work has taken me to Quebec right where, I mean, I can communicate with the people from Quebec and they can communicate with me it's just that we have to be - I have to be a little more careful in … in listening and I have to be more careful in the words -words I'm going to use right so I'm trying to just take the *acadien* - our *acadien* slangs out of there right but … and they also know I'm not a *Quebeçois* because of my accent.

Philippe also further said that, despite the differences in accent and regionalisms, "they'd still do business with me without giving me a hard time." Slang and dialectal language features can play an important role in sustaining community boundaries and identity (Cohen 2001, 44). Philippe made the choice to avoid his Acadian French variety in these situations to resist the homogenization of French dialects. They are also, for some, a way to assert their identity and community belonging to others (Cohen 2001, 16-17, 94).

What Philippe is describing is one form of linguistic insecurity; when speakers interact with Francophones from other areas of the province, county, or world the speaker can feel uncertain or uncomfortable using their variety of a language or their accent when communicating with someone from the other area, particularly in terms of which variety is viewed to be for non-prestige. This insecurity can be in-part due to language ideologies, for example, that one variety of French is 'more-correct' or better than another.

Linguistic insecurity can also manifest when French speakers are learning English, and also when English speakers are learning French. Both scenarios can leave the speakers uncertain and uncomfortable in the other language. Esme said that when she was in high school almost all classes were taught in English with English materials. The

students would speak French amongst themselves but were expected to speak English with the teacher. She said that "some students would not speak because they were so embarrassed to speak English."

In Canada, many government jobs today have a bilingual requirement, meaning that potential employees must have a certain level of English and French. This is particularly true of federal government jobs, though provincial governments also reflect this. As for the Nova Scotia government, the French Language Services Act was passed in 2004 to "foster the ongoing development of the province's Acadian and Francophone community and specifies the terms and conditions under which provincial institutions provide services in French." The passing of the act is important for Acadians and other French speakers in the province, but it also leads to debates in the use of standard French or dialects. Gabriel shared that, while working for the federal government, he made conscious word and verb tense choices so as not to use Acadian French when he was supposed to be speaking the accepted standard. He also shared that he would speak in their Acadian variety mother tongue when talking with other Acadians but only when he knows the person or if they use an Acadian variety first. Debates of standard versus dialect also emerged in Ontario and Alberta, particularly in Ontario call centres that offer services in both official languages. Roy (2004, 360-365) shows that French speakers who often code-switch do not believe they speak good enough French to qualify for bilingual positions as their French is not good enough. These situations keep the hegemonic beliefs of standard French is the best French alive and also instills these beliefs in French speakers not only in Nova Scotia, but throughout the country.

Doucet (1999, 110) discusses how, while at a conference, he felt judged and unsure of his French and says he has to "make sure my French is as polished as possible." He then goes on to say how francophones from different locations make subtle jibes and mock other francophones, for example Acadians from New Brunswick mock Acadians from Nova scotia (Doucet 1999, 111). This also contributes to feelings of linguistic insecurity, belief that others are judging you for how you are speaking any language, not just French. Louis said that he thought about applying for a job with *Radio Canada* but didn't because he "didn't know how to speak, meaning I didn't know how to express myself. I could use the accent I have but due to internalizing things like linguistic insecurity, I don't always feel comfortable speaking in that way." Louis went on to compare how francophones sometimes seem to look at Acadians as "how Americans look at southerners oftentimes, and that the drawl and all these things: syntax, pronunciation, grammar, are often viewed as being less intelligent or less than "standard English" and that's how I feel Acadians are often viewed." Acadians or southerners, or any other minority that speak differently, are no less intelligent because they speak in their regional varieties. The linguistic insecurity Louis mentioned, and saying he doesn't feel comfortable speaking naturally sometimes, was similar to an experience Esme had with her friend:

> Now I remember a friend of mine went, uh, well I don't remember where it was she went either to get her car fixed or something, she was speaking French and a gentleman said 'well you don't know how to speak proper French,' the words 'proper French' is quite uh it's not it's not welcomed but I don't- I don't mind when I speak French to someone who's from- not my not from Nova Scotia, I will try to avoid words like uh instead of saying uh for 'hand' for example the word is *'main'* and bread is *'pain,'* but in Clare we'd say *'mon'* and *'pon'* and *'fon*,' *'j'ai fon'* so I would try not to use those pronunciations.

This pronunciation difference was additionally brought up by Louis with the examples of '*main*' and '*pain*' in the Baie Saint Marie variety of Acadian French. Flikeid (1988, 87) also found that the pronunciation of words such as '*main'* said as '*mon*' to be characteristic of the variety of Acadian French spoken in the Baie Sainte-Marie.

Another ideology that has led to linguistic insecurity felt by some Acadians in Nova Scotia is discussed by Newell (2019). She analyzes Yves Cormier's *Dictionnaire du français acadien* which aims "to differentiate AF from Standard French, while Standard French remains the point of reference" (Newell 2019, 10). She argues that Cormier left out English loanwords from after the nineteenth century on purpose, since he includes words that came from Mi'kmaq. The reasoning may be because Mi'kmaq is also a minority, threatened language in Nova Scotia due to English being the language of the majority or it may be to combat the belief that English loanwords are "understood as signs of Acadian assimilation" (Newell 2019, 21). This, she argues, reinforces the linguistic ideology that code-switching between English and French, whether an Acadian variety or the standard, "should be discouraged." This occurs as well if a student uses an English word in place of the French word. It was additionally mentioned by Esme in a slightly different way, "I've heard that sometimes teachers who teach or speak in their Acadian dialect are corrected, especially by parents who are from outside the province." Further, this linguistic insecurity also occurs when English speakers are learning French. Both scenarios can leave the speakers uncertain and uncomfortable in the other language. Four participants (Gabriel, Philippe, Esme, and Louis) were born and grew up in varying Acadian communities here in Nova Scotia. Lisa and Sylvie, who are not first language French speakers, both went on to study French. Both also grew up in English

communities – Sylvie in HRM, Lisa in the Annapolis Valley. Lisa and Sylvie have both expressed feelings of identity and linguistic insecurity as they are not first language French speakers and did not grow up in an Acadian community. For Gabriel, Catherine, Philippe, Esme, Louis, and Brigitte, language plays a bigger role in connecting and performing their identity as Acadians. For these six, their language is tied to the community and culture they grew up in, forming a direct connection between their identity as Acadians and their language use.

Conclusion

The language ideology that you need to know English or a certain language to get a good job or go to school is potentially harmful to minority groups and their languages if they are accepted as true. In Nova Scotia, it seems that the ideology that English is the best and necessary to know to accomplish things in life or have upward social mobility can be seen in the shift in the use of French to English. This can be seen by Esme, who grew up speaking exclusively in French until she started school and at the age of 10, she said that her "mother used to say, 'now children, watch TV as much as possible because it's going to help you with your English'." The family had spoken French at home until that point, though with the new technology, a new tool for language learning and the dissemination of ideologies began.

This shift to English and use of an in-group second language is similar to the Acadians' English and French use. This is not to say that Mandarin (shown in the research by Li, Tan, and Goh 2016) and French are not valued by their speakers but rather their use is discouraged in certain spheres. This discouraging can contribute to the

cycle of turning ideology into truth and, consequently, lead to things such as linguistic insecurity.

Linguistic insecurity, as was mentioned by participants, is especially prevalent in the debates surrounding which French is better: the standard or the regional Acadian variety. Acadian varieties can be discouraged at school, at work, and these ideologies can potentially lead to further discouragement in other areas, such as in the home. As teachers correct students who speak Acadian varieties instead of the standard French in schools, this contributes further to the feelings of insecurity, embarrassment that your French is "bad," and fear of getting in trouble or reprimanded for using the wrong dialect.

One further problem that this linguistic insecurity can cause is that French may not be passed on to succeeding generations, thus the number of overall speakers falls, as can potentially be seen by past Canadian censuses (Statistics Canada 2022). We cannot be certain that this is what caused the drop as there are many potential factors, such as immigration or population movements, but it is still interesting to consider. This speculation requires more research and is out of the scope of this thesis, though interesting to consider.

Identity

Introduction

Identity is complex, ambiguous, and has been defined in a number of ways. Interest in the social sciences in identity grew in the 1990s, with many disciplines coming up with their own definitions and uses for the term. Definitions grew out of postmodern and postcolonial fascination with difference (for example Hall 1992, 1996), feminist interests in gendered social norms (for example Yuval-Davis 2006), and more (Jenkins 2004, 8). In psychology, it has been defined as "a disposition of basic personality features acquired mostly during childhood and once integrated, more or less fixed. This identity made a human being a person and an acting individual" (Sökefeld 1999, 417). In anthropology it has been defined as the sameness, or sharing of characteristics, of one with others to create a group identity (Sökefeld 1999, 417). A more complete definition, which predates the others, comes from Erikson (1980, 109) who says, "the term 'identity' expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others."

This sameness, or similarity, also creates otherness according to postcolonialism and postmodern schools of thought. Otherness is the differences between an individual or group and other individuals and groups. To sum this up in other terms, anthropologists see identity as something that we do, not something that people inherently have.

Acadian identity, much like Acadian historical conditions that the identity came from, is complicated. With feelings of not being as connected to one's Acadian identity when not living in Acadian communities, how are Acadians performing their identity and is their identity in danger of disappearing into the mixed community of urban areas?

Acadians may identify as such in the Maritimes and even Quebec but when in other parts of the country or the world, in what order does their identity fall? Are they first Canadian, Nova Scotian, then Acadian? Saying "*je suis Acadien*" to someone in Oslo or Hong Kong likely carries no meaning and would be followed up with questions and the need for clarification of what that means. It is similar to someone who identifies as Basque travelling to Chicago or Lima; would they identify themselves as Spanish or Basque first? How well-known around the world is the identity of the Basque? We cannot expect that others in these far-away nations learn about the beginnings of Canada or the history of the Basque, as they likely don't. In any case, it does not in any way make Acadian or Basque identities less real, though it does beg the question of how it can be maintained and more recognized. How are Acadians in HRM, indexing their identity?

Performing Identity

What then makes an identity meaningful is the interactions between intra-group members (or those who identify the same) and inter-group members. Jenkins argues that

when we first meet someone, we look for physical cues, such as language, to try and identify who they are, where they are from. This is simultaneously being done to us by them. There is room in this visual assessment for mistaken identification as well, in which what we perceive is not how the person identifies (Bucholtz 2011, 1, Jenkins 2004, 6). Bucholtz (2011, 1-2) says that "identities are not merely a matter of individual psychology. They are fundamentally the outcome of social practice and social interaction because it is only within and by means of interaction with others in the course of daily activities that identities become evident and consequential, to oneself as well as to others ... For how one presents one's own identity is shaped by how one interprets the identities of others, and an individual's self-presentation may be quite different from how she or he is interpreted by others."

There are also different ways we identify: gender, ethnic racial, religious, national, cultural, and more. Individuals and groups have more than one identity. Lisa, for example, defined herself as "a big mixture of different parts and Acadian is definitely one of the parts." This means that there is a constant negotiation going on between the different identities, or facets, that make up one person, that in turn all goes into creating our entire self which is then "socially created and communicated" (Finke and Sökefeld 2022, 3). Bucholtz (2011, 2) argues that no single aspect of identity is independent of other aspects and "an individual's identity cannot be arrived at simply by listing the social categories to which she or he is assigned." Identity is actively done in ways that are attributed to certain "social types" as people make active decisions in certain social contexts and conversations so that they will be interpreted by others. Butler (2017) similarly argues that the idea of gender being culturally constructed comes from our

presumptions that gender is natural and coherent. Butler's main argument is that gender is a performative act, such as a theatre performance, and gains meaning through interpretation and discourse. Gender, as a concept, is not stable and can change over time as we are constantly renegotiating our identity. Butler's argument can be extended as all parts of identity are performed and it is these performances that index who we are and what group we belong to.

Identity as a concept in academia is complex but also complex in oneself. Finke and Sökefeld (2022, 4) use an example of a Catholic woman. Different parts of her identity will play a larger role in conversation and life depending on who she's talking to and where she is. We, as humans, do this all the time. A similar example is Louis: he is male, queer, middle-aged, Acadian, Nova Scotian, Canadian, and more. All of these aspects are constantly negotiating and interacting to make Louis who he is through active social interaction with others. The part of himself that would be most prevalent, and relevant, would change depending on where he was and who he was talking to, just like for the Catholic woman.

In other words, these theoretical models on identity are relevant when looking at Acadian identity. Social interactions are relevant in terms of the performing identity: Acadian identity is formed in social interaction with others who are not Acadian and with those who identify as Acadian. Louis' description of his own identity is again an example of how identity is multifaceted as well.

Indexing Identity

Doucet (1999, 204) argues that “A language is both a passport and a filter through which people feel and express the world. The reason we use the terms anglophone and francophone today is because they indicate a manner of expression but not a cultural identity. For there are other qualities – landscape, climate, music, stories, friendship circles, traditions, philosophies – that define a people.” This is reflected in participant responses to the question of how they index their identities as Acadians. For Brigitte, being Acadian is “a 24/7 thing,” while Lisa said that “Not having a background in Acadian language which I think is uh sort of a big part is sort of the driver of Acadian culture today, I mean that experience, its past experiences and past histories and it's the way you communicate and the way you grow up.” This means that for Lisa, who identifies as Acadian through her ancestry, language and Acadian French varieties are important for the Acadian identity. This is interesting as all participants, including Lisa and Sylvie who only speak standard French, agreed that you do not have to have any knowledge of French to identify as Acadian. Lisa went on to say that “artists are culture makers,” and Gabriel is one example of this statement in practice as he uses his art to express himself and his Acadian identity: “my Acadian language is an oral language, which means it is not written, so I’ve developed quite profusely visually so for me it's kind of visually what I kind of look at and look for.” For Esme, on the other hand, she spoke of the importance of festivals and events for her Acadian identity. For instance, she said that “after I moved to Halifax it was so comforting to go to Grand-Pré and hear the mass in French.”

> And of course, the *congrès mondial acadien* and I couldn't go to the first one, but I watched it on TV, and it was so moving, every evening I would watch and really cry, tears would fill up my eyes from the pride and what people were doing and of course I have been to every other *congrès* that has been. The c*ongrès mondial*

> really brings out a great pride in the Acadian people and then people from away, people from Louisiana end up coming here and are so proud so I mean it makes people like us who … take everything for granted think twice. I mean, if these people are so proud of it and we're in the middle of it, we have all the opportunities that they never had, why can't we be carriers of our culture in a proud way?

The next c*ongrès mondial* will be held in Clare and Argyle, Nova Scotia in 2024 and the French President (Macron) has been invited. Esme says that this proved to be "a real liaison between Acadians and France." This could open up more doors for France and other francophones to recognize the Acadian people and culture. These festivals open up doors to other Acadians and other francophones to come and learn about other French cultures than their own. Esme also added, perhaps most importantly for her, another festival:

> In 2005 the *Société Acadienne de Clare* started a storytelling festival called *Le festival de la parole de la Baie Sainte-Marie* and they invited me for 11 years to be part of that festival. It was international, which means the storytellers were from the province and from outside so I got to know and be friends with people from France, Quebec, and so that sort of made our culture be recognized by people outside of our own little community.

This festival, and others like it for any community, gives opportunities to showcase oneself, one's cultural identity, and how the identity is unique. For Esme here, she could reference her Acadian history, experiences growing up and living in Nova Scotia, and highlight her Acadian French dialect with those from other francophone provinces and countries. Cultural or language events bring awareness to others that dialects and varieties are very real and being used in day-to-day life by people in other parts of the world.

Sylvie was the only one who discussed food in any way. She specifically brought up how the differences between her family's special dinners differentiated them from non-Acadians. She said, "We knew when our parents were home from Midnight Mass

and our neighbours who were from the same fishing village always came over after mass and we'd have rappie pie, we didn't have turkey dinner on Christmas Day." Food as a tool to index Acadian culture is not unique to Sylvie but has been mentioned by many scholars as being one carrier of Acadian culture (Baldacchino 2015; Griffiths 1992, 59-60; Vacon 2007). Louis, similar to Doucet (1999, 204), argues that there is more than language that makes a people, an identity. Louis also spoke of food as a cultural marker. He once did a presentation on food as "a cultural artifact, food as a cultural archive" and he wrote an Acadian cookbook that "talked about what it means to be Acadian across North America" and what it means to be Acadian through food. As for his own identity, Louis described being Acadian as "answering a lot of other people's questions about what it is to be Acadian, both from outside and within the community." He also says he sees parallels between being queer and being Acadian, "the parallel was living always against the grain of something," "my Acadianness as a francophone is a constant battle oftentimes in terms of proving I have worth and value as a francophone, even though I do not speak the way other francophones speak."

Connecting to Identity

When asked the question of "how do you connect to your identity in a city of mixed identities?" those who grew up in an Acadian community versus those who did not have different experiences. Gabriel talked about how it felt to live in Louisiana versus here in Nova Scotia:

> For example when I lived in Louisiana, there it felt like a majority because Acadian - Cajuns they're not a minority like they are in Nova Scotia, they're a majority so that was really quite nice sense of feeling like you belong and also by looking at people you can they have similar features so you kind of feel 'woooow'

> this is kind of a majority uh it kind of felt, in a weird way, kind of good because they're all your ancestors in kind of a strange way but uh in another way also they're kind of distinctly American, Cajuns so also a little bit different but uh that probably outside of my Acadian community is in kind of living in Louisiana felt the most uh let's say uh … less of a minority but a majority and that felt pretty amazing even though you -you don't radiate it but you almost feel like 'huh wow this is where I should be' or hanging out with your ancestors uh being just 4% of the population in Nova Scotia a minority can be a little bit of a sinking feeling.

That feeling of belonging is important in identity and community construction, as Cohen (2001, 15) argues. He says that "community is that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction we call 'society'. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home." That feeling of belonging to a community is part of what keeps the community strong and then the communal or collective identity passed on. It is also part of the reason people want to be a part of communities. Catherine had similar feelings and said:

> I find that um … (sigh) … it's easier to forget, to not integrate being Acadian in your everyday life when living in a community that's not Acadian um so the fact that I have certain things around me on a day-to-day basis help remind me of that um and … its … I -I mostly have lived in Acadian communities so when I am somewhere that is not Acadian, I do feel a bit sad about it and … do have a harder time connecting with people, actually. Like I do enjoy, ya know, being able to recognize last names, recognize the language, um, have that little extra connection other than, ya know, just being from the Maritimes, then its 'no we're Acadian, we're probably related somehow!'

The "things" Catherine references as to being around her everyday are Acadian flags, her Acadian lanyard, and her Acadian licence plate. Her point about recognizing last names also contributes to that feeling of the larger Acadian community. In 1660 there were 45-50 different family groups, which grew to around 70 in 1670, each with their own family names (Jones 2004, 21). These names continue to be a binding factor for Acadians and can provide genealogical proof of their heritage and, therefore, their identity. This, to

reiterate, is not necessary to do when claiming an identity as there are no specific rules as to who and who cannot identify certain ways.

Catherine and Gabriel both compared being in Acadian communities or places where they did not feel quite as much of a minority to where they live today. Both have similar experiences of sadness at not feeling as part of the Acadian community when not being surrounded by other group members. They also both talk about how it is easier to connect with people as you have a kind of baseline that you are a part of the same group which serves as a connection between people. Both additionally mentioned how it is easier to know someone is Acadian when you can hear them speaking French. In Brigitte's answer, she talked about the use of French as well but not in terms of belonging and knowing someone's identity but in terms of switching between French and English. She said:

> As soon as I leave home or I leave my workspace uh it's in English uh so living in Halifax is accepting to live in English, mostly, except when I'm home and I'm at work, so each time I leave those French spaces uh uh I switch to English. I'm expecting to be speaking English uh at all times so that's a big difference uh uh when I go to Shippagan [a town in New Brunswick] or to Acadian areas in Nova Scotia um uh I'm … I expect to speak French at all times. So that's the big difference for me, it's changing your mindset from English to French, and French to English depending where you are and uh that switch happens in Halifax, doesn't necessarily- never happens when I go to an Acadian area.

Halifax is a predominantly English city, situated as the capital of a predominantly English province. Brigitte works for an Acadian organization and thus speaks French at work but, except for other organizations and government institutions, this is not commonly seen in the city.

Conclusion

Identity is not something we inherently *have*, but it is something we *do*, and do in a number of different ways. Acadian identity, like any other, is complex, multi-faceted, and performative. There are different tools that people use to index their identity, for example Catherine uses the Acadian flag in her home and on her car, indexing to those who see these things that she is Acadian. These things that are used in indexing or performing identity differ from person to person in their importance and meaning as well. Gabriel said that "festivals don't make me feel more or less Acadian" while for Esme festivals are very important to her identity. This is an example of how identity can be fluid; there are many ways to claim an identity and perform it. Just as there are no set of rules or guidelines for someone to claim an identity, there are no rules or guidelines to follow to perform or connect to that identity. People are individuals and that means they have agency, the ability of individuals to act freely and make their own choices (Butler 2017, 347, 357), and so no two people will experience or index their identity in exactly the same way. Thus, some Acadians do use their language to index and perform their identity, not all do. Language use can be important to minority, majority, and national identities but there is more that holds together a people, a community, whether it is a shared history, collective trauma, a lost homeland, or shared cultural values unites this and other people. Much like festivals, music, foods, waving flags, language is simply a tool used sometimes to do so.

Despite festivals and other tools used in indexing identity, it can be complicated to connect to one's identity in locations where the identity is that of a minority, such as in HRM. Brigitte is proud to be Acadian and works with an Acadian organization, but she still has a difficult time outside of home and work connecting with her Acadianess in

HRM because it is predominantly English. This then ties into when Gabriel says that he does not necessarily feel like he is where he belongs. Participants also expressed how it can be harder to connect with people in HRM where there is an amalgamation of different identities, there is no immediate connection with someone here like there is in Acadian areas because you do not know if someone is Acadian unless they are indexing it through their language or displaying identifiers, such as Catherine does.

Linguistics and Identity

Introduction

Important theoretical considerations and ideas that can then be applied to the Acadians comes from Benedict Anderson, a historian and political scientist who focused his work around the definition of the nation as an imagined political community. He describes the nation as "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (2006, 6). These 'imagined

communities' are limited because communities of any size do not normally wish to include the entire world and are communities because of camaraderie between and amongst people in these groups who want them to exist by any means necessary (including going to war for it) (Anderson 2006, 7). He is talking generally about larger nations, but this applies to small communities and minority groups as well. Anderson's definition is applicable to Acadians: after the deportations, not all returned to Nova Scotia and the descendants of those who did now live all across the province (or in other parts of the world) today. This community is also based in historical context as the Acadians experienced a shared trauma and were a people born out of the conflicts between the English and French since the seventeenth century. Despite the distance, there is still this sense of *Acadienité* (or Acadian pride) and - as multiple participants voiced - shared trauma that unites them as one people.

In other words, Acadian as an identity is geographically fluid. It does not exist within the political, geographical, or symbolic boundaries of countries or provinces but exists within and beyond them. This is due to the deportations that spread out the community physically, though their identity keeps them tied together and festivals, such as the *congrès mondial acadien* reinforce those community bonds.

In a similar way, people identify as Acadian for different reasons. Three reasons that presented in this research were ancestry, culture, and a combination of the two. Identity insecurity presented in two different ways: in those who identify as Acadian but do not speak French or only identify through their ancestry, and in those who identify as Métis as well. The Métis are people of both colonial and Indigenous ancestry and are not

recognized in Nova Scotia, despite attempts in the community and in the justice system (for example, R v Powley, 2003 SCC 43).

Linguistics and Identity in Practice

For identity and language to be tied together, there needs to be discourse (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 587). Discourse here is defined as "An extended language interaction, i.e., longer than a sentence. Also, the study of such interaction" (Van Herk 2018, 225). Both language and identity are created and changed due to this discourse and interaction, and both gain further meaning from it as well. This can then lead to Discourse (with a capital D) which is "a society's way of talking about something that reflects underlying assumptions of the dominant group; these assumptions tend to become seen as "common sense" and thus are barely noticeable, despite the influence they have" (Van Herk 2018, 225). In other words, discourse (lowercase d) and language interaction can allow us to see the assumptions, ideologies, and beliefs of a group. Bucholtz and Hall (2005, 588) then argue that identity is the product of "linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore is fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon."

As mentioned before, people have multiple identities (cultural, sexual, etc.) that interact to create each other, as well as they are created by other identities they come into contact with. Languages appear to be inherent and inextricably tied to certain identities, but if we take away the historical context for most, they are in fact quite arbitrary. Anderson (2006, 42) uses French as an example: French was not accepted as an official language of France until 1539, when it replaced Latin. Historically, French as a language was not an essential part of French cultural identity as it seems today and was even

originally only used in official government capacity, not forced upon every French peasant at once (Anderson 2006, 42). Today though, without knowing the history of languages, people see them as belonging to specific communities and nations. Additionally, for the Acadians, they were caught in a struggle between English and French in multiple spheres — including as nations, languages, and other institutions such as religious —though French and English languages have been connected as far back as 1066 with French loanwords being used in government and legal realms (Rothwell 2001, 542, 551).

As for the Acadians, then, they are seemingly tied (historically and even today) to the French language as well despite all of my participants agreeing that someone does not have to have any knowledge of French to identify as Acadian. Of the first Acadians, many came from France (though not all), they spoke French, and that French evolved to create the various varieties we have all over the traditional lands of *Acadie* today. This brings us back to my original question: do Acadians living in urban areas use language to assert their identity; and if yes, how do they do so?

The Acadians, like many other minorities do use Acadian French varieties to assert their identity. One group that finds themselves in a similar situation to that of the Acadians, are the Basques in north-central Spain and south-western France. Conversi (1990) argues that language is one of the key elements in defining the Basque identity. He begins by stating: "Every ethnic group confers particular importance on a specific element of its own culture. This stress is subject to change, especially in contexts of inter-cultural contacts and group intercommunication" (51-52).

Beginning in the nineteenth century, the Basque were experiencing a dramatic decline in the number of speakers of their language: Euskera or Euskara. The Euskera language – and consequently the Basque identity – was not as widespread as Catalan, another competing identity in the area. Because of this, Basque nationalists, such as Padre Evangelista de Ibero, used other factors (origin, customs, laws, historical past, etc.) as key symbols to represent their identity. Media, such as magazines and nationalist periodicals, were written in Spanish or French, not Euskera (Conversi 1990, 59). Therefore, the Basque would have had difficulties in making their language their using their language alone to differentiate themselves and unite their community. There simply were not enough speakers and Euskera became a minority language, "spoken by a minority within the minority and destined for extinction" (Conversi 1990, 60).

Consequently, today, the Basque have a complicated relationship with their language just as we can see with the Acadians of Nova Scotia. Conversi (1990, 59) shows us that language is a contentious symbol for Basques as it is not widely spoken. On the other hand, some see Euskera as necessary for their identity as Basques. For example, in an interview with *The Guardian*, Xabier Agote is quoted saying "our language is what makes us Basque." (The Guardian 2011, 4:08).

The Basques are similar to the Acadians in a number of ways. Firstly, around 1% of Acadians were from Basque areas (Griffiths 1993, 331). The connections between the two groups are echoed by Doucet (1999, 3-4) who says, "The Acadians are like the Basques in the sense that they have always been a people balanced on the frontier between larger, more powerful national identities." One specific example of this

similarity is that the French language in Nova Scotia is not widespread; there are French communities scattered throughout the province but, again, each place has its own variety.

Anderson argues that the interactions between print media and capitalism are what "made the new communities imaginable" combined with "the fatality of human linguistic diversity" (2006, 43) This fatality references languages that were only oral – as Gabriel mentioned his Acadian French variety is – and could not be produced in print media such as novels and newspapers; this means that people had to learn and rely on different languages to consume the media. Print media unified certain language-speakers and made it possible for people who spoke different languages to understand one another and the same information via this media (Anderson 2006, 44). Anderson says that this led to a sense of a larger language community – the beginnings of national identities in which language plays a larger role.

Print media today plays a role in identity-creation and sustenance; Acadian newspapers, for example, play a role in connecting those who belong to the Acadian community (LeBlanc and Boudreau 2016, 84, 87). There are fifteen daily newspapers in Nova Scotia. Of those fifteen, only one is printed in French, *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse*. This, much like in the case of the Basques, makes it difficult to centre an identity around language alone.

A second example is *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*, written by Longfellow in 1847. The book is about the titular heroine Evangeline who spends her life trying to find her would-be husband after the deportations separated them. The book raised awareness of Acadian history and spurred the eventual creation of Grand-Pré National Historic Site in the early twentieth century to commemorate the events – not to mention the slew of

products (bread, wine, t-shirts, chocolates, and more) that were branded as 'Evangeline,' which commodifying the true Acadian story (Ross 2016, 102). It is also worth mentioning that this epic poem was originally published in English; thus, Acadians only had access to a translated version which was published in 1856 in Paris (Boudreau and Gammel 1997, 61).

Geographically Fluid

There is no real "homeland" for the Acadians today. Due to the deportations, Acadians can be found all over the world and so identifying as Acadian is not bound by geographical borders as people living in any Canadian province, Louisiana or other states, France, England, and more identify as Acadian or a variation of such. This example of provinces and states exhibits qualities that are usually associated with national entities and identities. These national identities behave in different ways than those of minorities and other groups who live within the political divides. This can be seen in the promotion of nationalism and the creation of a "national identity" which uses key symbols, such as a maple leaf in the case of Canada or an eagle in the US, to create sentiments of belonging, pride, and community (Banks 1996, 141; Cohen 2001, 15 18). These types of identities are especially salient during times of crisis, such as war or, currently relevant, during epidemics. Despite presumptions by many that national identities are all taken as real and valid, there are those who, for different reasons, are not recognized by the majority of nations. Examples include Kosovo, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia (Voller 2013, 611-612). Somewhat similar to unrecognized states, *Acadie* exists beyond political, geographical, and symbolic boundaries (Cohen 2001, 12-13, 40;

Doucet 1999, 3, 200). The homeland of the Acadian people consisted of today's Maritime provinces; however, this land and the power they had in its politics and development was exiled with them in the 1750s. The Acadians today feel a disconnect with the land and the sense of wandering continues, in a way, they are still searching for that homeland again. Though they lost this land, the shared *feeling* of a homeland is part of what kept the community together and identity alive (Griffiths 458, 464; Kennedy 2014, 22). Despite this, the Acadian community still views itself as a community. This community transcends borders and is also formed by them. One example is that Acadians in Nova Scotia and Acadians in New Brunswick or PEI speak in different dialects and may have other differences from Acadians in Nova Scotia but, despite the geo-political border between them all, are all connected by belonging to the larger Acadian community.

Additionally, there are events, such as the *congrès mondial acadien* (Acadian World Congress) that brings Acadians from all around the world together. The *congrès mondial acadien* is a festival held in various Acadian communities every four years, the first year being 1994. It has been held, for example, in Louisiana and the Atlantic provinces. The festivals mission was "*de développer des liens plus étroits entre tous les Acadiens et Acadiennes de par le monde*" (to develop closer ties between all Acadians around the world) (Cyber Acadie 2016). The festival is used additionally as a tool to make others aware of the Acadian identity and culture while simultaneously affirms the collective Acadian identity (Keppie 2016, 88; Lefebvre 2012, 78-79, 98; McLaughlin and LeBlanc 2009, 28- 29). This is not a unique case and happens all around the world in cases of immigration and human movement which are also integral factors in the creation

of new and changing identities (Leve 2011, Schulze 2017). These events highlight and reinforce *Acadienité* and Acadian pride.

Another example of events bringing people who belong to the same identity together are the Pan-Assyrian Games in Urmia, Iran every year. Schulze (2017, 152) argues that this event brings Assyrian minorities from different countries together where they learn there is "no "unique" Assyrian culture or any "standard Assyrian culture", but rather a set of shared customs, even though these might not be as relevant as the traditions shared with the host society." This absence of a larger shared culture does not make any one of them less Assyrian; it highlights that Assyrians in different places (as well as cultures and historical discourses) use different aspects of their identity to assert themselves in the geo-political, historical circumstances of their home countries. For the Assyrians in Armenia, language is one of their most important symbols to their identity. This, Schulze says, is due to two main factors: the belief the Assyrian spoken in Armenia is "pure" and close to that spoken in "the idealized homeland around Urmia"; and the way That conditions in Armenia "offer little room for developing cultural features that would be seen as typical for the Assyrian community" (Schulze 2017, 152). Specifically, Armenian Assyrians are Christian and allow exogamy, meaning they can marry individuals outside of the Assyrian community. In contrast, Armenian Yezidis and Kurds maintain a certain distance between their cultures and other Armenian majority and minority groups because they do not allow exogamy, thus keeping their traditions closed to outside influences (Schulze 2017, 152).

Identity Fluidity

Identity is ambiguous and fluid in its definition as a concept and is also ambiguous and fluid in practice (Finke and Sökefeld 2018, 6). As per this fluidity, the reasons why people identify as Acadians can be organized into three broad categories: ancestry, culture, and a combination of the two. Lisa, for example, would fall under the category of ancestral Acadian because she did not grow up in an Acadian community or participate in Acadian cultural norms or traditions while others such as Philippe would fall under the category of both ancestry and cultural because he has Acadian ancestry and grew up in an Acadian community, speaking Acadian French, and participating in Acadian cultural customs.

'Culture' here is defined as the shared set of (implicit and explicit) values, ideas, concepts, and rules of behaviour that allow a social group to function and perpetuate itself. Rather than simply the presence or absence of a particular attribute, culture is understood as the dynamic and evolving socially constructed reality that exists in the minds of social group members (Hudelson 2004, 345). Those who identify for cultural reasons, for example, grew up or live in an Acadian community, speak the regional dialect, are activists, attend festivals and events, and/or and participate in Acadian cultural customs and traditions such as ways of cooking, religious practices, music, art forms, etc. There is also the chance in this category of someone believing they are also part of the ancestry Acadian category based on identifying for the examples outlined above or things, such as a last name, though short of tracing their family tree, no one would know which category they belong to. It also must be said that it does not change the findings of this thesis; no Acadian need to trace their lineage to prove that they are Acadian by bloodline nor to prove to themselves or others that they are Acadian.

Ancestral reasons include those whose ancestors identified as Acadian. In this case, people may (if the culture has been sustained over generations) or may not know of this ancestry and may only find out, for example, after talking to family or doing genealogy research. Lisa only found out she has Acadian ancestry, or that she was Acadian herself, in her 20s. She found out while working at Grand-Pré National Historic Site, which commemorates the Acadian village that once stood there and the deportations. She was surprised by this and said that because she found out later in life, she struggles with identifying herself now:

> I think I would say I have Acadian heritage because I have Acadian in my family tree but it's not my whole family tree … I feel like a big mixture of different parts and Acadian is definitely one of the parts and luckily because of [work] it's the part that I know the most about so I feel sort of … when I'm at work it sort of makes me feel like I'm in the right sport because I can go back and I have a connection to it

This connection through ancestry is used to claim an identity and happens all over the world, even more so today thanks to the advent of genealogy websites. Some scholars see this as a problematic way to claim an identity; there may not be a list of requirements one must meet to claim an identity, though those who claim an identity based on genealogy without living and learning the culture have led to debates and tensions in multiple groups (Doucet 1999, Golbeck and Roth 2012, Huhta 2020, Tranter and Donoghue 2003). One example of this is the debate surrounding the Nova Scotia Métis, which is discussed further later. Despite these debates, people still claim identities this way.

The third is a combination of the two where the person knows of their ancestry and participates in Acadian culture in any form. My participants were representative of all three categories. All three share the common characteristics that identity is created and negotiated with those of the same identity and in contrast to others claimed by individuals

and larger groups, as highlighted in the Identity section of this thesis. In this case, being Acadian is negotiated with being Francophone, Nova Scotian, Canadian, and more though it is also created within these negotiations. The majority of participants fall into this category. For example, Gabriel, Louis, Clara, and Philippe all grew up in Acadian communities, speaking Acadian French, and participating in Acadian culture in various ways, including parades, food, religion, and language.

Identity Insecurity

Based on my participants, it seems that identity insecurity can be experienced by those who only identify as Acadian through ancestry. So-called ancestral Acadians are not born in an Acadian community or region and do not have a long-time sense of what Acadian means, nor do they necessarily have knowledge of Acadian culture and traditions. This feeling can be worsened when they find out their ancestry and – in some cases – do not speak any French at all. In other words, they define themselves through claims that there are Acadians in their family tree. Lisa, who falls under this category, as well as Sylvie who did participate in some Acadian traditions while growing up in HRM, remarked that they identify themselves as Acadian, but sometimes feel unsure or disconnected from what they think "being Acadian" truly means. Lisa further went on to say "I don't know how I would say I identify… I think I would say I have Acadian heritage because I have Acadian in my family tree but it's not my whole family tree." As mentioned before, this has led to debates in groups as to whether people can claim an identity on genealogy or ancestry alone; this tension may also be a factor in why identity insecurity manifests.

Identity is complex and one person can have more than one cultural or ethnic identity. This interaction and negotiation of different identities was brought up by Philippe in his struggle between his Acadian and Métis identities. Philippe talked about one time, while he was working, he was discussing his Metis identity with a Mi'kmaq man who was unhappy at this. Philippe relayed their conversation to me: "He said to me - I said, 'well I'm a Métis, right? and he said … he was pretty angry right that I said I was a Métis he says, 'so where- where were you born?' and I said, 'in Nova Scotia' and he said 'well there's no such a thing as Métis in Nova Scotia, you're- you're native is what he said ... because I was misidentifying myself."

Métis, people of both colonial and Indigenous ancestry, have been discriminated against by both groups. Section 35 of the Constitution Act explicitly recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Section 35 also indicates that the term "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada" (Government of Canada 2021). However, this is not applicable to Nova Scotia Métis. It was attempted in Nova Scotia in *R. v. Powley*, but ultimately failed in gaining recognition (Chartrand 2017, 369-379). In the Powley case the Supreme Court of Canada defined Metis as: "distinctive peoples who, in addition to their mixed ancestry, developed their own customs, way of life, and recognizable group identity separate from their Indian or Inuit and European forebears" (R v Powley, 2003 SCC 43). To claim Métis rights under Section 35 the court stated that the individual must self-identify, have proof of "ancestral connection to a historic Métis community," and provide evidence that the individual is accepted as part of a modern Métis community (R v Powley, 2003 SCC 43). After this case, others attempted to claim

Métis rights by means of genealogical evidence, but this also failed, and the court ruled that "the community identified as Acadian for most of its history and has not experienced the negative impact of colonization and assimilation to justify identifying the community as Métis in the Aboriginal sense notwithstanding the existence of mixed-ancestry in the defendant's distant lineage" (Chartrand 2017, 381). Additionally, in some instances the 'm' of Métis is capitalized, this is usually used to describe people of the "Métis Nation, who trace their origins to the Red River Valley and the prairies beyond" (Brown 2008, 12). A lower-case 'm' is used when referring to any other community with mixed European and Indigenous ancestry (Brown 2008, 12). Following the arguments made by the Supreme Court in *R. v. Powley* specifically, Nova Scotia Métis fall under the category of lower-case métis, not upper-case Métis.

Thus, the Métis of Nova Scotia are still subjected to debate about whether they really exist or not. According to Statistics Canada there were 23,310 Nova Scotians who self-identified as Métis from 2006 to 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017a). Some scholars (Gaudry and Leroux 2017, Anderson 2011) argue against the recognition of Métis in Nova Scotia, as it threatens indigenous identities and is opportunist. Other scholars disagree, arguing that Métis identity is embedded in culture and history; there are aspects of Acadian culture (practices, traditions, even words) that inextricably connect the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq (Lawless and Malette 2021, MacLeod 2021, O'Connell 2021). Faragher (2005, 25) presents that, in marriages between settlers and Mi'kmaq, children were referred to as Métis, evidence that people – recognized or not – still identify this way. When the English arrived, they saw the relationship between the two groups as a threat, especially complicated by their connections to one another, including

marriages and children (Faragher 2005, 8, 108, 303; Kennedy 2014, 86).The English divided the groups by deporting the Acadians and placing bounties on the Mi'kmaq, thus likely leading those who identified as both (or as Métis) to 'choose a side' so to speak (Macleod 2021, 103, Plank 2003, 112). Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this debate further, two of my eight participants identify as Acadian and Métis.

Conclusion

Participants and scholars (see Laxer 2007) refer to *Acadie* as the Acadian homeland. Although "homeland" is often paired with "lost" since the deportations, it still denotes a sense of "where we came/come from" for the Acadian community or, as Anderson puts it, refers to something or someplace to which one is naturally tied (2006, 143). Acadians are thus Nova Scotian and Canadian because their idealized homeland is that of *Acadie*, lost to time and changing political borders that help to create and form identities (Doucet 1999, 3-4). The boundaries of what was *Acadie* or even *Nouvelle France* versus the political boundaries today are much different. Communities or identities, can, however, transcend these borders and boundaries.

Though, as with indexing Acadian identity in HRM, it is difficult to identify sometimes who belongs to your community as two people who both belong to the same community may pass each other on the street and not acknowledge one another but are still connected. Because of this, community occurs more often than we might think. I asked participants to tell me about interactions they have had with other Acadians in the city versus in Acadian areas. Lisa, Gabriel, Catherine, and Brigitte brought up work in their examples, as their place of occupation means they see Acadians fairly often. Others,

such as Esme, brought up things such as cultural events or concerts which are geared towards Acadians as evoking Acadian pride. For example, Sylvie and Philippe talked about visiting friends and family from Acadian communities as being most memorable in evoking feelings of belonging. Sylvie said that visiting her parents' community “was strong. My father knew everyone in the community, and they knew him. ... When anyone came to visit in Halifax, he would escort them into the city because they didn’t know how to get where they were going. When they needed a place to stay, they would stay with us, so we were very welcome in the community.”

Individuals can also belong to a community for a number of reasons. Participants highlighted three different ways Acadians can identify as Acadian: ancestry, culture, and a combination of the two. Acadians from any of these categories may also experience identity insecurity. As identity is something we do, this means they are uncomfortable in doing or performing their own identity for various reasons, including not feeling like they are truly a member of the community. Lisa and Sylvie both had their own difficulties with not feeling Acadian enough to identify as Acadians, Lisa because she did not grow up in the Acadian culture or speaking Acadian French, and Sylvie because she could not speak Acadian French growing up. Additionally, Philippe identifies as Acadian without experiencing identity insecurity but does experience it when considering his Métis identity because it is not recognized in Nova Scotia and not accepted by some Indigenous groups and scholars.

To sum up, Identity is complicated in concept and in practice. We are constantly negotiating and renegotiating who we are and how we share with the world who we are as we are put in different situations and interact with different people. Identity is

something that occurs unconsciously but with phenomena, such as identity insecurity, it also passes into the conscious realm.

Sustaining Cultural Identity

Introduction

Minority communities – whether they're linguistic, cultural, or ethnic – exist in every country of the world. As minorities there is a risk of losing their language or identity over generations due to things such as language ideologies leading to assimilation to standard or prestige varieties or other factors such as endogamous marriages. Minority communities need support from governments, institutions, and individuals to sustain their identity. As identities are recognized by institutions, local and national governments in their locality, and other national governments, there are arguably more opportunities for their fight for rights, such as obtaining particular services in their mother tongue. One example is the fight for francophone minorities to be recognized all over Canada, including Nova Scotia. This led to the creation of Section 23 of the Minority Language Educational Rights of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This section guarantees rights in both of the official languages of Canada: English and French. These rights, for example, include education in each province in either language. Notably, this "refers specifically to the linguistic minority of a province. Hence, it does not matter whether a minority language community may, on the local or regional level, form a majority, provided it is a minority in the province" (Government of Canada 2021). Institutions and programs in minority languages can help to make the community feel welcome and recognized, something important since without recognition there would be

no government certified rights for them as a community, but sometimes these institutions have adverse effects and cause contention in the communities they supposedly help.

In regard to language and, subsequently Acadian French, Richmond and Kalbach (1980) used Canadian Census data from 1971 to show that recent immigrants were more likely to speak their mother tongue at home after arrival, but as time went on, and succeeding generations appeared, English became the home language. Six participants for this thesis were first-language French or bilingual speakers. Despite all participants having knowledge of some French, Statistics Canada Census reports show us that French as a first language and French use at home has been declining. The number of French first language speakers has gone down 3.5% to 1.7% from 1971 to 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017b). On the other hand, the number of households that reported to use English at home has virtually stayed the same; in 1971 95.5%, in 2016 95.3% (Statistics Canada 2017b).

Education

In Nova Scotia the minority language is, and for most of its history has been, French. This led to the creation of the *Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (*CSAP), the Acadian school board as it's more familiarly known, in 1996. The CSAP offered education in Nova Scotia in French. Under Section 23, the CSAP provides French-first language education to Nova Scotians (Government of Canada 2021). The mission of the CSAP is "*offre une éducation en français de première qualité, en tenant compte de son mandat culturel*" (offer first-class education in French, considering its cultural mandate). This cultural mandate is different from schools in the English school system; Section 16

of the Education (CSAP) Act 1995-96 indicates that “The Conseil acadien shall (a) promote and distribute information about the French-first-language program; (b) include in its learning materials information about the Acadian culture; and (c) in providing its educational programs, engage in activities that promote Acadian culture and the French language” (Education (CSAP) Act 1995-96 2018, 19). The CSAP, however, faces harsh criticisms in terms of not teaching enough Acadian history, teaching different courses than the English system, and de-valuing Acadian French dialects. It also opened the doors to more influence on the dialects from standard French (Comeau 2019, 4-5, 7, 10-11).

Two participants (Esme and Brigitte) both brought up similar points when asked about education given in Nova Scotia and the history of Acadians. Esme had been under the impression that the CSAP had a course that students had to take on Acadian history. She found out last year that it was not required:

> Now in high schools of the CSAP, high school students have a choice between Canadian history and Acadian history and the majority of them take Canadian history. Now, I could see where that would be more appealing because they get an overview of all Canadian history, but considering the fact that it is a Conseil Scolaire Acadien de la province, uh, I don't understand why somewhere along the way, either in grade 9 or in grade 10 ... why couldn't one of those grades from junior high to high school children- students be given the opportunity and maybe even make it uh ... not an elective but somewhere along the line I think it should be compulsory, somewhere between grade 9 and grade 12, Acadian studies should be compulsory and it may be just for a year but make it so, so that the children who are studying in French in this province understand the history of the Acadians because after all Nova Scotia is based on Acadian history, this is where it all started.

Esme also went on to say that she “was almost tempted to write to the, uh, school board but someone said ‘no, they're not gonna pay attention’.” Brigitte, when asked the same question regarding Nova Scotia schools, referred to it as a “personal battle.” She also

brought up the optional Acadian history course and compared the CSAP and English school systems:

> It's a personal battle for me and it's been for the past 20 years, I think. I think that it's horrible that um right now, in Acadian schools what is being taught is Acadian- uh Canadian studies, *histoire canadien*, that's mandatory, every student has to take that and one of the optional course in history is uh Acadian history and of course it's optional and therefore nobody takes the course or so few people takes it that it's not being offered eventually and … what I have a problem with is not only that part, because I think it should be mandatory, it's not just- should not be ya know optional, but if you look at what is happening with the English school board, or not the school board anymore but the English system, uh they uh are learning Canadian studies, ok? And one of the optional courses is African Nova Scotian or Mi'kmaq and I think even Gaelic, but these optional courses are not- there is no Acadian study on the English side and on the Acadian side they are not being offer African Nova Scotian or Mi'kmaq studies, ok? History. So, the divide and conquer is very much alive in the school system in Nova Scotia and that to me is a personal battle and each time I have a chance to say it and to say how much I feel that this is unfair, I will say it. I think it is horrible that Mi'kmaq, for example, that were our close close close friends historically speaking, uh have lost uh the- the knowledge of that, forgotten about us, and forgotten how close we were and what kind of relationship we were, and we're being assimilated now to the uh white settlers and -and I find that personally insulting because I've never considered myself as a settler. Uh Acadians have suffered so much and have been mar-marginalized and -and still are and I think that we have to have that discussion but there is no venue to have a discussion if we don't know our history, don't know what we have in common, don't know what separates us.

Throughout elementary and up to grade 9, CSAP students learn about the Acadian flag, Acadian history including the deportation, and "develop their own sense of Acadian and/or Francophone identity" (MacLeod 2022). In high school, students are required to take *Histoire du Canada* 11 or *Études Acadiennes* 11; both discuss the history of Acadians in Canada, but one more so than the other, and the different indigenous peoples of Canada (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial 2005a, 2005b). The goal of *Histoire du Canada 11* is to "enable students to better understand Canadian society and contribute to it while discovering the place occupied by this society in the world around them" (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial 2005b, 12). The goal of *Études Acadiennes* 11 is the

same but with special focus on Acadians and Acadian society (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial 2005a, 12).

In response to the question “should Acadian French be taught in schools” (specifically CSAP schools and Nova Scotia French Immersion programs), most respondents agreed that learning any French is good. Gabriel in particular also added that the dialect of Acadian French he speaks is mainly oral, meaning teaching to write and read would be nearly impossible. Brigitte and Catherine both agreed that standard French is useful for conversing with Francophones from other parts of the world and there should also be an understanding that there are different words and ways of saying things in different places. Catherine furthered her point by saying that:

> I think that it's important that even though the standard is taught ... it's taught in a way that doesn’t criminalize or penalize the um regional French ... so, not to say that ‘its incorrect to use this term and that term,’ um, 'you're wrong, you can't speak French,' to do it in a way that ya know, still values the regional varieties but also teaching the standard because it is very useful, it's how we get to communicate with any other French francophone in the world so definitely need a base of standard French but in a way that doesn’t spin regional French in a negative way.

Here, Catherine is referencing, again, a phenomenon that we’ve seen already discussed: linguistic insecurity. Comments like these contribute to this and leave Acadian-variety speakers with a sense that they have bad French or are ‘doing it wrong.’ Brigitte said, on the matter of what French should be taught:

> I think that uh- I think it's pretty hard to get that message across to teachers but there is no perfect French uh … what we called standard French is uh a level of French that one can use if you want to travel and leave your -your Acadian area and -and converse with people from Quebec or New Brunswick or France or all through the world, that's the language that is being taught in school.

Brigitte also brought up linguistic insecurity in her response:

> However, for Acadians they've been also taught they- they did not speak good French, they did not speak, they did not master the 'good French' when they were using Acadian words, old Acadian words ... and those -those words are still being used so to tell a student at school that 'this is not proper French', 'this is not good French,' diminishing the importance of a language that has managed to survive all those centuries and is still being used ... So I think that uh it's really sad that uh um some teachers will -will say that Acadian French is not good French and what that has created is what we call linguistic insecurity, where Acadians are afraid to speak either French or English because they've master neither French nor English or they feel they've master neither French nor English and another element of that is that you have to understand that before 1981 there were no Acadian schools in Nova Scotia, French was forbidden in schools. So, after 1981, they created what they call 'Acadian schools' what was just for primary schools and when you got into high schools, it was mixed schools half, so some courses were taught in English, some courses were taught in French with students English and students French, and what that created was assimilation uh uh uh uh uh um huge assimilation. In 15 years, we went from 80,000 francophones to 42,000 francophones because of that system so we had to fight, we had to go to Supreme Court of Canada to get uh to get uh French schools from grade primary to grade twelve for French only, for francophone only. So that has created another, another layer of uh of- uh of feeling that you're second-class citizens. Not only you don't speak "proper French" but on top of that you were forbidden for so long to speak French to to to learn French in school, that the message that went across was that you were a second class citizen so when I was talking about those linguistic insecurity, it is very very real, and very real even now and that's why lots of Acadians won't apply for government jobs for example because they feel, because of their education, that they don't speak proper French.

In 2004 the federal French-language Services Act was passed to allow the government to offer services in French (Comeau 2019, 6-7). This act gave more rights to minority French communities across the country, including the Acadians in Nova Scotia (Comeau 2019, 6). The rights mentioned include things such as an ensuring the government is aware of Acadian and francophone community needs and ensure these need are addressed, form partnerships with "Acadian and francophone agencies at provincial, national and international levels," and upholding the French-Services Act which details an expansion of government programs offered in French, that public information will be available in English and French, when answering a public inquiry that was sent in French

the response must be in French, and that meetings wherein the government consults the public must have at least one sessions in French (French-language Services Act. 2004, c. 26, s. 1). This has allowed, however, for standard French to become the norm promoted by institutions, such as the CSAP. Louis brought up the controversy in Acadian communities on just this topic: what French is best to be teaching kids in school?:

> As someone who went through an education system in French, I think there already was a certain degree of that kind of like pedagogical model being used in the French system like I remember specifically, especially in high school, teachers to a very certain degree trying to introduce us to certain words or exp- idiomatic expressions ... and being like "you have to understand," and the class that I was in was, we were taking everything in French we were not taking English classes save for our one class in English which was an English class, so they were like "if you wish to live in a francophone community or work in a francophone field you need to understand that there will be people who will not speak like you and this," unfortunately it was not until college until most of us were told that's not a bad thing, to speak in the way you do but it was just like "you need to know there are people out there that speak French in a different way than you" so ... and it's unfortunate (sigh) … I think of a lot of linguistic or cultural insecurity around French has to do with education systems but I'm not a pedagogue, I can't really say what is the best … culturally speaking though I think there is room ... I think there is always room to talk about um ... Acadian vocabulary, lexis, and phonetics to a degree to make sure that the kids understand that.

Participants argue that being told that others do not speak the same French throughout Nova Scotia and the world is good, but it is the way that it is being done. Louis says here that it should not be taught that Acadian dialects are bad or wrong. This contributes, again, to the linguistic insecurity Acadians face and if one feels they speak "bad" French, the likelihood of them passing it onto their children is minimal, such as we saw with Sylvie. Louis also went on to say that his niece is in French immersion and her teacher is not Acadian and therefore does not have an Acadian accent. This, he said, "de-marks her as Acadian." By "de-mark," Louis is referencing how a certain accent, in this case the Acadian accent, usually marks someone as being Acadian. Louis went on to say:

> The amalgamation of accent that happens in those schools and I think for a lot of people, especially those who live in urban environment who are from um linguistically isolated regions, the lack of accent can be incredibly daunting because that has been the thing that has demarked you as an Acadian like I still - it's slightly tangential but I still remember a woman I grew up with -for her the whole thing of being Acadian was around language, you define yourself by what goes out of your mouth and she goes to *Louisiane* [Louisiana] amongst Cajuns and for them it's like “no, it's what goes in your mouth, that's what defines you as Cajun” … tumultuous to her.

There is a mixture of accents and dialects in schools, both in CSAP and in French Immersion programs in the English school system. Neither exclusively hire teachers who are francophone Nova Scotians. In 2016, 5.8% of francophone immigrants to Nova Scotia worked in the education system (Policy Research Branch 2020, 12-13). In a study conducted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Policy Research Branch 2020, 33), an immigrant teacher was quoted as saying “We have to think about the Acadians because there are many students who don’t speak the language. There’s language insecurity too. There have to be Acadian [teachers] to make the children feel safe, to speak the language. This is completely normal. That’s what the CSAP does. And the English boards where there are a lot of African-Nova Scotian children are trying to do the same thing so that the students can find value in seeing or listening to people who look like them. You’re looking for a balance. You have to find a balance.” Interestingly, Louis also addresses above how some Acadians put a lot of weight on the use of language in their identity.

There are pros and cons for promoting standard French or a mix of dialects in the school system. Namely, multiple participants mentioned how it can lead to linguistic insecurity which can ultimately hurt French more than help. Promoting the standard also diminishes the value placed on Acadian French varieties in relation to Acadian identity.

Lisa, Catherine, and Brigitte all brought up that one possible solution to this problem is the recognition and celebration of different dialects. Brigitte said that:

> I think that they should celebrate Acadian French, but I think that they have to teach that language in, as part of uh … different levels of French, you know? Like you can speak in uh Acadian French, there is not one Acadian French and because Acadians were forced to be dispersed after the expulsion the language that is being used there is so different from one place to another it's just it's just amazing so uh so in school what-what should be taught is it's perfectly alright to use the expression '*brouchure'*? for fence it is it is perfect, all Acadian French corresponds to sixteenth century language blah blah blah clap clap clap yay us, ya know, we kept that language, but that word is not going to be understood if you go for example in France, they won't know what you're talking about if you use the word *'brouchure'* so another word that you can use is '*clôture'*, you know? So, these are the kind of things that you could- that's the approach that should be taught.

Brigitte, like many other Acadians, is calling for a recognition and celebration of variety. There is no "perfect French" as she put it and the standard is practical and useful to know but there is also something to be said in the valuing of difference. On that, Brigitte said "what makes it beautiful is variety, the differences, you can't have it all the same." The de-valuing can cause identity insecurity and linguistic insecurity as well. Esme also importantly brought up another aspect of linguistic insecurity that occurs in part because of the education system:

> In Clare now, we had one high school um it was French, more or less, and there were lots of parents who believe- they wanted their children to be able to go out into the world and speak English because that was the working language. And so another school was built in the adjacent English-speaking community so now there's an English-speaking school and there's a French school and even with that, in the corridors you'd often hear, and still do, students speaking English in the corridors of the French school.

The presence of an English high school in an Acadian community is normal today. The reasons behind wanting the English high school in the example presented by Esme is connected clearly to the language ideology of English being the best language to learn

and know to do well in life. This ideology has also led, as discussed before, to linguistic insecurity. Additionally, on this note Fritzenkötter (2014, 43) says, "there has been an increase of English words and structures, especially among teenage speakers, who tend to describe their French as 'franglais', '*moitié moitié*.' This means that speakers, specifically in the Baie Saint-Marie area, are experiencing linguistic insecurity and see their language not as a dialect or a variety, but as a mix of two languages. Fritzenkötter (2014, 53) goes on to argue that "the Acadian regions of Nova Scotia are becoming more and more anglicized, in spite of an Acadian school system and a Francophone university in Baie Sainte-Marie," and it seems that this trend has continued since 2014 as Esme and Louis both brought up English use in the French schools and French institutions in the Clare/Baie Sainte-Marie area.

The CSAP was created in order to consolidate and help francophone communities but here in Nova Scotia, my interviewees raise the question of how much it is helping the Acadian identity and community. This is an ongoing battle (to use Brigitte's words) between the Acadians, other francophones, and the CSAP. There are ways to teach standard French and the — travel, talking with francophones from other places, work, etc. — without demonizing regional dialects, which should be celebrated. Perhaps possible solutions are to teach units on different varieties or something as simple as teaching what a regional word is in standard French, but again, without devaluing the regional. Doors can then also be opened up to other French varieties; with 5.8% of CSAP teachers (in 2016) (Policy Research Branch 2020, 13) being immigrants to Nova Scotia, children have an opportunity to learn about their variety (and others) as well. Despite the problems that have arisen for Acadians, the fight to have French first-language education and the fight

to have government services offered in French is – in the words of Brigitte – an “overall win” and the Acadian reliance is seen in their resilience as a people and their continued fight to be recognized linguistically and culturally today.

Looking to the Future

With the daunting statistics of the decline in French language speakers in Nova Scotia, including those who report French as their mother tongue, the Acadians cannot rely solely on their Acadian French varieties to index their identity and based on my research, they do not. Whether it is due to linguistic or identity insecurity, language ideologies such as needing to know English to be successful in life, or exogamous marriages, the reality is that French use and intergenerational transmission seems to be decreasing; in 1971, French had been passed on to 7% of the children under the age of 18, though it increased to 16% in 2006 (Bouchard-Coulombe, Lepage, and Chavez 2012, 54). With this decline in mind, participants were asked “Do you think Acadian culture is changing or in danger of disappearing?” Esme initially responded “no” to the question of is the Acadian identity in danger of disappearing, but she then added that she “had doubts” because:

> When you go into CSAP schools, I’m pretty sure that the majority of students in there are not of Acadian descent. They’re immigrants, from other provinces, their parents are in the military and so that way it is… iffy and if we don’t stay on top of it and now, we have a minister of Acadian affairs which makes people like me a bit more optimistic, but they have to fight. Acadians have always had to fight and lobby and if it wasn’t for the lobbyists, we wouldn't get half the programs we’ve had. ... As long as we have ministers in the government who are Acadians, I think there’s hope.

The CSAP, again, comes under fire from some Acadians for accepting students who are not of Acadian descent. However, while it may be their goal as an organization to appeal

and attract the Acadian population, they do teach standard French and cannot only allow Acadians, as per Section 23, which is only concerned with the French and English languages in general, not specific dialects. With the establishment of the French Language Services Act in 2004, a Minister of Acadian Affairs was established in the Nova Scotia Legislature as well. The position "supports the delivery of French-language services throughout government, promotes Acadian and francophone culture and heritage, and celebrates Acadian heritage and community projects" (Communications Nova Scotia 2022). Sylvie, who also said that there is more of an effort being made now compared to when she was growing up, said that there could be more of an effort.

Brigitte also cited organizations as "a ray of hope" that they need to "attach it to something real," they need to attach it to being Acadian. All also agreed that the government, provincial or federal, can always do more to help minorities. Gabriel added to this by saying that the Acadians and other minorities need "people to support, to go find out different storytellers of different languages, different music, and kind of know that um the mainstream, if you delve a little bit deeper support, almost like you know, buying local." Brigitte also mentioned the importance of individuals: "people need to do something." Again, Lisa's assertion that "artists are culture makers" is relevant in answers to this question. She said that artists: "are the guardians of culture in that way and they send it out there and, I mean, then that makes it, ya know, introduces it to people who maybe aren't even in that group of people." Gabriel said that people are becoming interested in learning about the Acadians, whether it's their own identity or not through music:

> People are paying a lot more attention to Acadian musicians and the Acadian way of uh kind of delivering music or speaking so that's kind of cool because that's

> becoming a little bit more uh all of Canada, Quebec in particular and France also so people are a lot more aware. And sometimes there are different cinematographers or films that make a little bit more headway so um things like that or a few years back *Star Académie* which is like American idol, in Quebec one of the winners won with the song "Evangeline" so all of a sudden things become hip and cool for a little while so it's like a little bit of a wave.

He then summed his statement up by saying "music seems to kind of be the connecting factor for outside of Acadian communities that people gravitate towards." Catherine said that she does attend festivals and previously mentioned her lanyard and flags, though she also mentioned music here by saying "Acadian music is sometimes written and sung in standard French, English, Acadian French, or a mixture of all three. Boudreau and Gammel (1997, 55), remarked on this phenomenon as well by saying poets and songwriters strategically choose which language to write in as a tool for "'poking fun' at the dominant culture and for generating Acadian identity as one related to celebration, laughter, and community." They further argue that Acadians use words from Acadia to "construct its identity as a community without a homeland" (1997, 63). Though their argument is specifically focused on poets, singers, musicians, and authors, the argument can be expanded to other situations as language plays a role in constructing and performing one's own identity, even when combined with other tools (potentially artistic, such as for Gabriel) in doing so.

Philippe said that in his youth, growing up in an Acadian community, "we didn't show it a whole lot I guess, I'm not sure why uh but we um just later on in life there it became more- they wanted to put the flags up and make a statement I guess but back when I was a kid it didn't seem to be too much like that like for example in New Brunswick and when we went to some New Brunswick villages you knew you were in an Acadian village big time." Philippe went on to say that now in Nova Scotia there are

more flags and he “knows when I’m in an Acadian community now.” Philippe’s answer of “no” to the question of Acadian culture disappearing was likely because of the more visible Acadian pride now compared to when he was younger; the Acadian culture seems more celebrated and alive today than it was in the mid-to-late 1900s. Philippe finished by saying “the young generation, which is always important, I think they’ve been brought up with a pretty strong tradition of the culture and I think they’re strong believers and that will continue for a while.” In other words, the culture and Acadian pride has been passed on. This is important in maintaining the sense of belonging and, also, the community’s existence at all. Further, Louis said no, again comparing the past to now:

> For my parents' generation, baby boom generation, what it meant to be Acadian, like if you’re looking at the markers, were very specific: they were linguistic, cultural: music, literature, some visual art like folkloric art, the flag, and otherness. By the time I was in my twenties I was part of a generation of mixed marriages, much more linguistically mixed marriages, I was a generation raised on tv, most of which was in English. To most educators and cultural indicators- cultural consultants or er people studying it, they saw it as a form of assimilation. They say the lack of use of French or the uh … assimilation of English into our daily language as being reductive and removing what it means to be Acadian. ... we aren’t telling people we’re less Acadian for the way we spoke, it was those preceding us that, like this kind of generational trauma of ‘you must maintain your language,’ ‘you must maintain the quality of your language’ to my generation being like ‘it has nothing to do with the language’ in terms of like classical didactic form, it is how we *exist.* To now, looking at contemporary ideas or ideology of what Acadian is, its hip-hop: its trans and non-binary performers, its culinary, it, like in terms of restaurants existing in different places, it is an embracing of … the past, while still understanding the necessity to exist in the present moment.

Louis also shows the evolution of how Acadians view their own identity from this focal point of language to branching out to include in indexing their identity everyday things that are unique, such as cooking and – as discussed above – Acadian music and other art forms. There is more to an identity than what language its members speak.

Conclusion

When comparing languages most often spoken at home in Nova Scotia, 14,465 report speaking French, 863,550 report speaking English, and 34,280 report speaking another language at home (Statistics Canada 2016). One possible reason for the downward trend of French is that more and more households are bilingual as the majority of occupations, schools, businesses, and more in Nova Scotia are unilingual English. Further, population movement and immigration to the province has an impact on these statistics as well. On this note, Lisa asserted that in Clare – a traditionally Acadian area in southwestern Nova Scotia – there is an ongoing language shift:

> I think -I feel really fortunate and I'm really appreciative that I got to learn French in Clare but I know, I go to visit Clare on a pretty um annual basis because I love the area and since, since the time I went to university there, so it's almost 20 years now, it used to be that I would hear French everywhere -er, I would hear Acadian uh spoken everywhere in Clare all the time but it seems like more and more there have been people have moved into the region of Clare from other areas and they don't speak French and it doesn't look like they're trying to learn to speak French either, so it… it scared me that- like it it seemed that it could be a potential that the- especially that the language would kind of … not be as strong in that area and that would be a super shame.

Gabriel added on to this by saying:

> Clare has always been like now, there's like Tim Horton's and places like that it's almost uniquely all English people working there so it makes it kind of a bit – like sometimes when companies move in so uh and people will generally address you in English first before French because people don't know so uh um things are changing uh especially since the pandemic things are a lot more people are buying houses and moving in from different parts of Canada so yeah it uh definitely is a shifting uh because it's a beautiful area, it's on the ocean, ya know, real estate's fairly reasonable so it makes sense that people would come there to buy a home and then not uh necessarily want to learn French because I mean you don't have to -to live in places like that so it -it ruins the culture a little bit I suppose.

Since the start of the pandemic in Nova Scotia, immigration and inter-province movement has reached new levels. 9,020 new permanent residents immigrated to the

province and around 10,000 moved from other Canadian provinces and territories[1] ("Nova Scotia sets immigration record in 2021," CBC News, Feb 20, 2022). This is also seen in the number of speakers who speak a language other than French or English at home has grown from 1.0% in 1971 to 3.0% in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2017b). In 2021, Nova Scotia had record-breaking immigration statistics. In 2021, a campaign was launched to bring Afghan immigrants and refugees to Acadian communities in Nova Scotia. The campaign – initiated by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada – Welcoming Francophone Communities has 14 Francophone communities across the country, including Clare, committed to accepting refugees. These types of campaigns are important and help the country and provinces to help settle as many refugees as possible. But it does, as Lisa and Gabriel pointed out, change the demographics of Acadian communities. This brings us to the matter of how Acadian identity can be sustained in urban areas where there is an even greater mix of identities and languages at play.

Acadian identity is complex and fluid, just as the political situation it was born out of. Acadian culture, in a larger sense, which includes attending festivals and events, eating or cooking Acadian food in Acadian ways, participating in religious practices, music, art forms, and more can index to the world that someone identifies as Acadian. The most important factor in Acadian identity is not language, nor does it seem one factor in a possible list of hundreds indexes one's identity as Acadian as much as simply saying "*Je suis Acadien(ne)*" does.

Conclusion

The Acadian identity was born from conflict between the English and French. The Acadians' location in the middle of the two, swearing neutrality, led to their eventual deportation from their homeland of *Acadie*. This "collective trauma" as well as cultural aspects have held the Acadians together as a distinct people that continues on even today.

There are different ways people identify as Acadian (ancestry, culture, or both) and neither is more correct or acceptable than another. Identity is fluid and not something that people inherently have, but is something they do, they perform. There are many ways to perform an identity: cooking, festivals, music, and language use.

Acadian French is unique in each area you travel to due to influences from English, Mi'kmaq, and those the Acadians came into contact with during and after returning to Nova Scotia after the deportations. The language is important in some

aspects of *Acadienité*, such as music, poetry, books, radio, and news. Language is a connecting and identifying factor between Acadians in the same and different communities, though Doucet's (1999, 204) argument that language is important to being Acadian but there are other things that make a people rings true in my results. The Acadians in the greater HRM use their language when talking with people from their home Acadian communities but more often than not, use the standard French when conversing with other francophones due to feelings of linguistic insecurity. This linguistic insecurity can manifest when French speakers are learning English, but also when English speakers are learning French. Both scenarios can leave the speakers uncertain and uncomfortable in the other language. Another way, mentioned by a few participants, is the insecurity felt by Acadians who speak a regional dialect when they go to school, rules and norms within the CSAP such as teaching kids that Acadian French varieties are incorrect and bad French, and when speakers interact with Francophones from other areas of the province, county, or world. A potential further problem that this linguistic insecurity can cause is that French may not be passed on to succeeding generations thus the number of overall speakers falls, as can be seen by past Canadian censuses (Statistics Canada 2022). The CSAP was heavily criticized by participants for the de-valuing of the regional, and there was a general call for the celebration of varieties and differences. Celebrating differences and identity will help in the long run as people will feel proud of their language and want to pass it on, despite the language ideologies that English is the best language to know. English may be the language of most of the world today but that does not mean that people have to be unilingual English speakers; bilingualism is highly valued, especially by minority groups that have mother languages other than English.

The Acadian identity, despite its numbers declining in the face of higher immigration statistics and the English majority, is not in danger of disappearing. The varieties of Acadian French may perhaps disappear unless something is done, but not the Acadian identity as a whole will continue to exist in Nova Scotia, the Maritimes, Canada, and the greater world. There are Acadians all over the world who travel to events and festivals, such as the *congrès mondial*, to celebrate who they are, their *Acadienité*. The Acadians are fiercely proud of who they are and where they have come from, the collective trauma, language, and culture that holds their community together have made them into the resilient people they are today.

Notes

1. These numbers are only reported on by CBC News; they do not cite their source so it is not the most reliable, however, I deemed it ok to use since the results of the 2021 Canadian Census pertaining to population and immigration statistics will not be available until October of 2022.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Guiding topic	**Follow up questions**
Tell me about growing up	What is your first language? What language was spoken at home growing up? Where? I.e., Acadian region/community or no? Language in school? What school (board)?

Tell me about what languages you use or used growing up	Any French? If yes: Specific dialect? If no: why not? Do you think language use/knowledge is part of the Acadian identity? Do you believe someone needs to speak French to identify as Acadian?
Tell me about finding out you're Acadian	Is it something you always knew or discovered late in life? What does identifying as Acadian mean? Tell me what you know about the history of the Acadians and how you learned it
What does being Acadian look like for you?	Traditions/practices in everyday life, language use, visiting Acadian regions for festivals, activism, etc. Everyday examples Aka is there any part of your life/things you do that you consider to be distinctly Acadian?
Tell me what it's like living in a non-Acadian area	How do you connect to your identity in a city that is of mixed identities? Is it more difficult to connect? Are there any community groups of Acadians you're a part of or aware of?
What do you think about the English school boards teaching French? What do you think about the CSAP?	Is one better than the other for the Acadian community? How do you view standard French in relation to the Acadian community and Acadian dialects? Which do you think is better for people to be learning? Should kids be learning about Acadian history in school? More or less than they do?
Tell me about interactions with other Acadians you have in the city/not in Acadian areas	How do they differ? The same?
Do you think passing on Acadian history/identity is important?	Why?

Do you think Acadian culture is changing or in danger of disappearing?	What do you think individuals, the Acadian community, the Nova Scotia and/or federal government could do to help?