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Article

Impact of the Charter of Quebec Values on psychological well-being of francophone university students

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Abstract

This paper discusses results from a pilot study conducted in the spring of 2014 among young adults living in Montreal. The main objective of this study was to assess the relation between perception of the Charter of Quebec Values,[1] self-identification, perception of intercommunity relations, perceived discrimination, and psychological well-being in young students enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs of a francophone university in Montreal. A total of 441 students (30.5% male, 69.5% female) took part in a web survey designed by the research team. The data analyses and results suggest that the debate around the Charter of Quebec values was associated with a shift from a predominantly positive perception of intercommunity

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relations to a predominantly negative one, particularly among women, immigrants, and those who self-identified as cultural or religious minorities. In addition, more than 30% of participants reported having experienced some form of ethnic or religious discrimination since the Charter was released (personally or as a witness). This was particularly the case among immigrants, as well as those who self-identified as bicultural or from cultural or religious minority groups. This study's results thus highlight the exacerbation of intercommunity tensions linked to the public debate around identity and intercommunity relations in Quebec.

The Quebec Charter of Values, as it is popularly known, was first proposed in September 2013. It was tabled in the Quebec National Assembly by the government on November 7, 2013 as Bill 60 or a "Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests".[2] Broadly speaking, the Charter proposed to (a) establish guidelines for handling religious accommodation requests, with the primary goals being to promote fairness for all, insist on equality between women and men, and prevent discrimination; (b) prohibit proselytizing in public institutions; and (c) keep religion and the State separate so that no religion could influence political or legal decisions or the workings of public institutions. Wanting its public servants to "embody" the neutrality of the State, the government of Quebec also proposed forbidding them to wear "conspicuous religious symbols."

After the Charter was made public, an intense and often bitter debate raged in Quebec, echoing issues raised at the time of the Bouchard–Taylor Commission in 2007–2008 (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). Several public incidents of aggression towards minorities who were wearing religious symbols were documented in local and national francophone and anglophone media (*Le Devoir*, *The Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *La Presse*, *Le Soleil*) between September 2013, when the media first started to discuss the Charter even before it became official, and April 2014, when the Parti Québecois (PQ) government that promoted the bill lost at the provincial elections. Although the election results could be read as a rejection of the Charter by Quebec voters, the public debate around the Charter between September 2013 and April 2014 represents a symbolic moment in the recent history of the province, raising, yet again, the long-standing and unresolved question of Quebec identity in relation to intercommunity relations, or "living together" (*vivre ensemble*), as it is often expressed locally.

The controversy around the Charter provided a unique opportunity to examine the impact of the increase in intercommunity tensions associated with the socio-political context of the Charter debate on perceptions of "living together" among Montreal youth. The research had to be conducted in a very short time frame because of the difficulty in anticipating the duration and outcome of this type of social crisis. We thus conducted our fieldwork while the social crisis was occurring. The main objective of this study was to assess the relation between perception of the Charter, self-identification, perception of intercommunity relations, perceived discrimination, and psychological wellbeing among young adults in Quebec.

The Quebec context

Quebec has a social, historical, and political context which shapes the issue of "living together" in connection to minority–majority relations, and more particularly the role of religion in the public sphere and the place of racialized minorities and immigrants, in a specific way. As a result of its historical relationship with Canada, Quebec has an acute political and social sensitivity in defining its role and identity, which influences the relationship with racialized minorities and immigrants. Often perceived as contributing positively to a diverse social fabric, immigrants may also be seen as challenging social cohesion and the construction of Quebec's national project centered on White, francophone language and culture (Jamil, 2013). The proportion of immigrants, especially racialized minorities, has increased rapidly in Quebec in recent years, particularly in Montreal, where 33% of the population—and 60% of schoolchildren—are immigrants, and 10% of the population is Muslim (Statistics Canada, 2011, data not comparable to earlier census).[3]

Tensions in the relationship between the Quebec majority and racialized minorities have emerged in public debates in the past, most notably on the issue of reasonable accommodation during the Bouchard–Taylor Commission in 2007–2008. The intense attachment to secularism as part of a modern Quebec society (in reaction to the historical dominance of the Catholic Church) combined with the ongoing struggle to preserve a minority francophone linguistic identity in a majority anglophone North American context, contributes to the perception held by some members of the nationalist Quebec government and the White francophone majority that increasing social diversity and the public expression of religious identity constitute threats to Quebec identity and harmonious living together. While many Quebeckers believed that the Charter would protect them from religious extremism and preserve Quebec identity, others claimed that it would harm minority–majority relations and fuel religious discrimination. Religion has become a divisive issue in social and political relations in a number of countries, indeed in recent years (Pew Research Center, 2007), and some European governments have restricted public expression of religiosity (Baubérot, 2006, 2007; Kilani, 2005, 2006).

Impact of intercommunity tensions on youth

In recent years, research has shown that intercommunity tensions have serious consequences for youth. Previous research in Montreal has underlined the impact of tense majority–minority relations on youth and emphasized the need for inclusive policies (Rousseau, Ferradji, Mekki-Berrada, & Jamil, 2013; Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, Jamil, & Lashley, 2010; Rousseau & Jamil, 2010). First, feelings of marginalization and exclusion associated to the heated social debate around the Charter of Values may affect youth wellbeing. Second, there is a well-established association between discrimination and stress-related physical and psychological disorders (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Sellers & Shelton, 2003).

Pilot studies on the Charter support these hypotheses. In October 2013, El Hage conducted a pilot study on the impact of the Charter of Values on a multiethnic group of students enrolled in a health sciences program in a Montreal college. Six teachers also participated in a focus group on the same theme. The majority of immigrant students (17/24) reported stressful social experiences since the beginning of the Charter debate in September 2013, such as intimidating or derogatory remarks, hostile gazes, and other forms of exclusion or discrimination, which negatively affected their relations with some of their fellow students as well as with people on the street. Both teachers and students were worried about the students' ability to find a practicum (internship) and later a job in a health institution. Teachers anticipated that the Charter might have a negative effect on the academic trajectory and success of some of their students. This study was followed in November 2013 by a qualitative pilot study on the impact of the Charter debate with 62 clinicians in two Montreal regional public health clinics (CSSSs) serving multiethnic clienteles (Johnson-Lafleur et al., 2016). The results suggested an increase in psychological distress among vulnerable clients and also some clinicians. Clinicians reported that first- and second-generation immigrant youth clients expressed doubts about their identity as Quebeckers and their place in the host society, identified more strongly with their ethnic or religious group, and displayed feelings of alienation and anger. The clinicians exhibited a range of reactions: anger, sadness, anxiety, avoidance, and reserved responses. These two pilot studies indicate that the Charter debate had a short-term negative impact and raised concerns that there might be adverse medium- and long-term consequences.

Objective and hypothesis

The main objective of this study was to examine the relation between psychological wellbeing and the public debate around the Charter. Direct and indirect effects of the Charter were represented by five variables: (a) young adults' perceptions of the Charter of Values, (b) self-identification (self-identification and identity as perceived by others), (c) perceived discrimination, (d) perception of intercommunity relations, and (e) perception of the future. Our main hypothesis was that these five dimensions converge to affect the self-reported psychological wellbeing of university students from both majority and minority groups.

Methods

Setting, sample, and procedure

The sample consisted of students enrolled full-time or part-time in undergraduate or graduate programs in Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). UQAM is a francophone public university in Montreal with approximately 44,000 students enrolled. It was created in the 1970s and has a history of strong socialist student activism. UQAM is characterized by a very ethnically diverse student population, mostly of francophone origins. There were no eligibility criteria other than being an UQAM student. Although not representative of the youth in the general population, our sample is representative of francophone university students, who constitute the majority of university students in Quebec. Compared to the general population, students may be more likely to be aware of the Charter of Quebec Values.

The university ethics committee approved the study protocol, and all participants gave their informed consent. Data were collected from February to April 2014 while the heated public debate was going on around the Quebec Charter and widely reported in the local and national media. A total of 441 students (30.5% male, 69.5% female) took part in our survey (see Table 1 for sociodemographic characteristics). Data collection consisted of (a) in class ($n = 253$) participation by students enrolled in the Psychology Department, and (b) on-line participation ($n = 188$) by students from other departments (e.g., departments of religious sciences, education, politics, business and management, etc.). The questionnaire took approximately 20–30 minutes to complete and participants were entered in a drawing of 30 gift certificates worth $20.00 each from the UQAM bookstore. The questionnaire was only available in French, since admission to UQAM implies that students have sufficient mastery of this language.

Measures

Given that this is one of the first quantitative studies addressing the Charter of Quebec Values, the research team designed a questionnaire including several questions from scales already developed and validated in ethnically diverse populations. The questionnaire was pretested among 30 participants and five experts for pre-validation as a result of which some revisions were made. The final questionnaire comprised 34 questions using dichotomous responses (yes/no) or Likert scales ($5 = strongly\ agree$ to $1 = strongly\ disagree$, $0 = do\ not\ know/does\ not\ apply$). The questions were designed to provide six measures: (a) *Perception of the Charter* assessed the level of knowledge and perception of the Charter in relation to issues such as secularism, gender relations, and equity (e.g., "The Charter is associated with the principle of separation of state and religion"); (b) *Identity* assessed changes participants attribute to the Charter in their displayed identity, their sense of belonging, and the identity projected onto them (e.g., "Since the Charter, do you feel you are perceived differently because of your ethnic or

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants (N = 441)

Characteristic	n	Women (%)	n	Men (%)	n	Total (%)
Gender	303	69.5	133	30.5	436	100.0
Status in Canada						
Citizen	279	64.3	120	27.6	399	91.9
Other	22	5.1	13	3.0	35	8.1
Cultural group						
Quebecker-Canadian	205	49.0	83	19.9	288	68.9
Quebecker-other	35	8.4	8	1.9	43	10.3
Cultural minority	34	8.1	23	5.5	57	13.6
None	16	3.8	14	3.3	30	7.2
Religious-spiritual group						
Catholic/Christian	81	19.2	21	5.0	102	24.2
Agnostic/atheist	178	42.2	88	20.8	266	63.0
Religious minority	36	8.5	18	4.3	54	12.8
Country of origin						
Canada	256	59.1	103	23.8	359	82.9
Other	45	10.4	29	6.7	74	17.1
Middle East[1]	12	16.7	7	9.7	19	26.4
Latin/South America & Carribean[1]	9	12.5	6	8.3	15	20.8
Africa[1]	2	2.8	2	2.8	4	5.6
Asia[1]	8	11.1	0	0.0	8	11.1
Europe[1]	12	16.7	13	18.1	25	34.7
Oceania[1]	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	1.4

Note. [1]Results are given as percentages of the subsample, n = 74.

religious background?"); (c) *Relationship between communities* assessed participants' perception of the impact of the Charter on the relationship between communities (e.g. "The Charter will generate more support among communities"); (d) *Discrimination* was assessed with a scale adapted from the discrimination scale developed by Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, and Rummens (1999) and comprised two subscales, one which documented discriminatory events experienced since the release of the Charter (e.g., "Since the Charter do you feel that you have been treated unfairly?") while the other documented the emotional and behavioral responses of participants who reported at least one experience of discrimination (this scale has been used to measure changes in perception in discrimination related to events such as the 9/11 New York tragedy [Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, & Thombs, 2011]); (e) *Perception of subjective wellbeing*: this short scale

measured positive or negative subjective states linked to the Charter (e.g., "Since the Charter, do you feel more confident?"); and (f) *Vision of the future*: three questions assessed current and future vision of the relationship between communities in Quebec (e.g., "Since the Charter, what is your vision of the future of intercommunity relations in Quebec?"). Finally, sociodemographic characteristics measured included gender, age, birthplace, migration status, ethnicity, and religious group identification.

Data analysis

Data were collected with online survey software housed at UQAM, which guaranteed absolute confidentiality and anonymity of results as well as an automatic data entry and verification process. The data were analysed using SPSS Version 21 for Windows. Internal reliability of the scales was assessed with a Cronbach's alpha and ranged between $\alpha = .69$ and .938 (self-identification, $\alpha = .69$; identity as perceived by others, $\alpha = .78$; perception of intercommunity relations, $\alpha = .87$; discrimination, $\alpha = .86$; and psychological wellbeing, $\alpha = .94$). One-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and independent samples t tests were performed to evaluate between-groups differences on the sociodemographic variables listed in Table 1. These variables were used as grouping variables to assess differences in identity as perceived by others, perception of intercommunity relations, and discrimination scores. The normality of the distribution was assessed by the skewness of the values. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to inspect the effect of outliers and nonnormality if required. In the event that equal variances between groups could not be assumed, as assessed by Levene's Test of Homogeneity of variances, a t test with Welch-Satterthwaite correction to the degree of freedom or Welch's ANOVA was used. In case of violation of parametric assumptions with an appreciable effect, equivalent nonparametric analysis was used (Mann–Whitney U-test, Kruskal–Wallis ANOVA). From the outcome a two-tailed p-value was obtained and the threshold of significance was considered at .05. Results are reported as asymptomatic p-values. Effect size was calculated using r-squared, Cohen's d or omega-squared when appropriate. Post hoc analyses were done using the Tamhane's T2 conservative pairwise comparison test for unequal variances and sample sizes, with a significance level set at $p = .05$, or Dunn's procedure for pairwise comparison with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons and adjusted p-values, when appropriate. Finally, multiple regression was used to examine the impact on psychological wellbeing of sociodemographic variables, cultural and religious identification, perceptions of discrimination, relations between communities, and vision of the future.

Results

The results presented in Table 2 show significant differences across cultural and religious groups.

Perception of the Charter

Participants' perception of the Charter was heterogeneous with 39.5% of participants in favor of the Charter, 49.7% opposed to it, and 10.9% neutral or undecided. This is quite similar to a Léger poll conducted in January 2014 in the general population which found that in the 18–24 years age group, 33% were in favor of and 44% opposed to the Charter. If the Charter were to be adopted, 19.4% of the

Table 2. Comparative analyses by sociodemographic characteristics.

Sociodemographic variables	Identity as perceived by other		Intercommunity relations		Perceived discrimination	
	n	Result[1]	n	Result[1]	n	Result[1]
Gender		$t(178.75)$ $= 1.505$		$t(220.28)$ $= 3.22^{***}$		$U = 20\,030.00,$ $z = 0.78$
Men	98	2.80 (0.94)	126	9.82 (2.55)^a	131	Mdn 6.00
Women	214	2.63 (0.88)	273	8.96 (2.28)^a	295	Mdn 6.00
Country of birth		$t(55.29)$ $= -1.69$		$t(394)$ $= 2.23^*$		$U = 16\,580.00,$ $z = 5.67^{***}$
Canadian	265	2.64 (0.89)	329	9.36 (2.40)^a	352	Mdn 6.00^a
Immigrant	44	2.91 (0.98)	67	8.64 (2.31)^a	71	Mdn 7.00^a
Position toward Charter		$\chi^2 (2) = 0.45$		$F(2, 102.57)$ $= 119.10^{***}$		$\chi^2 (2)$ $= 15.48^{***}$
In favor	134	MR 150.25	156	10.97 (2.47)^a	165	MR 188.63^a
In disfavor	138	MR 156.37	196	7.78 (1.12)^a	211	MR 226.16^a
Neutral	34	MR 154.65	44	9.66 (2.15)^a	44	MR 217.40
Cultural identification		$\chi^2 (3)$ $= 12.32^{**}$		$\chi^2 (3)$ $= 9.98^*$		$\chi^2 (3)$ $= 51.19^{***}$
Quebecker-Canadian	211	MR 143.05^a	264	MR 203.77^a	286	MR 187.07^{a,b}
Bicultural identity	29	MR 165.71	41	MR 167.56	40	MR 266.46^{a,c}
Cultural minority	41	MR 185.26^a	52	MR 160.23^a	56	MR 259.57^{b,d}
None	21	MR 150.83	27	MR 182.35	28	MR 198.48^{c,d}
Religious identification		$F(2, 89.73)$ $= 8.98^{***}$		$\chi^2 (2)$ $= 13.27^{**}$		$\chi^2 (2)$ $= 44.83^{***}$
Catholic/Christian	69	2.71 (0.92)^a	97	Mdn 8	99	MR 214.62^a
Agnostic/atheist	195	2.52 (0.83)^b	246	Mdn 9^a	263	MR 190.06^b
Religious minority	41	3.20 (0.95)^{a,b}	49	Mdn 7^a	52	MR 282.14^{a,b}

Note. Mdn: median; MR: mean rank. Superscript letters refer to post hoc results: group results sharing a common superscript on a scale differ significantly from each other at $\alpha = .05$ level.
[1]Result is given as mean $\pm$ standard deviation unless otherwise stated.
$^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

sample would have considered leaving Quebec. Post hoc analyses using adjusted standardized residuals showed that Quebecker-Canadians and agnostic-atheists were more likely to be in favor of the Charter while members of a cultural or religious minority group were more likely to not favor the Charter.

Perception of intercommunity relations

According to respondents' retrospective appraisal (see Table 2), perceptions of the future of intercommunity relations drastically shifted with 51.7% of participants foreseeing a negative future of intercommunity relations after the debate on the Charter, while only 20.3% anticipated a positive future. This was the case particularly among women, immigrants, participants opposed to the Charter, or those who self-identified as a member of a cultural or religious minority group.

Self-identification

One-way ANOVA, Welch's $F(2, 132.155) = 10.548$, $p < .0005$, $\omega^2 = 0.04$, and Tamhane's T2 post hoc analysis revealed that the group opposed to the Charter and participants who self-identified as bicultural or as a cultural minority group had significantly higher self-awareness mean scores as compared to the group in favor of the Charter and those who self-identified as Quebecker/Canadian or of no cultural identification (see Table 2). Additionally, participants who reported belonging to a religious minority group reported higher self-awareness as compared to the Catholic/Christian group and the agnostic/atheist group.

Identity as perceived by others

This scale measured whether participants felt they were perceived differently since the release of the Charter. Pairwise tests revealed that compared to Quebecker/Canadian or Catholic/Christian, or agnostic/atheist groups, participants from cultural minority groups and those from religious minority groups were more likely to feel that they were perceived differently since the Charter.

Discrimination

Perceived discrimination scores were higher than expected. Specifically, 31.6% of our sample reported having personally experienced (or witnessed) an act of ethnic or religious discrimination since the release of the Charter, and 16.7% chose not to answer. As expected, more immigrants reported discrimination as compared to native-born Canadians ($U = 16\ 580.000$, $z = 5.674$, $p < .0005$). Participants in favor of the Charter reported less discrimination compared to those who were opposed (see Table 2). Discrimination scores were higher for participants classified as bicultural (mean rank $= 266.46$, $p < .0005$), from cultural minority groups (mean rank $= 259.57$, $p < .0005$), or from a religious minority group (mean rank $= 282.14$,

Table 3. Summary of multiple regression analysis on psychological well-being

Predictor	B	95% CI
Intercept (constant)	29.220***	[21.32, 37.12]
Charter's consequences	1.033***	[0.70, 1.37]
Position toward Charter		
In favor	0.718	[−1.71, 3.15]
In disfavor	−2.617*	[−4.96, −0.27]
Change in perception of groups	−1.440**	[−2.48, −0.40]
Discrimination	−0.293*	[−0.56, −0.03]

Note. $N = 215$. CI = confidence interval.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

$p < .0005$), as compared to the Quebecker/Canadian group (mean rank $= 187.07$), the Catholic/Christian group (mean rank $= 214.62$), or the atheist/agnostic group (mean rank $= 190.06$). There were no significant differences between the Catholic/Christian group and the agnostic/atheist group.

Psychological well-being

A multiple linear regression model examined the effect of perceptions of the Charter, intercommunity relations, discrimination, and self-identification on psychological wellbeing (Table 3). The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, outliers, and normality of residuals were met and the model was significant, $F(16, 198) = 13.228$, $p < .0005$, adj. $R^2 = .478$. Being opposed to the Charter, perceiving more negative consequences of the Charter on community relations, expressing a change in perception of ethnic or religious groups, and higher levels of perceived discrimination all independently predicted poorer psychological wellbeing (see Table 3).

Discussion

The goal of this study was to examine the impact of the public debate around the Charter of Quebec Values on the perception of community relations and the well-being of francophone minority and majority university students in Quebec. This is a topical issue in the sociopolitical context of Quebec because of the heated debates about whether the proposed Charter generated increased solidarity around a common identity or undermined social harmony. While the Charter's explicit intention was to put secularism and equality of gender rights at the center of the public and political debate, our results suggest that it had some negative consequences for university students and significantly affected their wellbeing. Most notably, the Charter was associated with a shift from a predominantly positive perception of intercommunity relations to a predominantly negative one, particularly

among women, immigrants, and those who self-identified as cultural or religious minorities. Our results also show that more than one third of the sample reported having experienced personally or witnessed some form of ethnic or religious discrimination since the Charter was released. This was particularly the case among immigrants, as well as those who self-identified as bicultural or as from cultural or religious minority groups. It was not possible to determine from our data the degree to which discrimination actually increased during the Charter debate, but the high perception of discrimination corroborates earlier research findings on the weakened feelings of belonging expressed by minority students. The multiple regression model confirmed the negative impact of the shift in perception of inter-community relations and associated discrimination on the reported psychological wellbeing of the students. In line with previous research, our results thus show that negative portrayals of externally attributed collective identities (e.g., Arab or Muslim, Sikh or Jew) provoke the internalization of these negative perceptions, and may jeopardize the targeted ethnic and religious minorities' sense of belonging in society (Rousseau et al., 2011; Sarroub, 2005).

Our results may reflect the fact that any social event that sparks passionate debate and receives intense media coverage tends to elicit a focused, heightened emotional response (Whalen, Henker, King, Jamner, & Levine, 2004). Given that the proposed Charter was dropped when the Parti Québécois (PQ) government was defeated in 2014, the negative effects we observed may have subsided. However, the underlying debate is still alive. Although it reflects Quebec's historical, social, and political specificities, this debate can also be seen as a local manifestation of a wider social context of intercommunity tensions associated with globalization, the perceived threats of religious fundamentalism, and the international "securitization" of migration (Agamben, 2014; Bigo, 2005; Huysmans, 2006) across North America and in many European countries. Studies suggest that there have been rapid changes in societal perceptions of safety and intergroup tensions, fueling profiling and negative stereotyping of some communities based on religious, ethnic, and racial differences (Ibish, Carol, Kareem, Marvin, & Balajia, 2001; Information Center About Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the UK [ICAR], 2004; Mekki-Berrada et al., 2013; Pew Research Center, 2007; Rippy & Newman, 2006; Rousseau et al., 2011). For Muslims, in particular, discrimination linked to religious identity intersects with ethnicity and migratory status, as social attitudes have become negatively polarized in the aftermath of 9/11. Previous studies, in Quebec and internationally, have highlighted the impact of tense majority–minority relations on youth and emphasized the need for inclusive policies (Hassan, Moreau, Rousseau, & Jamil, 2010; Rousseau et al., 2013; Rousseau & Jamil, 2010). Our study results thus bring to the fore what can be described as the "ordinary" violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004) that members of minority groups face on a daily basis. Ordinary violence is generally aimed at a "sacrificial category" (Kilani, 2006, 2009)—previously Blacks or Jews and now Muslims—that becomes so through the construction of the migrant as a "threatening, negatively stereotyped foreigner" ("*un étranger menaçant et pourvu de topiques*

négatifs"; Crettiez, 2006, p. 208). While the vandalism of the Saguenay mosque in August 2013 appears to have been an isolated incident, the October 2 and 3, 2013 editions of newspapers in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada (*Le Devoir*, *The Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *La Presse*, *Le Soleil*) reported that dozens of cases of harassment of Muslim women (with and without head scarves) had occurred in the preceding month. The Montreal daily *La Presse* (December 21, 2013) also reported that a young woman wearing a headscarf was threatened by a man with a gun. By portraying religious symbols as threats to "living together," the media discourse around the secularization advocated under the Charter contributed—along with the tense postwar on terrorism national and international sociopolitical climate—to flare-ups of discrimination and ethnicization directed, mostly but not only, against migrant Muslim women perceived as threats to the construction of the nation. This is how ordinary violence insinuates itself into the very midst of normal life, taking a variety of subtle forms. Our results show that these forms of violence have a negative and significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of youth.

Conclusion

The results of this study must be interpreted in light of its methodological limitations. The sample was predominantly composed of White, self-identified Canadian/ Quebecois youth enrolled at a francophone university in the Faculty of Human Sciences. The sample is thus not representative of the general youth population and results must not be generalized. Despite these limitations, the study reveals that the issue of Quebec national identity is highly sensitive and underlies significant intercommunity tensions. This might have been partially due to the dominant role of the media in presenting the Charter and the debates around it in a polarized manner, conveying a political and social construction of certain religious and cultural minorities as threats to Quebec identity, security, and democracy, and thus reinforcing divisions in perceptions of "us" and "them." Our results support numerous studies that have shown the detrimental effects of discrimination, conflicted intercommunity relations, and the increasing tensions around religious and ethnic identity in a globalized world for youth mental health and social adjustment in immigrant receiving countries. The province of Quebec is no exception and, clearly, building a foundation for living together in harmony from which both immigrants and the host society would benefit still represents a major challenge for present-day Quebec.

Notes

1. Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse de l'État ainsi que d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et encadrant les demandes d'accommodement, Projet de loi no 60, 1ère session, 40ème législature, Assemblée nationale (2013; présenté par Bernard Drainville). Retrieved from http://www.institutions-democratiques.gouv.qc.ca/laicite-identite/charte-valeurs.htm
2. "Quebec Charter of Values" and "Bill 60" are two labels referring to the same document, which we refer to as "the Charter" in the remainder of this manuscript. http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-60-40-1.html
3. Statistique Canada (2010). *Projections de la diversité de la population canadienne 2006 à 2031*. Publication autorisée par le ministre responsable de Statistique Canada © Ministre de l'Industrie. Division de la démographie. No 91-551-X au catalogue.

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