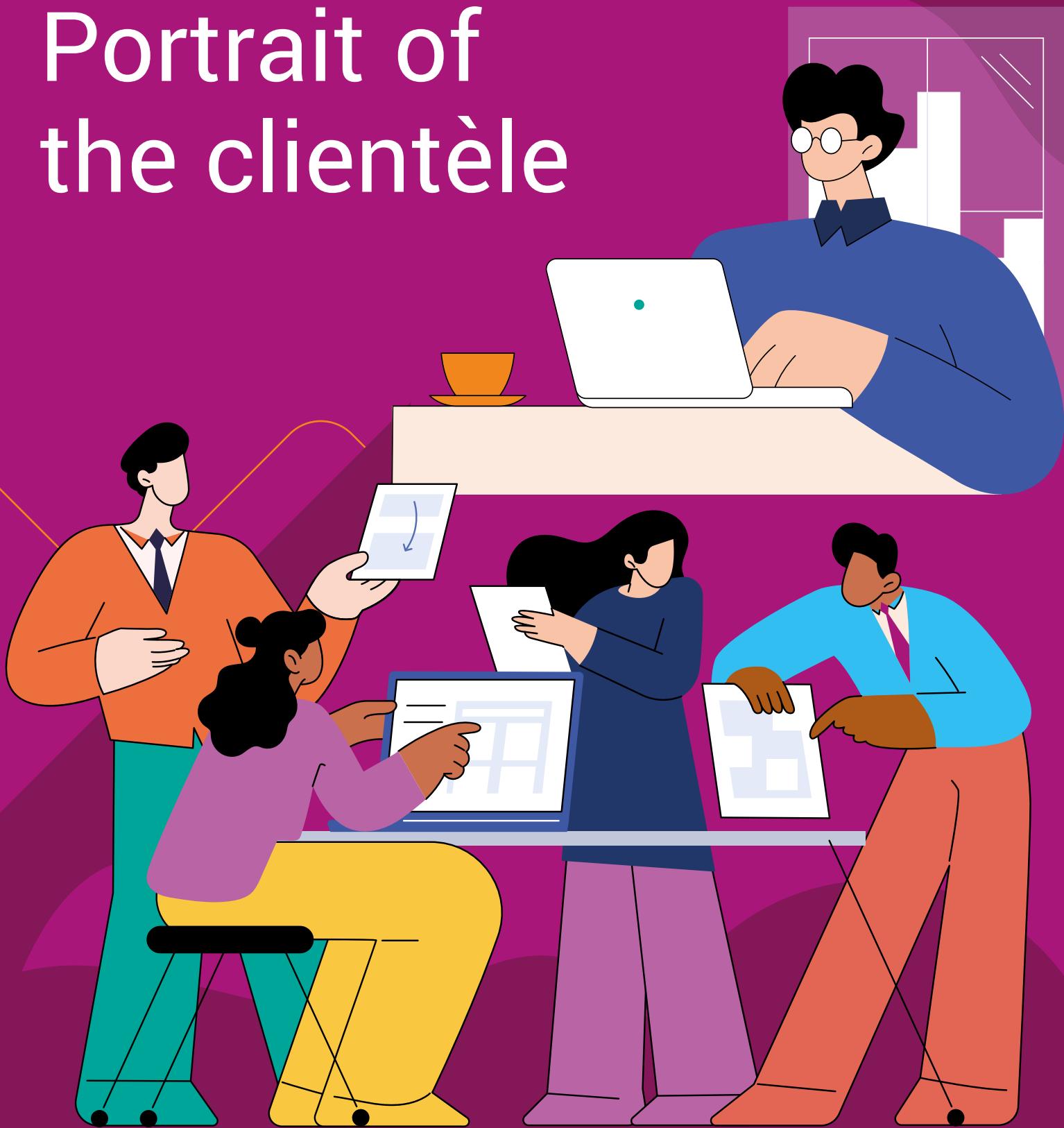


# Portrait of the clientèle



# About the Authors and Collaborators

## The Advisory Committee for English-speaking Quebecers (ACESQ)

The ACESQ was founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May of 2021 by the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* (CPMT) to promote the employability interests of English-speaking Quebecers (ESQs) and develop solutions to improve their integration in the labour market.



The ACESQ is made up of representatives from partner organizations that serve the clientele, each with specific expertise on the issues faced by Québec's English-speaking communities.

The Portrait of the clientele was produced as part of the ACESQ's mandate as set out by the CPMT.

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**Québec** The logo for the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail. It features the word 'Québec' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. To the right of 'Québec', there is a graphic element consisting of four blue squares arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each square contains a white fleur-de-lis symbol.

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# Executive Summary

Developed as part of the mandate of the Advisory Committee for English-speaking Quebecers, the *Portrait of the clientele* uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide an up-to-date portrait of the unique employment challenges and opportunities facing Québec's English-speaking population.

The *Portrait of the clientele* is intended to measure the economic health of English-speaking Quebecers, rather than to propose solutions to the multiple vulnerabilities it faces.

Using data from the 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 Canadian censuses, the report presents a longitudinal study of key demographic and labour force statistics among ESQs. This statistical analysis is complemented by a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with 30 ESQs across the province. The qualitative analysis is intended to complement the statistical data presented in the study and to provide insight into some of the issues underlying the numbers.

By placing the quantitative and qualitative data in dialogue with one another, the report aims to highlight the diversity of Québec's English-speaking population, as well as the range of experiences and barriers that community members encounter in the labour market.

Finally, the report provides a summary of the services currently available to help ESQs navigate the Québec labour market, including employment counseling and training opportunities.

This report represents an important contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the employment issues experienced by the ESQ population, and will enable the ACESQ, the *Commission des partenaires du marché du travail* (CPMT) and the *Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale* (MESS) to develop solutions that will empower ESQs to access the job market.

# Key findings:

## 01

Since 2006, the proportion of English-speaking Quebecers (ESQs) has been increasing relative to French-speaking Quebecers (FSQs). In 2021, ESQs represented 14.9% of Québec's total population, compared with 13.4% in 2006.

## 02

Since 2011, ESQs have been over-represented in terms of labour force participation rates. Of the 4,435,465 Quebecers in the labour force in 2021, 699,015 were English speakers, among which 92,048 were 15 to 24 years old, 318,695 were 25 to 44 years old and 254,328 were 45 to 64 years old.

## 03

The unemployment rate among ESQs increased from 8.9% in 2016 to 10.9% in the 2021 census. The unemployment rate among FSQs remained stable at 6.9% during the same period.

## 04

The sudden surge in unemployment between 2016 and 2021 can be partly attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, ESQs are more heavily concentrated in sectors particularly affected by job losses due to the pandemic, such as accommodation, food services and wholesale trade. In 2021, 36.4% of English-speaking workers were employed in sectors that experienced a drop in the workforce, compared with 33.1% of FSQ workers.

## 05

From 2006 to 2021, the median after-tax income increased more for FSQs than for ESQs in Québec as a whole. In 2021, ESQs earned 8% less than FSQs. The only regions where ESQs earned more than FSQs are Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and Chaudière-Appalaches.

## 06

The longitudinal analysis of censuses from 2006 to 2021 shows that people with knowledge of both French and English earn a higher median income than those who are unilingual in either language. The analysis also showed that people who know only English have the lowest median income compared to those who speak only French or are bilingual in both languages.

Moreover, French language skills, including knowledge of workplace vocabulary and confidence in the language, were the main obstacles to employment cited by participants in the qualitative interviews. This was also true of participants who had some French-language skills. Consequently, many said they felt limited in their employment opportunities since they could only work in English.

## 07

Despite their growing unemployment rate, census data shows that ESQs have higher levels of education compared to their FSQ counterparts. However, data collected from qualitative interviews indicates that ESQs are not developing the language skills needed to join the workforce of Québec's French-speaking population, even among those with high levels of education and those who have lived in Québec all their lives.

## 08

Many participants in the qualitative interviews said they had experienced linguicism, or discrimination based on language or accent, in the labour market. This led many of these participants to seek positions within English-speaking companies or organizations.

## 09

The proportion of full-time workers has decreased among both ESQs and FSQs, with a more noticeable decline among ESQs. By 2021, 50.3% of English-speaking workers were working full-time, compared with 53% in 2006. Conversely, 53.3% of FSQ were working full-time in 2021.

## 10

Of the 30 participants interviewed, 8 were currently working or have very recently been working in precarious jobs such as part-time, seasonal, or on-call jobs, due to the lack of other opportunities to work in English.

## 11

There are major disparities between the different regions of Québec, particularly between rural and urban areas. Regions such as Côte-Nord and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine have a declining English-speaking population, which may be due to high unemployment rates in these areas. In contrast, regions like Montréal and the Outaouais have significant ESQ populations and slightly lower unemployment rates than the rest of the province.

These regional disparities were reflected in the qualitative interviews. Participants living in rural areas indicated that there were fewer job opportunities in general, and even fewer opportunities to work in English. Moreover, these participants indicated that there were few services available to help them learn French.

## 12

Those who took part in the qualitative interviews overwhelmingly affirmed that the best way to learn French is through immersion. Indeed, those who identified themselves as bilingual said it was thanks to having been in an immersive environment at some point in their lives.

## 13

Participants in the qualitative interviews were extremely positive about French language training opportunities in the workplace. Those who were still learning French felt that they could become fluent in the language by working in a French-speaking workplace, while participants who had worked in French said that their French had improved considerably, enabling them to become fluent and to seek other positions in the language.

# Introduction

This report aims to provide an up-to-date profile of the position of English speakers on Québec's labour market. ESQs have long experienced employment-related challenges.<sup>1</sup> In May 2021, the CPMT authorized the founding of the ACESQ to promote the employability interests of ESQs and to develop solutions to improve their labour market integration. Indeed, the creation of the ACESQ recognizes the unique challenges that English speakers face on the labour market. Following its inception, the ACESQ developed this *Portrait of the clientele* in order to better understand the characteristics of the ESQs and the current employment situation of this population.

The ACESQ defines its clientele as those residing in Québec who consider English (between French and English) as their first language spoken, regardless of ethnic origin or first language learned. This definition of clientele reflects and celebrates the diversity of Québec's English-speaking community, and accurately represents the people who need services such as francization or English-language employment support. Finally, this definition enables the ACESQ to represent the employability interests of Quebecers who self-identify as being part of the English-speaking community.

This *Portrait of the clientele* provides a holistic overview of the employment experiences of Québec's English speakers through a combination of census data analysis as well as qualitative interviews with 30 members of the English-speaking community. By placing qualitative research in dialogue with quantitative data, this report gives readers access to the people behind the numbers, providing them with insight into the lived experiences and employment challenges faced by Québec's English-speaking population given the current labour shortage.<sup>2</sup>

The report first provides a statistical portrait of employment realities among English-speaking Quebecers. The ACESQ mandated AppEco, an economic consultancy group, to develop this labour market profile for English speakers using data collected by Statistics Canada as part of the 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 censuses. By analyzing data from the last four censuses, this report provides a longitudinal analysis of employment statistics for English speakers, giving readers an overview of how English-speaking Quebecers have interacted with the labour market over time.

In addition to the chapter featuring quantitative analyses, the report includes a chapter that focuses on a thematic analysis of the data collected over the course of the 30 interviews with members of the English-speaking community across Québec. The qualitative research presented in this section of the report aims to complete the data presented in the statistical analysis and can illuminate some of the issues that underlie the numbers outlined in this report. Moreover, this section will discuss important commonalities in the experiences of the participants interviewed for the *Portrait of the clientele*. By including both

1 Canadian Heritage (2011). *A Portrait of the English-speaking Communities in Québec*, (June), p. 3, [Online]. [https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/communaction/sites/default/files/attachments/CANHER\\_June2011\\_eng.pdf](https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/communaction/sites/default/files/attachments/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf)

2 This technique has been used by researchers from minority language communities based internationally. For example, in their report on *The Position on the Welsh Language 2016-20*, the Welsh Language Commissioner highlighted the importance of including the voices of Welsh speakers alongside quantitative analysis, writing:

Our aim in introducing you to these individuals [is] to encourage you (and us with you) to view the Welsh language through the lens of geographies, identities and situations beyond our own. We also present them to you in an attempt to go beyond the statistics. After all, it is people who speak a language: each one of the million speakers accounted for will be individuals and we are interested in their individual experiences, as well as the collective experience.

quantitative and qualitative research, the *Portrait of the clientele* effectively demonstrates the individual and collective experiences of English-speaking Quebecers. This section also serves to demonstrate that while the ACESQ serves Québec's English-speaking community, it is important to recognize that there are countless communities within this community, each with its unique set of circumstances and challenges.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will be followed with a brief discussion on how the qualitative and quantitative research presented in the preceding chapters complete each other and what they reveal once placed in conversation with each other.

The report finishes with a literature review on the issues and policies regarding employment among English-speaking Quebecers. This chapter gives an overview of prior research on the employment difficulties experienced by English speakers as well as services available to this population to help them integrate into the labour market.

Additionally, to highlight the individual experiences of participants and demonstrate the diversity of the English-speaking community, the report will feature a selection of case studies throughout. These case studies are based on stories that participants shared with the Committee's Research Coordinator during the interview process. Though the participants featured in these case studies come from diverse backgrounds and employment experiences, they are each counted as English speakers under the ACESQ's definition of the clientele. Moreover, the diversity displayed in the case studies provides a portrait of the array of supports that members of the English-speaking community need to enter and remain in Québec's labour market.

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian Heritage (2011). *A Portrait of the English-speaking Communities in Québec*, (June), p. 3 [Online] [https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/communaction/sites/default/files/attachments/CANHER\\_June2011\\_eng.pdf](https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/communaction/sites/default/files/attachments/CANHER_June2011_eng.pdf)

# Case Studies

## ***Note about case studies:***

The case studies presented in this report are based on the stories participants shared with the researcher during qualitative research interviews. All participants featured in the case studies are counted as English speakers under the ACESQ's definition of the clientele. Though these participants experience multiple obstacles to employment, these case studies focus on the specific barriers associated with being an English speaker on the labour market. Therefore, each of these participants needs access to services aimed towards the English-speaking community as a whole.

To preserve the anonymity of the participants, all names and, in some cases, characteristics such as place of residence and place of birth, have been changed. Quotes have been edited for clarity and length

Case Study 1

# Access to Francization Programmes



<b>Name</b>	Tegan
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Non-binary
<b>Origin</b>	United States
<b>Region</b>	Montréal



Tegan is non-binary and moved to Montréal four years ago from the United States with their husband, a French-speaking Quebecer. While Tegan knew some French from high school classes in the United States, they did not have the knowledge of French necessary to work in the language when they immigrated. While they were able to find employment in an English-speaking organization relatively quickly, the pay did not match that of other enterprises in Québec, where work is conducted primarily in French. Tegan acknowledges that “truthfully, if I want to be competitive for any job in Québec, I need to be bilingual.”

When I picked up the phone and the person on the other end was speaking French, I'd rush to my husband so he could translate for me.

Tegan says that they knew their lack of French skills would be a challenge before moving, and they were committed to improving their French. When they arrived in Québec, they signed up for provincially-funded French classes aimed at newcomers from other Canadian provinces and countries. However, they found it more difficult than expected to enrol in the program.

When Tegan went to sign up for classes online, they found that the website to sign up for French classes was offered only in French. As a result, they accidentally signed up for a full-time course, rather than a part-time course suitable for those working regular full-time hours. They only realized their error during a placement test conducted via a telephone call. Moreover, they found the placement test itself to be a very off-putting experience. As a newly arrived immigrant, Tegan says: "I had been getting a lot of phone calls to set up things like my health card or my bank account. When I picked up the phone and the person on the other end was speaking French, I'd rush to my husband so he could translate for me."

Tegan says they were not warned in advance that they would have to complete a placement test over the phone, so when they received the call, they immediately handed the phone to their husband since the person on the other end was speaking in French. Once Tegan's husband started speaking on the phone, the man on the phone "got angry and started yelling at us. Eventually, we figured out that the man was calling to do the placement test for the francisation class I had signed up for and he was angry because he thought my husband was helping me with the test." This entire conversation took place in French, which meant it would have been impossible for Tegan to figure out what was happening on the phone call without help from their husband. They added that "I can't even imagine what it would be like if you didn't have a French speaker that lived with you to help you with those phone calls. If I didn't have a French speaker on hand, how would I have done anything?"

Moreover, Tegan found that even once they were enrolled in the correct program, the French classes were not very helpful, especially for someone who aspires to work in French one day. They explained that the classes were "geared mostly towards customer service and clerical positions. So, they taught us how to answer the phone and give directions; things that would help you get by if someone approaches you on the street or working in retail. But it's not very in-depth."

**Truthfully, if I want to be competitive for any job in Québec, I need to be bilingual.**

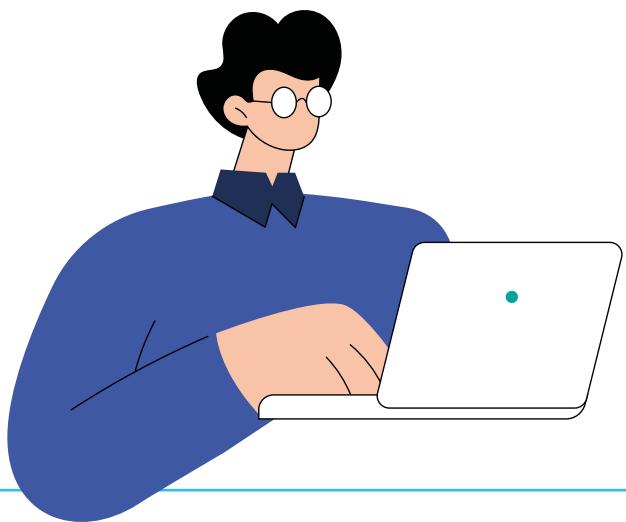
While they have been looking into French programs at an English-speaking university's continuing education program, Tegan says they would need their employer to pay for these courses as they are prohibitively expensive. Moreover, Tegan says that at the moment they live in an English-speaking bubble. They are still committed to learning French, but they say that "I felt a lot more motivated to learn French before I moved to Québec. I felt like French would be a lot easier to learn because I thought the language would be more integrated into our lives."

Case Study 2

# Confidence Using French in a Professional Environment



<b>Name</b>	Dan
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Origin</b>	Ontario
<b>Region</b>	Montréal



Dan, a software developer, recently moved to Montréal to assist his company in setting up an office in Québec. Though Dan is from Ontario, he previously lived in Québec while studying at an English-language university. He grew up in a bilingual area of Ontario and even went to a French-language elementary school growing up. Despite his high level of bilingualism, Dan left Québec after graduating from university because he felt that as an English speaker, there were more opportunities for work outside Québec. He says that “it’s harder to find work in Québec than in Ontario. I don’t think I would be able to get a job at a primarily French-speaking organization.”

**It’s harder to find work in Québec than in Ontario. I don’t think I would be able to get a job at a primarily French-speaking organization.**

Instead, Dan was hired for a position with the federal government in Ontario, where he worked in a bilingual environment within a majority-Francophone team. He enjoyed working in French and was confident conversing with his colleagues. However, he still does not think he would be able to work in a similarly French-speaking environment in Québec. He explains that “I think the meaning of bilingualism in a professional setting is different in Québec. In Québec, the standard is that you speak primarily French and English is a bonus, and in Ontario, it’s usually primarily English and knowledge of French is a plus.”

Dan left the federal government to work for a tech company based in Toronto. Though he enjoyed Toronto, he was happy that his company gave him the opportunity to move back to Québec, where he still has friends from university. Due to the highly technical nature of his position, Dan feels confident that he would be able to stay in Montréal long-term given the current demand for tech workers. Moreover, he explains that “with professions that are highly technical or scientific, the common language is English. It doesn’t matter where you are or where you’re from, you’re going to be speaking some English as the common way to define technical subjects.”

That being said, Dan believes that his options to work in Québec would be limited to positions at English-speaking companies based in Montréal. As Dan explains: “Most of the big tech companies and startups are based in Montreal. I’m sure there are tech companies based in Québec City, but I imagine that those companies would operate primarily in French.” Despite his skills, previous experience working in a French-speaking environment, and English being the dominant language in the tech industry, Dan is adamant that French-speaking companies “wouldn’t even interview me.”

**It doesn’t matter where you are or where you’re from, you’re going to be speaking some English as the common way to define technical subjects.**

## Case Study 3

# Education, Confidence Using French, and Outmigration



<b>Name</b>	Rachel
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Montérégie
<b>Region</b>	Montérégie



Rachel was born and raised in Montérégie. She has a French-speaking mother and an English-speaking father, but her dominant language is English. Her parents are separated, and she explains that “I’d speak English at my dad’s, but at my mom’s house we would speak mostly Franglish, so half in English, half in French. I learned a lot of French from speaking with my mom. So, I do have knowledge of French, it’s just that I’d speak English at school and with my friends, so English stuck as my primary language.”

I did work in French while in retail. In that situation, I can speak French. But I’m shy to do it, I feel embarrassed and I think I have a really strong accent when I speak.

When she was young, her parents decided to enrol her in the English-language school board. She says that at the time, her parents figured “ ‘we’re going to be speaking French in the house, so we’ll send Rachel to an English-medium school so her future children will also be eligible for English-language education.’ ”

Though Rachel says she had an advantage over other English-speaking students in her French immersion program, she feels that the language education that she received in school was limited. "I was pretty advanced compared to my classmates in French immersion, but in comparison to my stepbrothers who went to French-speaking school, my French was at a lower level. I felt like I was just learning the same verb tenses for years."

This experience also left her unprepared to use French professionally. "Socially, I can have a great conversation in French. But anything to do with business or politics, where French is a bit more formal, I don't have the vocabulary to carry out a meaningful conversation." After leaving university, Rachel found it difficult to find a position that matched her skillset and worked in a retail job for several years before finding her current role. During this time, Rachel did not feel comfortable applying for job opportunities in French, even though she frequently used French in her retail position. "I did work in French while in retail. In that situation, I can speak French. But I'm shy to do it, I feel embarrassed and I think I have a really strong accent when I speak." She also admits that "I know enough French to pass an interview. I'm probably not giving myself credit about how much French I know and how much I can speak."

In addition to the difficulties she experiences with her self-confidence in speaking French, Rachel has also struggled to reconcile people's expectations of her in a professional setting. Because she has a French last name, she says that in professional settings "every time I speak, someone usually mentions 'Oh, your French is not as good as we thought it would be. Or, we figured you would have more knowledge of the French language and less of an accent.'" This increased judgement has made Rachel even more reluctant to speak French in a workplace setting.

Rachel has always lived in Québec, but she is strongly considering leaving. She has a partner based in another province and she believes that she'll have more job opportunities outside of Québec, especially as someone who knows French. As she explains, moving away "might increase my chances of getting maybe even a higher-paying job since I can speak French and English."

## Chapter 1:

# The Statistical Profile



**ACESQ**

Advisory Committee for  
English-Speaking Quebecers

## 1.1

# Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction of this report, the ACESQ commissioned AppEco to conduct a longitudinal study of employment statistics for English-speaking Quebecers, using the 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 censuses.

Section 1 of this chapter presents the methodology, including the indicators collected, the collection logistics and the analysis methodology. Section 2 presents the results of the study.

## 1.2

# Methodology

## Replication of Census 2016 Results

In designing the methodology and parameters of this study, the report of the Provincial Round Table on Employment (PERT), *Employment Profile of English-speakers in Québec*, was used as the main reference tool, as it is one of the few studies of this type currently available.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, using the methodologies used by PERT ensures continuity and comparability between the research set forth in this report and the research used by key stakeholders in the English-speaking community.

PERT's 2022 profile of English-speaking Quebecers was based entirely on 2016 Canadian census data, the most recent available at the time. This report presents the economic situation of ESQs across Québec's 17 administrative regions. The definition used for language was "First Official Language Spoken" (FOLS). Individuals who indicated both French and English as their FOLS were divided equally between ESQs and FSQs.<sup>5</sup> This statistical variable best reflects the ACESQ's definition of the clientele.<sup>6</sup>

The indicators studied are: population (by age and sex), sectoral distribution of jobs, labour force (by age and sex), unemployment rate (by age and sex), employment status (full-time/part-time, number of weeks worked), median after-tax income and level of education.

In order to ensure the comparability of the analyses in this report with the results from the 2016 Census, the first step was to replicate all the results obtained for the same year, 2016. Though PERT used a bespoke data order from Statistics Canada for its analyses, the replication of results in this report are based on publicly available data from the 2016 Census, i.e., Table 98-400-X2-16352. This methodological choice stems from the desire to promote the replicability of results by stakeholders or other interested parties.<sup>7</sup>

Replication of the results, an example of which is illustrated in Figure 1, proved highly conclusive. Only minor quantitative differences - with no qualitative consequences - can be observed for certain values. The two reasons for these differences are 1) the rounding of public data and 2) the weighted aggregation of census divisions at the administrative region level, which constitutes an approximation. All replicated figures are available in Appendix II.

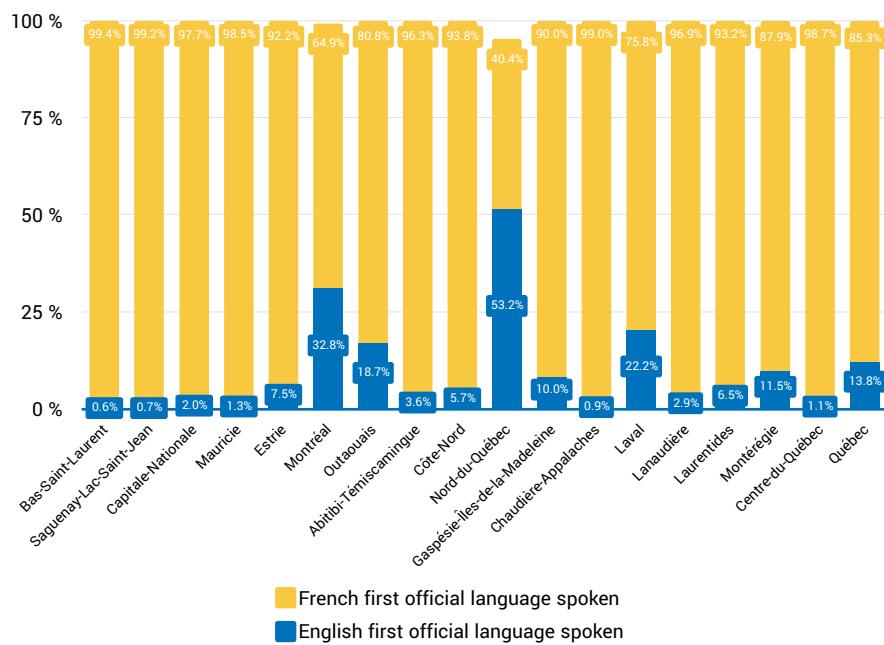
4 To consult the PERT report, visit: [https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PROVINCIAL\\_PROFILE\\_QUEBEC.pdf](https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/PROVINCIAL_PROFILE_QUEBEC.pdf)

5 The variable "First Official Language Spoken" is derived from the questions on knowledge of official languages, language spoken most often at home and mother tongue. Consult: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/fr/concepts/fig1>.

6 Go to page 8 to consult the ACESQ's definition of English-speaking Quebecers.

7 Throughout the exercise, the ACESQ and AppEco were in communication in order to clarify any methodological issues.

**Figure 1. Québec's total population by administrative region and first language spoken, 2016**



## Census Data Collection from 2006 to 2021

For the 2006, 2011 and 2016 censuses, public data could be extracted directly from the tables listed in Appendix III.<sup>8</sup> These provide all the variables required at the geographic level of the census division, which can be aggregated at the level of Québec's 17 administrative regions. Surprisingly, Statistics Canada did not produce an equivalent table from 2021 Census data. This change in practice has forced the commissioning of a bespoke data order, which does not promote replicability and monitoring of results over time for the public.

In each case, the following indicators were collected:

### *Language definition*

- First official language spoken
  - English
  - French
  - English and French

<sup>8</sup> In the case of the 2011 data, they are actually derived from the National Household Survey (NHS).

- Knowledge of official languages
  - English
  - French
  - English and French

#### *Indicators specific to general characteristics*

- Census division
- Population
- Age group
  - 15 to 24 years
  - 25 to 44 years
  - 45 to 64 years
- Sex<sup>9</sup>
  - Female
  - Male

#### *Specific indicators on employment and income*

- Economic sectors
- Labour force
- Number of unemployed
- Median after-tax income
- Highest certificate, diploma or degree achieved
  - No certificate diploma or degree
  - High school diploma or equivalency certificate
  - Post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree

<sup>9</sup> In the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada introduced the concept of sex to allow respondents to identify between male, female and non-binary. However, the small number of non-binary people forced Statistics Canada to divide them into men+ and women+ in order to preserve their confidentiality. These categories were used in the analysis.

In calculating each indicator, the 2016 definition of administrative region was used. This ensured that changes in the classification of census divisions did not impact data evolution. For example, the regional county municipalities (RMCs) of Brome-Missisquoi and Haute-Yamaska, which previously belonged to the administrative region of Montérégie, have been part of the Estrie region since the summer of 2021.<sup>10</sup> Since most indicators refer to a number of individuals, aggregation at the level of administrative regions could be carried out using a sum. Only the calculation of median income required the use of a weighted average between the census divisions composing each administrative region.<sup>11</sup>

## Temporal Analysis

Once the data from the four censuses from 2006 to 2021 were collected and harmonized, an analysis of the temporal evolution of the main indicators was conducted. This review represents the key contribution of this report to the pre-existing body of work on employability among English-speaking Quebecers. Indeed, while it is interesting to have a statistical snapshot of the economic situation of ESQ for a year, it is eminently relevant to study the evolution of these statistics over time, to identify areas and regions where the situation is improving, remaining stable or deteriorating.

Section 2.1 presents the results of this temporal analysis for Québec and by administrative region for certain indicators where the evolution is more revealing. The analysis focuses mainly on proportions in order to better assess the importance of ESQs in Québec as a whole, but some raw values are also mentioned throughout the analysis.

## Additional Analysis

In addition to the analysis of the socio-economic evolution of ESQ, two complementary analyses were conducted to broaden the study's scope.

First, a classification of administrative regions using machine-learning techniques was conducted. This analysis aims to group, on the basis of observable data, regions according to the main characteristics of their ESQ populations. This contrasts with the more traditional approach of grouping regions according to certain criteria such as urban or rural character. This could allow interventions to be tailored to the specific realities of each group of regions.

Then, an analysis of different language definitions was done to verify differences in level or trends between various groups on certain key indicators. The analysis was conducted for four language definitions: first official language spoken, mother tongue, language spoken at work, and knowledge of official languages.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on changes to the boundaries of the Estrie and Montérégie administrative regions, see: <https://statistique.quebec.ca/fr/actualite/modification-decoupages-regions-administratives-estrie-et-monteregie>.

<sup>11</sup> Since the PERT report is based on data previously compiled by Statistics Canada, revenues from this report were applied directly to 2016; and the remaining years were calculated using the growth rate of the weighted approximation for median after-tax income.

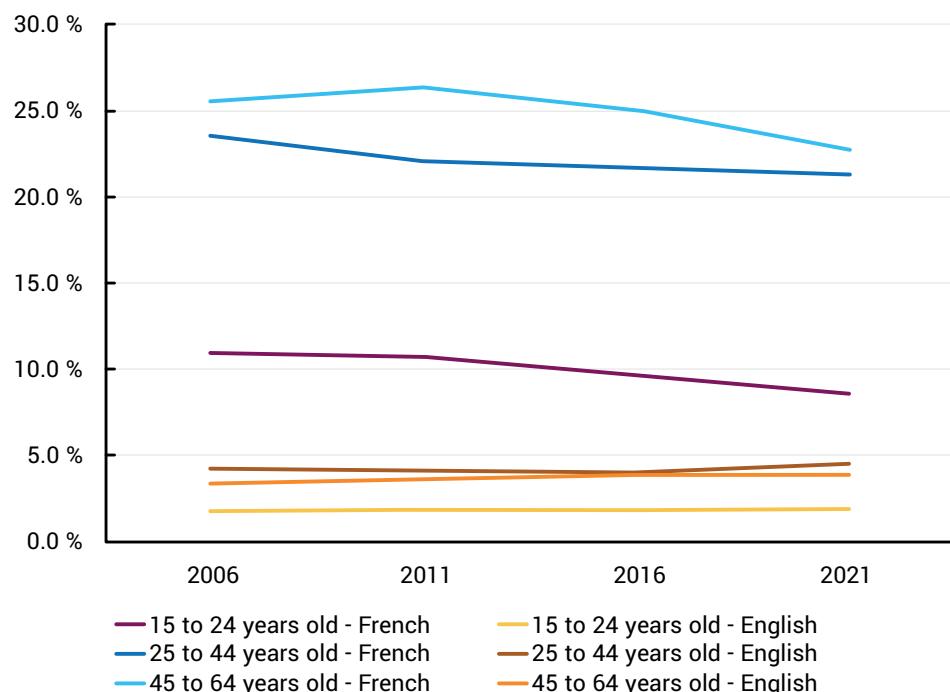
## 1.3

# Results

## Temporal Analysis

Of the total population of Québec, 1,253,578 individuals were English-speaking in 2021, accounting for 14.9% of the total population of Québec (compared to 13.8% in 2016). As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of FSQs has been declining for several years, particularly among individuals aged 45 to 64. Although the proportion of FSQs aged 15 to 64 decreased significantly from 2016 to 2021, it remained relatively stable for ESQs. In 2021, ESQs aged 15 to 24 represented 1.9% of Québec's population, compared to 4.5% for those aged 25 to 44 and 3.9% for those aged 45 to 64, for a total, including ESQs under 15 and over 64, of 14.9%. Moreover, the proportion of ESQs aged 0 to 14 increased from 2016 to 2021, from 2.1% in 2016 to 2.3% in 2021, showing that the share of young FSQs decreased slightly in favour of ESQs in this age group.

**Figure 2. Evolution of Québec's population by first official language spoken – proportion of the population**



ESQs are mainly present in the administrative regions of Nord-du-Québec, Montréal, Laval, Outaouais and Montérégie, as shown in Table 1 below. In fact, of the 1,253,578 ESQs in Québec in 2021, 692,110 were located in the Montréal area, 203,698 were in Montérégie, 104,520 were in Laval, and 83,135 were in Outaouais. These four regions alone were home to almost 80% of ESQs. Moreover, among the 17 administrative regions of Québec, only one (Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine) experienced a decrease in its proportion of ESQs between 2016 and 2021, from 10% to 8.7%. The regions with the largest increase since 2006 were Nord-du-Québec (+16.5 %pts), Laval (+5.3 %pts), Outaouais (+3.4 %pts), Montréal (+2.3 %pts) and Montérégie (+2.2 %pts). Overall, the total proportion of ESQs in the province has increased by 1.5 percentage points since 2006.

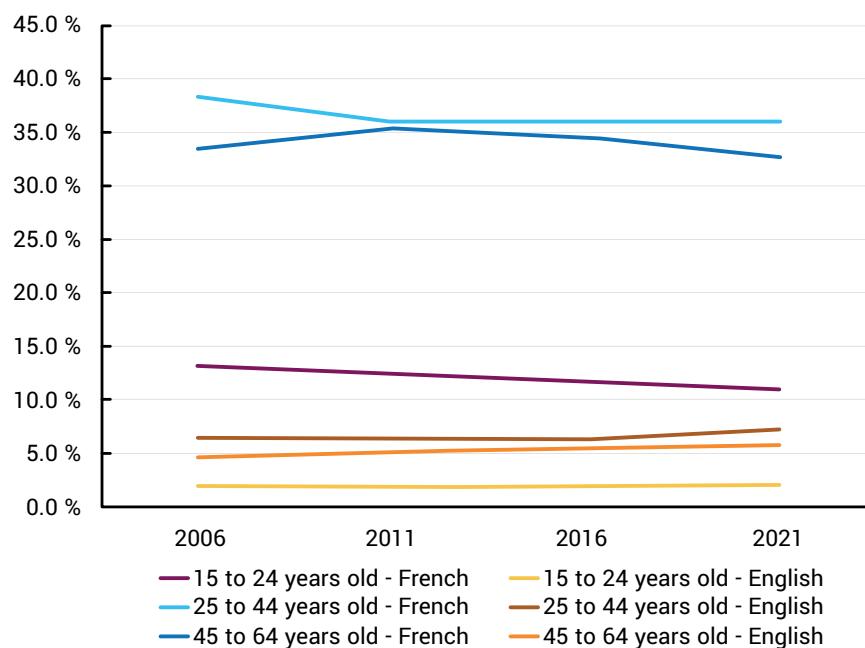
**Table 1. Proportion of ESQs within each region**

	2006	2016	2021	Evolution (% points)	
				06-21	16-21
Nord-du-Québec	42.8 %	53.2 %	59.3 %	16.5 %	6.1 %
Montréal	32.7 %	32.8 %	35.0 %	2.3 %	2.1 %
Laval	18.8 %	22.2 %	24.0 %	5.3 %	1.9 %
Outaouais	17.4 %	18.7 %	20.7 %	3.4 %	2.0 %
Montérégie	10.7 %	11.5 %	12.9 %	2.2 %	1.4 %
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	10.2 %	10.0 %	8.7 %	-1.4 %	-1.2 %
Estrie	8.0 %	7.5 %	7.7 %	-0.3 %	0.3 %
Laurentides	6.6 %	6.5 %	7.5 %	0.9 %	1.0 %
Côte-Nord	5.9 %	5.7 %	6.1 %	0.1 %	0.4 %
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	3.8 %	3.6 %	4.0 %	0.2 %	0.4 %
Lanaudière	2.4 %	2.9 %	3.3 %	1.0 %	0.4 %
Capitale-Nationale	1.8 %	2.0 %	2.3 %	0.5 %	0.3 %
Mauricie	1.0 %	1.3 %	1.6 %	0.6 %	0.3 %
Centre-du-Québec	1.1 %	1.1 %	1.4 %	0.3 %	0.3 %
Chaudière-Appalaches	1.0 %	0.9 %	1.2 %	0.2 %	0.3 %
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	0.7 %	0.7 %	0.8 %	0.1 %	0.1 %
Bas-Saint-Laurent	0.7 %	0.6 %	0.7 %	0.1 %	0.2 %
<b>Québec</b>	<b>13.4 %</b>	<b>13.8 %</b>	<b>14.9 %</b>	<b>1.5 %</b>	<b>1.1 %</b>

Figure 3 shows the evolution of the labour force, which is to say individuals who are employed or actively looking for work, by age group. While the proportion of people aged 45 and older in the labour force is decreasing among the FSQ population, it is increasing slightly among ESQs. Since 2006, the share of individuals in the ESQ labour force has remained relatively stable within each age group. However, overall, the proportion of ESQs increased from 13.4% in 2006 to 15.8% in 2021, which is very similar to trends observed for the general population.

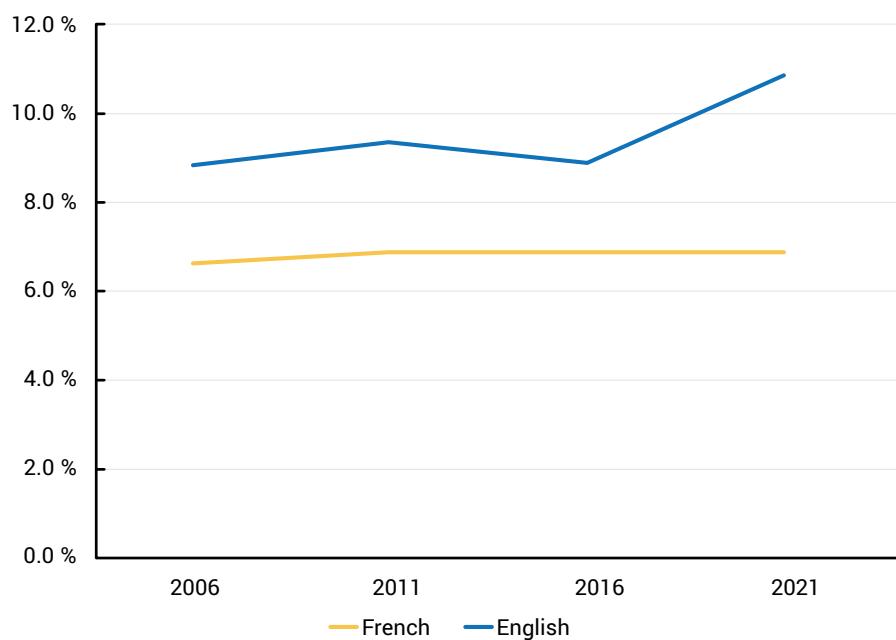
Since 2011, ESQs have recorded a higher participation rate in the labour force than their proportion of population. Out of the 4,435,465 Quebecers in the labour force in 2021, 699,015 are English-speaking, of whom 92,048 are aged 15 to 24, 318,695 are aged 25 to 44 and 254,328 are aged 45 to 64. Moreover, 8.4% of the labour force are male ESQs compared to 7.4% women ESQs (Figure A1.12).

**Figure 3. Proportion of the labour force by first official language spoken**



As has been the case since 2006, the unemployment rate among ESQs remained higher than that of the FSQ population in 2021, recording an increase by several percentage points (%pts) between 2016 and 2021, from 8.9% to 10.9%, while the FSQ rate remained stable during the same period (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Evolution of the unemployment rate by first official language spoken**



This sudden increase between 2016 and 2021 can be explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, ESQs are more heavily concentrated in sectors particularly impacted by job losses due to the pandemic, such as accommodation and food services and wholesale trade. In fact, 36.4% of ESQ workers in 2021 were employed in sectors that have seen a decline in the workforce, compared to 33.1% among FSQs (Table 2).

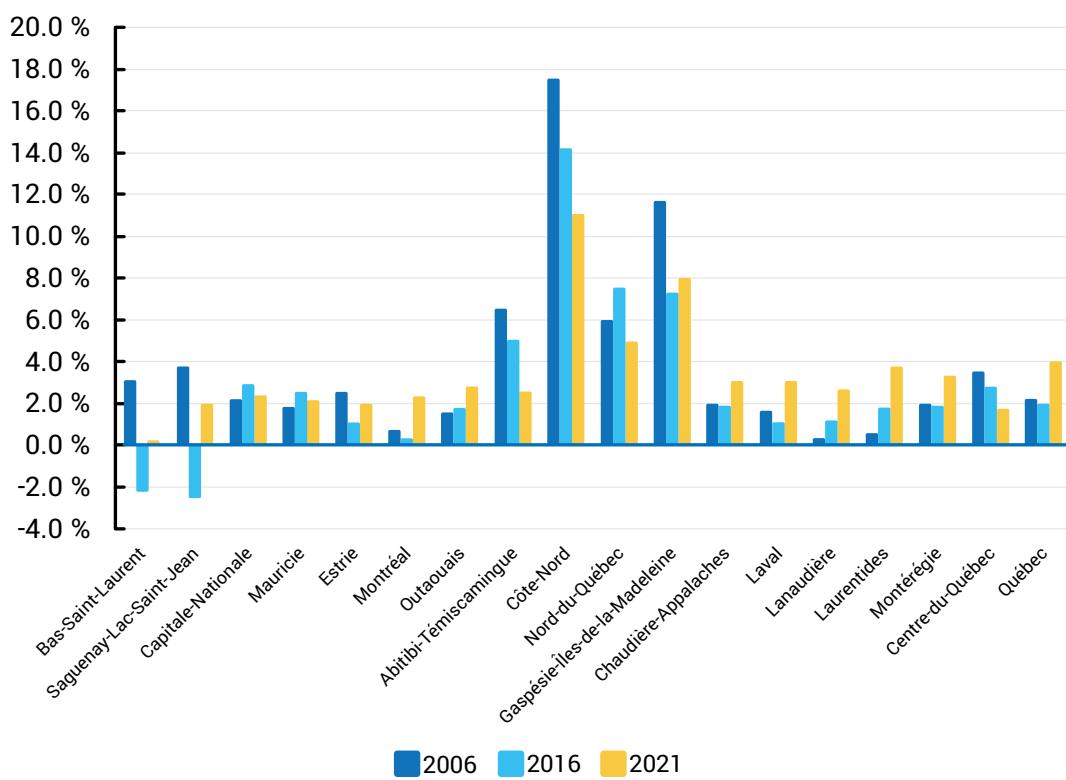
**Table 2. Proportion of total employment of ESQ and FSQ in sectors that experienced a decrease in workforce between 2016 and 2021**

	Variation in employment in the sector (%)	ESQ (% of total ESQs)	FSQ (% of total FSQs)
Manufacturing	-1.8 %	9.2 %	10.3 %
Accommodation and food services	-13.3 %	7.5 %	5.4 %
Wholesale trade	-6.2 %	4.9 %	3.0 %
Administrative and support. waste management*	-2.7 %	4.7 %	3.9 %
Other services (except public administration)	-1.0 %	4.2 %	4.5 %
Information and cultural industry	-7.5 %	2.8 %	2.0 %
Arts	-8.5 %	2.2 %	2.0 %
Agriculture	-6.4 %	0.9 %	2.0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.7 %</b>	<b>36.4 %</b>	<b>33.1 %</b>

*\*and remediation services*

During the period shown in Table 2, the unemployment rate among ESQs was generally 2 to 3 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate among the FSQ population and the overall unemployment rate for the province. This gap in unemployment was not the same for each administrative region (Figure 5). The regions of Côte-Nord, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Nord-du-Québec and Abitibi-Témiscamingue show the largest gaps for the three years presented. However, there are some limitations to consider due to the low sampling of ESQs in these regions. Moreover, it is important to note that while both Bas-Saint-Laurent and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean recorded lower unemployment rates for their English-speaking population 2011, all other regions recorded higher unemployment rates among their ESQs than compared to their FSQs each year.

**Figure 5. Gap of unemployment rate between ESQ and FSQ by administrative region (% pts) – A positive gap means that the ESQ rate > FSQ rate**



The unemployment rate is also higher among ESQs aged 15 to 24. In 2021, unemployment was at 17.4% for English-speaking youth, compared to 10.9% among French-speaking youth (Figure A1.14). Unemployment rates are even higher in the administrative regions of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Côte-Nord, Mauricie and Outaouais, where it exceeds 20% for youth aged 15 to 24. In addition, while there is a slight difference between the unemployment rate for French-speaking men and women, it is virtually the same for English-speaking men and women (Figures A1.16 and A1.17).

In 2021, the six sectors with the highest number of ESQs were retail trade, professional services, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, educational services, and accommodation and food services (Table 3). More than 55% of English-speaking workers are employed in these six sectors. However, the share of ESQs in manufacturing has dropped by 4.8 percentage points since 2006 (from 13.9% to 9.2%), while it has increased in professional services (+2.2%), health care and social assistance (+1.3%) and transportation and warehousing (+1.2%).

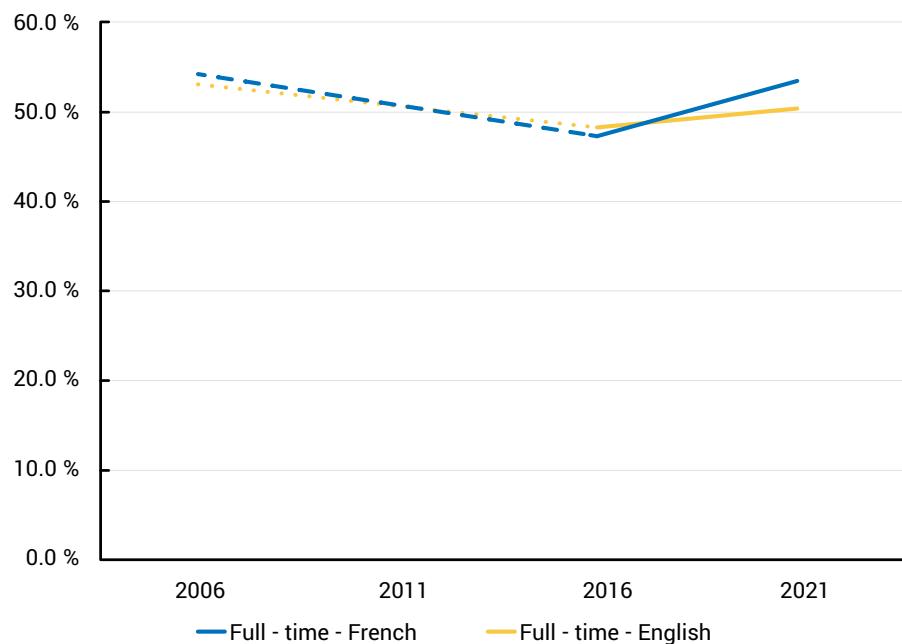
**Table 3. Distribution of ESQ employment by industry**

	2006	2016	2021	Evolution 06-21 (% points)
Retail Trade	10.4 %	11.3 %	11.3 %	<b>0.9 %</b>
Professional services	8.9 %	9.5 %	11.1 %	<b>2.2 %</b>
Health care and social assistance	8.9 %	9.5 %	10.2 %	<b>1.3 %</b>
Manufacturing	13.9 %	9.6 %	9.2 %	<b>-4.8 %</b>
Educational services	7.9 %	8.8 %	8.5 %	<b>0.6 %</b>
Accommodation and food services	7.7 %	8.8 %	7.5 %	<b>-0.2 %</b>
Transportation and warehousing	5.3 %	5.6 %	6.6 %	<b>1.2 %</b>
Wholesale trade	6.9 %	5.4 %	4.9 %	<b>-2.0 %</b>
Administrative services	4.7 %	5.0 %	4.7 %	<b>0.1 %</b>
Finance and insurance	4.4 %	4.6 %	4.5 %	<b>0.1 %</b>
Public administration	3.5 %	4.1 %	4.5 %	<b>0.9 %</b>
Construction	3.5 %	4.0 %	4.4 %	<b>0.9 %</b>
Other services *	4.7 %	4.4 %	4.2 %	<b>-0.6 %</b>
Information**	3.2 %	3.0 %	2.8 %	<b>-0.4 %</b>
Arts. entertainment and recreation	2.1 %	2.5 %	2.2 %	<b>0.1 %</b>
Real estate***	2.0 %	2.1 %	1.8 %	<b>-0.2 %</b>
Agriculture. forestry. fishing and hunting	1.3 %	1.0 %	0.9 %	<b>-0.3 %</b>
Mining. quarrying. gas and oil extraction	0.2 %	0.3 %	0.3 %	<b>0.1 %</b>
Utilities	0.2 %	0.2 %	0.2 %	<b>0.0 %</b>
Management of companies****	0.2 %	0.2 %	0.2 %	<b>0.1 %</b>

Note: \* other than public administration. \*\* and cultural industries. \*\*\* rental, and leasing. \*\*\*\* and enterprises.

In 2021, half of employed English speakers were working full-time compared to 53% of French speakers, as can be seen in Figure 6. This trend has remained stable in both groups since 2006. However, it is important to note that English speakers in the Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Côte-Nord regions have an increased prevalence of part-time work, while the reverse is observable for the Nord-du-Québec region (Figure A1.18).

**Figure 6. Proportion of full-time work by first official language spoken**



Note: data from 2011 is not available.

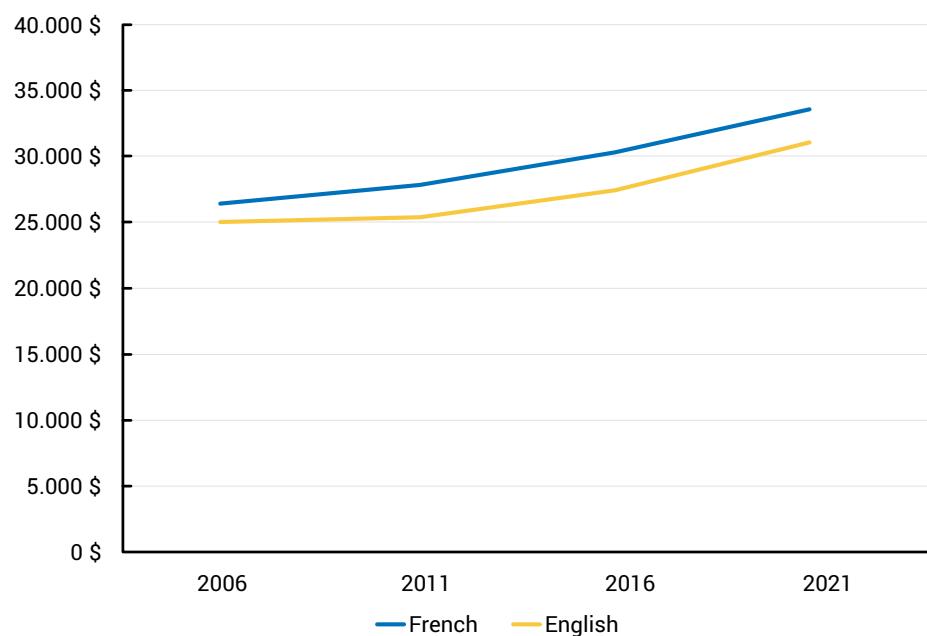
Although ESQs experience higher unemployment rates, their level of education is higher on average than that of FSQs (Table 4). Between 2006 and 2021, the proportion of ESQs with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree was consistently higher than that of FSQs, with a gap ranging from 0.5 to 2.7 percentage points. By 2021, 61.9% of ESQs had achieved this level of education, compared to 60.5% of FSQs. However, the level of education growth among ESQs and FSQs has been more noticeable in recent years. Indeed, in 2006, only 52.6% of FSQ had achieved this highest level of education (an increase of 7.9 percentage points), while 55.3% of ESQ had achieved it in 2006 (an increase of 6.6 percentage points).

**Table 4. Highest level of education attained by first official language spoken**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Evolution 2006-2021 (% points)
<b>English</b>					
No certificate, diploma or degree	19.8 %	17.3 %	16.1 %	14.5 %	-5.2 %
With diploma or equivalency certificate	24.9 %	24.4 %	24.6 %	23.6 %	-1.4 %
With postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	55.3 %	58.3 %	59.3 %	61.9 %	6.6 %
<b>French</b>					
No certificate, diploma or degree	25.5 %	22.6 %	20.2 %	18.4 %	-7.1 %
With diploma or equivalency certificate	21.9 %	21.3 %	21.0 %	21.1 %	-0.9 %
With postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	52.6 %	56.1 %	58.8 %	60.5 %	7.9 %

Despite higher levels of education among ESQs, their median after-tax income is lower than the provincial average, as is their real income, which was on average 7.9% lower than that of FSQs between 2006 and 2016 (Figure 7). In 2021, this gap narrowed slightly, with a difference of 7.6% between the two groups. Overall, however, the gap has widened since 2006, indicating that real income among French-speaking Quebecers has grown more than that of English-speaking Quebecers in recent years. It is important to note that the revenues presented correspond to the values of the year 2020, reflecting a period potentially affected by the pandemic.

**Figure 7. Median real after-tax income by first official language spoken**



These gaps differ between administrative regions. As shown in Figure 8, for the vast majority of regions and years presented, ESQs suffered from a negative wage gap compared to FSQs. Only in Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Chaudière-Appalaches did English speakers have a higher income in 2006, 2016 and 2021. In 2006, ESQs in the Capitale-Nationale and Mauricie regions also had higher incomes than FSQs. However, this trend was later reversed for these regions.

**Figure 8. ESQ and FSQ wage gap by administrative region (%) – a negative gap means that ESQ salary < FSQ salary**

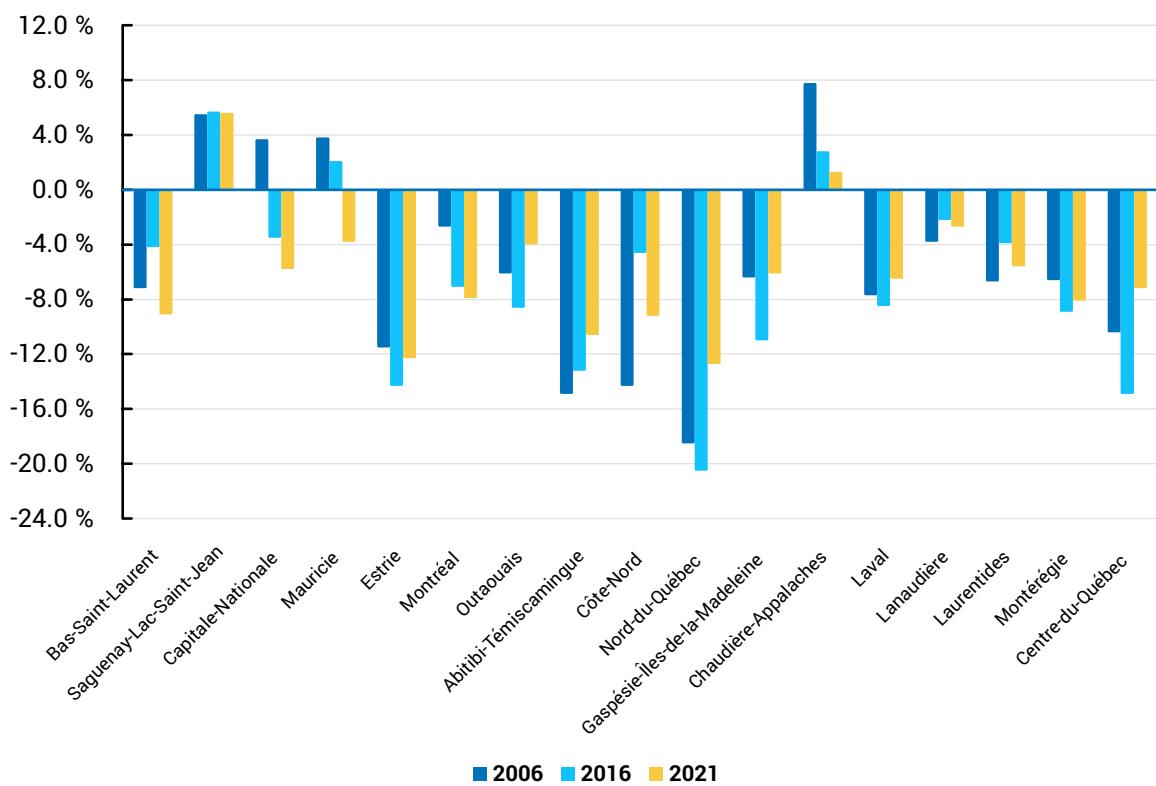


Table 5. ESQ-FSQ wage gap by administrative region

	2006	2016	2021	Evolution (% points)	
				06-16	16-21
Bas-Saint-Laurent	-7.2 %	-4.2 %	-9.1 %	3.0 %	-4.9 %
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	5.5 %	5.7 %	5.6 %	0.2 %	0.0 %
Capitale-Nationale	3.7 %	-3.5 %	-5.8 %	-7.3 %	-2.3 %
Mauricie	3.8 %	2.1 %	-3.8 %	-1.7 %	-5.9 %
Estrie	-11.5 %	-14.3 %	-12.3 %	-2.8 %	1.9 %
Montréal	-2.7 %	-7.1 %	-7.9 %	-4.4 %	-0.8 %
Outaouais	-6.1 %	-8.6 %	-4.0 %	-2.6 %	4.7 %
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	-14.9 %	-13.2 %	-10.6 %	1.7 %	2.6 %
Côte-Nord	-14.3 %	-4.6 %	-9.2 %	9.7 %	-4.6 %
Nord-du-Québec	-18.5 %	-20.5 %	-12.7 %	-2.0 %	7.7 %
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	-6.4 %	-11.0 %	-6.1 %	-4.7 %	4.9 %
Chaudière-Appalaches	7.8 %	2.8 %	1.3 %	-5.0 %	-1.5 %
Laval	-7.7 %	-8.5 %	-6.5 %	-0.8 %	2.0 %
Lanaudière	-3.8 %	-2.2 %	-2.7 %	1.6 %	-0.5 %
Laurentides	-6.7 %	-3.9 %	-5.6 %	2.8 %	-1.7 %
Montérégie	-6.6 %	-8.9 %	-8.1 %	-2.3 %	0.8 %
Centre-du-Québec	-10.4 %	-14.9 %	-7.2 %	-4.5 %	7.7 %
<b>Québec</b>	<b>-5.8 %</b>	<b>-9.3 %</b>	<b>-7.6 %</b>	<b>-3.4 %</b>	<b>1.6 %</b>

Table 6 summarizes the findings for Québec as a whole for the variables studied in this section. In sum, the total population and labour force of ESQs have grown faster than that of FSQs, but so have their unemployment rates. Moreover, full-time employment declined more among English speakers, while the wage gap between French speakers and English speakers remained unfavourable for the latter group.

**Table 6. Summary table of the main variables studied**

	French-speaking Quebecers					English-speaking Quebecers				
	2006	2011	2016	2021	Evolution 2006 - 2021	2006	2011	2016	2021	Evolution 2006 - 2021
<b>Population</b>	85.7 %	85.6 %	85.3 %	84.1 %	-1.6 %	13.4 %	13.5 %	13.8 %	14.9 %	1.5 %
15 to 24 years old	10.9 %	10.7 %	9.7 %	8.6 %	-2.3 %	1.8 %	1.9 %	1.8 %	1.9 %	0.1 %
25 to 44 years old	23.5 %	22.1 %	21.7 %	21.3 %	-2.3 %	4.2 %	4.1 %	4.0 %	4.5 %	0.3 %
45 to 64 years old	25.6 %	26.4 %	25.1 %	22.8 %	-2.8 %	3.4 %	3.7 %	3.8 %	3.9 %	0.5 %
Female	43.7 %	43.4 %	43.1 %	42.5 %	-1.2 %	6.7 %	6.8 %	6.8 %	7.4 %	0.7 %
Male	42.0 %	42.2 %	42.2 %	41.6 %	-0.4 %	6.7 %	6.8 %	6.9 %	7.5 %	0.9 %
<b>Labour force</b>	86.3 %	86.1 %	85.5 %	83.9 %	-2.4 %	13.4 %	13.7 %	14.3 %	15.8 %	2.3 %
15 to 24 years old	13.0 %	12.4 %	11.8 %	10.9 %	-2.0 %	1.9 %	1.8 %	1.8 %	2.1 %	0.2 %
25 to 44 years old	38.3 %	36.0 %	36.1 %	36.0 %	-2.2 %	6.5 %	6.2 %	6.3 %	7.2 %	0.7 %
45 to 64 years old	33.5 %	35.4 %	34.5 %	32.7 %	-0.8 %	4.7 %	5.1 %	5.5 %	5.7 %	1.1 %
Female	40.8 %	41.2 %	41.2 %	40.6 %	-0.2 %	6.2 %	6.4 %	6.7 %	7.4 %	1.2 %
Male	45.5 %	44.9 %	44.3 %	43.3 %	-2.2 %	7.2 %	7.3 %	7.6 %	8.4 %	1.2 %
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	6.6 %	6.9 %	6.9 %	6.9 %	0.2 %	8.8 %	9.4 %	8.9 %	10.9 %	2.0 %
15 to 24 years old	11.6 %	12.2 %	11.9 %	10.9 %	-0.7 %	14.9 %	16.9 %	16.3 %	17.4 %	2.5 %
25 to 44 years old	5.9 %	5.8 %	5.7 %	5.2 %	-0.7 %	8.8 %	8.7 %	8.5 %	9.8 %	1.0 %
45 to 64 years old	5.5 %	5.8 %	6.0 %	5.9 %	0.4 %	6.7 %	7.7 %	7.2 %	9.6 %	2.9 %
Female	6.1 %	6.0 %	5.9 %	6.7 %	0.6 %	8.7 %	9.1 %	8.7 %	10.9 %	2.2 %
Male	7.1 %	7.6 %	7.8 %	7.0 %	-0.1 %	8.9 %	9.6 %	9.1 %	10.8 %	1.9 %
<b>Worked - Full- and part-time</b>										
Full-time	54.1 %	-	47.2 %	53.3 %	-0.8 %	53.0 %	-	48.2 %	50.3 %	-2.7 %
Part-time	45.9 %	-	52.8 %	46.7 %	0.8 %	47.0 %	-	51.8 %	49.7 %	2.7 %
<b>Education</b>										
No certificate, diploma or degree	25.5 %	22.6 %	20.2 %	18.4 %	-7.1 %	19.8 %	17.3 %	16.1 %	14.5 %	-5.2 %
With secondary school diploma or equivalency certificate	21.9 %	21.3 %	21.0 %	21.1 %	-0.9 %	24.9 %	24.4 %	24.6 %	23.6 %	-1.4 %
With postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	52.6 %	56.1 %	58.8 %	60.5 %	7.9 %	55.3 %	58.3 %	59.3 %	61.9 %	6.6 %
<b>Median after-tax income</b>	22,922 \$	26,137 \$	30,211 \$	36,800 \$	13,878 \$	21,585 \$	23,889 \$	27,416 \$	34,000 \$	12,415 \$

## Categorization of Regions

The k-means clustering technique was used to identify groups of regions wherein their English-speaking populations share certain socio-economic realities. This approach has the advantage of being entirely data-driven and can bring to light similarities that are otherwise difficult to perceive.

The variables used to establish the similarity between regions are: 1) the proportion of ESQs in the region, 2) the change in this proportion since 2006, 3) the proportion of youth, 4) the unemployment rate, 5) the change in the unemployment rate since 2006, 6) the proportion of ESQs working part-time, 7) the wage gap with FSQs, 8) the change in the wage gap since 2006, and 9) the proportion of ESQs with a postsecondary degree.

Four groups were determined as optimal. The characteristics of each are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7. Characteristics of categories of regions**

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Nord-du-Québec	Côte-Nord Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean Capitale-Nationale Mauricie Chaudière-Appalaches Lanaudière	Bas-Saint-Laurent Estrie Montréal Outaouais Abitibi-Témiscamingue Laval Laurentides Montérégie Centre-du-Québec
Strong proportion of English speakers and of youths  Significant decline in unemployment Very low proportion of part-time work  Significant salary gap, but this has greatly improved  Low proportion of post-secondary graduates	Strong decline in the proportion of English speakers  Very high unemployment, but in decline  Strong proportion of part-time work  Salary gap which is close to average, but improving  Low proportion of post-secondary graduates	Below average proportion of English speakers  Low proportion of youths  Low unemployment rates and part-time work  Salary gaps virtually nil  Strong proportion of post-secondary graduates	Average proportion of English speakers  Lower unemployment rates  Salary gap close to average, but improving

Group 1 has a high proportion of ESQs, particularly young people who are English speakers, but relatively low levels of education within the population. The labour market has improved in these regions since 2006, thanks in particular to a high proportion of full-time jobs – a novelty in 2021 compared to previous census years. The wage gap between English and French speakers persists, but it could be due to the high prevalence of young people and/or low school enrolment. This group could benefit from targeted interventions for youth and skills development.

Group 2 has seen the size of its ESQ population decline since 2006, possibly due to high unemployment and the prevalence of part-time work. The wage gap, although negative, is close to the regional average. This group could benefit from interventions targeting employability and skills development.

Group 3 includes regions with relatively fewer ESQs, but with better socio-economic indicators than average for the whole of Québec. This may be due to the fact that there are relatively few young ESQs in these regions and/or that the ESQs in these regions are more educated than on average. It could be beneficial to attract more ESQs from elsewhere in Québec to these regions so that they benefit, at least in part, from this positive economic environment.

Group 4 brings together more urban regions or regions with strong historic English-speaking communities, such as Estrie or Outaouais. The socio-economic situation of ESQs in these regions is close to average, although unemployment is lower. Consequently, this group could benefit from more holistic interventions or, given the high rate of urbanization in these regions, interventions targeted at visible minorities and other groups facing multiple vulnerabilities, among others.

## Analysis of Different Language Definitions

Comparing socio-economic situations among linguistic groups in Québec is a subtle exercise as there are a multitude of points of views on what constitutes an ESQ or an FSQ. This subsection is therefore intended to provide context for some differences depending on whether groups are defined on the basis of first official language spoken, mother tongue, language spoken at work or knowledge of official languages.

**Figure 9. Proportion of English language in Québec's population**

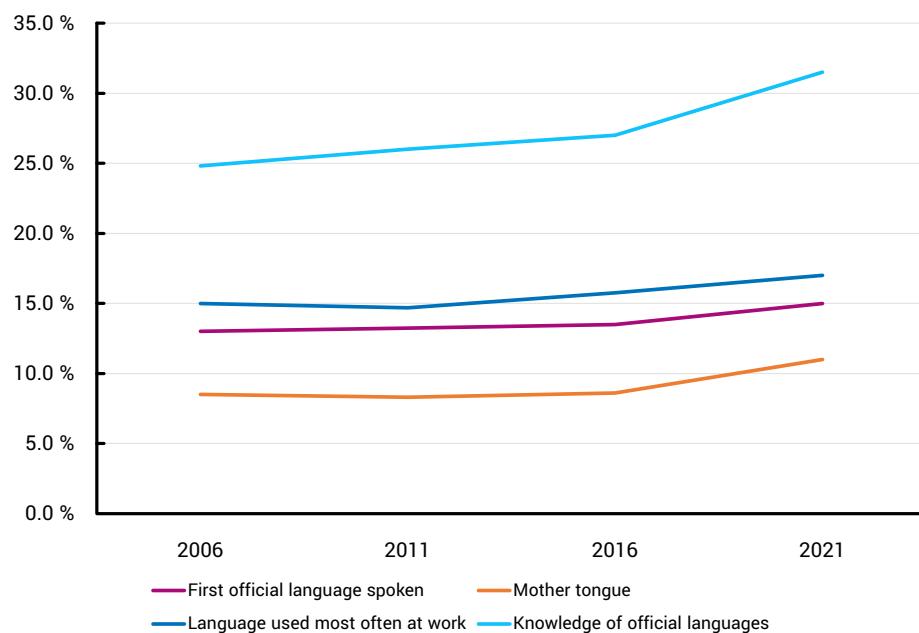
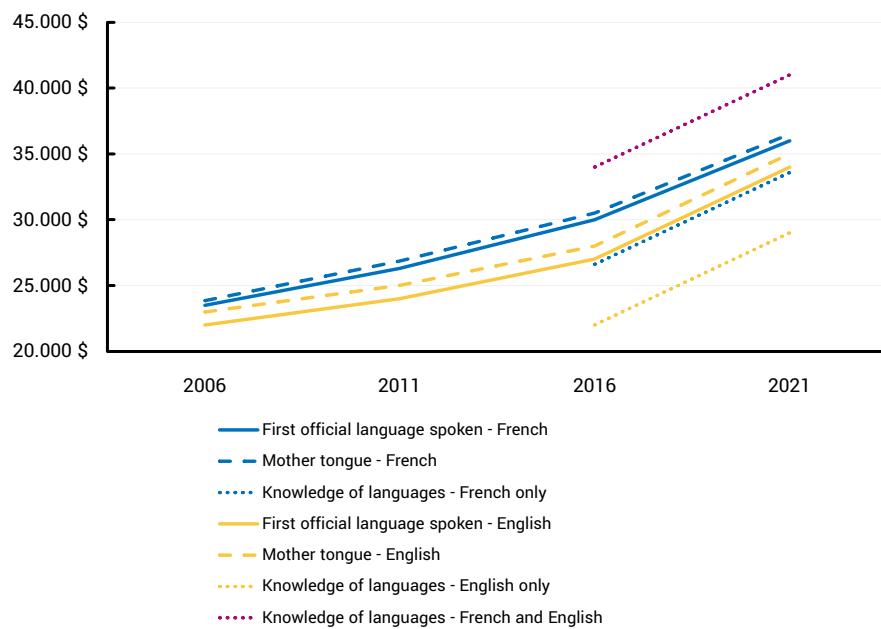


Figure 9 shows that, based on mother tongue, only 10% of Québec's population was English-speaking in 2021, compared to 15% using definitions like first official language spoken or the language most used at work. Moreover, more than 30% of Quebecers say they have some knowledge of English. For each definition, the proportion of English usage increased between 2016 and 2021, whereas it was previously rather stable, with the exception of knowledge of English, which has always been increasing.

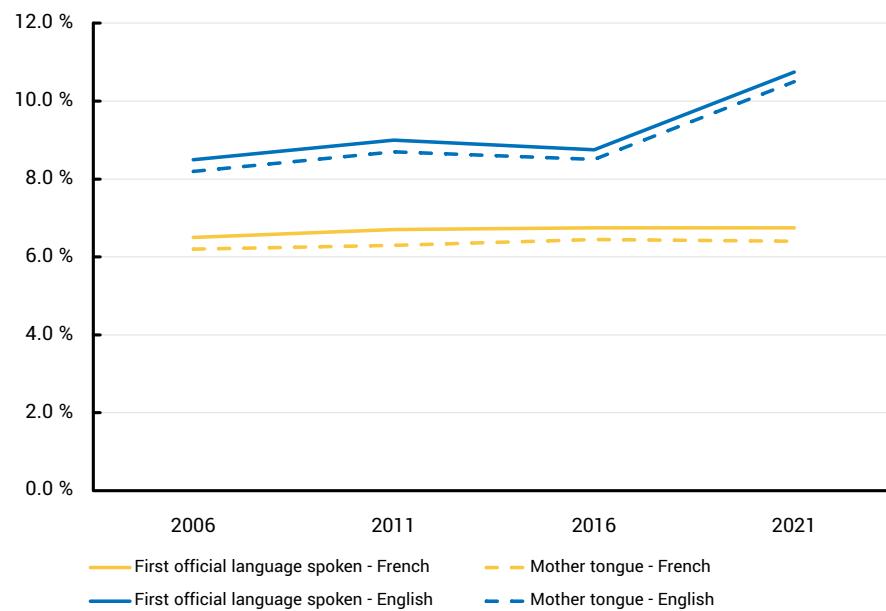
**Figure 10. Median after-tax income**



In terms of income, the gap between English and French speakers is comparable between first official language or mother tongue definitions (Figure 10). In each case, French-speaking people earn a higher median income. Moreover, for both individuals who know only French and those who know only English, their incomes are much lower, especially for those who know only English. This suggests that simply knowing French can make a big difference to one's socio-economic standing. In fact, those who claim to know both French and English earn significantly higher incomes.

Moreover, the unemployment gap between English and French speakers persists, regardless if first official language spoken or mother tongue definition is used. This is also true for the significant increase in unemployment seen in 2021 (Figure 11). However, it is important to note that unemployment rates are lower when mother tongue is used, which may partly reflect the integration of first-generation immigrants into the labour market.

**Figure 11. Unemployment rate**



## Case Study 4

# Underemployment and Mental Health



<b>Name</b>	Nina
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Elsewhere in Canada
<b>Region</b>	Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean



Nina is a racialized English speaker who works as an administrative assistant and runs a small business in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. She moved to the area from another province with her husband, a French-speaking Quebecer in the military. Growing up, Nina learned some basic French during her primary and secondary education but stopped after grade 9 when it was no longer mandatory to take French classes. Nina pursued post-secondary education and worked in creative industries for several years before moving to Québec.

Nina initially struggled to find employment that aligned with her skills and experience upon moving, due in large part to her lack of knowledge of French. "When I came here, I met with an employment counsellor to translate my resume and figure out where my skills would be useful. But the career counsellor basically told me that my options were to work as a cleaner in a local hotel or to pick mushrooms on a farm." This was a significant blow to Nina's self-confidence. She says that "being an Anglophone was seen as a handicap in a sense, and that was really hurtful and it really took a huge toll on my mental health. I

**Being an Anglophone was seen as a handicap in a sense, and that was really hurtful and it really took a huge toll on my mental health.**

felt like I had to start from the bottom careerwise, even though I already built a successful career elsewhere."

Nina recognized that in order to access more employment opportunities, she needed to learn French. However, this was complicated by several factors. Nina was nine months pregnant when she first arrived in Québec and did not have time to take any French classes as a new mother. Once she could begin taking some time away from her baby, Nina enrolled in a French course for military spouses that took place twice a week. However, Nina only participated in the course for 5 months before it was cancelled because of the pandemic.

Nina explains that this period was extremely difficult and her mental health suffered further. Without a job or community outside of her husband's French-speaking friends and family, Nina was extremely isolated. She said that as a new parent, she found it difficult to connect with other parents and families with young children because most activities were built for working parents. Moreover, without an English-speaking support system, Nina found it difficult to access the help she needed to improve her mental health.

"It was really hard navigating the healthcare system when my mental health was bad. Not having a professional that understood English enough to fully understand what I was going through was difficult. I would be literally pouring out my heart and soul trying to seek help and no one fully understood me, so I didn't feel like I was getting the support I needed."

Despite these challenges, Nina remained persistent in her efforts to improve her French-language skills. "It was pretty hard but I just did my best to surround myself with people who spoke French. Because my husband's from here, all his childhood friends are French-speaking and his parents only speak French, so I have to practise with them." She also regularly went to the local park so she could listen in on other people speaking French with the hopes that this would help her develop an ear for the language. Nina eventually befriended another regular at the park who happened to be a former English teacher. Her new friend took it upon himself to help her because he could see how much she was struggling to find employment. "He did so much research for me, called around and asked everybody, and he found a francization course for me."

The francization program was a full-time government-subsidized French class for newcomers to Québec. Without the help and guidance that she received from her friend, Nina would have never signed up for the French-language training course. "The key word they use to describe the classes on the website is

'for immigrants', as in it's a French program for immigrants. So, I figured that since I'm from Canada, I wouldn't be eligible. But what they mean is all immigrants to Québec, including inter-provincial migrants."

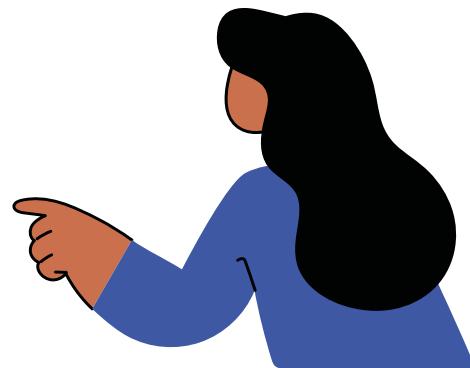
Nina says that the government-subsidized French courses have helped her improve her language skills, and she is now employed in a bilingual workplace. "I have a job now and I'm extremely happy and I feel super respected and supported." Her employers recognize that she is still learning French and they are very understanding. Nina is now enrolled in part-time evening government-funded French classes four days a week so she can continue to improve. Because she is now employed and no longer enrolled in full-time courses, Nina is not currently eligible for government subsidies. Moreover, between her two jobs and French classes, Nina has very little time for her family. For the moment, however, Nina says this setup is working for her. She is still working on building her own friendships in the community, but she feels optimistic that she will build those networks as time goes on. Overall, Nina says that she now feels that she is now adjusting well to her life in Québec after her "rocky start."

Case Study 5

# Professional Orders and French Testing



<b>Name</b>	Jen
<b>Age</b>	45-54
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Elsewhere in Canada
<b>Region</b>	Capitale-Nationale



Jen is a vocational training instructor based in Québec City. She's originally from another Canadian province but has lived in Québec for over 20 years. There were many Francophones in her community growing up and she was encouraged by her parents to learn French. She was enrolled in a French immersion program during primary and secondary school, but she forgot most of the language once she left. "As soon as I got into university, I just promptly forgot everything. With language, you have to use it or you lose it, and I lost it."

Before moving to Québec, Jen was working as a maintenance engineer for the federal government but decided to go back to university after cutbacks were introduced in her department. She studied mechanical engineering at an English-speaking university in Montréal, where she successfully graduated from her program. However, she was unable to join the Order of Engineers due to the language requirements.<sup>12</sup> Jen took expensive

It's not unusual to fail the language exam three or four times. It's common to spend hundreds of dollars at a university, or buying books, or listening to audio tapes.

French classes and sat the exam multiple times, but continued to fail the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) examination. According to Jen, this experience is not uncommon among English speakers. "It's not unusual to fail the language exam three or four times. It's common to spend hundreds of dollars at a university, or buying books, or listening to audio tapes only to fail three or four times."

<sup>12</sup> In order to join any of Québec's professional orders, applicants must prove that they have sufficient knowledge of French by passing an exam offered by the Office québécois de la langue française. Exams last 3 hours and test the applicant's oral and written skills in French. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/learn-french/professional-order/becoming-member/exam>

After failing the OQLF's language exam, Jen was forced to reevaluate her career prospects. She explains:

*I didn't pass the language exam to join the Order of Engineers. I could have become a junior engineer and just stamp things, but the pay is atrocious and I wasn't impressed with the work culture. It was dominated by toxic masculinity. But, I had just finished renovating my home and I thought I could work for myself and find renovating jobs. I became a plumber, electrician and a carpenter and started doing renovations for clients.*

After working on a self-employed basis for several years, Jen has recently shifted away from home restorations to English-language vocational teaching. She enjoys teaching and says that most of her students are allophones who have immigrated and already have qualifications in their country of origin that are not recognized by Québec.

Jen says that she regularly uses French at work to speak with Francophone colleagues and students, especially during lunch breaks. She also says that she'll "translate the curriculum from French to English because the Minister of Education is slow to provide English versions of the course materials."

Despite building a successful career in Québec, Jen says that her main motivation for staying all this time is her house, which she renovated herself and is situated on a large property, rather than her career or employment opportunities. She says most of her close friends are based outside of Québec and she works hard to keep in touch with them. Jen says that at her age, 'I'm settled, you know? I'm not really in any shape to pack up a moving van and say 'I'm leaving!'"

## Case Study 6

# Seasonal Work



<b>Name</b>	Kate
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
<b>Region</b>	Îles-de-la-Madeleine



Kate is a seasonal worker based in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region. Though she grew up in a majority English-speaking community, Kate says that she learned to speak French from a young age. “My whole life I spoke English at home. My mum’s a Francophone and my dad is Anglophone, but I was raised in an Anglophone home. I did have Francophone friends, and that’s what helped me to learn French.” While she did learn some French in school, she believes that she developed the ability to speak French mostly because of her relationships with French speakers. “Some things from school stuck with me, like verb conjugations and vocabulary. And then just being with Francophone friends really helped me learn how to speak French.” She says that by the time she left school and entered the workforce, she felt comfortable speaking French at work, but did not have the reading and writing skills necessary for a professional context.

My whole life I spoke English at home. My mum’s a Francophone and my dad is Anglophone, but I was raised in an Anglophone home.

Kate lived in another province for a time but returned to Québec 10 years ago and has worked for the same employer ever since. Her workplace is primarily English-speaking, but she regularly uses French to interact with external partners. She says that she was very happy to find this job “Because I didn’t think I would be able to find a position in the area where I’d be able to work primarily in English.”

Kate’s job typically runs from September to June, and she then goes on Employment Insurance (EI) during the summer months. While she enjoys her

job, she says that working on a seasonal basis puts her in a difficult position financially during the months she collects EI. "I mean, EI is supposed to be something you rely on temporarily until you find a job. But I don't need to find a job, I have a job that's nine months a year, but then I'm out of work for two months a year. And that's rough financially. A few years back I tried working at a second job for the summer, but I quickly realized that I paid so much income tax the following year that it wasn't worth it. Now I just try to minimize my expenses over the summer, but I often feel like I'm missing out on fun summer activities because I can't afford them while on EI."

I did have Francophone friends, and that's what helped me to learn French.

Kate says that the only full-year positions available in her area would be in retail or the service industry, which she is overqualified for. Despite having a high understanding of French and excellent speaking abilities, she says that she would not apply for a position that was being offered in French because she lacks the reading and writing skills necessary to perform well among native speakers. Kate's employer has recently started running twice-weekly French classes for staff, but she says that that course is aimed at developing basic language skills and would not help her improve her reading and writing skills. She has no plans to change jobs, despite the financial hardships associated with seasonal work.

## Chapter 2:

# The Qualitative Research

## 2.1

# Introduction

This chapter uses data collected from interviews to give an overview of the shared experiences of English speakers in Québec's labour force, including the unique challenges they face finding and staying in meaningful employment. The chapter also compiles information on participants' experiences finding employment in Québec, experiences in the workplace in Québec, and how their experiences learning French either prepared them or did not prepare them for the workforce.

Analysis of the recurring themes in these interviews offers insights into the needs of the community at large with regards to integrating into the provincial workforce. Such insights are especially important given the current labour shortage, as they can help Québec tap into the underutilized English-speaking community by developing policies and programs based on the current needs of English speakers to help them enter and stay in Québec's workforce, thereby contributing to a robust economy in Québec.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will be dedicated to a discussion of the methodology used for the qualitative research. The following section analyses the recurring themes that participants discussed throughout the interview process. The final section will briefly conclude the qualitative research chapter. Annex IV includes the demographic profiles of the participants interviewed for this study, Annex V includes the interview guide used for this research and, finally, Annex VI includes a complete list of the job titles of the interviewees.

## 2.2

# Methodology

## Recruitment

The ACESQ's Research Coordinator (hereafter referred to as the researcher) recruited participants for this study by sending a survey to relevant stakeholders and organizations and asking that they circulate it among their networks between August 2022 and October 2022. The survey included questions such as employment details, place of birth, first language spoken (English or French), region of residence, age bracket, gender identity, ethnic background, and disability. Participants were then selected from the pool of questionnaire respondents on a first-come, first-served basis.

The aim was to recruit 20 participants from across Québec that were symbolically representative of the English-speaking community's overall demographic profile. The researcher eventually extended the number of participants, conducting 30 individual interviews from September to December 2022. This was due in part to the number of interested participants and the desire to more accurately capture the diversity of the English-speaking population.

## Recruitment Challenges

The researcher found that participants from certain subsets of the English-speaking population were difficult to recruit. For example, it was difficult to find participants working in seasonal industries and vocational trades. It was also challenging to recruit English-speaking First Nations and Inuit participants. The researcher also found it difficult to recruit non-native English speakers, also known as allophones, to participate in interviews.

Reasons for this could include the fact that the ACESQ is based in Montréal and many of its stakeholders are similarly located in urban areas, where few participants from certain demographic profiles, such as seasonal workers, live and work. Another reason could be the Committee's method of disseminating the recruitment letter and demographic survey. As one participant working on a seasonal basis said, literacy rates among seasonal workers tend to be lower than the wider population, making our recruitment letter and survey inaccessible to many of those people. Moreover, since the survey was held online, those without access to the internet or a computer or with low digital literacy would also have had difficulty signing up. This could present another barrier for those living in the regions and working seasonally. Finally, by relying on the ACESQ's networks as a sampling method, the researcher was limited to participants that were somehow connected to the committee's networks.

To counter these challenges, the researcher instituted an honorarium in the form of a \$50 Amazon gift card. This honorarium was deemed appropriate given that many of Québec's English speakers face precarious employment situations or are from historically marginalized communities. The ACESQ also hoped that by instituting an honorarium, people that would otherwise be unable to sacrifice their time for an hour-long interview during working hours could participate.

The researcher also expanded the outreach strategy by researching community organizations and individuals throughout Québec that engaged with specific English-speaking communities, then sending the recruitment letter and survey to those groups. This included posting on social media, namely on Facebook groups geared towards English speakers from different regions, nationalities, and other backgrounds.

These strategies were successful and participants from harder-to-reach communities eventually responded to the recruitment letter and demographic survey, though in much smaller numbers than other constituents.

It is important to note that although English speakers experience higher rates of unemployment compared to their French-speaking counterparts, only one interview participant was unemployed and seeking work at the time of the interview. This could be a reflection of the current labour market shortage in Québec, which could leave English speakers more likely to be under-employed or in a position that does not correspond to their skillset, rather than unemployed.

It is also important to note that while the researcher initially planned on holding interviews in person, the majority were conducted remotely. This is partly due to some participants being located in remote regions. However, it is worth noting that most participants were more willing to participate in virtual interviews. Reasons for this could include that interviews were conducted approximately two years after the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has dramatically changed how people interact and has ushered in increased use of virtual communication technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.<sup>13</sup> This shift not only impacted how this study was conducted but has also had a significant impact on how people work. As such, it is also important to note that these interviews took place at a time of immense change for Québec's labour force.

## Data Collection

This section will discuss the two data collection techniques used for this study: a demographic survey and semi-structured interviews.

### Demographic Survey

Prior to being interviewed, each participant filled out a short demographic survey online. Surveys included questions regarding occupation, region of residence in Québec, mother tongue, first language spoken (English or French), and working pattern (i.e. full-time, part-time and seasonal). The survey also collected information regarding the participants' age range, gender identity, disability, ethnic origins, and place of birth. Participants that were not born in Québec had the option to fill in their place of birth. Questions regarding demographic information were modelled after those collected by the Canadian census to ensure that the data collected for the qualitative analysis aligned with the census analysis in the rest of the report. The results of the demographic analysis are available in Annex IV.

<sup>13</sup> MEHDI, Tahsin and René MORISSETTE (2021). *Working from home after Covid-19 pandemic: an estimate of worker preference*. Statistics Canada, (May 26) [Online]. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021005/article/00001-eng.htm>

## Interviews

To collect the data needed for this project, the researcher conducted hour-long semi-structured interviews with different members of Québec's English-speaking community.

Semi-structured interviews are organized around pre-selected topics and questions but remain open to new topics and ideas that arise during interviews.<sup>14 15</sup> Following this interview style, the researcher prepared an informal guide for the interviews with a list of themes and questions to guide the overall structure of the interview, while giving participants the freedom to discuss topics and experiences that they feel are most important. A copy of the interview guide is included in Annex V of this report. This format also enabled the researcher to ask a variety of follow-up questions in order to gain a full picture of the insights and experiences of each participant. As such, each interview varied in length and structure depending on the participant.

The two central questions that guided these interviews were: "How do Québec's English speakers experience Québec's labour market? What are their stories?" Though broad, this line of questioning enabled the researcher to speak to English speakers from across Québec from a diverse set of backgrounds, national and ethnic origins, work experiences, educational attainment, and mother tongues in an attempt to capture the heterogeneous nature of Québec's English-speaking population.

To answer our central research questions, we asked participants questions regarding their mother-tongue, first official language spoken, knowledge of French, education and work history, confidence using French in the workplace, access to French-language training, sense of belonging, and out-migration from Québec.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed with the prior consent of each participant. The researcher then coded these transcriptions and compiled these codes into common themes among the respondents. The remainder of this chapter presents the findings from this analysis.

14 AUSTIN, Zubin and Jane SUTTON (2014). Qualitative research: Getting started. *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, (November), 67(6), p. 436-440. [Online]. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4275140/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4275140/)

15 SHEPPARD, Valerie (2006). *Research Methods for the Social Sciences: An Introduction*. Pressbooks.

## 2.3

# Analysis and results

This section will analyze the common themes and experiences that participants spoke about during interviews. These themes have been selected for discussion because they demonstrate the unique challenges and opportunities that English speakers face in Québec's job market. This section will begin with a discussion on participants' experiences of finding work and will be followed by a discussion on their experiences of working in Québec. This initial analysis will establish French-language skills and related barriers, such as linguicism, as key issues for English speakers navigating the workforce. Moreover, these discussions will demonstrate that many of the English speakers interviewed for this study live and work among other English speakers and have difficulty connecting with Québec's majority French-speaking population.

This will lead to a discussion on how French-language training, through both public education and government-funded French-language learning programs, fail to prepare participants to join the French labour market, in part because they lack opportunities to practise French in an immersive environment since many of the participants interviewed for this report live and work in English-speaking circles.

This will follow with an analysis of positive experiences of learning French for the workforce, focusing on participants' experiences in immersive work environments.

## Finding a job

Out of the 30 participants interviewed for this study, 25 described having a negative experience or perception of applying for jobs in Québec. These participants used words such as 'hard', 'limited', and 'intimidating'. While the majority of participants described the job search process in negative terms, a few had positive experiences of finding employment in Québec.

Those that had negative experiences finding work in Québec cited a variety of reasons for why they struggled; however, participants that experienced difficulty in finding employment spoke of three recurring barriers: French-language skills, lack of confidence, and limited opportunities. Those that had positive experiences, on the other hand, cited their bilingualism, their ability to leverage their English-language skills, and their specialized skills as reasons for their success in the job market.

### French Language Skills and Confidence

The most common barrier to finding employment that participants cited was French-language skills, even among those with high levels of bilingualism. Of the 30 participants interviewed, 21 said that French was a barrier to finding employment in Québec. Many of these participants described experiencing a combination of inadequate French-language skills and a lack of confidence in French when applying for jobs, which caused them to self-select out of most positions. As one participant who grew up in Québec said, "it's the confidence thing, I find. Like, it's taken effect on my confidence [because] I don't even want to apply for certain jobs because I know that my French is going to be a problem."

Several interviewees said that though they felt they were bilingual conversationally, they were uncomfortable with the idea of working in French as they do not have perfect mastery over the language. For example, one participant said: "I get along and I get by really well in both languages. But if it was something where I needed to, uh, type in French and, you know, read documents in French [...] I don't think I would feel comfortable enough taking on the job." Another participant with strong French-language skills and a Francophone parent said: "Every single [job] posting you see and Québec has that necessary [French-language skills requirement and says you must be] fluent, perfectly bilingual, written [and] reading, whatever it is. And right away, it's like, I don't think they will like my level. And what's the point of applying? Why waste all this time and effort doing it when I know, come one question [in French], I'll be dismissed."

Another participant who is bilingual and regularly speaks French with her friends and Francophone husband said, "There was a job that I really wanted [...] but when I read [the job description] and requirements, I had everything but they wanted strong written French. I thought, no, [...] I can't lie, I [...] cannot write French as well as I could. So that kind of stopped me [...] because even though I work at a French and English [workplace], if you're in a role where you're working with [a French organization], then you have to have a pretty strong [command of] French. And I don't."

Another participant said that despite having strong conversational skills in French, she felt that her written skills are not strong enough to apply for most jobs. She explained:

*I don't even think it's to do [with] bilingualism, really. I think it's to do with my fluency in French and maybe, again, not necessarily conversation-wise, but, um, written, written French. I['ve] never applied to a strict Francophone com[pany], again, depending on the criteria [on a job posting] that I would read - if it was like bilingualism wasn't even an asset, if it was [only] French I just felt like I couldn't apply for that.*

Similarly, a participant who said that she specifically worked on developing the French-language skills needed to progress in her career said she still feels her skills are inadequate for a completely French-speaking workplace. She said: "There are certain positions that I wouldn't feel comfortable applying with, and it's ridiculous. And I think this goes to an insecurity, but I wouldn't feel [like] applying to the Québec government, I wouldn't feel comfortable applying there."

Even participants who felt confident enough to apply for jobs in French-speaking workplaces faced challenges related to their French language skills. One participant said:

*I haven't been very successful in nabbing a quote-unquote French job, except for small jobs at the pharmacy or the grocery store, like I mentioned. But those were just straight out of high school just while I was studying. I do have a couple experiences where I applied for two notable French organizations, and my French wasn't quote-unquote good enough. And, um, I even had to do a [...] test at some point. And I was just off by like one or two base points and I wasn't hired because of that.*

She added that because of her negative experiences trying to find work in a French-speaking company, "I generally try to find English-speaking jobs where French [...] is a requirement versus looking for French-speaking jobs."

For those still learning French, linguistic skills present an even greater barrier to finding work. One participant who moved to Québec from another province and started learning French on arrival said that since job postings do not specify that they are open to those learning the language, she feels she cannot apply for most positions. She explains: "[Job postings say you need to be fluent in French], not you need to be learning French. [A]ll these businesses, companies, they push [you to] learn French [and the] government [pushes you to] learn French. But at no point on a job [listing], nowhere does it say learning French is okay." Another participant with some knowledge of French, but who also felt she still had room to improve, said that she'd feel more confident applying for a French job if she "kn[ew] that English speakers are welcome to apply. Um, 'ils sont bienvenus.' Um, [if postings] sa[id] that you know you, regardless of your level of French, don't feel shy to apply."

## Linguicism and discrimination

Another recurring barrier to finding work cited among participants was linguicism. Linguicism is discrimination against those who speak a different language or have a different accent.<sup>16</sup> Research indicates that ESQs face high rates of linguicism, which poses a significant impact on their ability to integrate within Québec's labour market.<sup>17</sup> Many participants in this study said that they felt linguicism impacted their job search and believed that employers have a preference for native French speakers as opposed to English speakers who know French as a second language. For example, one participant said that when applying for jobs, "I'd not be targeting the super Québécois companies anyway, because for like [...] small businesses, I think that those are more favourable towards, like, Québécois [applicants]." Another participant said, "As someone who is Anglophone, [I think] there is this preference [among employers] that a Francophone will do a better [...] job [working] in French." Others said that they worried that having a non-French name would negatively impact their job prospects. One participant who is married to a French speaker said "Sometimes I think I should change my last name to my husband's last name" to improve her job prospects.

One participant said that while speaking to a recruiter at a French-speaking company on LinkedIn, the recruiter told her that "Anglophones [...] usually don't speak French." The participant then complained to the recruiter that this was discriminatory, and the recruiter apologized and admitted that the idea that ESQs don't speak French is "kind of an old stereotype". The same participant said that she now typically applies for jobs in larger companies that are more likely to be linguistically diverse.

## Limited opportunities available

Because most participants lacked the skills or confidence to apply for a job in a French-speaking workplace, there was an overall negative perception of career opportunities available to English speakers in Québec. As one participant said: "You really have not a lot of options if you don't know [...] French." While participants said that there were opportunities for work in unskilled positions such as retail and hospitality, many said that it was very difficult to find work that matched their skill set and could lead to a long-term career.

English-speaking interprovincial and international migrants in particular expressed dismay at the opportunities available to them in Québec. Many of these participants led successful careers where they developed highly specialized skills prior to moving to Québec. One interviewee who immigrated to Québec from the United States, where they worked as a marketing professional, said that they have had difficulty finding work because "I think every single position, like, that I've seen, whether I'm looking for a job or just [to] come here, it's all bilingual." They added "truthfully, if I want to be competitive for any job in Québec, I need to be bilingual." One interprovincial migrant to Québec said that when she arrived, she was told that as a result of her lack of French language skills, "[your] options here [are to] work at the Tim Hortons, [at a] hotel doing cleaning, or to pick mushrooms." She felt that "being Anglophone was seen as a handicap or disability in a sense, um, and that was really hurtful and it really took a huge toll on my mental health because, like, essentially just telling me like, yeah, you kind of have to start literally from the bottom if you want to get anywhere here."

16 BOURHIS, RICHARD and Nicole CARIGNAN (2010). Linguicism in Québec and Canada. (p. 156.) *Our Diverse Cities*, vol. 7. p. 156-162.

17 *Ibid.*

Several participants described making active efforts to improve their French in order to open up more career opportunities. One participant, who grew up in Québec, said that for a long time “I was really limited [in] my capacity to go and find work. So, I was kind of stuck working in the West Island, working, like, retail jobs, where the French was like ‘Bonjour, comment je peut vous aider aujourd’hui?’ ‘Est-ce que vous avez trouvé quelque chose?’ Kind of like the very basic service industry French. [...] I had to actively make efforts given what I wanted to do with my career [...] to improve my French.”

Other participants similarly said that while they could easily find low-paying jobs in retail or in the service industry, they found it very difficult to access salaried office positions that better align with their education and skill set. One participant who had pursued a higher education said that

*I look[ed] for jobs [...] using Emploi-Québec, like their old [website]. And I was so disappointed because it's like, you need a dishwasher, we need a truck driver, we need a gas station [attendant]. And I'm like, those are noble jobs—like any job that people work in, you know, it's great. But [...] I don't know how to do some of these. And [none were related to what] I studied.*

The issue of limited employment opportunities was exacerbated for those living outside urban areas in the regions. Many of these participants explained that there are fewer employers in these areas generally, and even fewer that enable employees to work in English. One participant, a former seasonal worker in a local fishery, said that apart from seasonal work, “the options for alternative jobs are very slim, especially in the winter months, as the labour force here are mainly construction workers, fish [and] hunting camp guides, and commercial fishers – this skill set doesn’t necessarily transfer into winter months.” Another seasonal worker in the regions said that beyond working on a seasonal basis, her job options were at the “dépanneur” or “Tim Hortons,” and “that doesn’t interest me.” Another participant living in a rural area of Côte Nord said that distance and extreme weather present other limiting factors in finding employment, saying: “I feel like I would be really limited to what’s available in [neighbouring towns], and even then, that’s a bit of a drive in the winter, so it does feel very limiting.”

## Positive experiences

Though most participants had a difficult job search, a few participants had positive experiences finding work in Québec. Those that had a relatively easy time applying for jobs cited their high level of bilingualism, their specific training and expertise in a high-demand field, or their ability to leverage their English-language skills as reasons for their success in finding a job.

Unlike most participants, those who described themselves as perfectly bilingual in French and English felt that they had many opportunities for work in Québec. One of these participants said that finding work was “very easy - I was bilingual.” Another participant who attended school in the French school system similarly said: “I’m going to say personally, yes, I have had the same opportunities [as my French-speaking peers]. [What] I will say is [...] does language play a role in my answer? No, I think because I went to school in French I feel on the same playing field as my peers. I don’t feel underprepared [for the workforce] at all.” Another participant who had gone to daycare in French and therefore became bilingual from a young age said: “Because I was in a French environment at such a young age, I’ve never had issues like communicating in French or [...] I don’t think I’ve had as many issues [...] finding employment.”

Conversely, a few participants credited their knowledge of English as the reason for their smooth job search experience. As one participant said: "I think I'm more of a [...] fortunate situation than others. [...] Right near when I was graduating from my [...] first degree there was a job offer that came up in the area. And it was in an English-speaking [...] First Nation that's right near where I am." Another participant who works with English-speaking clients in a business said "I have better job opportunities because they keep closing the door on people being able to actively learn and use a second language, which is English. So as long as they continue to just close those doors, it gives me an advantage."

Finally, participants that work in fields that require specialized skills such as healthcare, information technology, and teaching reported no difficulty in finding work as these positions are in high demand.

## Working in Québec

Though the participants in this study worked in a range of employment types across various industries, many shared that language had a significant impact on their jobs and experience of working in Québec. This section will discuss participants' experiences of working in English-medium workplaces, including precarious employment conditions and how working in English impacts their interactions with Québec's majority French-speaking community.<sup>18</sup> This will be followed by a discussion on participants' experiences working in French and the impact of linguicism on these experiences.

### Working in English

26 of the 30 participants interviewed in this study reported working primarily in English. According to the 2021 census, 79.9% of Québec's population works primarily in French, 14.04% works primarily in English, and 5.4% works equally in French and English.<sup>19</sup> Given that French-language skills presented a significant barrier to many participants, it makes sense that most would work in an English-medium workplace, often within English-language institutions, such as schools, universities, and hospitals or within English-language community organizations. Others worked in businesses and industries that require staff that have English-language skills to serve their clientele. Though the primary language of work of most participants was English, this is not to say that these participants did not use French regularly while working. The vast majority said that they used French to some degree, often when communicating with external partners or clients.

Many participants acknowledged that without English-language businesses and institutions, they would have little or no employment opportunities available to them. For example, one participant from the regions working in healthcare said: "Most jobs you would have to know French. Like, it would be hard to get jobs really unless you got into, like I said, an English school where people were speaking English. At [my job], the thing is, I work for mainly English families." Another participant who works for a community organization serving English speakers said that when they first got their job, "I was happy [...] because I didn't think I would be able to find something here [where] I would be able to communicate on a daily basis in my mother tongue. [...] Working on a daily basis in English helps a lot, and I really believed I

<sup>18</sup> "English-medium" is used to denote that the language primarily used in an institution is English. In an education context, the term English-medium instruction (EMI) is used to describe the language of education in a country or location in which English is not the language spoken by the majority population. For more information, see: <http://www.emi.network/about-emi-oxford.html>.

<sup>19</sup> STATISTICS CANADA (2022) *Speaking of work: Languages of work across Canada*. (Accessed May 24, 2023.) Retrieved from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021010/98-200-X2021010-eng.cfm>

wouldn't be able to find something in [my] area, and I did. So, I'm grateful for that." Another interviewee who worked at an English-medium university said: "I knew that I wanted to work at [the university], um but at the same time, I feel like it's one of my only options being an English Quebecer. [...] I feel like [the university] is a little bit of a silo of English speakers."

## **Underemployment and precarious work**

With few options available to work in English, some of the participants interviewed were underemployed or working in precarious employment types to sustain themselves. Participants living in the regions were particularly impacted by precarious work, as there are fewer employers and opportunities to work in English. For example, three of the participants interviewed currently or formerly worked on a seasonal basis in the regions. These participants said that working seasonally presents severe financial difficulties, especially during the off-season, when they were forced to go on Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. The same participant who earlier said that she was "happy" when she first got hired for her job "because I didn't think I would be able to find [employment] here [where] I would be able to communicate on a daily basis in my mother tongue" also said that she faced financial difficulties because her position was seasonal. As she explained, "well, basically, I'm off from mid-June to the end of August, [during] which I fall on EI and that's not cool." She added:

*I mean EI is, like, in my mind, it's something on a temporary basis until you find a job. But I don't need to find a job, I have a job that's nine months a year, but I only [unclear] three months a year so that makes it a bit rough financially, to be honest. And a few years back I tried going to get like a second job for the summer, but I quickly realized that I paid so much income tax the following year that I was like, okay, I might as well stay home for the summer, not have a second job, less expenses if I don't go anywhere. But that's kind of sad in a way because I'm missing out on all these activities because of the fact that financially it's not cool being on EI.*

The participant explained that apart from working seasonally, her options for finding work as an English speaker are slim, saying "I can have a full-time job, but I would have to work at the dépanneur, and that doesn't interest me." Another participant who worked on a seasonal basis at a fishery that employed mostly English speakers said:

*I was lucky enough to be working [...] 6 months compared to the approximate 3-4 [months] of the majority [of staff]. [...] Most everyone including myself go[es] on EI during the off-season. The options for alternative jobs are very slim, especially in the winter months as the labour force here are mainly construction workers, fish [and] hunting camp guides, and commercial fishers – this skill set doesn't necessarily transfer into winter months.*

She added that “the seasonal EI life was a main motivator in the creation of my business. [...] EI is enough to cover the essentials and sometimes not even that, with the cost of living being what it is now. My goal is to never need to be on EI again.” Moreover, the participant explained that her business enables her to work in English on a full-time basis, a rarity in her rural area.

Another participant, an interprovincial migrant with very little knowledge of French, also described turning to self-employment to provide herself with an opportunity to work in English. She explained that:

*I'm currently on EI, so, like, unemployment. I worked in the school system last year on a contract. However, due to less funding from the government this year, there wasn't another contract available for me at this time. So, I'm just [...] substitute teaching, replacement teaching right now at the same school, um, until hopefully, something becomes available, if it becomes available.*

To supplement her income, the participant started a design business making “personalized ornaments and shirts and mugs and glasses, and people can send me their ideas and I do things with them.” She also started selling products for a multi-level marketing company. This participant is in a particularly precarious position, working in multiple unstable jobs to make an income as there are so few employment options as an unilingual English speaker.

### **Sense of belonging to majority French-speaking community**

Even participants working in stable positions revealed that there are drawbacks to working in English-medium organizations, namely isolation from the French-speaking community. Participants described living in an entirely English-speaking ‘bubble’, which extended into their workplace. For example, one participant said: “living in my little area bubble that’s very bilingual, speaking French is definitely external. So, if I’m just communicating internally with my coworkers [...] it’s done in English. Um, and then externally [...] conversations are, are in French.” Another participant who works in an English-speaking school in a French-speaking town described the linguistic differences between her work and community in stark terms, saying “I mean once [...] I leave the school building, everything’s in French.”

Some of these participants recognized that working in an English-language business or institution limits their interactions with the French-speaking community. One participant who began working in Québec on a self-employed basis said:

*[I] started just tutoring people in English and tutoring my neighbour's kids in English and helping them with their schoolwork. And, you know, it's just that when you're-, for me, I had to kind of reinvent myself in a lot of ways just to find my, find my community here and find my purpose here. And a lot of that was built around my differences [...] So I kind of lived in this little English bubble that helped me survive day to day mentally, but also stopped me from fully integrating into [...] the Québec life.*

Another participant shared feeling the same disconnect from the French-speaking community as a result of her job. After transitioning from a French-speaking workplace to a role in a community organization serving English speakers, the participant said that “I sense that connection [to the French community] is less present. And then I got this job, and I [feel] like my connection to the Francophone world is [gone] – I fell into, like, an English hole.”

## Politics and uncertainty of working in English

Multiple participants expressed concerns that the implementation of Bill 96 could further limit opportunities to work in English.<sup>20</sup> For example, one participant who recently completed her degree said that she’s noticed that many of her friends left Québec after graduating, in part because “all of [my friends] don’t see themselves having strong enough job prospects [in Québec] because of language, especially because of Bill 96’s new provisions for workplace standards.” Others also said that they have considered leaving Québec because of Bill 96, but are waiting to see what impact the law will have on their job prospects and daily lives.

Many participants were not sure about what impact the bill would have on the day-to-day operations of the workplace and were worried that they could be penalized for breaking any newly-created rules. One participant described how her employer was trying to make changes to the business, explaining: “I know [Bill 96] is coming. So, we are trying to get ahead of it. Like we’re making sure that our signage is done properly. [...] I do design a lot of the signage [...] for [our] building. So, we’re making sure that [the] French [is more] prominent, and the English is half [the size of the French].” Despite being proactive about making changes, she still says that there’s a feeling of “impending doom [at work]. Like, when do we get fined? If I call so-and-so [at work] and I ask them [a question] in English, [am I] going to be fined for speaking to them in English?”

Another participant who works at an English-language university said that Bill 96 is a source of uncertainty in the institution, especially because the law “is so vague.” They said the university’s “protection [referring to the university’s status as an English-language institution], we’re not sure if it’s true anymore.” This uncertainty has left many of their colleagues unsure if they will be able to continue working in English in the future.

## Challenges of working in French

Most of the participants that participated in this study had some experience using French in a professional context. Five of the participants interviewed either currently or formerly worked in completely French-speaking workplaces. Moreover, as previously mentioned, many participants who worked primarily in English used French in some capacity in their role, particularly while working with external partners and organizations.

Participants with experience working in French generally had mixed experiences. A few participants had positive experiences working in French and spoke of the benefits of working in an immersive environment, which will be discussed in further detail later in this report. However, most participants said that while they sometimes felt welcomed and supported while working in a French-speaking workplace,

<sup>20</sup> Bill 96 was passed into law on June 1st, 2022. The law reinforces French as the language of work in Québec. To read more about this topic, see: <https://www.quebec.ca/gouvernement/politiques-orientations/langue-francaise/loi#c149662>

they also experienced linguicism at other times.

For example, one participant who had previously worked in an entirely French-speaking media organization described having an extremely positive experience overall, especially since he was perfectly bilingual. However, he did experience some linguicism, as he explained:

*I was behind the scenes and I was hoping to get in front of the camera also. And the only time I've ever felt that being English first language [was treated negatively] was, [...] the producers said, 'well, you have an accent when you speak French.' And that told me that I'm not French enough. I have an accent when I speak, but my French is proper. But yeah, c'est bon, je parle français, it's understandable. But it was - in that particular context with that particular person I would never get to be [a presenter] because [I was] not French enough.*

Another participant spoke of a similar experience while working in a French-majority workplace. She said that overall, she had a very positive experience while working for a French company, explaining "it was fun [working] multilingual[ly] because I felt like my English was really valued and respected. I mean, I was [the] only Anglophone, so, like, everything we published in English [...] I was the last stop [to make sure it was well written and edited]." However, she said that one of her bosses would frequently make fun of her French, especially because she spoke with an English accent. She said:

*He would, like, imitate my accent [...], like an Anglo-French accent, you know? And [I] got so mad one time. I went, I calmed myself. Then I gathered my courage and I went down to talk to him. And I said that it really hurt. And I started crying because, you know, I was so upset. And like, it really is upsetting to do this and it's like, insulting. And then he never did it again. He apologized [[and] ...] he never made fun of me again after that.*

Other participants who had experience working in French-speaking workplaces said they had difficulty fitting in with their colleagues because of language barriers. One participant said that while working in French-speaking companies she felt that "there w[ere] a few times that I was employed by, um, organizations [...] with people that I felt [...] didn't accept me. I always felt alone." She said that she felt like an outsider in part because of cultural differences, but also because she needed additional support as someone who spoke French as their second language. She explained that because she was still learning French, some managers would "switch to English for me [...] and then I think other employees felt, um, that wasn't fair. So, I was treated in a way that they didn't accept." She said that "that caused a lot of tension in small teams as well. So, there were a couple organizations that I was let go of because of that and a couple that I chose to leave because I didn't feel comfortable. [...] You feel different." However, this participant has since started working with another French-speaking employer where she has had a very positive experience as an English speaker. She said: "In my [current role], I know I make hiccups and mistakes often, but everybody is super friendly and they're there to help."

Another participant said that she previously worked for a French-speaking company and similarly felt judged for needing help with her French occasionally. She said: "sometimes [...] I would just, like, request, to speak in English just because I didn't know all the technical words in French, like when I started. [...] But then they didn't like that. [...] They were [...] super annoyed with that." She added that as a result, "I felt like I kind of didn't really belong there [...]. Like there was that tension that I felt, that like, 'Oh, why? Why do you even, like, want to work for our company?' " Ultimately, this participant was let go from this position and she feels that the decision was at least in part because of language. She explained: "The reason that they gave [for letting me go] was [...] I didn't have [...] experience and they needed a senior person. But I think if they really wanted to keep me, they could have made it work." Because of this experience, this participant is now looking for jobs in English-speaking businesses in Québec and in other provinces.

Participants who occasionally speak French at work expressed feelings of stress around having to speak French professionally, as they have received negative comments in the past. One interviewee said that when she has to give presentations in French or meet with French-speaking partners, "I'm scared to make a mistake. I'm [...] worried [because] it has happened to me [...] in the past, even like in my current role where I'll have [...] somebody correct me in the middle of [...] a presentation if I'm doing it in French, which is [...] very off-[putting]." She has found that "people are not shy to tell me [I've made a mistake in French]. And I know it's embarrassing." Another participant similarly struggled with feeling embarrassed or looked down upon when speaking the language in a professional context, particularly when he is corrected by native French speakers. He said:

*[E]ven though it comes from good intentions, the tone of which somebody corrects you can be very, um, can either be very encouraging or [...] debilitating. [At my previous job] there was a [colleague where] every time I spoke in French [...] it would be like an instant, like, «well, it's not said like this, it's said like this.» And it was [...] just exhausting.*

He said he would come away from those interactions thinking, "I just won't speak French near you anymore." On the other hand, he has a colleague that regularly corrects his French but "their demeanour is very different [...] [She'll say to me] [a phrase is said] like this, not like this," and, as a result, he feels supported and encouraged to speak more.

## French-language skills development

This section will explore why the overwhelming majority of participants cited French-language skills as a barrier to accessing or integrating into employment.

All participants had received some form of structured linguistic training over the course of their lives and careers, whether through public education, government-funded French courses, or private classes. Participants experienced varying degrees of success in acquiring French-language skills depending on the type of class and the context in which they were learning. However, a common thread through all of the participants' learning experiences is that participants could not become fluent through French classes alone. Rather, education paired with sustained immersive interaction within one's community was vital

for gaining command of the language. This section will discuss participants' perceptions and experiences of learning French through public education and government-funded French-language training courses for adults, going into depth on the barriers and efficacy of government-funded French-language training programs in Québec.

## French education within Québec's education system

Participants that grew up in Québec overwhelmingly said the English school system left them unprepared to join the French-language workforce. This was largely because participants felt that they did not gain fluency in French while studying the language in school, even those who studied in immersion programs. Many said that while they were taught grammar and conversation, reading, and writing throughout their schooling, they were never exposed to French in a truly immersive environment, making fluency impossible. One participant said:

*I have a big gripe with the English education system and [...] its capacity to prepare English Quebecers for economic and social integration. [...] [A]lthough that we had French classes on a daily basis and I also took other subjects in French, the reality is [...] that the cultural division that still exists means that there was not a lot of opportunity to practise, and without the capacity to practise and immerse yourself in the language, [and] what you learn in class, in my case, didn't really stick.*

This quote is particularly instructive, as this participant indicates that it is not necessarily the fault of the English-medium school system that many participants did not leave school fluent in French, but rather the fact that many English speakers live among other English speakers and rarely have the opportunity to speak French for a sustained period of immersion within a community environment.

Other participants similarly stated that learning French in institutions within the English school boards alone was not enough to prepare them to use the language in a professional context, as they were never immersed within their community. For example, one participant said that while she did learn French as a child, she quickly lost it once she stopped having regular French classes because she was never exposed to the language outside of school. She explained that because her parents "put [me] in the English schools, English extracurriculars, [...] I [...] felt like I was lagging behind in [...] certain opportunities once I became an adult and was competing on the job market." Another participant who was enrolled in the French school system and frequently interacted with French speakers said that he felt he had an advantage over his peers that went to school in the English system upon entering the workforce. He explained: "A lot of those who [were] in the English system didn't come out with the French that was efficient enough for them. I have many friends who left, many friends who didn't get the opportunities [I did] because their French skills were not [...] as good as they should have been."

Participants also said that there was a noticeable difference in linguistic ability and French-language skills among English speakers that had attended school in the English and the French systems, leaving them at a disadvantage in finding work after leaving school. One participant who received English-medium instruction in school said that her level of French is much lower than her stepbrothers, who went to school in the French system. She explained:

*I felt like a little bit of a disadvantage [when it came to work] because of that. [...] I was pretty advanced in terms of French in my immersion school, but if you compared, like, my French to my stepbrothers' French, who only had their education [in] French, our French is mostly different. Like, I felt like [I] w[as] still learning the same tense of [...] verbs for [...] years.*

This participant was careful to explain that unlike her, her stepbrothers interacted much more with the French-speaking community, in part because her step-brothers spoke French both at home and school, giving them plenty of opportunities to practise. Conversely, this participant only occasionally spoke French at home with her mother and, since all of her classmates were English speakers, she rarely spoke French outside of the classroom at school.

## **Eligibility for French-language learning programs for adults**

Given that French-language skills presented such a significant barrier to accessing employment for the majority of participants, and most lived in English-speaking bubbles with little opportunity to learn French organically through community, many expressed interest in taking French courses to improve their employability. However, when asked about government-funded programs, many participants said that they had difficulty accessing these classes. A significant barrier to access was the eligibility criteria for courses. At the time of this study, government-funded French-language training programs were only eligible for those who had moved to Québec from abroad or from another province. Therefore, participants who had grown up in Québec could not access these classes. As one participant said:

*I [...] know, for example, there's [...] Francization courses for [...] immigrants and whatnot. I know that's a lot about like culture and stuff, but it would be nice, like, even if you graduated from an English high school in Québec, if you could still have access to some of these things immigrants had access to or, you know, whoever because there's just always need to improve your French. Like if you're coming out of an English school, um, there's just always room for improvement.*

Those that were ineligible for government-funded classes felt that they had few viable options to learn, since privately-run classes are too expensive. One participant from Québec explained: "There [are] classes available. I've looked into it extensively [...] Oftentimes it's [...] really expensive and I'm like 'why is it \$500 for eight weeks?'"

Given that most participants who were from Québec felt ill-prepared to join the French-speaking workforce in Québec, expanding eligibility criteria would help these English speakers access employment opportunities.

## Findability and awareness of French-language learning programs for adults

For participants who were eligible for government-funded French classes, findability and awareness of opportunities presented a challenge in accessing programs. For example, several interprovincial migrants were unaware that they were eligible for subsidized French programs.

Of the ten interprovincial migrants interviewed for this study, eight said that they needed to learn French upon their arrival to Québec. One of these participants arrived at the start of the 1980s and did not know of any available courses. Two of these eight participants stated that they were eligible for government-funded French classes. However, five of the other participants said that they did not know they were eligible for subsidized French courses as interprovincial migrants. One interprovincial migrant who was unaware that she was eligible for government-funded French classes said: "What surprises me, though, about Québec is that, you know, they're happy to teach newcomers that [are] from out of the country, um, English, but they won't provide those services for people who are actually from Canada that are moving to Québec, um, then you actually have to pay for it. So, I'm like, what's the difference?" Another interprovincial migrant was similarly unaware that they were eligible for government-subsidized French-language training programs, saying: "I found that it's, it's very hard to find services [as] a Canadian who's wanting to learn French. There's a cost to be concerned about and access."

One interprovincial migrant explained that she did not know she was eligible for funded classes because she thought the programs were aimed at international immigrants. She explained: "[The website for the program] really [didn't] make it sound appealing to Anglophones because the keyword that they use [is] 'immigrants.' Like, [the programs are for] an immigrant to Québec. [...] And [I found out] I'm an immigrant [even though] I was born and raised in Canada. [Because] what they mean is an immigrant to Québec." Moreover, because the websites were in French, she effectively could not research the eligibility requirements. Only when she befriended a bilingual French speaker who researched the courses for her did she find out that she was eligible.

Another migrant to Québec said that they struggled to sign up for classes because websites to sign up are offered only in French. They explained: "So the site to sign up for the French classes is in French," which meant that they were unsure what exactly they were signing up for. When the participant received a phone call from a representative from the French-language training program to assess their level of French, they had no idea what was happening and asked their French-speaking spouse for help taking the call. The assessor thought that they were trying to cheat on the assessment and got angry on the call. The participant explained: "He didn't even switch to English to be like, I'm sorry, there's been a misunderstanding, I'm trying to assess your French. He just [...] kept yelling at [me and my husband] in French. So, it was nuts. I can't even imagine, like, if you didn't have a French speaker in the home, like to help you with those phone calls."

Moreover, it is important to note that not a single participant referenced having any knowledge of any classes or programs available online through the government. This speaks to the fact that these courses have extremely low visibility among English speakers. This could be due to a combination of lack of marketing and the fact that the information on how to learn French is only available in French.

## Scheduling and availability and French-language learning programs for adults

The scheduling and availability of government-funded French-language training programs presented another access barrier for participants. Courses that are aimed specifically at preparing students for the workforce are held online for 6 hours a week on an 11-week schedule.<sup>21</sup> Generalized French courses are available in-person on a part-time and full-time basis as well as online. Part-time in-person classes are held over 8 to 12-week periods and range from 4-15 hours of class time per week.<sup>22</sup> These courses are designed for beginner to intermediate-level students. Full-time courses are also held over an 8 to 12-week period but are between 25-30 hours per week. Full-time classes are available for beginner and intermediate learners and run from 8:30-16:00 from Monday to Friday.<sup>23</sup>

Several participants said that the timing and intensity of these courses made them inaccessible to them, especially for those who were working or had child-caring responsibilities. One participant said that she enrolled in a government-subsidized French-language training program while looking for work and said:

*[They ran] from five 'til eight or eight-thirty. It was late. I feel like it might have even been 5 to 9 or something. It was long. So yeah, I don't think like, I could currently do that. So, in terms of accessibility [there were no] options of classes [that ran on a] schedule that I was looking for. [...] So I made it work. [...] And also because like I live, I live close-ish to the school that I went to. I think again, like if you're, if you have to travel, it would be hard if you were working and had to go there after work, it would be hard. I can't imagine if you had, like, kids or something, I don't know how you would do it.*

Another participant who took a government-subsidized French class in the evenings described having to take a break from learning because the schedule was too intensive. She explained that "because the classes start at 6:30 and end at ten and I finished work, [it was] like another job for me. And that is very difficult because I get home at 11 and [I had] no energy for [the] next day for work. So that was affecting my health. So, I thought, okay, taking a break is a good idea." She's hoping that she can find a class that enables her to enjoy a better work-life balance.

Several participants with parenting or caregiving responsibilities said that it was difficult to carve out time for intensive French-language training programs. One participant said that while she would be interested in taking French classes, she simply does not have the time between working and parenting. She said:

21 GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC. *Apprendre le français: cours spécialisés par domaine d'emploi.* (Accessed on April 18, 2023). [https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-specialises#c36405\\_target](https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-specialises#c36405_target)

22 GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC. *Apprendre le français: cours à temps partiel.* (Accessed on April 18, 2023). [https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-temps-partiel#c36404\\_target](https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-temps-partiel#c36404_target)

23 GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC. *Apprendre le français: cours à temps complet.* (Accessed on April 18, 2023). [https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-temps-complet#c36403\\_target](https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais/cours-temps-complet#c36403_target)

*[Even if finding] childcare [wasn't an] issue, it's just that it's always on a weeknight, so [...] by the time you get home at five, you have to cook and then you're eating at six. And then, you know, by the time you're done [eating] dinner, it's like 6:30 and then you're doing homework [with your kid] for like 40 minutes or something like that. So then by then, that time, like your kid [is] ready to go to bed. So, unless like, you know, you're going to bring [your kids with you to classes] and they're going to be doing their homework [there] [it does not work].*

Even parents who were aware that childcare subsidies exist for classes, or who had a partner that could take care of the children during classes, felt uncomfortable leaving their children for so long. One participant who took classes as a new mother said that she found it difficult to justify sacrificing time with young children to take classes. She said: "I went [to classes] when my son was six months old and [...] I breastfed. So, I would breastfeed him, I would hop in the car and then he would take bottle milk after that from my husband. And I did French classes, I did evening classes two days a week [for] two or three sessions." Overall, she found the experience to be negative, saying: "I felt that I would be leaving every night with a headache. I was giving up time with my newborn son." She suggested that parent-child classes, such as guided playgroups or language cafés, would be helpful for parents learning French.

Scheduling and availability were particularly important barriers for participants living in remote areas, where few classes are available compared to urban centers. One participant living in the regions explained that because classes in her area tend to be designed for seasonal workers during their off-season, classes are "always [held] during business hours, so [because I work] Monday to Friday, 8 to 4, it's impossible for me. I have to take a day off to go get my oil change done or whatever, you know, like I like those kinds of things that we have to do. So, it's hard to work around." She added that because she lives in such a small town, the only French-language courses for adults in her town run during the day, but says "it would be really cool if, you know, if there were some evening classes [...]. It would be nice to see something in the evening. [Because] not everybody is a seasonal employee."

## **French-language learning programs for adults and applicability to the workforce**

Moreover, participants that had taken government-subsidized French courses or were eligible for them had mixed reviews about the usefulness of these programs, particularly in relation to their applicability to the workforce. Participants who identified as beginners in their French-language learning said that while the classes were helpful for learning general grammar and vocabulary, they ultimately failed to prepare them to use French in a professional context. For example, one participant who came to Québec with little knowledge of French said that while she learned basics in her government-funded French class, she felt the course was largely ineffective. After completing two sessions, she was left feeling like "[t]here really was no option for me to learn French to get to where I needed to be, to be able to join the workforce after my maternity leave."

Another participant who came to Québec with some basic knowledge of French already said that "the [government-funded French] class just didn't match up with [...] what I already knew [...]. It was too much and some of it wasn't enough." She added that the classes were not adapted to professional

contexts, explaining that “[the class] was really just for [...] conversations [...] on the street, [like, how] to [give] someone directions.” An interprovincial migrant with a limited background in French said that “out of all of [...] my French courses, [the government-subsidized French class] was probably one of the least helpful. I think it was, like, the grammar brush-up was good, but [...] I could have just [...] reviewed [...] my old workbooks from school [...]. [There] was [...] so much repetition in that class.”

Other participants who had more positive experiences taking government-funded French classes still said that the courses were not enough on their own to prepare them for the workforce, especially since many were under the impression that their French skills had to be perfect in order to be able to work in the language. One participant who had completed the advanced levels of the government-funded French-language training program said that:

*I think [to get to a] professional level [of French], or anyone who has a French of a certain level [but wants] to push further, [...] I feel like there's a hole there that it would be cool if the government offered something, [because] even if I continue with francization [...], it w[ouldn't] do [...] what I want, [which is] something made for people working who want to [...] improve their French.*

Another participant similarly said that he did not think that government-funded French-language training programs are adapted “for someone who’s already in the workforce [and can work in French at some capacity] to fine-tune their skills.”

Like those who learned French through school alone, these participants find that there is a limit to what they can learn in a classroom setting, and they need immersion to attain true fluency. On-the-job training in an immersive environment could be particularly helpful here, as it would give participants the opportunity they need to ‘fine-tune’ their pre-existing skills and enable them to gain a stronger command of the language.

## **Employer-delivered French-language training programs**

Though Québec does offer subsidies for companies looking to provide French-language training for their employees, none of the participants interviewed in this study had ever been given an opportunity to take government-subsidized French classes through their employer. Two participants said that their employers offer basic classes for staff, these classes are organized by the employer themselves and are very limited. One participant explained that the employer-run classes are for members of staff with no knowledge of the language, and therefore are not useful to most of the employees. Another said that her employer had offered to pay for them to take a continuing education course at a local university. This suggests that government-subsidized classes for employers are underutilized or ill-adapted to meet the needs of employers. This also aligns with qualitative evidence gathered by other research organizations, which suggests that government-funded French-language training programs for employers are not well-known and are difficult to access.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE (PERT) (2021). French-Language Training for the Workforce in Québec. (Accessed May 16, 2023). <https://pertquebec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Evaluation-des-programmes-de-Francisation-de-la-main-doeuvre-quebecoise.pdf>

## French-language training Support for Québec's Professionals

French-language skills presented unique challenges for participants looking to join one of Québec's professional orders. There are 46 professional orders in Québec. All members must have a knowledge of French that will enable them to provide professional services in the language. Each professional order and the l'Organisme d'autoréglementation du courtage immobilier du Québec (OACIQ) decides whether a candidate must pass a language exam administered by the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF).<sup>25</sup>

Of the 30 participants interviewed, three were current members of a professional order, one was a former member and another was unable to join their professional order due to the language requirements. Each of these participants had unique experiences in joining or attempting to join their respective professional orders. Two participants were exempt from taking the OQLF language exam because one had completed CEGEP in Québec and the other worked with an English-speaking First Nations community.

However, the remaining three participants had to study for and pass their exams in order to join their professional orders. They each described the experience as stressful. Moreover, none of these participants received support from the government or their professional order while learning French for the exam. One participant said that because she had a Francophone partner who worked in the same field, she had a slight advantage while studying as she could easily access support. She explains: "I was lucky having a Francophone in the same field as me, because he could give me books to read. [...] I had the training, but I didn't know the vocabulary." After studying, she says "the French test, I didn't find it that bad at the time [...] I passed it." The other participant who sat and passed the OQLF exam said that she expected to fail, saying "I took the O[Q]LF exam and I passed it. I was quite surprised, but I did." She too had support from her French-speaking partner while preparing for the exam. Again, interactions with members of the French-speaking community and the opportunity to speak French in an immersive environment proved to be helpful for participants in acquiring the linguistic skills to work.

Conversely, the participant who did not manage to pass the exam enrolled in private classes to study, saying: "I spent a bomb at Berlitz as well, you know, and so I can have a conversation, and I can read books, and I can translate things in my head. But the written and the... I don't know what it is with professional orders."<sup>26</sup> As a result, this participant was unable to work in the field she was qualified in. One of the other participants said that she's noticed that many newly qualified English speakers in her field leave Québec for other Canadian provinces because the OQLF language exam "is a huge obstacle for them." French-language training programs for English-speaking professionals could help Québec better retain and integrate these valuable workers into the workforce.

25 OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE. Ordres professionnels. (Accessed May 11, 2023). [https://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/francisation/ordres\\_prof/ordres.html](https://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/francisation/ordres_prof/ordres.html)

26 Berlitz is a popular private language training program.

# Positive French-Language Learning Experiences

In addition to sharing their frustrations and struggles with learning French for the workforce, many participants also shared positive experiences learning the language. The vast majority of the positive experiences while learning French that participants shared centred on situations in which they were immersed in the language. Participants cited immersion as the best way to learn French, whether that was with friends and community members or at the workplace. This final section will discuss participants' experiences of learning immersion generally and will conclude with a discussion of immersion in the workplace.

## Learning through immersion

An overwhelming majority of participants said that they felt that the best way to learn French was through immersion. Most participants that identified as bilingual credited being immersed in the language, whether that be through French-language extracurriculars, friendships with Francophones, or interacting with French-speaking family members, as the main reason they could speak the language. For example, one participant who grew up in Québec explained that while school helped her understand the grammatical structures of French, it was really her extracurriculars that helped her gain comfort in the language. She said: "As I grew up [...] the only time I really, really started being interested in French [was] when I joined a group - when I was thirteen, [...] I joined the Cadets de l'aire, the Air Cadets [...]. And that's how I learned my French."

Other participants shared similar experiences of learning French through immersive situations. Another participant credited their bilingualism as being the result of "not necessarily with the education component, I think it was more environmental than anything that helped me along with the [...] French language." Another said that while "I can say I learned the basics in school," she found that when "hanging out with Francophone friends, [...] [learning French] kind of ended up coming automatically."

## Immersion and the workplace

As previously discussed, many participants said that they had mixed experiences working in a French-speaking environment. However, participants who had an opportunity to work in French also said that this immersive experience improved their levels of bilingualism, helping them reach fluency and gain confidence in the language. One participant who spent her career in a completely French-speaking workplace spoke about how her French-language skills developed significantly over the years. She said that her job:

*[G]ave me the opportunity [to improve my French], and over time I just started changing into different dossiers and [t]hen I was writing more. Again, my writing got better. [...] So if I look back, probably sometimes it was horrific, but I got through, I got better, I wrote more and just got more confidence. But I had the opportunity and I really believed [...]. And my boss was just very proactive and he [...] accepted me for that. [...] They believed in me and, uh, and [...] then [I] proved [myself.], you know? [Y]ou just need that chance.*

Other participants who were given a similar chance to work in French in a supportive environment, despite not having completely mastered the language, also spoke very positively about how their linguistic skills improved. One participant described how when he worked in a French-speaking workplace:

*[A]ll the meetings were in French. It was French, French, French, French. So it was great. I learned a lot of French and I became a lot better. [...] It was an immersion situation and, uh, no regrets, is the best thing I ever did. [If] I hadn't done that, I wouldn't have had that, that, um, that connection [to the French-speaking community]."*

Here, it is important to note that while these participants improved dramatically, they also spoke about learning the language as a life-long process. Participants said that part of feeling supported as a French-language learner in the workplace was the understanding that gaining fluency takes time.

Moreover, participants often spoke about being 'given a chance' to work in French. Many felt that they were lucky to have the opportunity to work in the language and improve, and others who did not have that opportunity coveted it. One participant who said that they had been unsuccessful in finding a job in a completely French-speaking workplace said that her perception was that "it's really fast and quick and easy to pick up the lingo, business terminology while you're actually doing the job. But if you don't get hired, you're never going to have that opportunity to grow."

Another participant who had recently been hired in a position where she would be working closely with French speakers said that she felt very hopeful that her linguistic skills would improve in the role. She said that her job "is going to be a lot of French. [...] So [my bosses and colleagues are] hoping they're going to help me with my conversational French because they said it is there, the basis is there. So, they're hoping to just kind of work with me to develop it [...] which is good." She added that part of why she felt so confident that she would improve was that the people around her would be supportive, explaining:

*[Just the] fact that I will be working with people that are open and they're very, like, nurturing with [my learning French] is going to [make] a huge difference. [...] So, I think my confidence will be a little bit better. It's definitely comfort[ing] [that my colleagues will] kind of nurture that safety net for [me].*

The evidence presented in this section suggests that on-the-job training opportunities could be especially beneficial for English speakers in integrating into the workforce. Though the participants of this study needed to have the confidence and linguistic skills to apply for French-speaking jobs, employers also played a role in welcoming and developing non-native-speaking staff. As discussed in previous sections, many participants had experienced linguicism while applying for jobs or working in French. However, when employers had the capacity to support English-speaking employees as they learned French on the job, participants succeeded. Therefore, employers should be given incentives and tools to support English speakers as they learn on the job.

## 2.4

# Discussion on the qualitative and quantitative research

The statistical profile presented in this report indicates that the ESQ population has faced evolving challenges in terms of integration into Québec's labour market over the 2006-2021 period. While the results of the interviews carried out with 30 members of the English-speaking community do not carry the same statistical significance as the analysis of the 2006 to 2021 censuses, they could gesture towards some of the employability challenges that may contribute to the results of the quantitative analysis presented in the first chapter of the *Portrait*.

The statistical analysis presented in this report indicate that, since 2006, unemployment rates have been 2 to 3 percentage points higher for ESQs than for FSQs. Moreover, these higher unemployment rates persisted despite higher levels of education for ESQs than for FSQs. Several participants interviewed as part of this study mentioned their insufficient French language skills or lack of self-confidence and ability to express themselves in French in a professional context as a barrier to finding a job. Furthermore, the lack of skills or self-confidence to express themselves in French was a limiting factor for these individuals, as they felt that they could only apply for positions where they could work primarily in English. Participants therefore felt that they had little chance of finding meaningful employment compared to their French-speaking counterparts, given the status of French as a language of work in Québec.

The lack of opportunities described by participants in the interviews could towards problems underlying the results of the census analysis, which indicate that ESQs are more likely to work part-time in precarious employment conditions. For example, ESQs are 3% more likely than FSQs to work part-time. ESQs also tend to work in sectors most affected by the pandemic, such as retail and accommodation. These realities were reflected in the interviews. Some participants indicated that they worked in precarious conditions mainly because it was one of the few options they had to work in English.

Moreover, it is interesting to consider that in the 2021 Census the median income among ESQs was 7.6% lower than that of FSQs. This aligns with the qualitative research; many ESQs surveyed were interacting with a much smaller portion of the labour market, as they worked or applied for jobs in English-language organizations. Consequently, they may have fewer opportunities for career promotion or advancement. This limited number of opportunities could partly explain why ESQs have consistently earned a lower median income than FSQs from 2006 to 2021.

Analysis of the census data also indicated that those with knowledge of French and English earn a higher median income compared to those who are unilingual in either language. The analysis also showed that people who only have knowledge of English earn the lowest median income by a significant margin, even compared to those who speak only French. The qualitative data collected within the framework of this study is especially interesting to consider here, as there appears to be a tension between the quantitative and qualitative data. Although the majority of participants reported having some level of bilingual proficiency, most of them said they did not have the necessary proficiency to work in French. Many participants also stated that their English education did not prepare them to join Québec's

French-speaking workforce. These participants said that though they had been learning the vocabulary and grammatical structures of French for years, because they had never experienced full immersion in the language, they were not able to acquire a true command of French. Even those who were highly qualified or who had pursued higher education reported that their educational experiences did not prepare them for Québec's labour market because they did not receive adequate training in French. Counter to the results of the census analysis, these participants do not appear to be benefiting economically from their bilingualism, as they are unable to use French in a professional context.

While many ESQs interviewed for this study felt that their French language skills were inadequate for the workforce, attitudes toward French-language training for the workforce were positive. Indeed, many participants expressed a strong desire to learn or improve in French. This indicates that opportunities to learn French on the job may be extremely popular among the ESQ population.

Finally, the census analysis in the first chapter of this report highlighted regional disparities in employment and socio-economic realities among ESQs (see Chapter 1, Table 7). These differences were reflected in the qualitative interviews conducted for the purposes of this report. For example, participants living in rural areas indicated that there were few employment opportunities in general, and even fewer jobs in English-language organizations. On the other hand, many of them also reported that they had difficulty finding opportunities to improve their French language skills. This further highlights the diversity of experiences within the ESQ population and the need to offer services tailored to the unique reality of each region and community.

It would be interesting to incorporate further qualitative research using proportional sampling methods into this debate that could more accurately highlight the needs and experiences of the ESQ population in relation to census data in future research.

Case Study 7

# English-speaking First Nations People and Language



<b>Name</b>	Ryan
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Origin</b>	Îles-de-la-Madeleine
<b>Region</b>	Îles-de-la-Madeleine



Ryan is a healthcare worker in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region of Québec who identifies as First Nations. Growing up, Ryan spoke English and learned the basics of French in school. He says that English was the dominant language of his childhood in part because “I went to school in English as well. But that was mainly because I experienced late development as a child, so it was medically advised that I be placed in an English-medium school instead of French.” Ryan described his French education in school as inadequate, saying “I did learn a bit of French, but I think that the level of French being taught in the English school system is not at a high enough standard. And I don’t think this is something that is unique to my school, I think it’s a province-wide problem in the English school system.”

I was in a fortunate situation compared to a lot of other people. I got a job in the English-speaking First Nation close to my hometown when I graduated from university.

Ryan left Québec for a time to pursue higher education in another province. While at university, Ryan continued to take French classes to improve his language skills. He returned to his hometown after graduating and quickly found work within his field. “I was in a fortunate situation compared to a lot of other people. I got a job in the English-speaking First Nation close to my hometown when I graduated from university.” Ryan also joined a professional order when he returned to

Québec, but was exempt from taking the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) language examination because he works in an English-speaking First Nations community. However, if he were to begin working outside of a First Nations community, he would need to pass the OQLF exam.

Though the First Nations clientele Ryan serves are English-speaking, he still says that he'd like to improve his French in order to better communicate with coworkers and external organizations. He has had some difficulty in finding language classes that suit his needs. Before the pandemic, Ryan was enrolled in a privately run French class, but "we were learning the same things that I learned in school and that wasn't helpful." These classes were cancelled during the pandemic and have not been reinstated yet. The only other French programs Ryan has found in his area are held at the local adult learning centre during the daytime, making them inaccessible to people in full-time employment. He's also seen government-funded French programs for newcomers to Québec, but he does not believe he is eligible to enrol since he grew up in Québec. The ideal course, Ryan says, would be something where he could "fine tune my skills," rather than focusing purely on grammar.

I did learn a bit of French, but I think that the level of French being taught in the English school system is not at a high enough standard.

In addition to improving his French, Ryan also says he would "Like to improve my knowledge of the First Nation language [Mi'kmaq] to be able to serve the community members whose mother tongue is that language." Ryan took Mi'kmaq classes online during the pandemic, but says that as with French, "I think it's something you need to learn by regularly speaking the language with other people in your environment" rather than from a classroom or textbook.

## Case Study 8

# Linguicism at Work



<b>Name</b>	Faye
<b>Age</b>	45-64
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	United States
<b>Region</b>	Capitale-Nationale



Faye is a professional working in communications in the Capitale-Nationale region. She moved to Québec from the United States over a decade ago. Before moving, Faye had already studied in France and studied the language at university, but found that she had to adjust to the new dialect and culture when she arrived. She enrolled in a government-funded French program at a local adult education centre for four months while she waited for her permanent residency to be approved. In addition to covering conventional topics such as grammar, “we did classes where we would work on Québécois phrases and idioms. They would teach us formal French, but also say ‘if you hear this, this is what this means.’ And that was super helpful.” As a migrant, Faye was eligible for the subsidized programs, making the classes especially accessible for her.

What I want from a French class still doesn't exist. I want to perfect my French. But there's not a lot of classes available for advanced learners.

Though she enjoyed her experience taking government-funded French classes, Faye says she quickly outgrew the program. “What I want from a French class still doesn't exist. I want to perfect my French. But there's not a lot of classes available for advanced learners.”

Once she was able to work in the country, Faye started applying for jobs. Initially she found that there were few opportunities available to her as a native English speaker. “I started looking for jobs after that to see what was out there, using Emploi-Québec's website. And I was so disappointed

because the jobs that were available to English speakers were dishwashers at a restaurant and gas station attendants. And those are noble jobs, but there was nothing related to what I studied or related to my skill set."

Faye said that after searching for some time she found two part-time jobs to apply for and got them both. Eventually, one of these positions turned into a full-time job. The role was at a Francophone organization assisting with the production of English-language communications. Faye really enjoyed this position and says "it was fun working in a French-speaking environment because I felt like my English was really valued and respected. I mean, I was the only Anglophone, so everything we published in English had to be checked by me first."

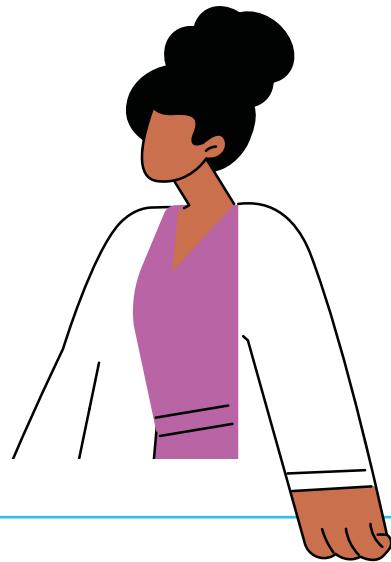
Though she enjoyed the position, Faye said that she experienced linguicism at the workplace. She said that one of her bosses, a French speaker, would regularly "imitate my accent by putting on an Anglo-French accent." After one incident in which her boss imitated her, Faye got so upset that "I gathered my courage and I went to talk to him. I told him that it really hurt my feelings and I started crying because I was so upset. And then he never did it again." She said that other colleagues offered their support as well, and one left her a note that said "Votre accent est beau" that she kept in her desk at work. Faye says that even though "I was kind of scared," she's glad she stood up for herself because "it was important to me."

## Case Study 9

# Navigating the Labour Market as a Racialized Person



<b>Name</b>	Dee
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Outside of Canada
<b>Region</b>	Capitale-Nationale



Dee is an interprovincial migrant living in the Capitale-Nationale region. She grew up in another province and moved to Québec after finishing higher education. Dee was enrolled in a French-speaking school growing up and she took government-funded French-language training programs when she first moved to prepare for entering Québec's labour market. Despite her advanced level of French, she said that she has found it difficult to settle in because she is both an English-speaker and a visible minority. She says, "I'm part of the English-speaking community of Québec and I'm also a person of colour. These two things really stand out in Québec." Dee says she faces increased discrimination as both an English speaker and a racialized individual. "If you are a person of colour, especially from a visible minority that is assumed to be unable to speak French, then there is a lot of linguistic discrimination." She says that many people she interacts with assume that she cannot speak French because of her race.

I'm part of the English-speaking community of Québec and I'm also a person of colour. These two things really stand out in Québec.

These issues have had a significant impact on her experiences in the labour market. She says that while she was able to write job applications in French, she often felt that when she went to interviews, the recruiters were not expecting her to be a person of colour. "I did apply for French-speaking jobs and I didn't have a problem writing a CV or cover letter in French, but when employers met me at the interview stage, I felt discriminated against. I could tell that employers were not expecting a brown person when I showed up for interviews because it is assumed I am an English speaker."

Dee was eventually hired for a bilingual position in a French-speaking company but found the work environment difficult to navigate. "I was working in a Francophone company, and I felt like I didn't belong because I was an English speaker." She said that when she first started working, she found that many of her colleagues were not understanding of the fact that she was still learning French. "Sometimes I would request to speak in English because I didn't know all the technical words in French, like when I first started. But my colleagues didn't like that and were annoyed with me for needing accommodation while learning the terms of the position in French." She said that she was eventually terminated from this position because the company wanted someone with more experience, but Dee says "I think that if they really wanted to keep me, they could have made it work. I feel like they were looking for a reason to terminate my contract."

I was working in a Francophone company, and I felt like I didn't belong because I was an English speaker.

Currently, Dee is looking for work and hopes to stay as she doesn't want to "give up" living in Québec. In addition to looking for jobs in Québec, Dee has been looking for remote employment opportunities in other provinces. She cites several reasons for this, one being that "I wasn't really used to working in French before moving to Québec. And I think that is always going to be a disadvantage, I have to work a little bit harder than everyone else to make up for that."

## Chapter 3:

# Literature Review on Employability Policies and Issues



**ACESQ**

Advisory Committee for  
English-Speaking Quebecers

### 3.1

## Introduction

Analysis of the census data shows that English-speaking Quebecers generally experience higher rates of unemployment and lower incomes than their French-speaking counterparts, despite having a higher level of education on average and being just as likely to be working full-time when employed. In addition, analysis of qualitative data shows that English speakers face unique employability obstacles, including linguistic barriers.

To reduce these inequalities between English and French speakers, it would be appropriate for governments and community organizations to implement policies aimed at improving employment outcomes among English-speaking Quebecers. These policies should not be «wall-to-wall,» but should take into account the diverse and specific realities of English-speaking communities. For example, a program for an urban area will not necessarily have the same priorities as one for a remote region, or depending on whether the main barrier is qualifications, trainings should consider language, age, parental responsibilities, etc.

This section presents a literature review of the issues surrounding current employment and employability policies, particularly those that do not serve ESQs.

### 3.2

## Perceptions of Employment Services

According to a study conducted by Canadian Heritage in 2019, 47% of ESQs were satisfied with the public services received in their official language, compared to 52% of French speakers outside of Québec (Canadian Heritage, 2019). Additionally, most ESQs indicated that access to English-language services in their region has remained unchanged over the five previous years (from 2014 to 2019). English speakers were fairly satisfied with services related to post-secondary education, media, arts, and culture. Conversely, the types of services that garnered the highest levels of dissatisfaction pertain to legal services, daycares and, at the lowest point, employment services—only 17% of English-speaking respondents indicated that they were satisfied with these services.

From a historical point of view, 21% of respondents indicated that employment services had deteriorated over the five years preceding the study, while 35% estimated that access had remained relatively unchanged (5% reported an improvement and 39% responded that they did not know). However, in the chapter on priority actions to be implemented, employment services are in 4th position, after health, legal services and pre-college education. These findings align with those from the Building Bridges consultation tour, during which education, health and social services, employment and the community sector were identified as priorities by the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, 2020). The consultations carried out as part of the Building Bridges tour also revealed that many regional organizations have difficulty accessing the programs that have been implemented because the populations they serve are too small and/or they are compelled to work in several fields (youth, seniors, employment, health, etc.), making them ineligible for programs that cater to specific population groups. Funding guidelines are often based on a minimal number of participants, making it almost impossible for smaller communities to qualify. Some organizations were also concerned about the lack of transparency around funds allocated by the federal government for employment and teaching programs—a sentiment that is heightened by the fairly low representation of English speakers in Québec's public service sector. Moreover, English speakers specifically singled out Emploi Québec as being unreceptive to their needs and concerns during these consultations.

### 3.3

## Barriers to Employment

To maximize their effectiveness, employment policies and other initiatives should target the main barriers that English-speaking Quebecers face. In November 2019, PERT held a conference on issues and solutions around employment and the English-speaking community, bringing together 96 members of this community and representing 58 organizations (PERT, 2019). One of the issues raised during this conference pertains to public employment programs and their stringent eligibility requirements, which automatically exclude certain regional organizations whose mandates are considered too broad or who serve a population deemed to be too small. French-language skills continue to be the main barrier to employment, especially when it comes to accessing professions regulated by professional orders. In terms of geographical location, English-language educational institutions are concentrated in Montréal, which makes education—especially vocational training—more difficult to access for certain communities. Moreover, English speakers living in more rural areas often work in seasonal industries and therefore face more employment insecurity.

In 2017, YES Employment + Entrepreneurship conducted an extensive study in the regions of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Montérégie, Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue (YES Employment + Entrepreneurship, 2017). According to their research, 97% of English-speaking youth seeking work considered youth unemployment to be a concerning issue for the Québec economy, and nearly two thirds considered themselves to be underemployed (65%). The same study also identified language as a significant barrier to employment, and 70% of respondents had considered leaving the province to find work. Additionally, only 38% of ESQ youth looking for work in these regions knew of at least one employment service available in English and only 43% of these respondents felt that these services were adequate. The majority of respondents (78%) had used services offered by the Government of Québec, but their level of satisfaction was relatively low (31%). The rate of satisfaction with services provided by community organizations, used by 55% of respondents, was higher at 67%. While this study dates back a few years, 300 available resources were identified in the surveyed regions. A list that includes each service, its contact information, clienteles, language of service and the types of services it offers (job search, going back to school, orientation, internships, workshops, etc.) is available upon request on the YES Employment + Entrepreneurship website.

PERT also identified five priority issues that affect ESQs:

- 1) ESQs living in resource-oriented regions are often limited to part-time or seasonal work in industries such as fishing, forestry and tourism, increasing overall employment insecurity;
- 2) despite higher rates of educational attainment, some ESQs require more French-language training—employers are not likely to invest in training programs due to their perception of low returns;
- 3) community organizations located in more rural regions are willing to provide French-language training services but lack the funding to do so;
- 4) French-language training services offered in more rural regions are not always geographically accessible and are not usually targeted towards developing useful skills for the labour market; and

## 5) ESQs require support to properly integrate into French-language workplaces.

French-language training programs therefore appear to be the main barrier to employment for many English-speaking Quebecers. During the Building Bridges tour, English speakers' limited French-language skills and ability to work in French were identified as barriers to accessing programs that are often only available in French. Moreover, French-language training programs are rare and expensive, and it is difficult to distinguish between programs available to immigrants and those available to more groups (Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, 2020).

The recently adopted the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*, commonly known as Bill 96, has sparked concerns regarding the employability of English speakers. Bill 96 specifies that employers cannot require a person to have knowledge of a language other than French during the hiring process, unless the employer formally demonstrates that the performance of duties requires such knowledge and that the employer took all reasonable means to avoid imposing such a requirement. Furthermore, the extension of the requirement to implement a French-language training committee in businesses that have between 25 and 49 employees could have positive repercussions for employed English speakers who wish to improve their French-language skills. The Act also imposes a limit on enrolment to post-secondary English-language educational institutions while increasing the French-language requirements, which could have positive repercussions for some students while negatively affecting others. Finally, municipalities could lose their bilingual status if the proportion of their English-speaking population drops below 50%, unless they adopt a resolution reaffirming their desire to maintain that status. The Act's ramifications are significant and will most likely have both positive and negative effects on English-speaking Quebecers. It will be crucial to follow up on its implementation and impacts on different groups (regions, age groups, socioeconomic status, etc.).

Previous research indicates that English speakers also face linguicism while navigating Québec's labour market. Linguicism is defined as prejudice against a person or group of people who speak a different language or with a different accent. In the paper, *Linguicism in Québec and Canada*, Richard Bourhis and Nicole Carignan examine the Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted by Statistics Canada (Bourhis et al., 2010). According to the survey, 25% of white and 41% of visible minorities who speak English experienced discrimination in Québec. Of those who experienced discrimination, 67% of mother tongue English speakers and 52% of allophones, or those who speak neither French nor English as their first language, said that they experienced discrimination based on language.

Linguicism has been shown to impact hiring practices in Québec. According to the study *Employment of English Speakers in Québec's Public Service*, English speakers have made up between 0.7% and 1% of Québec's public service since 1971 (QUSECREN, 2019). This is particularly significant considering English speakers currently make up 15.2% of Québec's population. Research from the article *Linguicism in Québec and Canada* also showed that the underrepresentation of English speakers in Québec's workforce cannot be explained by a lack of English-speaking applicants, inadequate qualifications and linguistic skills alone. Surveys show that hiring managers within the public service prefer to hire staff that have similar cultural and linguistic characteristics. This is also true when selecting candidates for promotions and pay raises (Bourhis et al., 2010).

### 3.4

## Overview of Available Programs and Services

In Québec, there are many programs and initiatives that promote employability for English speakers and other job seekers. First, Emploi Québec and Local Employment Centres (CLEs) provide assistance for job searchers and share available job postings. There are approximately 150 Services Québec offices dispersed across Québec's 17 regions. Each office includes a reception area, a multiservice room and financial assistance services; employment services are offered at most of these centres. An inventory of 389 organizations that specialize in employment in Québec, organized by region and clientele, is also available on Emploi-Québec's website. However, English-speaking Quebecers do not fit into a specific clientele, making it impossible to conduct targeted research on this group.

The Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité Sociale has implemented different programs and measures to promote employment (MESS, 2021). The following are the most relevant for English-speaking Quebecers:

- Discover a trade, a profession [*Découvrir un métier, une profession*]: offers internships to unemployed youth under the age of 25 to allow them to gain real work experience and confirm their career choice.
- Training for the workforce [*Formation de la main-d'oeuvre*]: grants an allowance and reimburses training-related expenses to eligible individuals at risk of long-term unemployment.
- Job readiness [*Préparation à l'emploi*]: offers activities to help unemployed individuals develop the personal skills needed to find and keep a job.
- Employment assistance services [*Services d'aide à l'emploi*]: offers various activities for individuals who are looking for work: information sessions on the labour market, career advice and counselling, job search club, etc.

Considering that the main barrier to employment among English speakers is French-language proficiency, an analysis of French-language training programs is included in this report. The Government of Québec offers information about French-language courses on its webpage "Learn French" (Government of Quebec [GoQ], 2021). Three programs out of four are available to people born in Canada: full-time, part-time, and online, and they are all free. The in-person courses are offered in adult education centres in every Québec region. Specialized courses by field of employment are only available to immigrants. The government also provides support to businesses for French-language programs. Eligible employers (companies, co-operatives, NGOs, municipalities, freelancers, communities and band councils) can receive financial assistance for French-language training programs for their employees (GoQ, 2022).

This overview makes it clear that, while there are many public employment services, there are barely any policies that seem to cater specifically to English speakers beyond French-language training programs. One exception is the Pre-employment program for English speakers offered by the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre. This service is based in Montréal and promotes employment for individuals who have

difficulty integrating and remaining in the workforce (GoQ, n.d.).

In addition to public services, the community sector is very active in offering services to ESQs. For example, Voice of English-speaking Québec (VEQ) seeks to help English-speaking and bilingual populations in the Greater Québec City region find employment (Voice of English-speaking Québec, n.d.). The service is free and provides employment information, promotes English and bilingual job opportunities, and assists employers searching for candidates that have these language skills.

There is also the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), an organization that works to build and strengthen the vitality of the English-speaking population of the Gaspé Coast (CASA, n.d.). There are many other regional organizations, such as the Megantic Community Development Corporation in Chaudière-Appalaches, the North Shore Community Alliance in Côte-Nord, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation for the English-speaking community, and the Townshippers' Association in Estrie and Montérégie. Moreover, there is a strong network of community organizations offering employment services for English speakers in Montréal. For example, YES Employment + Entrepreneurship offers employment counselling services for English speakers seeking employment or looking to start their own business. Montréal is also home to several other organizations serving the English-speaking community, including Cible Retour à l'Emploi, REISA and CRE Pointe Claire. Furthermore, there are multiple organizations that serve English speakers who experience additional obstacles to employment. For example, Desta Black Youth Network and the African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) offer a range of services aimed at members of the Black English-speaking community in Montréal. Finally, though it does not specifically cater to English-speaking Quebecers, the Alliance des centres-conseils en emploi (AXTRA) brings together 96 organizations that offer services across 16 of Québec's regions.<sup>27</sup> Some of these member organizations offer employment services for English speakers. A complete list of organizations offering employment services for English-speaking Quebecers is available in Annex VII.

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<sup>27</sup> The region that is not serviced is Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

### 3.5

## Possible Solutions

In 2011, Canadian Heritage identified three key strategies to address issues related to the employability of ESQs, including high unemployment rates and low income-levels (Canadian Heritage, 2011). First, more advanced French-language training, targeting writing skills in particular, would significantly improve employability. A comprehensive approach to lifelong learning should be encouraged. Second, technical and vocational training should be promoted among English speakers, especially those living in more rural regions—this strategy could lead to employment in industries that are in high-demand and well-paid, like construction and public services. Third, targeting ESQs in recruitment strategies could increase their representation in Québec's public service sector, improving both their socioeconomic conditions and overall access to these services. One way of achieving this would be to include ESQs in targeted groups for hiring.

Possible solutions suggested during the conference organized by PERT in 2019 included helping seasonal workers transition to other employment, improving the regional coverage of service centres (or at least increasing the availability of English-language services in these centres), funding organizations located in more distant regions, making employment services available to immigrants and international students, and increasing the number of training programs offered in French, especially to help prepare for tests to join professional orders (PERT, 2019).

### 3.6

## Discussion

Difficulties around the issue of employment in the English-speaking community have persisted for years despite the fact that many possible solutions have been identified. While there are many services available in the Greater Montréal region, English speakers living in other regions face more barriers to access because of their relatively small population size and a smaller network of institutions. English speakers based in rural and remote regions experience more precarious working conditions, including seasonal work. Broadly speaking, the programs and services that are available rarely cater specifically to English speakers, who are therefore unlikely to make use of them.

French-language training services must continue to be spread throughout the province and be made available to Canadian citizens. According to the documents analyzed, French communication is by far the biggest employment barrier for English-speaking Quebecers. It could be beneficial to research the possibility of more flexible hiring processes, when it comes to language requirements, and creating a shift to promoting and supporting learning during employment. It will be important to follow the implementation of Francisation Québec, a new portal created by Bill 96, or the Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec in June 2022. This initiative should ensure access to services that promote French-language training in a way that is coherent, simplified and open to everyone living in Québec. According to the official announcement, this service should allow for a deeper understanding of its clientele's needs, which could better align the services offered with Québec's English-speaking communities.

Case Study 10

# Entrepreneurship and job insecurity



<b>Name</b>	Sadie
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Côte-Nord
<b>Region</b>	Côte-Nord



Sadie lives and works in the Côte-Nord region. She grew up in an English-speaking community in the same region and says that by the time she reached CEGEP she was bilingual. However, when she started higher education, she started to lose her ability to speak French. Even as a student, Sadie was aware that her deteriorating French-language skills would present a serious barrier to entering the workforce. She says that she spoke with an “English accent and struggled over words in French. So, I never really gained fluency in French, and it actually stopped me from studying the subjects I wanted to study in school.” For example, she even changed her degree while in university, because she was aware that she would likely face difficulty pursuing a career in that area of study without being able to speak French fluently. “I figured that since I wanted to stay in Québec, I shouldn’t study psychology in university because I don’t know enough French to

offer services in the language or pass an exam for a professional order. So, I ended up changing my major.”

Sadie chose another area of study that she did not enjoy and ended up leaving Québec after graduating to find more career opportunities. After several years away, Sadie and her husband returned to Québec so they could start a family. At first, Sadie found seasonal work in a local fishery, but this situation was not ideal. “I was lucky enough to be working approximately 6 months compared to the 3 or 4 months that most people worked. Almost everyone, myself included, goes on EI during the off season. The options

for alternative jobs are very slim, especially in the winter months, as the labour force here are mainly construction workers, fish and hunting camp guides, and commercial fishers. That skill set doesn't necessarily transfer into the few jobs that are available during the winter." Sadie also faced financial difficulties as a result of working on a seasonal basis. She says that "EI is enough to cover the essentials, and sometimes not even that, with the cost of living being what it is now."

Even though there were positions available in some French-speaking organizations in the area, Sadie did not feel comfortable applying because she does not feel confident in her speaking abilities. "I know that there are a lot of positions available at Revenue Québec, but I would never apply. All the open positions say that bilingualism is required, and I wouldn't feel comfortable applying for that because I'm still trying to learn the language."

Sadie eventually started an online business where she works with clients across Canada in English. She says that the "seasonal EI life" and the lack of jobs available for English speakers were "big motivators for me to start my own company and become self-employed because it's a lot easier." Sadie says she's deeply concerned about community devitalization and hopes that by creating her own business she can help members of her community access full-time working opportunities. "My goal is to never be on EI again and eventually grow my business enough to be able to offer the same opportunity to others interested in this field of work."

## Case Study 11

# Immigration, French-language education and the workforce



<b>Name</b>	Michelle
<b>Age</b>	16-24
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	India
<b>Region</b>	Montréal



Michelle immigrated to Québec with her family when she was a child. Before she moved, Michelle spoke Hindi as her mother tongue and knew English as a second language. When she arrived in Québec, Michelle was enrolled in a French-language school because, as an immigrant, she did not have the right to an English-medium education. Starting school in a new country in a completely foreign language was very stressful, and Michelle says “it was still terrifying going into my first day of school and not knowing any French, not even knowing that there are other English speakers in Québec. I was pretty certain that there were only Francophones here and I wouldn’t have anyone to speak to, which wasn’t true. I quickly made some Anglophone friends outside of school, but it was still terrifying going to school every day in French.”

This experience had a significant impact on her sense of belonging in Québec. She says that during this time “I felt a strong rejection towards French because I felt like it was being forced on me and I was really reluctant to identify as Québécoise for a while.” Michelle’s attitude changed in the 6th grade. She says that her teacher “was really, really into Québécois culture, so he focused his entire curriculum on that. And I learned a lot about Québec heritage and culture. We listened to Québécois music and watched stand-up comedians and plays. And it made me realize that I actually love Québécois culture, I just needed that exposure in an environment where I didn’t feel forced, but was engaging, informative, and fun for me.”

Michelle credits her education with helping her integrate into Québec and later establish her career. After leaving higher education, Michelle was able to easily find work in her desired field. In her current role, Michelle primarily uses English but regularly speaks French to external organizations. She plans on staying in Québec indefinitely and says “I have the same opportunities as French-speakers. I think because I went to school in French, I feel on the same playing field as my peers. I don’t feel underprepared to work in French at all.”

Michelle says her experience of moving to Québec and integrating in the labour market is wildly different compared to that of even some of her family members who never learned French. "I would say there are a lot of immigrant parents who come here and need to be encouraged to learn. My mom started learning French last year and she realized how important knowing French is to integrate after a decade of living here. Since she started learning French, I can see the difference in her lifestyle and in her mood. She's so much better off now. She's so much happier. She's so much more integrated just by virtue of understanding what's going on in the world around her."

In Michelle's opinion, "it's really unfortunate that unemployed English speakers in Québec don't really get the chance to regularly speak French." She said that one thing that helped her mother was working for an organization that provided French classes for its employees. "On Fridays or something she would leave the office early and go to a professional development seminar in French, which was really helpful and she really, really enjoyed it." Michelle says that her experience has taught her that immigrant communities need to be "Incentivized to participate in the culture" in a positive way, rather than by force.

## Case Study 12

# Maternity (or parental) leave, disability, and underemployment



<b>Name</b>	Eva
<b>Age</b>	25-44
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Origin</b>	Outside of Canada
<b>Region</b>	Capitale-Nationale



Eva moved to the Capitale-Nationale region from another Canadian province with her husband, a French-speaking Quebecer. Eva has a chronic illness and needs some workplace accommodations to manage it. Prior to moving, she had a successful career in a Canada-wide enterprise and was told that she could keep her job when she moved if she learned French. Eva said that while she had a basic knowledge of the language from mandatory classes in school, she would have to improve significantly to keep her job. Eva quickly realized that it would be extremely difficult for her to learn enough French to keep her position. She arrived in Québec eight months pregnant and figured "I'm on maternity leave, so I don't have to worry about a job right now, I should just focus on attending my doctor's appointments and making sure my house is ready for when the baby arrives."

I felt like I was getting nothing out of my classes. I would be leaving every night with a headache and I was giving up time with my newborn son.

Things only got more difficult after giving birth. Eva started attending government-subsidized French classes when her baby was six months old. She says that prior to classes "I would breastfeed him and make sure he had enough bottled milk so that I could attend my evening classes while my husband took care of him." She says that despite her time and effort she found the classes unhelpful and poorly organized. "I felt like I was getting nothing out of my classes. I would be leaving every night with a headache and I was giving up time with my newborn son." Moreover,

attending French classes presented significant logistical challenges for Eva and her husband. She says without her husband available to look after her newborn, she would not have been able to attend at all.

She also says that attending classes more often to help speed up her learning was not an option. "Going to the French classes five days a week - because I know they offer them Monday to Friday - I can't do that either, because I have a newborn son. So that's not an option for me. There really was no option for me to learn French so I could join the workforce after my maternity leave." She said that it quickly became clear that she would not be able to learn a sufficient amount of French in order to transfer her job after maternity leave, which caused financial difficulties for the family. "We did a lot of re-budgeting and luckily we had picked our house when we moved here based on if I could not find work, just to make sure we were OK financially."

Eventually, Eva found a temporary position at an English-speaking school in her area that provided sufficient accommodations for her chronic illness. However, her contract was not renewed this year due to lack of funding. "I'm currently on EI and I'm substitute teaching right now. I'm hoping another job will come up for me at the school I work at, but, if not, I'll just continue juggling EI and substitute teaching."

To supplement her income, Eva has turned to various self-employment opportunities. "I actually started my own business where I make personalized shirts and mugs. And I also just started at a multi-level marketing company." Though Eva is managing three jobs and is on EI, she is still on the lookout for full-time employment. She says that ideally, she'll be able to find something in the English school board or in an organization where she can learn French while working so she can overcome the linguistic barriers to employment.

Case Study 13

# Staying in Quebec after graduation



Name	Gina
Age	25-44
Gender	Female
Origin	India
Region	Estrie



Gina is a postdoctoral student living in Estrie and studying climate change resilience. She grew up in a small town in India, where she spoke Hindi. She learned English while pursuing higher education in the sciences. Gina also worked in other international institutions under prestigious funding schemes alongside scientists from around the world, where the working language was always English.

She says that “when I moved here, I slowly realized that if I want to advance my career here, I need to learn French. So, I started to learn on Duolingo and then I started attending a francization program for two months.” While Gina is determined to learn French, the government-funded French courses do not fit well in her already busy schedule. “Because I’d attend classes from 6:30pm to 10pm after work, the program felt like another job. And it was very difficult because I’d get home at 11pm and I’d just have no energy the next day for work. It ended up impacting my health, so I’m taking a small break from the classes.”

I need to learn French if I want to work as a scientist in the government. I cannot deny that language is a hurdle for me.

Now that her postdoc is wrapping up, Gina is starting to look for jobs. She aims to stay in Québec because she’s found it to be very welcoming and is now in a serious relationship with a Quebecer. Gina is especially interested in working for the provincial government since it can give her an opportunity to work on a permanent basis.

*"I am not looking for a temporary job anymore because I am highly qualified. I have a PhD and postdoc, so I deserve a full-time position. Based on my experience, I am qualified to work as a professor at a university or as a researcher at a private company or in the government. But ideally, I'd like to work in the federal or provincial government."*

Gina also believes that her expertise in climate change could help Québec prepare for the future.

*"We are now seeing unpredictable weather patterns in Québec that are a direct result of climate change. Given this context, what better way to use my expertise in climate change than in government?"*

Though she is highly qualified and has studied at several prestigious institutions, Gina is worried that she will not be able to find employment in Québec because she is still learning French. "I need to learn French if I want to work as a scientist in the government. I cannot deny that language is a hurdle for me." Gina has noticed that many of her peers in a similar position leave Québec for other Canadian provinces. She says:

*"my peers in the Indian community generally leave Québec, because if they want to stay long term, then it is a very long process to learn French. I can see that in the Indian community, people generally prefer to move to other provinces because they do not have to learn French, so there are more job opportunities available."*

Despite these barriers, Gina is optimistic about finding work in Québec once she has finished her postdoc and can start dedicating more time to learning French. She loves living in Québec and would recommend moving here to other immigrants too. She says:

*"People don't want to come to Québec because it is hard to navigate the rules surrounding French. But I found that they have so many programs for mental health and adjusting to the move as well as for learning French. And I found this system to be very supportive and I am happy here. But that being said, you definitely have to demonstrate that you can speak French to access job opportunities."*

# Conclusions and Avenues for Reflection

This report illustrates the evolution of socio-economic indicators among ESQ by analyzing Canadian census data from 2006 to 2021 as well as data collected during interviews with 30 English-speakers. The quantitative and qualitative analyses presented in this report provide insight into the unique employment challenges faced by Québec's English-speaking communities.

The longitudinal analysis of Canadian census data gathered from 2006 to 2021 show that the unemployment and income gaps between ESQs and FSQs widened on average, despite a higher presence of ESQs in the labour force compared to FSQs, and a prevalence of part-time work comparable to that of FSQs between 2006 and 2016. One of the causes put forward to explain this deterioration is the over-representation of ESQs in the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as accommodation and food services. It will be interesting to note if this change is reversed during the census scheduled for 2026.

Moreover, the over-representation of ESQs in some sectors highlights the limitations associated with directly comparing the socio-economic conditions of different groups of individuals. It is important to take into account differences in age structure, sectoral distribution of jobs and other factors that may explain the gaps observed. Such an analysis, in particular using econometric tools, could make it possible to distinguish between cases of genuine imbalances between individuals sharing the same profile and those where the differences are explained by other reasons.

Many of the realities described in the analysis of census data are reflected in the thematic analysis of interviews conducted with our sample of 30 ESQs. The most common barriers participants faced in integrating with the Québec labour market were related to French proficiency and self-confidence. That being said, these barriers were not limited to linguistic aspects, but also encompassed cultural issues, and often these two barriers seemed to interrelate. Most participants led parallel lives to those of their French-speaking counterparts because they lived and worked primarily in English, without meaningfully engaging with Québec's predominantly French-speaking population. The same is true concerning their professional lives, with most participants occupying positions in English-speaking institutions and businesses because they did not have the skills or confidence to obtain a position in a French-speaking workplace. As a result, few participants had the opportunity to develop their language skills beyond what can be learned in a classroom, school or government-funded French classes, and to gain true comfort and fluency in the language through sustainable immersion in a French-speaking environment.

Participants who had the opportunity to work in a French-speaking environment had mixed experiences, and some of them were subject to constant linguicism. However, those who worked in a supportive environment explained how this experience changed their relationship with the language, allowing them to speak it fluently and integrate into the world of work.

These challenges are consistent with the questions underlying the statistics presented in the census data analysis discussed in Chapter 1. Although most participants reported having some level of bilingual proficiency in French and English, they did not feel comfortable applying for or working in a French-speaking workplace. This may explain why unemployment rates remain consistently higher for ESQs than for FSQs, even though education rates have remained relatively high among English speakers. Furthermore, some participants indicated that, without adequate French-language skills, they were forced

to turn to precarious employment as this was the only option available to work in English.

Problems of precarious opportunities and employment have been exacerbated in the regions, where there are fewer job opportunities in general, and even fewer jobs in an English-speaking environment. Analysis of census data also revealed disparities between Québec's administrative regions. The categorization of Québec's administrative regions on the basis of ESQ-specific characteristics identified four major groups where ESQ challenges differ. Combined with the literature review of employability policies, this exercise paves the way to the implementation of targeted and personalized interventions according to the regions.

Moreover, the individuals featured in the case studies throughout the report encouraged readers to look beyond the figures, providing a profile of the diversity of the ESQ community and the different types of support needed to help them reach their full potential. This again highlights the importance of developing customized policies and programs based on the needs of each region and community.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative research findings presented in this study align with the research findings discussed in the literature review. This underlines the fact that the results of this report make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge on the realities of employment within the ESQ population.

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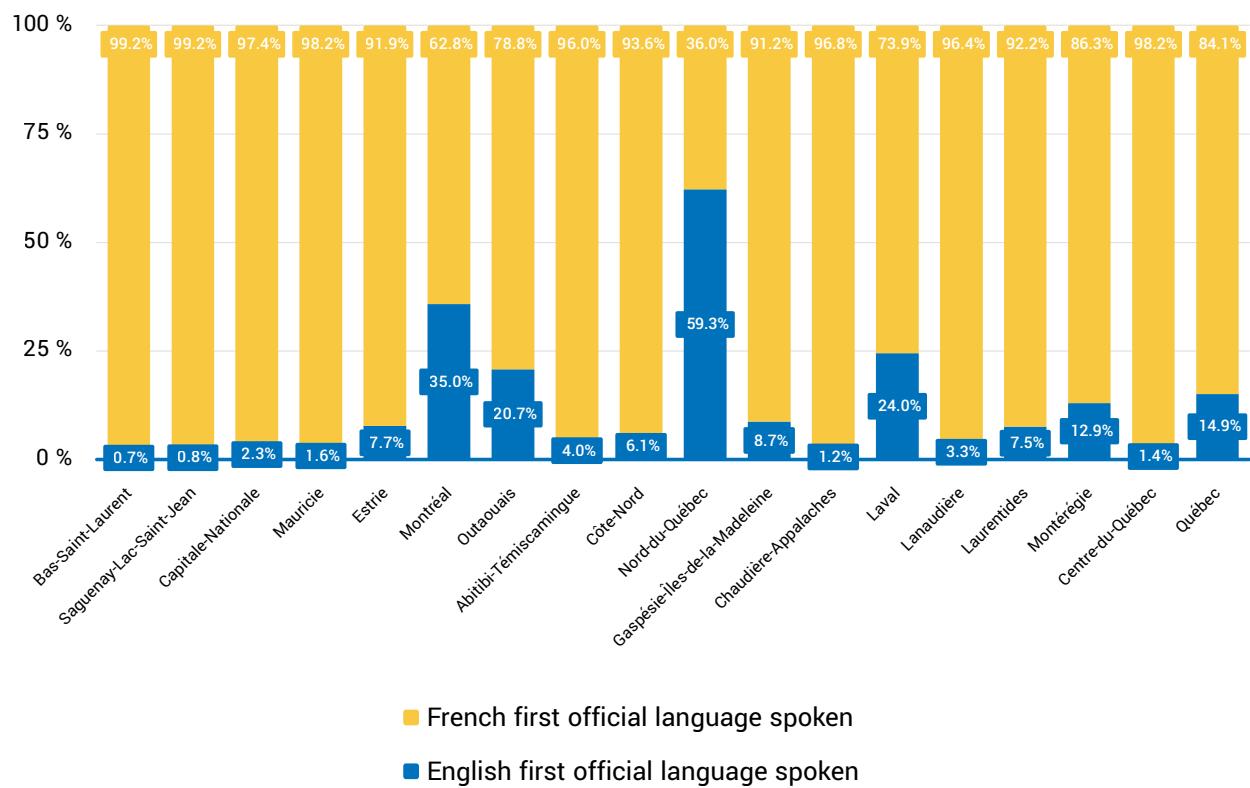
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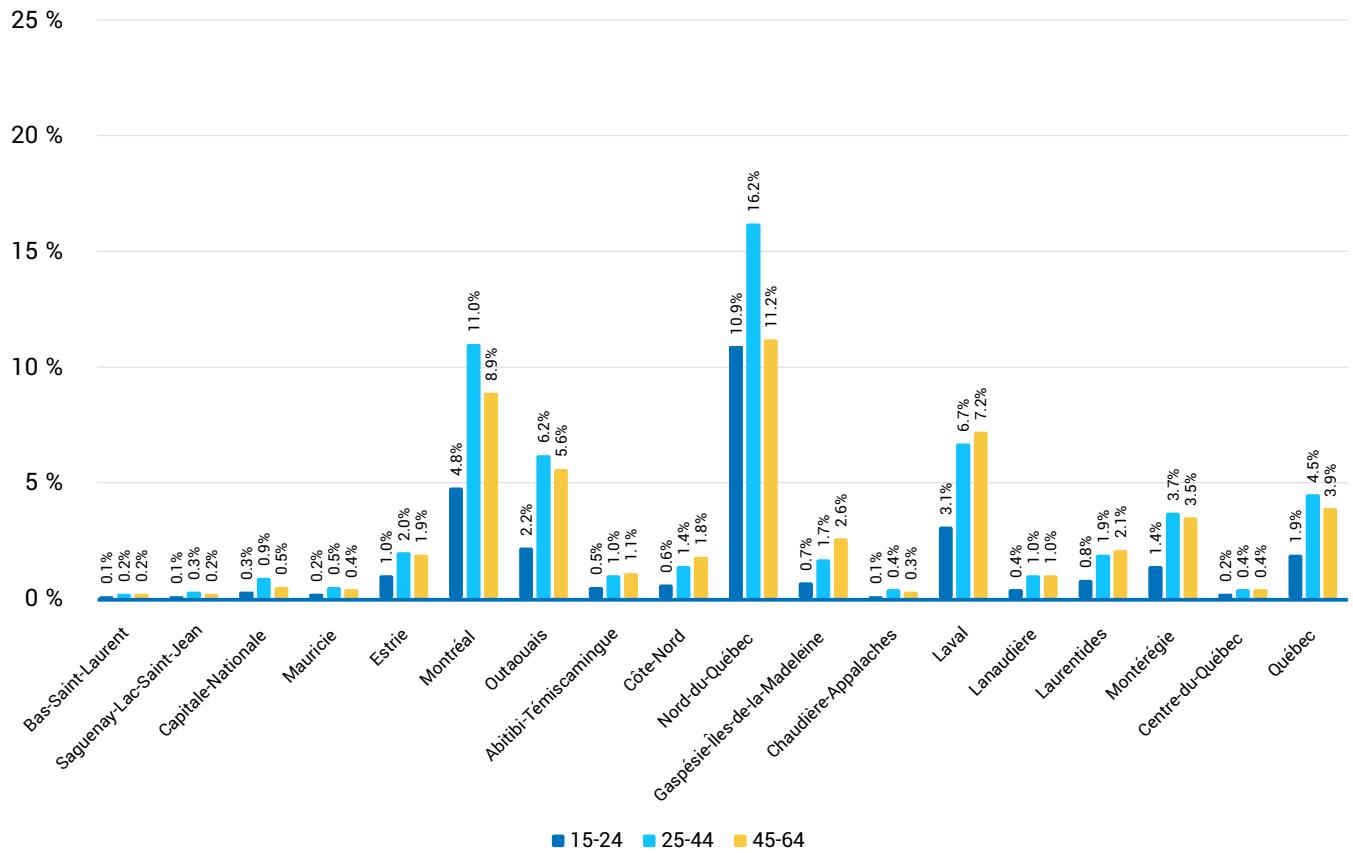
## Annex I

### Supplementary figures (2021 Census)

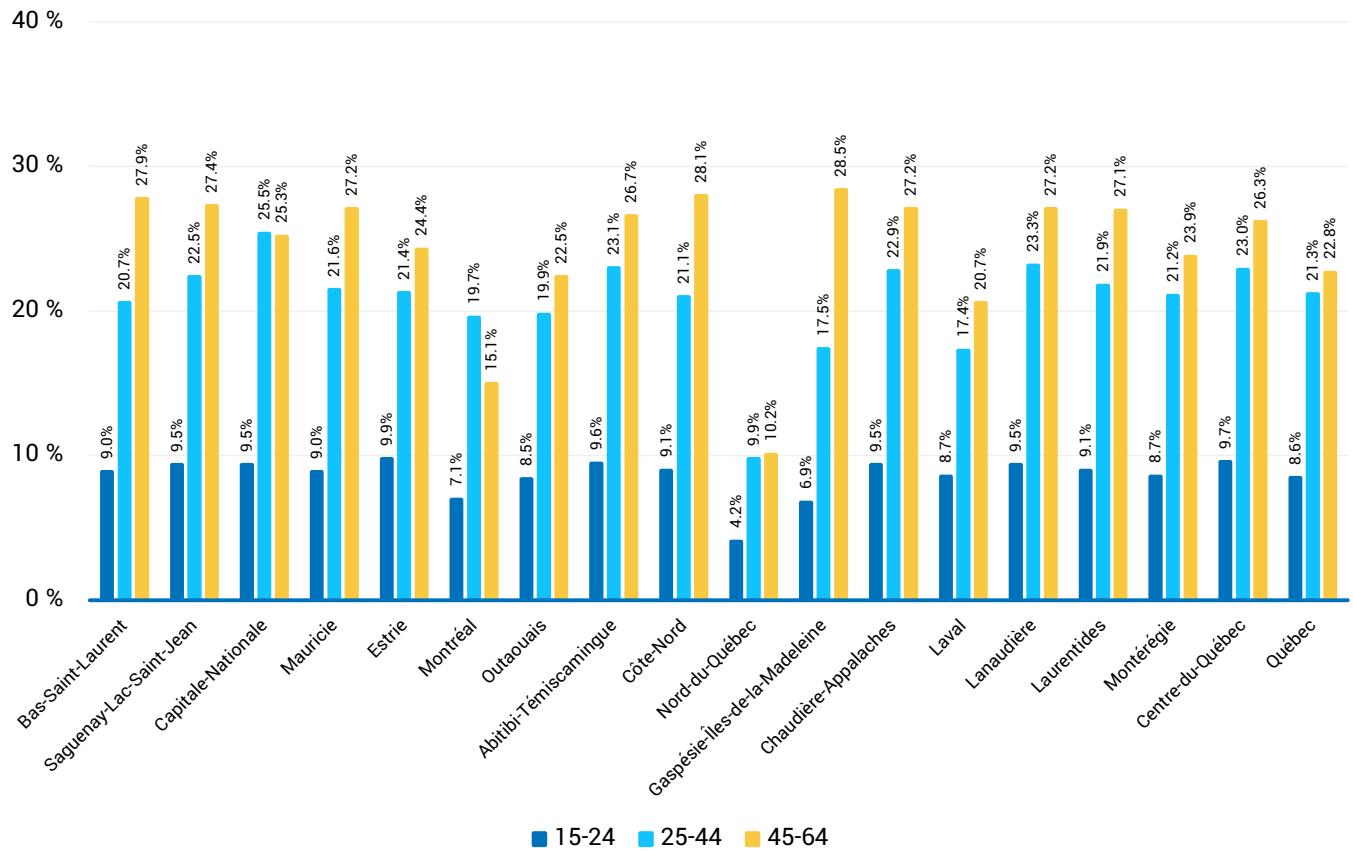
Figure A1.1. Total population of Québec by administrative region



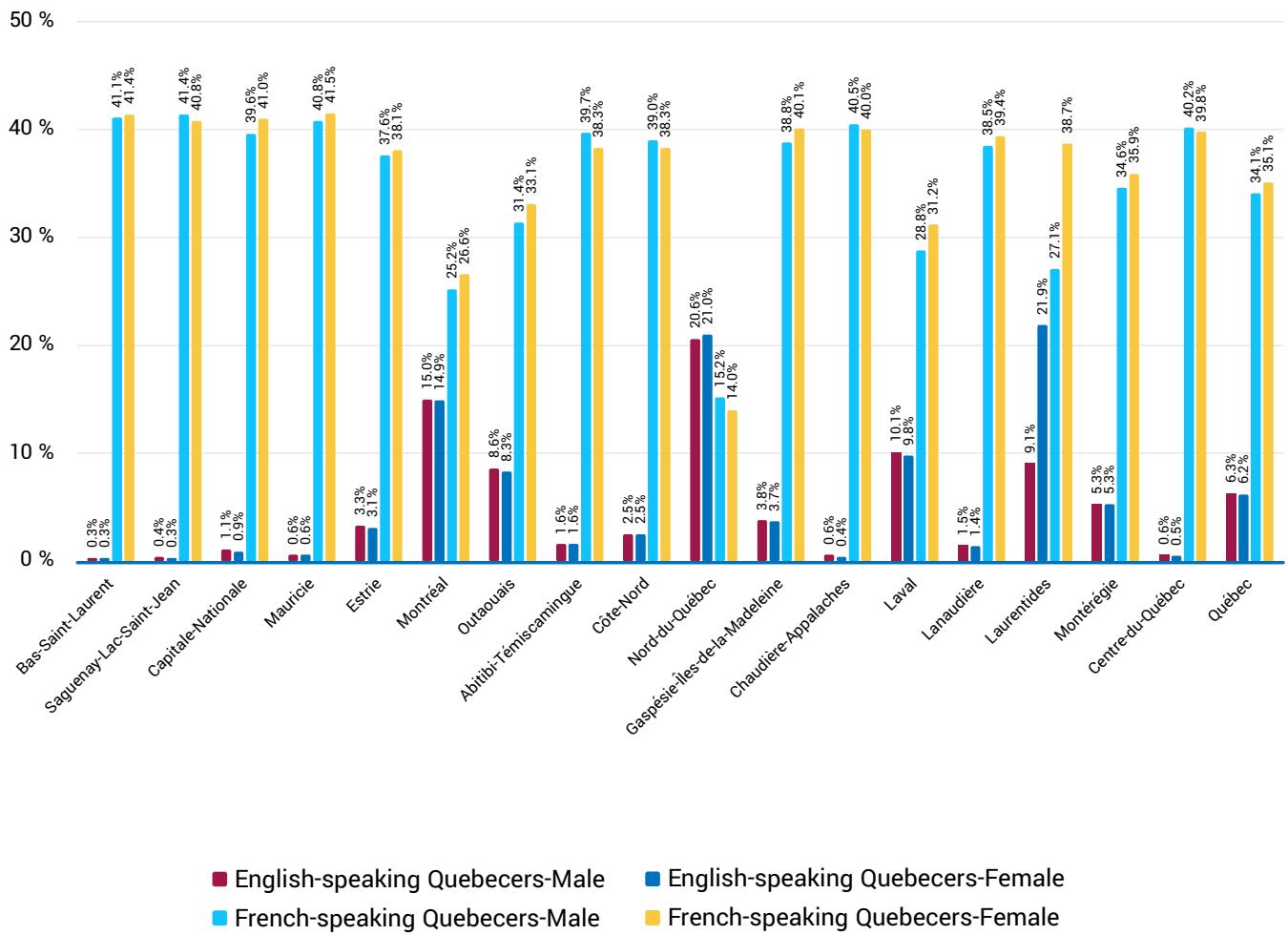
**Figure A1.2. Population age structure by administrative region – ESQ**



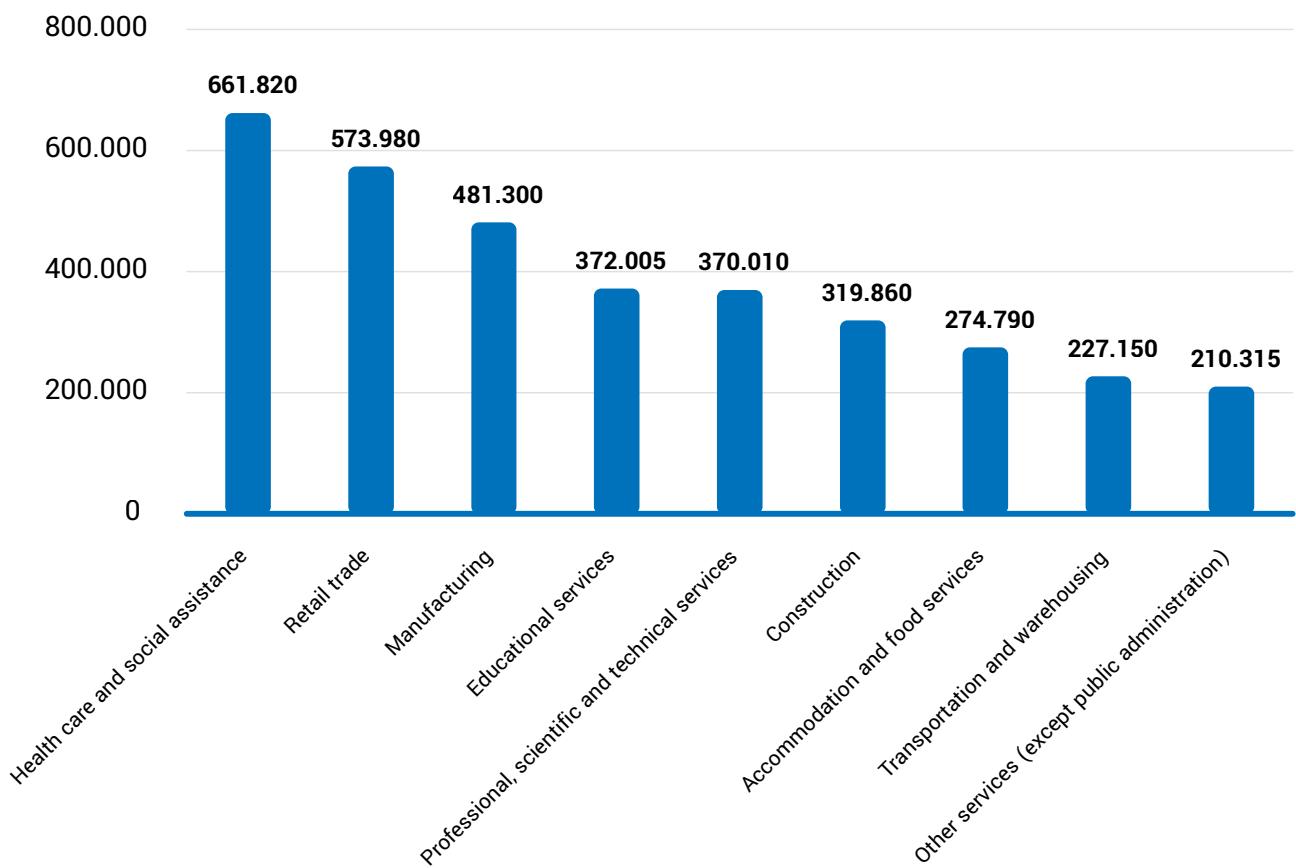
**Figure A1.3. Population age structure by administrative region – FSQ**



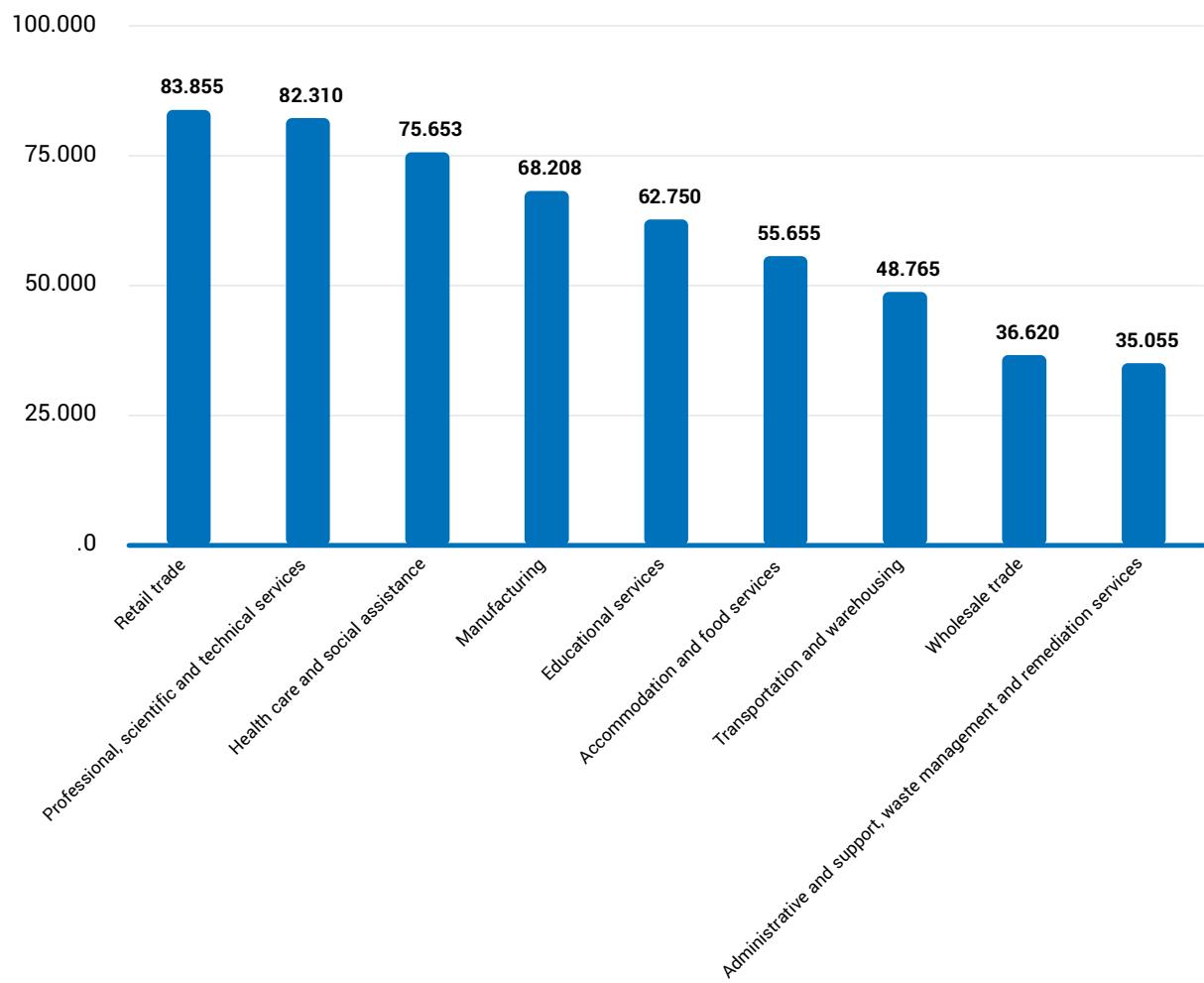
#### A1.4. Age structure of Québec by administrative region



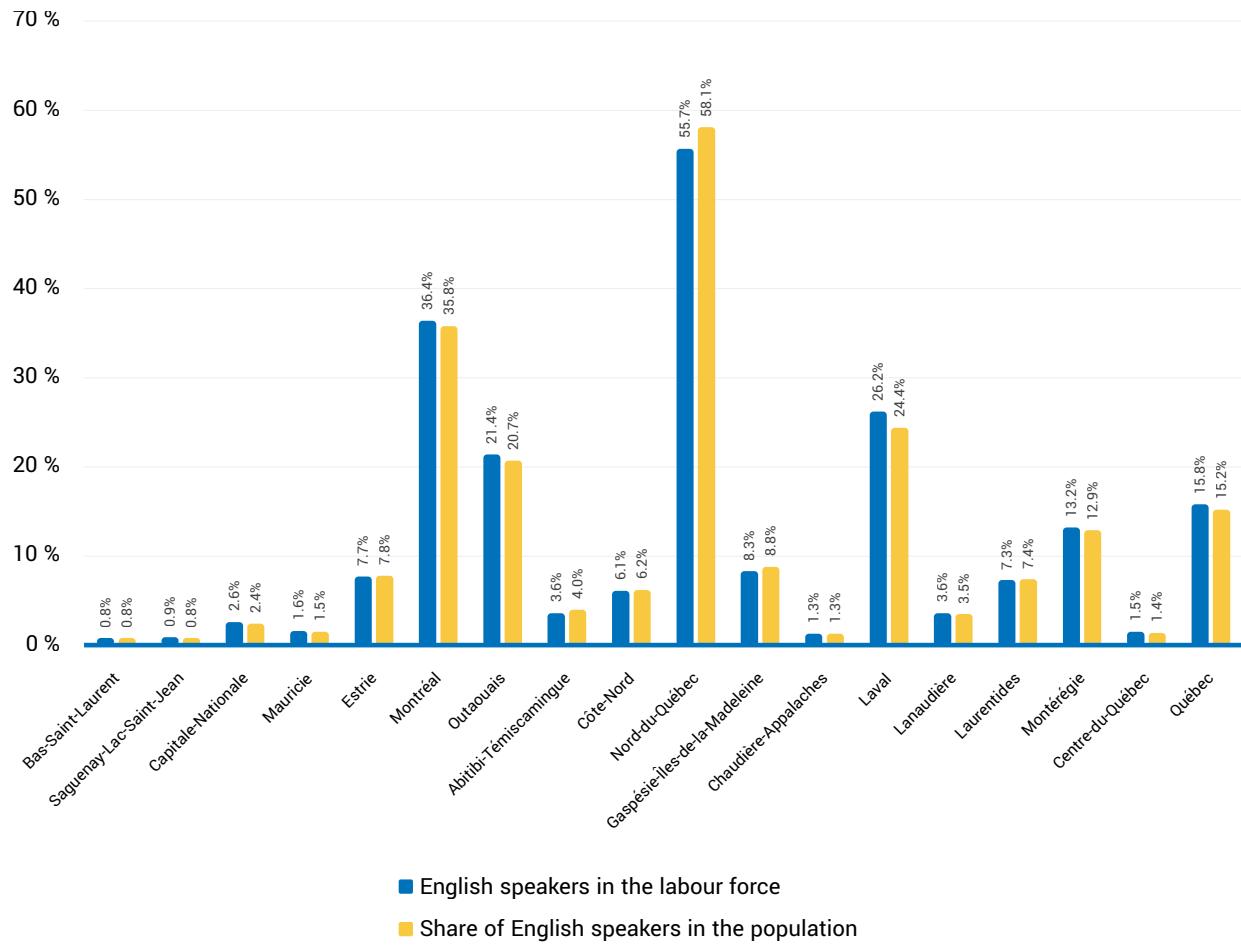
#### A1.5. Main industries in Québec by total population



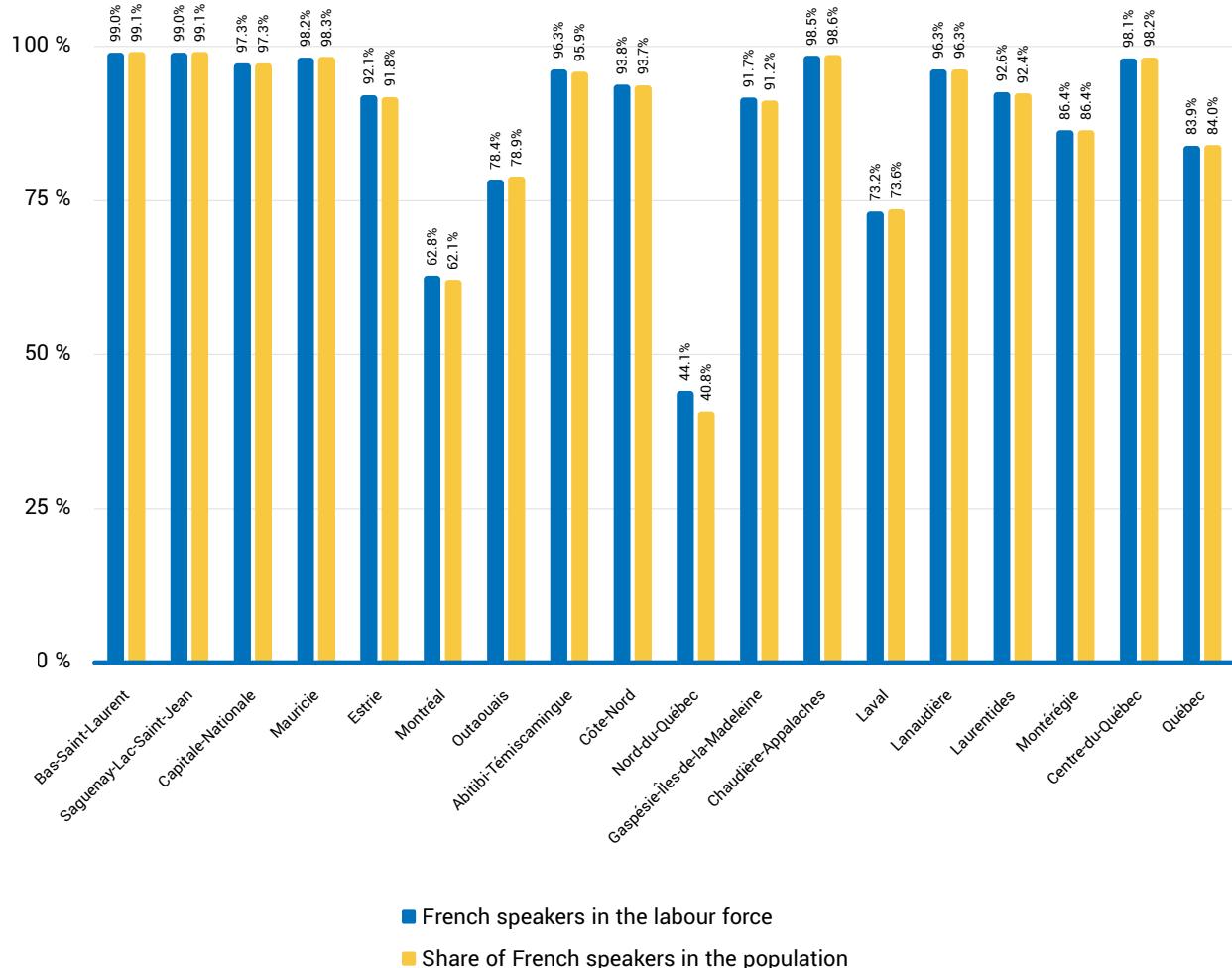
**Figure A1.6. Main industries in Québec for ESQs**



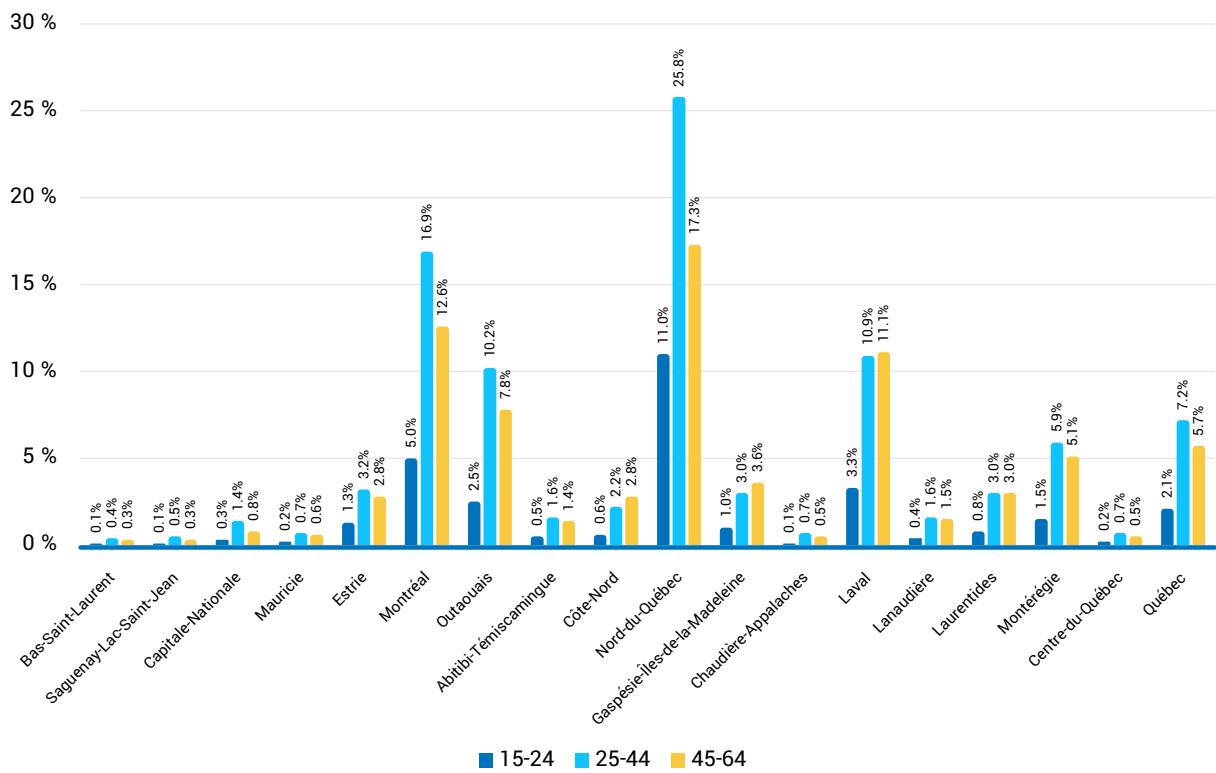
### A1.7. Labour force in Québec by administrative region – ESQ



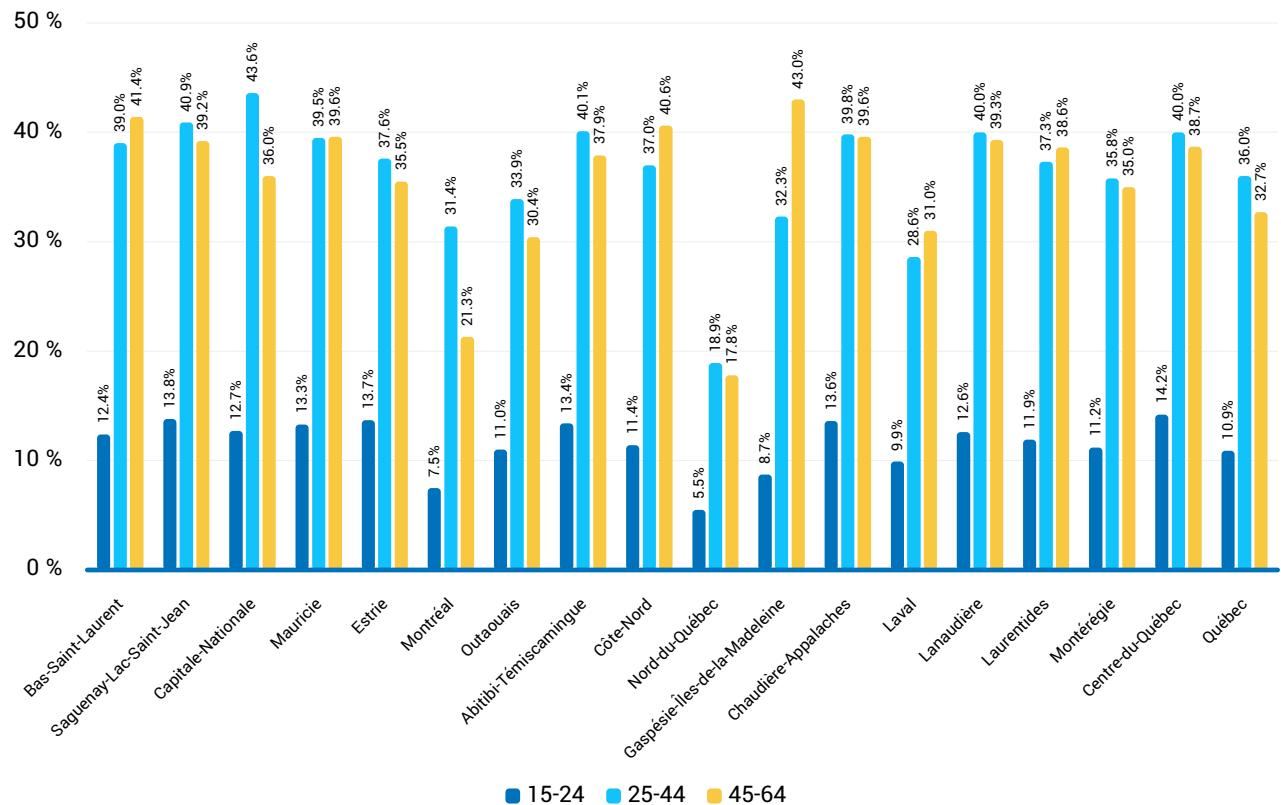
### A1.8. Labour force by administrative region – QEFs



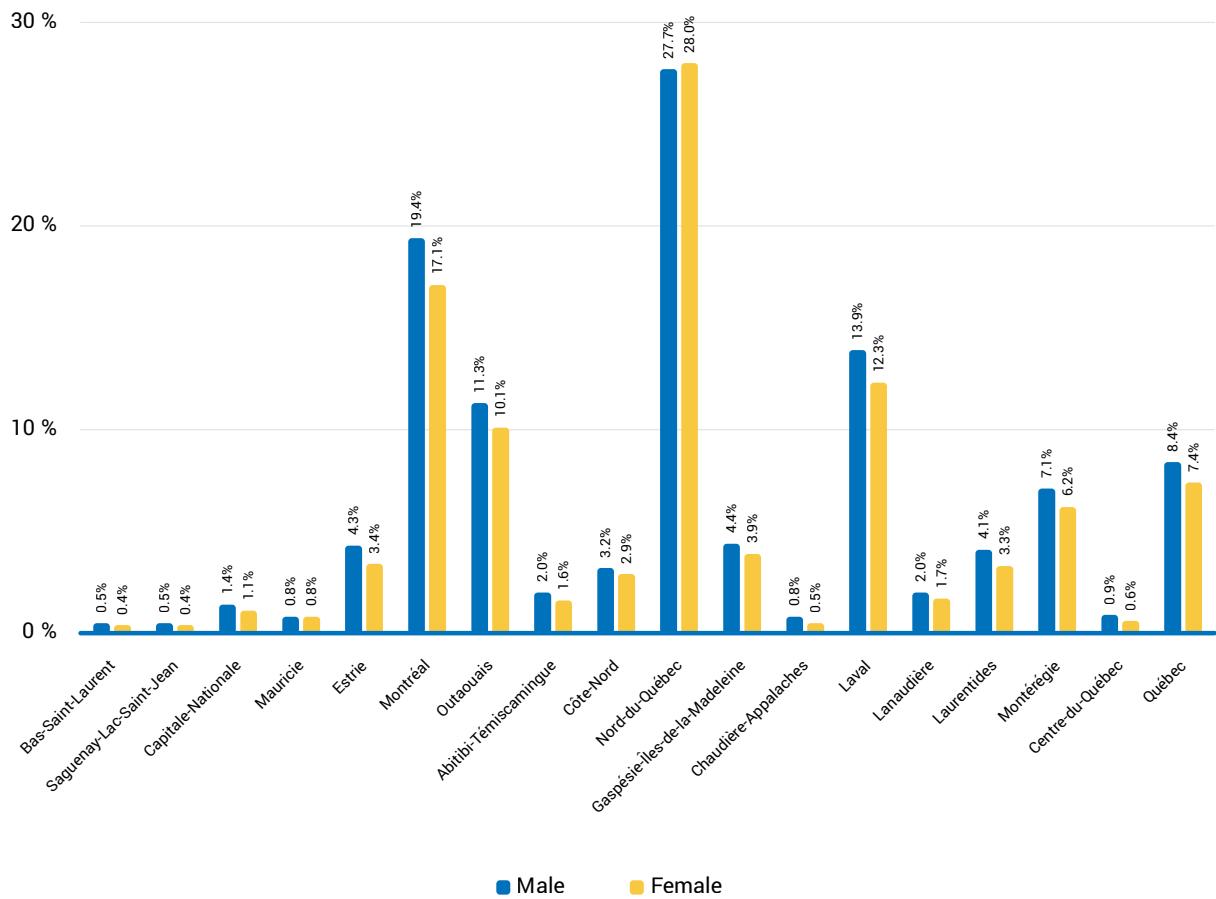
**Figure A1.9. Age structure of the labour force by administrative region and language – ESQ**



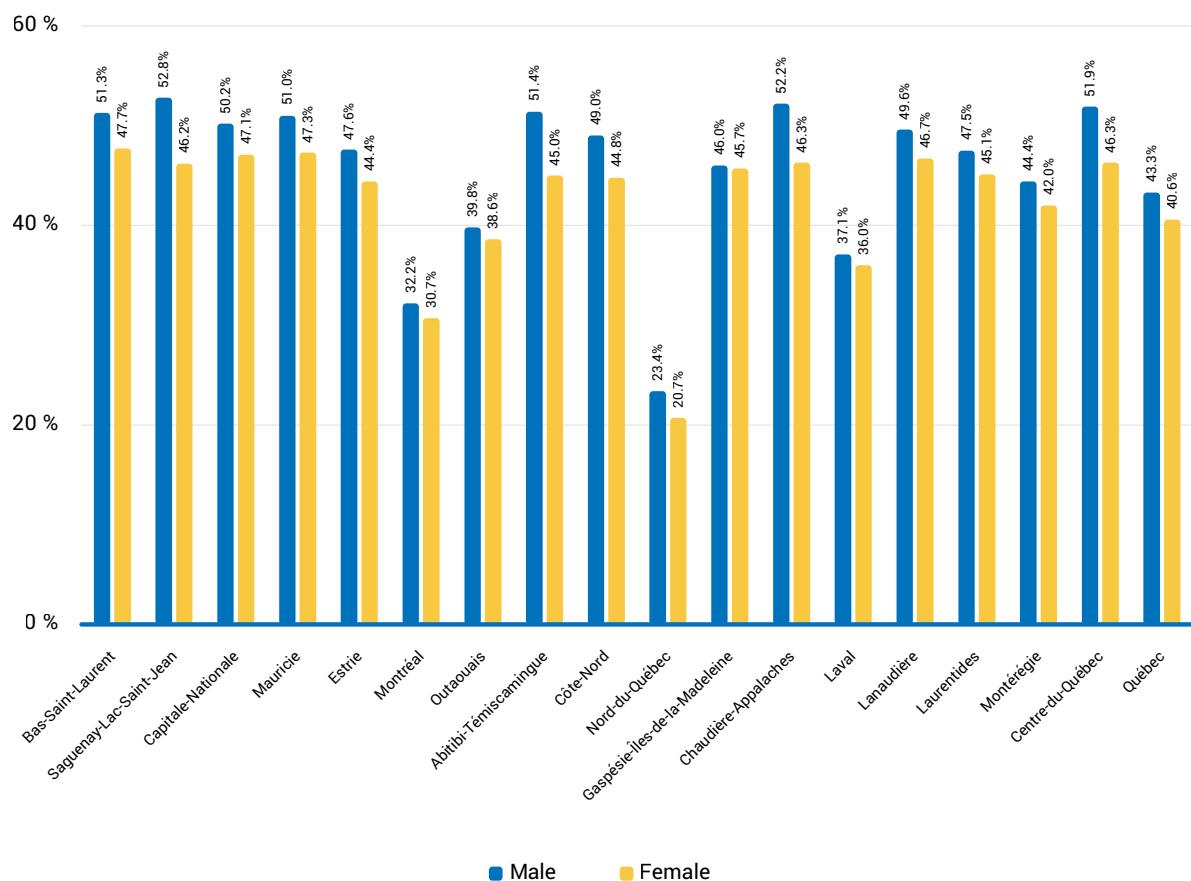
**Figure A1.10. Age structure of the labour force by administrative region and language – FSQ**



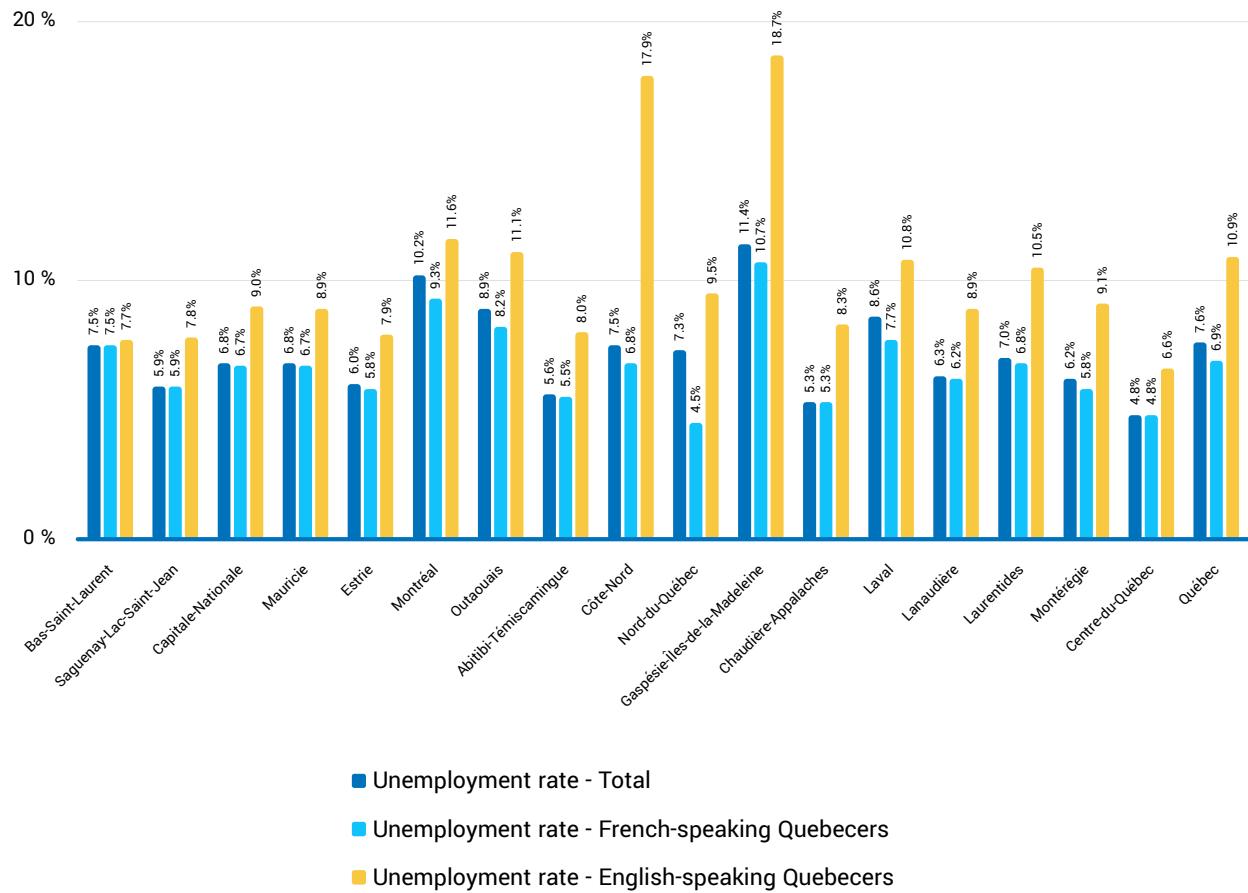
**Figure A1.11. Gender breakdown of the labour force by administrative region – ESQ**



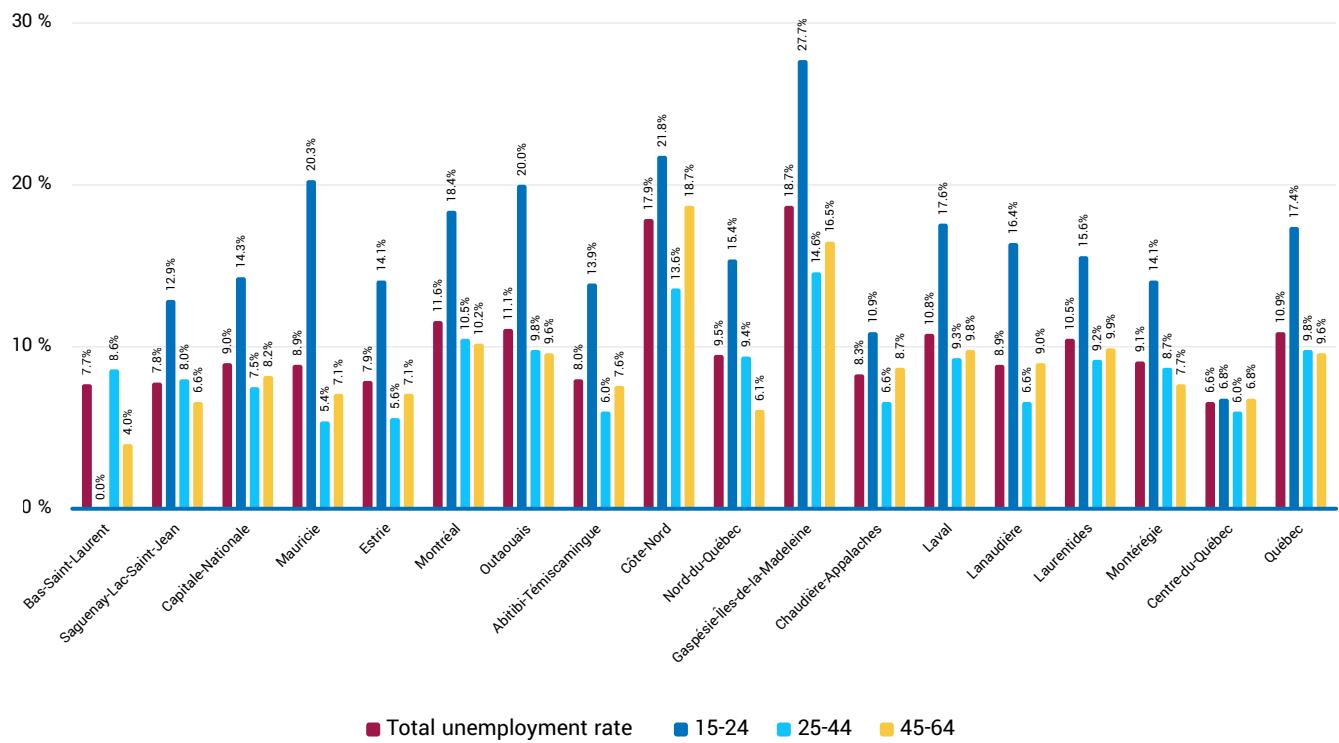
**Figure A1.12. Gender breakdown of the labour force by administrative region – FSQ**



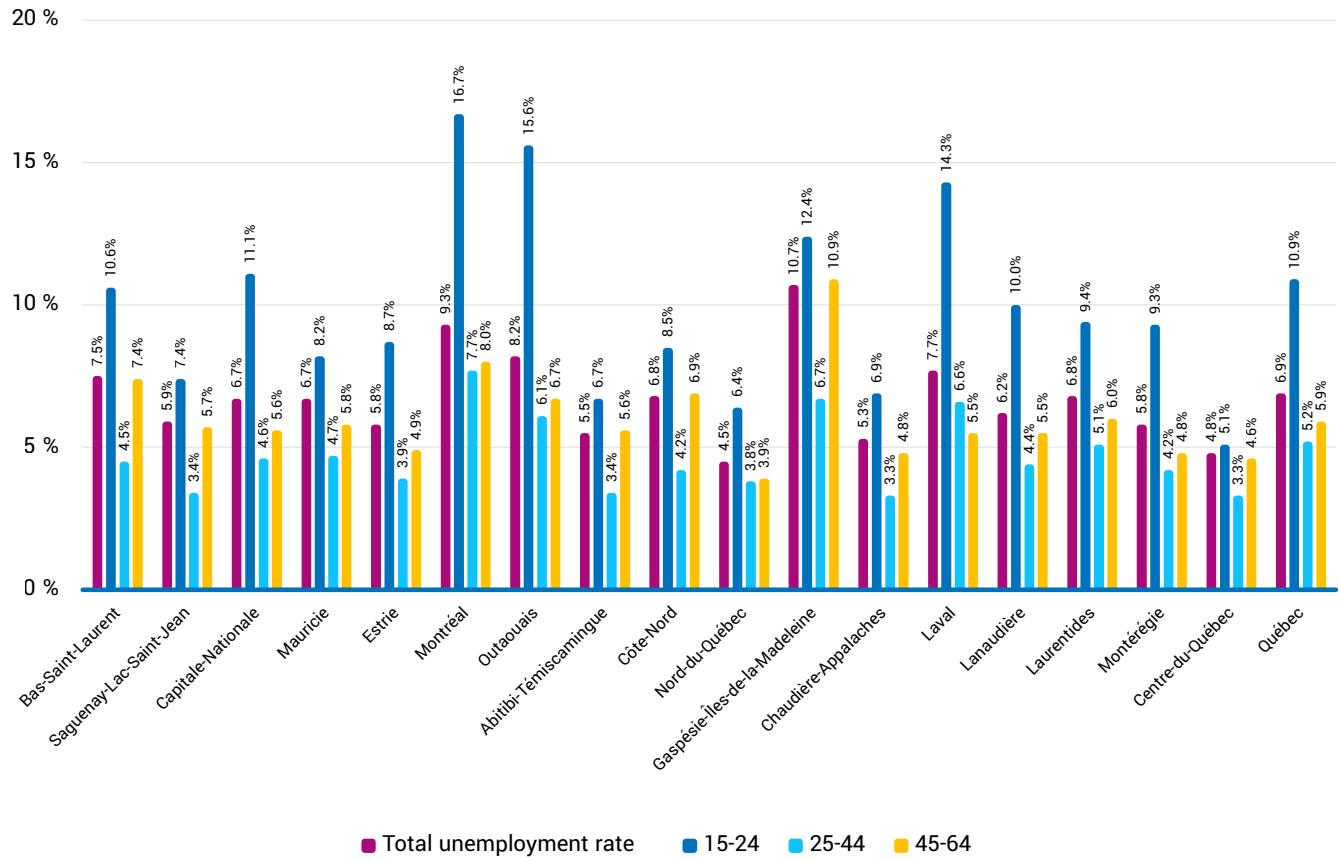
**Figure A1.13. Labour force unemployment rate by administrative region and by language**



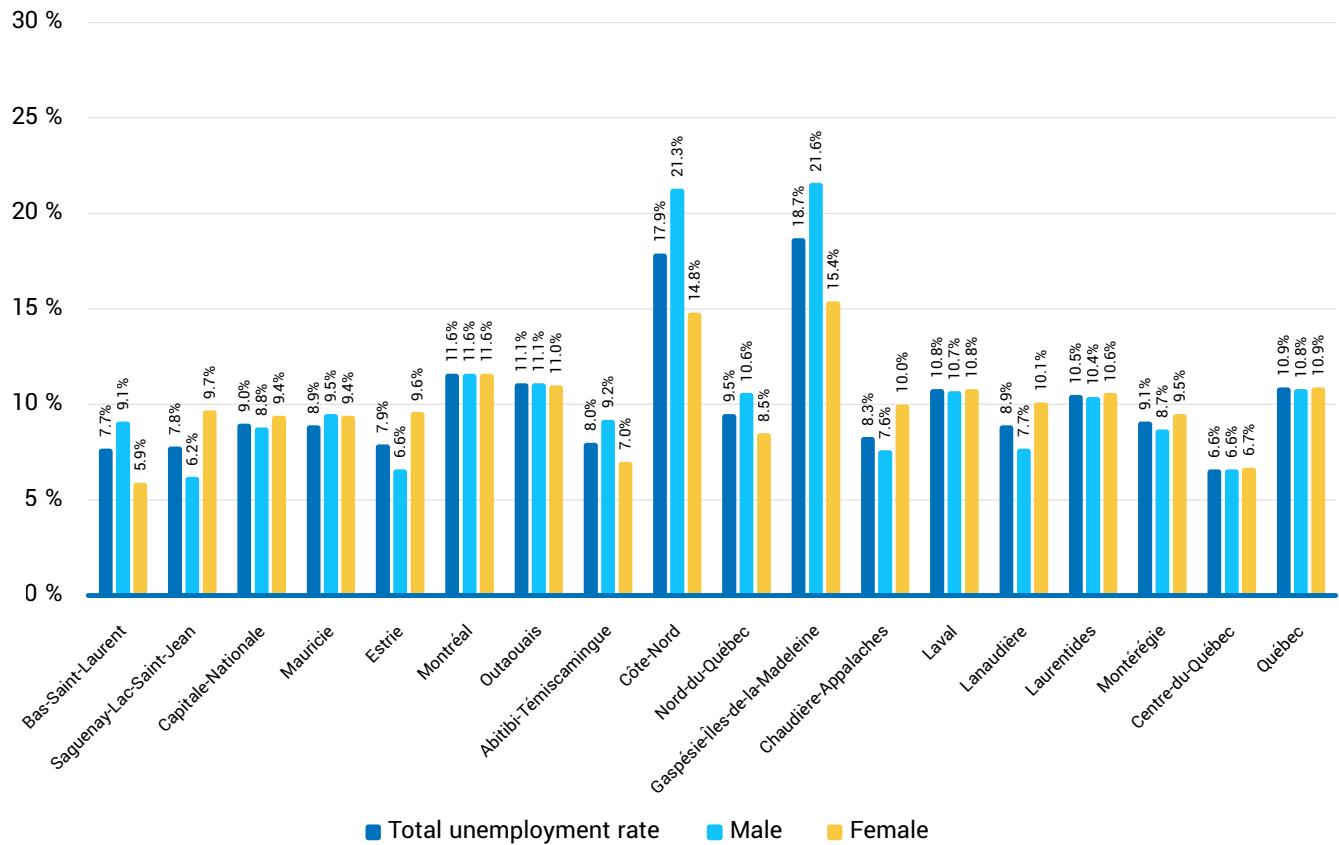
**Figure A1.14. Age distribution of the unemployment rate by administrative region – ESQ**



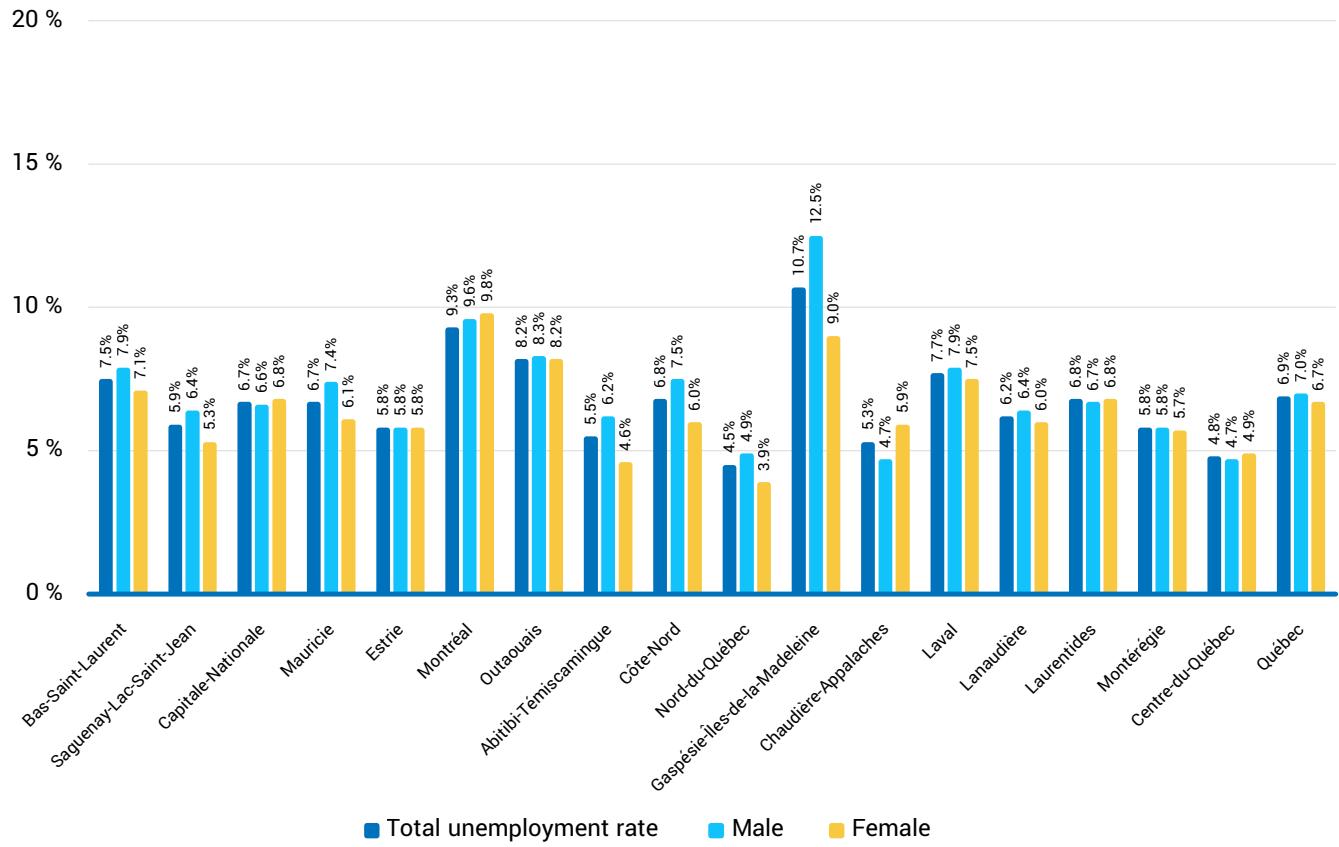
**Figure A1.15. Age distribution of the unemployment rate by administrative region – FSQ**



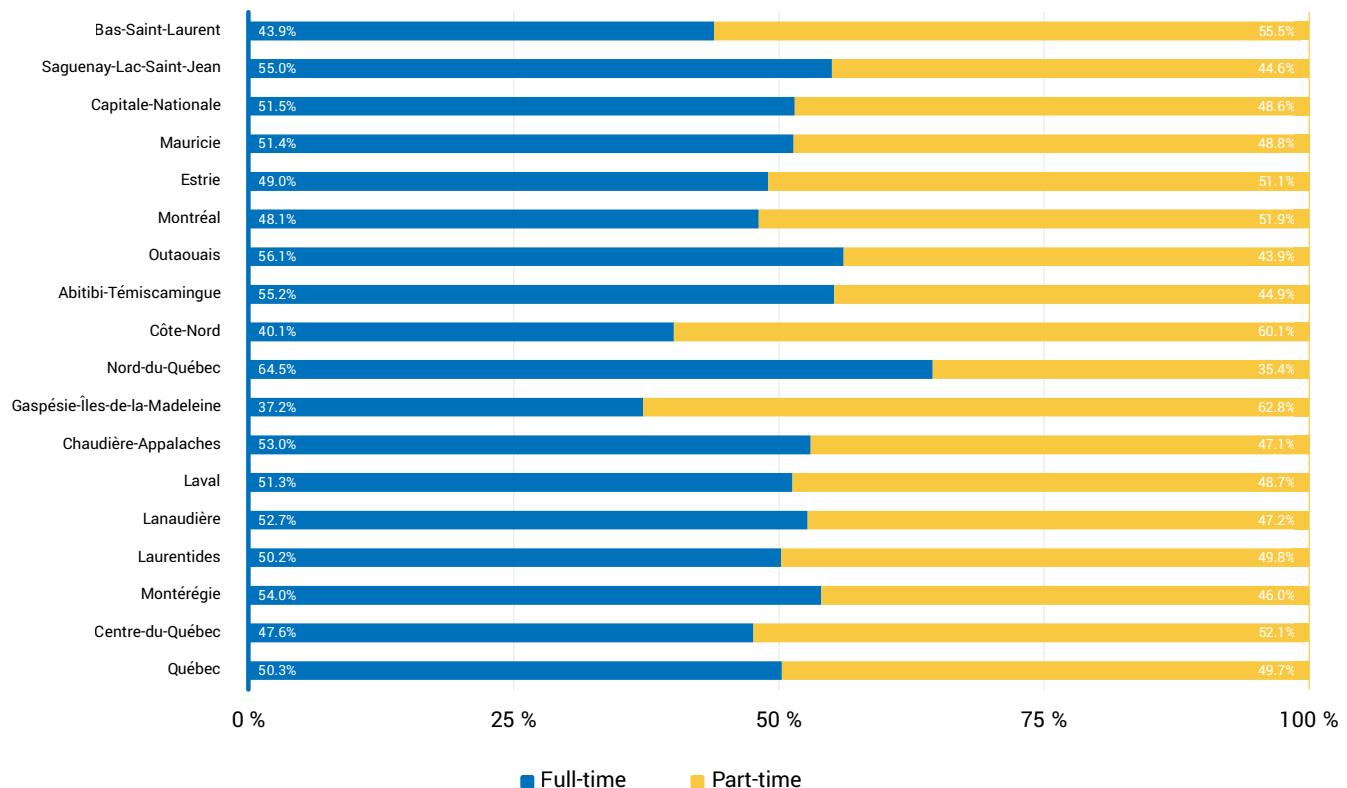
**Figure A1.16. Unemployment rate by gender and administrative region – ESQ**



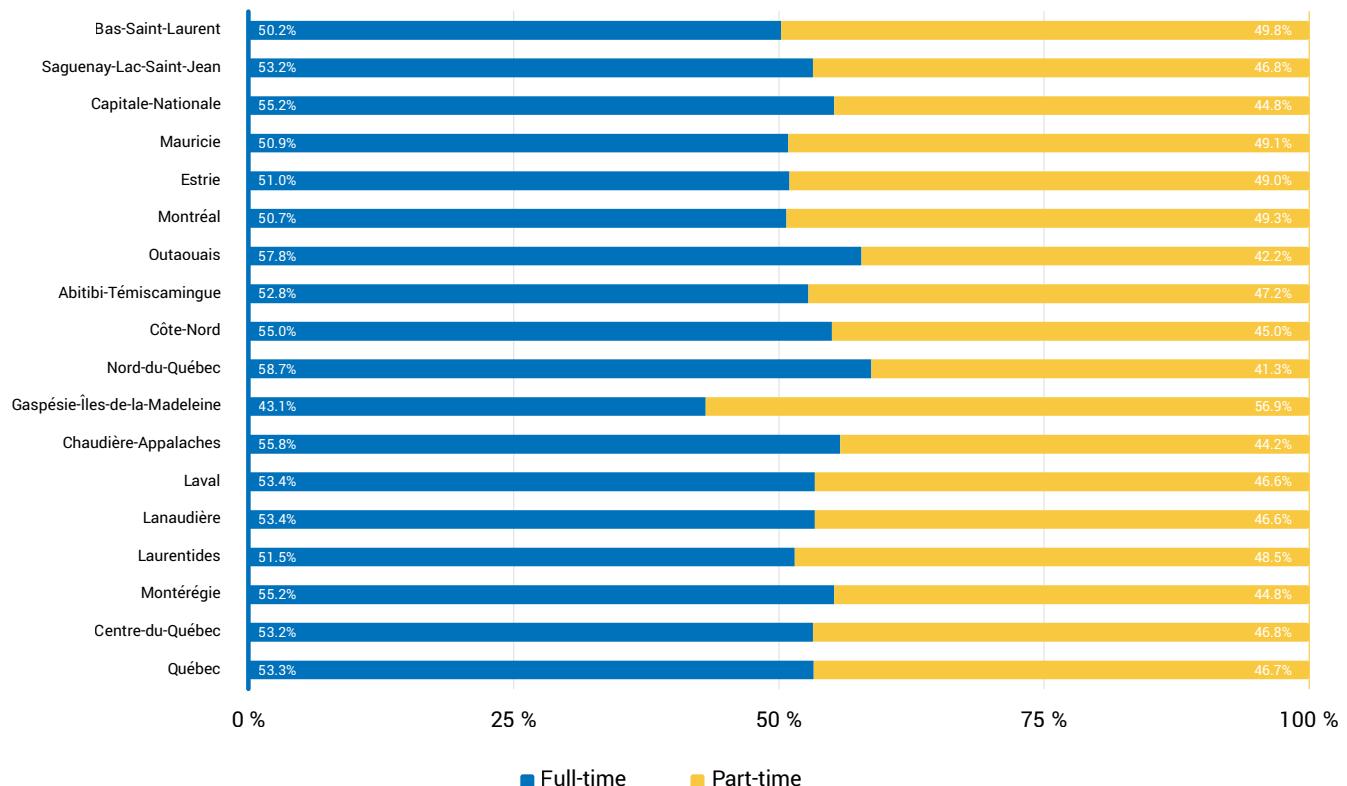
**Figure A1.17. Unemployment rate by gender and administrative region – FSQ**



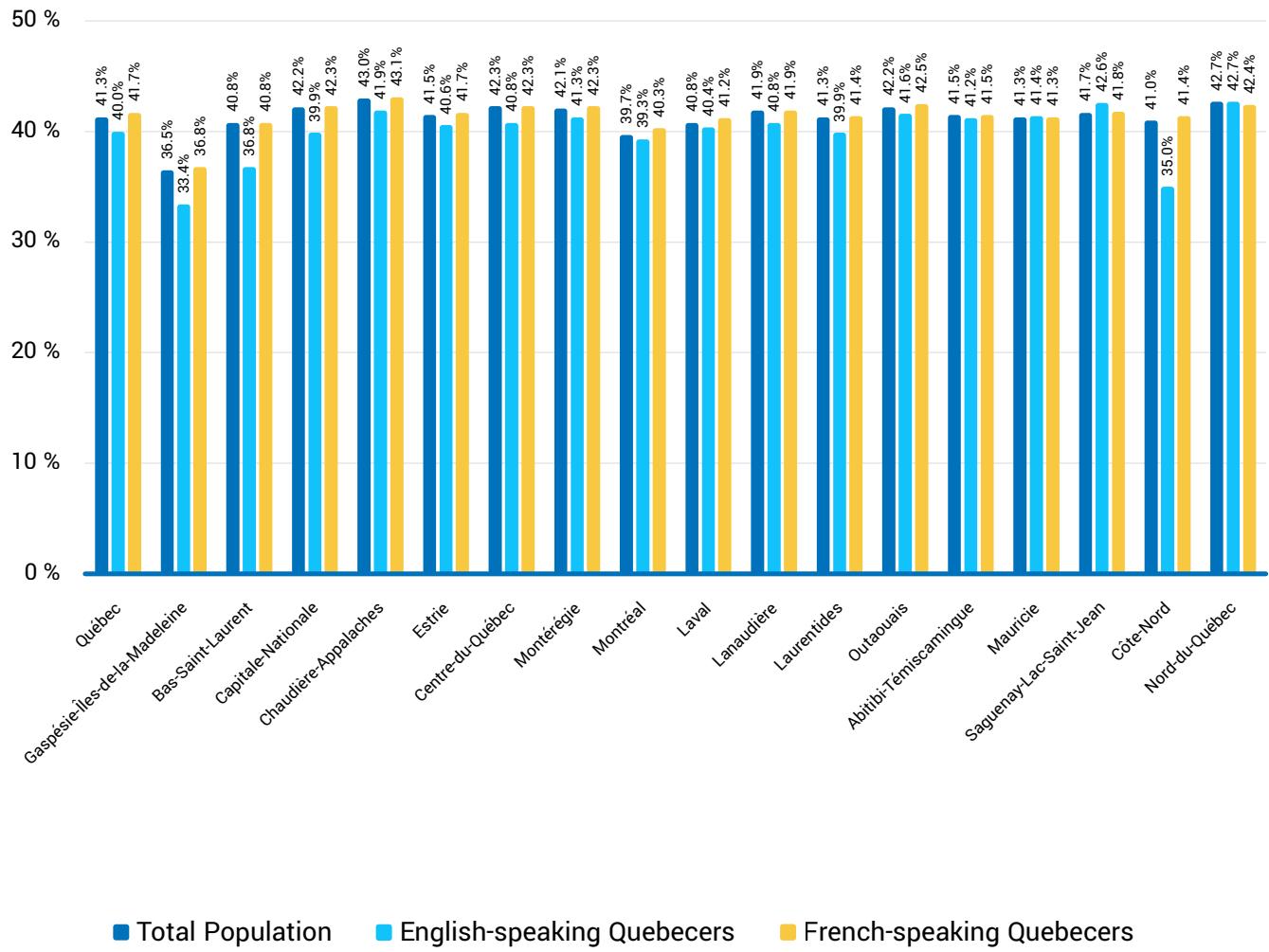
**Figure A1.18. Professional activity by administrative region – ESQ**



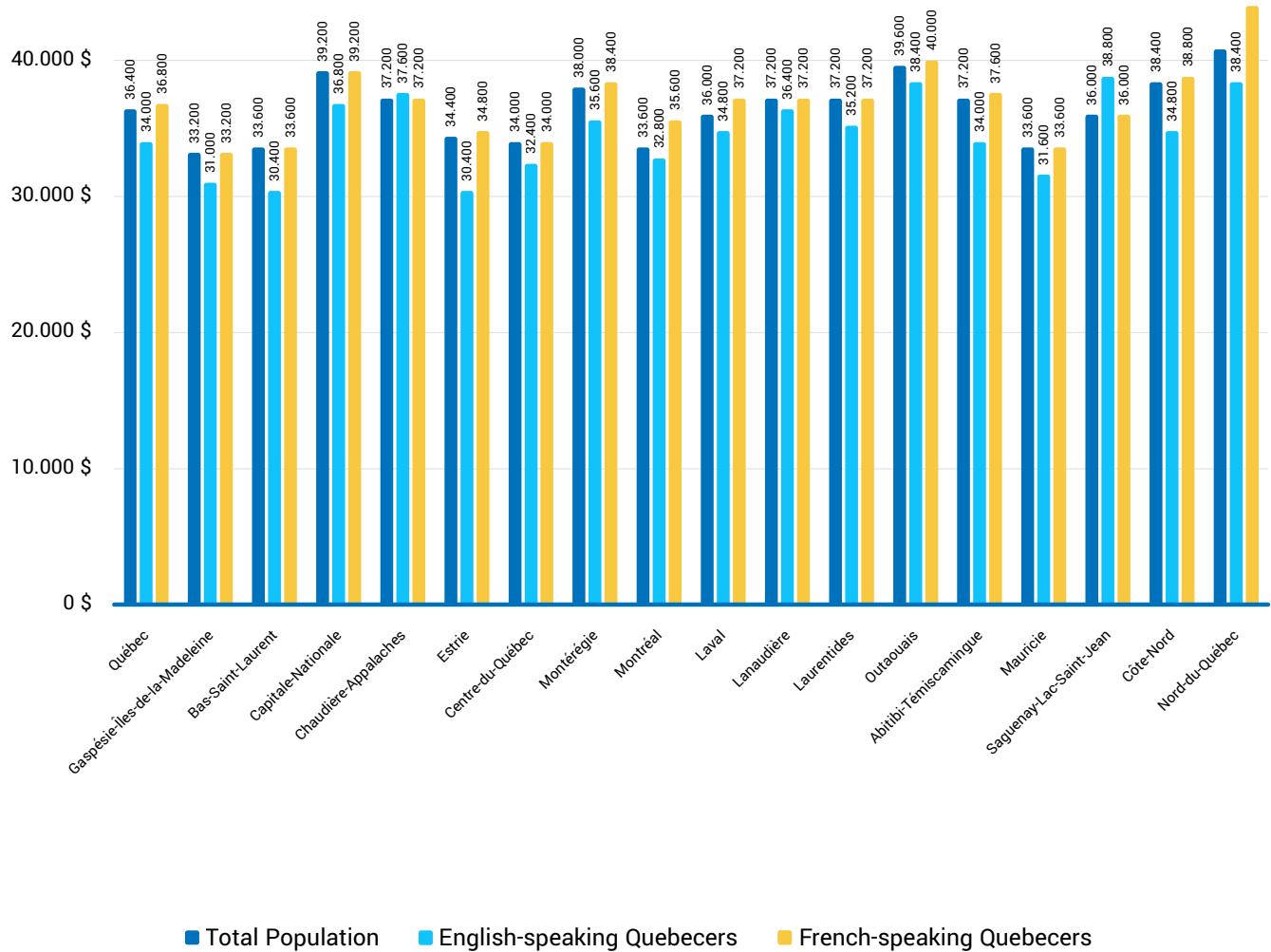
**Figure A1.19. Professional activity by administrative – FSQ**



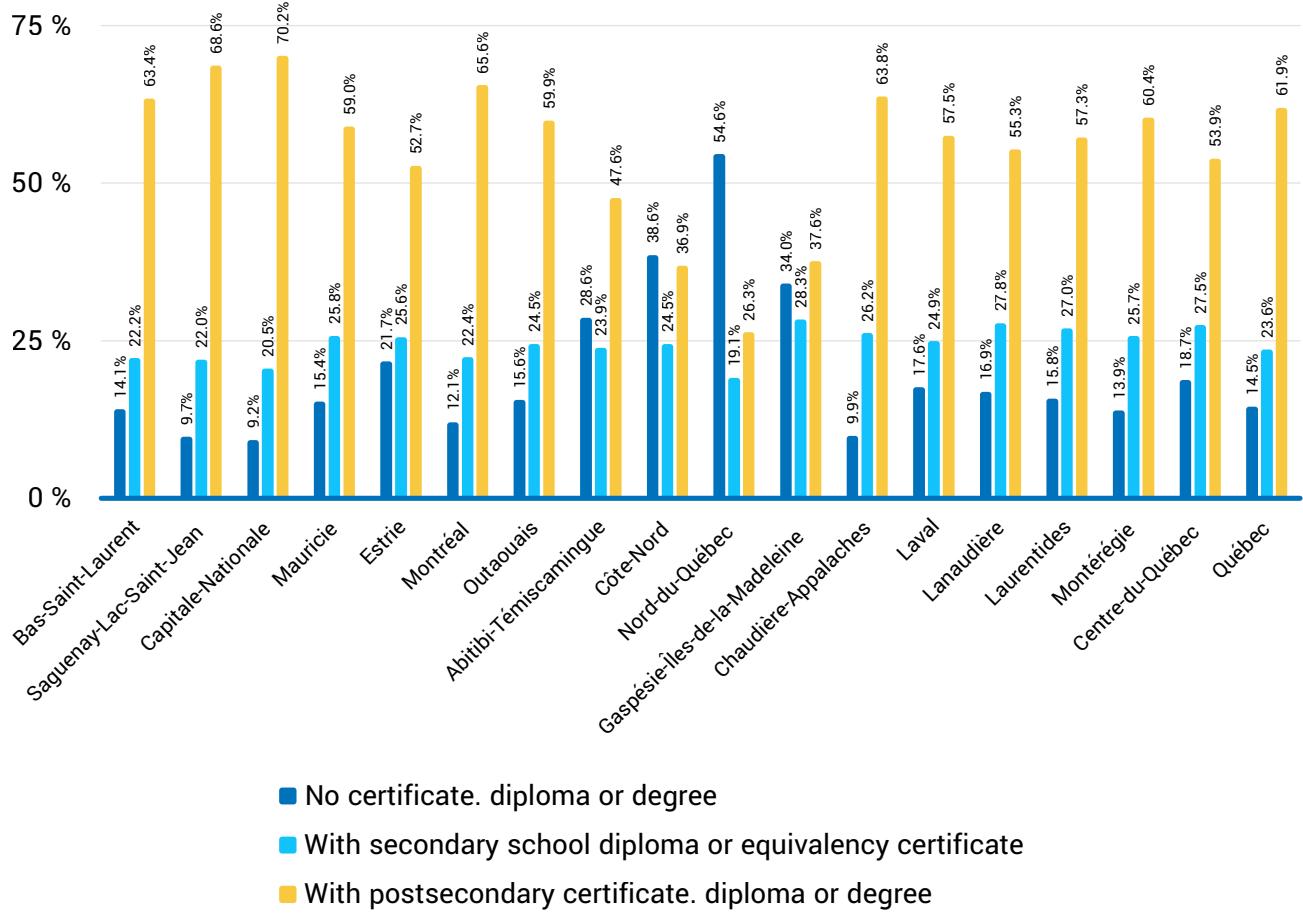
**Figure A1.20. Average number of weeks worked by administrative region and language**



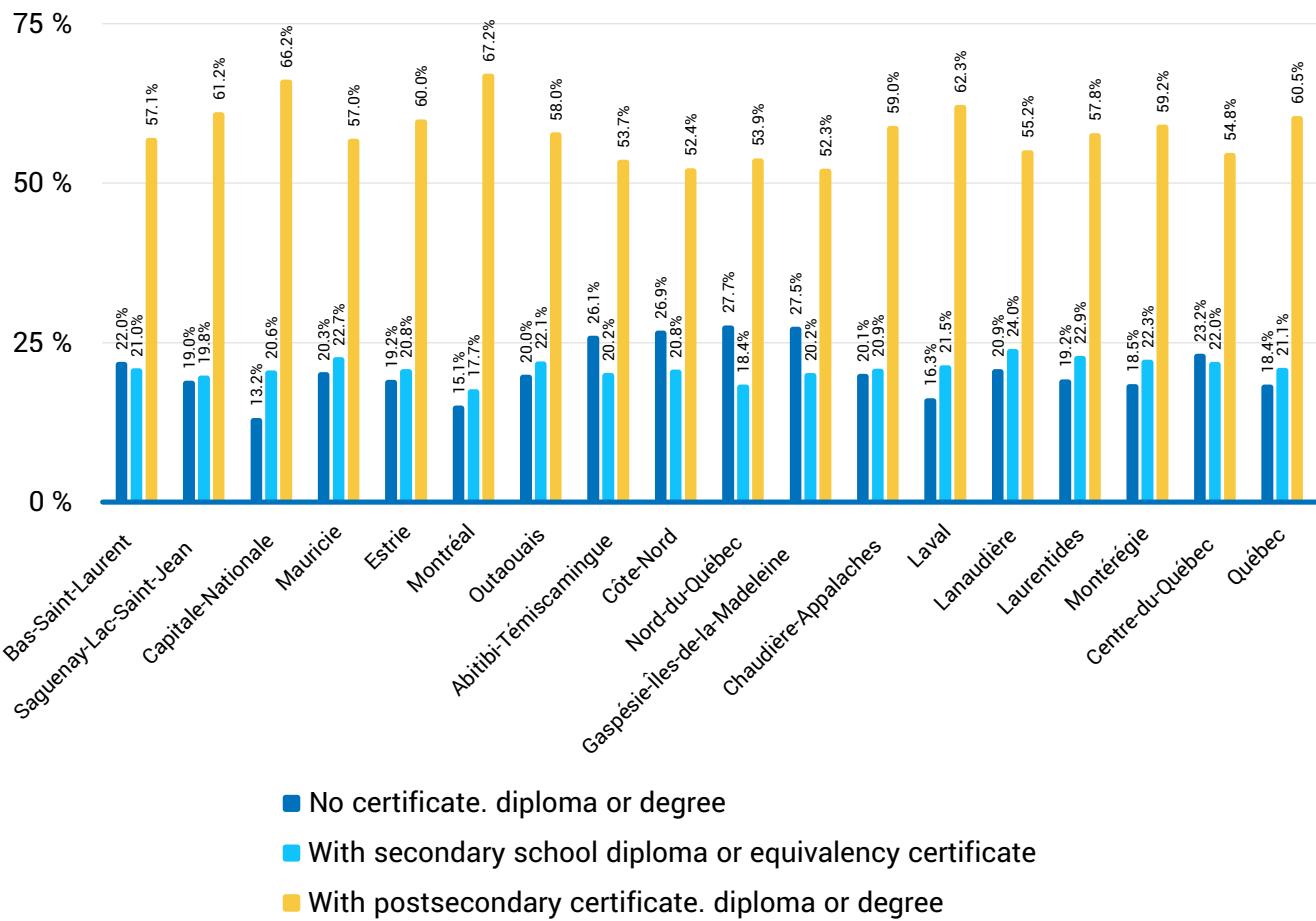
**Figure A1.21. Median after-tax income of the population by administrative region and language**



**Figure A1.22. Educational attainment by administrative region – ESQ**



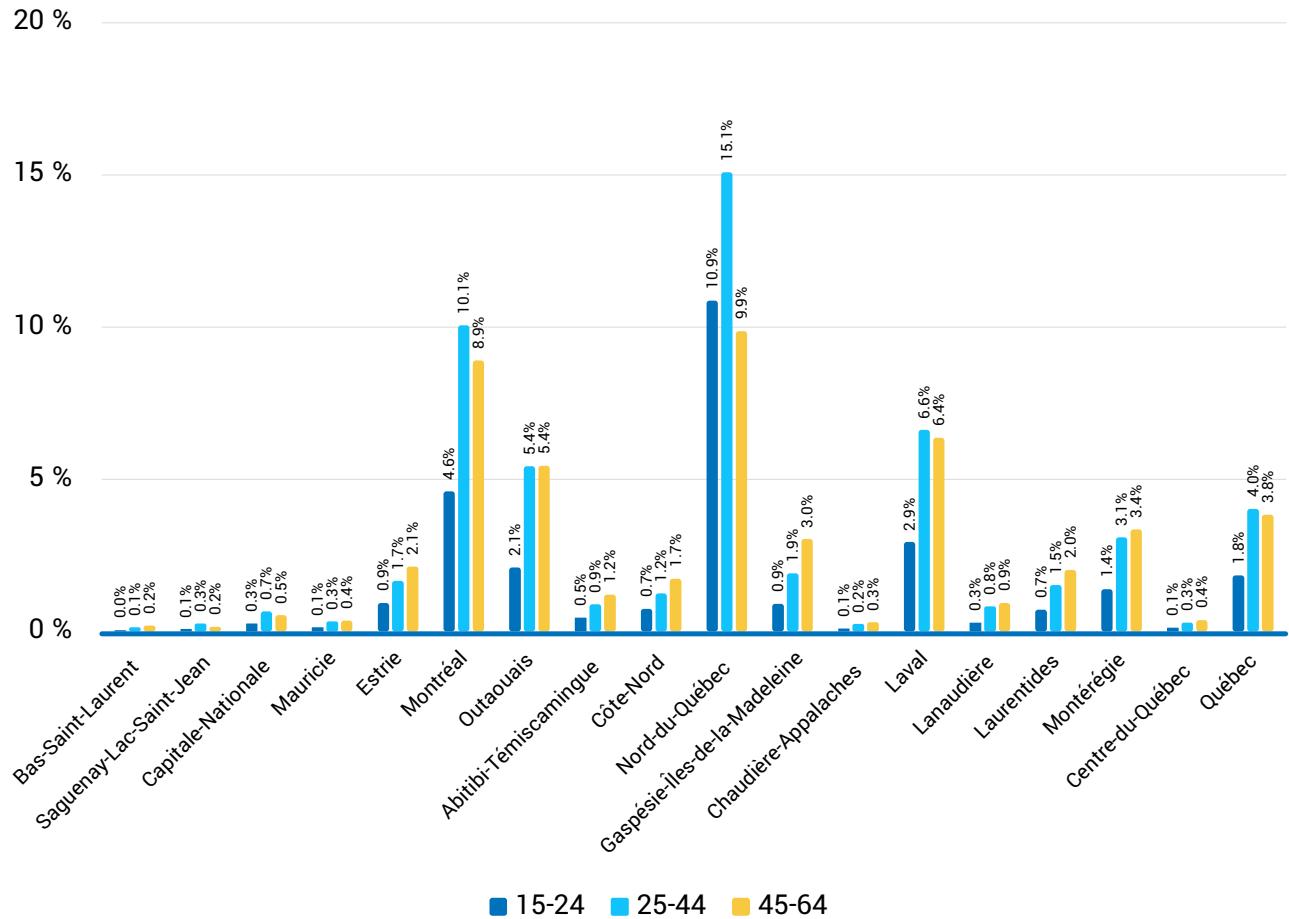
**Figure A1.23. Educational attainment by administrative region - FSQ**



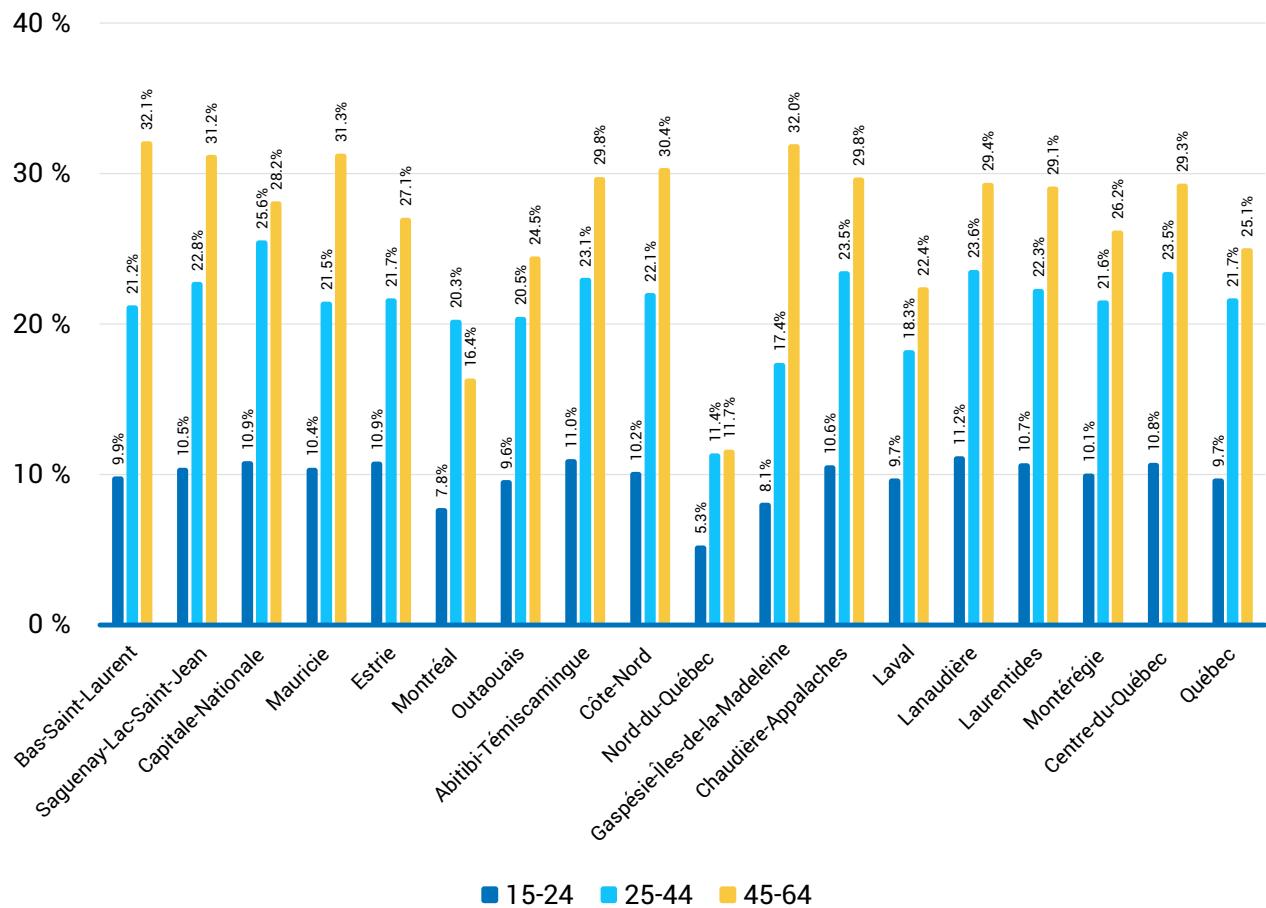
## Annex II

# Supplementary Figures (2016 Census)

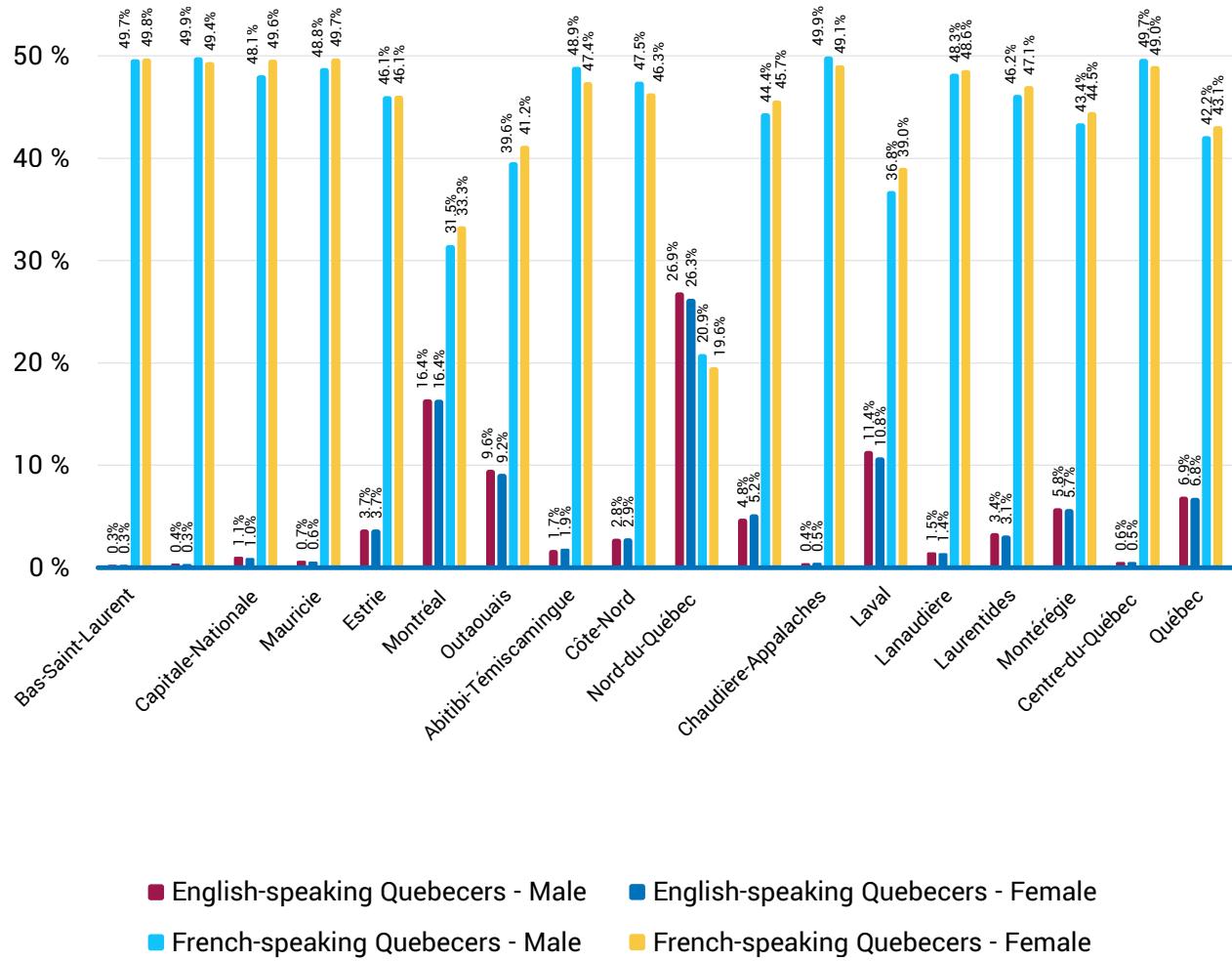
**Figure A2.1. Population age structure of Québec by administrative region – ESQ**



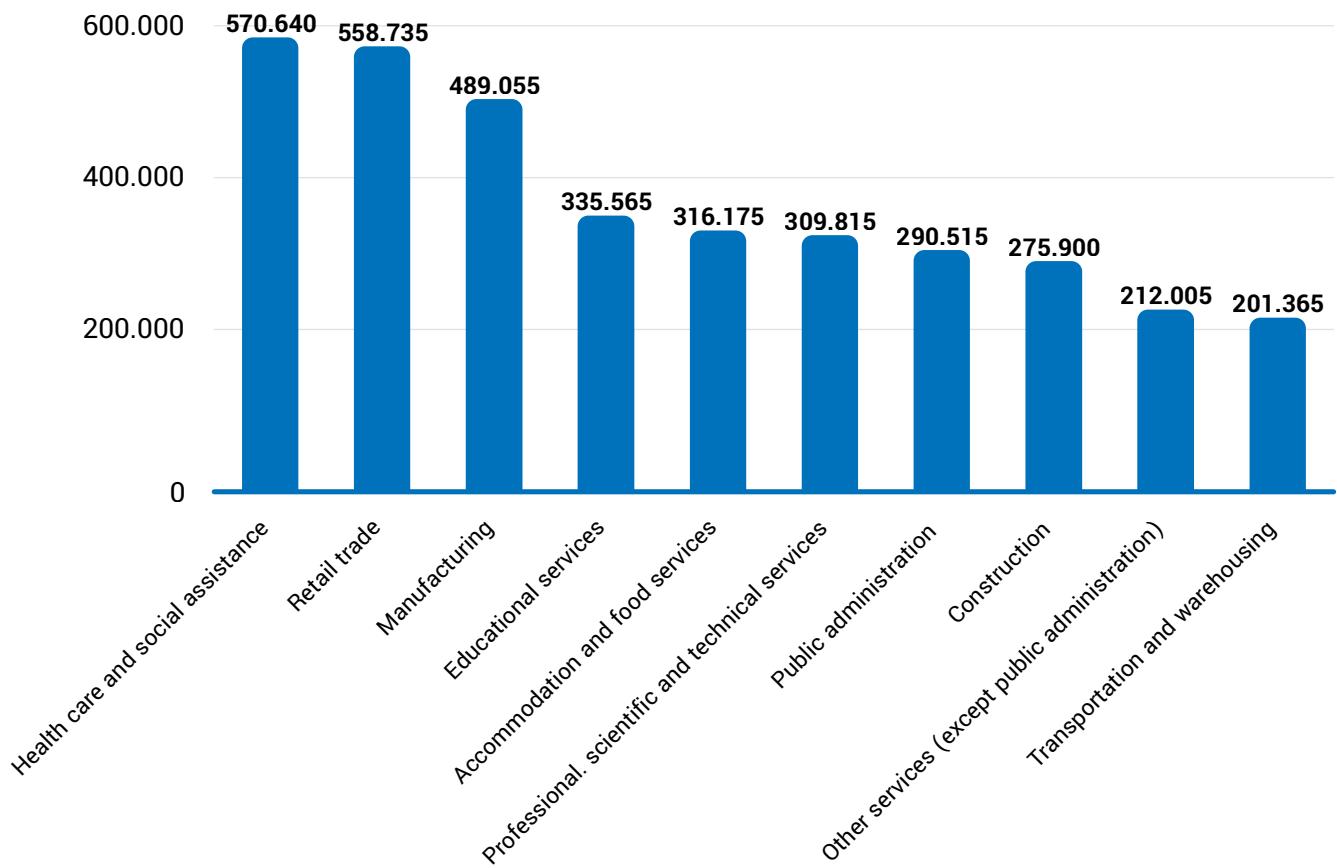
**Figure A2.2. Population age structure of Québec by administrative region – FSQ**



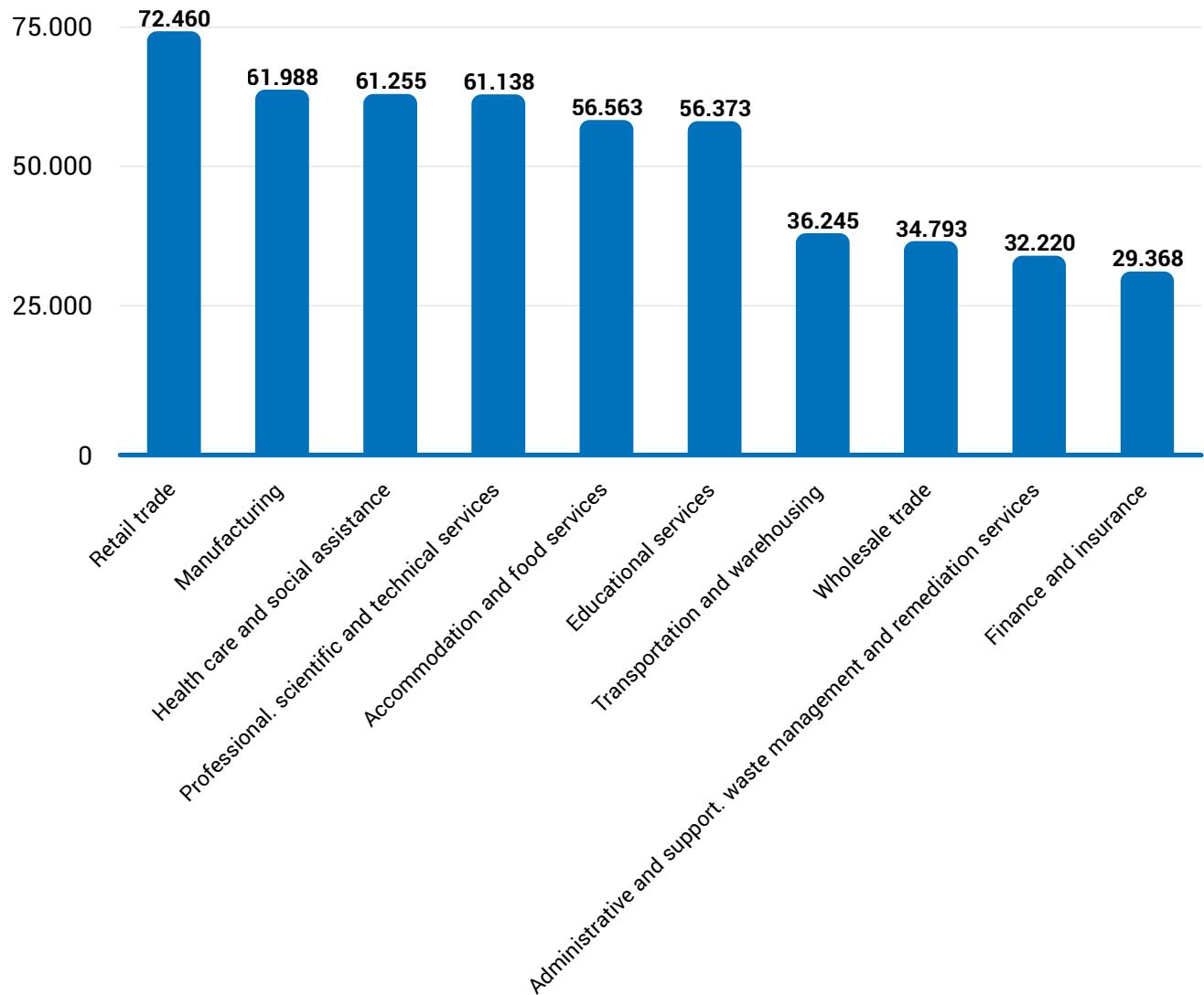
**Figure A2.3. Sex breakdown of the population of Québec by administrative region**



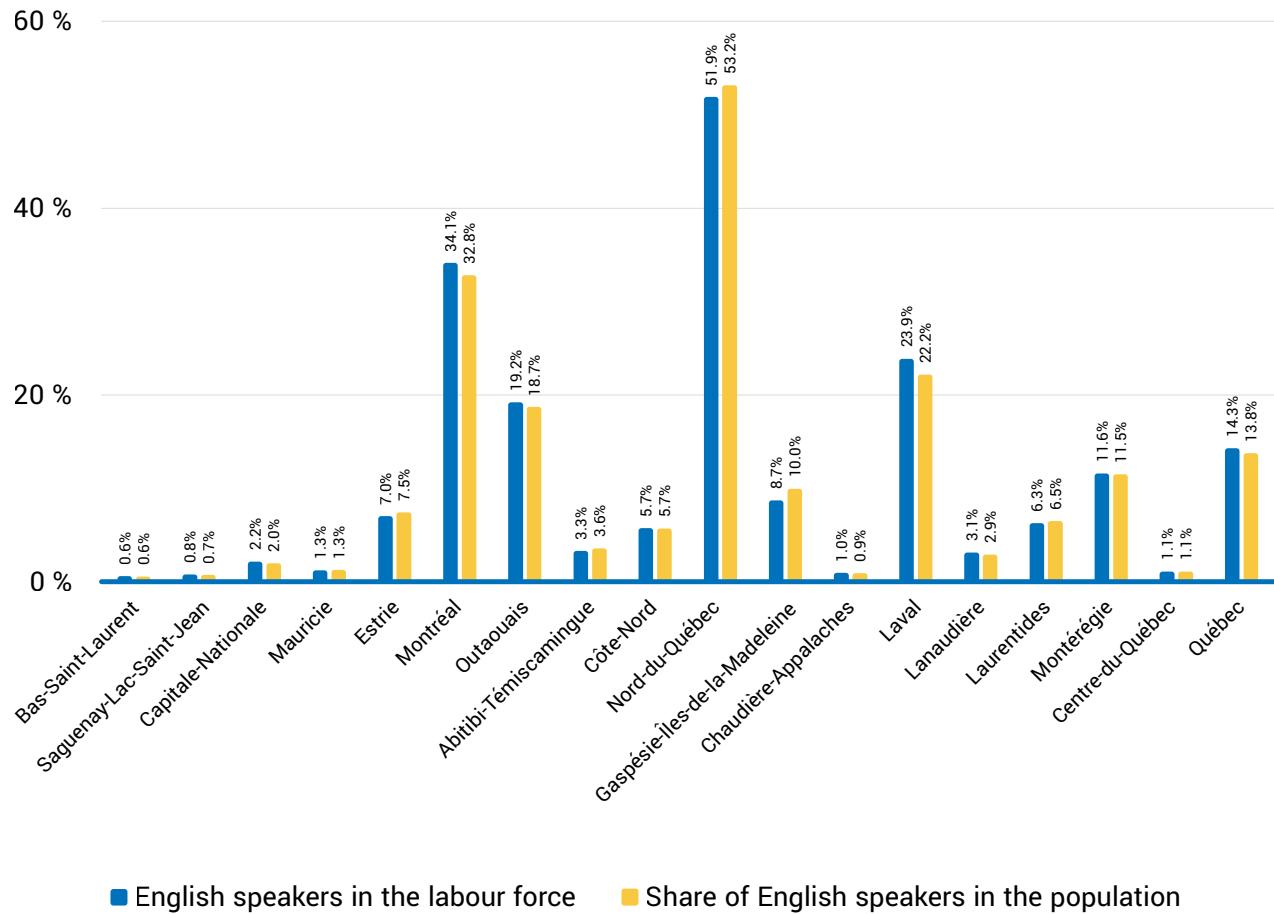
**Figure A2.4. Main industry in Québec by total population**



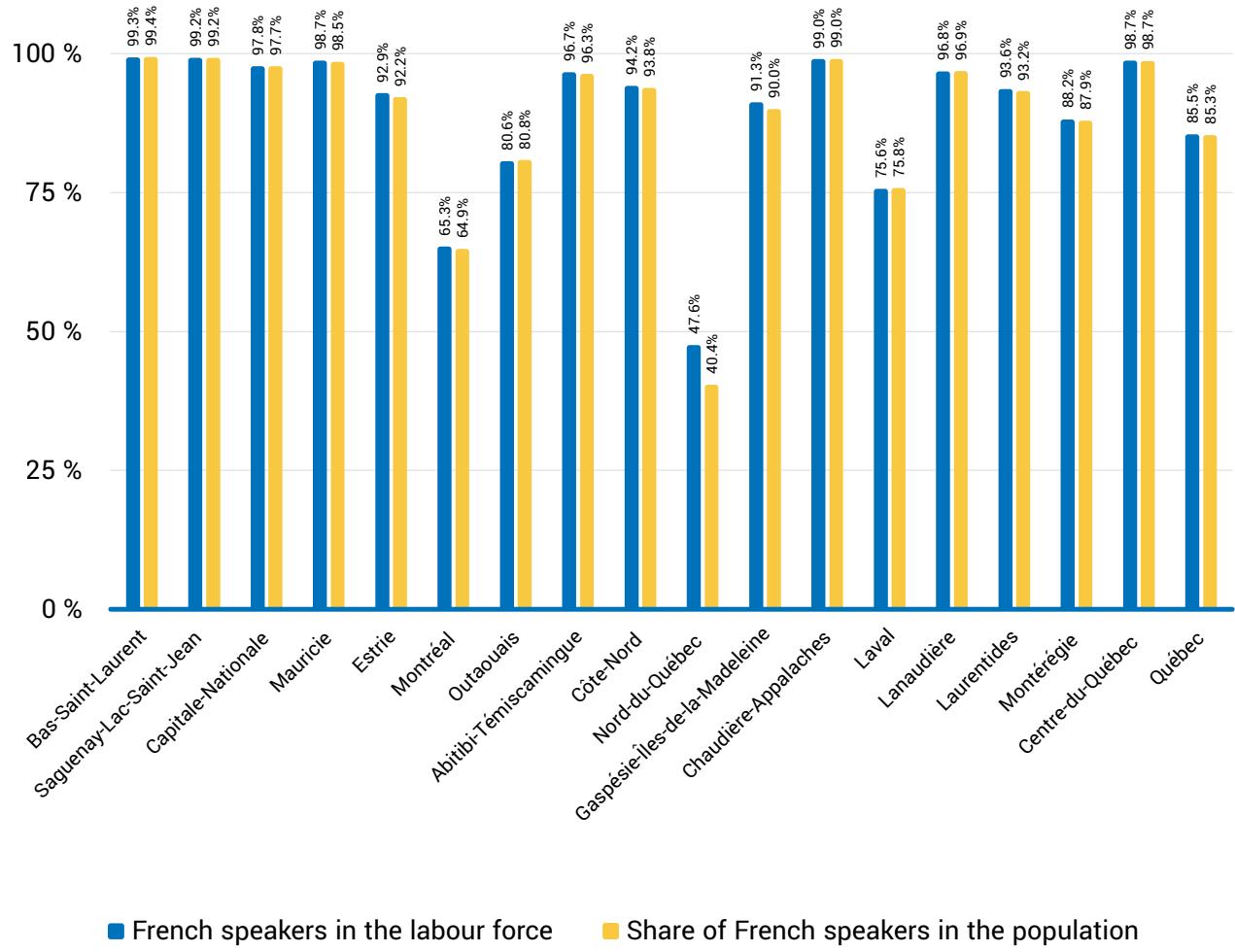
**Figure A2.5. Main industries in Québec for ESQs**



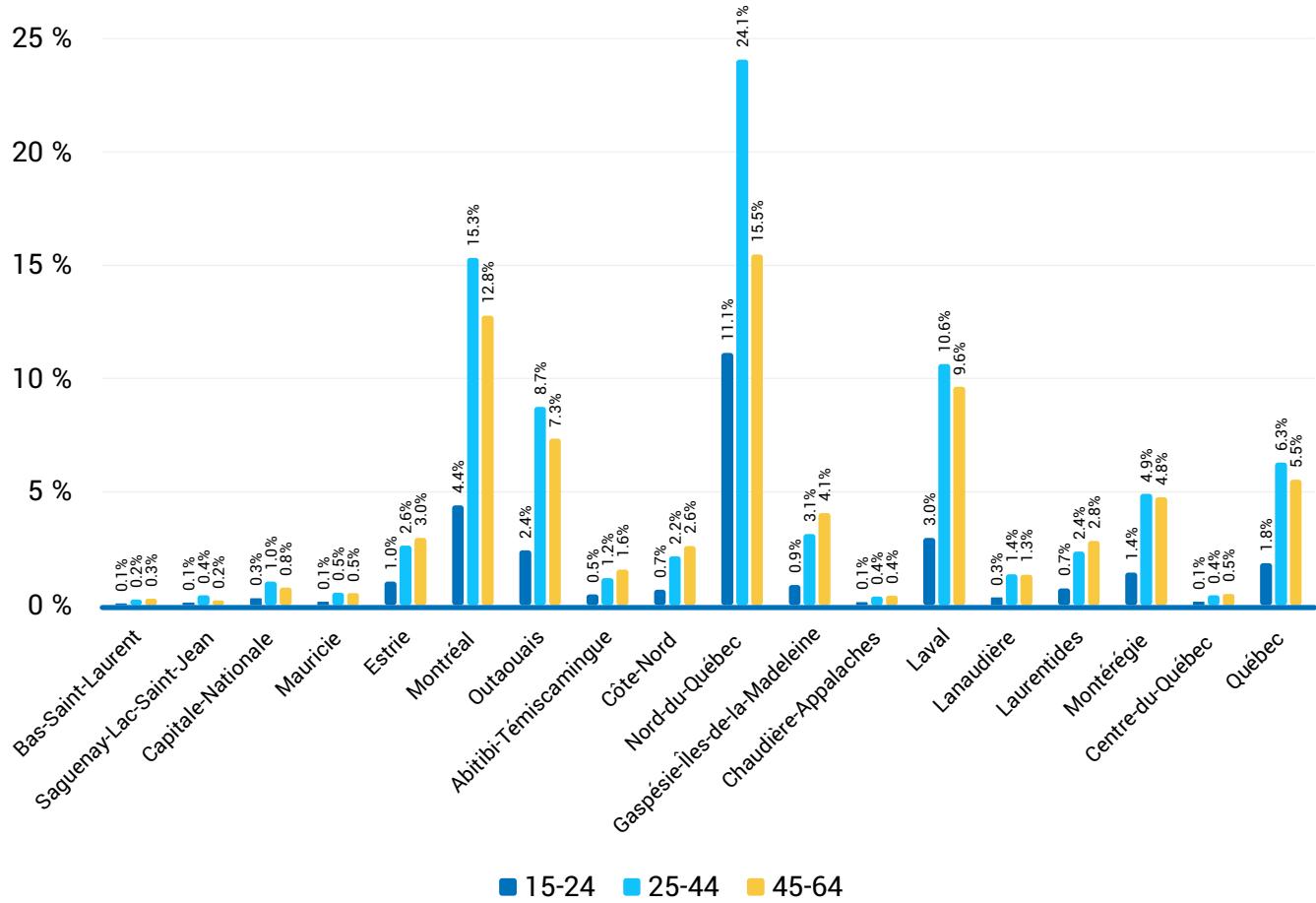
**Figure A2.6. Labour force in Québec by administrative region – ESQ**



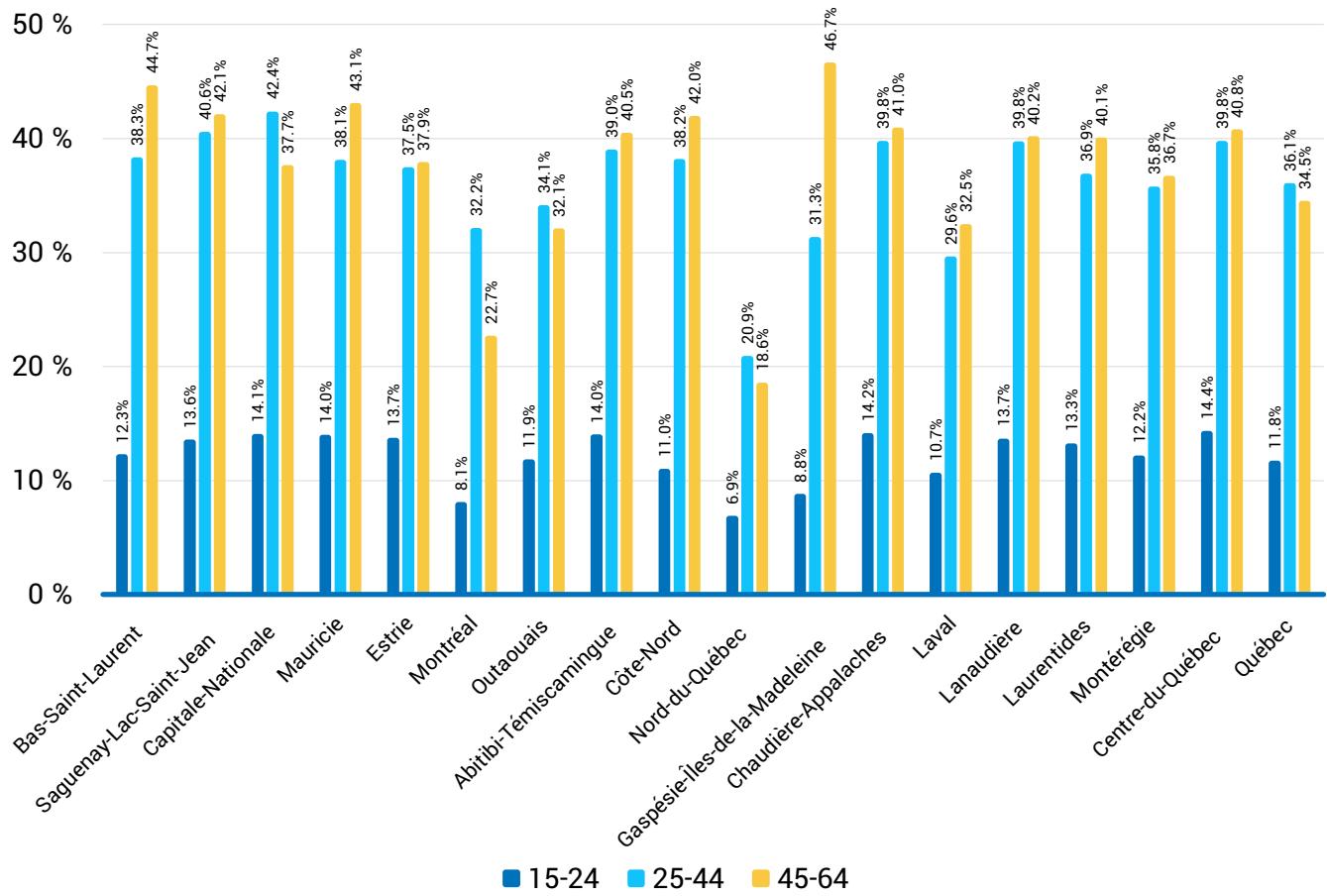
**Figure A2.7. Labour force in Québec by administrative region – FSQ**



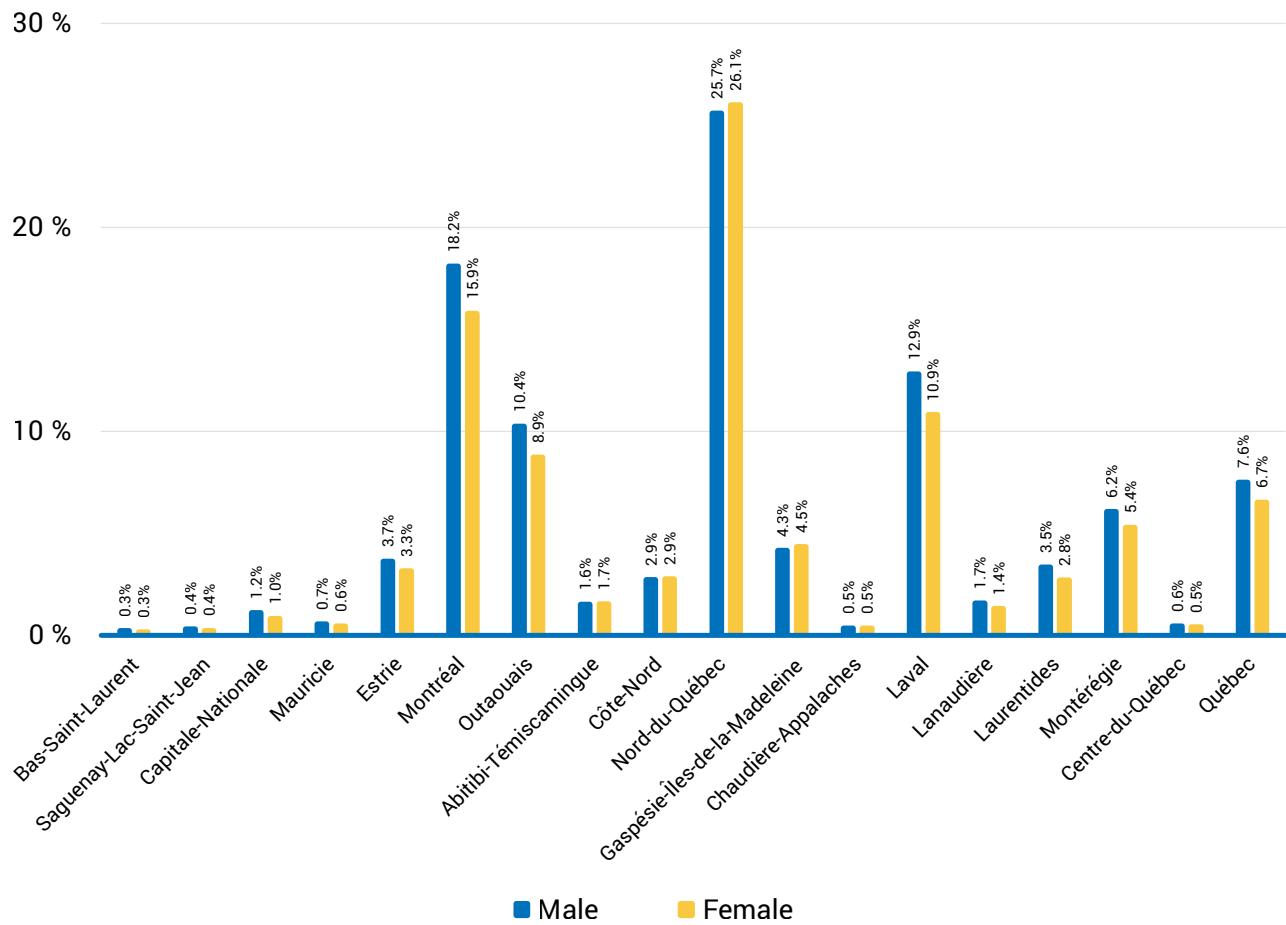
**Figure A2.8. Age structure of Québec's labour force by administrative region – ESQ**



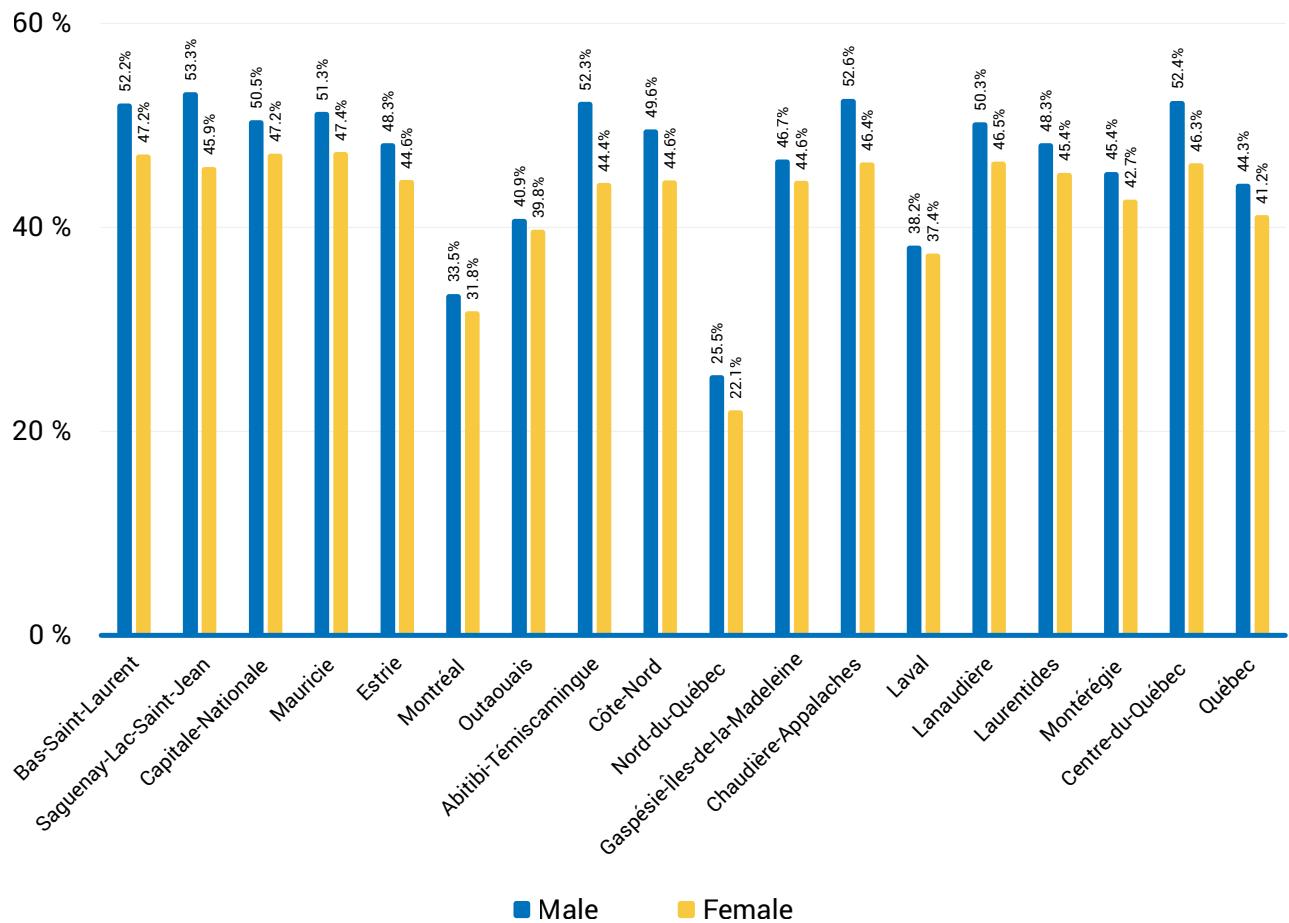
**Figure A2.9. Age structure of Québec's labour force by administrative region – FSQ**



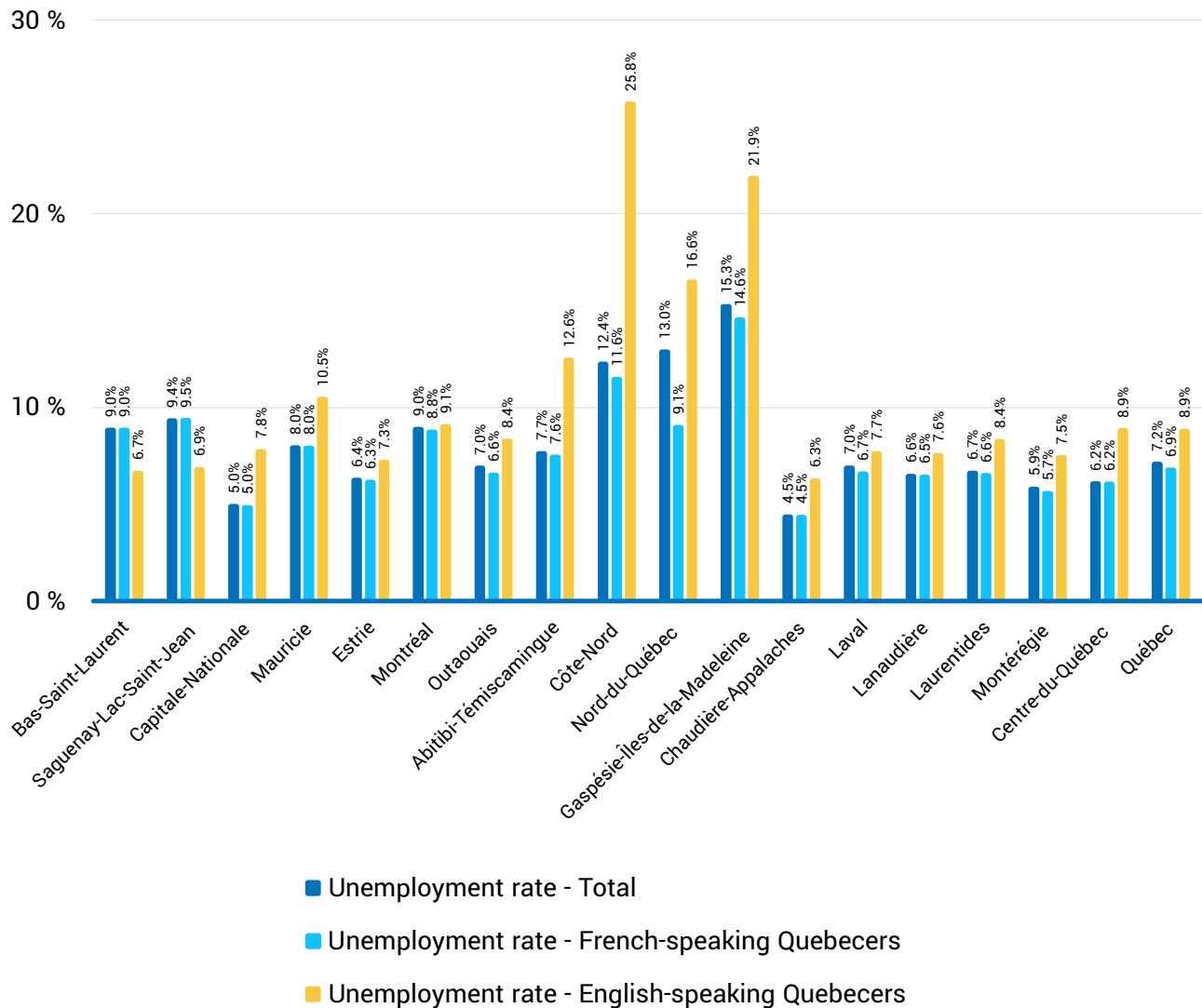
**Figure A2.10. Gender breakdown of the labour force by administrative region – ESQ**



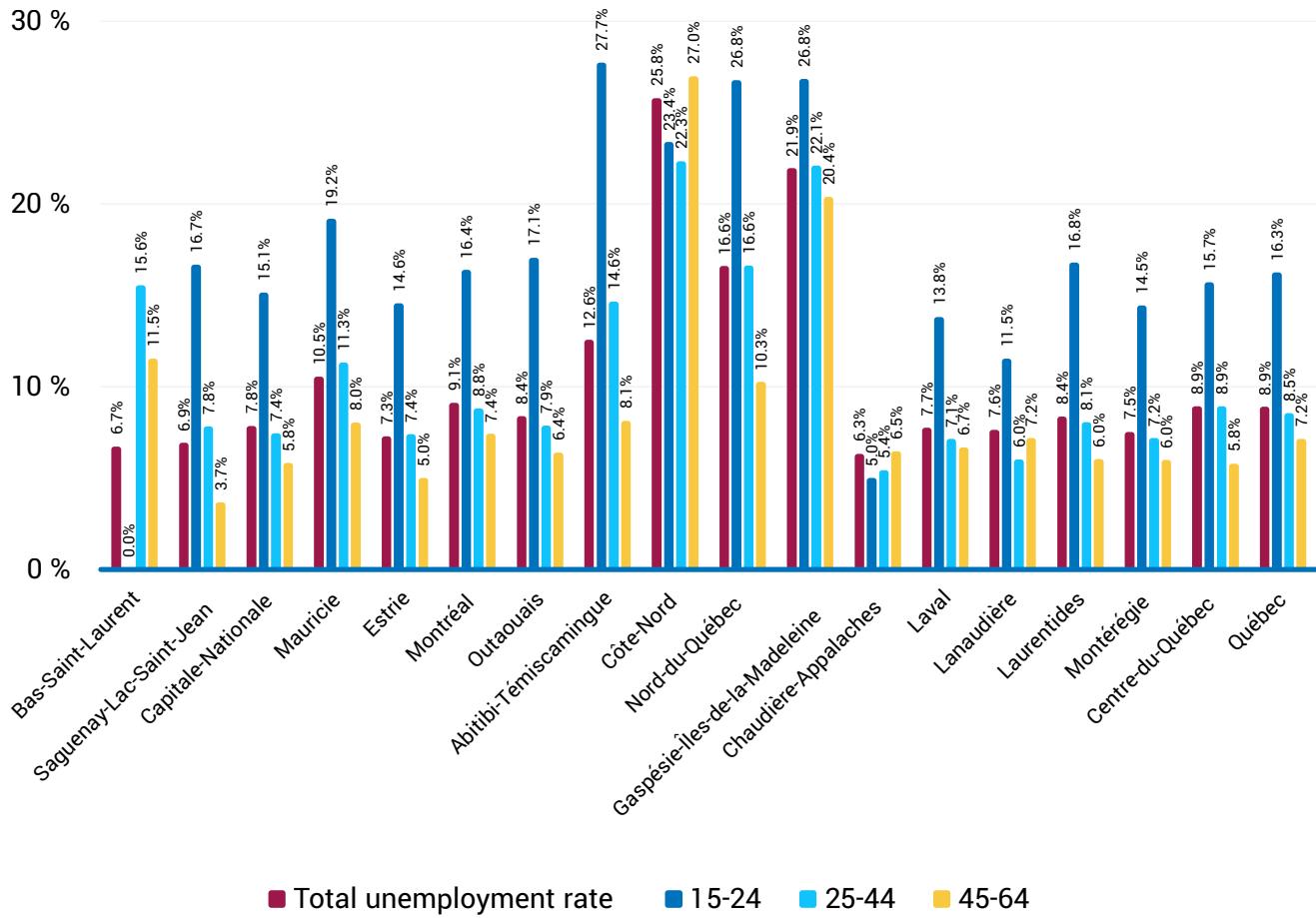
**Figure A2.11. Gender breakdown of the labour force by administrative region – FSQ**



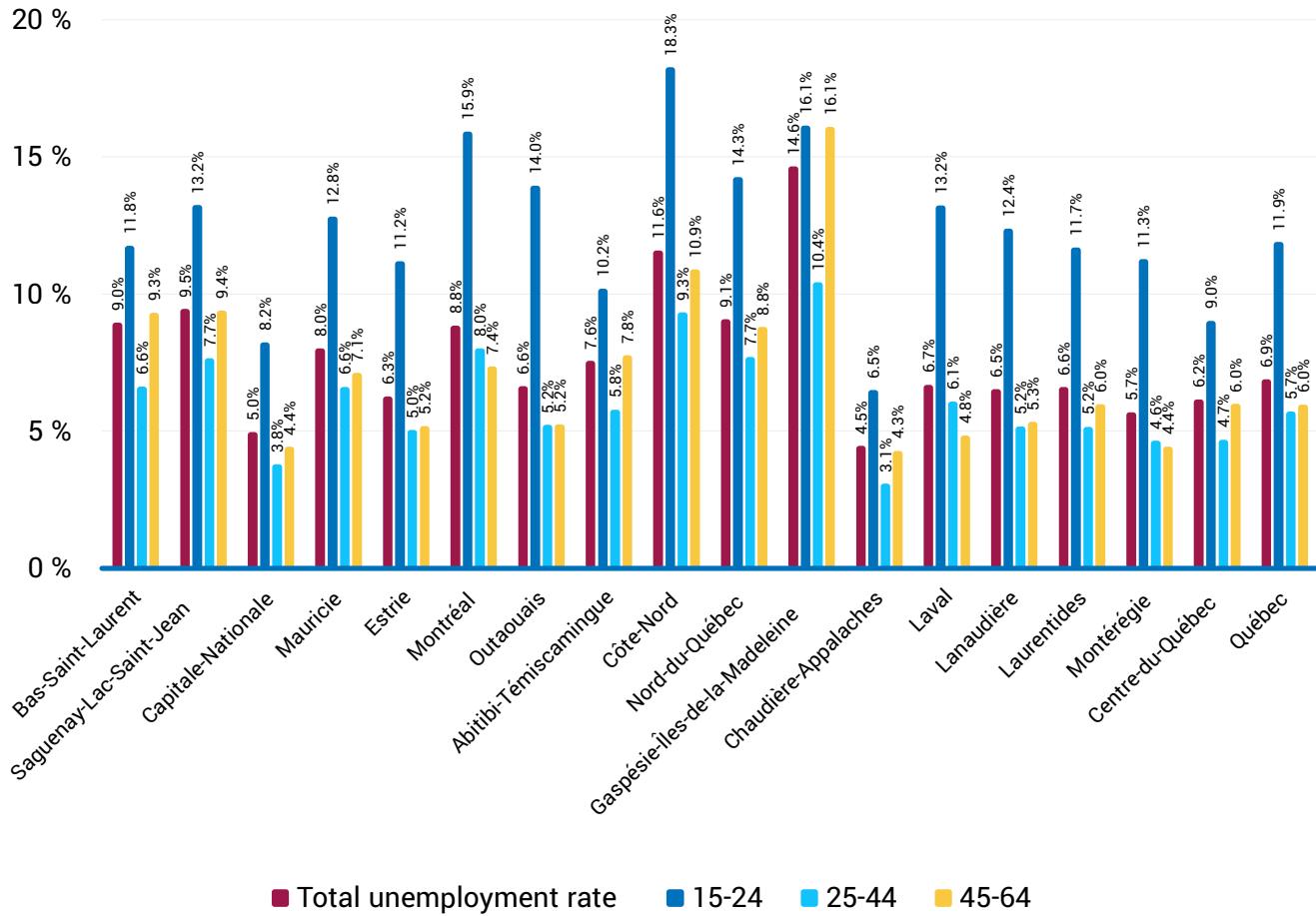
**Figure A2.12. Labour force unemployment rate by administrative region and by language**



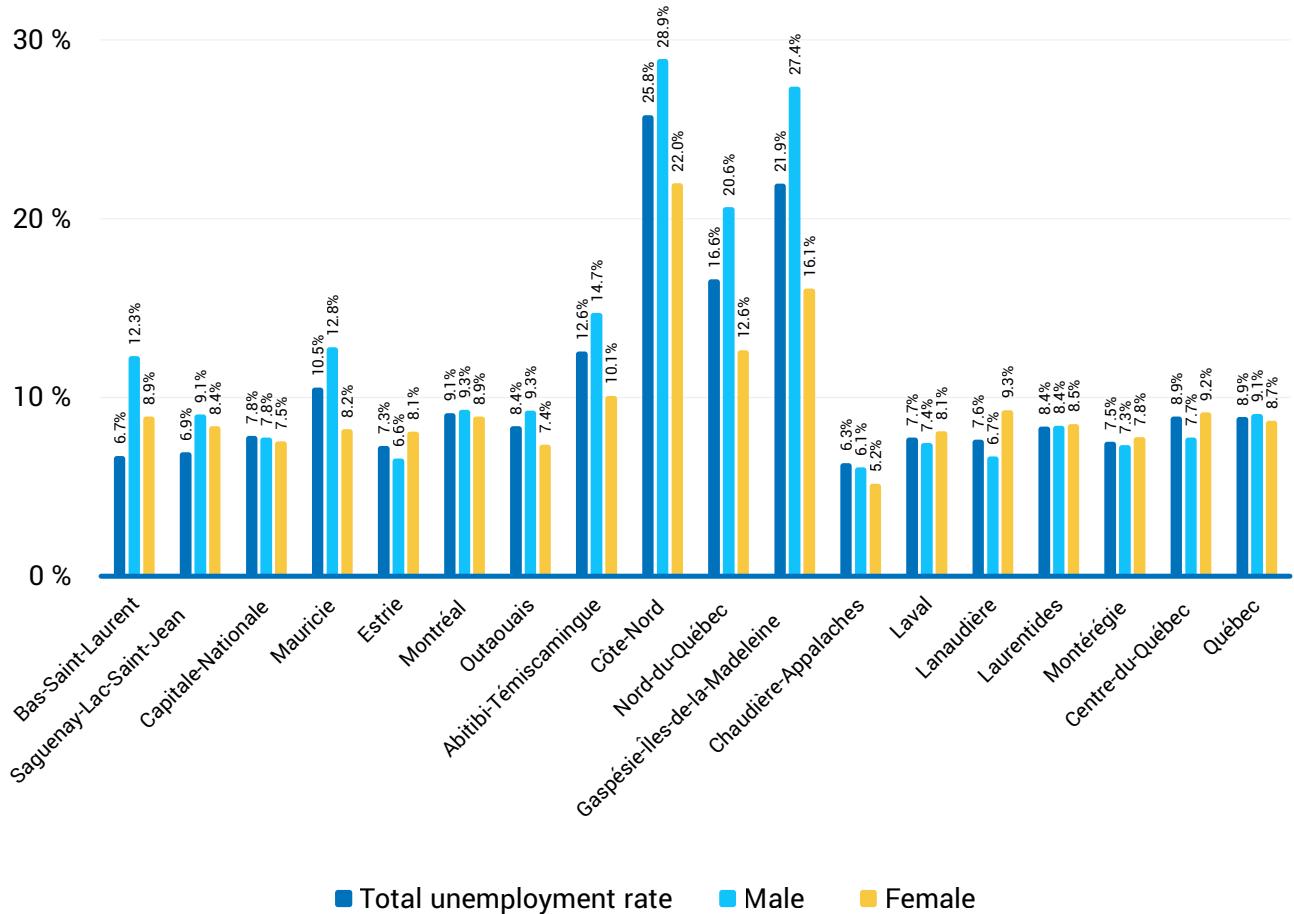
**Figure A2.13. Age distribution of unemployment rate by administrative region – ESQ**



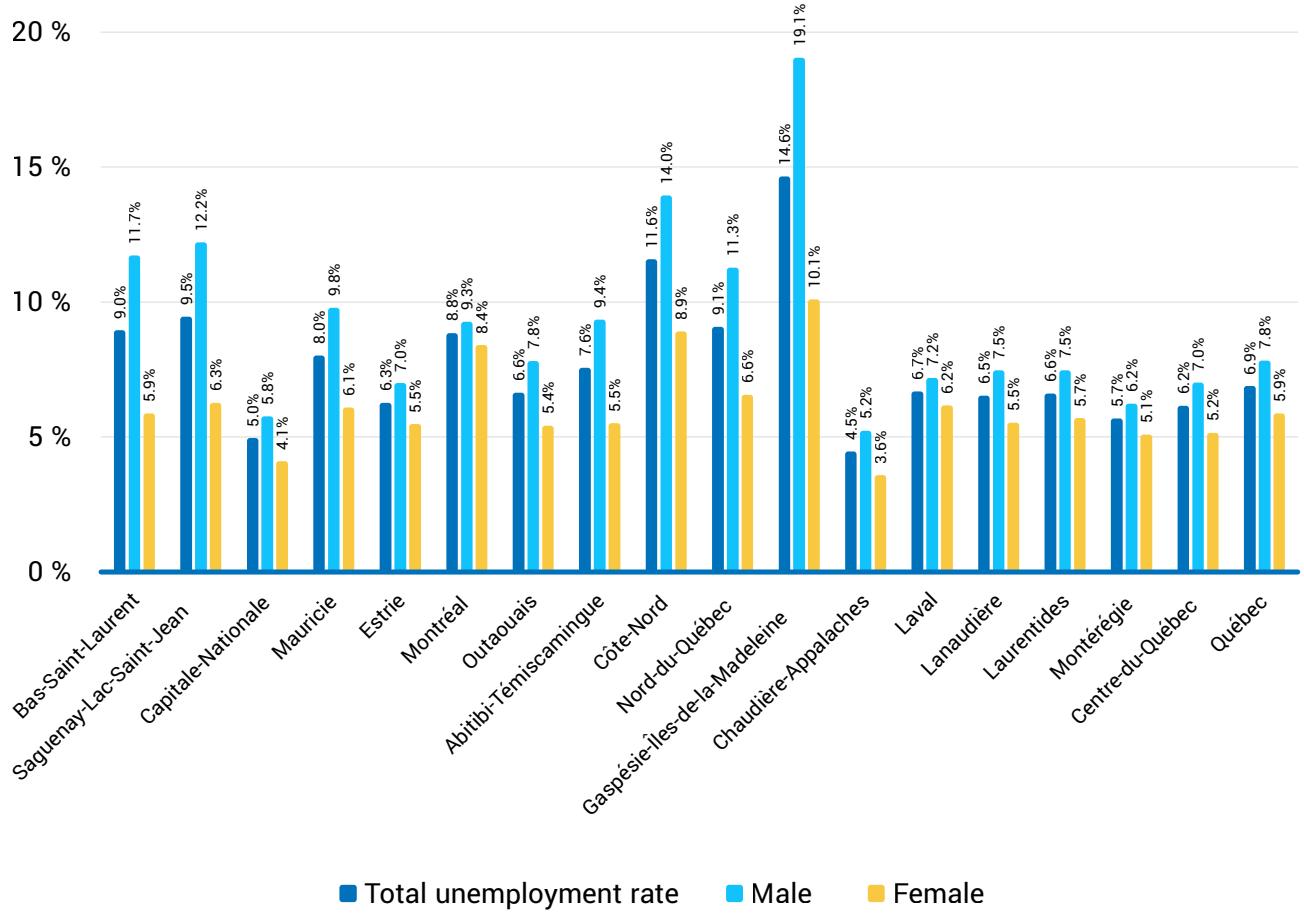
**Figure A2.14. Age distribution of unemployment rate by administrative region – FSQ**



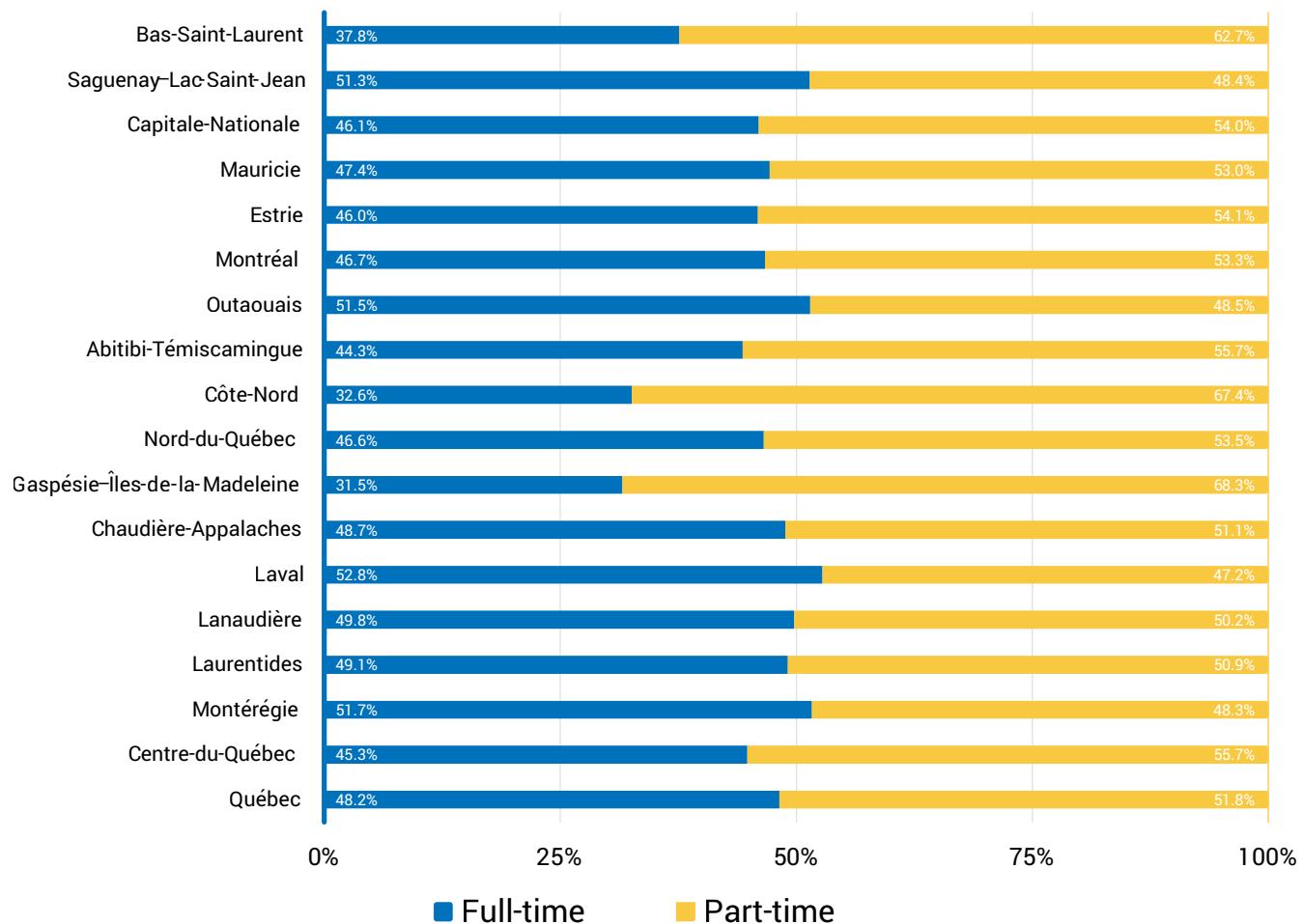
**Figure A2.15. Unemployment rate by gender and administrative region – ESQ**



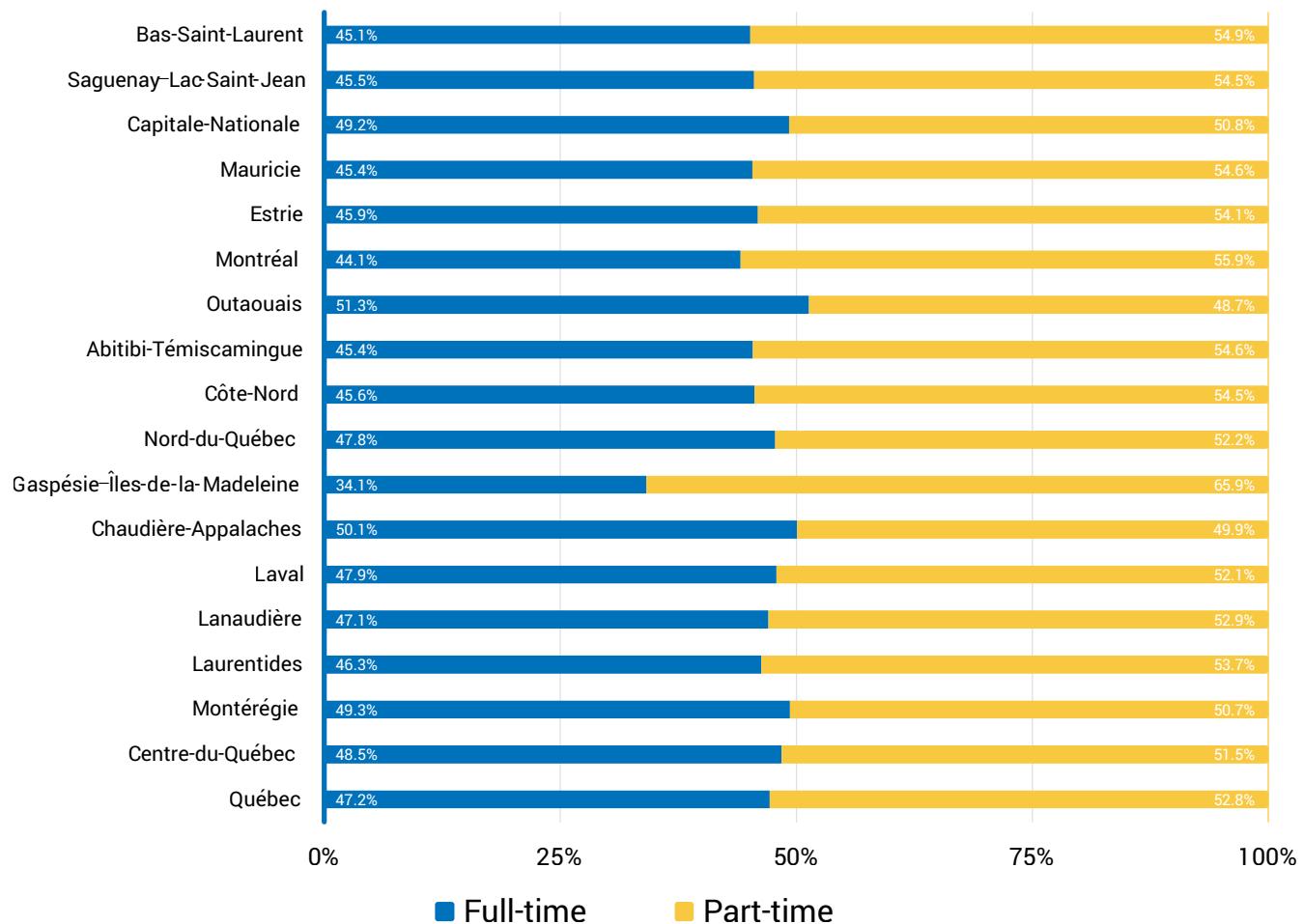
**Figure A2.16. Unemployment rate by gender and administrative region – FSQ**



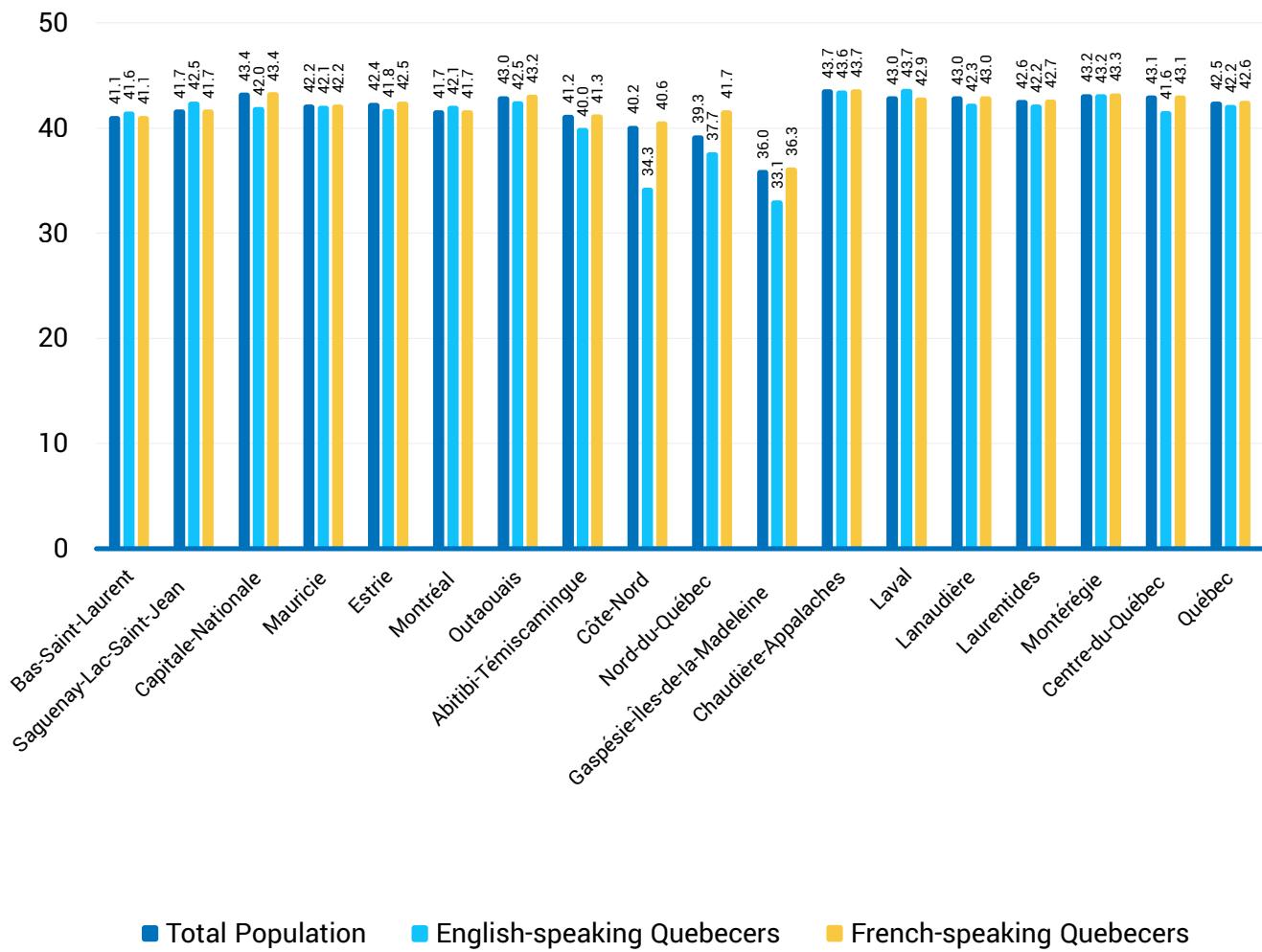
**Figure A2. 17. Professional activity by administrative region – ESQ**



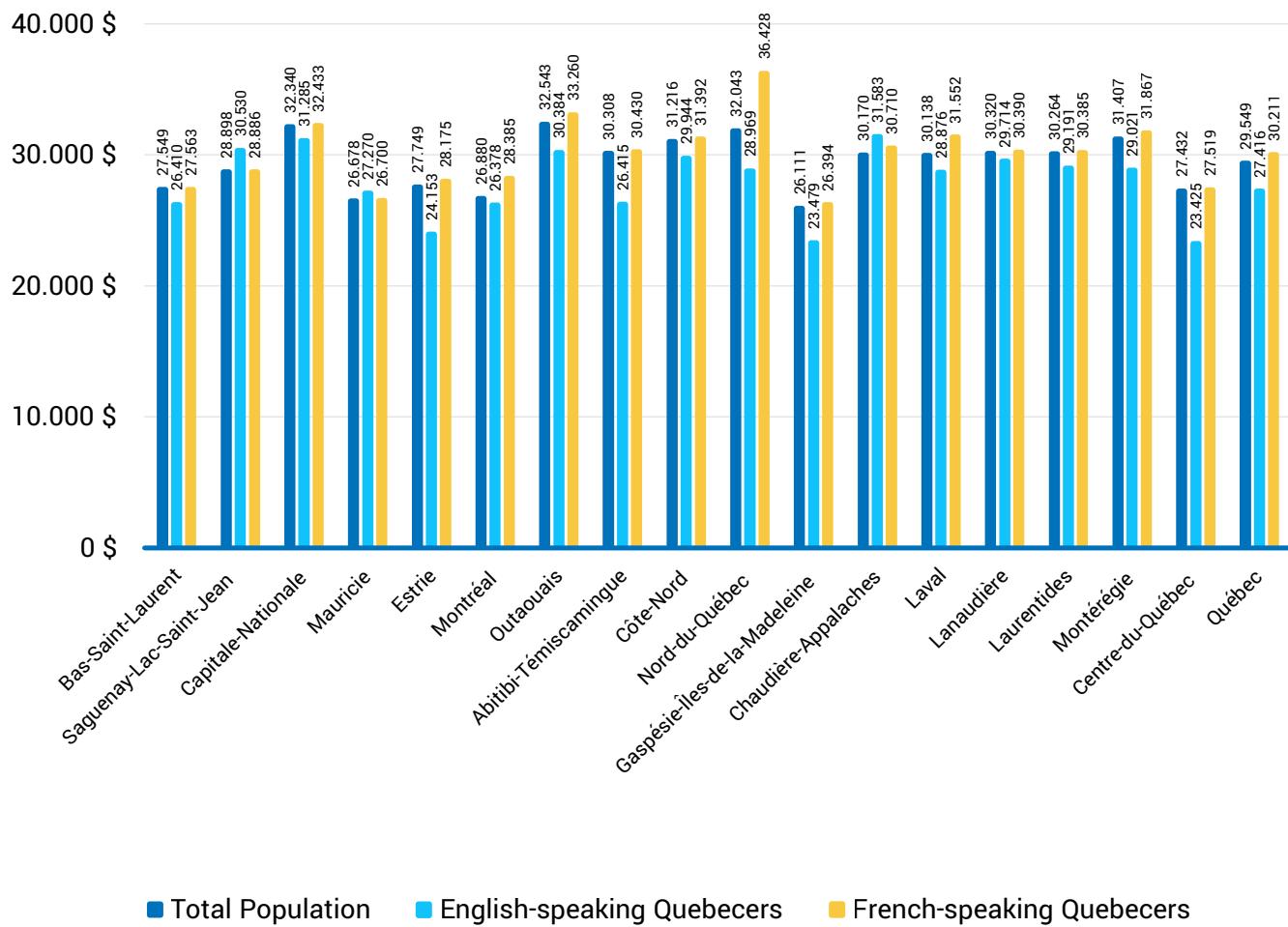
**Figure A2. 18. Professional activity by administrative region – FSQ**



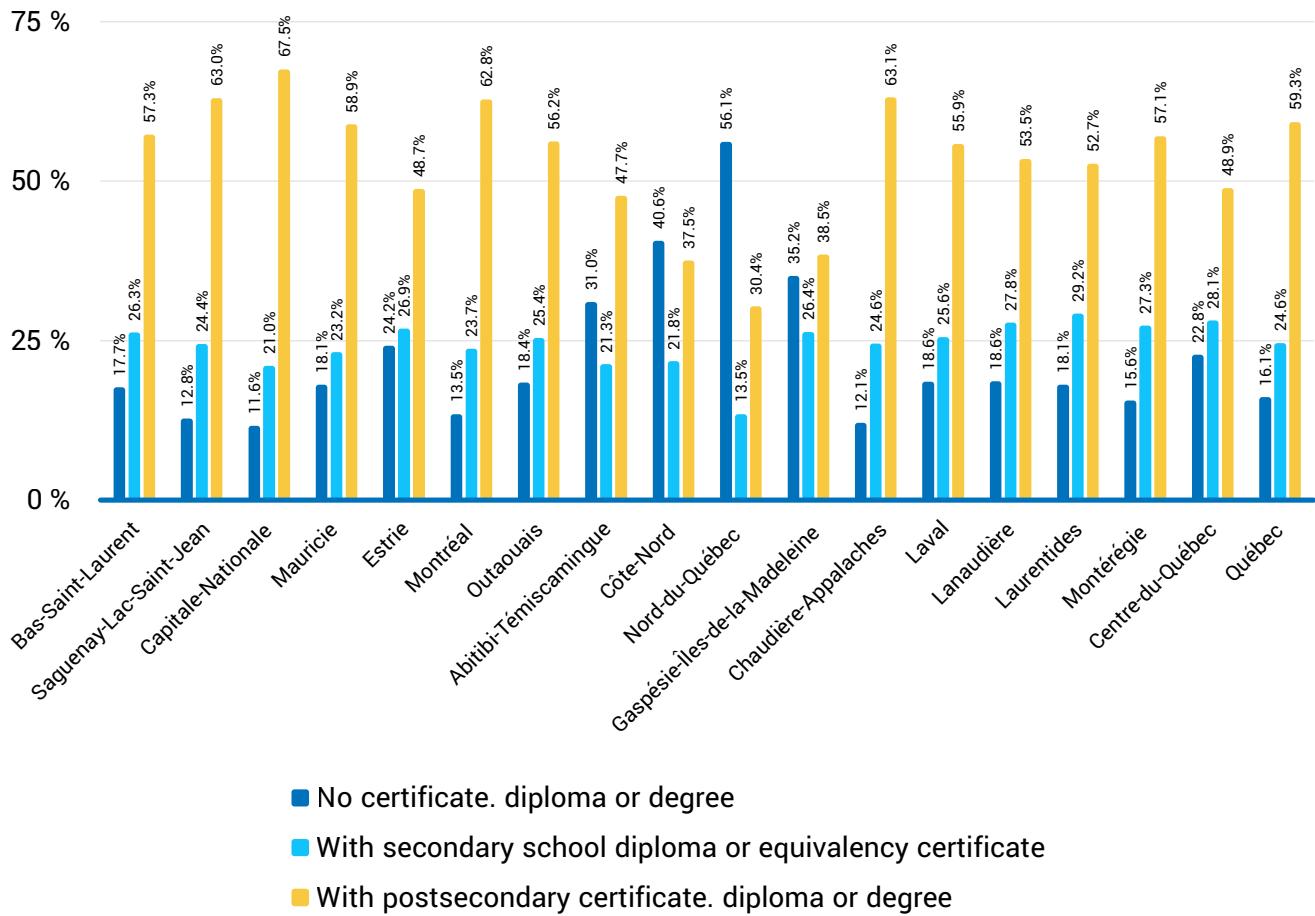
**Figure A2.19. Average weeks worked in Québec by administrative region and language**



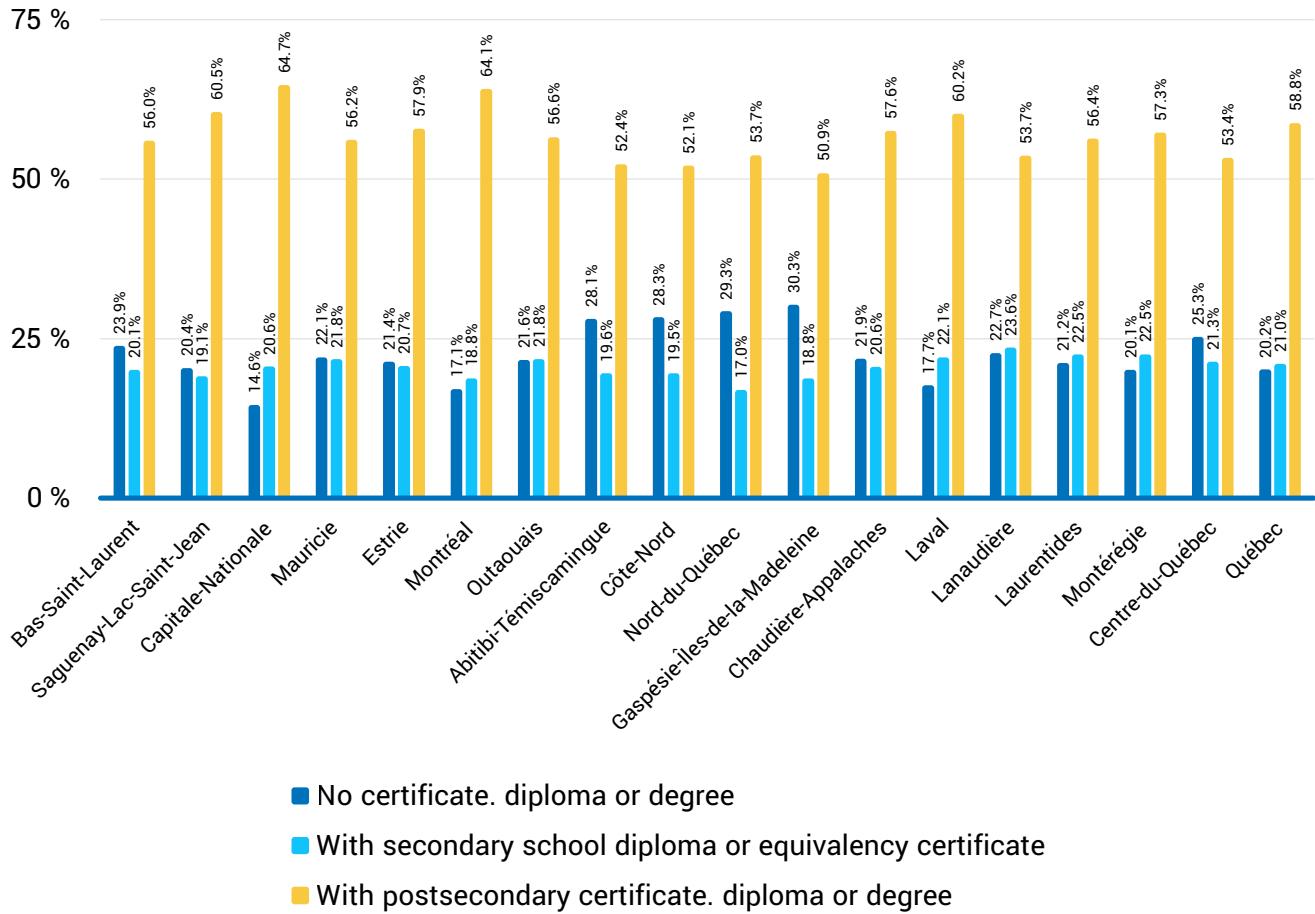
**Figure A2.20. Median after-tax income of the population by administrative region and language**



**Figure A2.21. Educational attainment of the population by administrative region – ESQ**



**Figure 2.22. Educational attainment of the population by administrative region – FSQ**



- No certificate, diploma or degree
- With secondary school diploma or equivalency certificate
- With postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree

## Annex III

### List of Statistics Canada Tables

#### **First Official Language Spoken**

Table 98-400-X2-16352 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (984), First Official Language Spoken (6), age (8B) and sex (3) for the population in private households of Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions, 2016 Census – Sample data (25%)

Table 99-010-X2011044 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (730), First Official Language Spoken (4), age groups (8D) and sex (3) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories, census divisions and census subdivisions, 2011 National Household Survey

Table 97-555-XCB2006059 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (926), First Official Language Spoken (4), age groups (8A) and sex (3) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories, census divisions and census subdivisions, 2006 Census – Sample data (20%)

#### **Mother Tongue**

Table 98-400-X2016067 – Mother tongue (10), First Official Language Spoken (7), knowledge of official languages (5), age (27) and sex (3) for the population excluding institutional residents of Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2016 Census – Integral data (100%)

Table 99-010-X2011033 – Detailed mother tongue (158), immigrant status and period of immigration (11), knowledge of official languages (5), number of non-official languages spoken (5), age groups (10) and sex (3) for the population in private households in Canada, provinces and territories, 2011 National Household Survey

Table 97-557-XCB2006021 – Immigrant status and place of birth (38), sex (3) and age groups (10) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories, census divisions, census subdivisions and dissemination areas, 2006 Census – Sample data (20%)

Table 98-400-X2016354 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (981), mother tongue (4), age (8B) and sex (3) for the population in private households of Canada, provinces, territories, census divisions and census subdivisions, 2016 Census – Sample data (25%)

Table 99-010-X2011047 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (688), mother tongue (4), age groups (8D) and sex (3) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations, 2011 National Household Survey

Table 87-555-XCB2006053 – Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (684), mother tongue (4), age groups (8A) and sex (3) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2006 Census – Sample data (20%)

Table 97-555-XCB2006037 – Language used most often at work (8), other language used regularly at work (9), mother tongue (8), highest certificate, diploma or degree (7) and sex (3) for the population aged 15 years and over who worked since 2005, for Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations, 2006 Census – Sample data (20%)

## **Language Spoken Most Often at Work**

Table 98-400-X2016093 – Language used most often at work (8), other language(s) used regularly at work (9), mother tongue (8), industry - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2012 (21) and highest certificate, diploma or degree (7) for the population aged 15 years and over who worked since 2015, in private households of Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations, 2016 Census

Table 98-400-X2016093 – Language used most often at work (8), other language(s) used regularly at work (9), mother tongue (8), industry - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2012 (21) and highest certificate, diploma or degree (7) for the population aged 15 years and over who worked since 2015, in private households of Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2016 Census

Table 99-012-X2011026 – Language used most often at work (8), other language used regularly at work (9), mother tongue (8), industry - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2007 (21), highest certificate, diploma or degree (7), immigrant status (4) and age groups (5) for the population aged 15 and over who worked since 2010, in private households in Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations, 2011 National Household Survey

Table 97-555-XCB2006035 – Language used most often at work (8), other language used regularly at work (9), detailed mother tongue (186) and age groups (9) for the population aged 15 years and over who worked since 2005, for Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2006 Census – Sample data (20%)

## **Knowledge of Official Languages**

Table 98-400-X2016384 – Knowledge of official languages (5), income statistics (17), highest certificate, diploma or degree (15), immigrant status and period of immigration (10), work during reference year (4A), age (6B) and sex (3) for the population aged 15 years and over in private households of Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2016 Census – Sample data (25%)

Table 99-010-X2011040 – Mother tongue (8), knowledge of official languages (5), highest certificate, diploma or degree (15), labour force status (8), immigrant status and period of immigration (11), age groups (10C) and sex (3) for the population aged 15 and over, in private households in Canada, provinces, territories, census metropolitan areas, and census agglomerations, 2011 National Household Survey

## Annex IV

# Demographic Survey Analysis

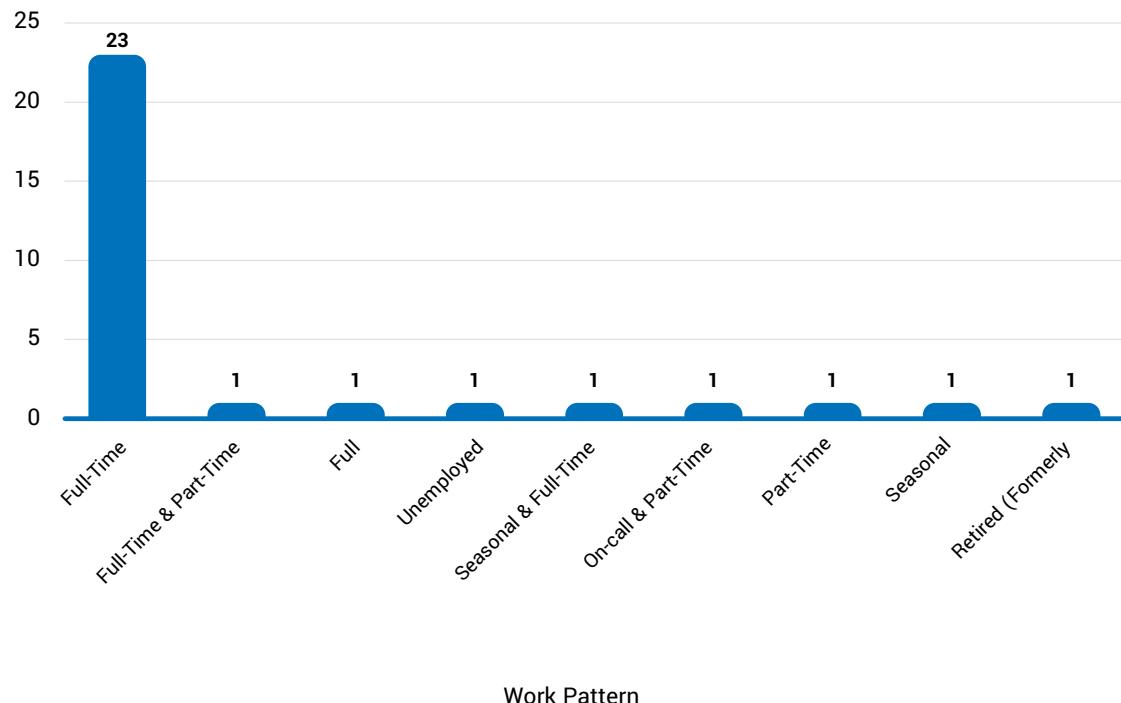
This section will begin with an overview of the employment backgrounds (the working patterns and industry engagement) and demographic characteristics of the participants in this study.

### Employment Backgrounds

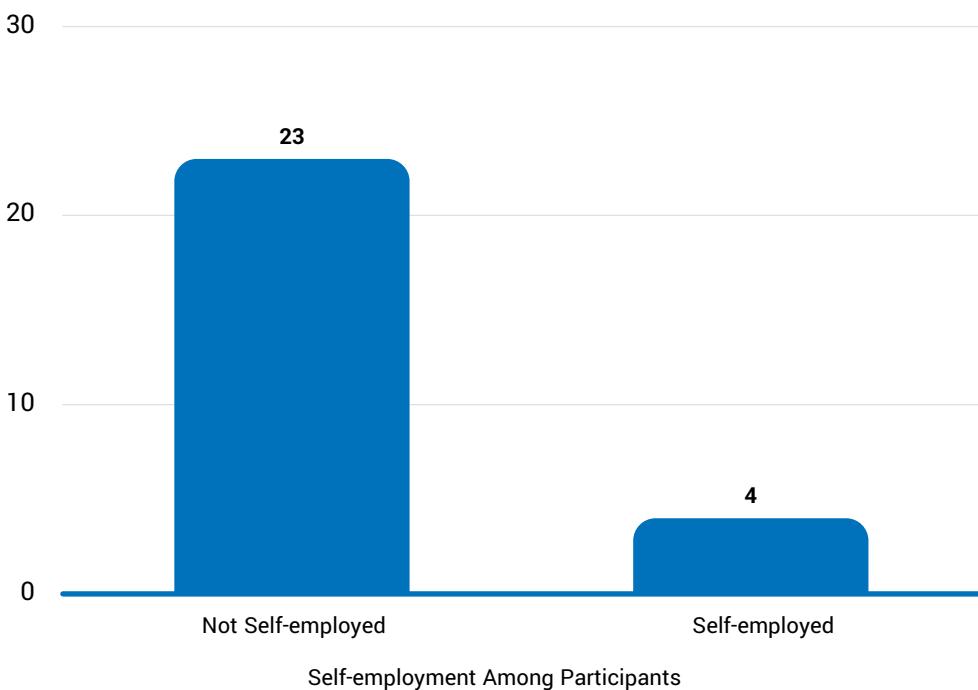
At the time of the study, 24 participants were engaged in full-time work; 1 participant was working part-time; 1 participant was working two jobs, including a full-time position and a part-time position; 1 was working seasonally; and 1 was working both seasonally and full-time. 1 participant was recently retired, having worked seasonally in their most recent post. Moreover, four of the 30 participants were self-employed.

Despite English speakers facing higher unemployment rates than their French counterparts, only 1 participant interviewed for this study was unemployed and seeking work. This could be a reflection of the current labour shortage in Québec, wherein English speakers are perhaps more likely to be underemployed or in employment that does not match their skillset than unemployed.

**Graph 1: Working Patterns Among Interview Participants**



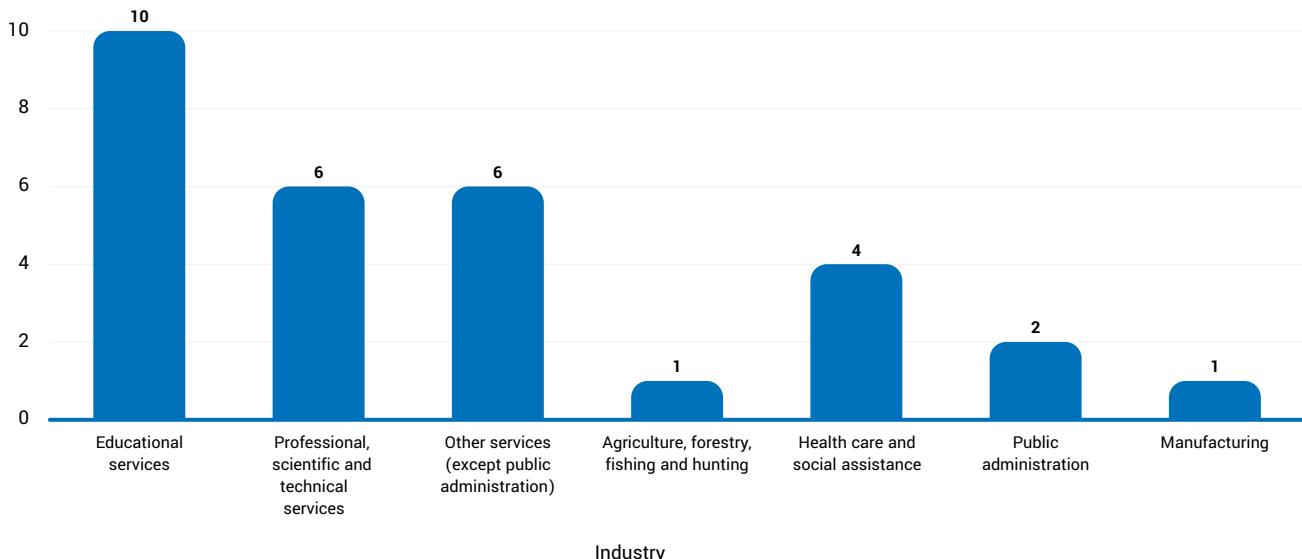
**Graph 2: Self-Employment Among Participants**



Participants were employed in a range of occupations and industries. This study uses the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and National Occupation Classification (NOC) to organize the employment data for each participant. These classification systems are different in that NAICS describes the industry in which an individual works, whereas NOC describes their occupation within that industry. Using the National Occupation Classification system and North American Industry Classification ensures that the results from this study can be easily compared to the Canadian census data analysis presented in the other chapters of this report as well as other studies conducted in Québec and Canada.

The majority of participants worked in the educational services sector, followed by the professional, scientific and technical sector and other services (except public administration). These findings include the most recent industry and occupation that unemployed and retired participants worked in.

**Graph 3: Industry Engagement Among Interview Participants**



Typical occupations in the educational services sector include teachers, school administrators, classroom assistants, and university lecturers. Employers include private and public institutions such as public schools, universities, colleges, and vocational training centres.

Occupations within the professional, scientific and technical sector include legal services, consulting, design, engineering, and scientific research.

Other services (except public administration) is a broad category and includes organizations engaged in repair and maintenance services, personal and laundry services, religious services, grant-making, civic and professional organizations and private households. Occupations within this industry include public policy researchers for non-profit organizations, automotive mechanics, dry cleaners, undertakers, and caretakers for private households.

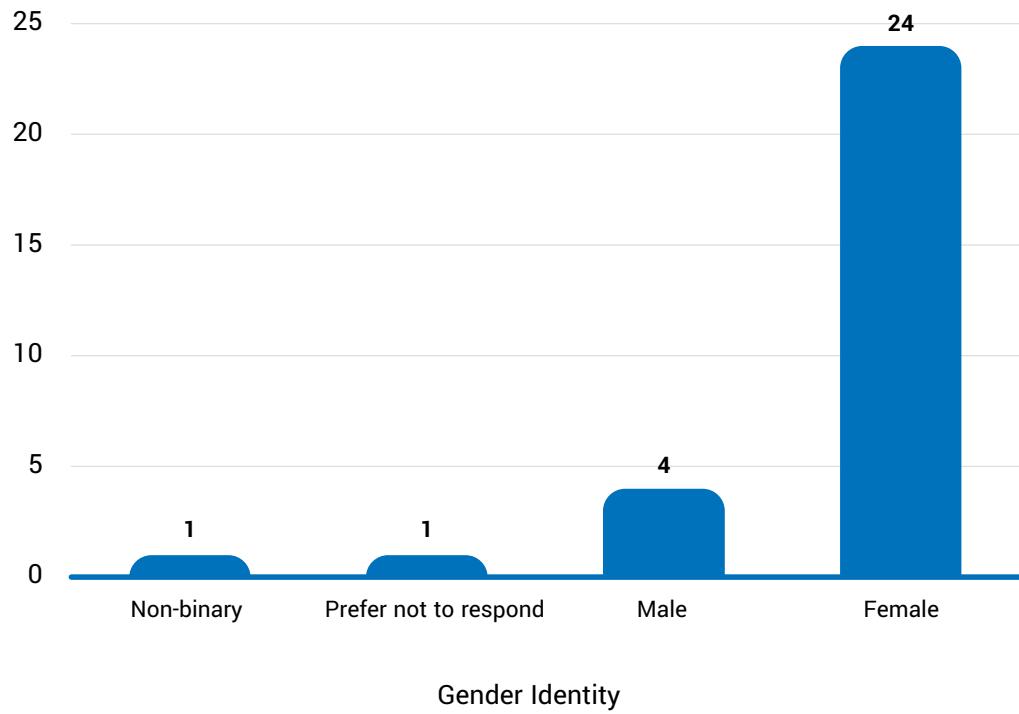
Both the educational services industry and professional, scientific and technical services industries are represented in the top 10 industries for English speakers in Québec. However, it is interesting to note that the category of other services (except public administration) is not among the top 10 industries for English-speaking professionals. One reason for this could be the study's sampling method. As previously mentioned, the researcher relied on disseminating survey information through the ACESQ's networks, and since many related organizations and stakeholders are engaged in non-profit research and employment services, which are included in the other category (except public administration) sector, the study disproportionately attracted people that were engaged in this industry.

Moreover, participants worked in a variety of roles within these sectors. As previously mentioned, this report uses the National Occupation Classification (NOC) system to organize this data. Common NOC occupation titles among participants included social policy researchers, consultants and program officers, advertising, marketing and public relations managers, elementary school and kindergarten teachers, school principals and administrators of elementary and secondary education, and education policy researchers, consultants, and program officers. A complete list of participant occupations can be found in Appendix VI.

## Demographic Characteristics

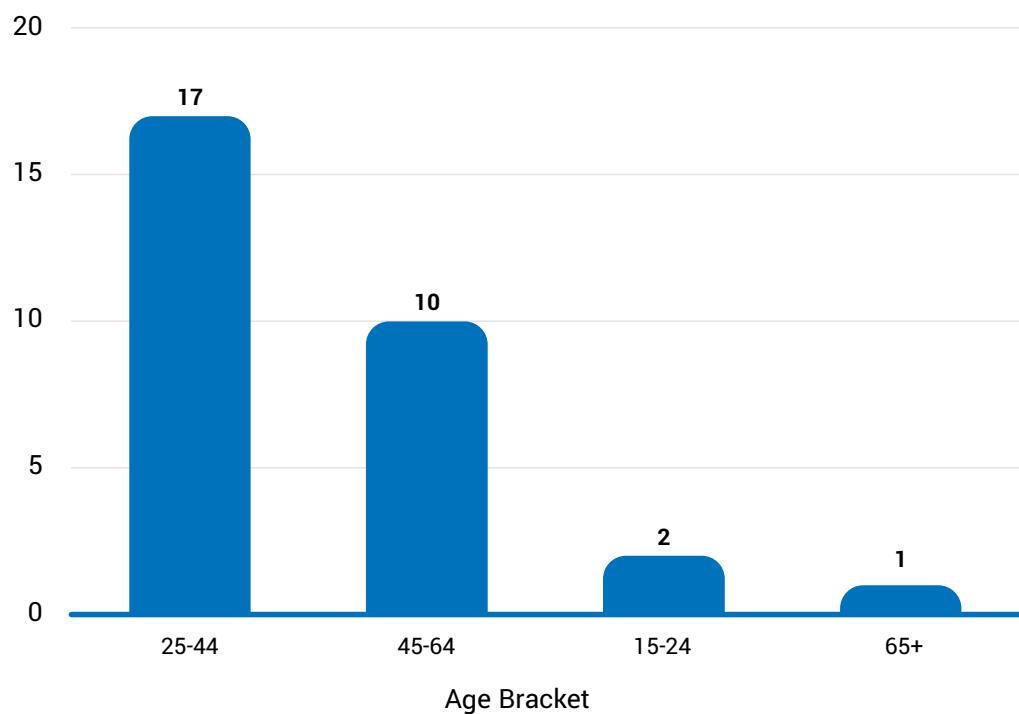
Of the 30 participants, 24 identified as female, 4 as male, 1 as non-binary, and 1 preferred not to respond.

**Graph 4: Participants' Gender Identity**



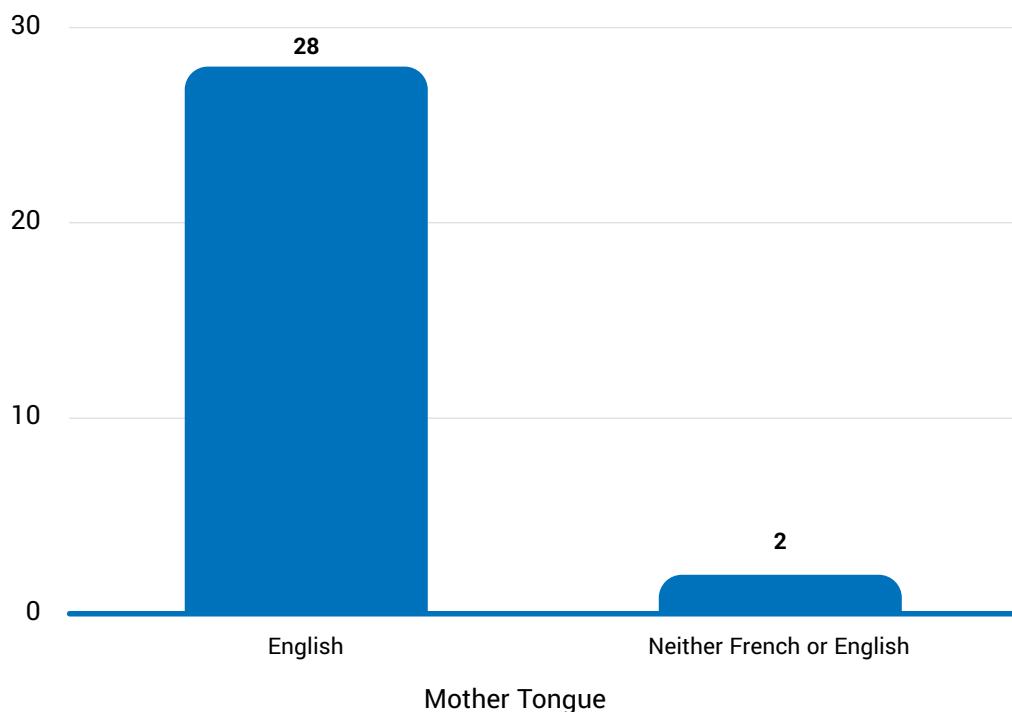
The researcher spoke to participants from a range of age groups, with 16 (53.3%) of the participants falling in the 25-44 bracket, 11 (36.6%) falling in the 45-64 range, 2 (6.6%) falling in the 15-24 bracket, and 1 (3.2%) belonging in the 65+ range.

**Graph 5: Participants' Age Bracket**



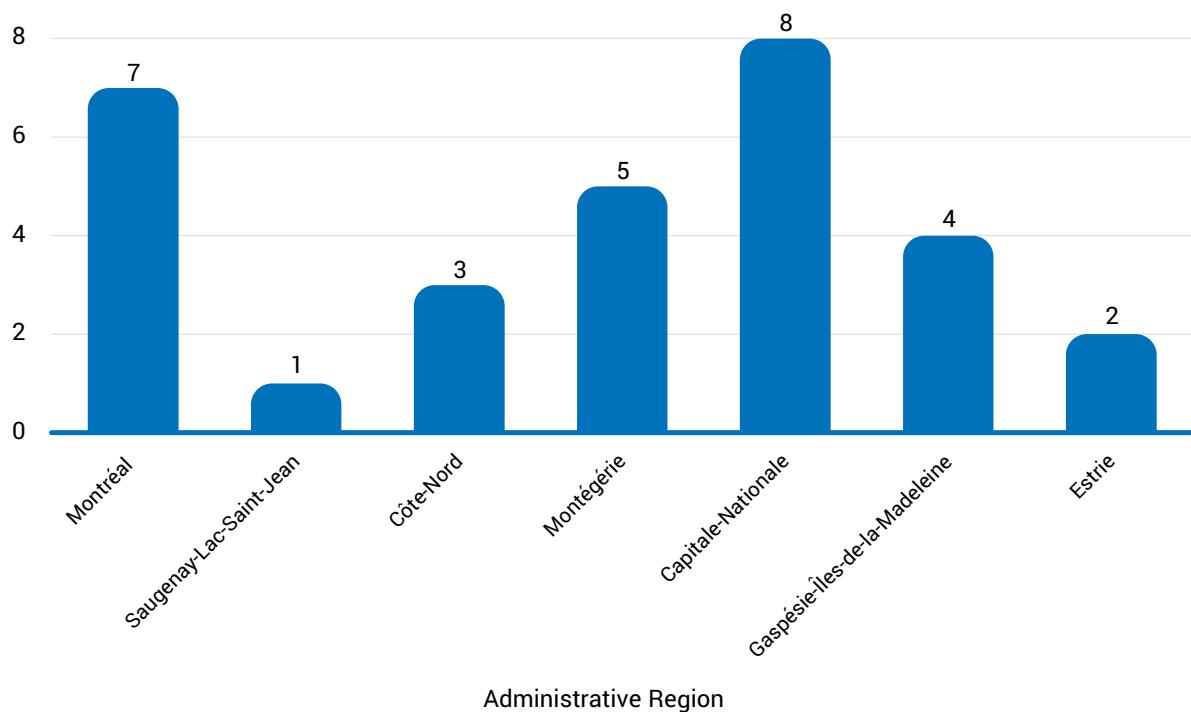
English was the First Official Language Spoken of all the participants. The majority of the participants used English most frequently in their day-to-day lives, but 1 said that while their mother tongue is English, they currently speak French more often in their daily life. English was the second language of 2 participants, but it was still their First Official Language Spoken. Each of the participants interviewed in this study are considered English speakers under the ACESQ's definition of the clientele. Moreover, all participants would be counted as English speakers in the Canadian census.

**Graph 6: Participants' Mother Tongue**



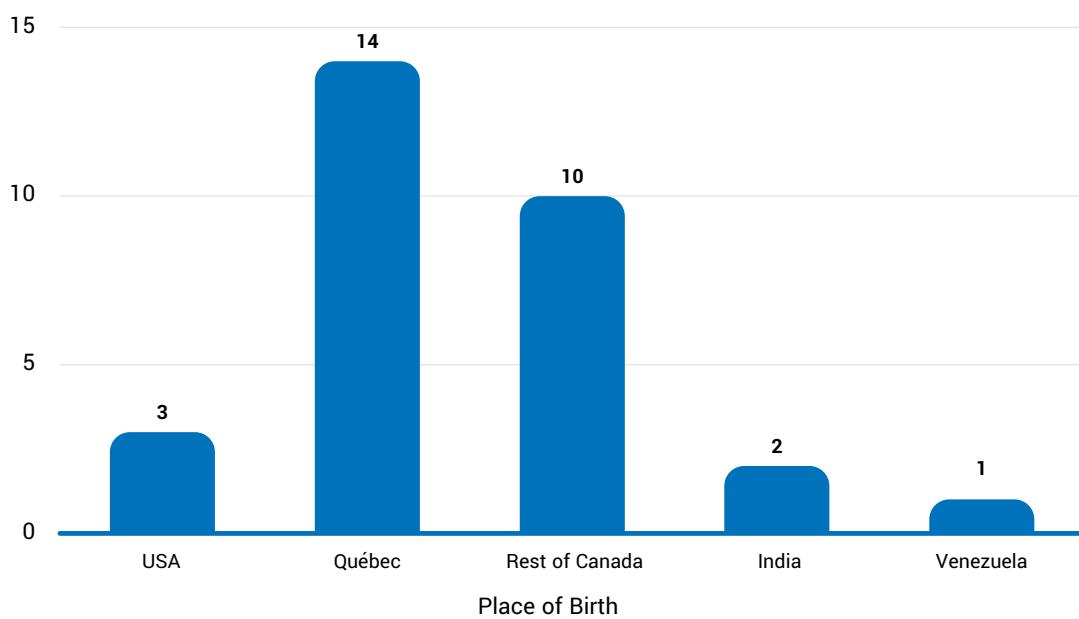
Nine of Québec's 17 administrative regions were represented in the survey, with 8 participants currently living in Capitale-Nationale, 7 living in Montreal, 5 living in Montérégie, 4 in Gaspésie-Île-de-la-Madeleine, 3 living in Côte Nord, two living in Estrie, and 1 living in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

**Graph 7: Participants' Administrative Region of Residence**



Just under half of the participants were born in Québec, while the other participants came from other Canadian provinces or from other countries. Of those who migrated from another province, most were from Ontario. International migrants came from the United States, India, and Venezuela. Once again, it is important to note that all participants, including those that are interprovincial and international migrants, are English speakers and fall under the ACESQ's definition of the clientele. Each participant is also counted as an English speaker in the Canadian census under the First Official Language Spoken designation.

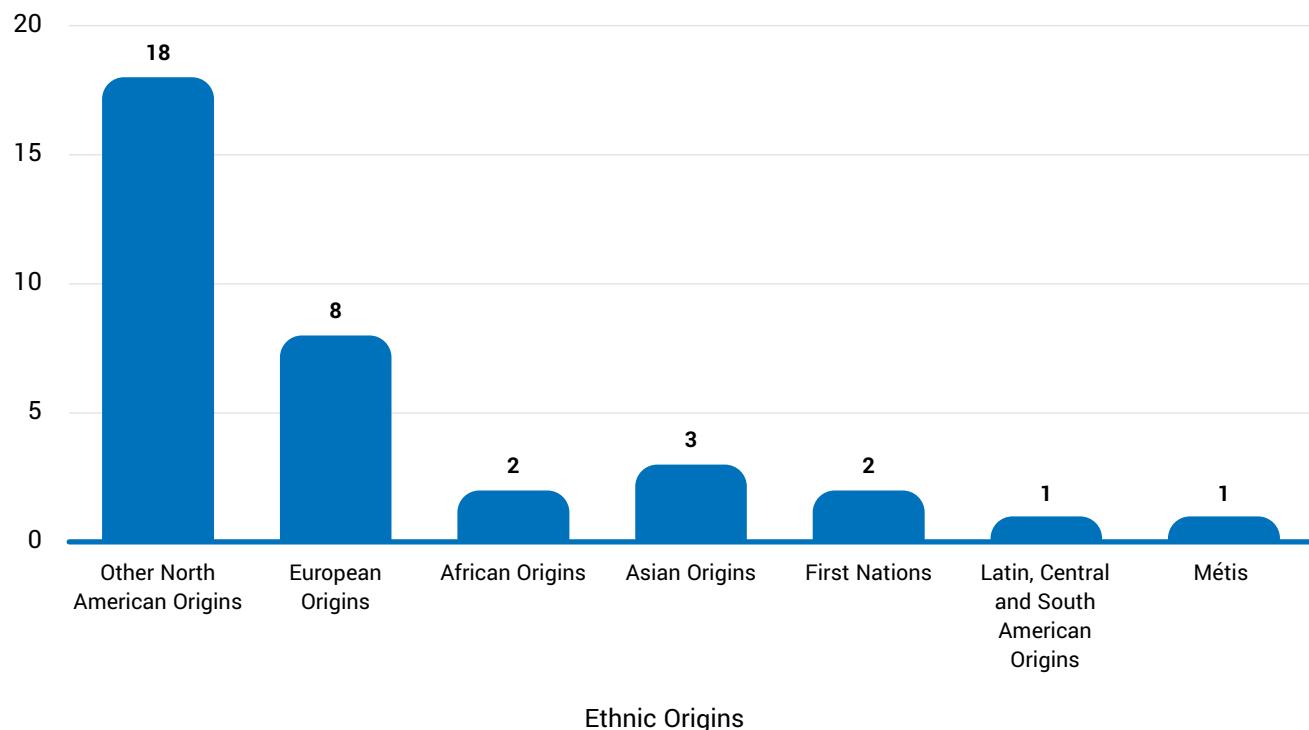
**Graph 8: Participants' Place of Birth**



This study collected data on participants' ethnic origins based on the categories used in the Canadian census to ensure the data aligned with the quantitative data analysis in the rest of this report. Therefore, participants could select whether they identified as having Other North American origins, Caribbean origins, Middle Eastern origins, Oceanian origins, European origins, African origins, Asian origins, or Latin, Central and South American origins. Participants could also select whether they belonged to First Nations, Inuit, Métis, or Pacific Island nations.

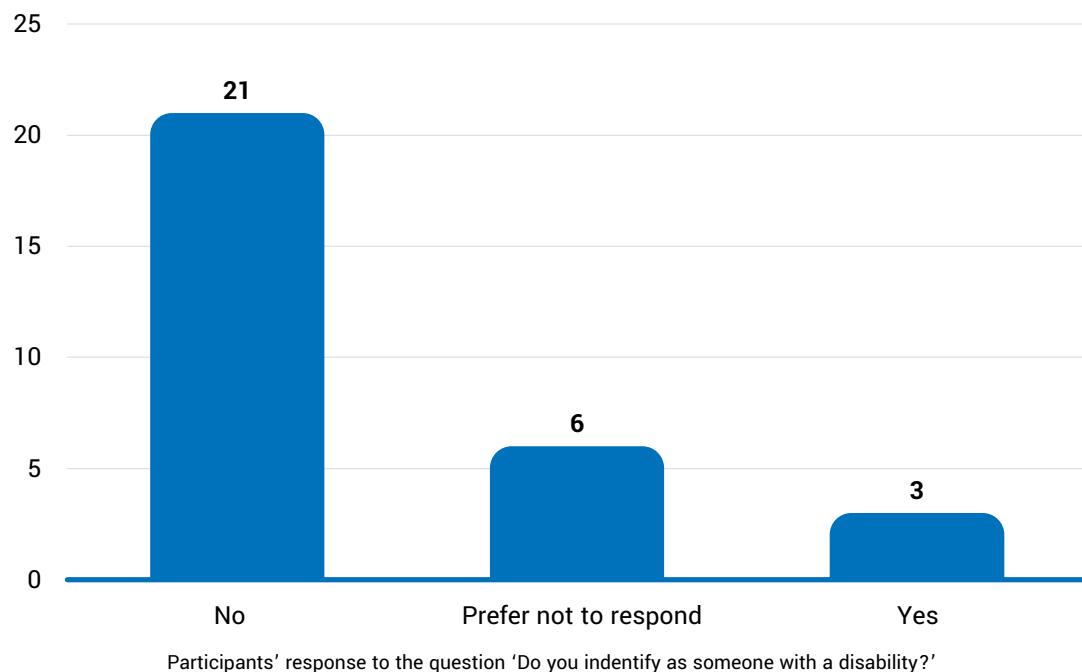
Most participants in the study identified as having Other North American origins, followed by European origins and Asian origins. Participants also identified as having African Origins and Latin, Central, and South American Origins. Other participants identified as being First Nations and Métis. Participants could select multiple options, which is why the chart below shows more than 30 responses.

**Graph 9: Participants' Ethnic Origins**



Finally, 21 of the respondents identified as someone without a disability, 3 identified as someone with a disability, and 6 preferred not to respond.

**Graph 10: Participants Identifying as Having a Disability**



## Annex V

# The Interview Guide

Research Question: How do English speakers experience Québec's labour market? What are their stories?

### **1. Knowledge of French and FOLS**

- a. What language did you speak growing up?
- b. What language did the rest of your community speak?
- c. (For allophone participants) How did you learn English? Did you learn at school growing up?
- d. Did you learn French while in school or university?
- e. How did the French classes you took in school prepare you for using the language professionally?

### **2. Employment history**

- a. (If Québec native) - Can you tell me about your jobs in high school and university?
- b. (if Québec native) How did your knowledge of French factor in getting those jobs?
- c. (if Québec native) How did your knowledge of French factor in during the day-to-day of your workplace?
- d. Can you tell me about your career and jobs since leaving formal education?
- e. Are you part of a professional order?
  - i. If yes, how did you find the experience of joining the order?
  - ii. Did you have to develop language skills?
- f. How did you find applying for a job as an English speaker in Québec?
- g. Did French factor in the application process?
- h. How does your current role align with your skillset?
  - i. Are there skills you think you're missing to move up career-wise? If yes, what are those?
  - j. Have you found opportunities to improve your French or learn French through your workplace? Outside of work?
- k. Are you aware of opportunities to learn French (ask if paid or unpaid)
  - l. (if they have taken further language classes) How accessible were these opportunities? (i.e. timing, financially, location)
- m. (if they have taken further language classes) What was the focus of these classes? Did they prepare you for working in French?

### **3. Confidence in using French in the workplace**

- a. How do you use French in your current role?
- b. What's the linguistic makeup of your workplace? Are coworkers English-speaking, French-speaking?
- c. How do you find using French with your colleagues?
  - i. Professionally?
  - ii. Casual conversation?
- d. How confident are you using French at work?
- e. Do you speak French with an accent? Has that ever been commented upon?
- f. Are you more or less confident than you would be using French socially or just in your day-to-day life?
- g. What factors have you found that impact your confidence?
- h. What would make you more confident using French at work?

### **4. Belonging and out-migration**

- a. (if migrant to Québec) How was it moving here? How did language impact fitting in here? (especially at work)
- b. (migrant to Québec) Why did you move to Québec?
- c. Do you feel a sense of belonging in Québec generally?
- d. Do you see yourself living in Québec long term?
- e. Have you noticed any of your peers leaving Québec?
- f. How do your employment or career goals fit in with your vision of staying here or leaving?
- g. What are the factors influencing your decision to leave or to stay?
- h. As an English speaker, do you feel that you have the same opportunities career-wise you would have in Québec if you spoke French as a first language?

### **5. Further discussion**

- a. Anything else you want to add that we haven't touched on?
- b. Feedback?

## Annex VI

# Complete List of Participant Occupations by National Occupation Classification

Participant number	National Occupation Classification Title
1	Professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations
2	School principals and administrators of elementary and secondary education
3	Software engineers and designers
4	General office support workers Photographers
5	Administrative assistants
6	Education policy researchers, consultants, and program officers
7	Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers
8	Elementary school and kindergarten teachers
9	Information systems analysts and consultants
10	School principals and administrators of elementary and secondary education
11	Advertising, marketing and public relations managers
12	Social workers
13	Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations
14	Other managers in public administration
15	Business development officers and marketing researchers and consultants
16	Social policy researchers, consultants and program officers
17	College and other vocational instructors
18	Sales and account representatives - wholesale trade (non-technical)
19	Instructors of persons with disabilities
20	Professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations
21	Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses College and other vocational instructors

Participant number	National Occupation Classification Title
22	Lawyers and Québec notaries
23	Social policy researchers, consultants, and program officers
24	Survey interviewers and statistical clerks
25	Education policy researchers, consultants and program officers
26	Advertising, marketing and public relations managers
27	Social and community service workers
28	Cooks
29	Elementary school and kindergarten teachers
30	University professors and lecturers

## Appendix VII

### Summary of Documents Consulted for the Literature Review

N°	Reference	Key facts
1	CANADIAN HERITAGE (2019). <i>Étude sur l'appréciation et la perception des deux langues officielles du Canada chez ces communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire</i> . Retrieved from: <a href="https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.882698/publication.html">https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.882698/publication.html</a>	<p>This report presents the results of a Canada-wide survey conducted in 2019 among 2,000 respondents, a third of whom were ESQs.</p> <p><u>Access to services</u>: Overall, 47% of ESQs said they are satisfied with the services they receive in their official language, compared with 52% of French speakers outside Québec. The majority of ESQs surveyed reported that access to services in their official language in the regions has remained unchanged over the past five years.</p> <p><u>Employment services</u>: For ESQs, employment services constitute the service category with the lowest satisfaction (17%), behind legal services, health care, and education. According to 21% of respondents, employment services have deteriorated over the past five years. In terms of priority for action, however, employment services rank only 4th, after health care, legal services, and pre-college education.</p>
2	SECRÉTARIAT AUX RELATIONS AVEC LES QUÉBÉCOIS D'EXPRESSION ANGLAISE (2020). <i>Rapport de la tournée de consultation 2019: construire des ponts</i> .	<p>This report summarizes the results of consultations held in 2019 with organizations serving the ESQ communities on the priorities and orientations of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise.</p> <p>Education, health, and social services, employability as well as the community sector are all identified as areas the Secretariat should prioritize.</p> <p><u>Access to governmental programs</u>: Many regional organizations struggle to access existing programs because they serve a very small population and/or are forced to be active in several areas (youth, seniors, employment, health, etc.), so they don't meet the required criteria. Funding criteria are often based on a minimum number of participants, making eligibility almost impossible in small communities.</p> <p>Limited ability to express oneself and work in French is also a barrier to accessing programs, which are often administered solely in French.</p> <p>Francization programs are rare and costly. It is also difficult to distinguish programs aimed solely at immigrants from broader programs.</p> <p>Some organizations are concerned about the lack of transparency regarding funds transferred from the federal government for employment and education programs. The lack of ESQ representation in Québec's public administration is both a symbolic and practical issue.</p> <p>Emploi Québec is perceived as not being very receptive to the needs and concerns of ESQ.</p>

N°	Reference	Key facts
3	CANADIAN HERITAGE (2011). <i>A Portrait of the English-speaking Communities in Québec</i> .	<p>This profile identifies a wide range of quantitative and qualitative findings concerning ESQs, particularly in terms of education, sense of belonging, socio-economic status, migration, and the political/legal context.</p> <p><u>On the question of employment and employability specifically</u>, three key strategies are indicated to address the problems of high unemployment and low income. First, more extensive training in French, particularly written French, would substantially enhance employability prospects. A culture of lifelong learning should be promoted. Second, technical or job education should be promoted among ESQs, especially in the regions, as it can lead to high-demand, well-paid occupations, for example in the construction or public services sectors. Third, increasing ESQ representation within the Québec public service would both improve socio-economic conditions and promote access to services. One way of doing this would be to include ESQs among the priority recruitment groups.</p>
4	YES EMPLOYMENT + ENTREPRENEURSHIP (2017). <i>Employment in the Québec Regions: Needs Assessment Study</i> .	<p>This study regroups the results of three undertakings: the development of regional socio-economic profiles, a survey of available employability services, and an analysis of two surveys of young ESQ workers. Seven Québec regions are examined: Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Montérégie, Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue.</p> <p><u>Employability services</u>: The analysis identifies nearly 300 resources available in the regions studied, including Emploi Québec, the Centres locaux d'emploi (CLE), the SADC-CAE network and the Regroupement québécois des organismes pour le développement de l'employabilité (RQuODE). The list is available on request and identifies, for each service, the contact details, the clientele served, the language of service and the types of services offered (job search, return to school, guidance, internships, workshops, etc.).</p> <p><u>Surveys</u>: 97% of young ESQ job seekers consider youth unemployment to be a worrying issue for the Québec economy. 65% consider themselves underemployed, 70% have considered leaving the province to find work, and language is identified as the main barrier to employment.</p> <p>38% of young ESQs looking for job opportunities in the region are aware of at least one employability service available in English, and 43% think the services available are adequate.</p> <p>The majority of respondents (78%) used services offered by the Québec government, but their satisfaction was low (31%). Satisfaction rises to 67% for services offered by community organizations, used by 55% of respondents. The report also provides survey results by region.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u>: Increase the supply of employability services for ESQ communities in the regions, offer low-cost French courses, increase the visibility of existing services/organizations, strengthen links between educational institutions and labour market needs.</p>

N°	Reference	Key facts
5	PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE (PERT) (2019). <i>Closing the 12k Gap: Improving Employment for Québec's English Community—Conference Report</i> .	<p>In November 2019, PERT brought together 96 members of the ESQ community representing 58 organizations at a conference focusing on issues and solutions concerning ESQ employability.</p> <p><b>Barriers:</b> Public employment services have overly strict requirements that de facto exclude some ESQs. English-language educational institutions are concentrated in the greater Montréal area, making access to education difficult for some communities, especially technical training. French-language skills remain the main barrier to employment, particularly for practicing a profession regulated by an order. It is estimated that in 2017-2018, only 3% of MESS funds were distributed to organizations serving ESQs, even though they represent 13.7% of the population. Many ESQs in the regions work in seasonal industries.</p> <p><b>Solutions:</b> Help seasonal workers make the transition to other jobs; improve regional coverage of service offices, or at least the availability of services in English in these offices; provide financial support for organizations in remote regions; open up employment services to immigrants and foreign students; provide more training in French, particularly in preparation for professional order exams.</p>
6	PROVINCIAL EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE (PERT) (2021). <i>Employment Profile of English Speakers in Québec</i> .	<p>This report presents a detailed analysis of the socio-economic and demographic conditions of ESQs across Québec's administrative regions using 2016 census data.</p> <p>In terms of employability policies, five priority issues are at stake: 1) by their geographic and industrial distribution, ESQs often only have access to seasonal or part-time jobs, such as fishing, forestry and tourism; 2) despite a high level of education, some ESQs need better training in French. Employers are reluctant to invest in this respect, as they do not necessarily see the benefits; 3) community organizations in the regions are willing to offer francization services, but lack funding; 4) francization services available in the regions are sometimes too distant or do not specifically target skills that are useful on the job market; 5) ESQs need support to integrate effectively into French-speaking workplaces.</p>
7	BOURHIS, Richard & CARIGNAN, Nicole (2010). <i>Linguicism in Québec and Canada. Our Diverse Cities</i> . Volume 7. 156-162. Retrieved from: <a href="https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/cic/Ci2-1-7-2010-eng.pdf">https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/cic/Ci2-1-7-2010-eng.pdf</a>	<p>This report analyzes the Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. According to this survey, 25% of white people and 41% of English-speaking members of visible minorities have experienced discrimination in Québec. Among those who had experienced discrimination, 67% of English speakers whose first language is English and 52% of allophones, i.e., people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, reported being discriminated against on the basis of language.</p> <p>The report also showed that the under-representation of ESQs in the Québec workforce cannot be explained solely by a lack of ESQ candidates, inadequate qualifications, and language skills. Surveys show that public service recruiters prefer to hire staff with similar cultural and linguistic characteristics. The same is true when selecting candidates for promotion and salary increases.</p>

N°	Reference	Key facts
8	<p>QUESCREN (2019). Employment of English speakers in Québec's public service. QUESCREN Working Paper no.1. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artscli/scpa/quescren/docs/Quescren_QPSRPTEnglish.pdf">https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artscli/scpa/quescren/docs/Quescren_QPSRPTEnglish.pdf</a></p>	<p>This report analyzes ESQ participation in the Québec public service. The first section synthesizes information from relevant primary and secondary sources. The second section includes summaries of preliminary discussions with key informants, as well as observations.</p> <p>The report finds that ESQs are under-represented in the Québec public service. For example, ESQs have made up between 0.7% and 1% of the Québec public service since 1971. This is especially significant given that ESQs currently represent 15.2% of the Québec population.</p>
9	<p>MINISTÈRE D'EMPLOI ET DE LA SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE (2021). <i>Programmes et mesures</i>. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/programmes-mesures/">https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/programmes-mesures/</a></p>	<p>Web page featuring programs and measures deployed by the MESS. Among the most relevant to the ESQ community are:</p> <p><u>Discovering a trade, a profession</u>: Internships are offered to unemployed young people under the age of 25 to help them validate their career choice or gain work experience.</p> <p><u>Workforce training</u>: This measure offers eligible people at risk of long-term unemployment an assistance allowance and reimbursement of expenses related to their training activities.</p> <p><u>Job preparation</u>: This measure is addressed to unemployed people, offering them activities allowing them to develop the personal skills needed to find and keep a job.</p> <p><u>Employment assistance services</u>: This program offers a range of activities for job-seekers: information sessions on the job market, advice on career orientation and choice, job-finding club, etc.</p> <p>About 150 Services Québec offices are located in the 17 regions of Québec. Each office includes a reception service, a multi-service room and financial assistance services. Employment services are also available in most of these offices.</p>
10	<p>GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC (2021). Apprendre le français. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais">https://www.quebec.ca/education/apprendre-le-francais</a></p>	<p>Web page featuring French course offerings of the Québec government. Three out of four programs are available to students born in Canada: full-time, part-time, and online courses. These courses are free of charge. In-person courses are offered in adult education centers existing in every region of Québec. Specialized courses by field of employment are reserved for immigrants.</p>
11	<p>GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC (2022). Aide à la francisation en entreprise. Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.quebec.ca/entreprises-et-traveilleurs-autonomes/francisation-entreprise/aide-francisation-entreprise">https://www.quebec.ca/entreprises-et-traveilleurs-autonomes/francisation-entreprise/aide-francisation-entreprise</a></p>	<p>Web page describing the programs available to employers for the francization of their staff members. Financial assistance is available. Eligible employers are: companies, cooperatives, NGOs, municipalities, self-employed workers, communities and band councils.</p>

N°	Reference	Key facts
12	EMPLOI QUÉBEC (n.d.). <i>Répertoire des organismes spécialisés en employabilité</i> . Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/citoyens/trouver-un-emploi/reperoire-des-organismes-specialises-en-employabilite/">https://www.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/citoyens/trouver-un-emploi/reperoire-des-organismes-specialises-en-employabilite/</a>	Directory of organizations specializing in employability in Québec, organized by region and clientele. However, ESQs are not included as part of a specific clientele. The directory contains 389 results.
13	VOICE OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUÉBEC (n.d.). Services. Retrieved from: <a href="https://veq.ca/francais/services/">https://veq.ca/francais/services/</a>	<p>Voice of English-speaking Québec aims to help the English-speaking and bilingual populations of the Greater Québec region find a job through its employment services.</p> <p>The service is free and provides employment-related information to those who need it. It highlights English-language and bilingual employment opportunities, while offering support to employers looking for candidates with these language skills.</p> <p>Voice of English-speaking Québec also offers an online job bank.</p>
14	GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC (n.d.). Projet de préparation à l'emploi (clientèle anglophone). Retrieved from: <a href="https://www.travailimmigrants.com/ressources/centre-communautaire-tyndale-st-georges/projet-de-preparation-a-l-emploi-clientele-anglophone">https://www.travailimmigrants.com/ressources/centre-communautaire-tyndale-st-georges/projet-de-preparation-a-l-emploi-clientele-anglophone</a>	<p>A service promoting the integration into employment of people who are experiencing serious difficulties in integrating and maintaining a job, and whose needs lie in terms of personal skills, job search and integration into employment.</p> <p>This service is available in Montréal.</p>
15	COMMITTEE FOR ANGLOPHONE SOCIAL ACTION (n.d.). <i>Programs and projects</i> . Retrieved from Committee for Anglophone Social Action: <a href="https://casa-gaspe.com/">https://casa-gaspe.com/</a>	Organization working to develop and strengthen the vitality of the English-speaking population of Gaspésie by representing its interests as well as creating and offering programs to meet its needs.

## Annex VIII

### Organizations offering employment services for the ESQ community

Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) Voice of English-speaking Québec (VEQ)	Voice of English-speaking Québec (VEQ)
African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN)	Agape Association
Agence Ometz	Association internationale des machinistes et des travailleurs et travailleuses de l'aérospatiale – centre de réadaptation, d'orientation et d'intégration au travail (AIM Croit)
Alliance des centres-conseils en emploi (AXTRA) *seulement quelques membres	Centre de recherche d'emploi Côte-des-Neiges
Centre Générations Emploi	Cible Retour à l'Emploi
CRE Pointe-Claire	DESTA Black Youth Network
Eastern Townships Schoolboard	ERS Training and Development Centre
Future Occupation Reinvention Team (FORT)	La Passerelle
East Island Network for English Language Services (REISA)	Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre
Y des femmes	YES Employment + Entrepreneurship



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