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The process of minoritisation of the Franco-Ontarian identity and its numerous articulations: A Montfort Hospital case study.

par

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Ce mémoire intitulé :

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Abstract

The present thesis, underpinned by notions of articulation theory, theorises the process of minoritisation[1] in regard to the Franco-Ontarian identity and its numerous articulations. This thesis proposes an examination of the Franco-Ontarian identity within a modern perspective, as opposed to the historical accounts that have been the norm. The concepts of identity and minority identities within Cultural Studies have been researched and explored many times over. However, the concept of minoritisation has hardly been central to these studies, and as the present thesis and literature review will demonstrate, the case of the Franco-Ontarian minoritisation in the face of crisis is unique and has not been addressed in previous studies. My work attempts to theoretically elaborate the process of minoritisation following an extensive review and interpretation of discourse mobilised by the partisans of SOS Montfort regarding the closure of the only French-speaking hospital in the province of Ontario. Additionally, this present work examines the effects of resistance on the Franco-Ontarian identity, and the use of *militantisme* as a discursive strategy in successfully essentialising their identity, in order to claim victory over the Ontarian government, and ultimately, ensure the survival of their culture.

Key words: minoritisation; identity; articulation theory; resistance; discourse

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[1] Please note that the present thesis promotes the use of Canadian English, except of course in quotes, where I have stayed true to the American English used by the author.

Sommaire

Ce mémoire, soutenu par des notions de la « articulation theory », formule le processus de minoritisation en ce qui concerne l'identité franco-ontarienne et ses nombreuses articulations. Ce mémoire propose une étude de cette identité dans une perspective moderne, contrairement aux exposés historiques qui ont longtemps été la norme. Les concepts d'identité et d'identité minoritaire ont souvent été étudiés en « Cultural Studies ». Cependant, le concept de la minoritisation a à peine été une notion centrale dans de telles études, et tel que ce présent travail et sa revue littéraire le démontrera, le cas de la minoritisation du peuple franco-ontarien en temps de crise en est un qui est unique et qui n'a pas été adressé dans des études précédentes. Mon présent mémoire tente une élaboration théorique du processus de minoritisation suivant une analyse et une interprétation des discours et des stratégies discursives mobilisés par les partisans de SOS Montfort en ce qui concerne la fermeture de l'unique hôpital de langue française dans la province de l'Ontario. De plus, ce travail décortique les instances et les effets de résistance, et l'emploi du *militantisme* en tant que stratégie discursive des francophones dans le contexte de mobilisation de leur identité, afin de réclamer la victoire sur le gouvernement de l'Ontario et finalement assurer la survie de la culture.

Mots clés : minoritisation; identité; résistance; discours; stratégie discursive

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I dedicate this thesis to all Franco-Ontarians that have come before me, and those who will come after. Thank you for your courage in fighting for what's right. Forever I shall be proud to identify myself as a Franco-Ontarian.

"La fierté, la détermination, la patience et l'engagement de SOS Montfort nous permettent aujourd'hui non pas de respirer à l'aise (car la lutte n'est jamais finie), mais surtout de regarder vers l'avant avec confiance et enthousiasme. "
- Pierre Bergeron, 2002

Remerciements

Introduction

D'abord Français d'Amérique, puis Canadiens, les Canadiens français ont progressivement cédé la place aux Québécois, aux franco-ontariens, et autres « franco ». St Jean Baptiste ne sait plus pour qui intercéder : patron des Canadiens français ou des Québécois, des Québécois francophones ou des francophones canadiens? Ainsi qu'en témoigne notre histoire, une parmi tant d'autres, ce qui est constant, au niveau des frontières ethniques, c'est leur fluctuation (Juteau-Lee, 1980).

As Danielle Juteau-Lee's quote maintains, Canada's francophone population has a history of fluctuating identities. At one time, most French speakers identified themselves as French-Canadian, or *canadien français*. This label slowly evolved to differentiate within the broader identity to include, among others, a *Québécois*, *franco-ontarien* and *franco-manitobain* identity. In the thesis that follows, I intend to draw attention to the largest francophone community outside the province of Québec, located in Ontario, and most commonly referred to as Franco-Ontarians (FO hereafter). My primary objective is to study instances of discourse in a particular case involving the FO people as a minority group, engaged in a struggle of power and resistance, and how their discourse allows me to ultimately theoretically elaborate the concept of minoritisation. My intent is to carry out this case study using the method of textual analysis and the notion of discourse ascribed to Hall, Laclau and Mouffe. It should come as no surprise then that I approach the concept of identity from a non-essentialist perspective wherein identity is always evolving and is neither fixed nor rigid.

I cannot deny the fact that identity and minority identity are concepts that have been questioned and studied many times over within Cultural Studies. However, this thesis will couple these notions with minoritisation, a concept that has rarely been examined in this field, although present in many related disciplines as my literature review will establish. In addition, the manner in which I approach the Franco-Ontarian population, one that is capable of resistance and holds the potential for a certain discursive power, is in and of itself unique and has not been addressed in previous studies. In fact, a problem that has surfaced during my research is that the available resources concerning the identity of the FO mainly present a historical account of events and outcomes, and do not serve to establish any arguments (see Juteau-Lee, 1980: 46). My thesis will propose that, contrary to widely held beliefs, the Franco-Ontarian identity is not simply something citizens are born into, nor do they inherit the identity solely by their linguistic capabilities. Instead, through articulations of identity, this population chooses to distinguish itself as a minority group in order to act within specific conjunctural circumstances. Furthermore, my take on the process of minoritisation claims that this process is initiated within the minority group itself, as was the case in the threat of the closure of the Montfort Hospital in 1997, discussed in detail in further paragraphs, and closely examined in later chapters. My understanding of the process of minoritisation thus draws upon the notion of strategic essentialism. The case study serves to examine the ways in which the Franco-Ontarian identity was discursively mobilized and constructed in a manner which made of minoritisation a form of resistance. Throughout my discussion, the identity of the FO is

articulated with many things, but I wish to draw upon the importance of one particular articulation that was forged with the Anglo-Québécois identity. This may be the most obvious articulation in the sample of discourse that I studied. Both the Franco-Ontarians and the Anglo-Québécois are linguistic minorities, subsisting in societies in which their native languages, their mother tongues, are not that of the majority. The main difference though is that one group, the English population of Québec, is protected under provincial and federal linguistic minority laws, whereas the FO <u>were</u> not.

Before presenting a short narrative of the events involving the chosen case study, I wish to quickly comment on my personal motivation for choosing this subject and completing this thesis. Firstly, it must come a no surprise that this subject is greatly important to me, given my personal background. I was born into a Franco-Ontarian family, one that has stressed the importance of our culture, sown the instinct and desire for our culture's survival and to ensure that our ancestors have not fought in vain. Also, as mentioned previously, most of the studies involving the Franco-Ontarians present their identity and minority positioning as a immediate given, as opposed to something that could have been perhaps developed and evolved over time. This personal frustration of mine has pushed me to further the FO cause by casting a different light on my people's identity, culture and situation, which ultimately makes this work valuable and unique at the same time. I will have more to say on the epistemological implications of my involvement in the politics and the identity position under discussion in later chapters. Having

outlined the motivations behind my thesis, I shall now present a brief overview of the events surrounding the closure of the Montfort Hospital and how this case will allow me to fulfill my research objectives.

The Closure of the Montfort Hospital: A narrative of the event

On February 24, 1997, the Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission (created by the government of Ontario and headed by Dr. Duncan Sinclair) announced the closing of Montfort Hospital, the only hospital in the province to offer expert medical services in French. In addition, the Montfort Hospital is the only hospital in the province with the tools necessary to train French-speaking health care professionals. The closure of this facility meant that ultimately, French-speaking patients would have to be treated at an English-only hospital. As well, students studying in French under the University of Ottawa's bilingual medicine programme, and wishing to practice in Ontario, would have no other alternative than to complete the programme's rotation and residency requirements in English.

Almost overnight, the Franco-Ontarian community came together to create SOS Montfort, presided by Gisèle Lalonde, and supported by the Hospital's CEO, Gérald Savoie, then-Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Michelle Courville Nicol (and the numerous members of the Board), former prime minister Brian Mulroney's press secretary, Michel Gratton, and the cause's lawyer, Ronald Caza.

The Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission defended the need to streamline a massive and expensive health care system, while the Franco-Ontarian community found it objectionable to close the only francophone teaching hospital in Ontario, which served approximately 200,000 people (Infoaction, 2002).

The threat of closing the hospital rallied thousands of partisans to challenge the government's decision through public events, such as *Le Grand Ralliement* that took place on March 22, 1997, at Ottawa's Municipal Centre and drew more than 10,000 protesters (ibid). This last event attracted the attention of all major Canadian media. It was expected that *LeDroit*, Ottawa's francophone newspaper, would cover the story, and the struggle, but surprisingly, so did *The Montreal Gazette*, as well as *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star*, the *Journal de Montréal*, and others. The support and the coverage offered by these outlets allowed the Montfort activists to place this case in the spotlight.

A few months later, in the face of massive mobilisation by the Franco-Ontarian community to save the hospital, the Commission ordered a drastic reduction of services at the hospital, which would have transformed it into a large-scale walk-in clinic (Health, Work and Travel, 2007).

In July of 1998, following unproductive discussions with the Restructuring Commission, SOS Montfort and the Montfort Hospital officially appealed the government's decision to the Ontario Divisional Court. The Commission's

recommendatory powers lapsed in April 1999 without changes to the directions to close the Montfort, so that the case proceeded to a hearing before the Divisional Court (Infoaction, 2002).

On November 29, 1999, the court struck down the decisions of the Commission. SOS Montfort and the Montfort Hospital declared victory. However, the Ontario government retaliated by launching an appeal to the Ontario Court of Appeal (ibid). Montfort lawyers invoked section 16 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which stipulates that English and French are the official languages of Canada. They also proved that Ontario has the obligation to promote the substantive equality of the two official languages and that the decision by the government to close Montfort Hospital ran counter to this obligation (Health, Work and Travel, 2007).

On December 7, 2001, Montfort won a historic legal victory. In a unanimous decision, the three judges hearing the case in the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that the institution is protected under the Constitution of Canada because it is essential to the survival of the Franco-Ontarian community. Their decision is premised upon the unwritten constitutional principle of respect for and promotion of minorities. Ultimately, on February 1, 2002, Tony Clement (then Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care) announced that his government would not appeal the final ruling of the Ontario Court of Appeal, insisting that the hospital be maintained as a full-fledged community teaching hospital (ibid). This

announcement was the final event in the struggle to keep the Montfort Hospital open for its community.

It is my argument that through the accounts made available in my corpus, I will be able to interpret the discourse in the context of the closure crisis, which in turn will allow me to theoretically develop the notion of the process of minoritisation. This case encompasses many of the characteristics of a suitable case study highlighted by Robert Stake[2]. It has boundaries (the crisis begun in 1997 and lasted until 2002), it is of interest (if only to the researcher) to the discipline of communication studies, and it is a subject that may be convenient given my background, but also offers rich discourses from which interpretations and meanings of social meaning, resistance and power can be derived. Not incidentally, I, as a Franco-Ontarian researcher, have the foreknowledge and experience related to this case that allows me to bolster my plausible interpretations and analyses of the discourse, but also requires that I reflexively situate myself vis-à-vis the knowledge that I am creating.

This particular case study was recorded in a book entitled *Montfort: la lutte d'un peuple* authored by Michel Gratton, a career journalist, columnist and former press secretary to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (1984-1987)and published by the *Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques* in Ottawa (Canada). As a defender of the Franco-Ontarian cause, Gratton believed it was important to

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[2] The use of case studies is further discussed in Chapter 4.

document the Montfort case. In his view, this was one of the valuable victories of his people, and serves as proof that the population does not need to bend to the majority's rule, nor can their existence be ignored. His personal account of the events as they unfolded over a five year period is supported by extensive use of newspaper articles and court documents, all of which are cited and impeccably referenced. Events that are not witnessed first-hand by the author are recounted to him by trusted sources, such as the members of SOS Montfort, who are, may it be reminded, the cause's president, Mme Lalonde, Montfort's CEO, Gérald Savoie, then-Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Michelle Courville Nicol, the cause's lawyer, Ronald Caza.

While this source is definitely selective, structured around a narrative, it was judged suitably exhaustive to become the basis of the corpus for the analysis. This choice would perhaps be problematic if I had intended to do a content analysis that made strong inferences based on this small sample. However, in critical communication studies concerned primarily with the meanings made of texts and events this thesis provides enough material to support my analysis of some of the key discourses operating in the Montfort crisis. As a case study of a particular conjuncture, whatever claims the thesis makes about these events and discourses are not assumed to be generalizable to other conjunctures.

Argument and Structure of the Thesis

When considering the Franco-Ontarian population, it will be argued that this culture, these people, are not forced into a minority position by the dominant

culture; rather, they come together and identify themselves as a minority, and not the other way around, as is often suggested by various sources, and will be demonstrated in the subsequent literature review. The review will then be followed by problematisation section wherein I will present by research questions, my arguments and the definition of the concepts and notions employed in the course of the present work (identity, articulation, articulation theory, minoritisation, power and lived resistance). In the methodology chapter, I introduce the methods employed in my research (textual analysis and case study), presenting a short critique and a few words on the ethical considerations of my thesis topic. In the fourth chapter I present my argument in detail, and develop my interpretations of the discourses made available in the corpus that I have chosen. At the end of this chapter I shall elaborate on the theory and process of minoritisation as I see it in the light of the events that I have studied.

Evidently, this line of research has many political and social implications. As for the former, this case study will attempt to demonstrate how a group or a society, however marginalised or small in numbers, penetrates the political scene and makes its presence known and felt on local, national and international levels. As for the social implications, this serves as evidence to all minority groups that being minoritised does not necessarily come from above, but it can come from within, and that being a minority does not necessarily mean being powerless.

1 Chapitre 1 : Literature Review

In the following literature review, I shall examine the works that have been published in regards to two main elements of the present thesis: minoritisation and Franco-Ontarian identity. As for the former, I shall consider all works, regardless of the field of research from which it stems, e.g., ethnography, sociology, etc. As for the latter, given the specificity and uniqueness of the subject, one will quickly notice that the terms "identity" and "Franco-Ontarian" are intertwined to make up one concept. The reason for this is rather simple: although the concept of identity is of interest, and will be clearly defined in later chapters, it is my opinion that researching the Franco-Ontarian identity is sufficient for the purpose of this literature review. A discussion of the Franco-Ontarian identity and a review of the concept of minoritisation follow.

1.1 Franco-Ontarian identity

As previously mentioned, the majority of the sources published on Franco-Ontarian identity treat the question as one that is historically constructed, especially through memory. For instance, "Le thème (…) jette les bases de la réflexion en proposant d'aborder la question de l'identité sous l'angle de la mémoire – la souvenance, les images, ce qui était et ce à quoi on cherche à greffer l'avenir – et de la fragmentation – ce qui est dispersion et diversité" (Boissonneault, 2004: 164).

The task of defining the term Franco-Ontarian identity is sensitive because it can

be interpreted in two manners. The idea of having a fixed definition of what it is to

be Franco-Ontarian would somewhat defeat the purpose of having a non-

essentialist approach to the notion of identity. Nonetheless, although it may seem

quite evident at first glance, I must, at the very least, have an idea of which

population I intend on examining.

According to the Wikipedia[3] website, an online encyclopedia, the term

> Franco-Ontarian has, in fact, two related usages, which overlap
> significantly but are not identical: it may refer to francophone
> residents of Ontario, regardless of their place of birth, or to
> people of French Canadian ancestry born in Ontario, regardless
> of their primary language or current place of residence.

The first meaning is generally the most widely used, while the second meaning is

poorly understood. Most people who identify themselves as Franco-Ontarians do

meet both of these definitions, although there can be some exceptions. For

instance, a French-speaking Manitoban who moves to Ontario is considered to be

a Franco-Ontarian by the first definition, while a person can be a Franco-Ontarian

by the second definition but not by the first if they were born to Franco-Ontarian

parents but work and live using the English language.

Nonetheless, both meanings are heavily politically charged.

> Using the second to the exclusion of the first may be considered
> racist in that it excludes francophones born in other countries,
> such as Haiti, Vietnam or Tunisia, from the Franco-Ontarian

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[3] Although it is most often unadvisable to reference works such as unmediated webpages, for the purpose of defining the realities of what is it to be a Franco-Ontarian, or what the identity entails, this reference is thus judged acceptable.

community, while using the first to the exclusion of the second obscures the very real cultural distinctions that exist between Franco-Ontarians, Québécois, Acadians, Métis and other Canadian francophone communities, and the pressures toward assimilation into the Anglophone majority that the community faces (ibid).

For the intention of my present work, I shall take into account both of these definitions, as the complex political and sociological framework can only be understood by acknowledging both significances and understanding the difference between the two. Although one chooses to speak English, or Spanish, or Turkish, it does not follow that he or she does not, or cannot, choose a Franco-Ontarian identity. Just because I chose to write this proposal in English, or because I work primarily in English, does not mean that I do not think of myself as Franco-Ontarian at heart.[4] This is the primary reason why it is so important to consider both definitions of Franco-Ontarian.

Julie Boissonneault's article titled *Se dire… mais comment et pourquoi? Réflexions sur les marqueurs d'identité en Ontario français* summarises students' positions regarding their identities: are they French, French Canadian, franco-ontarien, Canadian or bilingual? Her research notes that, compared to previous years, high school students growing up in French communities in northern Ontario now identify themselves as bilingual, as opposed to franco-ontarien, as in the past. Her work is useful to my research as she sees identity as being individual "puisqu'elle appartient à celui ou à celle qui s'en réclame, mais elle se construit

face à la société en ce qu'elle signe l'appartenance ou la différenciation d'une personne à un ou à plusieurs groupes" (2004: 164). In other words, identity itself does not exist in solitary: it can only exist when it is opposed to something else. This is helpful to my purpose as I believe that the Franco-Ontarian identity, through my analysis of discourse, was articulated with strategies and in relation to other identities within the goal of saving the Montfort Hospital.

In addition to this, Boissonneault calls upon Monica Heller (1994: 156) to explain the link between language and identity:

> La langue a toujours été un élément central de la construction
> de l'identité franco-ontarienne ainsi que de la mobilisation
> politique des franco-ontariens, d'autant plus que la religion et
> le concept de « race » ont commencé à prendre leur
> importance à travers le Canada français au courant des années
> 1960.

In addition, the author states that language is central to identity because communication is at the heart of socialisation. However, when speaking of the Franco-Ontarian identity, Boissonneault, relying on Juteau-Lee's 1980 work, specifies that "parler de l'Ontario français et du fait franco-ontarien, c'est à la fois afficher une identité structurale qui se définit par un espace et une identité conceptuelle qui se définit par la valeur qu'est la langue" (2004: 166). She continues to say that while language is something that can unite people, it can also differentiate and divide groups. "Il s'agit donc d'un marqueur à la fois de

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[4] This discussion brings forth the notion of reflexivity in research, a concept that will be discussed in Chapter 4.

différenciation et d'appartenance" (ibid). This is quite fitting, as I will explain that throughout the chosen case study, a political struggle of classes emerged.

It is quite disappointing how some authors, such as Linda Cardinal or Michel Bock see minority communities as being powerless, fragile and at the mercy of the powerful:

> Malgré un dynamisme indéniable, le milieu francophone de
> l'Ontario est extrêmement fragile. Sa vitalité dépend
> grandement des jugements de la Cour suprême et de la
> générosité des gouvernements. Elle pose, en outre, une question
> sur laquelle nous devrions tous nous pencher : Dans quelques
> décennies, seront-ils [les jeunes Franco-Ontariens] condamnés à
> demander à la Cour suprême de leur donner une identité?
> (Cardinal, cited in Hotte, 2002 : 111).

The above quote supposes that the FO will be unable to give themselves an identity, a passage that I am very much against, as I don't believe that others can 'give' identities – they should come from within, collectively. Another frustration is that the authors understand the future of Franco-Ontarian identity as one that is dependent on other factors, or worse, the cooperation of a government that has long since tried to oppress them. These authors presuppose that the FO community is a fragile one, rather than understanding it as a community that can and will fight for their minority rights. Instead, I see it as something the FO people can control – by their instances of discourse and resistance.

Additionally, Lucie Hotte speaks of past studies wherein the francophone identity was of prime interest. Hotte believes, as I do, that these studies leave much to be

desired, as they do not necessarily address all the issues regarding the minority situation of the Franco-Ontarians and their fate.

> On a beaucoup parlé de l'identité et de la condition franco-ontariennes. La plupart des études sont d'ordinaire centrées sur des considérations culturelles et cherchent à cerner soit la spécificité de la culture franco-ontarienne, soit encore les conditions de vie ou de survie du groupe. Le plus souvent les aspects politique et judiciaire, inévitablement liés aux conditions d'existence des minorités linguistiques ou culturelles, sont ignorés (Hotte, 2002 : 108).

Following concise research on the subject of the Franco-Ontarian identity, it has become quite evident that quite a few problems arise. First, the majority of the sources concerned with this issue tend to be dated. It is difficult to justify using resources that may not be up to date with the most current information available (e.g., the percentage of the Ontarian population that designates itself as being native French speakers), or use outdated and hence invalid theories. In addition, the resources available also are inclined to present a historical perspective, an anthropological approach or even an ethnography of the topic.

The most problematic challenge I have faced in researching and documenting the subject of a Franco-Ontarian identity is that most researchers do not challenge the formation of such an identity. It is as though the identity of each and every Franco-Ontarian is innate, inflexible and firm. Works by authors such as Marco Dubé, Linda Cardinal or Michel Bock place the Franco-Ontarians immediately in a minority situation, and examine the social factors that have lead to their fate.

Instead of examining only the social factors, they could have questioned *all*

factors, such as political, judicial, social, together and subsequently questioned the

formation of the FO identity. These authors fall into the trap of not questioning the

Franco-Ontarian identity and thus, in my opinion, they take its existence for

granted. This is the primary reason why my approach and definition of identity is

extremely important, as I do not adhere to the idea that identities are unchanging.

On that note, it is important to examine and research this issue, as it is a brand-new

way of approaching the matter of the French-speaking minority in Ontario,

opposing other dated views mentioned above. It is also reasonably of importance

to understand, in a cultural sense, the fabrication, the making of meaning, identity

and minority, as they all seem to be socially construed and maintained.

Having elaborated a quick overview of the literature available on the subject of

Franco-Ontarian identity, I will now move to minoritisation, as I shall define the

theoretical concept of identity in later chapters.

1.2 Minoritisation

The concept of minoritisation has been elaborated in various fields, from sociology

to ethnology, and from psychology to Cultural Studies. Often, the concept is used

to demonstrate the behaviours and reactions of different minority groups. And

surprisingly, the minority groups found in most articles are not necessarily a

minority based on culture or race. Oftentimes, the articles on the subject of minoritisation concern groups of a sensitive nature, such as battered women. British authors Erica Burman and Khatidja Chantler have published numerous pieces about domestic violence and the concept of minoritisation. Similarly, Rebekah Pratt has published works summarizing the use of the concept of minoritisation used in Burman and Chantler's articles. Additionally, other researchers, such as Jane K. Cowan, have also used the concept of minoritisation in such a way to demonstrate the relationship between a majority group's identity, and one that is in a subordinate position. In her book *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference,* Cowan examines the Macedonian people's identity and how they relate to the majority group. Throughout her research, she adopts an anthropological take on the notion of identity as it is tied to the Macedonian culture. As her research is one of the first to utilise the notion of minoritisation in regards to identity, her work is quite useful to my work, as it has allowed me to draw from her experience, while allowing me to distance myself from such an anthropological/ethnological approach.

Authors such as Patrick Cooney, in his article titled *The Minoritization of the Irish,* speak of a process that has an immensely negative impact on the minority culture/identity. I investigate his claims in future paragraphs, but it is important to note that this concept is often tied to very negative consequences, and hence has historically had negative connotations.

Speaking of negative consequences, such is the case outlined in David Atkinson's article titled *Minoritization, Identity, and Ethnolinguistic Vitality in Catalonia*. Firstly, Atkinson speaks of Montaner's definition of a minority, "in the sense of a minoritized group, is one which finds itself in a position of political, social, linguistic, economic, cultural, legal or sociological inferiority" (Atkinson, 2000: 187). Atkinson also speaks of the process of minoritisation and the situation of the Catalan speakers in Catalonia. "Minoritization is a key concept in the Catalan case precisely because, for many of those involved, it is less clear-cut than in many other situations, or perhaps more accurately, it is clear-cut for many individuals but they differ as to which language suffers from the problem [of being minoritized]" (ibid). Although the Franco-Ontarians may differ from the Catalan speakers and their fight for independence (seeing as the Franco-Ontarians don't necessarily adhere to nation-state), there are many similarities that can be drawn between the two, as illustrated by the following:

> Not only is the extent of their [Catalan] minoritization highly polemical, but they clearly do not fit either the category of a divergently motivated group seeking their ethnolinguistic independence (as were, for example, the Norwegians prior to their attainment of statehood) or a convergently oriented constituency seeking assimilation into their host culture (as has been the case with some groups and/or individuals emigrating from Europe to the USA or Australia) (Atkinson, 2000: 191).

Other works, such as Sinha-Kerkhoff's paper, concern identity, minoritisation and memory. Sinha-Kerkhoff argues that the minority groups in the Rhanchi district create their identity through a process of minoritisation based on discourses of

memory. "These memories bring to notice a process of minoritization with accompanying discourses of rootedness" (Sinha-Kerkhoff, 2001: 1).

Parallel to most other articles cited earlier, the majority of the works concerning the process of minoritisation stem from various fields, other than Cultural Studies. Hence, not only will this thesis serve as a bridge between the concept of minoritisation and the field of communications, but it will be one of the first times this concept is used in Cultural Studies. This constitutes the major difference between the studies noted earlier in this section, and the work I intend to carry out.

The major problem I have encountered while researching this concept is the fact that it has rarely been approached in the context of Cultural Studies. The second most important difficulty I encountered is, as with many vague notions, while there are many articles and authors highlighting the process of minoritisation, it is rarely explained thoroughly. Authors such as Erica Burman allude to its importance, but rarely is it the subject of close investigation. This leads me to such a situation where I, as a researcher, must pick and choose from different articles to build and create a succinct definition and application of the process of minoritisation.

To some reviewers, my literature review may seem scarce and possibly incomplete; however, it must be understood that most of my literature review is explicitly entwined with the definition and explanation of the process of

minoritisation, as shall be seen in future chapters of the present thesis. I wish to now direct attention to the elaboration of the problems and research questions that will guide my work. In order to do so, I find it of prime importance to firstly examine and discuss key concepts and terms that will be questioned.

2 Chapitre 2 : Problematisation

2.1 Introduction

In the course of the present work, I wish to highlight that minoritisation emphasises the process of being positioned as a minority group. In particular, I will examine how and what is mobilised to systematically position the Franco-Ontarian population as being a minority. For the purpose of this thesis, it is vital to assert that the process of minoritisation is to be treated as both a process of oppression by a majority culture, of being positioned as a minority group, as well as a question of strategic essentialism, wherein there might be occasions where it is advantageous for minority groups to position themselves through the essentialist identity claims. Here Stuart Hall's thoughts on the creation of identity may help to clarify what I see in my case study. Hall proposed two main approaches to cultural identity. The first one is that minority groups can represent themselves (often invoking essentialist notions) and the other approach looks at identity as something that is produced, created and not innate, in which the group refuses to accept that an identity can be projected on them. This then raises the question: Why has the identity of Franco-Ontarians always been examined from a historical perspective? The literature has largely failed to problematise Franco-Ontarian identity as a contingent construction.

The theoretical problem of identity formation and the political problem of identity

formation during a crisis are brought together in my case study, presenting the

researcher (me) with the very specific problem of identity formation during a

political crisis in the context of domination of the Franco-Ontarian ethnic and

linguistic minority. This questioning brought me to my research problem, which is

on one hand whether or not the Franco-Ontarian identity can be considered from

any other perspective, and on the other hand whether or not it is possible for a

minority group such as this one to take its situation in hand and make it work for

them. It is precisely this problem that sparked the interest to investigate this issue

and make it the subject of this thesis.

2.2   Research Questions

Following the literature review discussed earlier, and the subsequent discussion of

the key concepts I wish to mobilise, it is clear that past authors who have treated

the question of identity, especially of the Franco-Ontarian identity, have done so

from a historical point of view. It is my belief that the Franco-Ontarian identity is

not innate, nor do they inherit this identity simply by their linguistic capabilities,

but rather, through articulations of identity and the process of minoritisation, the

population is able to distinguish itself as Franco-Ontarian in particular cases. I do

not mean to over-generalize here, nor do I assume that they are free to choose their

identity is all cases, since Barker (2003) points out that identity is socially assigned

in addition to being subjectively chosen. I simply wish to highlight the manner in which I understand the formation of the Franco-Ontarian identity in this case.

As stated in the preceding literature review, the concept of minoritisation as a process has been rarely exploited to explain the identity formation of the Franco-Ontarian population. "The term 'minoritisation' is used in [...] research to describe the different ways in which unequal power relations between minority and majority groups are manifested in systems and structures that perpetuate privilege" (Pratt, 2004: 33).

In 1997, the Ontarian government ruled that the Montfort Hospital, the only French-teaching hospital in all of Canada (west of Quebec) was slated to be closed in favour of creating a super hospital, The General Hospital, where the only teaching language would be English. This meant that not only would French-speaking patients be treated at an English-only hospital, but also all medical students enrolled in the University of Ottawa's bilingual medicine programme would be forced to complete their rotations in English. This closure hit Franco-Ontarians hard – they no longer would have access to health services in their mother tongue – and they resisted. In view of this question of minority identity, it is important to note that Franco-Ontarians did not necessarily welcome the label of "minority" forced on them by the majority culture, but with time, they came to realise that the Franco-Ontarians were, in fact, a minority, as were other cultures within Canada. They had to embrace this, and make their status work for them, as

opposed to against them, as the government would have it. Month after month, year after year, the prominent Franco-Ontarians in the Ottawa region fought the government, to the point that the Montfort Hospital became a sort of symbolic institution to the francophone community.

Throughout the research, my interests and questions developed in relation to what I was learning in my analysis of discourse. As I read more deeply into the case, I was able to reflect on the questions that I have brought forth earlier in my research, including whether or not the evidence, the discourses I had before me, were able to support the claims I was making. I don't think it was a matter of whether or not I could "prove" my claims, but more a question of whether or not they were worth answering. My original research question was as follows:

Using the narratives available to us concerning these events, we are interested in examining and studying the manner in which the collective identity of Franco-Ontarians was constructed, articulated and mobilized in this conflict involving the Montfort Hospital. As well, we are interested in knowing which factors were mobilized that suggests a process of minoritisation.

Although this may have been a valid first research question, there was a lot left to be desired by it. It's not that I am no longer interested in the manner in which the collective identity of the FO was created. It is always best to steer clear of research questions that can simply be answered by "yes" or "no," or even "how," especially

since the latter makes for difficult explanations in regards to supporting evidence. This being said, after examining the corpus, it's quite clear that there was a process of minoritisation taking place in the discourse, and a revision of my research question was in order. I changed the question to:

Which strategies of discourse were employed in the specific crisis of the threat of the Montfort closure in order for the Franco-Ontarians to empower themselves by claiming the status of a minority?

2.3 Definition of concepts

2.3.1 Identity

Within the Cultural Studies framework, the concept of identity is one that arises very often. In fact, it was the centre of Cultural Studies in the early 1990s (Barker, 2003). It goes without saying that identity and subjectivity are closely connected, although they may be virtually inseparable in everyday understanding. The main difference that one can make between subjectivity and identity is that subjectivity is seen as "what it is to be a person," the condition of being a person, whereas identity is "how" we describe ourselves to each other.

According to Barker (2003: 220), "identity is an essence that can be signified through signs of taste, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles." In addition, subjectivity and identity are cultural reliant productions. "What it means to be a person is

social and cultural 'all the way down.'" Thus, identities are entirely social productions and do not exist beyond cultural representations (Barker, 2003). The manner in which I wish to use identity is actually a combination of both subjectivity and identity, as described earlier. For the purpose of this thesis, I qualify identity as the methods by which one becomes a person, how one is formed as a subject (biologically and culturally), all things that make up subjectivity, in addition to the verbal and non-verbal impressions one has about oneself, the emotional identification and the beliefs and feelings that others have, which also constitute elements of identity.

This concept of identity serves the purpose of delimiting the groups of people living in Ontario who identify themselves as francophone, or Franco-Ontarian, even if not by birth. Briefly, this signifies that even if a person who identified herself as a Franco-Manitoban moved to Ontario, she would identify primarily with other Franco-Ontarians rather than with Anglo-Ontarians. For my present purpose, I have no intention of examining other identities other than those of linguistic minorities. More specifically, I will only be concerned with the identity of Franco-Ontarians living among the English-speaking majority in Ontario, in addition to the articulation between these people and the Anglo-Québécois living among the French-speaking majority in Québec through the concept of minoritisation.

Since I wish to present the concept of the activation of different identities, it is necessary that I approach the concept on identity from an anti-essentialist point of view, as opposed to that of the essentialist standpoint. Simply put, there are two different approaches one can take when speaking of identity: the essentialist and the anti-essentialist standpoints. "Essentialism assumes that words have stable referents and social categories reflect an essential underlying identity. By this token there would be stable truths to be found and an essence of, for example, femininity or black identity" (Barker, 2003: 19).

It is worth mentioning that Hall's non-essentialist approach to identity argues as well that an identity (in this case, the Franco-Ontarian identity) becomes fully salient only when it is "called up" in the midst of controversy to mobilise opposition, as will be demonstrated in the case study.

For poststructuralists, there are no truths beyond language. However, this does not mean that one cannot address identity or truth. To a certain extent, according to Barker (2003: 19), anti-essentialism treats concepts such as identity as being "not universals of nature but productions of culture in specific times and places." This definition is extremely important to my research, as I shall attempt to demonstrate how precisely this happened in the case study.

Given that I have already based some of my arguments on the activation of certain identities, it is necessary that I approach the concept of identity from an anti-

essentialist point of view, where identities are changeable and flexible as opposed to being fixed and rigid. It would prove quite unfruitful to argue the activation of identities when opposed to crisis if I were to base my thoughts on an essentialism-influenced definition of identity.

Also, it is important to consider that while I am speaking of identity, the identity I speak of is activated through a crisis, or an opposition. For example, in *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996), Stuart Hall demonstrates what is meant by identities that are "activated" by crisis through the example of the Anita Hill case. The example deals with the nomination of a black conservative (Clarence Thomas) to the position of a Supreme Court Judge in the United States. By doing so, then-president George Bush hoped to maintain the conservative majority in the Supreme Court and thought that the white population would support the nomination given that Thomas was a conservative and the black residents would support the same decision since Thomas was black.

However, what President Bush did not foresee was the sexual harassment claims brought forth by Anita Hill, which very much complicated the identity issue, especially for the demographic composed of black women. Black women had to decide whether their identity was "black" or "woman" and whether to support or oppose the nomination. This is a prime example of a non-essentialist identity point of view.

In an interview with Stuart Hall, Erkki Karvonen states that "potentially, we may have many different identities and the question is which one of these is activated. (...) The skilled communicator can activate the identification he or she wants: we Europeans, we Finnish, we male persons, we white, we taxpayers, we parents and so on" (2001: 105). This is where the notion of the activation of a certain identity becomes important to this project: how the identity, the distinguishing of the population based on linguistic differences through their discourse, and those who, although speaking English the majority of the time in their everyday lives, when faced with the closing of the province's only French teaching hospital, activated their francophone roots and identified themselves with this cause. The francophone community in Ontario was faced with the same decision as the black women in the above example: which identity surfaces? Thankfully, most of the French-speaking Ontarians sided with the cause, and not the government, as will be discussed in later chapters.

Having already discussed the Franco-Ontarian community, I wish to draw the importance of articulation forged between the Anglo-Québécois and the Franco-Ontarian population brought forth in the FO discourse when faced with the process of minoritisation. First, I will examine the idea of articulation.

2.3.2 Articulation and Articulation Theory

Cultural Studies has used the idea of articulation to formalise the relationships

between elements of a social construction. This concept

> refers to the formation of a temporary unity between elements
> that do not have to go together. An articulation is the form of
> the connection that can make a unity of two different elements
> under certain conditions. Articulation suggests both expressing/
> representing and a "putting-together." Thus, representations of
> gender may be "put-together" with representations of race. (...)
> This occurs in context-specific and contingent ways that cannot
> be predicted before the fact. The concept of articulation is also
> deployed to discuss the relationship between culture and
> political economy. Thus culture is said to be 'articulated' with
> moments of production but not determined in any 'necessary'
> way by that moment, and vice-versa (Barker, 2003: 9).

In other words, the notion of articulation allows for bringing together two

different, otherwise unrelated subjects in the context of drawing comparisons. In

addition, as Laclau and Mouffe have argued, the social is to be deemed not as a

totality, but as a set of possibly related collections of difference articulated

together. According to Laclau (1990), there are no necessary links between

discursive notions. Apparently, these associations, which are invented and

temporary, are inadvertently related to the conjuncture in which they appear.

Along with the development of the concept of articulation, Cultural Studies proved

to be the grounds in which articulation theory has been elaborated. In the present

thesis, articulation theory will inform my forthcoming analysis in a number of

ways. First, articulation theory will be used to describe how elements of discourse

are combined into ideologies mobilized during political struggle.[5] Contemporary

scholars such as Stuart Hall (1980) and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985)

consider the notion as "both a way of understanding how ideological elements

come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of

asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to

certain political subjects" (Grossberg, 1996, pp. 141–142). Additionally, a second

use for articulation theory arises in my theorization of minority identity.

Articulation theory stresses that all identities within a social formation must be

valued as the "nonnecessary" association between the elements that constitute it

(Slack et al., 1993). In reality, articulation theory presupposed that each identity

"is actually a particular connection of elements that, like a string of connotations,

works to forge an identity that can and does change" (Hall, 1985: XX). Thus, it

bears repeating that the manner in which I approach the concept of identity must

be within the anti-essentialist perspective, which allows for such fluctuations of

identity. Inevitably, the manner in which elements are associated or connected is

expressed as an articulation (Slack et al., 1993). In layman's terms, Slack and

colleagues attempt to explain the manner in which articulation theory influences

identity formation by mobilizing the elements that constitute a train. I quote their

example in its (almost) entirety, as I judge it to be an excellent approach to

explaining the use of this theory:

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[5] Here I follow Stuart Hall's use of the terms discourse, ideology and articulation in Hall (1997) and I am aware that Hall does not strictly respect distinctions between ideology and discourse that others, such as Foucault, might have found quite important.

> Any identity might be compared to a train, which is constituted of many different types of train cars in a particular arrangement (or articulation). Each car is connected (or articulated) to another in a specific was that, taken as a whole (as a series of articulations), constitutes the identity *train*. Any specific train is thus a specific, particular set of articulations – an identifiable object with relatively clear-cut boundaries. But these specific articulations are nonnecessary; that is, there is no absolute necessity that they be connected in just that way and no guarantees that they will remain connected that way (ibid: 27).

Therefore, articulation calls for a culturally agreed upon identity, or that the identity is "struggled over in ongoing processes of disarticulation and rearticulation" (ibid). In a later chapter, I will point to the fact that this was a development within the FO culture – there existed a particular struggle in which the parties fought over the specific articulations of their identity.

Further, articulation theory "motivates scholars to examine, amidst conditions of social complexity, how ideologies and ideological elements are invoked, mobilised, combined, altered, rejected, or ignored" (Brouwer, 2007: 70-71). It becomes immediately evident the manner in which articulation illuminates my thesis – I am most interested in examining the strategies that were drawn upon by certain groups in their discourse at specific conjunctures (i.e., throughout the crisis of the Montfort Hospital). By examining the strategies used, I attend to the manner in which the FO discursively articulated their identity with other elements, such as the fear of assimilation and the threat of oppression, the need for unity within the community, and an articulation with identities such as the English community of Québec. Refracted through the lens of articulation theory, the examination of these

discursive strategies will ultimately allow me to reflect and elaborate on the concept of minoritisation.

In addition, articulation theory refigures the concepts of meaning and power. As Slack et al. have it, "meaning – both instances and the general concept – can be understood as an articulation that moves through ongoing processes of rearticulation" (1993: 28). I argue that the meaning of particular institutions, such as Montfort, played out in the discourse surrounding such a political struggle, was constantly discursively rearticulated by the FO, as it is demonstrated in later chapters.

Political struggle, then, involves asserting one form of discourse over another by "the construction of a new ''common sense'' which changes the identity of the different groups" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 183). Building on an understanding of language as a structure of interrelated signifiers (Saussure, 1967), Laclau and Mouffe define discourse as the means used to organise a society into a structured totality to give it stability and meaning. Discourse here includes all social institutions, customs and practices, as well as language, since meaning is fully relative to context (Laclau, 1995, cited in Sutherland, 2005: 191).

Articulation theory asserts that each sender, each receiver, each and every discourse and medium, all contribute to the ongoing development of articulating and rearticulating meaning (ibid). Therefore, the concept of power is no longer

assumed to be the power of a sender or a receiver but "at that which draws and redraws the lines of articulation" (ibid). As my analysis of available discourse will demonstrate in later chapters, it is the activists of SOS Montfort that managed to articulate and rearticulate their identity with other elements to resist governmental power.

Seen in this manner, it is possible to consider both single identity and social formations as particular historically specific articulations of discursive elements. For instance, there is no basic connection between the various aspects of identity (class, gender, race). Hence, working-class Hispanic men do not automatically share similar identities and identifications with each other any more than all upper-class white women do (ibid). For example, not all French speaking Ontarians identify with the identity position articulated by the Montfort activists; nor all Franco-Ontarians accept SOS Montfort's articulation of the hospital. These articulations had to be forged within discourse, by key FO players. Additionally, I intend to analyse the use of the concept of articulation in the FO's discourse, which seemingly serves as a "link" between the Anglo-Québécois community and the Franco-Ontarian population, comparable because both populations are minorities in so much as their language is not the working language of their province. But also, the manner in which articulation informs this thesis is that it allows me to examine the struggles of power and meaning and of the formation of identities mobilised by various articulations in the discourse available in my corpus. If, as Barker suggests, the task of cultural studies is to analyse the

articulations that have taken place, in my thesis this involves illustrating how various contingent practices are "'put together' with each other through the operation of power" (Barker, 2003: 107).

Before going any further in examining the two distinct cultures and the articulations that may exist between them and the manner in which identities are discursively formed in this case, a few words concerning the definition of the concept of minoritisation are in order.

2.3.3 Minoritisation

It has been said that the concept of minority works like the concept of culture in Cultural Studies: both are very ambiguous terms that are difficult to define (Cowan, 2001). And like culture, the international academic community has not been able to come up with a definition of "minority" upon which all agree. However, that being said, the concept is normally understood through reference to cultural standards. The definition that is most widely accepted is the one supported by Francesco Capotorti:

> a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population, and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or identity (1991: 96).

It is immediately obvious that the French speakers of Ontario belong without a doubt to this designation of minority: while they are all "nationals of the State," their language is certainly different from the majority of habitants of Ontario, and through the crisis of the closure of the Montfort Hospital, this group was able to mobilise its members and show signs of unity and solidarity before the Ontarian government and its courts. In her studies of the Macedonian culture, Jane K. Cowan has pursued what she calls the minoritisation of culture. Briefly, "with this term, she [Cowan] refers to the transformation of a fluid identity into one of supposedly ontological quality in order to fit legal and political criteria" (Dembour, 2001: 149).

Cowan herself speaks of a process

> by which the identities of a diverse population and the meanings of its cultural practices are reformulated to fit within the framework of the moral, conceptual and legal category of minority. Minoritization is a distinctive strategy within a global political field that eschews territorial objectives and seeks rights within existing national borders; it may develop as a reformulation and an alternative to an explicitly nationalizing project (Cowan et al., 2001: 156).

In other words, as I have stated earlier, the process of minoritisation involves a dominant culture (i.e., one with more power) that attempts a reformulation of the minority's culture in order for it to conform to the majority culture. It is immediately evident that to treat the process of minoritisation is to also treat a question of power, which I will discuss later.

Cowan continues by stating that as a legal category, minority "partakes of the essentialising and reification entailed in all legal regimes, which demand clearly bounded entities" (ibid). That is to say that the minority must be separate from the majority, whether by linguistic differences, religious or otherwise. Nonetheless, international law acknowledges that "members of a minority have two ways of expressing their identity: either by associating themselves with the strong desire of a group to preserve its characteristics, or by exercising their choice not to belong and instead assimilate into the majority" (UN, 1992: 10). So, when faced with the majority, the subordinate population has the choice to either stand apart and denounce their identity as being the minority (i.e. resistance), or it can simply go along with the majority and integrate itself (i.e. assimilate) into the dominant culture. Here I can also draw a correlation between the ability of activating different identities (that of the minority, Franco-Ontarian) or adapting the francophone community to the dominant Anglophone one.

Jane Cowan is not the only author to have developed the notion of minoritisation. Among others are Vered Amit-Talai, Caroline Knowles and Patrick L. Cooney. The latter speaks of minoritisation in relation to the Irish in his article titled *The Minoritization of the Irish: Unorthodox Thoughts About Irish History*. Cooney (2003: 2) explains that

> the process of minoritization involves a corruption of the social structure that now serves to keep the minority in the status of a minority. Rather than the social system working to help people, for the minority the social system is used to oppress the minority.

He goes on to explain that the social structure thus becomes distorted in the process of being redesigned to keep a population in its place. "The portion of the social structure that the minority has control over also becomes skewed because the basic social processes are all designed to be so negative" (ibid).

I've discussed a few articles in my literature review that I should examine a little more closely. While it may be that these articles come from various fields other than the field of communications and Cultural Studies, these works are still important to mention since they are pertinent to my research in defining and applying this concept.

Authors Erica Burman and Khatidja Chantler explain the concept as the following:

> We use the term 'minoritisation' (rather than minority, or
> minority ethnic group) to highlight that groups and communities
> do not occupy the position of minority by virtue of some
> inherent property (of their culture or religion, for example) but
> acquire this position as the outcome of a socio-historical
> process (Burman, 2005: 60).

The above highlights that the groups are in a minority situation not because of some innate quality (i.e., mother tongue being French), but because of a process of minoritisation. The fact that the above quote stresses the importance of this non-innate point of view joins the anti-essentialist approach to identity, as was discussed in earlier passages. This anti-essentialist approach to identity allows me to speak of identities that find themselves in a minority situation through a process

of minoritisation only because of the fact that the identities are fluid and non-static.

In her article titled *From disconnection to connection: 'Race', gender and the politics of therapy*, Chantler is virtually the only author to appropriate herself the concept of minoritisation. She explains:

> Minoritization is indicative of activity rather than the stasis
> associated with the term 'minority ethnic.' So rather than
> seeing minority ethnic groups as fixed entities, minoritization
> seeks to stress the *process* of being positioned as a minority
> group together with its specific social, economic and political
> histories. Moreover, 'minority ethnic' has come to be
> synonymous with 'colour' so that only people who are black or
> have a visible skin colouring are attributed as belonging to a
> minority ethnic group. Such a formulation therefore ignores the
> positions of white ethnic minorities, for example Irish people.
> In contrast, minoritization is able to span black and white
> minority ethnic groups whilst maintaining specificity, together
> with, an alertness that different groups are subject to different
> forms of racialisation, and have differential access to structures
> of power and privilege (Chantler, 2005: 245 original emphasis).

Chantler brings forth a quite important issue that I have yet to discuss, and that is the fact that, as said above, minorities are not always based on skin colour, but they can, and are, based on culture, language, religion, etc. She also speaks about power relations and how minoritisation is affected by such relations. I shall address the issue of power relations, although I will not attempt to define it, simply by the fact that it is deemed a self-explanatory concept whereas evidently minorities would not exist without power relations. That being said, I shall discuss, albeit briefly, the concept of power and lived resistance. It goes without saying

that in these power relations, minorities are not the ones with the power, as may be defined by having a larger population.

2.3.3.1 Power and Lived Resistance

While the claims of the case study that follows are rigorously supported with analysis of discourses drawn from the crisis, I also feel compelled to raise the issue of resistance at this point. It is quite evident that the Franco-Ontarians resisted governmental minoritisation by rallying around their minority identity, engaging in a sort of resistance through strategic essentialism. It is often asserted that early studies on resistance in Cultural Studies tended to overemphasize the capacity for agency of various identity groups. This has led to a healthy scepticism towards simplistic assertions of resistance. However, Paula Saukko believes that resistance is still an important focus for Cultural Studies and in her book titled *Doing Research in Cultural Studies*, she devotes a whole chapter (*Studying Lived Resistance*) in which she states, "(…) resistance, as a concept, provided early cultural studies with a way to argue that people have some creative and critical abilities to 'resist' domination" (2003: 39). Saukko distinguishes three approaches to resistance: critical contextualist approach, optimistic textualist approach and the third, contingent approach (ibid). The first approach focuses on the effects of resistance on real structures of dominance, whereas the second approach concentrates on symbolic resistance. These two share a similarity wherein their

tendency is to analyse resistance "in terms of its alleged effects on a system" (2003: 40).

The last approach, the contingent approach to resistance, analyses an activity, an event, from different perspectives, evaluating "what types of power this activity resists and what types of power it buttresses" (ibid). Instead of studying power vertically, as do the first two approaches, and evaluating the effects on the system, this contingent approach treats power in lateral terms, evaluating its effects on other activities. In other words, instead of studying power and resistance in terms of bottom-up or top-down terms, I can use this contingent approach to study the moderate effects of resistance on Franco-Ontarian identity. Saukko explains:

> However, this type of notion of power (vertical) tends to attribute too much to the activity in question. Therefore, to overcome this polarized and vertical mode of analysis, it may be fruitful to shift towards a more contingent or lateral notion of power and resistance. Instead of thinking whether a particular local resistance has systemic effects, it might be a better idea to explore what kind of specific effects it has, or how it relates to other issues, events and processes in different places and spheres of life (2003: 50).

So, instead of studying if an activity of resistance has any effects on the system, Saukko proposes that we look at how, or what effects resistance has on other issues. This is, in part, incorporated in my study, seeing as I examine the ways in which identities were mobilised in this discourse of resistance, and its process of minoritisation.

Now that I have been able to discuss the different concepts I wish to mobilise, I wish to revisit the research questions that will ultimately guide my research, and allow me to formulate research arguments.

Let us recall that I have reviewed my question to the following:

Which strategies of discourse were employed in the specific crisis of the threat of the Montfort closure in order for the Franco-Ontarians to empower themselves by claiming the status of a minority?

I believe that this research question serves much better the purpose and the goals that I set out to explore and achieve in the beginning stages of this thesis. Having modified and elaborated a revised research question, I am then able, through my practice of reading and following the steps laid out by Johnson, to reach for plausible arguments.

3   Chapter 3 : Methodology

3.1   Introduction

I have decided to employ the method of textual analysis, coupled with the notion

of discourse attributed to Hall, Laclau and Mouffe above, to carry out my research.

According to Saukko, the tradition in classic and contemporary Cultural Studies

has been the analysis of texts and discourses "to the point that the paradigm has

been accused of a tendency to reduce all social phenomena into texts" (2003: 99).

However, she believes that it is important to point out that instead of examining

the formal or aesthetic features of text; Cultural Studies tends to examine the

manner in which cultural texts play a role in the changing of social, political, and

historical contexts. This is important to my project because I assume that the

discourses that I reconstruct are actually important in rearticulating the contexts in

which they operated. So while I do not want to dismiss the many important extra-

textual determinations that brought the Montfort crisis to its ultimate conclusion,

my chosen focus is on discourse, through the analysis of texts.

As Grossberg (1997) has said, "What characterizes cultural studies' approach to

culture is not 'textualism' but contextualism" (cited in Saukko, 2003: 99). This is

probably the most important characteristic that sets work in Cultural Studies apart

from most other methods and paradigms. Attending to context is important to

understanding power; as Johnson asserts (2004: 174), "The structural textual

methods [meaning semiotics, content analysis, etc.] pay insufficient attention to context and so ignore historically specific relations of power." So while texts are clearly important objects of study in Cultural Studies, contemporary approaches agree on the need to look beyond texts to the wider contexts in which they operate.[6]

Consequently, I use a combination of textual and discourse analysis. My project necessarily engages in textual analysis, since my corpus is written and collected in Gratton's text. I do, in fact, engage in a hermeneutic practice as I draw selectively on the text at different moments of my project. After all, it is necessary for me to distinguish between Gratton's polemical narrative, and the more useful functions of his text as a journalistic record and historical document. This requires judicious interpretation of the text. However, this is just an initial phase of my project that allows me to gather the key elements of my corpus. My corpus is composed of a small selection of things that were said and done in the context of the Montfort crisis that seem symptomatic, in my view, of the operations of discourse and articulation and which, again in my view, contributed to its resolution in favour of the francophone minority. I thus attempt to contextualize the particularly significant events and statements that I have gathered from the text. I use the notion of discourse to link specific events and statements to more general statements (as Foucault called them *enonces*) or strategies of enunciation that are,

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[6] It is possible that these statements take 'context' too much for granted, as though it were something objectively 'outside' the text rather than another intertext mobilized by the researcher to support her interpretations. It is preferrable to treat both text and context as a sort of critical narrative that is constructed through the course of the research.

in my analysis, powerful meanings that define events and positions that make up the context of the Montfort crisis. Prior to elaborating the ways in which research was completed, a few words on the nature of textual analysis and what constitutes as text are in order.

All too briefly, a textual analysis can be said to be performed when a reader (an expert, a semiotician, a researcher, etc.) reads, observes or studies a text and using their judgement, makes interpretations regarding the meaning of such texts. Nick Couldry offers a useful description of precisely what the process of a textual analysis is:

> The traditional literary model of textual analysis started out from a limited selection of texts (the 'canon') and aimed either to elucidate their meanings and debate their significance ('exegesis') or to find out how those texts produced their effects ('analysis') or both. Both exegesis and analysis depend on prior value judgements: obviously about the merit of texts themselves, but also (more subtly) about the judgement of a particular type of reader – the critic or (more recently) the semiotician, that is, someone who is assumed to make correct or authoritative judgments (2000: 67).

This method may be contrasted with discourse analysis, which sets out to analyse the discourse itself, without engaging in the hermeneutic maneuvers characteristic of textual analysis as Couldry understands it. Discourse analysis requires reading at a certain depth, to trace out a system of regularities in the appearance of statements. So in the analysis that follows, while I may cite the words and interventions of particular persons (even their confidences and personal correspondence) it is with the purpose of demonstrating how more broadly distributed social discourses are articulated

through these specific words and in fact lend them their power to define realities and move constituencies.

Discourse analysis thus entails a practice of reading (see the following section for more on this point). It is not a hermeneutic practice, in which one reads for the true meaning of the concept, or the intention of its users. Nor is it deconstructive, in that it does not dwell on the surface of language, analyzing the rhetorical techniques and figures that create the effects of knowledge or truth. Discursive analysis works at the level of the entire formation, and so while I discuss passages drawn from Gratton's text in great detail, it is with the interest of locating the significant statements that point to a set of more broadly distributed social discourses.

By the paragraph above, it is undeniably clear that throughout the reading of the corpus, throughout the examining of the texts, a specific discourse will be highlighted to allow for an interpretation of meaning conveyed, discursive strategies employed, and themes and symbols indicative of a process of minoritisation. A short discussion on the practice of reading employed in this study is in order.

3.1.1 **Reading and Reflexivity**

Richard Johnson et al. devote a complete chapter, if not full sections, of their

textbook titled *The Practice of Cultural Studies* to textual analysis. These authors

view this research method as an empirical one, a procedure that is itself also

dialogic (2004). On how to read text, Johnson states:

> In approaching a text, our lines of questioning come initially
> from our interest, our fore-knowledge and our positionalities in
> the wider contemporary context. (....) we have to open
> ourselves to the speeches themselves, listen attentively, read in
> context, take the pressure of the text (2004: 179).

For the purpose of this research project, patterns, themes and movements will be

examined to allow for structure, but also certain discourse mobilizing strategies

and articulations will be called upon. Briefly, to support the claim that there are

various ways in which a text can be read, I will employ different strategies when

approaching my corpus. For example, in the instances where I describe the

unfolding of the events of the Montfort Hospital, I will have read the text for the

facts that it affords. In another instance, I read the text in a different way in order

to interpret the events. As Saukko (2003: 112) attests, individual texts can be read

as both factual accounts and political interventions that advance a position on the

controversy unfolding before the researcher. The corpus I intend to use

reconstructs the Montfort Hospital crisis and in doing so, puts forward a position. I

read it as the point of articulation of multiple discourses and determinations.

Since the texts included in my corpus deal with politics, dominance, and resistance, the issue of power in text and in reading texts must be addressed. Saukko points out that "the interest in texts within the social context is umbilically connected with an interest in power" (2003: 100). And so,

> while Cultural Studies continues to examine the relationship between culture and social domination, it understands cultural texts, such as popular products, not to be mere loci of domination. Rather, it views them as sites of contestation over meaning, where different groups compete to set forth their understandings of the state of the affairs in the world" (ibid).

Therefore, I will be finding and underlining texts where contestations over meaning are played out. My analysis may ultimately provide a suggestive, if necessarily incomplete, example of how resistance may be read from the operations of discourse, through textual analysis.

In the above paragraphs, I have discussed the issue of the numerous manners in which text can be approached, as well as outlining, albeit briefly, the issue of politics and its relation to textual analysis. I must now address the issue of reflexivity, a method of rendering an analysis of such a kind more convincing and valid. My experience as a Franco-Ontarian informs my reading of the events in numerous ways. For example, I chose to study this event because it has special meaning for me. Yet my problematic draws into question any simple notion of

identification. Thus, a few words concerning this topic, my implication in my object of research, are in order.

3.1.2 Reflexivity in research

All researchers wanting to respect the values of Cultural Studies must address the issue of reflexivity in their research. Saukko writes authoritatively about new Cultural Studies as

a self-reflexive... mode of analyzing experiences and discourses 'from the inside'. This form of analysis acknowledges that the scholar does not have any privileged access to a space 'above' discourses but is also formed by them. Thus the... approach is characterized by a self-reflexive, critical autobiographical or introspective analysis of the discourses that have constituted the scholar (2003: 75).

Thus, the following interpretation of the texts included in this project's corpus depends highly on the researcher's reflexivity. This concept is one that is central to the paradigm and is so important partly because, as Johnson et al. would have it, "knowing our partialities enables us to correct our biases" (2004: 53). Similarly, reflexivity is important because it "informs our readers of our partialities, so that they can make any necessary corrections" (ibid). And Saukko cautions: "One needs to critically reflect upon one's own perspective in terms of submitting it to a similar political and social scrutiny as one would submit any text." (2003: 113). In sum, Cultural Studies distinguishes itself by maintaining that all knowledge

production is implicated in ideology or political struggles, thus objectivity (in the pure sense employed by critics of Cultural Studies) is not attainable. After all, as Frow and Morris have it, "(...) the intellectual project of Cultural Studies is always at some level marked, we would argue, by a discourse of social involvement" (2000: 327). Thus, the researcher is always involved in these types of studies, and therefore cannot claim to be 100 percent objective in her results and interpretations. "On the contrary, work in CS accepts its partiality; it is openly incomplete, and it is partisan in its insistence on the political dimensions of knowledge" (ibid).

Therefore, I would like now to address the issue of my involvement, whether identifactory or emotional, in regards to my research object.[7]

Of course I am emotionally, historically and by virtue of my identity involved. I am researching the struggles, the minoritisation of "my people." I've experienced this crisis firsthand. I was present at most of these events. I am certainly not hiding the fact that I am engaged in this subject. That being said, however, I see how my engagement, my involvement, my foreknowledge (as Johnson would say) is an advantage for this thesis – it is certainly positive. As a Franco-Ontarian, I already have the knowledge necessary of Franco-Ontarian identity, culture and politics. This has helped me generate intuitive hypotheses or questions about my research.

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[7] On a side note, it is not by simply identifying and discussing the issue of reflexivity in research that makes it possible to overcome it; in fact exploring it can make the research all the more meaningful to the reader.

As well, my narrative of the Montfort crisis, while theoretically informed and avoiding the pitfalls of essentialism, is nonetheless told from the position of one who identifies as a Franco-Ontarian. So, not only am I the observer, the researcher, but there is a struggle with the part of me that was a participant, as emotionally invested as I am, in my practice of reading. None of this stops me from claiming that I have uncovered a kind of truth in my analysis. Throughout my work I have struggled with these issues. After all, it must be recognised that absolute objectivity is impossible, but objectivity as a cognitive and intellectual stance remains a possibility (Johnson, 2004).

3.1.3   Practice of reading

Having explored the major points of textual analysis, I must now discuss the practice of reading that I have completed in my research. Although the results of this reading will only be examined in the next chapter, I begin by discussing the validity of my corpus as text. When speaking of textual analysis, Richard Johnson et al. raise the question of which texts to choose (2004). For the purpose of my thesis project, I will be relying on articles (from various sources) gathered by a Franco-Ontarian journalist and published in a book titled *Montfort: La lutte d'un peuple*. The reasons for which this book was chosen are quite simple: while it may be convenient to have the complete media coverage of this struggle in one location, the book actually assembles a broad sample of discourses, whether originating from the government, the activists, or third parties. Of course, I am

aware that the selection of texts was performed by an author deeply implicated in the crisis, and I have sought more sources where necessary to balance this partial perspective. So the corpus chosen allows the study of all kinds of different texts, as it must for as Richard Johnson has written "the isolation of a text for academic scrutiny is a very specific form of reading. More commonly texts are encountered promiscuously; they pour in on us from all directions in diverse, coexisting media, and differently-paced flows" (cited in Couldry, 2000: 73).

Of course, methodologists would insist that the exclusive usage of this book offers no alternative viewpoint form which to see the partiality of the events as they unfold in this manuscript. Why didn't I turn to the primary journalistic record? To this, I answer that even those texts are positioned and partial, and that adding additional viewpoints might create a kaleidoscope effect, and would not get me any closer to the "truth" or objectivity. Johnson focuses on the concern of the size of one's corpus. Johnson et al. state that "what matters most is where we break into cultural circuits, not, so much, how many individual units we amass" (2004: 176). He rejects the idea that a large corpus automatically guarantees "representativeness." As he argues, in cultural analysis, one searches for forms that are broader than individual expressions or texts:

> If we define culture as the production of shared meanings and
> social identities, it doesn't make a lot of sense to approach it by
> means of individuals. If culture consists of historical formations
> or "structure of feeling," it doesn't only pertain individuals. It
> makes more sense to study social groups or cultural spaces in
> face-to-face meetings or to read the texts that in context, carry
> and embody the cultural forms. The circulation of cultural forms

> also suggests that the location or 'moment' is more important
> than quantity. What matters most is where we break into cultural
> circuits, not, so much how many individual units we amass
> (2004: 177).

Instead, I have chosen to examine in more detail the point of articulation of one set

of positions and their mobilisation of identity. If I were to add other texts in my

corpus, they would most probably be written from similar positions, written by

other enunciators of the Franco-Ontarian identity. In other words, the manner in

which I speak of the texts studied is that they are simply the vehicles for more

general cultural forms that are intertextual. I assume, based on discourse theory,

that these forms circulate in other texts and even if I were to do the endless work

of analyzing all the texts of the conjuncture, I would find these forms elsewhere.

3.1.4   Analytical Posture

I believe it is important and vital to address the point of describing the manner in

which I have analyzed my data. The way I approached the texts I read was, on the

first hand, for the facts that were offered, and then I read the texts in a way that

allowed me to make an interpretation. I have taken a step back from the texts and

asked myself, "What do I expect from this discourse? What does this passage

allow me to do? What interpretation can be deducted from this text?" I read, all the

while making notes and asking myself, "What am I asking of the material?" For

example, am I asking it to support my claims of the existence of a process of

minoritisation? Am I asking it to provide support for the existence of an

articulation with the Anglo-Québécois? The answers to these questions then allowed me to interpret meaning and advance a hypothesis addressing my research questions.

3.2 Case Study and Conjunctural Analysis

Case studies, as Robert Stake affirms, have become one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry, but this approach is neither new nor unique to sociology (2000). Indeed, starting with a specific event is a hallmark of conjunctural analysis in cultural studies. As Frow writes, "Cultural Studies often tends to operate in what looks like an eccentric way, starting with the particular, the detail, the scrap of ordinary or banal existence, and then working to unpack the density of relations and of intersecting social domains that inform it" (2000: 327). In my thesis, the case study is undertaken in order to make interpretations about the process of minoritisation.

Why did I choose this particular event to study as a 'case'? Needless to say, I have great interest in the history, culture and identity of Franco-Ontarians. I am incredibly invested in this case, as I've alluded to in earlier paragraphs. However, there are good reasons for selecting this case. It is often at moments of crisis and contestation that the principle fault lines of the social formation are most clearly revealed. I would argue that the Montfort crisis 'surfaced' discourses and strategies of enunciation that would otherwise be hard to study in a coherent form.

There is a further affinity between the case study and certain forms of small-scale cultural studies analysis, involving the scope of generalisation and how far one's interpretations of the case can be carried over to the interpretation of other contexts.

3.2.1 Critique of the Case Study Theory

A considerable epistemological issue in social sciences concerns the foundation of generalisations. Case studies allow for an in-depth view of an event, but they do not usually lend themselves to developing general theories based on empirical data. Many sociologists find them inferior for this reason. Rather like the Cultural Studies position on "objectivity," Cultural Studies researchers such as Larry Grossberg argue that all knowledge is conjunctural, thus specific to a particular conjuncture of socio-politico-historical-geographical context in particular conditions of power. As I've made note of earlier, I do not intend to make generalisations of the process of minoritisation. Stake (2000) asserts that the purpose of case studies is not always theory building. Study is undertaken mostly for the interest in, for example, the case and evolvement of the Franco-Ontarian identity. He continues to say that "damage occurs when the commitment to generalise or to theorise runs so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn from features important for understanding the case itself" (2000: 439). Therefore, it is important for me to inform that the results of my reading need not apply more

generally to anything other than to the case of the Montfort Hospital developed below.

3.3 Ethical consideration

As with any research project, it is vital to address ethical consideration to ensure that researchers follow all conventions to minimise the risks involved in our subjects' participation. That being said, case studies most usually treat matters that are of public interest but for which there is no "right to know" (Stake, 2000: 447). Therefore, the value of the research being performed must not outweigh injury to a subject exposed. "Along with much qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances. Those whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment, as well as loss of standing, employment and self-esteem" (ibid). Using a corpus such as mine, a published manuscript, circumvents most of the ethical considerations that I would have to keep in mind if I were to conduct personal interviews and use personal accounts to interpret meaning. I assume that all and any ethical considerations have been addressed prior to the corpus being published. This is not to say that I am cleared of any wrongdoing, nor do I have to be ethical in my reasoning, but most of the discourses that are based on personal accounts have been most probably been approved by the speaker.

In normal circumstances, it would be important for the targeted individuals to receive drafts of this thesis, so that they could object to any quotes and interpretations that may have been erroneously made on their behalf. Thankfully, it is for this reason that, although I have to remain ethical in my research process, I am not preoccupied with misrepresentations of the texts available, nor am I worried for the well-being of the individuals quoted in the corpus.

3.4 Conclusion

Many Cultural Studies textbooks introduce the notion of textual analysis as being an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of the text. (Johnson, 2004) Very few will argue that textual analysis is, in fact, a form of methodology; that is, a way of gathering and analysing information in academic research, and that in Cultural Studies, there is no right or wrong way of researching a subject. There are simply different ways of doing so. The goal of performing a textual analysis is not to evaluate the accuracy of particular texts. In this case, I have decided to examine a corpus of newspaper articles and discourses gathered in a published book concerning our case study, and interpret their meaning.

The incident of the closure of the Montfort Hospital is an ideal example of a suitable case from which to perform a textual analysis. I've discussed the many aspects of my subject as a case study, and the reasons for which it can considered

as such.. As I've argued previously, the results of this textual analysis will not be the basis for a generalisation of the process of minoritisation of all minority cultures. Rather, I am fully aware, and so it is my intention to draw conclusions and generalities about this case that will only apply to this specific incident in this particular context. At this point in my thesis, it is time to discuss the outcome of my readings of the case study of the closure of the Montfort Hospital.

4 Chapitre 4 : Analysis of Discourses

4.1 Introduction

In previous chapters, I've discussed main supporting aspects of this thesis. The literature review in Chapter 2 has allowed for the creation of a knowledge base in which I've reported earlier studies regarding minorities, Franco-Ontarians, and identity issues. My argument in that literature review was that, on a theoretical level, existing studies of the Franco-Ontarian minority largely tend to assume that identity is a stable attribute grounded in shared historical experience and language, and thus disregard the contingent nature of such cultural identifications. At the same time, no studies that I found in my review took a contextualist case-study approach to an actual controversy, to see how identity formation actually occurs on a micro-level.

In Chapter 3, I elaborated a problem and a set of research questions that guide my research. Throughout Chapter 4, I advanced the methodology that would allow me to attempt to plausibly answer the questions and find solutions to the problems highlighted in the earlier chapters.

In the present chapter I will present and analyse some of the important discourses that I uncovered in my research. In their discussion of the method of textual analysis, Johnson et al. describe this state as "elaborating a reading." This involves

the "juxtaposition of aspects of text and context" as well as taking a more active approach to the corpus (Johnson et al., 2003: 182). This will allow me to make several arguments that answer my research questions and extend my theoretical understanding of minority identity formation and agency.

It is of prime importance that it is understood that my goal here is not to simply show that different points of views existed in this struggle, but that the discourse is more than a simple argument to sway public opinion. Instead, I am interested in the sources of authority which are drawn upon in these differing views, and how powerful these are generally thought to be and how powerful they proved to be in the Montfort crisis. The following discourses presented below put into action many different discursive regimes of power/knowledge. Let us recall, for Foucault, the processes of meaning-making (i.e., discourse) are always partnered with relations of power (see Lewis, 25). "Discourse, therefore, is an essential part of human relationships and human knowledge. 'Knowledge/power' can only exist in relation to discourse" (ibid). As for Foucault, discourse establishes possible positions; it is for this reason that I wish to demonstrate the manner in which Montfort is situated in differing positions, meaning that each party involved held a different view on the meaning of Montfort (symbolic for the Franco-Ontarians, and bureaucratic for the Commission), which in turn mandated the flow to conclusions, whereas the FO group found it unacceptable to close their hospital. This will serve to define conflicts between the two groups.

Before beginning the analysis, a few words on corpus selection are in order. As I've alluded to earlier in the previous chapter, it is most often a problematic step in all research: knowing where to start and which elements to describe, and which to put aside. From a selection of hundreds of statements excerpted from my source material, I have chosen a relatively small number to interpret. After all, as Johnson affirms (2004), it is better to have a smaller number of texts, and select those that are most important to me in making my argument. Since I am not performing content analysis but rather a more selective critical discourse analysis, I feel that this style of presentation is justified.

4.2   Reviewing my Argument

Before beginning my analysis, I will briefly recap my argument. This case study demonstrates that the FO, a linguistic minority that was virtually invisible in the social field, successfully resisted government attempts to shut down a key French-speaking institution, the Montfort hospital. While this could be interpreted as an expression of the agency of an ethnic group unified around a shared identity and crisis, this would be to essentialise FO identity and its role in the event. A theoretically informed reading of the event that takes full account of its context suggests that FO unity and relative agency was achieved only through much discursive contestation.

Drawing on the theory and method of articulation of Hall, Laclau and Mouffe (see

Barker 106-107; 410-414) I analyse the discursive strategies at work in this

particular event that shaped both the government and the FO position.

One of the key problems the FO had to surmount was their relative invisibility (see

Barker 413). If articulation theory considers the social to be a field of articulated

social differences, successful politics requires establishing the visibility of the

cause and the protagonists. So I would argue that much of the controversy

involved fixing the Montfort issue in the political arena as one of cultural

significance (rather than a simple administrative issue), and that in turn involved

rendering visible the FO identity as a substantial consideration in the government's

actions.

Thus I argue that the central discursive contest played out in this event centred on

the meaning of Montfort. As Hall theorises about cultural representation more

generally, the meanings of institutions are not fixed but rather require discursive

work to fix their significance (see Barker chapter 4). The Ontario government

employed a discursive strategy that effaced the specificity of Montfort, the only

French teaching hospital in Ontario. The government treated the closure within the

terms of a rationalizing bureaucratic discourse that was dismissive of cultural

difference. As one functionary asked, "If we don't have Italian hospitals, why should

we have French ones?" (I paraphrase). This is but one example in which the

Commission and its members attempted to nullify the meaning of the Francophone

community, and simply gathered them with other minorities, denying the group's status as a founding Canadian culture with special rights to preservation.

The government's hegemonic discourse effaced cultural differences; the client-citizens of the state are all to be treated as equals. This effectively rendered the FO invisible. I argue that the FO successfully articulated their difference as a distinct linguistic group, and ultimately prevailed in fixing a meaning on the Montfort closure. My discursive analysis leads me to argue that:

i. **The FO identity was mobilised through an articulation with two powerful discourses; the fear of assimilation and the need for ethnic solidarity in the face of a threat.**

ii. **However, the FO identity is not an essence in itself. It is a social construction specific to a historical context. Thus one of the issues that impeded the mobilisation of FO identity in the struggle was the prior existence of class division. The inertia of the francophone elite had to be overcome. A discursive strategy was needed to articulate across existing differences of class, and that strategy was the FO's militantisme (militancy).**

iii. **The FO position was also strengthened by the articulation of Montfort with a wider discourse on multiculturalism, and specifically the status of minorities within Canadian politics. Here the parallels with other regimes governing minority rights (particularly the treatment of English in Quebec, and the whole notion of equal but distinct communities) were particularly powerful discursive articulations. But to return to my main point, for this parallel to appear legitimate, the FO had to position themselves within the political discourse as an entity worthy of consideration.**

This leads me to an important argument about the concept of minoritisation that is prevalent in culturally oriented political theory. Within current dominant

constructionist epistemologies (which also underpin this study) it is a given that minorities are considered to be constructions made in the interests of the powerful. Analyses of minoritisation tend to present it as something done to others and disempowering. In the light of my case study, however, I would like to argue that this notion of "top-down" minoritisation is insufficient, and its assumption that the minoritised are disempowered is only partly accurate, at least in the Montfort case. If we take the position advanced in articulation theory – that power is capillary, more unevenly disseminated than critical theory generally accounts for – then it is possible to see that the FO were empowered by attaining minority status. One could say that to mobilise, make visible and rally under the sign of the linguistic minority in order to defend "their" institution, the FO underwent a voluntary minoritisation. In effect, they chose to strategically essentialise their identity. Of course, this interpretation is largely conjecture and cannot be supported empirically, but my goal with this specific argument is one of theoretical elaboration and perhaps clarification. Minoritisation, like other social processes, has no given articulations with positions of disempowerment or empowerment.

Like the FO activists and "organic intellectuals" (see Barker 406), I see Montfort as an instance of resistance. However, I have attempted through the use of articulation theory in my retelling of this story to distance myself from the assumptions of identity and agency that plague both the common-sense interpretations of the event and, not incidentally, earlier cultural studies of

resistance. Like Paula Saukko, I am critical of these earlier studies, but I believe that resistance is still a pertinent focus for cultural studies. With the theory of articulation, it is possible to see resistance as contingent and contextually limited.

4.3   Interpretation of discourses

4.3.1   The Meaning of Montfort

Much of the controversy surrounding Montfort involved fixing the meaning of its closure in discourse. As I've explained in earlier chapters, material objects and social practices are given meaning and brought into view by language. In other words, they are discursively formed (Laclau and Mouffe in Hall, 1985). From the perspective I have built here, Montfort is given meaning through discourse, and may be subject to different and competing views of its meaning. **The central discursive contest played out in this event centred on the meaning of Montfort.**

While the closure of the hospital appears to have been ordered based on material concerns, the conflict that ensued played out largely in symbolic terms. As Stuart Hall's theory of representation would lead us to expect, the discourses produced around the closure of Montfort originating from the Ontario government differ from those produced by the FO activists, since the two groups pursue different objectives. The fact that the Government of Ontario and the Franco-Ontarian population did not see the significance of Montfort in a similar way is perhaps

what drove the controversy as far as it did. Had they agreed in the beginning stages that Montfort held cultural significance for the Franco-Ontarians this crisis could very well have been averted. However, this was not so. It is for this reason that both discursive strategies of positioning Montfort by the government are included below in my interpretations.

4.3.1.1   The Governmental Positioning of Montfort

Montfort as the object of governmental rationality

I shall present two statements as indicative of the discourse originating from the Ontario government (and its agencies), and then I shall discuss their theoretical relevance.

> Certains membres du Conseil régional de santé avaient tenu
> derrières des portes closes des propos inacceptables envers les
> francophones. Selon les témoins, Beth Sweetnam aurait traité de
> la question de soins de santé en français en disant : « What do
> you expect, it's an English country! » Un autre conseiller, Ed
> Gladu, aurait pour sa part affirmé que l'on peut s'occuper des
> minorités lorsqu'on a de l'argent, mais qu'il était normal de les
> mettre de côté quand les ressources ne sont pas là (125).[8]

In this first example, it is clear that the closure of Montfort was initially treated as a bureaucratic, fiscal matter. Since "discourse constructs, defines and produces the objects of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other ways of

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[8] This statement originates from an article appearing in *LeDroit* on March 26, 1997, and summarizes remarks made by members of the Ottawa-Carleton District Health Council during a meeting behind closed doors.

reasoning as unintelligible" (Barker, 2003: 119) it could be argued that at least initially, the governmental discourse produced a certain knowledge of Montfort in terms of governmental rationality, which would necessarily exclude other ways of reasoning as being "unintelligible". Thus the Franco-Ontarian position would be inconceivable within this discourse, since (from this perspective) it was based on affect and emotions, illogical arguments.

The government here adopts the position of the "caretaker" that is reminiscent of governmentality in the Foucauldian sense, that the government is present to care for its citizens. The government adopts the position that it alone determines the needs of citizens, since it alone has the authority to distribute services and goods to the population (as Foucault calls governance, "l'art de disposer les choses").

The Erasure of Franco-Ontarian Identity

A second important strategy can be seen in the following excerpt from a Commission member

> Une autre conseillère, France Somers, aurait déclaré : « We don't have Italian hospitals! » Elle faisait allusion à cette mentalité de certains anglophones, de l'Ontario et d'ailleurs au Canada, qui ne font aucune différence entre les minorités francophones et les autres minorités multiculturelles. On était bien loin de la Constitution canadienne, de la vision des Pères de la Confédération et des peuples fondateurs du Canada » (125).[9]

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[9] The quote from Ms. Somers originates from the same article appearing in *LeDroit* on March 26, 1997, and the subsequent explanation stems from the author, Michel Gratton.

This statement minimises the difference between the FO population and all other Canadian minorities. It is clear that the above statement figures in a discourse of power. By minimizing the differences of the Franco-Ontarians, the government is effacing the specificity of Franco- Ontarian identity – as the FO are effectively thrown into the melting pot, rendering them invisible as a distinct minority group.

Here this particular statement can be analysed as belonging to a more general area of controversy concerning the relative status of minority groups and multicultural policy. By comparing the FO to Italians, or any other minority group, the Ontarian government is leveling the differences between two cultures and articulates government speech with the larger *dispositif* of multicultural policy in Canada.

Although multicultural policy is supposed to celebrate cultural differences, according to May, Modood and Squires (2004) it can have a leveling effect, when within these policies, all ethnic groups are held to be of equal status. In this view, instead of celebrating each culture's uniqueness, multiculturalism falls short by celebrating difference in general. Franco-Ontarians, being "stripped" of their identity by a discourse that levels differences such as in the example above, appeared to feel the need to reassert their status.

4.3.1.2   The Franco-Ontarian positioning of Montfort

The Symbolic Significance of Montfort

Having demonstrated and highlighted two of the principle articulations of the

government discourse, I shall now illustrate key aspects of the discourse advanced

by the Franco-Ontarian participants. They tended to frame the event for its

symbolic significance.

> Comme nous l'avons souligné, la perte éventuelle de l'Hôpital
> Montfort en tant qu'hôpital général est beaucoup plus
> importante que la simple perte d'un service. En effet, la
> collectivité franco-ontarienne perdrait une institution qui,
> comme l'a affirmé Dr Bernard, incarne et évoque la présence
> francophone en Ontario. L'Hôpital Montfort, seul hôpital
> francophone de la province, est un porte-étendard de la
> collectivité de la minorité francophone en Ontario, un symbole
> de la force et de la vitalité de cette collectivité. Selon Dr
> Bernard, il deviendra désormais un symbole de défaite de la
> collectivité, s'il est incapable de conserver sa place en tant
> qu'institution culturelle dans la collectivité franco-ontarienne.
> (636).[10]

In the above quote, it is evident how the discourse of the FO calls upon their

specificity and the uniqueness of the Montfort Hospital, especially the fact that it is

the only French teaching establishment in the province. The above statement

situates the hospital as an important symbol of collective identity of the FO, as

"their hospital," as their property. The hospital is a representation of the FO

people, of their culture, of their belonging. It is mostly a representation of their

presence in a province where English is the dominant language, and the FO face

the challenge of keeping their culture and language.[11] Acting as a representative

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[10] Ontario Divisional Court ruling rendered on November 29, 1999 by Judges Carnwath, Blair and Charbonneau in *Lalonde contre la Commission de restructuration.*

[11] As it is with most of the discourse available in my corpus, the threat of failure ("symbole de défaire de la collectivité") of the group is always ever so present, and relays the aspect of fear, which will be explored in later sections.

of the SOS Montfort movement, Michelle de Courville Nicol (then president of the hospital's Board of Directors) wrote to Mike Harris in an open letter:

> Montfort est la somme de nos espoirs, de nos aspirations et de nos réalisations, et ne peut être écarté d'une façon aussi cavalière. Pour la communauté, il s'agit d'une source de vitalité, un phare brillant qui confirme que nous avons notre place dans la société ontarienne. Si notre institution peut être ainsi démolie, nous y voyons tristement une confirmation du contraire. Si nous ne pouvons pas conserver un seul établissement de santé d'importance, ou nous pouvons pratiquer comme professionnels et être soignés dans notre langue maternelle en Ontario, alors nous sommes sans aucun doute des citoyens de deuxième classe (270).[12]

The discourse above calls into play the discourse of minority rights as a source of credibility in positioning the hospital. The protagonists of this crisis call upon the manner in which the FO are and should be viewed and treated as a distinct linguistic minority group worth protecting. They often call upon historical facts (such as their status as one of the founding cultures of the country) to advance their importance and the importance of their survival.

A discourse of survival in the face of oppression and assimilation

The survival of the FO community is articulated to the survival of Montfort. Throughout the struggle, the protagonists advance the idea that institutions matter symbolically, especially when it comes to minority cultural institutions. This is central to the strategy of the FO activists, who construed the meaning of Montfort

as an important establishment to the survival of the FO minority. In their

argument, the continuing existence of Montfort respected the protection of

minorities, as is stipulated in Canada's *unwritten constitutional principles*. These

legally binding principles insist that all commissions, acting on the behalf of a

provincial or federal government, must defer to the recognised Constitutional

principles, such as democracy and respect for minorities (Reference re Secession

of Quebec, 1998). Therefore, their discursive strategy emphasised that by denying

their right to a minority establishment such as Montfort, the Ontario government

was denying their right to exist as a minority group, but also, the government was

contributing to the oppression and assimilation of the FO. As the defenders of the

hospital repeatedly claimed, should the Montfort Hospital close, it would signify

the end of the Canadian dream where the country is seen as one of the most

tolerable and accepting societies in the world.

In this representative sample of discourses, it is evident that in the first instance,

the government sought to efface the specificity of the Franco-Ontarian minority

through the leveling of their status as a distinct linguistic minority group. As for

the FO discourse, it relied mainly on arguments of uniqueness, minority rights and

identity to not only sway public opinion, but, as sources of authority, to advance

their cause.

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[12] Excerpts from a 2000-word letter written by SOS Montfort president, Gisèle Lalonde to Ontario Premier Mike Harris, published as an editorial in *The Ottawa Citizen*, July 29, 1997.

Public opinion (and ultimately the judicial system) agreed with the FO discourse,

that it was of prime importance to protect minorities and their rights in order to

maintain the image of what Canada represents with regards to tolerance of its

differing cultures. As per the final judgment in the Montfort case before the

Ontario judicial system:

> De fait, la protection des droits des minorités a clairement été
> un facteur essentiel dans l'élaboration de notre structure
> constitutionnelle même à l'époque de la Confédération. Même
> si le passé du Canada en matière de défense des droits des
> minorités n'est pas irréprochable, cela a toujours été, depuis la
> Confédération, un but auquel ont aspiré les Canadiens dans un
> cheminement qui n'a pas été dénué de succès. Le principe de la
> protection des droits des minorités continue d'influencer
> l'application et l'interprétation de notre Constitution (486).[13]

> Il ne s'agit pas d'une affaire portant sur les droits à l'instruction
> dans la langue de la minorité. Il s'agit de déterminer si les droits
> de la communauté franco-ontarienne ont été diminués par les
> directives de la Commission d'une manière qui contrevient au
> principe de « protection des minorités », l'un des principes
> structurels fondamentaux qui sous-tendent la Constitution
> canadienne. Dans un sens, il ne s'agit même pas du cas de
> l'avenir d'un hôpital, mais plutôt du cas de la place de cet
> hôpital dans le milieu culturel et linguistique des droits de la
> minorité linguistique des droits de la minorité francophone en
> Ontario. En ce sens, les questions à définir en l'espèce relèvent
> de concepts plus vastes que les notions plus distinctes des droits
> linguistiques d'une minorité ou des droits à l'instruction dans la
> langue de la minorité, tels qu'ils sont abordés dans la Charte. Ils
> ont trait au maintien du patrimoine multiculturel francophone
> des Canadiens » (636).[14]

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[13] Excerpts from the Supreme Court's ruling on *Renvoi relatif à la sécession du Québec* (rendered on August 20th, 1998), a case that would judge if the province of Québec had a constitutional right to separate from the rest of the country, which, at first glance, would not appear to be pertinent to Montfort's case, except that the courts formulated, for the first time, the four unwritten principles of the *Constitution* which created Canada in 1867, and they are: federalism, constitutionalism, rule of the law and finally, protection of minorities, which is why this ruling was so important and vital to the Montfort cause.
[14] Ontario Divisional Court ruling rendered on November 29, 1999 by Judges Carnwath, Blair and Charbonneau in *Lalonde contre la Commission de restructuration.*

In the end, the FO were able to fix a meaning on the Montfort closure, one that overrode the government's discourse on the matter. This evokes the effects of resistance, and the issue of power in the discursive formations, issues that shall be discussed in later paragraphs.

4.3.2 Strategies of Franco-Ontarian mobilisation

My analysis of the discourse provided by the corpus and its subsequent examination has led me to believe that the Franco-Ontarian activists were able to mobilise through an articulation of their identity and their situation using two very powerful discursive strategies: the never-ending fear of assimilation and the need for ethnic solidarity in the face of such threats.

I have established that the contest for the meaning of Montfort was waged through discourse. Now I want to talk about the strategies used to mobilise the Franco-Ontarian minority. The FO identity was mobilised through an articulation with two powerful discourses; the fear of assimilation and the need for ethnic solidarity in the face of a threat. Before discussing this further, I will briefly explain why it is important to see mobilisation as constitutive of FO identity.

Everyday notions of Identity would suggest that Franco-Ontarians recognised their common interests as an already extant group. Certainly the Montfort activists

made frequent appeals to this unified identity. However, I do not make this assumption in my analysis, because to do so would require that I ignore the important divisions and differences within the identity group, and it would not allow me to demonstrate the difficult discursive work required to unify the group.

Rather, I approach my corpus from an anti-essentialist point of view. This take on identity implies that identity is neither fixed nor static, but rather is fluid, constructed in the present discourses and articulated with other elements, changing over time, being mobilised. It is discursively formed and articulated in the discourse put forth by the FO. This approach to identity allows its articulation with other elements. Suggesting that identity is a social and cultural construction allows me to explore its articulation with other social forces and the various manifestations that may result (May et al., 2004).

In so doing, the way in which ethnicity is deliberately employed – or mobilised – in specific contexts also becomes central, as do the particular ends pursued in the process of mobilisation. Put differently, if ethnicity is primarily an aspect of social relationships, then it can best be analyzed through the various uses to which individuals and/or groups put it (May et al., 2004: 1).

In fact, this approach presupposes that the origin, content, and form of identity are open for negotiation. "Mobilizing particular identities will also depend, to a large extent, on the audience(s) being addressed. As Joane Nagel observes, a 'chosen ethnic identity is determined by the individual's perception of its meaning to different audiences, its salience in different social contexts, and its utility in different settings'" (ibid).[15]

As I see it, the Franco-Ontarian activists had to work hard to unify the opposition across existing differences. Their main tool, in my analysis, is the use of discourse. As Stuart Hall has written about ideological articulations, "You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? The so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness' (in Barker, 2003:232). So what interests me in this section is the question of what differences were resolved and what strategies were used to forge this articulation.

4.3.3 Fear of assimilation, and ethnic solidarity

Here I shall present and subsequently analyse two discourses demonstrating mobilizing the identity of FO through articulations with the fear of assimilation and the need for ethnic solidarity.

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[15] As I will demonstrate later on, it is important to note how identities are used in different settings, as I argue this point when speaking of a process of minoritization.

J'étais celui qui, depuis longtemps, maintenait que c'était le
« comportement minoritaire » des francophones qui était la plus
grande cause de l'assimilation. J'avais même écrit: « À se
comporter en minoritaire, on finit par être marginal. » Se
comporter en minoritaire, ce n'est pas parler anglais lorsque
l'autre ne comprend pas. C'est se croire inférieur. C'est ne pas
s'afficher comme francophone. C'est avoir peur de la réaction de
la majorité. La peur. C'était la clé. « N'ayez pas peur d'être qui
vous êtes et de la montrer. Quand nous avons peur, nous
donnons raison à ceux qui veulent nous faire disparaître.
Marchez la tête haute aujourd'hui, demain et jusqu'à la fin de
vos jours. N'ayez plus jamais, jamais, jamais peur! » (659)[16]

Rolande Faucher leur a ensuite déclaré : « C'est souvent
lorsqu'on fait face à des problèmes que l'on découvre son
identité et son appartenance. En venant ici, vous venez montrer
votre identité et votre appartenance. Vous êtes ici pour dire à la
face de la province et du pays que vous tenez à vos
institutions » (79).[17]

In the first example above, it is clear that the advocates articulate their message

with the concept of fear– the word "peur" is referred to many times in the above

examples. The threat takes on many facets, certainly fear of the majority's

reaction, and fear of assuming an active, militant role as Franco-Ontarians. But

primarily, the fear of assimilation is articulated. They speak about how being

afraid of showing who they are plays into the government strategy of erasing their

identity. The threat of those who *veulent nous faire disparaître* implies the process

whereby a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the

prevailing culture to the extent that their culture no longer exists. This would

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[16] Speech made by SOS Montfort president, Gisèle Lalonde, on December 9th, 1999 at a ceremony commemorating the hospital's legal victory before the Ontario Divisional Courts.
[17] Excerpt of a speech made by Rolande Faucher, a fellow FO activist, before a group of 1,000 high school and college students, creating a human chain around the Montfort Hospital.

negate the differences and the culture of the FO, causing the minority culture to disappear.

In the second example above, the discourse calls into play the need for ethnic solidarity in the face of a threat. The speaker, Rolande Faucher, is addressing a rally of Franco-Ontarians. The idea of solidarity when faced with a threat is also conveyed in the following passage: *en venant ici... vous êtes ici pour dire ... que vous tenez à vos institutions*. Additionally, Gisèle Lalonde also speaks of a certain unity of the FO when she said: *Marchez la tête haute aujourd'hui, demain et jusqu'à la fin de vos jours*. Thus, she instructs all the FO, together, to proudly show who they are, what their identity is, no matter what. It is also important to note that the above are but two examples of the total discourse presented by the FO, spanning more than five years. The fear of assimilation is strongly invoked in my corpus, and it appears that this was an important strategy in unifying the Franco-Ontarian opposition.

It is interesting to note how in both examples above, the discourse implies the activation of identity. In the first example, the author says *C'est ne pas s'afficher comme francophone* and in the second, Rolande Faucher says *vous venez montrer votre identité et votre appartenance*, which suggests that the FO identity is being called into play in this struggle. I shall discuss this point in later paragraphs. For the time being, I shall now move on to the next part of my argument.

4.3.4 Shame and the use of negative stereotypes

In earlier paragraphs, I argue that the FO identity is a construction specific to historical context. Again, the anti-essentialist approach to identity is of importance, and it allows me to argue that the FO identity is in fact partly constructed through discourse. The following discourse shows the manner in which shame and negative stereotypes were mobilised in their discourse. Historically, the FO are known as a pacifist group, and so this leads, as I will demonstrate, to a certain class division, the "elite" FO and the activists willing to go to any lengths to preserve their culture and their rights. The following examples of discourse clearly support the historical construction of the FO identity through the use of negative stereotypes and shame:

« Jean-Jacques m'a confié qu'il a toujours déploré le fait que, dans le passé, même les francophones les plus convaincus s'écrasaient devant la majorité lorsque venait le temps de s'affirmer. » (290)[18]

« En dernière analyse, ils sont convaincus d'une chose : les FO ne sont pas prêts à se sacrifier pour une cause comme celle-là. On est un peuple pacifique. On ne brasse pas trop la cage. On a une histoire d'accepter les compromis, des miettes. On est achetable. C'est terrible à dire, mais c'est ce qu'ils ont toujours pensé de nous, ai-je ajouté » (264).[19]

In the first discourse above, the author implies that, in the past, even the most convinced FO had a tendency to give up when faced with adversity, to surrender to

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[18] Declaration made by Jean-Jacques Blais, Queen's counsel, Privy Councillor, and former MP to Michel Gratton about the fact that even the most ardent defenders of the cause bend to the majority.

the majority, in the past (*dans le passé*) suggesting a historical construction of stereotypes of the FO behaviour and how it relates to their identity. In the second example, the history of the FO identity and the manner in which they have become known as a weak group is much more apparent (*on est un peuple pacifique*). Also, the discourse implies that the FO of yesterday were willing to accept compromises, to not get their way (*on a une histoire d'accepter les compromis*), to not get anything close to what they were asking (*des miettes*). The discourse also mobilises the past tense verb (*ils ont toujours pensé de nous*), implying that this representation of FO as a group has been held for a long time, thus suggesting that there is certainly a historically constructed identity of the FO based on shame. This leads me to argue that shame and negative stereotypes were strategies used in the FO discourse to unify the group and enforce the articulation of their ideology.

To highlight this use of strategy, as witnessed in these two examples of discourse, certain words and formulations of ideas imply a relation of power wherein the government had the power in the relationship with the FO community. The formulation of ideas such as *les francophones s'écrasaient devant la majorité* and *On a une histoire d'accepter ... des miettes* suggests that the community always relinquished power back to the majority (meaning either the anglophone population or the government) instead of resisting to attain what they wanted. Therefore, by mobilizing words such as *histoire*, and verbs in the past tense (*ont*

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[19] Declaration made by Michel Gratton, in a private meeting with the founding members of SOS Montfort in August of 1998.

pensé), the examples suggest a historical formation of identity based on the use of shame and stereotypes, but surprisingly, the discourse also implies relations of power early on, by mobilizing ideas such as *s'écrasaient devant la majorité*.

4.3.4 Articulating ethnic Identity across class divisions

Another issue that impeded the mobilisation of FO identity in the struggle was the prior existence of class division. The inertia of the francophone elite had to be overcome. A strategy, manifested in discourse, was needed to influence the elite for them to realise the intentions of the Ontario government and support the FO cause. I argue the FO's *militantisme* is not only a practice, but also a discursive strategy that was used to overcome existing class divisions.

My initial focus was on "linguistic" identity. In the analysis of the case, I see that something like "class" identity was also very important because it broke up the unity of the FO formation. As one activist wrote:

> Ma préoccupation était de trouver un moyen de minimiser l'impact du groupe de francophones de l'élite traditionnelle qui continuait à s'opposer à la voie juridique. Ils avaient certainement suffisamment de poids pour nous nuire de bien des façons (478).[20]

Indeed, the comments of activists and politicians discussing Montfort seem to confirm that rallying around a common linguistic identity did not automatically

resolve the difference at the level of class. This elite group was considered to be hindering the progress of the FO community from trying to save the hospital. In order for the FO community to progress in their struggle over the closure of the Montfort Hospital, the inaction of the elite to be overcome through a strategy of *militantisme* (militancy), which the following statements exemplify.

> Par ailleurs, c'était peut être un signe avant-coureur de ce que nous aurions à confronter dans les mois à venir de la part prétendue « élite » franco-ontarienne. Nous ne courions pas à notre perte, mais je savais déjà qu'il nous faudrait avoir les reins solides lorsque viendrait le véritable affrontement. Celui qui nous opposeraient aux forces qui ont toujours miné le militantisme franco-ontarien : les nôtres (206).[21]

> À la Chambre des Communes, c'est la leader du NPD, Alexa McDonough, qui s'en prenait à Mauril Bélanger. Elle n'y allait pas de main morte : « J'ai été renversée par les déclarations du député qui représente la circonscription dans laquelle l'Hôpital Montfort se trouve. M. Bélanger n'aide pas la cause de Montfort en accusant le Bloc de la sorte. Au contraire, il viole l'esprit de la campagne SOS Montfort. Son attitude est aberrante. M. Bélanger condamne les gens qui tentent de sauver son hôpital. Ça me dépasse. S'il fallait que les gens de l'Hôpital Montfort se mettent à choisir qui a le droit de donner et qui n'a pas le droit, leur campagne n'irait pas très loin » (511).[22]

The first example suggests a sort of opposition of classes, whereas the FO community would have to confront (*confronter*) the *prétendue « élite » franco-ontarienne... qui ont toujours miné le militantisme franco-ontarien : les nôtres.*"

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[20] Statement made by Michel Gratton, the book's author, on his next course of action regarding the oppostion of the FO elite.

[21] Statement made by Michel Gratton to the members of SOS Montfort, in the context that resistance from the FO elite is beginning to make an appearance.

[22] Declaration made in the House of Commons by Alexa McDonough to Mauril Bélanger regarding the disparity in the FO groups regarding the Montfort crisis.

The second example above is extremely rich in evidence that supports the claim of the existence of a class division within the FO community. It comes from the leader of the NDP party, in a public speech in the Chamber of Commons. She says that Mauril Bélanger, a deputy (belonging to the francophone elite) representing the electoral ward where the Montfort Hospital is located, is obstructing the progress of the fight against the closure. At the time of the McDonough's statement, Bélanger was heading what the opposition termed a "campaign of disinformation" wherein he claimed that the separatist groups of Québec were contributing to the FO fundraisers, He was also impeding the fight, as the opposition would have it, by urging people on the SOS Montfort board to vote against court appeals, and advising all Canadians not to contribute to the *Fonds de Résistance*, a fundraiser put into place to pay legal fees. The struggle was impeded by the elite because it presented to observers a divided front, and managed to convince some supporters of the cause to reconsider their support. McDonough's statement was denouncing the fact, before the assembly in the Chamber of Communes, that this deputy was encumbering his own people's crisis. Her statements were therefore furthering the FOs' *militantisme*. The FO had to prevail over the elite to continue their resistance.

4.3.4.1 Militantisme as a unifying discursive strategy

It could be argued that a discursive strategy was needed to articulate across existing differences of class, and that strategy was the FO's *militantisme* (militancy). The Montfort advocates resisted the elite through *militantisme*, and this is mobilised by their discourse in manifestations, speeches and journalistic interviews, as the two examples above illustrate. The first statement, made by Gisèle Lalonde, was at a press conference, denouncing the fact there were people impeding their cause.

> Je me suis mis à lui préparer un texte-choc. Évidemment, je ne parlerais pas de « collaborateurs », la déclaration étant assez raide en soi. Mais mes commentaires n'étaient pas tombés dans l'oreille d'une sourde. « C'est un coup de poignard dans le dos que ces trois francophones s'apprêtent à donner à Montfort et à toute la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, » déclarait Gisèle Lalonde (132).[23]

By pointing fingers, urging others not to follow, the militants, in some ways, were able to persuade the elite that the government was not going to serve their interests. The second statement was also made by Gisèle Lalonde, this time in an interview with a reporter, and it served the same purpose as the first speech – to incite others not to fall into the elite's trap. In the end, the activists were able to unite the classes that comprised the FO identity, as expressed by the following quote:

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[23] Statement written by Michel Gratton in the context of preparing an article for SOS Montfort president, Gisèle Lalonde, followed by the actual quote made by Ms. Lalonde to *LeDroit* on April 1st. 1997 regarding the FO elite's actions.

C'est dommage, mais d'abord, nous sommes en guerre. Il va y avoir des morts et des blessés. Et puis, vous êtes le chef de toute la communauté. Mais elle et d'autres comprendront un jour que nous avons choisi une nouvelle façon de nous battre (133).[24]

Militantisme is both a practice and a discourse. It consists of practices such as calling press conferences and pointing fingers. It consists of using discourse strategically to frame the position of one's opponents in a negative light. In the above example, there is a formulation of ideas that suggests a negative connotation to the term *"collaborateurs,"* a term used to refer to those of the elite who are choosing to collaborate with the government as opposed to supporting their own. The connotations of this term are many, and include a general sense of betrayal by their own people. By collaborating with the government, the continued negotiations, as the elite would like it, will not result in the desired outcomes. The term *"collaborateurs"* thus implies the fact that these people don't want to see their culture succeed, or move on; it signifies that the FO are divided.

The advocates employed a strategy that brought attention to the fact that, once again, some FO were impeding the developments, and pressured this group into acting in favour of SOS Montfort. In addition to the statements presented here, in the midst of rallies, and interviews, the representatives of the FO community called out to their "elite" colleagues by pointing the finger at them, by making their names known, by accusing them of assisting and aiding the assimilation and disappearance of the FO culture. These were, in general, harsh thoughts to

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[24] Statement made by Michel Gratton during a private meeting with SOS Montfort president, Gisèle Lalonde, in order to

articulate, as the last thing the activists wanted was to present a divided front (as

demonstrated in earlier discourse and analysis). Nonetheless, the idea of

francophones assisting the government was nonetheless amplified by the various

interviews, press conferences, and speeches given by Gisèle Lalonde conveying

this betrayal. Below is an example of a newspaper article based on an interview:

> De fait, la première page du Droit y était consacrée, portant un titre que j'avais déjà deviné: « Gisèle Lalonde : les Richer, Bradet et Isabelle sont des collaborateurs » et le titre principal : « Les francos divisés » (132).[25]

In other words, the effects their of *militantisme*, mobilised in practice and in their

discourses, forged the necessary articulations across class divisions, bringing the

elite into line with the activist goals and finally supporting the position of the

Montfort Hospital.

> Nouvelle positive dans tout cela : le député fédéral Mauril Bélanger se rangeait désormais sans hésitation derrière SOS Montfort. « Nous irons jusqu'à la Cour suprême, s'il le faut, » dit-il. « C'est mon souhait le plus cher que le gouvernement de l'Ontario ait l'air ridicule au bout du compte. »
>
> Même si nous avions traversé la course à obstacles à laquelle il nous avait soumis, c'était réconfortant pour nous, de la part du député Bélanger. Cela signifiait non seulement que cette élite franco-ontarienne, qui nous avait mis des bâtons dans les roues, était maintenant de notre côté et vu de ses yeux qui était véritablement de mauvaise foi dans toute cette affaire (665).[26]

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make it understood the importance of going forward with the cause, regardless of the fact that the people who may stand in the way are their own.

[25] Title appearing on the front page of *LeDroit* on April 2nd, 1997 attesting to the fact that the Franco-Ontarians may not be as homogenous as they appeared.

[26] Statements made by Michel Gratton and Mauril Bélanger, following the latter's declaration that the elite will put an end to their resistance efforts and join SOS Montfort in the fight for their rights.

While there is no clear linkage between the FO strategy and the eventual

capitulation of the FO elite and its integration within the activist formation, I

would like to argue that it is through changing the context of the controversy that

the FO position prevailed. If, as Laclau and Mouffe have argued, political struggle

involves asserting one form of discourse over another by "the construction of a

new ''common sense'' which changes the identity of the different groups" (Laclau

and Mouffe 1985: 183), it would appear that the consistency of the FO activist

militantisme changed the common-sense.

As the crisis unfolds, a conflict based in class interests ensues, even as a more

general fight for hegemony within the Franco-Ontarian identity group is waged.

Both parties involved in this struggle, the elite and the activists, attempt to make

their discourse dominant, with the power of hegemony resting in securing consent

rather than coercion (ibid). This demonstrates the need for a method and theory of

conjunctural analysis that can account for differences at the levels of both

language and class. The theory of articulation meets this need. Laclau and Mouffe

(1985) argue that all groups can bring about social change, and this is precisely

what unfolded during the Montfort crisis in which a splinter group emerged from

civil society challenging the entrenched interests of the FO political and economic

elite. According to Fairclough (1989: 2), "ideologies strive to gain acceptance as

'common sense' in their chosen territory by operating a successful articulation of

concepts," where "common sense" refers to 'the equivalent to a hegemonic

discourse, or a plausible interpretation of reality generally accepted to be the

truth'" (Hall, 1998: 1057). The activists in this crisis, in fact, managed a successful articulation of their identity with notions of assimilation, and dominance, in order to alter the "common sense," and gain the support of various groups, and ultimately, of their own (elite). By the use of their tactics and strategies of *militantisme*, which is publicly pointing fingers at the elite, and denouncing their actions as hindering their own culture, the FO activists were able to "coerce" the elite.

In doing so, as argued above, the FO activists were able to modify the hegemonic position. The dominance of the FO discourse meant that the collective identity of the minority group would be changed, because it would no longer be led by the elite, nor would the FO identity be seen as divided. In the end, by changing their hegemonic position in the struggle, the FO were able to also change the common sense regarding their identity and the negative stereotypes it entails (i.e., as a people who give up easily, or who aren't willing to fight for their rights as minorities).

4.3.5 Articulation of Montfort with a discourse on the status of minority rights and articulations with other regimes governing minorities

My final argument is that the FO position was also strengthened by the articulation of Montfort with a wider discourse on multiculturalism, and specifically the status of minorities within Canadian politics. Here the parallels with other regimes governing minority rights (particularly the treatment of English in Quebec, and the

whole notion of equal but distinct communities) were particularly powerful discursive articulations. Clearly, the FO position within this crisis was strengthened by the articulation of the case of Montfort, and what it represented for minorities. The articulation was based on the parallel between the minority positions of the Franco-Ontarians with that of the Anglo-Quebecois. For this reason, in order to strengthen their position, the advocates of the Montfort Hospital sought the support of other minority groups existing within a Canadian context. This parallel was exploited in some of the tactics used by the FO activists:

> Je proposais de nommer, dans la région de Montréal, un hôpital desservant les anglophones qui ressemblait à Montfort, donc un hôpital communautaire, pas McGill. L'idée était que nous rendre sur place, avec des militants de Montfort, et de faire la comparaison entre la façon dont on traitait l'hôpital de langue anglaise et la communauté anglophone au Québec et la manière d'agir envers le seul hôpital francophone en Ontario. » Pourquoi fallait-il qu'il soit connu des Anglo-Canadiens? Parce que nous ne pouvions faire beaucoup plus au Québec. Mais principalement parce que le message touchait vraiment les anglophones. Il montrait comment la minorité linguistique était desservie au QC, tout en laissant planer la possibilité que ça change pour le pire en advenant l'intransigeance du gouvernement ontarien à l'égard de la minorité francophone la plus importante en nombre au Canada » (216).[27]

This discourse supports my claim of strengthening the position of the FO community and their fight against the closure of the Montfort Hospital. As many Anglophones do not live in a position of minority, throughout this struggle, it was difficult to get them to understand the meaning of the hospital and its

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[27] Statement made by Michel Gratton, explaining his strategy underlining an event with the Lakeshore Hospital, an English-speaking hospital in French-majority Québec and the parallels that can be made with Montfort.

representation for a minority. The articulation made between the two linguistic

minority groups allowed the activists to demonstrate the manner in which the

English were protected in Québec, compared to the strategies proposed by the

Ontarian government to "protect" the French living within its boundaries. At the

same time, as this articulation served to educate the English, it also served to

educate their own, sending them a message along the lines of "Look how the

English are protected in Québec – can't Ontario do the same for us?"

> Imaginez que Lakeshore soit le seul hôpital pouvant desservir la communauté anglophone de l'Ouest de Montréal et que, dans le cadre de compressions budgétaires, il soit fermé et qu'il déménage à l'Hôtel-Dieu dans un « Lakeshore Pavilion ». Et que, pour calmer les angoisses des anglophones, le gouvernement dirait qu'ils auraient de meilleurs soins de santé en langue anglaise dans un tel contexte » dit la présidente de SOS Montfort. « Inutile de dire que l'on croirait à une blague de mauvais goût. Pourtant, c'est ce que Mike Harris propose. On espère qu'avec cette image la Commission va au moins comprendre. Vous, comme anglophones minoritaires, êtes les seuls qui puissiez leur expliquer l'importance d'une institution comme Montfort pour la minorité » (229).[28]

> Les Anglo-Québécois savent à quel point ils seraient sceptiques si le gouvernement Bouchard tentait de condamner un hôpital anglophone tout en prétendant que ses patients pourraient recevoir des services complets en anglais dans un plus grand hôpital de langue française. Les Anglo-Québécois savent aussi que de recevoir des services de santé dans leur langue n'est pas une espèce de bénéfice marginal. La maladie est suffisamment accablante sans avoir à communiquer dans une autre langue (230).[29]

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[28] Speech made by SOS Montfort president, Gisèle Lalonde before the crowd gathered at the Lakeshore Hospital press conference and reported by *The Montreal Gazette* the next day.

[29] Editorial appearing in *The Montreal Gazette* in May 1997, following the press conference organised at the Lakeshore Hospital by SOS Montfort.

Here, the francophone population establishes the articulation made between them and the English community living in Québec. By using Lakeshore Hospital, an establishment located in the West Island neighbourhood of Montréal, serving an English population of French Québec, the discourse above relates the developments of Montfort (whereby the budget constraints oblige the government to close the institution, and propose, as a solution, to move the hospital within an establishment where the "other language is the working language) to the Anglo-Québécois population. This articulation is useful in strengthening the FO position in the sense that it allows the FO to make their struggle understood, in a wider sense, by the English-Canadian population. The importance of this statement was to illustrate, with the use of a concrete example such as the case of the Lakeshore Hospital, the manner in which certain Canadian minorities are protected and even encouraged, assisting, by their own provincial governments, to offset total assimilation By doing so, the FO activists relate their case to that of another in the Canadian context, and by demonstrating how the province of Ontario should treat the FO case in the same manner, they strengthen their position as a minority group whose rights are not being considered.

4.4   Theoretical elaboration

In this chapter I have identified some of the key elements of the conjuncture surrounding the closure of the Montfort hospital, unfolding in the Ottawa region between 1997 and 2002. As Sikka says, conjunctures "can be understood as moments in social and historical time and space," involving elements or identities

such as "social practices, discursive statements, ideological positions, social forces, or social groups" and relations of power (Sikka, 2006: 109).

As an entry into this conjuncture, in the preceding sections I have offered an analysis of the discursive strategies employed both by the governmental agencies and the Franco-Ontarian activists who opposed them and who sought to articulate the Montfort closure within competing discourses. These include the articulation between the FO identity and discourses of assimilation, the need for unity in the face of threat, and of course the articulations created between the francophone population of Ontario and the anglophone community of Québec, as linguistic minority groups. I have also identified *militantisme* as an effective social practice employed to articulate a unified Franco-Ontarian identity across existing contradictions of class, and to rearticulate the Franco-Ontarian position within the overall hegemonic articulation.

The theory of articulation has helped organize my understanding of at least two dimensions of the Montfort controversy; first the importance of articulating a unified identity across existing differences in the minority group; and second, the wider discursive struggle in which the FO position was articulated against the government. These statements invoke the theory of articulation, which

> preserves a relative autonomy for cultural and ideological
> elements (...) but also insists that those combinatory patterns that
> are actually constructed do mediate deep, objective patterns in
> the socio-economic formation, and that the mediation takes

place in *struggle*: the classes fight to articulate together
constituents of the cultural repertoire in particular ways so that
they are organized in terms of principles or sets of values
determined by the position and interests of the class in the
prevailing mode of production (Middleton, 1990: 9).

The unifying articulation of the FO across class differences

The following concerns the first dimension: Two groups claiming to represent the

FO position engage in a discursive struggle, in order to prevail in organizing their

values. They successfully articulated across class differences and this articulation

was crucial in unifying the FO opposition in the more general struggle against the

hegemonic erasure of their status as a minority with entitlements based on their

unique cultural identity. I have argued that the FO's practice of *militantisme* as a

discursive strategy is what ultimately allowed for the unification of the elite and

activists. By repeatedly framing the elite's position, as conservative and even

collaborateur the activists managed to marginalize the views of their elected

representatives in favor of SOS Montfort's position. The elite came to the

conclusion that the consequences of their actions would only serve the interests of

the government of Ontario and its Commission, to the detriment of their own

community. Therefore, by their practice of *militantisme*, the activists of SOS

Montfort were able to unify the FO community, so that together, they were able to

fight for principles and interests of their culture.

The rearticulation of the FO position (now unified) within the wider contest over the meaning of Montfort and their eventual success in fixing the meaning of Montfort

As articulation theory holds, politics can be analysed as a matter of the rearticulation of elements leading to the reconstruction of existing hegemonic meanings. In their contest with the Ontario government the FO community sought to rearticulate the hegemonic position throughout this crisis. Through the practices of militantisme and the articulation of the event within wider discourses on minority survival and rights, the FO minority successfully overcame the governments' strategy.

For example, by situating Montfort as more than simply a hospital, but rather treating it as a symbolic institution, a symbol of their survival and their rights, the FO (now unified) were able to gain credibility in the eyes of outsiders, whereas the government's position relied on governmentality to defend their actions. By indicating that the government was attempting to close the only French hospital in Ontario (and thus denying minority rights to the FO and not acting for the greater good), SOS Montfort was able to fix the meaning of the hospital as one that is essential to its self-actualisation and ultimately, its survival. If, as articulation theory stipulates, power remains a fluid presence in the processes of forming, producing and consuming meaning, the FO, initially lacking the power to represent themselves, eventually gained the ability to control the cultural production (i.e., meaning) of their identity. In a sense, they *gained* power by

affirming their minority status, which in turn required that they represent a unified FO identity within the struggle. It is for this reason, then, that I argue that the widely held conception of "top-down" minoritisation is unsatisfactory; if power can circulate between classes, as articulation theory allows, groups can then strategically essentialise their identities as minorities as in this case, as opposed to being oppressed and forced into an inferior position. I will expand on this argument in the section below.

4.5   Minoritisation

Although my corpus may not empirically support the process of minoritisation per se, it allows me to reflect upon it, and theoretically elaborate on this concept that may be widely misunderstood. One of the contributions of the present thesis, therefore, is to advance the concept of minoritisation as a process rather than the act of being oppressed into a minority identity by a higher power. The process ought to be considered as dynamic and dialogic rather than unilateral and oppressive, as is generally the case. Chantler hints at something like this in her development of the concept of minoritization; "rather than seeing minority ethnic groups as fixed entities, minoritisation seeks to stress the process of being positioned as a minority group together with its specific social, economic and political histories" (Chantler, 2005: 245). But Chantler's understanding of minoritisation still seems to connote a structuring process, rather than one in which determination and agency are relational. In the case of Montfort, I see the relative

agency of the FO identity group as the result of a rearticulation of their position within a wider hegemonic articulation. Whatever agency the Franco-Ontarians attained within the struggle was ultimately confirmed through the intervention of the existing institutions of the courts. Nonetheless, I believe that the discursive aspect of the struggle was decisive. The FO activists were able to position themselves as a minority and resist the identity being imposed on them by a "higher agency" through the enunciative effects of *militantisme* and the appeal to a minority identity that they *voluntarily* embraced.

As opposed to the classical use of minoritisation, where the subordinate culture is oppressed to have a minority label by a higher power, I contend that, if the concept of minoritisation is examined within an articulation theory perspective, where relations of power and resistance are always in play, then it is plausible that the minority group could rally around their minority identity, and due to their specificity, can differentiate itself from other minority groups, thereby gaining power by resisting the oppression, and ultimately strategically essentializing its identity.

As mentioned earlier, even though my interpretation is mainly speculative and the discursive formations in my corpus may not implicitly support this claim, my objective remains to emphasise that the process of minoritisation has no predetermined ideas of power, given the fact that it is a social process that is in constant construction, negotiation, formation, and reformation. By emphasizing

their minority status, by rendering their group visible through resistance in this crisis, the Franco-Ontarians were able to strategically essentialise their identity.

Thus I understand the Montfort crisis as an instance involving resistance, however I hope to have distanced myself from the tendency to glorify symbolic resistance in early Cultural Studies. In fact, this was one motivation behind my use of articulation theory. Even if there are 'no guarantees' or 'no necessary connections' concerning the effects of popular resistance, I think it is evident that there was in fact an important effect articulated to the Franco-Ontarian identity.

To its credit, contemporary Cultural Studies has approached the concept of resistance as one that is relational and conjunctural. "Resistance is constituted by repertoires whose meanings are specific to particular times, places and social relationships" (Barker, 2003: 396). Resistance cannot be thought of in terms of one singular act; rather it must be approached as a collection of actions and tactics. For Hall (1996: 294), the strength of the conception of resistance lies in the fact that it is approached "as challenges to and negotiations of the dominant order which could not be assimilated to the traditional categories of revolutionary class struggle." Therefore, in my case study, I've meant to understand, among other things, the manner in which various meanings were negotiated through discourse (either the meaning of Montfort, or importance of minority rights, etc.). And true to the notion of resistance as contingent and conjunctural, my claims concerning resistance and agency are not meant to extend beyond the context of this event. I

am not proposing a new framework for theorizing identity politics. Rather, my aim in this thesis was in part to examine and analyze this instance of resistance in terms of its utility and value to the Franco-Ontarian identity, rather than what effects the resistance proved to have on democracy, or Canadian multiculturalism.

4.6 Conclusion

In the present chapter, I have offered a theoretically informed reading of the discourse of the crisis of the closure of the Montfort Hospital and the subsequent FO mobilisation that followed. I have attempted to direct my interpretations away from a simple expression of existing discourse in view of swaying public opinion, and have instead attempted to draw out the underlying social discourses on which these differing views rely. I have done so by mobilizing and interpreting the various statements manifested throughout my corpus, and by adumbrating an analysis of the discursive practice of militantisme. Furthermore, I have considered the implications of this particular case for the theorization of minoritisation. Here I have touched on the deficiencies of many conceptions of minoritisation (e.g., disempowerment of subordinate groups, necessary oppression). Instead, I reflected on the possibilities offered by articulation theory, particularly in relation to power. I argue that if power is circulating, that is, in movement, then different social groups, even subordinate ones, can hold power through acts of discourse, manifested by resistance. In this light, minority groups, such as the FO, can in fact strategically essentialise their identity relying on its specificity, and effectively

resisting higher beings, such as provincial governments. Although processes of minoritisation tend to present the process as "top-down," as my theoretical elaboration has illustrated, it is hence possible to also view it as a relational production of identity.

Conclusion

As discussed in initial chapters, francophone identity in Canada has, historically, fluctuated. At one time, francophone people have identified themselves as being French Canadian, Franco-Ontarian, Franco-Manitoban, etc. Immediately, I put into perspective my anti-essentialist approach to the concept of identity as an ever-changing and varying element. Throughout this thesis, I have questioned the strategies mobilised by the Franco-Ontarian population within the discursive realm of the crisis of the Montfort Hospital closure, and the manner in which it has allowed me to theoretically elaborate the notion of minoritisation.

For once, when considering the Franco-Ontarian population, it has been argued that this culture is not necessarily forced into a minority position by the "dominant" culture, but that the members unified and identified themselves as a minority, drawing upon this a source of authority in advancing their discourse and ultimately, their cause.

As I have demonstrated in my literature review, accounts of Franco-Ontarian identity have usually been concerned with historical accounts of the culture. In the past, the issues were examined and studied with either outdated theories or un-theorized ideologies, therefore rendering them inadequate for my work. The most problematic matter in the existing Franco-Ontarian literature is that most researchers do not challenge the formation of identities. It was crucial for me to

approach the notion of identity from an anti-essentialist point of view, since I have argued the process of minoritisation involves a necessary mobilisation and rallying around such an identity.

Throughout Chapters 2 and 3, I elaborated on the concept of minoritisation. As with the issue of Franco-Ontarian identity, minoritisation proved to be an under-studied concept, which meant that I necessarily had to borrow definitions originating outside of Cultural Studies, as others have often done before me. Hence, not only has this thesis served as a bridge between the concept of minoritisation and the field of communications, but it was one of the first times the concept was considered in Cultural Studies. My literature review and the theoretical elaboration of the various concepts used in this work, then, led me to advance a research question, wherein I was interested in examining the strategies of discourse employed by the Franco-Ontarian population to empower themselves by claiming the status of minority. I examined the discourse made available by my corpus using a textual analysis. I have explained, throughout Chapter 3, the reasons for which textual analysis was my methodology of choice, my arguments resting on the fact that it is one of the only methods that allows for the consideration of context and thus the interpretation of texts.

Many Cultural Studies textbooks have introduced textual analysis as being an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of the text. My aim in performing a textual analysis was not to evaluate the truthfulness

of specific texts. Rather, I decided to examine a corpus made up of public discourse concerning the threat of the closure of the Montfort Hospital and the ensuing mobilisation of the Franco-Ontarian community. However many critiques can be made of textual analysis as a valid methodology in Cultural Studies, I have argued that it was the ideal method to draw interpretation from the texts included in my corpus, all the while being mindful of the context in which they appeared. In Chapter 3, I also addressed a very important issue that arises often in research – the issue of reflexivity. I have, from the beginning, emphasised the manner in which I have been involved in this research, having experienced firsthand the same obstacles as my counterparts in my case study. Throughout my analysis, I have not expressed anything resembling a judgment of superiority over other "readers" of the same text. That being said, my background and my past have allowed for a greater amount of foreknowledge of the case, and has permitted me to listen more attentively to the meaning conveyed in the texts studied. That being said, objectivity is not attainable, but this has usually been accepted in Cultural Studies, as most researchers are somewhat invested in their research.

The closure of the Montfort Hospital has proved to be an ideal example of a suitable case from which to perform a textual analysis. I have previously discussed the many aspects of my subject as a case study, and the reasons for which it can be considered as such. As I have argued earlier, the results of the textual analysis were not the basis for a generalisation of the process of minoritisation of all minority cultures. Rather, it was my intention to draw conclusions about this case

that I have only applied to this specific struggle in this particular context. I believe I have been successful in doing so.

In my last chapter, I attempted to elaborate my reading of the discourse of the crisis of the closure of the Montfort Hospital and the subsequent FO mobilisation that followed. I then aimed to direct my interpretations away from a simple expression of existing discourse in view of swaying public opinion, and drew out the authorities on which the differing views have relied. I have done so by interpreting the discourse manifested by all interested parties in my corpus. Additionally, I have aimed to illustrate the various articulations existing within the Franco-Ontarian discourse, relying mostly on elements evoking articulation theory, such as the circulation of power and resistance.

During the writing process, I made sure to keep in mind the methodologies employed and the creative liberties they may have allowed me. For example, I have stated the usefulness of comparison in case studies, and by articulating the minority identities of the Franco-Ontarians with that of the English community in Québec, my goal was to compare the two situations in order to derive the powers in discourse.

These strategies and interpretations were useful in explaining the possible deficiencies usually reserved for the process of minoritisation (e.g., the disempowerment of subordinate groups or necessary oppression). Instead, I have

reflected on the possibilities offered by articulation theory, especially in relation to power; I've argued that should power circulate within groups, that even minority groups are able to gather around their specificity and effectively resist domination... Although only implicit within the corpus, my analysis has allowed me to elaborate theoretically on the process of minoritisation.

In keeping with the self-reflexivity of my thesis, I believe it is important to also reflect on the strengths and limits of the present work. As for the former, there are several strong points. For one, I believe that the explanation, application and mobilization of Stuart Hall's articulation theory are impressionable, as it is a concept that is often misunderstood and thus oftentimes erroneously utilised. As well, I believe that the fact that there is a self-reflexive component that runs throughout these chapters is also significant, and it is something that I have worked hard to achieve in order to make my thesis successful and more importantly, valid. Finally, I believe that the accumulation of the textual analysis allowed me to conceptualise, or reconceptualise rather, the notion of minoritisation and how it is applied to the Franco-Ontarians affected by this crisis. It is not often that a thesis serves as a medium for a reconceptualisation, but I consider it vital to my people to realise the manner in which they are able to redefine terms to make them work in their favour, as opposed to accepting the fact that their minority status would plague them until the end of their existence.

In complement to the strengths of this thesis, there are, as always, limits to this project. At first glance, the most limiting aspect of this thesis is the fact that the conceptual and theoretical elaboration is limited by the fact that the case study is specific to this case, therefore it is not possible to generalise the findings to other studies or cases. Although it would be tempting to use the notion of minoritisation to explain or elaborate on other case studies or minorities, it is impossible to do so, given the specificity of the case study and its corpus (as well as the evidential discourse pulled from it).

A few words on self-reflexivity

Throughout my research and analysis, I have made a point to highlight the fact that I was first and foremost a "chercheure engagée" in the sense that I identify myself as a Franco-Ontarian, and that I was touched by, and formed by, some of the discourses under study. At the same time, I worked hard to produce a relatively objective piece of research. Again, I believe it important to disclose the challenges that being an engaged researcher posed, and at the same time, point out the self-reflexive nature of this thesis.

Being FO did not necessarily lend itself easily to this project. In fact, I think it made it more difficult, as I had to remind myself to remain as objective as possible in my analysis and interpretation, even though I was treating a subject that was near and dear to me – I was born at the hospital the government wanted to close!

Although being FO did not make my task any easier, I do believe that it allowed

for a more complete research on the subject. As an engaged researcher, I know of,

and have experienced many of the struggles outlined in my corpus. The fact that I

am Franco-Ontarian allowed me to better understand their plight, to understand

what they were facing, to put myself in their shoes, because I am one of them. As a

researcher, I did not have a privileged view-point above the discourse, as others

may have had. Rather, I was mixed in the discourse, I was in the middle of it, and

necessarily, I was formed by it.

However, this does not signify that I was in accordance with all of the actions

carried out by the Franco-Ontarians, even though I was 'one of them.' For

example, I recognise that some of the discursive strategies used by SOS Montfort

may have relied on stereotypes, fear of assimilation, prejudices, but I chose not to

criticise these actions, since I believe they were justified. Just as any researcher

would do when speaking of their 'own,' I still believe that the FO people were

right in their fight against the Ontarian government, that they were the 'good

guys.' And this is acceptable in Cultural Studies – most Feminists and minority

groups have embraced this paradigm because it allows for politically charged

research. Having said this, I remained, nevertheless, committed to carrying out a

reasonably objective thesis.

My corpus formed me, of course, and in my analysis and interpretation, I struggled

in remaining objective. However, I believe I was able to successfully reach this

state as I tried to base my analysis and interpretations on discourses coming from outside parties. When this was not possible, I tried to base my reasoning on discourse that gave a first-person summary of the unfolding events. In my opinion, doing so eliminated any third-party assessments creeping into the discourse which would make my attempts at objectivity futile. I constantly had to remind myself to be objective, to not analyse the discourse as a partisan, but as a researcher who could bring theoretical validity to her people.

Finally, my approach to resistance was not intended to lead to claims about its systemic effects, but rather to examine the effects resistance has had on the Franco-Ontarian identity. Ultimately, I attempted to demonstrate the manner in which the Franco-Ontarian community, composed of nearly 200,000 people in a province that counted more than 9 million citizens, was able to mobilise discourse concerning the closure of a symbolic institution and compelled the government of Ontario to modify its course of action. This event, the struggle and its eventual victory, has gone down in Franco-Ontarian popular history as the greatest demonstration of Franco-Ontarian solidarity and identity.

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Annexe A

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