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IMMIGRATION, RACE, AND LANGUAGE: BLACK FRANCOPHONES OF ONTARIO AND THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION, RACISM, AND LANGUAGE DISCRIMINATION

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Immigration, Race, and Language: Black Francophones in Ontario and the Challenges of Integration, Racism, and Language Discrimination

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the challenges of integration faced by Black Francophones African and Haitian immigrants who live in Ontario and who constitute a racial minority situated within the Francophone official linguistic minority. These challenges are manifested by institutional racism coming from State and Francophone mainstream institutions and by language discrimination coming from the predominantly Anglophone society. This paper also looks at the socio-historical context of the migration of Black Francophones to Canada and provides a profile of this populace in Ontario. It brings together an Antiracism perspective and *la Francophonie*. By identifying what it means to be a double – racial and official linguistic – minority in Ontario, this paper stresses the need to implement additional policies that would better target the full socio-economic integration of these minorities.

KEY WORDS: Immigration, Francophones, Antiracism, minorities, policies, community organizations, Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I investigate how the challenges of integration manifest themselves in the experiences of Black African and Haitian French-speaking immigrants who live in Ontario and who constitute a racial minority situated within the Francophone official linguistic minority. I first highlight the context of the study. Second, I outline two theoretical perspectives employed in this study, namely, Antiracism and Black feminism, as well as the methodology employed. I then focus on the socio-historical context of the migration of Blacks to Canada and explore specific policies of immigration that have impacted on the migration of this population. I also provide a profile of the Black Francophone community and its various organizations and associations. Next, I examine the racism that Black Francophones face coming from both State and Francophone mainstream institutions, and unveil the challenges for these migrants of living in a predominantly Anglophone context. Finally, I show that Black Francophones are caught between State and Francophone institutions. My analysis will be based on discursive methods, involving the analysis of both texts and interviews, and observations conducted with individuals and members of community organizations in Toronto and Ottawa and on relevant documents. This study bridges Antiracism and *la Francophonie*, two fields that traditionally have been studied separately. As a result, it fills gaps in the literature concerning Black Francophones. Moreover, it sheds light on various aspects of Francophone immigration, on the social dynamics within the Francophone communities, and the impact of some State policies on Black Francophones. The conceptualization of the double minority status of Black Francophone immigrants reinforces the urgency of the need to establish a more inclusive *Francophonie* within a more equitable society.

CONTEXT

Francophones have migrated to Ontario from Quebec, Acadia, and other parts of Canada since the second half of the 19th century (Martel 1997; Welch 1988). Many studies have revealed that Franco-Ontarians constitute a linguistic minority vis-à-vis the dominance of Anglophone State institutions (Choquette 1977; Farmer, Kabeya, Labrie, and Wilson 2003). Franco-Ontarians have been struggling throughout their history for the right to establish and control their own institutions in their own language. This process has had considerable success. For example, Canada's *Official Languages Act* was passed in 1969, and revised in 1988. This legislation provides funding for official language minority communities. Furthermore, the Charter of the French Language in Quebec (Bill 101) adopted in 1977, stimulated the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms at the federal level in 1982. The latter gave the right to schooling in either of the two official languages in a minority context and to the establishment of political, cultural, financial, and educational institutions: schools, media, community centres, health and employment services, and colleges and universities. Moreover, many associations were established to guide the struggle of Francophones, for example, *l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario* which has been perceived for many decades as the official representative for the minority in the province (Kingsley 1998). For reasons that will be explored later, it has been facing resistance from many Francophones in recent years.

Lately, large numbers of Francophones have started migrating to Canada from different parts of the world, mostly from Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. They usually come from countries where French is the official, co-official or second language. These immigrants include significant numbers of Blacks from many African countries and the Caribbean (mainly Haitians) who arrived in Canada at different points of time. The presence of the first wave of Haitians goes back to the 1960s (Pompilus 1999), while the Africans

have arrived primarily since the 1980s. The migrations of Haitians and Africans to Canada, as well as their internal migration from Quebec to Ontario, have led to the establishment of a Black Francophone community in Ontario.

Black Francophones in Ontario are a part of the Francophone official linguistic minority, but they also belong to a racial minority. Their presence in Canada represents a contribution to the continuity of the existence of both Blacks and Francophones in Canada. As to their belonging to Canada's racial minorities, it is important to stress that the history of Blacks in Canada goes back to the 16th century. Numerous writers have chronicled the presence of slaves in Canada's early history under the ownership of both migrants from France and Loyalists from the United States who established communities in places like Nova Scotia and Quebec (Case 2002). These facts remind us that, contrary to general belief, slavery was practiced in Quebec and other Canadian provinces (Trudel 1990). In addition, the presence of Mathieu da Costa, who served as an interpreter of Micmaq, French, and English, in Eastern Canada at the very beginning of the 17th century, "around 1606," (Gouvernement du Québec 1995), attests to the fact that there were French-speaking Blacks in the country prior to the establishment of the Canadian Federation.

Within the Francophone official minority, it is important to stress that Blacks are located in a complex social context where they deal with various social dynamics that include connections with the State, with white Francophones, and within their community. In this context, the challenges of integration that Black Francophones face include the possibilities of both racism coming from the Canadian State and Francophone mainstream institutions and of language discrimination. State racism is connected to the impact of some policies on Black Francophones as immigrants and as members of both racial- and official-linguistic minorities. This can be seen in policies of resource distribution assigned by the State to its official linguistic minorities, as well as policies specific to racial minorities targeting racism and the socio-economic integration of immigrants and racial minorities, which fall under the umbrella of multiculturalism. There is, therefore, a need to explore the access of Black Francophones to these resources. At issue, then, is how the Canadian State, which is predominantly white and Anglophone, deals with an official linguistic minority that includes both white and racial minority members.

This study also is linked to the official bilingualism of Canada and to its immigration policies. I would like to state that even though the issues pertaining to Black Francophones as part of the official linguistic minority are situated within the framework of Canadian official bilingualism, I am aware that considering Canada as a bilingual country - English and French - is itself an indication of potential State racism. Canada's official bilingual policy is based on the myth of "two founding peoples," namely, the British and the French. It does not acknowledge other groups, such as the Aboriginal Peoples and racialized groups who were present in Canada prior to the foundation of the Canadian Confederation. In addition, providing constitutional protection to two languages in Canada undermines the multilinguality that applies to the multicultural nature of Canadian society. Official bilingualism, therefore, serves to undermine languages that are spoken by communities who are integral parts of the social fabric of Canadian society. That Canada is a country of immigration also signifies that immigrants built it. Black Francophones came to Canada as immigrants, and it is important to bring to the forefront the social relations of race and language within the dynamics of the integrative process.

At the heart of any racism stemming from Francophone communities and mainstream institutions is the degree to which power and resources are shared with Black Francophones. Within Francophone communities, the case of Black Francophones is unique in that they constitute a linguistic and a racial minority. This implies that, if, in Ontario, white Francophones are subjugated because of their language, following the same principle, Black Francophones are also discriminated against because of their language in addition to their skin color. Like other racial minorities they experience racial oppression within the

broader Canadian context. They are, however, not only a linguistic and a racial minority but also a racial minority within the linguistic minority (Ibrahim 1998; Madibbo 2002, 2004). This fact suggests that Black Francophones are discriminated against by both white Anglophones and white Francophones. It also reveals possibilities that white Francophones, a group that is considered, and perceives itself, to be a linguistic minority, reproduces dominance towards the racial minority which is situated within it. This illustrates an example of a dominated group (white Francophones) who, while struggling against their own oppression, reproduce injustice by subjugating others (Black Francophones).

At stake in the Ontario Francophone context is the issue of power: How was it obtained and how can it be distributed and shared? The question of power is vital in understanding internal relations. It allows us to go beyond the conflict between Franco-Ontarians and Anglophones to concentrate on the social dynamics within and across Francophone communities in Ontario. The questions that arise are if Franco-Ontarians have been fighting to gain power and if they have obtained it, how do they share it? And, which is the space occupied by Blacks in the Francophone mainstream's institutional hierarchy? To study power distribution in the Francophone context we need to take into account that Francophones constitute vibrant communities that contain different groups, institutions, and organizations. These populations comprise white Franco-Ontarians, Europeans, Asians, and ethnic or visible minorities.

To discuss issues of power in this context, it is important to examine to the extent to which the distribution of resources is filtered through race, language, and gender relations. If there are institutions that are created and publicly funded to serve the entire community (Francophone mainstream institutions), then why do Black Francophones and ethnic minorities create separate social and political spaces that concentrate on issues related strictly to them? Similarly, if we have *L'Association canadienne-française* to represent the entire community, then what has led some Francophones to organize themselves in groups, such as *L'Association Interculturelle Franco-ontarienne*, that are separate from those of white Francophones? Similarly, why do Black women form organizations and centres separate from those of the mainstream and other minorities?

With respect to mainstream institutions, Heller (1995) has argued that these institutions not only are sites of resistance against the hierarchical relations of power, but also are sources of the reproduction of these relations. This observation indicates that institutions must be viewed as being capable of reproducing inequitable power relations among white Francophones across lines of class, gender, and sexual orientation. It may also explain why the institutions sometimes reproduce domination between white and Black Francophones through race relations. It is the latter possibility that I will explore further. This can be done by looking at the space Black Francophones occupy in these institutions, and by investigating how the distribution of resources is organized within and across existing institutions and associations (mainstream and minority), to see if all organizations have the same degree of access to material resources, especially funding. Some questions arise: Who controls key resources in the Ontario Francophone context? Who are in positions to make resource-allocation decisions? Who gets benefits? How are different bodies represented in the hierarchy? How are these relations shaped by gender, race, and language? Where do these relations intersect?

A considerable amount of research is available on Francophone populations across Canada (Thériault 1999). With but a few exceptions, however, these studies have been specialized and focussed more on white French-Canadians. Moreover, studies on Black and ethnic Francophone minorities have been mainly focussed on the situation in Quebec (Kanouté 1999; McAndrew 2001), and only sporadically has attention been turned to that in Ontario. Similarly, the vast majority of the existing literature on Blacks in Canada has been focussed on Black Anglophones. This reveals that, notwithstanding their belonging to the two communities, issues pertaining to Black Francophones have not been thoroughly analyzed in either of the two most relevant fields - Francophone Studies and Antiracism. Therefore, it is important to explore the various issues that pertain

to Black Francophones as both immigrants and members of a double minority from a variety of perspectives, including antiracism. Analysis of their experiences with both racism and language discrimination will allow the development and implementation of policies which can be targeted towards socio-economic integration of racial and linguistic minorities.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: ANTIRACISM AND BLACK FEMINISM

Antiracism and Black Feminism are theoretical and discursive frameworks that have emerged from anti-colonial space to challenge the racism and patriarchy of predominantly white Western societies, such as Canada, that have been regulated by hegemonic Euro-centric practices and knowledge. These approaches are political projects that aim for social change (Dei 1993; James 1996). They recognize that the existence of inequitable hierarchies in Euro/Canadian societies is located within exploitative, predominantly white structures. These frameworks, therefore, acknowledge that there is an inequitable distribution of power and resources. They call for a critical examination of how social difference and power relations are made manifest in people's daily experiences and within societal structures. The approaches cited aim to build strong strategies for the struggle against social inequities and to attain social and institutional transformation.

Antiracism calls for a critical examination of "the study of how dynamics of social difference (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, language, and religion) are mediated in people's daily experiences" (Dei 1996, 55). Rezai-Rashti (1995) has suggested that antiracism theory has emerged from the struggles of racial minorities against imperial, colonial, and neo-colonial experiences. The experiences of oppressed groups are crucial to understanding how social inequalities and racism are produced in, and maintained by, social institutions. As Ng (1991) has observed, a salient feature of the approach is the recognition of unequal power between groups. In this regard, Young (1995) maintained that the understanding of the discourse of power should be situated within a broader framework of the historical, social, and political processes that have institutionalized and continue to maintain such unequal power.

These processes include enslavement, colonization, and the imperialist economic and political practices followed by European powers that have built and continue to construct inequalities in these societies. James (1995) has argued that, in Canada, the politics of a white power base influence societal structures and, therefore, access to power and opportunities are influenced by race, ethnicity, and other related factors. As a consequence, James (1995) has contended that people from racial minorities are the ones who most often are excluded from power structures. The antiracism framework has been used to suggest that racial minorities should not be viewed as 'victims' and 'subordinated.' The latter's histories of resistance and struggle provide key sources for empowerment and social change. Therefore, this standpoint is also a call for the struggle to transform the existing power inequalities and structures in society. This approach highlights the saliency of race as a historical, social, and political factor, and explicitly recognizes the reality of racism in its systemic, institutional, and individual forms (Goldberg 1993; Lopez 1995).

This theoretical stance applies to my work particularly, because it allows me to examine how institutional racism, as reflected in the policies and practices of both the State and Francophone mainstream institutions, influences the distribution of resources. It is, therefore, important to apply this framework in order to study the access of Black Francophones to resources within State and Francophone institutions. This theoretical framework offers insight into how race relations are articulated within a linguistic minority community that also comprises a racial minority.

Very little research has been conducted using either an antiracism approach or addressing race relations about issues pertaining to Francophone communities (see Case 1995; Ibrahim 1998). Before any progress could be made, however, the study of these topics needed to be expanded to include more institutions, associations, and other settings in these communities. Antiracism provides valuable insight into power inequities and racism; however, a main argument I set out in this study is that oppression should not be viewed separately. Indeed, I have attempted to recognize the saliency of racism in its historical and contemporary contexts, how it produces inequitable relations of power and its negative impact on racial and ethnic minorities. I also believe that racism should be linked to other forms of oppression, such as sexism and language oppression. Similarly, race is an important category, but others such as sexuality, age, and language also matter. In this instance, I join researchers who maintain that the aim is not to prioritize any form of oppression over another, but rather to focus on developing strategies to overcome oppression (hooks 1991). Various systems of oppression - such as sexism, homophobia, and classism - cannot be properly understood if they are decontextualized from others. Each of them has multiple and interdependent effects on the others. Therefore, in this paper Antiracism will be linked to Black Feminism.

Black Feminism has been conceptualized as an activist approach that is grounded in Black women's shared histories and their experiences of colonialism, sexism, and racism. It is rooted in the shared legacies of political, social, and economic struggles against different types of oppression (Collins 1990). The politics of Black Feminism seek to identify the dimension of the suppression of Black women. Black Feminism is a standpoint that acknowledges that sexism could be as oppressive as racism. As hooks (1995) has observed, to make them separate is to deny that both race and gender are integral parts of human identity. This theoretical perspective underscores the exclusion of Black women's thinking from hegemonic mainstream academia and from both white feminism and nationalist Black discourses. In this respect, Collins (1990) has contended that, in spite of the existence of an independent Black female intellectual tradition that has largely contributed to the production of knowledge such as Black Feminism and Afro-centric culture, this tradition has been ignored within all of these intellectual streams.

When it comes to white feminism, hooks (1984) has argued that this branch of feminism has devoted scant discussion to the impacts of racism on Black women. Wane (2002) has suggested that Black women are not represented in this discourse as it is based almost entirely on the experiences of white middle-class women, largely has been concentrated on gender as the main factor that has an impact on women's lives. Because it undermines race, this framework does not acknowledge the impact of racism on Black women and other racialized groups. With respect to Black nationalist traditions, hooks (1994) has observed that Black male leaders do not want to acknowledge that racism is not the only oppressive force in the lives of Black women. She has noted that although Black women and men struggled together for liberation during slavery, and for racial equality during the Civil Rights Movement, Black male leaders, for the most part, have maintained patriarchal values. As she has observed, while Black males have advanced in the economic and political structures of society, many have continued to encourage Black women to assume more submissive roles. As a consequence, women largely have been excluded from positions of power within Black organizations. In response to this reality, some Black Feminists have begun to attempt to document both Black women's histories of resistance and their contribution to Black communities (Amadiume 1997).

hooks (1995) has explained that although Black Feminism focuses on Black women, it also recognizes that the struggle for liberation can only be effective if it takes place within a movement that aims at liberating all people. As expressed by Nain (1991,19), Black Feminism is, therefore, also a "mass movement against the various sources of oppression." It addresses the hierarchy of power in society, in general, and within Black communities, in particular (Leah 1999; Walker 1977). Some Black feminists have contended that even though racism and sexism are the main sources of subordination for Black women, other factors also shape their lives (King 1988). They have argued that besides race, gender, and class

discrimination, Black women are also faced with economic, political, and ideological subjugation. Thus, Steady (1989) has underlined the need to incorporate these factors into Black Feminist thought. She has noted that “African feminism combines racial, sexual, class, and cultural dimensions of oppression to produce a more inclusive brand of Feminism” (Steady 1989, 4). According to Brewer (1993, 16), “the conceptual anchor of recent Black feminist theorizing is the understanding of race, class and gender as simultaneous forces.” In this context, Brewer’s view highlights the simultaneity of oppression in the sense that each of these forces - racism, sexism, and classism - cannot be understood in a decontextualized form from the others.

This approach is of great significance because it brings to the study of oppression the principle of the simultaneity of oppression. This principle points out that it is impossible to view oppression in isolation. Pharr (quoted in James 1995, 42) has stated that :

... sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, ableism, anti-Semitism, ageism ... are all linked by a common origin ... economic power and control ... and by common methods of limiting, controlling and destroying lives.

Pharr’s argument is that each of the systems of oppression, for example, language oppression, sexism, and homophobia, does not operate alone. They are all interrelated, and one cannot capture the full impact of any one system without understanding the interconnectedness between various forms of oppression. The same argument applies when it comes to resistance. To eradicate one form of oppression, we have to work to challenge all of them. To do otherwise, would render the struggle for social change incomplete. As my study is also situated within a linguistic minority whose members also belong to a visible minority group, the principle of the simultaneity of oppression will enable me to address racism as it intersects with language discrimination and, in some cases, sexism. This approach will enable me to identify the positions Black Francophone women and men fill in the functioning of their organizations and coalitions.

Using the example of Francophone communities, I have chosen a framework that brings together Antiracism and Black Feminism. I see these two approaches as complementary, as they both underlie theoretical, historical, and political aspects that deal with the reproduction of power relations and racism. Antiracism provides a general framework for understanding the mechanisms of power between the State and its communities, as well as the power and race relations within Francophone communities and how they position themselves vis-à-vis different institutions and organizations. Black Feminism permits us to locate the power dimensions while analyzing how Black Francophone women are situated in both the Black community and the Francophone community at large. For example, I use Black Feminism to explore how these women position themselves vis-à-vis different institutions and groups in the community and how they organize. Analysis through the two approaches offers complementary perspectives that have allowed me to examine how the interplay of race and gender impacts on the distribution of resources in the Franco-Ontarian context. I emphasize that, since this study is located within a linguistic minority, language is a focal social category that should be integrated into the analysis. In the following section, I explain how I use race, gender, and language as social categories in terms of their interpretation and their impact on this study.

RACE, GENDER, AND LANGUAGE: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS AND CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

James (1995) has observed that the definition of concepts and their meanings provides an understanding of how to use them to analyze, discuss, and understand the issues we study. In this context,

it is worth mentioning that there are a number of competing definitions for the notions race, gender, and language. I have chosen to locate them within Antiracism and Black Feminism, approaches that consider them as social constructs (Rothenberg 1998). These categories have social and cultural meanings that we attach to them. Dei (1996) has suggested that while these factors are sociopolitical constructs, they are real in terms of their material and social effects. In other words, they also can become features that define social position, the distribution of economic and social opportunities, and influence institutional and social practices. More importantly, these constructs can be used to include and to exclude, to superiorize, and to marginalize. They are also maintained through State and other mainstream structures. These variables also have effects on a group's history and identity.

As Ng (1995) has argued, social constructs, such as gender and race, are not only analytical categories, but should also be treated as social relationships performed in everyday life. She has explained that these relationships have to do with how people communicate with each other and how they relate to societal structures. Ng's perspective has been of great significance to this research project. In the case of my study, it has provided an understanding of how language, race, and gender regulate relationships among and between Francophones and within State structures of power. As Dei (1993) has observed, however, the use of these concepts as analytical and practical tools is only meaningful if they allow for adequate discussion of social inequities and power relationships. This point leads me to emphasize that social constructs must be based on material, historical, and political facts; for they are embedded in relations of power and in institutional and social practices that have impact on people's lives. With these thoughts in mind, I have used race, language, and gender as analytical categories that are also socio-political constructs. I also need to emphasize that they are interrelated and that they all do matter.

Using race as an analytical category has enabled me to study how Black Francophones are situated with respect to the distribution of resources contributed by the Canadian State to Francophones as an official linguistic community in a minority situation. It also has allowed me to examine how race relations affect the power distribution among Francophones. In addition, analysis through race has permitted me to better understand the experiences of immigrants both within Francophone communities and in the broader society at large. I again must stress that race needs to be interfaced with other categories of potential oppression, notably, language and gender. Thus, in this discussion, I have focussed on the social category of gender. Bannerji (1991) has stated that discussions on issues pertaining to "women" in the Canadian context have been largely located in historical and societal contexts (Connel 1987). Therefore, to understand the experience of Black Francophone women as immigrants, their social itinerary has to be located within the social construction of Black womanhood. In this regard, we need to take into account factors such as colonialism, immigration within Francophone space, and the labour market.

This discussion about race and gender as social constructs and analytical tools has led me to conclude that, in the Franco-Ontarian context, while race helps to analyze power relations within Francophone structures, analysis through gender sheds light on internal discourse within the Black community. Gender analysis has been used to provide insight into the Francophone community and the way Blacks as individuals and organizations are situated within its structures. Gender analysis also provided tools to explore the social relations among and between Black and white Francophone women. The experiences of Black Francophone women should, however, be understood in the context and intersection of gender, race, and language.

Like race and gender, language provides another way to categorize people and reinforce their dominant or subordinate status. My view on language echoes the conclusions of researchers who have treated it as a social construct and a social phenomenon (see Purushotam 1998). Therefore, many scholars have argued in favour of both situating language in its socio-historical and political contexts and for exploring the intertwining of language and power (Ogbu 1999). Language also has been studied as an integral part of

colonial projects as well as a strong means of resistance (Bobb-Smith 1998). One needs to take into account the focal relationship between language and nationhood as well. Throughout history, language has played a major role in the constitution of nation-states as political units. As Heller (1999) has observed, in Canada, language has been important because of its role in the process of nation-building. Quebec's claims of a distinct society often have been based primarily on language. The question is to identify who is part of the nation, and who is not? Who actually plans the nation? How are Francophone immigrants situated in a national project? This topic also connects to the language politics of the Canadian State, notably, Bilingualism (English-French) and Multiculturalism. Those policies shape immigrant experiences in different ways. For example, knowledge of, or lack of, English affects immigrants in terms of access to education, employment, services, and so on.

Of particular interest to this research is language as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) that regulates people's access to different resources (material, political, social). It also can be related to the way language becomes a tool that mobilizes groups of people, and thereby fosters the establishment of linguistic communities. For example, language (French) has the strength to mobilize across cultures and countries. This refers to the institutions of *la Francophonie Internationale*. The latter is composed of all countries where French is used, spoken, and written, as a mother tongue, first language, or official language, or learned as a second language. It is also a coalition that comprises governmental and non-governmental organizations that attempt to preserve and expand the status of French (Haut Conseil de la Francophonie 1999). It is within this Francophone space that this research is situated, as most of the countries of origin of Black Francophones, as well as Canada, are members of this international organization. Similarly, language mobilizes Ontario Francophones from different cultures and constitutes an integral part of the spirit of their communities.

Moreover, there is a relationship between language and resistance that needs to be explored in order to understand how it has been used to challenge and contest the dominant order. I would argue, therefore, that it is important to take into account the ways in which language also can be utilized as a major means of oppression. In other words, there is a need to recognize that language impacts on racial and ethnic minorities in different ways. Therefore, we should talk about the need to eliminate discrimination based on language (see Madibbo 2000). In the case of this study, language is a factor that significantly influences the daily lives and experiences of Black Francophones and their encounters with both State and Francophone mainstream institutions. To study power distribution in relation to the racial and linguistic minority, I have attempted to weave gender and race into my analysis. The decision to examine the three key variables – race, gender, and language – intertwined should offer valuable insight into the topic being studied.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My methodological approach is based on the principles of critical ethnography that grew out of a dissatisfaction with social and cultural analyses in which factors like patriarchy, racism, and class were not addressed (Anderson 1989). Critical ethnographers seek to describe and analyze power centres and the mechanisms that help to produce various forms of resistance. Critical ethnography also represents a critique of scientific rationality. It challenges positivist notions of “detachment” and “neutrality” in the conduct of research, asserting, rather, the position that research projects should be political and activist (Fine 1994). Like the Antiracism and Black Feminist perspectives, critical ethnography questions class, race, and gender inequities. It also stresses that both the researcher and the researched should be directly involved in both the act of knowledge production and the process of social change. Therefore, my political beliefs and my social location inform this work. My study overlaps with my experiences as a Black woman living in Canada facing

racism and going through the experience of immigration. My choice of this topic stems from my awareness of the pre-eminence of social inequities and an urgency to attain social justice.

At another level, ethnographical sociolinguistic approaches examine language and discursive practices. These approaches are concerned with verbal and social interactions as a means of negotiating meanings in social contexts. As Mondada (1998) has observed, in sociolinguistics, interaction is the site of language use and it is, therefore, predominant in the data and work of sociolinguists. In their analyses, sociolinguists study these interactions to examine social relations between language users, norms, and values (see Gumperz 1982). Therefore, the process of data collection and analysis was conducted joining critical ethnography and sociolinguistic approaches. This allowed me to identify the historical and social contexts of language practices, and to explore how relations of domination and resistance are maintained through and by construction of meaning within linguistic communities that include racial minorities.

Process of Data Collection and Analysis

I used data collected within the project *L'immigration et la communauté francophone de Toronto*¹ (1999-2001) that was funded by the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement - Toronto. Additional data were gathered between 2001-2002 in two cities in Ontario: Toronto and Ottawa. The subjects of my research were African and Caribbean Black Francophones - individuals as well as members and leaders of different organizations and associations. I collected data from Black Francophones situated within Francophone, Anglophone, and Bilingual mainstream institutions and organizations. To respect equity and diversity, and to represent various social locations, subjects were chosen taking into account gender, ethnicity, education, age, country of origin, place of birth, time of arrival in Canada, class, religion, employment, and locality. The choice of organizations took into account my desire for representation of different fields of action and of women's organizations. I gathered my data from multiple sources. For the most part, I used qualitative methods, including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Furthermore, I also used quantitative approaches for statistical purposes, especially to get information on numbers of immigrants and their time of arrival in Canada.

To give priority to subjects' voices, interviews were a major source of data. I conducted individual, focus group, and life history interviews, using semi-structured survey instruments that were based on open-ended questions. I also obtained data through informal conversational interviews. Finally, interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

Another method I used was participant observation. I kept field-notes of observations and information gained from informal interviews and discussions during the process of observation. Moreover, I took part in most of the events that occurred during the fieldwork. I also attended community and committee meetings, general meetings of organizations, and a variety of events within the Black Francophone community. In addition, I conducted participant observations of selected events within the chosen centres and associations.

¹ The project *L'immigration et la communauté franco-torontoise* was funded by the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement - Toronto (CERIS). Its principal investigators are Monica Heller and Normand Labrie. These data were collected from members of the Haitian and Mauritian communities in Toronto.

I also spent several days at a centre in Toronto and two organizations in Ottawa. In some cases, I was invited by organizations to take part in specific events; for example, I was asked to facilitate workshops or to participate in the organization of certain events.

The third method I employed was document analysis. I searched for all documents that pertained to the topic being analyzed, namely, those documents produced about or by Black Francophone communities and organizations. I gathered a significant number of documents from different sources: from government offices and agencies and also from individuals and associations/organizations. The documents collected from organizations included photos; newspapers, including the community publications that appear regularly or otherwise; brochures and reports; and radio and television documentaries. At some organizations, I was also allowed to consult internal documents, such as minutes of meetings and other reports. The documents collected constituted a valuable source of information. They also revealed, among other views, information on the history, social contexts, and internal functioning of the associations and organizations. Afterwards, I coded part of the interviews and observations using the *NUD*IST* software package. These three methods – interviewing, participant observation, and document analysis – must be viewed as being complementary. Using the three methods together revealed what subjects said and what they did. In other words, this approach enabled me to observe discourse both when it was spoken and when it was performed as some sort of action, and it provided documented materials that offered deeper insights into the topic being studied.

Discourse Analysis

The collected data were interpreted through discourse analysis with the aim of accessing both language and discursive practices (Heller and Labrie 2003) and of identifying the connection between discourse and the re/production of racism (Van Dijk 1992). Discourse constitutes the “social” in its different dimensions: social relations and social identities. It can, therefore, be seen as real action constituting reality (Wodak and Reisigl 1999). As Lemke (1995) has reminded us, discourse analysis is used in a multiplicity of ways. It is under the theme of *discourse as a form of social practice* that I employ it in this work.

According to Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, and Vetter (2000, 26), the consideration of discourse as social practice entails a dialectical relationship between “a discursive event and [the] situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it.” Such an inter-relationship suggests that situations and institutions shape the discursive event, but the latter also shapes the former. In other words, discourse constitutes situations and relationships between people in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social and power relations and, in this sense, it also contributes to challenging them.

Moreover, in studying language practice as social practice, Bautier (1995) observed that language illustrates a specific version of the interpretation that subjects construct of their practices. As she argued, the description of language practice for those who do not know it (and those who do) allows us to observe themes and categorizations constructed by subjects. In this instance, her view indicates that categories (language, sexuality, race, and gender) are constructed, invoked, and negotiated “either in discourse or by discourse” (Mondada 1998).

Labrie, Bélanger, Lozon, and Roy (2000) have suggested that the analysis of social practices and language practices, particularly through discourse, helps us to understand how language users make sense of their actions or their social realities by expressing positions and representations. Furthermore, they argued that through positions concerning linguistic communities, language practices will allow better understanding

of the power relations that underlie the discourses produced within these communities. Thus, discourse analysis enables us to analyze the positions of different social actors and social groups when it comes to the distribution of resources within Francophone communities.

Discourse shapes, and is shaped by, relations of power. Van Dijk (1992) noted that as discourse constitutes society and culture, power relations are, at least partially, discursively constituted. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects, as they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations through the ways in which they represent things and position people. Fairclough (1992), for example, has argued that power-in-discourse translates through control over the content. This is composed of what is said or done in discourse; control over the relations among individuals or groups; and control over 'subjects,' in other words, the social roles fulfilled by interlocutors in discourse. In this instance, racist beliefs and discriminatory practices can be produced, prepared, and legitimated through discourse. Similarly, state-affiliated institutions may exercise power through the legitimization of specific kinds of language practices and ideologies. For example, official discourse (mainstream media) may either ignore minorities totally or actually perpetuate stereotypes.

Moreover, minorities may be represented not only as 'poor,' 'backward,' or 'primitive,' but also as criminal and aggressive (Van Dijk 1993). Such discourse serves to express, convey, legitimize, and even to deny, such attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Therefore, institutional activities may help to establish and maintain the kind of power exerted through discourse practice. I would contend, however, that discourse also can be related to resistance. It is through and by discourse that exclusionary and dominant practices are challenged and contested. In this regard, discourse may serve to criticize, illegitimize, and argue against racist opinions and practices. It also may be used to build and pursue avenues of anti-oppression, such as anti-sexist and anti-racist strategies and discursive counteractions.

Discourse analysis, therefore, allows an examination of the discursive practices and strategies produced by language users in different talk and texts (documents) produced at various levels: everyday conversations, community associations, institutions, and organizations. My decision to employ discourse analysis also was connected with the importance I associated with the notion of *Prise de parole comme prise d'action*/speaking-out as an action. This notion can be related to the idea of language practice as social practice, but it also emphasizes that speaking-out is a form of resistance. Notably, Black Francophones represent a group that does not always obtain a space from which it is possible to speak-out. They may not have control over, or access to, mainstream media. In this context, discourse analysis could become a means to make their voices heard and their experiences understood, and could be a way of *giving voice to the marginalized*. In this respect, studying social practices through discourse should allow us to reveal the different positions taken by Black Francophones in a variety of situations.

Analysis of discourse also offers an opportunity to identify dominant practices: which discourses are dominant, whose discourse is excluded, and whose included. For example, while analysis of discourse in institutional sites, such as State and Francophone mainstream institutions, is a study of dominant ideologies, daily-life discourse incorporates subjective views and the experiences of individuals within institutional structures. I made Black discourse the centre of this analysis, and have used it to challenge the dominant one. Discourse also allows access to gender, race, and language identities. By using discourse analysis in this way, it becomes possible to emphasize the inter-relatedness between discourse and social change. It also underscores the role of language as a tool that can be used to incorporate both reality and social practices.

Description of the Data

For this research project, in addition to utilizing the CERIS data, I conducted interviews with 29 subjects, 15 women and 14 men. That number included representatives of a total of 19 organizations and 6 individuals. The organizations consisted of community associations, women's and youth organizations, regional and provincial umbrella coalitions, and groups associated with the arts and theatre. Those interviewed worked in the fields of health, research, advocacy, economic development, integration, and sports.² The data collected from the organizations focussed on their history, goals, mandate, operations, access to public funding and other resources, sources of funding, contacts with other Francophone and Anglophone associations and institutions and major barriers encountered, and the role they played in the community. The data also explored how and why Black women established their own associations, how they organized, how and why they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the entire Francophone community.

In addition, I asked about their experiences of, and views on, institutional racism and the different mechanisms they used to strengthen their communities. At the individual level, the group chosen included students and others who occupied positions in various State, Francophone, and bilingual mainstream institutions. While small in size, the group was quite diverse in terms of the backgrounds of its members. Some of those interviewed had migrated recently, while others had been born, or grew up, in Canada. Some of them sent their children to Francophone schools as part of their identification with *la Francophonie*, while others deliberately sent their children to English schools to resist Francophone racism. In that context, the data revealed individuals' daily-life experiences as well as their encounters with different Francophone, Anglophone, or bilingual institutions and associations.

The gathered data were exhaustive; they covered most existing groups and offered insights into the evolution of the Black Francophone community as well as historical and present background about major issues of concern to Black Francophones. This information allowed me to study individuals who belonged to different waves of migration from the 1960s to 2000s. It also permitted me to identify differences and similarities in terms of education, class, age, and gender ratios. Such data enabled me to obtain various narratives in different contexts. The gathered data also helped me to understand issues of funding, internal functioning, and contacts between Haitian, African, and other Francophone centres. These data also shed light upon the significance of the community organizations with respect to their access to funding and their encounters with mainstream institutions and the State. Therefore, the data allowed me to respond to my major research questions concerning the situation of Black Francophones with regard to the distribution of resources allocated to Francophones, the share of power within Francophone communities, racism, and the strategies of resistance developed by Black Francophones.

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BLACK FRANCOPHONE MIGRATION TO ONTARIO/CANADA

As stated, the history of Black Francophones should be regarded as part of the historical continuity of both Francophones and Blacks in Canada. Unlike the history of Black Francophones, that of Black Anglophones in Canada is well-documented (Henry et al. 1995). It is worth mentioning, however, that the

² Any names used in this paper have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

migration of Haitians to Canada has been more studied than that of African Francophones. Thus, the history of Black Francophones needs to be far better documented. The arrival of Blacks in Canada since the turn of the twentieth century can be largely related to trends in global migration. To date, this migration has been mostly conducted in a linear way: as movements of peoples from South to North, from poor to wealthy countries, and from the “underdeveloped” world to the “developed” one. To understand what makes migration the process that it is, one needs to take into account the various factors that have triggered it. We should identify the historical factors that have informed and forced movements around the world. These factors have included the historical, political, and economic contexts of migration both in sending and receiving countries.

To some extent, these factors can be related to slavery and colonialism and their continuity in various forms of imperialism and racism. As Calliste (1993) has stated, international labour migration was triggered by the unequal development associated with European colonialism and imperialism. This meant that development often was characterized by the massive concentration of capital and wealth in the North, and the underdevelopment and dependence on those countries by others in the South. In this instance, Calliste’s view can be related to the economic and political disparities between countries that receive and those that send immigrants. Calliste (1993) went on to suggest that, in the case of the Caribbean, limited opportunities and low wages in the Caribbean economy, coupled with high levels of unemployment in that region and a demand for cheap labour in developed capitalist countries, resulted in sustained migration from the Caribbean to Canada and other developed countries. Calliste’s view can be applied to African immigration as well. It is in that context that migration from these countries to former colonial powers and other states in the North took place.

At this point, there is no need to outline the history of the migration of Blacks to Canada, as this phenomenon already has been well documented. I will emphasize, however, that the presence of Blacks in Canada has been coupled with a degree of racism that stemmed from the host society in terms of exclusionary State immigration policies and hostility from settlers in various provinces (Shepard 1997). Recalling these facts allows us to conceptualize the present context of migration, and to identify what policies were implemented to ensure the socio-economic integration of those Blacks and others who continued to migrate to Canada, including Francophones from the Caribbean and Africa. Calliste (1993) maintains that immigration policies were racialized and gendered. She has reminded us that section 38 of the 1910 version of the *Immigration Act* prohibited entry of immigrants belonging to “any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada” (Calliste 1993, 379). This statement could have been used as a pretext by immigration officials to prohibit the entry of Blacks to Canada. In that sense, for much of the 20th century, the entry of Black migrants to Canada went unrestricted only when there was no choice.

In the same vein, when it came to the migration of women from the Caribbean, female domestic workers were recruited to help fill the demand for cheap domestic labour in Ontario, Quebec, and other provinces. However, unlike the situation for European female migrants, areas of employment other than domestic service were not accessible to Black women who frequently faced deplorable working conditions, including low pay and poor working conditions (Calliste 2000). With the beginning of the Great Depression in the 1930s, immigration regulations were tightened to further restrict the arrival of Black women, even as domestics (Calliste 1993).

What this historical background does reveals to us is that if we examine the history of immigration in Canada in the context of State policies, official discourse, and public reactions to immigrants, we must come to realize that there is a history of racism and exclusion that cannot be ignored. In this sense, immigration can be linked to individual and institutionalized racism and stereotypes. These facts tell us that Blacks, and other visible minorities, were welcomed when their labour was in demand, but not as citizens

who would be part of the nation. This also reminds that, since then, discourse often has been focussed on the negative, and not on the positive, contributions of immigrants, such as their impact on the economy.

What should be kept in mind is what has changed in both Canadian immigration policy and public reactions to Blacks since the beginning of the 20th century. It is fair to ask how far has Canada come in terms of fighting racism, seeking the betterment of previously marginalized groups, and improving their socio-economic integration? In other words, the question is: As Canada has continued to receive Black migrants, what has happened to those who settled earlier, and those who have arrived since then? In this context, it is worthwhile to note that, during much of the twentieth century, Black Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec, as well as Black Anglophones in the rest of Canada, continued to face racism (McGill Consortium 2001). Therefore, since the bulk of the migration of Black Francophones to Canada and Ontario has been relatively recent, an important question for this study was to explore how both the State and white Francophones have dealt with Black Francophones. Before I can properly address this question, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the major waves of immigration of Black Francophones.

The Migration of Haitians

The context in which different waves of Haitians and Africans have migrated to Canada since the 1960s must be considered both in light of the economic and political situations in their respective countries and changes in Canadian immigration policies that might have influenced immigration patterns. Immigration to Canada has taken various forms, including direct movement from sending countries to Canada. Other itineraries have included, in the case of Haitians, arrival in Quebec through the United States, and, in the case of Africans, through European States like France and Belgium.

Pompilus (1999) has classified Haitian migration to Canada by waves. He found that Haitian immigration to Quebec began during the 1940s with “the pioneers,” a few government officials and students who decided to stay in Quebec. At the end of the 1950s and in the early 1960s, Haiti went through severe economic and political crises, especially during the years of the Duvalier regime (1957-1971) which targeted and suppressed intellectuals and all opponents. In that context, many left for Canada, the United States, and Cuba.

The 1960s witnessed significant changes in Canadian immigration policy. During that decade, the winds of change that were felt around the world, notably the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the anti-colonial struggles on the African continent, gave birth to several liberation movements. Those movements challenged the structural racism of Western societies. For example, the Civil Rights movement had a direct impact on the abolition of discriminatory immigration policies in the United States. In Canada, immigration policies were reviewed at the beginning of the 1960s. Policies that were based on discriminatory laws began to soften. In addition, in the 1960s, the economy was booming and there was a demand for new immigrants to develop and expand Canadian industry. In 1962, discriminatory provisions were removed from Canada’s immigration policy, and a points-system based on such criteria as level of education and occupational skills was implemented (Pompilus 1999). That process opened the doors for the more-educated members of racial minorities to enter Canada.

In Quebec, the Quiet Revolution began to occur during the 1960s. It was a period of political, social, and institutional reforms. Quebec society needed to expand its education and health care sectors, and to foster the expansion of the new economy. In that context, the Quebec Government needed intellectuals and professionals to facilitate the development of the society. For some of this expertise, Quebec had to look

outside of Canada. It first sought to encourage the immigration of French-speaking professionals from Europe. As European immigrants showed little interest in coming to Quebec, efforts were then deployed to promote employment opportunities for French-speaking professionals from the Caribbean. It is in that context that the first major wave of Haitian immigrants arrived in Quebec during the 1960s. Many were either highly skilled or well-educated intellectuals, including middle- and upper-class professionals (Roc 1997). That wave arrived in Quebec during the early stages of the Quiet Revolution. Their contribution to Quebec society continued throughout this period, and they clearly benefited from Canada's more open immigration policies.

One outcome of the Quiet Revolution within a booming Quebec economy, however, was that the job market became more competitive. As more young Quebecers became university graduates, the skills of the Haitians were no longer as needed, and a fear that they were taking jobs from white Francophones began to surface. The consideration of and welcome for Haitian immigrants in Quebec society soon were replaced by hostility. In that context, the application of immigration policy became more restrictive in an attempt to stop the flow of Haitians to Canada (Waldron 1996). Moreover, in 1972, Canada changed the policy which had allowed visitors to apply for permanent residency. During the 1970s in Quebec, there was a demand for manual workers, in contrast to the need for people to fill the better jobs that had been available in the 1960s. It is in that context that the second wave of Haitian migrants arrived in Canada during the 1970s. In general, these migrants had lower levels of education than those of the first wave. Those who arrived afterwards, the third and fourth waves of migrants, who respectively arrived in Canada during the later 1980s and the 1990s, entered Canada both as immigrants and convention refugees.

The socio-historical context of Haitian migration tells us something about both the contributions of immigrants to the economy and the building of infrastructure in Canadian society and the motivations of the Canadian State. It also shows us that countries like Haiti were able to produce intellectuals and professionals at a time when places like Quebec and other regions in Canada were not doing so in sufficient numbers. In this sense, the migration of the intelligentsia from developing countries, like Haiti, to Canada and other industrialized nations, must be viewed as a process of brain drain from the sending countries. More specifically, the migration history of Haitians reveals that Black immigrants were welcomed when their skills and labour were needed, but when the economic situation changed, the degree of tolerance in the host society was reduced. Consequently, discriminatory immigration practices replaced others that had been more welcoming. Therefore, official and public attitudes to Haitians during the 1970s were similar to the reactions that had been directed towards Anglophone Caribbean migrants at the turn of the 20th century. This indicates that discrimination against Blacks in Canada has continued.

The Migration of Black Francophones from Sub-Saharan Africa

Francophone African migration to Canada has become much more significant since the beginning of the 1980s. Africans who speak French now arrive from the Horn of Africa – Somalia and Djibouti; central Africa – Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Cameroon; and from the western parts of the continent – Ivory Coast, Benin, and Senegal. Each country has its own political and socio-economic context that has led many Africans to leave their respective countries for other parts of the world. The conflicts, wars, and political oppression that characterized a good number of African States during the 1980s often triggered this migration (Madibbo 2002). Africans mainly come to Canada under one of three categories of immigration: convention refugees, family reunification, and as independent immigrants.

Internal Migration from Quebec to Ontario

As has already been noted, traditionally in Canada, the migration of Black Francophones was directed to Quebec. Recently, however, the migration trajectory has shifted, with substantial numbers of Black Francophones now arriving directly in Ontario from their respective countries. Furthermore, the patterns of migration have been further complicated by some considerable internal movement between Canadian provinces, mainly from Quebec to Ontario's largest cities, Toronto and Ottawa, that started in the 1980s (Chambon, Heller, Labrie, Madibbo, and Maury 2001; Madibbo and Maury 2002). This internal migration has served to create some interesting dynamics among and between Black Francophone communities in the two provinces. The question to be asked is why Black Francophones have decided to leave a French-speaking province in which they were part of a majority to take up residence in predominantly Anglophone cities where they would become members of a double minority?

According to the study participants, the various factors triggering the migration of Black Francophones to Ontario from Quebec mainly related to racism and the economic situation in Quebec - the higher rate of unemployment, easier access to better employment opportunities in Ontario, and the perceived openness of settlement options in Ontario for Black migrants. If language fluency initially was considered to be the predominant variable that determined a successful outcome in the integration process, more recently race and economy also have become identified as essential factors in this process. Significant numbers of Black Francophones left Quebec for Ontario after the Referendum of 1995 in which sovereignty association with Canada was very narrowly defeated. The aftermath of the Referendum began with some infamous statements by Jacques Parizeau - then the Premier and leader of the *Parti Québécois* - who blamed the loss of the 1995 Referendum on sovereignty on money and the "ethnic" vote (see Helle-Mai 1998). The latter phrase represents a clear example of a constructed category that succinctly captures all racialized groups resident in Quebec. Such official discourse served as a reminder for the different generations, including Haitians and Black Anglophones who had been born in or had grown up in Quebec, that they were not part of the nation, definitely not considered to be *pur laine*, and that the nation had been and would continue to be constructed by and for whites. They were seen as "ethnic" as opposed to being regarded as Quebecois. Such sentiments reflected the fact that the majority image of the Quebec nation had become deeply racialized (Bannerji 2000). Moreover, this official discourse was produced in a province that had received the first waves of Black Francophones, the Haitian migrants of the 1960s, who had contributed substantially to the building of its society in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution.

Such reactions usually arise during times of recession and economic crisis. In such situations, anti-immigrant sentiments may develop into xenophobia, with the white majority finding it convenient to place the blame for all manner of things on "immigrants." Visible minorities clearly are situated within one category of the racialized "other," strangers and outsiders. In such an environment, extremist and far right movements often play the anti-immigrant "card," a phenomenon that has received significant media attention in many parts of Western Europe in recent times. Some members of the public fall into that trap, and large segments of society can forget the positive contributions of immigrants. In such an environment, Blacks and other racial minorities in Quebec came to feel that they were not welcome. Racism and the economic downturn of the first-half of the 1990s triggered their internal migration to Ontario and other Canadian provinces.

The decision to move to Ontario also has been influenced by language considerations. Language can be viewed as a factor that determines where and how immigrants live. Those who choose to relocate to Ontario have to be prepared to deal with both the dynamics of bilingualism and the challenges of living in

a predominantly Anglophone environment. These challenges include, among other factors, acquiring a functional knowledge of English and coping with the lack of appropriate services in French.

What Happens After Blacks Come to Ontario?

In Ontario, Black Francophones have tended to settle in the province's largest urban centres, especially Toronto and Ottawa. Many have attempted to preserve their Francophone traditions by choosing to live in French in Ontario, using French-language services, sending their children to French schools, and participating in Francophone associations. Even before the arrival of these immigrants, the Franco-Ontarian population was becoming more diversified, particularly along class and gender lines. The arrival of these new Francophones, however, has begun to change the image of the community into one that is seen as more heterogeneous in terms of its culture, class, gender, language, religion, and race/social relations. A very positive impact of their presence can be observed, especially in terms of their growing numbers which are essential for the survival of the Francophone community and its institutions in Ontario. For example, in Toronto their arrival has meant a doubling of the number of Francophones who are faced with assimilation into the English-speaking majority and who can be counted upon to support claims for more Francophone institutions and services.

Relations have evolved in rather complex ways; on the one hand, within the Black community, and, on the other hand, between white Francophones and racial minorities and between Black Francophones and other visible minorities. Without question, some tensions and conflicts have arisen between Black and white Francophones. The struggle has been mainly over the sharing of power. One group aims to maintain its power and privilege; the other seeks to be an integral part of the community and full citizens. Blacks also have claimed their rights to an equitable share of power in terms of financial and other resources, access to employment, and decision-making. Along the way, Blacks have sometimes found it necessary to establish their own organizations and associations, which have been used as tools both to contest and rectify State racism and power inequities within Francophone communities and to reinforce their community development.

A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE BLACK FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY IN ONTARIO AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS

On the basis of mother tongue, or the language first learned, the total number of Francophones in Ontario is 485,630. The number of Francophones as measured by their knowledge of only French is 42,305 and 1,319,715 understand both English and French (Statistics Canada 2001). It is important to mention that my research subjects, as well as others, have expressed considerable doubt about the veracity of these census results and the interpretation of the data (Human Rights Commission 2004). Black Francophones tend to argue that the definition of Francophones based on the mother tongue criterion largely underestimates their actual number. In this context, it is fair to say that Blacks constitute a significant proportion of Ontario's Francophone population. According to the 2001 Census, the Ontario Black Francophone population is relatively young, highly educated, and the number of males is higher than that of females. The correspondence between this population's level of education and its actual employment characteristics deserves more attention. In this regard, the expected correlation between a high level of education and an appropriate job does not necessarily apply. Moreover, a significant number is either unemployed or underemployed (Conseil pour l'intégration 1997).

Notwithstanding the emphasis on education as an important criterion in the immigration points system, education does not guarantee the smooth transition of Black immigrants into appropriate positions in the work force. Some studies, in fact, have shown that Blacks endure a lower socio-economic status than normally would be associated with their educational backgrounds, and that Black Francophones are among groups which are at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder in Canada (Galabuzi 2001). Other studies have underscored the drastic socio-economic disparities among Black and white Francophones (Programme d'appui aux langues officielle 2000).

In terms of the link between time of arrival and class, a recent analysis of the socio-economic status of immigrants revealed that "little has changed in the socio-economic situation of the Haitian immigrants since the second wave" (Pompilus 1999, 19). This is also true of Africans. I have interviewed many Haitians and Africans belonging to different generations, but class-ratio comparisons reveal that there has been no significant economic change between the successive generations of Blacks. What has contributed to this pattern? As will be observed, many members of the community are un-and-under-employed, and most of its organizations are underfunded. As a consequence, the degree of poverty in the community is alarming, and not at all what one might anticipate given the skills and educational backgrounds of many of its members.

When it comes to age, the most significant cohorts are those under 15 years old and those between 15-35 years. A smaller group is over 50 years (Conseil pour l'intégration 2001). According to my research, a significant proportion of this community is presently attending schools and colleges, with significant other proportions who either are could be in the workforce. These demographic factors should draw our attention (as well as the attention of government officials, policy makers, and planners) to the potential of and the vitality within Ontario's Black Francophone community. In addition, with its relatively high birth rate and the continuing arrival of new immigrants, it is expected that this number will double in the foreseeable future. This fact will have its impact on the socio-political and economic dynamics within both the Black and the Francophone communities.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Black Francophones have started to form their own organizations, including community associations, groups of musicians and artists, community economic development groups, organizations of women and youth, media initiatives (such as newsletters and radio coalitions), churches, and umbrella, local, and regional groups (Bisson, Buculmi, and Gabikini 2003). All of these are urban associations which play crucial roles in giving voice to the social differences between Black and ethnic minorities vis-à-vis white Francophones. The various Black Francophone groups support community development, offer various services, fight racism, defend the rights of their communities, and promote the social and economic integration of their community members. These groups organize and initiate connections between Black Francophones, with the State, and also with Francophone or Anglophone communities and institutions (Conseil économique et social d'Ottawa-Carleton 2003). To accomplish their numerous goals, the organizations take actions and develop strategies that include promoting partnerships and economic development through entrepreneurship, job creation, and providing orientation sessions and Canadian work experience.

Thus, there are numerous Black Francophone organizations that intervene in various fields. The issue, however, is not only how many exist, but also how many of these organizations are able to function. A goodly number of these organizations are newly emerging. Some others, however, have existed for years and can be said to have succeeded in that they have made significant achievements and played pivotal roles in community development. Not unexpectedly, some groups have collapsed. In this context, what needs to be kept in mind in the context of this study are the various challenges that these organizations face, and the factors that led to the collapse of some of these earlier efforts. These observations are important because they

relate to the main themes of this study in relation to the distribution of resources to Francophones and the sharing of power among these Francophones.

Without question, immigration must be seen to be racialized. As I have argued at the beginning of this section, the migration of Black Francophones should be spoken of as a continuity of the presence of both Francophones and Blacks in Canada. It is vital to explore both what has happened to Blacks who arrive in Canada and what faces the generations raised in this country, along with the relationships between Black Francophones in Ontario and both Francophone and Black communities. Migration also must be related to demographic change and its impacts on institutions. Migration implies connections between and among immigrant communities, their linguistic and racial minorities, and the State that receives them, and between immigrants and the host society - in this instance the Francophone community.

BLACK FRANCOPHONES IN ONTARIO FACING STATE RACISM

Significant research has been conducted on systemic racism in Canada in the cases of Aboriginal Peoples, racial minorities, and immigrants to Canada. In this context, I would like to stress that while some forms of racism experienced by Black Francophones are similar to those faced by their Anglophone counterparts, racism also has been experienced in ways specific to Black Francophones. The experiences of Black Anglophones have been exhaustively studied (Brand 1991; Waldron 2002), but some manifestations of racism specifically relate to Black Francophones as a racial minority situated within an official linguistic minority. Nevertheless, similarities in the experiences of racism by members of the two groups of Blacks are worth exploring because such perspectives might help to reveal what Canada has done to improve the situation of its racial minorities and what still needs to be accomplished to more fully combat racism. I will focus on specific forms of State racism that relate to Black Francophones. Moreover, I will examine the institutional definition of the category “Francophone” as it is identified by Statistics Canada, and show the impact of this definition on the Black Francophone community and its organizations. In addition, State racism will be investigated as one factor that might have contributed to the underfunding of Black Francophone organizations.

The Institutional Definition of the Category “Francophone” and Its Impact on the Black Francophone Community and Its Organizations

Many would argue that the exact number of Black Francophones has not been adequately identified. This under-enumeration stems both from how census questions have been posed and how these data have been interpreted. The census definition of Francophones in Canada includes four criteria: mother tongue, the use of French at work, the use of French at home, and knowledge of an official language, a direct reference to an individual’s ability to maintain a conversation in English or French (Statistics Canada 2001). Of these criteria, however, the one that has been adopted by Statistics Canada and used by governmental institutions to determine community funding has been the mother tongue criterion, which is interpreted to mean the first language learned at home and still understood. Unfortunately, use of this criterion does not adequately reflect the number of Black Francophones. Strictly speaking, French usually is not their mother tongue, as they most often first learn other languages such as Creole, Arabic, or some African language.

French, however, frequently is the, or an, official language of their home countries, their language of instruction for formal education, and many often use it at work and in public life. In Ontario, Black Francophones continue to employ French within various settings in every-day communication, and within institutions where they use French services. French, therefore, often is not a mother tongue for this population, but it is more than a second language. A definition of Francophones based solely on the mother-tongue criterion, thus, raises many contradictions in terms of who is included in this category and who is excluded. For example, it excludes many immigrants from officially French-speaking countries from being considered to be Francophone. Moreover, the definition does not include other categories, such as those who migrate from countries like Eritrea and Sudan and who speak French as a second language (Madibbo 2003). In this regard, it is worth noting that the International *Francophonie* includes many categories in defining which nations are considered to be Francophone. It has remained purposefully open in its scope, and, as a consequence, among its membership it counts a variety of geopolitical entities: countries where French is the official or a co-official language, States which have affinities with *la Francophonie*, as well as those inhabited by individuals who use French for various purposes. Ironically, the definition of Francophone adopted by Canada means that some immigrants will be officially recognized as Francophone outside of Canada, but are not counted as such within the country.

If the criteria exclude many who were born outside of Canada, neither do they automatically include some who were born and/or grew up in the country, a group that would include youth who both speak French and another language at home. If these young persons do not identify French as their mother tongue, they will not be recognized as Francophones, but rather as Anglophones or Allophones, notwithstanding their use of the French language in their daily lives (see Commission on Human Rights 2004).

Without question, Ontario's Francophone population is diverse, and increasingly so. Additional categories of Francophones have emerged as part of the dynamics of the changing social reality of Canada which, as a result of immigration, has been becoming more multilingual, multiracial, and multicultural. To identify Francophones solely on the basis of mother tongue, therefore, is limited and does not capture the growing heterogeneity of the community. The precise question to be asked is to whom does the mother tongue criterion apply? We can contend that the definition mostly applies to white French Canadians or those of European descent. With assimilation and an increasing number of linguistic mixed-marriages between white Anglophones and Francophones, many white Francophones may no longer speak French at home or at work. They may not use French services or attend Francophone educational institutions. However, they may still identify French as their mother tongue on their census form, and will, therefore, be officially recognized as Francophone.

The definition of "Francophone" based on mother tongue can be seen to be discriminatory, contradictory, and racialized. It is important, therefore, to thoroughly evaluate the impact of the official Canadian definition of Francophone on Blacks because it says a great deal about how the State deals with Black Francophones who are part of its official linguistic minorities. The most important impact of this definition has been to under-estimate the number of Black Francophones and, as a direct consequence, to limit the access of this population to the financial resources assigned by the State to the Francophone community in Canada. Thus, Black Francophones remain part of a federally-supported official language community, but in a decidedly minority situation.

The elements outlined in this discussion allow us to conclude that the actual number of Black Francophones in Ontario might well be greater than the one provided by Statistics Canada which is based on mother tongue criterion (some 33,000 in the 1996 Census). Statistics Canada's definition of "Francophone" has generated considerable debate. Community members have rejected the number of Black Francophones given by Statistics Canada, and have estimated the number of racial and ethnocultural Francophone minorities

in Ontario to be between 100,000 and 300,000, which is significantly higher than that of Statistics Canada. Clearly, there is uncertainty when it comes to identifying the true size of this population.³

In Canada, statistics determine crucial issues such as funding, community development, and services assigned by the State to its official linguistic communities according to their demographic importance. Thus, population figures provided by Statistics Canada are used by different levels of government to both make policies and implement programs. Therefore, the number of Black Francophones identified by Statistics Canada significantly impacts on their political and legal rights, their access to funding, and their potential for community development. Once again, it must be remembered that Black Francophones should be considered to be both a linguistic and a racial minority. These two minorities are, respectively, placed under the protections afforded by the Official Languages Act (OLA) and the Multiculturalism Policy. The OLA includes constitutional rights that ensure the development of official linguistic communities in minority situations, namely, Anglophones in Quebec and Francophones in the rest of Canada. Articles 41 and 42 of the Official Languages Act outline the responsibility of the Federal Government to participate in the development and help to build flourishing official language communities in minority settings:

Le gouvernement du Canada s'est engagé, aux termes de la Loi sur les langues officielles, à favoriser l'épanouissement des minorités francophones et anglophones du Canada et à appuyer leur développement (Entente Canada-communauté-Ontario 2000, 1).

The Official Languages Act (OLA) guarantees to Francophones constitutional protections that can generate for them entitlements to significant funding, institutions, and services. Canada's Multiculturalism Policy deals with racial minorities. Unlike the OLA, Multiculturalism Policy does not offer to racial minorities the same constitutional rights or significant material resources that the OLA guarantees to the two official linguistic groups in minority situations. This indicates that Francophones as a linguistic minority have been granted more rights and material resources than have been provided for racial minorities.

The official definition of Francophones based on the mother tongue criterion has had considerable implications for Blacks, because many who do speak French are not included in this category. Consequently, funding policies that are based on the OLA do not properly meet the needs of this population in terms of its development.

Funding is crucial because financial resources relate to vital concerns, such as the establishment and stability of organizations, the long-term socio-economic integration of the community, and its process of settlement. Over the years, funding in support of Francophone communities has come from both governmental and non-governmental sources. The governmental funding has come from federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. Based on the Official Languages Act, the Federal Government has made contributions to support the development of official linguistic communities in minority settings. The provincial Office of Francophone Affairs, which plays a major role in all issues related to Francophones in Ontario, manages the funding that provincial ministries give to Francophones. Municipal government funding has been less predictable, and is regulated by decisions taken by local politicians at that level. Notwithstanding the contributions by provincial and municipal governments, the Federal Government continues to play the largest role, by far, in this area.

³ This problem of under-estimation is by no means restricted to Black Francophones; rather it is a common complaint among many immigrant and visible minority groups. See, for example, Suzuki (2005) on the Burmese population.

When it comes to the access of Black Francophones to the main sources of funding, the community leaders and members interviewed for this study contended that Black Francophones do not receive a level of funding that corresponds to their demographic weight. For example, study participants argued that in the 1999 allocation of federal governmental funding, only a few organizations associated with racial and ethnic minorities received any money. These groups captured only 4 per cent (\$200,000 out of \$5 million) of the funds that were distributed to Francophones in the province in that year. In that case, participants referred to a specific program of funding: the *l'Entente Canada-Communauté*, which is managed by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The point here is not only that the financial support Black Francophones receive is minimal compared to their demographic presence, but also that the funding level is far from sufficient for the development of the Black Francophone community (Commissariat aux langues officielles 2000).

Thus, study participants argued that the Federal Government, which has a constitutional obligation to financially support official linguistic communities in minority contexts, contributes unacceptably small amounts of funding to the Black Francophone minority, even though this group is an important part of the official linguistic minority (see also Conseil pour l'intégration 2001). They also suggested that the provincial government has not provided adequate funding to Black organizations. In this respect, those interviewed argued that the distribution of resources appears to be racialized. They believed that the funding granted to the various elements of the Francophone community in Ontario differed significantly, not in accordance with number, but with race. For them, the under-funding of Black Francophones is embedded in a process of State racism.

WHY LINK UNDER-FUNDING TO RACISM?

The connection made by study participants between the under-funding of Black Francophone organizations and racism can be attributed to their perceptions of the impact of the criteria used by funding agencies and the impact of other aspects of their funding procedures. Funding agencies have identified criteria that a given organization should possess to be eligible for funding. Study participants have argued, however, that the criteria for funding are so severe that it has been difficult for Black organizations to comply. Those interviewed attributed Black Francophones' apparent lack of access to scarce resources as being directly connected to these funding criteria, especially the common criterion requiring that, in order for a specific organization to receive funding, it has to be well established. Typically, this has been taken to mean that an organization has to be incorporated, should hold general meetings, and should have implemented projects. Such requirements serve as formidable barriers for fledgling minority organizations. In a sense, they represent the institutional equivalent to a barrier often faced by individual immigrants, namely, the request for evidence of Canadian work experience.

Most Black Francophone organizations cannot comply with these criteria because the majority of them are newly emerging, do not possess strong organizational structures, and face diverse challenges (Programme d'appui aux langues officielles 2000). This should not be taken to suggest that there have been no well-established Black Francophone groups in Ontario. In the past, many community organizations existed for a period of several years, developed expertise, and accomplished their goals, but then collapsed, often due to a lack of appropriate funding.

To comply with funding criteria, an organization must have staff to perform administrative tasks and initiate projects, and it should also have a space from which to accomplish its work. Those criteria require financial and human resources. Newly-emerging organizations seldom have such resources. In addition,

specific difficulties associated with the application of the criteria include the fact that the language used on the application forms often can be quite technical and, therefore, difficult for the members of fledgling organizations to understand. Moreover, such organizations rarely possess adequate evaluation measures, such as the ability to explicitly identify their mandate and goals, and to articulate their needs. Thus, many of the organizations that have emerged recently simply do not possess the financial resources that would allow them to build a suitable organizational structure, and, therefore, will not qualify for substantial funding. In this era of growing demands from governments and their funding agencies for increased transparency and accountability, it is perfectly reasonable that there should be criteria for eligibility and an institutionalized process for the evaluation of the results of funding allocations. For fledgling organizations, however, the question is how such requirements take into account the needs of these groups in terms of capacity building and the stage of development of the community.

Study participants argued that existing organizations need financial support in order to strengthen their organizational skills to permit them to comply with the stringent demands placed on applicants by funding agencies. They also felt Black Francophone organizations should receive a sufficient amount of funding to enable them to implement projects that would ensure the development of their community. Thus, there is a need for some form of official recognition that would include measures and policies that would take the stage of the socio-economic integration and settlement of Blacks into consideration.

We can conclude that the funding criteria that are in place tend to favour well-established organizational structures that are difficult for Black community organizations to emulate in the short term. Studying the reality of Francophone organizations, one can note that, in most cases, only mainstream organizations are able to comply easily with such criteria. It is worth noting that the study participants contended that the same criteria were applied to the organizations of both Black and white Francophones, a practice perceived by many as discriminatory. The issue here is not to verify whether Blacks and whites are evaluated based on the same criteria, but rather to note that these two groups within the Francophone community are not similarly organized, so the playing field used in the competition for funding is not level.

Mainstream Francophone organizations are far better established than those of Blacks because Franco-Ontarians have been building their groups for over a century and have had both time and the State's support to strengthen the structure of their organizations. Not surprisingly, these organizations have managed to continue functioning for many years and they have gained credibility because they have both appropriate resources and the structural sophistication to comply with the criteria established by funding agencies. When it comes to Black Francophone organizations, however, it must be stressed that many Blacks have recently arrived in Canada, and their groups often do not yet possess strong organizational structures.

Based on this discussion, we can contend that, intentionally or otherwise, the impact of applying the same criteria for white and Black organizations has made the access of mainstream organizations to funding easier than it has been for those organizations started by Black Francophones. For example, in a situation where two Francophone organizations, one Black and one white, initiate similar proposals involving the same potential clients, the mainstream group's chances of receiving funding probably would be much higher than those of the Black organization because of the differences in organizational sophistication, even though Black Francophones frequently constitute the largest number of clients at the mainstream organizations. Once again, we are reminded that the institutional definition of "Francophone" favours the enumeration of white Francophones, so the criteria used for funding allocations has tended to favour the mainstream institutions which were started by white Francophones.

All of these practices relate to the State in the sense that criteria for funding, as well as the criteria for the definition of "Francophones," have been established and implemented by institutions that are part of

the Federal Government. Of note, many of these criteria were established even before the arrival of the immigrants who now are suffering from their ramifications. They were developed at a time when Canada was home to relatively few members of visible minority groups, and the main sources sending immigrants to Canada were found in Western Europe and the United States. In this context, they do not properly accommodate the present social reality of Canadian society, which is multicultural and multiracial, and increasingly draws its immigrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Carribean. In effect, they have become systemic barriers to community development for those who have arrived recently.

The discussion about the connection between funding and State racism has shown that members of the Black Francophone community feel that their organizations have been underfunded in comparison to their needs for community development, and in comparison to Francophone mainstream institutions. Underfunding has impacted on Black organizations in the sense that it has disrupted the operation of these organizations, sometimes led to their collapse, reinforced poverty within the Black community, and stultified the development of a full system of organizations to meet the community's needs. After organizations submit proposals to funding agencies, as part of normal funding procedures, they have to wait for a specific period of time before they receive a response to their application. This interval differs according to the specific funding agency's criteria. In some cases, it takes several months, but, in extreme cases, it could mean a wait of up to two years. Even then, there is the possibility that funding may not be approved. While awaiting funding approval, smaller organizations often have to scramble to find resources that will allow them to continue to function. Established organizations can survive during such periods, but the majority of newer agencies do not have many options and, thereby, frequently face major survival challenges. In most cases, the majority of their work has to be conducted on a voluntary basis. In addition, members of fledgling organizations often cover expenses from their own resources to ensure the continued functioning of their organization.

According to the study participants, the majority of those who do all this volunteer work, or cover their organizations' expenses, already have a low economic status and fight for their own survival. In such situations, the organizations often are forced to look for other sources of funding such as members' contributions, co-operative projects, and fund-raising activities. In reality, many community members cannot financially support Black Francophone organizations due to their own poverty and a lack of established financial networks. In addition, fund-raising activities usually generate small amounts of money that do not provide a long-term solution to resource shortages. These periods when organizations are awaiting decisions on funding, often are times when activities and communication between members become drastically curtailed.

Another impact of underfunding on Black Francophone organizations is related to a growing tendency to favour the funding of short-term projects.⁴ Traditionally, funding agencies have divided their initiatives into 'Core Funding,' which guarantees operating costs and 'Project Funding,' which funds projects that are determined for a specific period of time. Most of the financial resources obtained by Black Francophone organizations have been based on Project Funding. According to the study participants, this has meant that Black organizations are almost constantly involved in developing requests for funding renewal/continuation. In an increasingly-tight funding environment, some organizations have received funding for specific projects, but have not managed to have their grants extended for the next stage of the project or for a new one. Once specific projects have been completed, the organization might have to wait for months to have funding renewed, or to acquire new funding. The non-renewal of funding generates a lack

⁴ Again, this worrisome trend is not unique to Black Francophone organizations; it is a problem faced much more broadly by the entire range of settlement-service agencies in Canada. See Sadiq (2004).

of continuity in the functioning of organizations, and it becomes increasingly difficult to make future plans and to ensure development and survival of these organizations for the long-term. As a consequence of these factors, some organizations simply disappear or collapse.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that members of the Black Francophone community face severe socio-economic challenges (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health 2001). This population is largely un- and-under-employed, and its members often have been excluded from employment opportunities within both Anglophone and Francophone institutions. Therefore, underfunding, directly or otherwise, has increased an already severe level of poverty in the Black Francophone community. The organizations represented in this study have sought to elevate the socio-economic status of community members insofar as they have attempted to provide services, create jobs, and advocate for the rights of Blacks. They also have played major roles in the integration of the community into the larger Ontario society. Such organizations themselves, however, have suffered from a degree of underfunding that has placed limits on their ability to effect institutional and societal changes and to fight poverty. In this context, study participants linked poverty and underfunding to racism in the sense that the Black community and its organizations have not been able to obtain appropriate funding. Moreover, they argued that the socio-economic status of the community stems from factors, such as underfunding and under-employment, that can be related to systemic racism. As other scholars have found, the connection between poverty and racism is that the former is, in itself, a manifestation of the latter (Galabuzi 2001). It is also worth emphasizing that, in a global context, poverty has been closely associated with racism and racial discrimination (World Conference Against Racism 2001).

Given the connection between the Black Francophone community and its organizations, underfunding can be seen to have negatively impacted on the development of the community. The Black Francophone community is growing, and organizations are being established to reply to the various needs. Nevertheless, this community needs to become more established and to focus on organizational and economic development. As the community becomes settled in the province, it must plan and strategize in order for it to reach an appropriate level of socio-economic integration; but to do this properly, it will need more resources. In spite of such needs, however, the social actors interviewed for this study indicated that funding for Black organizations has been decreasing.

Many of the research subjects in this study contended that the underfunding of Blacks must be seen as a political issue, and represents a systemic barrier put in place by the federal government, which, of course, plays a major role in the distribution of funding to organizations serving official linguistic minorities. The government does not directly prohibit the funding of new organizations. Rather, it appears to do this indirectly by providing limited funding, setting restrictive criteria, and engineering the non-continuity of funding. It is worth observing that some of the study participants took the issue of the relationship between the underfunding of Black Francophone organizations and State racism further by situating it as a consequence of the lack of official recognition of the Black Francophone population as a racial minority and an official language community in a minority situation. Their argument is that the lack of official recognition engenders both underfunding and the lack of concrete policies that might better serve Black interests and enhance the development of the Black Francophone community in Ontario.

All these practices can be linked to government policies and to the intersection between recognition, statistics and funding. This discussion leads us to the consideration of a specific funding program that illustrates these dynamics, namely, the *l'Entente Canada-communauté*.

THE *L'ENTENTE CANADA-COMMUNAUTÉ*

The *l'Entente Canada-communauté* is a funding program based on the Official Languages Act that affirms the obligation of the Government of Canada to participate in the development of official language communities in minority situations. It is an agreement signed between the Government of Canada and the official language minorities in each of the provinces. The *l'Entente* that was underway when I conducted the fieldwork for this study had been signed in 2000 and extended until 2004 (see *Entente Canada-Communauté-Ontario 2000*; *Renouvellement de l'Entente 2000*). It consisted of an allocation of over \$137 million for all of Canada. Francophones in Ontario received the largest amount of this total, over \$22 million dollars spread over the four years of the agreement. In the case of Ontario, the *l'Entente* involved the Federal Government and the Francophone communities who were, respectively, represented in the negotiations by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage and members of the *l'Entente* Committee. The latter consisted of representatives of the numerous sectors of Francophone communities such as education, economy, and health.

The text of the *l'Entente*, which is a legal document, indicated that its main objectives included the promotion of the development of Francophone communities. Moreover, it affirmed the commitment of the Government of Canada to Canadian policies through financial contributions to the enhancement of the development of these communities. In the context of the *l'Entente*, development refers to supporting requests for human resources and community infrastructure in various fields such as the arts, economy, education, and judicial services. The text brings to our attention the fact that any development resulting from the *l'Entente* is to be accomplished in partnership between the State and the community, and it is the State that has placed an emphasis on community participation. In this context, we will discuss two issues that pertain to Black Francophones and the *l'Entente*: the funding model and the status assigned to Blacks.

When it comes to the funding model, the text of the *l'Entente* does not allocate funding to specific groups of Francophones, but rather to programs and projects for all sectors of the Francophone community. Blacks have argued that funding is contributed to all Francophones, yet most of it goes to and is controlled by whites. Under the *l'Entente*, Blacks are not guaranteed equitable funding that properly addresses their needs for community development. Blacks have been claiming that a specific amount of this funding should be allocated to racial and ethnic minorities. In their view, there should be two separate budgets, one for white Francophones and another one specifically for Francophone racial and ethnic minorities. The request for separate funding is considered by Black Francophones as the best strategy to both address their specific needs and ensure the development of an organizational structure to reinforce their community's long-term development. In the view of those interviewed for this study, distinct funding would mean equitable access to power, resources, and sustainable development.

With regard to the status accorded to Blacks in the *l'Entente*, as stated, the Francophone community has been divided into about fifteen sectors including, French-Canadian associations, women, health, economy, education, and other categories including racial and ethnic minorities. Each sector assigns a representative from a provincial organization to sit on the *l'Entente* Committee. Unfortunately, this model gives Blacks consideration merely as a sector of Franco-Ontarians as opposed to being viewed as a sector of *la Francophonie*. As a result, Black Francophones are treated on an equal footing with such categories as health or communication. Study participants, however, quite strongly objected to this placement of Blacks as one of the numerous sectors covered within the *l'Entente*. Their argument is that treating Blacks as a sector places them in an inequitable power position vis-à-vis white Francophones. This opinion also can be related to the question of the number of Blacks represented on the various *l'Entente* committees. As mentioned, each of the sectors has one representative on each *l'Entente* committee. In the first *Entente* (1996-99), its 2

committees each consisted of over 10 participants, but the majority were white Franco-Ontarians with merely one or two Blacks represented. The social actors who were interviewed for this study argued that the underrepresentation of Blacks on the *l'Entente* committees limited the participation of Blacks in decision-making processes, and subsequently led to the underfunding of Black Francophone organizations.

We should note that the *l'Entente* committees are crucial because they make all the major funding-allocation decisions under this program. Study participants revealed that when representatives of the Black community voted on issues of concern to their community, the white majority frequently voted against them. This underscores the imbalanced power relations within the Francophone community, as white Franco-Ontarians' control over the *l'Entente* was evident through the voting process. As white Franco-Ontarians were in the majority on these committees, the decisions they supported were adopted. Even when representatives of racial minorities made suggestions on issues that concerned their communities, final decisions ultimately depended on the positions held by whites. This process has impacted on the funding of Blacks in the sense that the needs of racial minorities often were not considered as priorities. Thus, when Blacks vote on matters that concern them, whites have the privilege of deciding how those specific concerns will be handled. Such a decision-making structure also impacts on the ability of Blacks to become fully engaged in civic life in the sense that they are not able to participate effectively in taking decisions on issues pertaining to their communities or on matters that relate to *la Francophonie* at large. The issue raised in this debate is the imbalance of representation and its impact on voting. Community members have argued that the presence of Blacks at these levels is crucial to ensure that their interests are protected. In the overall *l'Entente* structure there have been few Blacks on committees because Blacks as seen just as representatives of French-speaking racial minorities. For historical reasons, other sectors included in the *l'Entente* framework, usually were dominated by white Francophones. In this instance, representation can be contested in the sense that whites are seen to represent all Francophones, while Blacks are limited to being representatives of their own community.

According to study participants, Black Francophones have contested the relegation of Blacks to the status of a sector of the Francophone community because this status leads to their underfunding and marginalization, and to a lack of specific policies targeted towards the development of the Black Francophone community. Consequently, Black Francophone social actors have requested that members of their community should be officially recognized as a full community. Furthermore, they have argued that that community should have constitutional protection as a double minority, that is, as a racial and a linguistic minority. The notion of "full community" means that Blacks represent a community that has its own sectors, and is not to be regarded merely one of the sectors that constitute the various fields of the *l'Entente*. These social actors claim that Blacks should be considered a community because they possess the elements that constitute a community. This argument is based on perceptions that, like the white Francophone community, Black Francophones include women, youth, and elders and numbers that are sufficiently high to warrant their designation as a true community, one that already possesses a rudimentary array of organizations that are attempting to serve that community.

Therefore, the most important point for these Blacks is for the government to recognize the Black Francophone community as a racial minority that is a part of *la Francophonie* in Ontario. This means the explicit recognition of a Francophone multicultural/multiracial community. In this context, an interesting question that might be posed is whether it would make any difference if the members of this population were to be considered "Francophone" only, or if they were counted as "Black Francophone." In replying to this question, it is worth stressing that if Blacks were considered to be Francophones, they would contribute to an increase in the number of all Francophones and, therefore, their numbers would help to support claims for funding for the entire Francophone community. This probably would allow mainstream institutions to gain more benefits. However, if they were to be counted as Black Francophones, this might bring more benefits

to agencies that serve racial minorities. Such an enumeration might foster the protection of the rights of Blacks and lead to consideration of their development needs in terms of their experiences with immigration and racism.

This discourse reveals that the official recognition sought by Black Francophones would entail constitutional protection of their rights. The argument stressed by many study participants was that all minorities need protection for their guaranteed constitutional rights. They argued that, just as the government offers constitutional protection to Franco-Ontarians as an official linguistic minority, then Blacks deserve the same sort of protection. In this study, Black Francophones argued that, because they are members of a double minority, they need double protection as a racial and linguistic minority. Thus, the goal has been to gain some recognition that guarantees both legal and political rights, such as access to resources and specific policies, and a long-term plan of development targeted towards the Black Francophone community. Constitutional protection will be respected by guaranteeing them autonomy in terms of decision-making and resource allocation in order to establish tools for community development, as well as infrastructure for their institutions. In addition, protection for Blacks entails that they will become equal partners with white Francophones, and not one of their sub sectors. This would mean that Black Francophones would share power, for example by occupying different positions within the hierarchy of Francophone mainstream institutions, as well as retain the right to establish their own institutions as needed.

This analysis of the discourse of the study participants regarding their contesting of the negative outcomes associated with assigning the status of a sector to Blacks within the framework of the *l'Entente* has been worthwhile. It seems obvious that such discourse has led to rethinking about the space that fundamental democratic principles assign to the full participation of Black Francophones and other racialized groups in decision-making processes and other important elements within the structures of power. Therefore, the issues outlined by Blacks in relation to voting, decision-making, and the need for protection for minorities raise many troubling questions. Black Francophones claim protection within a liberal democratic system. The challenge that liberal democracies, like Canada, face is how to fight racism and how to treat groups equally when they are not equal, that is to say, groups that are not all at the same stage of socio-economic development.

The racism that Blacks and other minorities, notably the First Nations, continue to endure in Canada, tells us that liberal democracy, which preaches equality, has not so far been able to provide protection for all minorities. In this regard, the discourse of Black Francophones, especially if viewed from an Antiracism perspective, challenges both the liberal democracy that regulates the text of the *l'Entente* and the Canadian State that has produced this text based on Canadian laws. Therefore, we conclude that an Antiracism perspective should bring to a liberal democracy the principle of equity. These factors tell us that it is not only institutions that should be transformed to adapt to demographic change and diversity, but also that theoretical foundations that regulate the State, such as the principles underlying a liberal democracy, may need to be rethought and modified accordingly.

Black Francophones continue to demand to be officially recognized as a linguistic and a racial Francophone community that has an entitlement to constitutional rights and protections. This means that they feel they have not been properly recognized by the State. For Francophones, the status of majority/minority changes according to whether one is in Quebec or in Ontario; but, what does this difference teach us about State racism and power relations? If we look at Black Anglophones in Quebec, do they have the same recognition and protection as another minority community – the white Anglophones? When it comes to Ontario, are Black Anglophones in Ontario part of the dominant majority that discriminates against white Francophones? Furthermore, why do both groups of Blacks have such apparently low socio-economic status in their respective provinces?

These questions are about the issue of official recognition and who benefits from rights and constitutional protection in Canada. In other words, even though the notion of two “founding nations” has, itself, been contested, it is important to ask whether Blacks are ever considered to be Francophones or Anglophones, that is, as belonging to either one of the two nations that constitute the officially-recognized Canada? We would contend, therefore, that, as this work has shown, Black Francophones in Ontario have not gained the same privileges as their white counterparts (see also Ibrahim 1998). Other studies have demonstrated quite clearly that Black Anglophones in Quebec live in poverty and still face various forms of racism (Waldron 1996). Moreover, Black Francophone requests for official recognition often have been simply lumped together with other major requests for recognition as distinct communities made by groups such as the Aboriginal Peoples. The very existence of such claims leads us to pose fundamental questions about both Canada’s constitution and its language policies. They also lead us to conclude that, not only is it true that the Canadian Constitution favours Anglophones and Francophones, but also that often it has been only whites who have gained the privileges of the recognition that the Canadian State affords to members of the two officially-recognized “founding nations.”

COMPARING STATE AND BLACK FRANCOPHONE POSITIONS

The Black Francophone discourse, as captured in this study, reminds us of the lack of infrastructure in the Black Francophone community and of the institutional poverty that its organizations face. It outlines the unemployment and underemployment of its community members, their under-representation in decision-making arenas at various levels of government and within various institutions, and the lack of necessary resources for community development. On the basis of this evidence, we are forced to conclude that these are systemic barriers that contribute to the undermining of development opportunities in the Black Francophone community. In comparing State and Black Francophone discourse on funding, we came to realize that there are conflicting positions between the State and Blacks concerning major issues, notably policies of racial equity and the matter of distinct funding for Black Francophone organizations. The Black discourse about the *l’Entente* tells us that while the government theoretically encourages Blacks to participate in identifying their development needs and to take part in the development process, some Black Francophones have begun to ask the State to challenge its own racism and to rethink how it situates them in its constitution.

The State, through the *l’Entente*, links funding to development, while Black Francophones connect funding and development to equity. Blacks have identified a lack of equity as a major barrier to development of the Black Francophone community. The concept of equity has been related by study participants to underfunding and the under-representation of Blacks on both the *l’Entente* committees and within Francophone mainstream institutions. In this respect, Blacks have stressed racism and a lack of racial equity as major impediments to the development of the Black Francophone community. They have continued to advocate for a global policy of racial equity to be applied at various levels, including the *l’Entente*; access to resources, funding, employment, services, and representation in government and Francophone mainstream institutions. To what extent, it might be asked, will the existing dynamics within the Francophone community in Ontario continue to impact negatively on the development of a Black Francophone community? Now that the barriers to full development of a Black Francophone community in Ontario have been identified, the focal point should become the time it will take to remove them, so that attention might be focused on the fight against poverty and racism.

ANTIRACISM AND *LA FRANCOPHONIE*: BLACKS WITHIN FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

It is within Francophone communities and their institutions that Francophones most frequently interact, and that is precisely where Blacks often find themselves situated as a double minority. Francophone institutions, thus, have become sites where relations of power are both exercised and resisted (Berger 1996). The discourse of the Black Francophones who participated in this study illustrates the various forms of racism faced by Blacks within Francophone communities and mainstream institutions. In this section, I will focus on specific practices of racism as articulated by Blacks. This included statements that captured feelings about being both betrayed and used by their white counterparts. They also spoke about specific institutional practices of racism, such as a lack of equity and representation, which underlie these feelings. The section will illustrate that, even though Blacks face and speak of racism within Francophone communities, a major challenge for them is the relative silence about racism within the dominant Francophone discourse. The discussion will lead us to draw precise conclusions on race, gender, and the social dynamics of language in relation to the racism faced by Blacks within Francophone communities.

Power relations among Francophones have been characterized by Blacks in terms of feeling that they are being used by white Francophones. The main argument stressed by the Blacks interviewed for this study was that, notwithstanding their active participation in the overall Francophone struggle, their contribution to Ontario's *Francophonie* has not been properly recognized. In fact, they feel that they have been excluded from the sharing of power and resources within Francophone communities (Conseil pour l'intégration 1997). It is important, therefore, to identify both what Blacks think their contribution has been and how they perceive that they have been excluded from Francophone mainstream institutions. According to the study participants, the contribution of Blacks to *la Francophonie* can be seen in the significant role that racial and ethnic minorities have played in the struggle for French language rights in Ontario. These rights include gains such as French services legislation and the creation of Francophone Boards of Education, colleges, and services. These are important rights that Francophones have gained after long struggles, militancy, and community organizing efforts, but usually their achievements have been portrayed as resulting from the activities of white Francophones.

Without question, however, Blacks have participated in the Francophone struggle; for example, by actively taking part in meetings, demonstrations, and mobilizing their community members. Indeed, it is safe to say that, in isolation or collectively, Blacks have been involved in the struggle for improved Francophone services and institutions for a very long time in Ontario. In Toronto during the 1980s, the Haitian community was already becoming established in the city and had a relatively strong infrastructure. Many Haitians were highly involved in the Francophone community, and they were soon joined by Black Francophones from Africa. The advocacy efforts by Blacks have increased and broadened over time as their efforts to support language equity have become coupled with attempts to create racial equity and to promote the diversity and multiculturalism of the Francophone community. They have both contested the under-representation of Blacks in mainstream Francophone institutions and started to participate in events, such as Black History Month, which concerned them as Blacks.

The contribution of Blacks to *la Francophonie* must be seen as ongoing. The research subjects outlined some of the various dimensions of this Black contribution. For example, Blacks use French-language services and are political activists within Francophone communities. They claim French services from the police and the judicial system, and continue to fight against English assimilation that has become a threat to the survival of *la Francophonie*. In addition, Black Francophones promote bilingualism. The point we take

from this discussion is that Blacks' efforts have led to an increase in resources for all Francophones in Ontario, and these resources have become the backbone of the Francophone community and its institutions. This view deconstructs public and official beliefs, which associates the "Francophone struggle" solely with the efforts of white Francophones. The discourse of the study participants revealed feelings of deep disappointment, often expressed as concerns about power relationships within the Francophone community. At the extreme margins of this discourse, terms like "betrayal" have become themes that have been used to characterize these relations. To the study participants, this feeling of betrayal has played out in the following way: when there was a struggle for French language rights, Black Francophones worked hand-in-glove with white Francophones; when successes were achieved, however, Blacks did not get an equitable share of any new resources because whites remained in control over the allocation of those resources. In this instance, resources specifically refer to funding for various autonomous Francophone institutions and services.

Betrayal also has meant a sense that Black Francophones have been used in different ways. They have taken part in advocating for linguistic rights, services, and institutions, but have not benefitted noticeably from new resources that have been made available to the Francophone community as a result of such efforts. It also has been claimed that institutions have been funded in the name of all Francophones, yet, a significant proportion of this population, Black Francophones, has been excluded from an equitable sharing of power. In other words, for study participants betrayal has come to mean that Blacks have been used as numbers to support claims for public funding and institutions, but have not been treated as equals in the sharing of resources. Blacks expected that, as the resources were given to all Francophones, they should be entitled to a fair share of both resources and power. As expressed by the study participants, much of the discourse on Francophone institutions has become preoccupied with the exclusion of Blacks within and by these institutions. This exclusion has been described by various practices that Blacks have come to identify as elements of institutional racism. In this context, we will focus on two major institutional practices that came up in the subjects' discourse, namely, the exclusion of Blacks from key positions within Francophone mainstream institutions and the fact that the majority of clients of these institutions often are members of the Black Francophone community.

Those interviewed maintained that most of the key positions in Ontario's Francophone institutions have been taken by white Francophones, while Blacks usually occupy part-time or contract jobs (Labrie, Chambon, Heller, Kanouté, Madibbo, and Maury 2002). The issue here is not only whether Blacks have been hired, but also the nature of their employment. Over time, an institutional hierarchy, whereby whites hold key positions while Blacks are usually at the bottom of the scale, seems to have emerged. As a consequence, Blacks have been excluded from decision-making processes and from an equitable share of resources. This view, therefore, places a considerable emphasis on power relationships within the Francophone community, connecting the under-representation of Blacks to their exclusion from major positions of power within these institutions. This under-representation has come to be contested by some Black Francophones, particularly because the majority of clients of many Francophone institutions are Black (Conseil pour l'Intégration 2001).

This process has created a racialized client/service-provider dichotomy. The former are, in majority, Blacks; while the latter are mostly whites. Such an approach, in fact, places Blacks under the category of "clients" or consumers, rather than "Francophones" who should benefit from the right to offer services. Blacks have come to constitute the majority of clients for many agencies because of their growing numbers through immigration, and because many of the Francophone institutions in question offer services to immigrants. If the majority of clients are Black, this means that whites do not often use services offered by these institutions. This point is significant because it reveals that white Francophones, who fought vigorously to obtain autonomous institutions, no longer fully utilize these services, either because they use English-language services offered by Anglophone institutions or because they no longer need the services that are

offered by such agencies. The irony is that while white Francophones claim “ownership” over these institutions, they no longer seem to make much use of them, but still feel a need to control them.

In the same vein, many of the study participants also spoke about exclusionary practices affecting Blacks within the school system. They argued that schools in urban centres often re/produced the above-mentioned racialized customer/service-provider relationship that has been applied to other mainstream institutions. Schools, therefore, sometimes have served as mirror images of relationships in the general *Francophonie*, especially when we consider the racial disparities between student bodies and teachers, administrators, and so on. In Toronto, large proportions of many school populations are presently composed of members of racial and ethnic minorities. For example, in some schools the proportion of racial minorities has reached 80 per cent of the overall student population. While the number of Black students has become significant in many schools, often there is only a small number of Black teachers in these schools (see also Comité 1998). Moreover, according to those interviewed for this project, too often, Blacks have been hired mostly as substitute teachers within the school system.

The debates among community members and leaders about Francophone institutions recently have been extended to a consideration of institutions of higher education. This can be explained by the fact that there are presently more Black Francophone students in Ontario’s universities and community colleges, and growing numbers of Blacks recently have become graduates of these institutions. When it comes to the lack of hiring of Black Francophones, the universities and community colleges have been no better than other Francophone institutions. One argument stressed by study participants was that Francophone departments in institutions of higher education have not hired Blacks in spite of the fact that significant proportions of their students are Black. It is important to note that the under-representation of Blacks and other racialized groups in higher education institutions can be perceived not only as a loss of human and intellectual Francophone capital, but also as evidence of racism. Such discourse indicates that Blacks can invest years undertaking advanced degrees, but then may not derive an appropriate benefit from their efforts. It also signifies that, with a growing number of Black students in universities, a continuation of hiring practices that appear to exclude Blacks will simply continue to create the racialized dichotomy that exists at the level of many other institutions, such as schools. Under this scenario, professors and principal researchers will continue to be white, while students, research assistants, and sessional instructors increasingly will be composed of Blacks and other racial minorities. These observations from the study participants are indicative of beliefs that there are contradictions in institutional practices in the sense that though these institutions promote services and education, they have not yet found a way to fully integrate Blacks within the various levels of the hierarchy found in post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

I want to emphasize that the under-representation of Blacks and other racialized groups in the Canadian academy is not limited to Francophone institutions. While many studies have revealed the under-representation of Blacks in Anglophone institutions of higher education (Donkor 2000), the practices of Francophone institutions towards Blacks have not been examined. The under-representation of Blacks in various Francophone mainstream institutions can be related, at least in part, to the non-recognition and non-accreditation of academic and professional qualifications acquired outside of Canada (Strategic Research and Analysis 2002). This non-recognition of credentials also contributes to the under-representation of Blacks within both State and Francophone mainstream institutions. The point that needs to be emphasized is that Black Francophones who migrate to Canada often have foreign credentials which are not properly recognized and, therefore, they sometimes have been excluded from employment that corresponds to their qualifications.

When, however, members of racialized groups who have acquired their education and training in Canadian institutions are excluded from the workforce, we must conclude that non-recognition is not limited to “foreign” credentials (Galabuzi 2001). This all-too-common experience of immigrants should force us to

re-think the policies and procedures that have come to guide hiring practices in Ontario's post-secondary institutions. The non-recognition of credentials is a form of systemic racism that impacts on Blacks in many ways (Waldron 2002). It should be studied in depth in order to reveal any discriminatory ideologies that guide Canada's integration and settlement policies as well as institutional practices. The studies, however, should lead to the identification of concrete solutions to promote the recognition of credentials obtained inside and outside of Canada. We should also stress that practices like the non-recognition of credentials involve both Canadian and Francophone mainstream institutions, hence the relevance of this discussion to the racism practiced within Francophone institutions.

At this juncture, it is sufficient to state that the views of Blacks on institutional racism also relate to concepts of representation and equity. These concepts are pivotal to the discussion of power relations among Francophones. Black Francophones argue that the wider Francophone community is presently diverse, and institutions should adapt to demographic changes to better reflect the complexity of the community they were established to serve. Appropriate changes may need to be made at all levels within institutional hierarchies. Representation must be associated with equity since that is the only way to ensure an appropriate distribution of power in decisions about equitable access to resources. According to those interviewed for this study, it may well become necessary to implement formalized equity policies, or the under-representation of Blacks and other racialized groups in positions of power will continue to prevail. The discourse about representation within Francophone institutions also must be viewed as part of debates which have revealed that Canadian institutions do not yet equitably reflect the multicultural and multiracial fabric of Canadian society (Cooper 2003).

The discussion of power relations among Francophones has revealed specific practices of racism that have resulted in the exclusion of Blacks from mainstream institutions. I will now provide a specific case study that will illustrate the bias of institutional practices towards Blacks. The situation described was widely perceived to be a case of racism. The incident in question concerned a Francophone community college, which, as part of its employment promotion campaign, produced a postcard depicting the image of an ape looking for employment. This event must be seen as significant to any analysis of institutional practices which are indicative of racism.

THE COLLEGE AND *LA CARTE DU SINGE*/THE APE POSTCARD

As part of its employment outreach campaign in 2001, a Francophone College produced a postcard. The card consisted of a full color picture of an ape stretching its paws over a wall and featured a bilingual speech bubble that read: "j'ai besoin d'aide!" "Where's help when you need it?" The postcard provided for a postage-paid return for those who wished to respond to its message (Figure 1). It is important to note that the College itself had been created at the beginning of the 1990s. Francophones, including Blacks, had been involved in a long struggle to obtain such a facility as part of their attempt to establish autonomous institutions that would best serve the interests and needs of the Francophone community. Only a few years later, however, the discourse by Blacks about the College corresponded to their views with respect to other Francophone mainstream institutions. As with other Francophone institutions, the College's practices had begun to generate feelings of betrayal. The largest single group of the College's students were members of visible minorities; however, most of the College's key administrative and academic positions were occupied by white Francophones. This meant that, in the middle of the 1990s, the College reproduced racial disparities, in terms of those who held positions of responsibility, that prevailed in other mainstream Francophone

institutions. While the under-representation of Blacks was itself striking, if hardly surprising, the production of the offensive postcard by the College was particularly unfortunate.

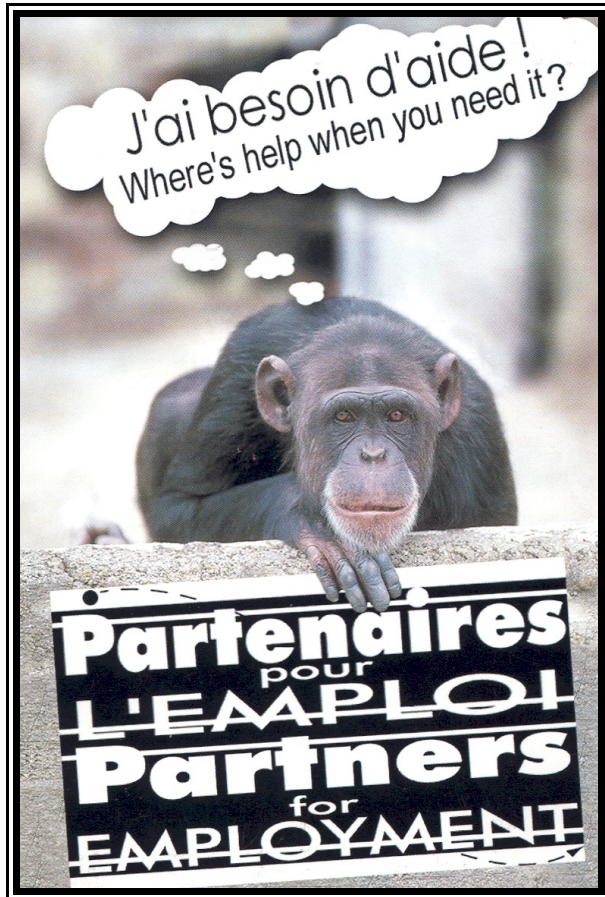


Figure 1

The various factors which explain why this specific incident was an example of racism were captured in a press release entitled “[The] College’s use of racism imagery deeply troubling.” This media release was issued by a Black Francophone umbrella organization named “Solidarity” a few days after the postcard became public. It was intended to contest the use of the ape imagery. According to the members of “Solidarity,” the image was connected to racist ideologies, such as Social Darwinism, which often had been used to justify slavery and colonialism. Those racist assumptions were based on prominent biological and social theories that drew upon concepts such as natural selection, the superiority of certain races, and white supremacy (see also Goldberg 1993; Miles 1989). These ideologies have engendered and been utilized to justify slavery and colonization, and often have led to manifestations of racism. The discourse of Black Francophones also underscored the theoretical and applied foundations of scientific racism. In that context, race became a social construct in order to justify difference and, therefore, lay the groundwork for relations of domination and exploitation. Colonialists often have equated Blacks and people of African descent with monkeys, gorillas, chimpanzees and other apes in order to both dehumanize Africans and justify their enslavement.

The image of the ape evoked painful memories for Blacks. It reminded them of somber and painful moments of their history. Moreover, it perpetuated one of the most unacceptable racist slurs directed to peoples of African descent. The point to be stressed is that the image of the ape frequently had been used by white supremacists to degrade Africans, immigrants, Blacks in the Diaspora, in Africa, in Canada, and in the United States of America, indeed, all people of African descent. We should keep in mind, however, that even though racist ideologies emerged a long time ago, they laid the foundation for contemporary racism. Without question, these ideologies have helped to maintain racism and inequitable relations among groups in society.

In addition to providing text-based criticism of the use of the ape image by the College, the Solidarity press release provided examples of web sites that included graphic material that depicted gorillas and were accompanied by racist slurs. This underscored the degree to which white supremacist groups, which overtly advocate racism and the exclusion of Blacks, still use animal images to dehumanize Blacks. This reveals the extent to which explicit racist codes were embedded in both the College’s publicity material and white supremacist web sites. The similarity in the images used by the College and white supremacist groups was shocking to members of the Black Francophone community, especially given that the College was expected

to show leadership both in the diffusion of knowledge and the application of principles of equity and democracy.

It is fair to ask what type of ideology would guide those in charge of an institution such as the College, with its substantial population of Black students, to choose an image which could be so closely associated with racist groups? The postcard was designed by professionals who might have had limited knowledge of the demographic characteristics of the student body, but the final design, one would assume, had to be approved by College officials. What message, we might ask, could this image have conveyed to employers, what might they have perceived the link to be between an ape and those in the College who were looking for employment? The “Solidarity” press release suggested that the vast majority of the College’s students at the time (80%) were Africans or people of African descent. Thus, a significant proportion of the College’s students belonged to immigrant populations, which makes this racist incident so deeply offensive. The inevitable conclusion that comes to mind is that the College had agreed to the use of an image that could have been interpreted to link its students with apes. Whatever the motives behind the selection of the image, the end result was the production of a highly offensive piece of promotional material to potential employers, some of whom, themselves, may well have been Black.

The use of this disturbing image served to reinforce racist ideas, and demonstrated a the lack of respect for racial and cultural differences. The incident also proved to be racist because the image and its context served to create a discourse related to racist ideologies. Even more tellingly, it was used in Canada, the world’s first nation to adopt an official policy to promote multiculturalism, by a Francophone educational institution that was publicly funded and designed to serve all Francophone peoples. The incident, therefore, had a considerable racist impact since it consciously or unconsciously inflicted deep damage on those who felt directly violated, as well as all those who believe in equity and respect for diversity. The production of the ape postcard revealed an important and hidden aspect of Francophone institutional practices. It must be seen as a significant event because it underscored what too often happened to Black Francophones after Francophone institutions had been established, even when they had been set up to promote rights and equity. It also demonstrated the possible consequences of the under-representation of Blacks within mainstream institutions. Furthermore, it served to remind us that the notions of “Francophone struggle” for justice and the “rights” of linguistic and racial minorities still can include highly negative experiences.

In 2001, the College still was a relatively new institution, but that is no excuse for the production of the ape postcard. At the beginning of the 21st century, this sad episode is an example of an act of insensitivity, humiliation, and dehumanization by public officials who should have known better. Not surprisingly, this incident engendered deep and widespread feelings of discomfort and disgust within Black Francophone community organizations that led these groups to take a leading role in strongly contesting the incident.

We can conclude that Francophone institutions and organizations sometimes have become sites where relations of power, in terms of both domination and resistance, have been exercised. White Francophones sought to establish their own autonomous institutions to resist the exclusion they had experienced within Anglophone organizations. More recently, Blacks have experienced racism within these same Francophone institutions. This reveals that the way in which white Francophones are treating Blacks in such settings is, in many ways, similar to what they had experienced at the hands of the Anglophone majority. Such a dynamic should force us to rethink the process of the struggle over and for power. Why does a group that has itself had to fight against injustice, then act, consciously or otherwise, to reproduce inequities? Keeping in mind that Blacks do not have the same power that whites hold in this still-predominantly white society, one question that must be posed is to what extent can Blacks avoid reproducing dominance, or will they learn from their experiences and opt for equity?

The question of how racism manifests itself in the case of Black Francophones should be viewed in parallel to the observation that racism is rarely spoken about within the Francophone community. Thus, the challenge for Black Francophones is that, while Blacks constantly speak of racism, the dominant Francophone discourse has been characterized by silence about racism. Based on the discourse of those social actors interviewed for this study, it now seems appropriate to examine how this issue fits into the white Francophone agenda on racism.

LANGUAGE AND RACE DISCRIMINATION: THE WHITE FRANCOPHONE SOCIAL AGENDA AND RACISM

Throughout my fieldwork, research subjects constantly spoke of language discrimination coupled with racial marginalization. Placing emphasis on racism may be related to the fact that the latter manifests itself in multiple forms and comes from both the State and Francophone institutions. Or, it could simply be a reflection of the reality that the linguistic element has been publicly, officially, and constitutionally recognized. This does not mean that Blacks do not face linguistic barriers, but rather is intended to indicate that their experiences as a linguistic minority are also shaped by both State and Francophone institutional racism. According to some study participants, Blacks have been unable to attain their rights as a linguistic minority because they are a racial minority that continues to experience racism. What, we might ask, are the connections between language, race, and power relations among Francophones, and how these do these relations connect to the white Francophone social agenda? The concept of a white Francophone social agenda is appropriate because the dominant discourse in the Francophone mainstream in Ontario still focuses on French language rights, without including racism as a consideration, and it remains controlled and prioritized by white Francophones.

Language impacts on Black Francophones in a variety of ways. Canada is promoted internationally as a bilingual State that has English and French as its official languages. As a result, Blacks who immigrate to this country usually arrive with pre-established views about a way of life that functions in both French and English. This perception may change later when they come to realize the distinction between the image portrayed to the outside world and the internal reality lived by all Francophones who find themselves as part of a linguistic minority. Blacks then discover that French is a dominated language. In predominantly Anglophone cities, Francophone communities are largely invisible. Black Francophones also soon seem to become aware that their limited English proficiency may well restrict their access to education and employment opportunities. They also are faced with an overall inadequacy of French-language services. This may be the most critical impediment to the smooth settlement of Black Francophones in Ontario because, at least during the first years of settlement, Black Francophones rely heavily on these services.

In many ways, language-related problems determine the experiences of Black Francophones. But is language their only problematic factor? Since they all speak French, what, precisely, is the root of their language-related problems? How do Blacks who choose to identify as Francophones speak of the institutional racism they face? Why do Black Francophone youth who were born in Canada face racism and fight it? We can reply to these questions by saying that these situations are related to the fact that, according to the study participants, the State-community and community-community practices spoken of in this work are perceived to be highly racialized.

Language does not function separately as a discrete social phenomenon; it is embedded in complex relations with race, gender, immigration, and power. The point in this context is not to doubt the relevance

of language discrimination but, rather, to affirm that, while Black Francophones are faced with the experience of racial discrimination in addition to linguistic barriers, the white Francophone social agenda continues to focus solely on linguistic discrimination. Clearly, both race and language shape the experiences of Black Francophones in significant ways. For example, a youth participant in this study revealed that she once was harassed on the street because she spoke in French and was told she should go back to Africa. Such incidents show that, with Black Francophones, hatred can be directed at their use of the French language and racist assumptions can be made about their origins, simultaneously. Taking into account that this specific Black Francophone youth had been born in Canada, the incident draws our attention to stereotypes and the racialization of citizenship. For some, Blacks are not “Canadians” but “immigrants” no matter how long they have been here, or even if they had been born in Canada. Sadly, the incident reveals that, even today, a Black person can be subjected to both racial and linguistic harassment in Canada.

In that context, study participants pinpointed difficulties in dealing with racism within the Canadian context, both at large and also within the Francophone community. They maintained that racism in Canada is subtle. That is, the racism usually was hidden. For the most part, it was not discussed openly, but, rather, only in an implicit way. In making a link between Canadian and Francophone attitudes on racism, participants often referred to the silence about racism that is specific to the Francophone community (Madibbo and Knight 2002). To situate this discussion in a broader social context, it should be mentioned that this silence is made manifest in many ways. It may take the form of a lack of open debate on racism within mainstream Francophone discourse. It also can be seen in the absence of discussion of race and racism from the curricula found in French-language educational institutions and the publications issued by mainstream Francophone organizations. It may also be related to the fact that, to this day, Francophone mainstream political advocacy work remains primarily focused on issues related to linguistic rights. Finally, it also may be seen to reflect a failure to develop racial equity policies at the level of Francophone mainstream institutions.

It seems fair to say that study participants strongly felt that the fight against racism and the needs of Blacks as a racial minority have not yet been included in the Francophone social agenda, which remains largely focused on language discrimination. Waldron (1996), for example, has written about the extent to which Quebecois mainstream discourse remains fixated with questions concerning language. We might ask, however, how does race threaten this French language agenda? Some might argue that the introduction of a discussion of race and racism to the dominant Francophone discourse may take the focus away from language rights. According to some of the study participants, white Franco-Ontarians, who perceive of themselves as victims of the Anglophone majority, do exhibit racism through their abuse of power. Consequently, they should no longer be portrayed only as a minority, as has historically been the case, but rather as a majority that reproduces domination over Black Francophones.

It may well be possible to situate the silence about racism in the mainstream Francophone community within the context of a discursive strategy. For any community, discourse is not only what is said, but also what is not mentioned (Gal 1989). Therefore, silence about a particular topic can be seen to represent a strong discourse of denial. In this context, the denial is linked to not speaking of racism, in spite of its existence. Therefore, the silence about racism is, in itself, a manifestation of racism. This silence impacts on Blacks in many ways. According to the study participants, Blacks who have been involved in antiracist activities have encountered resistance when they have attempted to speak about racism within the broader Francophone community. In such situations, the silence about racism creates a dilemma for community members who, themselves, have experienced racism, directly or through their community trajectories, but do not feel they are able to speak of such experiences openly. Study participants suggested that within the Francophone community those who wish to tackle racism will seldom find an appropriate space in which to do so; nor are they likely to discover a path towards its eradication.

Our discussion leads us to conclude that there are different positions and priorities within Francophone communities. While whites lead a struggle that is based mainly on language rights, Blacks are immersed in a double fight for language and racial equity. Nevertheless, Blacks remain committed to the French linguistic agenda. Unfortunately, the Francophone mainstream's discourse does not yet support an antiracism agenda, in spite of the fact that racism plays a part in the social dynamics within the Francophone community. As a result of immigration and other factors, the fabric and demography of Ontario society has changed, and so, too, has the Francophone community in the province. Ontario's Francophone communities presently include, in growing numbers, members of racial minorities whose quality of life is not only influenced by language but also, as we have seen in this work, by race and racism.

A study of Black Francophone experiences based on the analysis of language would mainly reflect the language discrimination they face. Examining Black Francophone linguistic experiences together with race offers a more inclusive perspective on the social dynamics produced within Francophone communities. Similarly, one cannot thoroughly address the issues of immigration and integration within Francophone communities without dealing with race. Societies are changed through immigration, so ideologies and practices should be modified accordingly. According to the social actors interviewed for this study, for the white Francophone social agenda to be made more equitable, it has to be broadened to include race and other social categories. When Black Francophones speak of the silence over racism within the broader Francophone community, their goal is to initiate a dialogue about racism in order to identify its dimensions and to find solutions to it. Through their organizations, Black Francophones have participated in antiracist activities through forums, discussion groups, in meetings, and via the Internet. Such activities should suggest to us that the discussion about racism will not vanish. In fact, it is being articulated more frequently than ever by youth and other members of Ontario's Black Francophone community.

One question that should be posed is how the racism that Black Francophones face should be fought? To reply to this question we should recall that issues of linguistic rights and racial equity were closely tied to the debate about statistics and requests that Blacks have made during negotiations associated with the *l'Entente*. These points are related to the desire and need for some form of official recognition of Black Francophones as a linguistic and racial minority by the Canadian State. In this context, we can also make a link to how Black Francophone experiences of racism have been affected by the actions and policies of both the State and Francophone mainstream institutions. The lack of official recognition by the State that Black Francophones constitute a racial minority within the linguistic minority, as well as the silence about racism within the mainstream Francophone community, have combined to produce a situation in which the racism that the members of this group have faced has been neither acknowledged nor properly rectified. We contend that the official recognition of Blacks as a racial and linguistic minority could lead to the implementation of policies that would both consider the full implications of the racism to which they have been subjected and that would allow for the creation of a space within Francophone communities in which racism could be confronted and tackled.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: BLACK FRANCOPHONES CAUGHT BETWEEN THE STATE AND FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES

The previous sections have identified the various forms of racism Black Francophones have experienced at the hands of both the State and mainstream Francophone institutions. Based on the analyses made in these sections, we can identify the situation of Black Francophones as follows: most Black Francophones have chosen to live within Francophone communities which constitute an official linguistic

minority. As a result of many factors, including the marginalization they face within these communities, Black Francophones have established separate organizations and associations. They also have faced various forms of State racism. While this population is situated as a racial minority within a linguistic minority, the mainstream component of the linguistic minority often has excluded its members from full participation in the life of the community. Furthermore, within the Black Francophone community, there is a widespread belief that State does not treat white and Black Francophones equitably. These observations suggest that when Blacks are part of a linguistic minority, which includes whites, the privilege attached to whiteness often places Blacks in a secondary position to whites. Under such circumstances, they will seldom not be properly recognized as being equal in importance to whites.

In addition, there are similarities in the outcomes produced by State racism and the racism of Franco-Ontarian organizations in terms of the under-representation of Black Francophones in positions of authority, their under-employment, and the non-recognition of their credentials. These similarities allow us to contend that white Francophones cannot be said to be exerting a “new” form of racism with respect to Black Francophones; rather, they can be said to be reproducing the same type of discrimination that often has resulted from State policies. From the evidence presented in this study, the two white majorities in Canada, Anglophone and Francophone, are perceived by many Black Francophones to be powerful and dominant allies in the State. Black Francophones, therefore, often find themselves situated in a complex and uncomfortable position between the State and the Francophone mainstream community.

This work also has drawn our attention to an important focal point. Some forms of racism that Black Francophones presently face were experienced by their Anglophone counterparts years ago. These practices include, for example, the under-representation of Blacks in positions of power in State and other mainstream institutions (see The Nation Council of Barbadian Associations 1991). The fact that Black Francophones are facing systemic barriers that other racialized groups experienced in the past reveals that racism is not only ongoing; it is also being re-produced. Unfortunately, the patterns of racism faced by Black Francophones are not being appropriately documented. We also have to acknowledge that the condition of Black Francophones has not been adequately addressed in the antiracism discourse. The double minority situation that Black Francophones face is of such a nature that the racism they encounter often is also invisible to their Anglophone counterparts. It took Black Anglophones long years of struggle to overcome some of the systemic barriers they encountered; it should not have to take their Francophone counterparts as long to achieve similar results. Nevertheless, reaching that goal will be a challenge for the State through its policies, for those engaged in the Antiracism struggle, and for Black Francophones themselves.

Finally, the mere recognition of these barriers should not be taken to mean that the members of Ontario’s Black Francophone community are helpless, perpetual victims. This study has pointed to numerous cases of resistance by Black Francophones concerning structures within both State and Francophone mainstream institutions. A fuller account is beyond the scope of this paper.⁵ The very fact that Black Francophones have chosen to contest certain situations, such as the use of the ape postcard, serves to underscore the need to establish a more inclusive *Francophonie* within the just society known as Canada.

⁵ For a fuller discussion, see Madibbo (2004).

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