



Current Research Compendium on Francophone Immigration in Canada



CONFÉRENCE MINISTÉRIELLE
SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE
CANADIENNE | MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE CANADIAN
FRANCOPHONIE



FÉDÉRATION DES COMMUNAUTÉS
FRANCOPHONES ET ACADIENNES
du Canada

This Compendium was published for the Fourth National Metropolis Pre-Conference Event on Francophone Immigration in Canada, held during the *Twelfth National Metropolis Conference* in Montréal, March 18-21, 2010 in collaboration with the Quebec Metropolis Centre – Immigration et métropoles

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Note of introduction

This compendium contains a series of articles that illustrate the status of research on immigration in Francophone minority communities in Canada. In that sense, it is something of a sequel to the Spring 2008 issue of *Canadian Issues* edited by Chedly Belkhodja.

Written by researchers from many different backgrounds (mostly university researchers, but also researchers with community organizations and public agencies), the articles are presented in the form of short “research capsules” that provide a snapshot of the key findings and their relevance in terms of public policy. At the end of each capsule is a list of resources where readers can obtain more detailed results.

The compendium opens with an article by **Farmer** that sets the tone by highlighting the main current issues related to the integration of immigrants into Francophone communities in Canada. Drawing on a large body of literature, the author presents a thoughtful analysis of 15 years of Canadian immigration policy in a Francophone minority context. She identifies the two factors that shape Francophone immigration (demographics and identity) and discusses the problems and contradictions that stem from the compartmentalization of services.

In the next article, **Ngouem** undertakes a conceptual review of the main processes through which immigrants integrate into Francophone minority society. The article by **Madibbo** provides a number of empirical answers to the questions raised by Ngouem. Her qualitative field work in Alberta with immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa documents their quest for identity. She shows how these immigrants identify not only with the ethnic community in their country of origin, but also with the Francophone community and the rest of Canadian society.

We then move on to a series of case studies that together span much of the country. First is an article on Atlantic Canada by **Gallant**. This is followed by two articles on Ontario by **Huot** (London) and **Lacassagne** (Sudbury) and an article on Calgary by **Hébert and Wanner**. All four of these articles feature the experience of immigrants and the organizations that help them settle. They highlight the *real-life* issues encountered in the field, in particular the importance of services provided by the Francophone host community, which still serve as an interface between new immigrants and the local community.

Still in Calgary, a case study by **Ngwakongnwi** examines a specific and very important issue: access to health care.

Continuing with another examination of the immigrant experience, **Gilbert and Veronis** look at the perceptions and practices of immigrants along the provincial border between Ottawa and

Gatineau. They focus in particular on the linguistic dynamic, which is different depending on whether Francophones are the majority (Quebec side) or the minority (Ontario side).

Continuing with the linguistic dynamic, but with specific emphasis on the vitality of minority communities, **Jacques, Donaldson and Dufresne** of Canadian Heritage examine the arts and culture aspect of cross-cultural relations.

Education and training – at all levels – has been a popular theme lately, as evidenced by the six research capsules that deal with the subject either directly or indirectly. In the first article, **Carlson Berg** explores immigration issues in the education system generally, as well as actual classroom experiences and relationships among students. **Prasad** examines the crucial role of teachers in the establishment of identity among young immigrants in primary grades. Echoing the Canadian Heritage article, **Schroeter** studies the role of the arts in the integration of immigrants at the high school level. **Liboy** looks at the role of schools in building relationships with immigrant families.

Stepping outside the school context *per se*, **Belkhdja and Wade** show how universities can be instrumental in making communities more diverse by recruiting international students and contributing to the Canadian training and intercultural integration of those students.

The final reference document deals with adult education. **Sarrazin** describes the process that led to the preparation of new French proficiency tests for immigrants. The article brings the compendium full circle, because in the end, language is the key to the integration of new immigrants into Francophone minority communities.

Enjoy!

Nicole Gallant
Scientific Editor

The development of immigration policy in the context of francophone minority communities: overview and issues

Keywords: *immigration policies, francophone minority, FCFA, language policies, new mobilizations, categorization, exclusion*

The objective of this research, conducted in 2007, was to track, over a period of 15 years, the development of Canadian immigration policy in minority francophone contexts, and discuss the questions and transformations that are ongoing within these communities. This study¹ was part of an initiative that brought together approximately fifteen researchers who are specialists of the Canadian francophonie. The study was intended to provoke a broad collective reflection on the new directions that are developing in minority francophone milieus in Canada.

METHOD

The research was based on a survey of the literature and a review of documents produced on immigration by (or for) the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA), between 1991 and 2007². Our analysis drew upon the seminal work done by Nicole Gallant and

¹The overall manuscript was directed by Linda Cardinal, Anne Gilbert and Joseph-Yvon Thériault and it was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

² Adam, Dyane (2003). « L'immigration et la francophonie canadienne », *Francophonies d'Amérique*, n° 16, p. 7-35.

Canada. Ministère de la Citoyenneté et de l'Immigration (CIC). Comité directeur – Communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (2006). *Plan stratégique pour favoriser l'immigration au sein des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire*, Ottawa, CIC, 22 p.

Canada. Ministère de la Citoyenneté et de l'Immigration (CIC). Comité directeur – Communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (2005). *Vers la francophonie canadienne de demain. Sommaire des initiatives 2002-2006 pour favoriser l'immigration au sein des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire*, Ottawa, CIC, 12 p.

Canada. Ministère de la Citoyenneté et de l'Immigration (CIC). Comité directeur – Communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (2003). *Cadre stratégique pour favoriser l'immigration au sein des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire*, Ottawa, CIC.

Churchill, Stacy et Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill (1991). *Les communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada face au pluralisme*, Ottawa, La Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, 136 p.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2007). *Sommet des communautés francophones et acadiennes. Vers une vision commune du développement des communautés en situation minoritaire. Bilan depuis 1988 et enjeux*, Version 2.4., Ottawa, FCFA, 34 p.

Chedly Belkhodja on the activities of the FCFA and the theme of welcoming communities, as well as work done by *the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL)* researchers on the matter of immigration, to which we added our recent work done in Ontario and the results of additional studies we reviewed. In total, 66 bibliographic references were consulted.

HIGHLIGHTS

Two diverging perspectives

The development of immigration lies at the very heart of debates on the transformation of minority francophone environments. The question can be viewed from two different arguments being constructed.

Immigration as a response to low demographic weight

Firstly, immigration is presented as a response to the low demographic weight of francophones and a necessary condition to the renewal of communities. The demographic argument is initially invoked as utilitarian logic: there is a need to attract immigration and to have communities benefit from it.

Immigration: a population perceived as different than “us”

However, minority environments are inherently and by necessity self-protective, and they define themselves on the basis of linguistic and cultural boundaries. By the same token, this process tends to inadvertently push away the very population the communities are trying to attract (perceived as different/other than “us”). This is the identity-based argument. The question that needs to be addressed then is how, as a group, does redefine and broaden the collective identity? The will to attract and retain new populations cannot be realized without a reflection on identity in the context of diversity.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2006). *Point d'arrivée. Le bulletin du dossier immigration dans les communautés francophones et acadiennes*, Ottawa, FCFA, n° 1, 8 p.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2004). *Vers des communautés francophones ouvertes et inclusives. Évaluation de la capacité des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire à accueillir de nouveaux arrivants* (Rapport final), Ottawa, Prairie Research Associates, 103 p.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2001). *Parlons-nous! Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue*, Ottawa, FCFA.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2001). *Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue*, Ottawa, FCFA, 2001.

Jedwab, Jack (2002). *L'immigration et l'épanouissement des communautés de langue officielle au Canada : politiques, démographie et identité*, Ottawa, Bureau de la Commissaire aux langues officielles, Ministère des Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 79 p.

Quell, Carsten (2002). *L'immigration et les langues officielles : obstacles et possibilités qui se présentent aux immigrants et aux communautés*, Ottawa, Commissariat aux langues officielles, Ministère des Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 69 p.

This tension between the demographic argument and the identity argument and the underlying diverging perspectives of a utilitarian logic or one of social exclusion is at the heart of the analysis undertaken by researchers and community stakeholders³.

Convergence in the evolution of the legislative framework

Contrary to the message of “newness” largely associated with immigration, historically one finds a continuity and convergence in the evolution of language policies with regard to immigration, and in those on immigration⁴.

The evolution of the *Official Languages Act* (1969), in particular the adoption of the new *Act* in 1988, gave new impetus to the development of the francophone immigration file. The government’s commitment to contribute to the vitality of official languages communities⁵ by requiring the cooperation of all federal departments thus included the immigration sector, which had until then been neglected.

Linguistic provisions were integrated into the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2002). Greater importance was given to knowing both official languages in the selection criteria for immigration candidates. Finally, the communities benefited from federal programs relating to recruitment and the development of reception and settlement services.

The FCFA: reflection on two decades of work

The work done by the FCFA as of the 1990s can be divided into two parts:

³ Belkhdja, Chedly (2005). « Immigration and the Challenge of Regionalization. Francophone Immigration in New Brunswick », *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*, Spring/Printemps 2005, p. 112-115.

Belkhdja, Chedly et Nicole Gallant (2004). « D’un déficit de diversité... à la production de la diversité : l’expérience immigrante francophone au Canada et au Nouveau-Brunswick », sous la direction de J. Gatugu, S. Amoranitis et A. Manço, *La vie associative des migrants : quelle reconnaissance?* Paris, L’Harmattan, p. 79-94.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2004). *Vers des communautés francophones ouvertes et inclusives. Évaluation de la capacité des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire à accueillir de nouveaux arrivants* (Rapport final), Ottawa, Prairie Research Associates, 103 p.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2001). *Parlons-nous! Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue*, Ottawa, FCFA.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2001). *Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue*, Ottawa, FCFA, 2001.

Gallant, Nicole et Chedly Belkhdja (2005). « Production d’un discours sur l’immigration et la diversité par les organismes francophones et acadiens au Canada », *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 37 (3), p. 35-58.

⁴ Jedwab, Jack (2002). *L’immigration et l’épanouissement des communautés de langue officielle au Canada : politiques, démographie et identité*, Ottawa, Bureau de la Commissaire aux langues officielles, Ministère des Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 79 p.

Quell, Carsten (2002). *L’immigration et les langues officielles : obstacles et possibilités qui se présentent aux immigrants et aux communautés*, Ottawa, Commissariat aux langues officielles, Ministère des Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada, 69 p.

⁵ Canada, Loi sur les langues officielles, 1988, Partie VII, article 41.

- An exploratory and awareness-raising period with regard to the potential of immigration, initially conceptualized as relations between “francophones and new Canadians”⁶ then repositioned within the communities themselves [translation] “[...]” creating, in communities, a climate that is favourable to the reception and settlement of immigrants “[...]”⁷, and
- a decidedly more strategic period of organization and rationalization of the immigration sector with reference to the Canadian francophonie, which led to the creation of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada-Francophone minority communities (CIC-FMC) Steering Committee and the development of a framework and of a strategic plan.

Mobilization of stakeholders, milieus and institutions

Immigration mobilizes a multitude of stakeholders and interventions at various levels; this is a matter that affects all of the areas of the francophonie, whether it be language policies, health, education, human rights, or others.

The experience of immigration within francophone communities brings out the fragmented and chaotic dimension of the francophone public space on which integration depends (in the sectors managed by language policies versus those that are excluded, and the real state of services).

The tensions between the demographic argument and the identity-based argument are transposed within institutions. One element of the change consists in the legitimization of new categories: francophone immigrants, francophone refugees, racial minorities. Stakeholders are mobilized by new issues, as the work of the francophone feminist movement in Ontario has illustrated regarding spousal sponsorship and legislative changes⁸.

Categorization can also lead to the differentiation and the distancing of populations, as in the case of eligibility/orientation towards distinct programs or the relationship between the school and certain families.

⁶ Churchill, Stacy et Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill (1991). *Les communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada face au pluralisme*, Ottawa, La Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, 136 p.

⁷ Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) (2004). *Vers des communautés francophones ouvertes et inclusives. Évaluation de la capacité des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire à accueillir de nouveaux arrivants (Rapport final)*, Ottawa, Prairie Research Associates, 103 p.

⁸ Côté, Andrée, Michèle Kérisit et Marie-Louise Côté (2001). *Qui prend pays... L'impact du parrainage sur les droits à l'égalité des femmes immigrantes*, Ottawa, Rapport d'étude présenté par la Table féministe francophone de concertation provinciale au ministère de la Condition féminine Canada, 259 p.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The state of immigration policy in the context of francophone and Acadian environments and in particular the contradictions in the development of welcoming structures in minority environments highlight the necessity of developing an approach that is not compartmentalized (strict specialization of host and settlement services), but integrated overall into the institutional networks that characterize francophone minorities (education, employment, health, social services, justice, arts and culture...).

The problems related to fragmentation due to the piecemeal nature of services, and the distancing that ensues, are social issues that have been little explored and that invite researchers, decision-makers and practitioners to examine the policies and institutions “from within”, in order to detect and determine the categorization and exclusion processes that are at play.

To find out more

Farmer, Diane (2008). L'immigration francophone en contexte minoritaire: entre la démographie et l'identité, in Thériault, Joseph-Yvon, Gilbert, Anne et Linda Cardinal (under the direction of) *L'espace francophone en milieu minoritaire au Canada. Nouveaux enjeux, nouvelles mobilisations*, Éditions Fidès, p. 121-159.

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IMMIGRATION TO FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES IN CANADA

March 2010

Research Capsule 2

Constructing a Normative Model for the Integration of Immigrants into Francophone Minority Communities

Keywords: *immigration, immigrant integration, francophone minority community, model, host community, cultural understanding, assimilation, multiculturalism, interculturalism, systemic analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Which integration model is most likely to ensure the successful integration of Francophone immigrants into Francophone minority communities? Answering that question is the main purpose of this capsule, which endeavours to construct a normative model for the integration of immigrants into a host community.

From the 1990s onward, researchers studied the selection, integration and retention of immigrants in minority communities¹. Those studies found that knowledge of the language of the host community², cultural understanding³ and employment⁴ are three key factors in the integration of immigrants.

¹ Churchill, S., and I. Kaprielian-Churchill. 1991. *The Future of Francophone and Acadian Communities in a Pluralistic Society: Facing Pluralism*, Ottawa: Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada

Hawthorne, L. 2007. "Foreign Credential Recognition and Assessment: An Introduction," *Canadian Issues / Thèmes canadiens* (Spring)

Heller, M., with M. Campbell, P. Dalley and D. Patrick. 1999. *Linguistic Minorities and Modernity: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*, London: Longman

Milroy, B. M., and M. Wallace. 2004. "Ethnoracial Diversity and Planning Practices in the Greater Toronto Area: Final Report," *Policy Matters Series*, No. 12 (November).

² Jedwab, J. 2002. *Immigration and the Vitality of Canada's Official Language Communities: Policy, Demography and Identity*, Ottawa: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

³ Chambon, A., et al. 2001. *L'immigration et la communauté franco torontoise*, Toronto: University of Toronto, CREFO.

Gallant, N. 2007. "When Immigrants are the Minority Within the Minority: Openness and Identity Inclusion in Francophone Minority Communities," *Our Diverse Cities / Nos diverses cités*, Vol. 3, pp. 93-97.

⁴ Environics Research Group. 2004. *Intégrer les employeurs au débat sur l'immigration. Sondage auprès des employeurs et des gestionnaires canadiens des ressources humaines*. Report produced for the Public Policy Forum.

METHODOLOGY

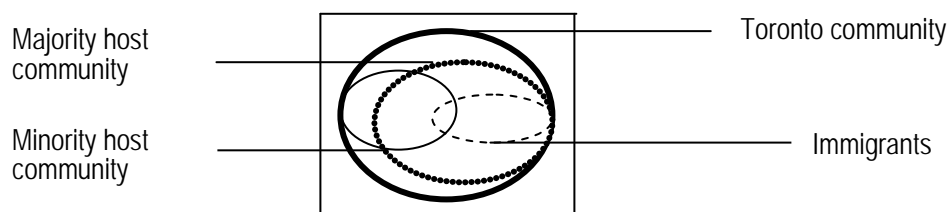
This article is based on exploratory research using the descriptive case study method. Observation and semi-directed interviews were conducted with some 50 immigrants of different origins and cultures living in Toronto and who came from countries where French is an official language. All participants consider themselves to be Francophones and many of them went to school in French even though their mother tongue was Arabic, Bassa or Creole.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Linguistic and cultural assimilation for purposes of employment

Thirty of the respondents in our sample stated that they learned English in order to find a job, forsaking their mother tongue. Forty respondents spoke French before they arrived in Toronto and still speak that language at home sometimes. They are making every effort to learn English in order to optimize their economic prospects. They do not believe that French will help them integrate; the result is that they and their children become assimilated into the English majority. Figure 1 illustrates the linguistic and cultural assimilation of immigrants.

Figure 1. Assimilation of immigrants into host communities



Twenty respondents have become involved in the cultural activities of the Francophone host community and no longer in those of their community of origin. Like the 30 respondents who have learned English, they believe that being part of a socio-economic network in the host majority community is a key factor in getting a job.

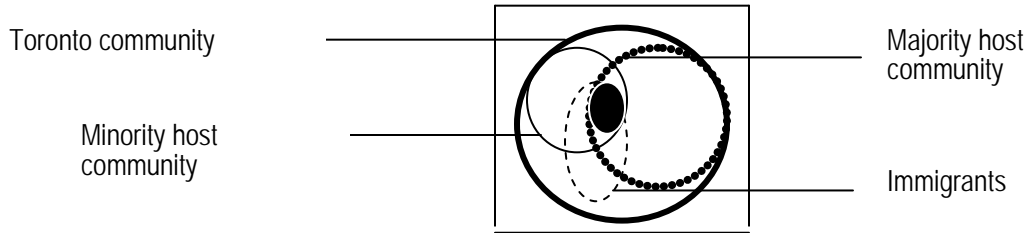
Interculturalism: Sharing language and culture

Some 15 respondents stated that they learned English and French (if they did not already speak it) and that they use their mother tongue everywhere. Several said that they have taken part in the cultural activities of the majority and minority host communities, as well as in the activities of their community of origin. When we asked them if they belonged to a Francophone community, an Anglophone community or their community of origin, at least five stated that they belong to all

Schellenberg, G., and H. Maheux. 2007. "Immigrants' perspectives on their first four years in Canada: Highlights from three waves of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada", *Canadian Social Trends/Tendances sociales canadiennes*, Statistics Canada.

three. Even those who have found work stated that they feel comfortable in their job, whether they work in English or in French. Figure 2 shows interculturalism.

Figure 2. Typical interculturalism among immigrants



Multiculturalism: Preserving language and culture and establishing a network of immigrants

Some immigrants think of themselves as living “abroad” even though they have children who were born in Canada. Five immigrants believe it is important to stay connected to their community of origin, main reason for that being that they feel they have to preserve their culture and heritage. Those immigrants believe they should build a cultural centre for people from their country of origin in Toronto, speak to their children in their mother tongue and avoid other communities as much as possible. Figure 3 is a profile of that category of immigrants.

Figure 3. No linguistic or cultural contact

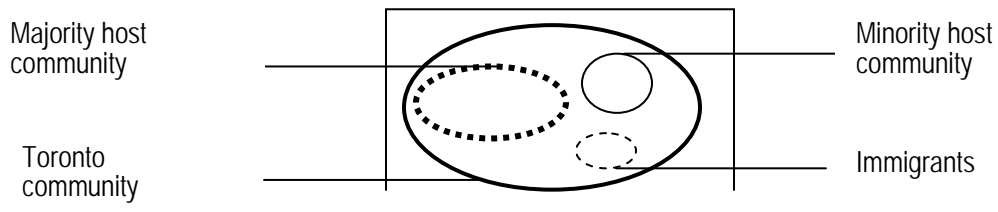


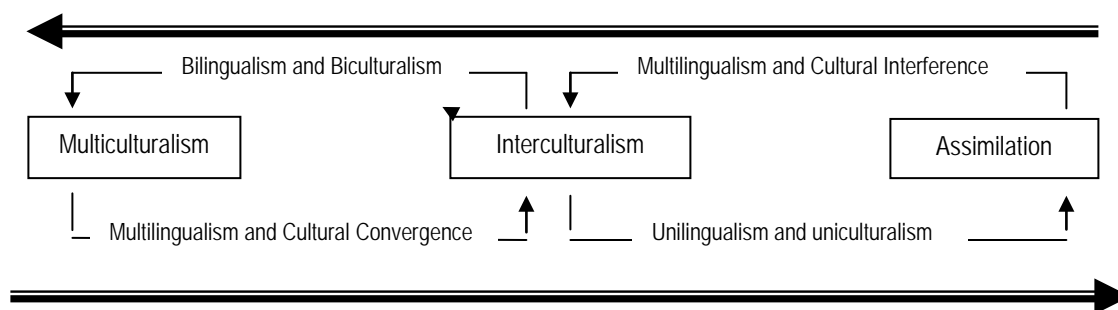
Figure 3 shows how the five immigrants have no contact with the majority host community or the minority host community but stay within their social, cultural and linguistic network. If both of the other communities live in isolation, the Toronto community comes across as multicultural. These immigrants believe that their economic networks enable them to work in their own communities. Three of the five immigrants have small businesses that sell mostly items from their country of origin.

CONSTRUCTING A NORMATIVE MODEL OF INTEGRATION

Figure 4 shows the dynamics of the economic and sociocultural integration of immigrants into Francophone minority communities⁵.

⁵ This diagram is adapted from : Rousseau, Guillaume, 2006. *La nation à l'épreuve de l'immigration ; le cas du Canada, du Québec et de la France*, Les éditions du Québécois.

Figure 4. Integration of immigrants into a Francophone minority community



This diagram shows that the integration of immigrants into a minority host community is a continuum and a two-way process. Systemic analysis of the integration of immigrants assumes that immigrants integrate in one of three ways: multiculturally, interculturally or by assimilation. These three modes function independently and are sometimes institutionalized in the country of the host community. To optimize the integration of immigrants into the Francophone minority community in Toronto, the approach must take into account the modes of integration but also the linguistic, cultural and employment variables of the continuum.

IN CONCLUSION

Three proposals for normative integration of Francophone immigrants

Based on the results presented above, three proposals are made in an attempt to show that it is possible to establish an inclusive and beneficial relationship between the Francophone and Anglophone communities and Francophone immigrants.

P1: Language: The French language does not only serve as a means of communication for all Francophones but may also contribute to the dynamics of plural identities and cultures. The French language used to define identity, culture or citizenship enhances the sense of belonging to a group even though this group is not homogeneous.

P2: Cultural understanding: Francophone minority communities have to accept cultural dialogue with immigrants and make cultural understanding an essential condition for the successful integration of immigrants into their community. Partnership between cultures is the essence of successful integration.

P3: Employment: Francophone networks must ensure that immigrants integrate not as consumers, but as full-fledged members of the Francophone community, participating in the production and management of common resources. Immigrants do not simply constitute significant human capital; they also have the capacity to make use of their social capital.

Researcher

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The Racial and Ethnic Identity of African Francophone Immigrants

Keywords: *Francophone immigrants; Alberta; sub-Saharan Africa; identity; antiracism; inclusion*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project is to understand the identity choices and practices of first-generation Francophone African immigrants in Alberta. The study looks at how immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa relate to their communities of origin, the Francophone community in general and Canadian society as a whole. Another goal of the project is to determine the impact of social factors like race and language on identity among immigrants. The project explores possible ways of strengthening immigrants' sense of belonging and socio-economic integration within the Francophone community and Canadian society as a whole.

METHOD

The study is based on a qualitative research method that uses semi-directed individual interviews and document analysis. The study was conducted between 2007 and 2009 in the cities of Calgary, Edmonton and Brooks with some 30 individuals from such countries as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Cameroon. Research subjects, between the ages of 22 and 50, were selected using the snowball method. The interviews covered immigration path, linguistic profile, socio-economic integration process and links with various communities. We also compiled some 40 public and internal documents, including studies, minutes and community newsletters.

HIGHLIGHTS

The identity discourse of the research subjects brings to light multiple forms of affiliation with many social groups, the primary manifestations of which include collective identification with the ethnic community of the source country, the Francophone community and the rest of Canadian society.

Sense of belonging to the ethnic community

Affiliation with the ethnic community is established in order to meet challenges immigrants encounter in the course of migration, especially the social and economic tensions and conflicts that occur within the immigrant community. Initiatives taken by organizations in the immigrant community, such as events celebrating national holidays, are meant to strengthen intra-ethnic cohesion within the immigrant community and create more opportunities for community development and social and economic integration in the new immigration context.

Sense of belonging to the Francophonie

It is important for immigrants to feel they belong to the Francophonie, where “being Francophone” to them means “being an integral part of the Francophone community” and “living in French in Canadian society as a whole.” However, some forms of linguistic racialization faced by Francophones in Canadian society overall and the racialization faced by immigrants within the Francophone community make some African immigrants reluctant to identify themselves as Francophones. To affirm their Francophone identity, immigrants become involved in promoting linguistic duality and racial and ethnic diversity in the host society.

Sense of belonging to the Canadian society

Immigrants’ relationship to Canada is perceived in terms of the legal rights and social benefits this country offers, but also in terms of their respect for the main duties that come with citizenship, such as voting, respect for Canadian political institutions and civic involvement through volunteerism, for example. However, the problem of racialization from Canadian society at large reduces the likelihood that immigrants will meet their migration goal, which is to build a rich social and economic life and contribute to the social, political and economic growth of the host society. This gives rise to the perception that they are not considered genuine Canadians. The Government of Canada is working in partnership with the community and implementing initiatives and programs to encourage immigrants to identify strongly with the Francophone community and the rest of the host society as well. Despite these efforts, African immigrants continue to feel excluded and marginalized.

Multiculturalism and inclusive citizenship

Canadian multiculturalism encourages immigrants to choose their own ethnic culture but at the same time embrace dual citizenship. Some Francophone immigrants are able to develop and maintain their ethnic identity linked to their community of origin, but racialization and other barriers create a sense of exclusion from the Francophone community and Canadian society as a whole. Consequently, there is a need to further strengthen their attachment to the host society. This will happen within the context of a social blueprint for building a society that is more equal and inclusive.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This study shows that more should be done to strengthen the principles of multiculturalism and linguistic duality. Implementing racial and linguistic equity programs could have positive results if those programs are applied in an appropriate manner in the social and political institutions in both the Francophone community and Canadian society overall.

To find out more

Madibbo, A. 2010. (forthcoming). “The African Francophone Identities within the Francophone Diaspora in Canada,” in McCauley, T. (Ed.), *Canadian Society: Global Perspectives*. Oshawa, Ontario: de Sitter Publications.

Madibbo, A. (forthcoming). “Les identités multiples des immigrants Africains francophones”. Submitted to *Les Cahiers de recherches du Centre canadien sur les francophonies en milieu universitaire*.

Research team

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Funding agencies

- University of Calgary
- Le Centre canadien de recherche sur les francophonies en milieu minoritaire, University of Regina

IMMIGRATION TO FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES IN CANADA

March 2010

Research Capsule 4

Pathways of francophone immigrants in the Atlantic Provinces

Keywords: *integration; immigration for francophone minority communities; settlement services; language fluency*

INTRODUCTION

Minority francophone communities are increasingly welcoming for immigrants. However, when we look at integration paths followed by francophone immigrants in Canada, we notice that many do not integrate into the francophone community; even when they continue to live in French at home, their social and institutional (employment, schooling, etc.) networks are often dominantly English.

METHOD

We performed one-hour interviews with 21 francophone immigrants. To develop an overall profile of the Francophone immigrant situation in the Atlantic, we looked for immigrants from a variety of origins who had arrived in Canada at different times and in different ways and, especially, who now live in various parts of the region (rural and urban New Brunswick; Prince Edward Island; Newfoundland and Labrador; Halifax). The sample was thus a qualitative one, in the sense that it seeks a diversity of possible situations.

Interviews covered a) their immigration paths; b) their arrival and integration experience (first contact and impressions, employment, housing, schools, immigrant services, network of friends and social life, health care, main obstacles to integration); and c) their assessment and level of satisfaction (what they like and dislike about their area; what makes them want to stay or leave; what they would change).

HIGHLIGHTS

The immigration experience of Francophone immigrants who settle in Atlantic Canada is multi-layered.

Dimensions typical of Canadian immigration

Some aspects are typical of Canadian immigration in general: problems associated with recognition of qualifications, administrative difficulties associated with one's status, use of informal

social networks on arrival, the lack of cultural adaptation of public services and their lack of experience with newcomers, etc.

Dimensions characteristic of immigration into smaller areas, aggravated in minority francophone settings

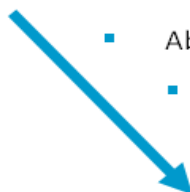
Other aspects of the experience of Francophone immigrants to Atlantic Canada are characteristic of immigration to small settings, which is where Francophone communities are generally located. Although those aspects are also found in studies dealing primarily with English-speaking migrants, they appear to be aggravated in the case of Francophone minorities, which are even less used to receiving and integrating immigrants than their English-speaking counterparts in the same regions. In this instance, we think of the difficulty penetrating local social networks or the lack of structured social or multicultural activities. Local attitudes of ignorance or even lack of openness to diversity are exacerbated in Francophone settings, according to one participant from P.E.I., because of the bitterness towards “Others” that is necessary for the survival of minority peoples.

Dimensions specific to francophone immigration

Lastly, what this research has especially attempted to identify are the dimensions specific to Francophone immigration to Atlantic Canada. These are numerous.

The experience of Francophone immigrants to Atlantic Canada begins with a particularly warm reception from the local people, but soon includes a discovery of the **absence of settlement services in French** (or, in the rare cases where they exist, the lack of information promoting their existence). This results in a lack of knowledge about school systems and other French-language institutions, which hinders the development of social networks in French, already so difficult to penetrate.

Pathways of integration

- On arrival: Francophone population is especially warm and “welcoming”
 - Absence of settlement services in French (& by francophones)
 - Lack of knowledge about school systems and other French-language institutions
 - Hinders the development of social networks in French
- 

Further, Francophone immigrants to minority communities quickly discover that the way bilingualism works in Canada prevents them from finding work easily unless they speak both languages. Access to public services in general (hospitals, etc.) is also hindered when one does not speak English.

However, on the French side, they encounter difficulties understanding local variants, all the more difficult for some because French is their second language and not their mother tongue. As noted by a number of participants, a **fairer presentation of how Canadian bilingualism works** and of the need to know English in most areas outside Quebec, as well as **supplemental French courses** would be beneficial.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Results from this research confirm those of other researchers, most notably in the Western Provinces. Although stimulating public awareness remains an important element, it seems that the main obstacle to the integration of francophone immigrants into minority francophone *communities* stems from institutional practices.

On the one hand, if settlement services are provided by dominantly English SPOs, these immigrants will be guided spontaneously to Anglophone neighbourhoods and institutions (schools, banks, health services, etc.), thus led away from local francophone communities.

On the other hand, current language training policy does not take into account that francophone immigrants need not only English language training (required for employment), but also French language supplementary classes. Such classes would be beneficial partly because French is often not their first language, but also and particularly, because knowledge of the *local* varieties of French will assist their *social* integration into French language *communities*.

Moreover, both English and French classes ought to be delivered by the francophone community, because – beyond linguistic training – language classes also serve two crucial integration functions: learning about the local culture and making friends and acquaintances.

To find out more

Nicole Gallant et Carole Fournier, 2010, *A Qualitative Profile of Francophone Immigrants in Atlantic Canada*, Rapport INRS. Available online at <http://www.uccs.inrs.ca/>

Nicole Gallant, forthcoming, « Trajectoires d'immigrants francophones en milieu minoritaire : rôle des réseaux et des organismes communautaires dans l'insertion sociale des immigrants », *Mouvements associatifs dans la francophonie nord-américaine*, sous la direction de Lucille Guilbert, Presses de l'Université Laval.

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Funding agency

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada, for the Atlantic Population Table

The Challenge of 'Successful Integration' into the London, Ontario Francophone Minority Community

Keywords: *ethnography, habitus, identity, integration, occupation, place, visible minorities*

INTRODUCTION

While 'successful integration' of francophone newcomers is a key policy goal of the federal government aimed at maintaining and bolstering Francophone Minority Communities (FMC), migrants face a series of obstacles to this end. The notion of 'success' is heavily value-laden and contextually-bound, and one should question how it is defined and by whom? There is a need to bring to light and critically reflect upon the daily experiences of francophone newcomers to raise awareness of structural barriers to 'successful integration', as well as to question how and why 'success' has been defined in particular ways.

A critical ethnographic study of immigrant and refugee integration is currently being undertaken with French-speakers from visible minority groups within the London, Ontario FMC. The study examines ways in which structural influences shape how integration is understood and worked towards, and addresses how individuals negotiate shifts to their familiar places and occupations, and by extension, to their identities within the Canadian social system. Occupation in this sense is broadly defined, extending beyond paid employment, to include all activities that people engage in to occupy themselves (e.g. parenting, volunteering).

METHOD

Theoretical framework

This research is located within a critical paradigm, guided by anti-racism and postcolonial feminism, and drawing upon Bourdieu's¹ (1979) theory of practice to identify unquestioned assumptions about the 'way things work' in society. As such, this theoretical framework serves to highlight the intersections of identity, particularly according to language, race and gender in processes of migration and integration.

¹ Bourdieu, P. (1979). *Outline of a theory of practice*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Ethnography

Methodologically, the critical ethnography was adapted from Carspecken² (1996). The first stage involved up to five meetings with a total of 8 participants (4 female and 4 male) who were French-speaking newcomers from countries in Central and Northern Africa, Eastern Europe, and North America. Data collection consisted of a preliminary narrative interview to obtain the stories of their migration and settlement. The second and third meetings consisted of the creation of mental maps outlining their spatial use of the city, and participation in participant-selected routine occupations. The two final meetings entailed semi-structured interviews focused on occupation and integration respectively. All meetings were conducted in French. The purpose of this data collection was to gain a depth of understanding of individual experiences within this particular local context.

The second stage involved semi-structured interviews with 6 Francophones from governmental and immigrant-serving organizations who were recruited to provide information about the structures and systems in place to support Francophone immigrant integration. Questions addressed topics such as the organizations' mandates and service provision. The purpose of this data collection was to gain knowledge of the implementation of the social system at a community level. Appreciating the context of the London FMC is also being supported through document review and an examination of Canadian Census data.

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data collection was recently completed and analysis has begun. Preliminary findings provide insight into the complexity of newcomer integration within a linguistic minority context. For instance, participants were asked whether they thought there was a difference between integrating into the city of London generally and into the city's francophone minority specifically. Their responses highlight issues that will be explored through ongoing analysis, a few of which are briefly introduced below.

Cohesion and Division

An assumption that individual migrants adapt to an existing environment and integrate into a cohesive whole overshadows existing divisions within receiving communities. London's Anglophone and Francophone communities are both diverse and integrating into either or both of them is complicated due in part to the separation of the two, and to tensions within each. As such, analysis will seek to identify points of divergence and convergence between and within London's official language communities to address how cohesion can be promoted to benefit the FMC.

² Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. New York: Routledge.

Bilingualism and Multiculturalism

As FMCs become increasingly diverse, the artificial separation between language and ethnicity and/or culture is problematized. Linguistic communities are multicultural and the intersections of their affiliations may lead to their integration into a number of groups and communities. Discourses on integration into FMCs must consider that migrants may also belong to Spanish or Arabic speaking communities among others. Analysis will address these intersections to inform existing policies on bilingualism and multiculturalism.

Negotiating transitions

The analysis of findings is theoretically informed by Bourdieu's³ concepts of habitus and field to explore daily practices of integration. Habitus refers to taken-for-granted understandings of social structures that affect what people do and how they act within particular social spaces (i.e. fields). Exploring differences in the dispositions of newcomers and those of the host community, and their interrelations with the fields organizing society will illuminate specifically what migrants are integrating into (e.g., education field, etc.) and how these fields both enable and constrain migrants' integration. Viewed this way, the 'work' of integration is not imposed wholly on the newcomers rather it considers how the transitions experienced throughout the process of integration can be understood within particular contexts.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The participants' experiences highlight a range of factors at a number of levels. At the macro scale, issues such as the influences of the global labour market and migration policies influence one's reasons for migrating, and selecting a particular destination. Within this broader socio-political context, individuals' everyday experiences at the micro scale affect, and are affected by, the negotiation of transitions brought on by international migration. As people's occupations shift and change due to their migration from one country and its familiar places to a country with which one is less familiar, the intersection of their identity traits, such as race, language, and gender may also be affected as they situate themselves within a different society. Highlighting this interplay of structure and agency through Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field, this study of a local context serves to emphasize the particular socio-historically situated moves of individual migrants within larger global migratory patterns. Furthermore, the focus on London's francophone minority community is particularly important given the unique political context of Canadian FMCs.

To find out more

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³ idem

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Funding agencies

- This doctoral work has been supported by an Ontario Graduate Scholarship and a doctoral award from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

The Challenge of Francophone Immigration to Sudbury: An Unknown National Issue

Key words: *immigrants, Francophones, national unity, attraction*

INTRODUCTION

Sudbury is the capital of a demographically bilingual northern Ontario, within which much of the Franco-Ontarian identity is defined. Over the last 20 years, there has been a growing awareness in community and political circles of the importance of promoting Francophone immigration into minority communities. The policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism are the cornerstones of the Canadian identity. Without flourishing Francophone communities outside Quebec, the entire premise of Canadian unity is called into question. Ontario has the largest Francophone minority community in Canada (over 550,000). In terms of concentration (although not in absolute numbers), Francophones largely live in Sudbury and in the northern part of the province. It can therefore be said that the battle to enhance the vitality of Francophone minority communities—an essential part of Canadian unity—is being played out in Sudbury. According to all the figures, these communities can only survive and thrive through immigration. And Sudbury seems to be having difficulty attracting Francophone immigrants—roughly 100 settled there between 1991 and 2001, and since then, there has been a steady rate of about a dozen a year. Sudbury's challenge is therefore to put in place the tools needed to foster attracting, retaining and integrating Francophone immigrants.

METHODOLOGY

Since the numbers in question are so small numbers, the research team opted not to use quantitative methods. It is working with local partners to meet their needs through a combination of research and action. The team did not develop any research programs *a priori* but rather, responded to requests put forward by the front-line stakeholders, whether they be immigrant service providers or the municipality in the development of its Local Immigration Partnership. It is therefore research *for* the community and not *on* the community.

HIGHLIGHTS

The problematic issue of numbers

One problem coming out of all the forums on immigration is that of the actual situation and the reliability of the statistics. Everyone agrees that not only is there a problem with the definition of “immigrant,” there is also a problem with the definition of “Francophone.” The *Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury* [Sudbury Francophone intercultural contact centre] (CIFS) serves a significant client base (students in particular) that is not counted as immigrant, either because the students are here on visas or because settled immigrants/students have kept their addresses from their host city (often Toronto).

Establish the legitimacy of the CIFS as a one-stop shop for the welcoming and integration of Francophone immigrants to Sudbury

The sole provider of settlement services to immigrants officially designated by CIC in Sudbury is the Sudbury Multicultural and Folks Arts Association (SMFAA). This organization is recognized as being bilingual, but in reality few services are offered in French. The CIFS has done this job for the last decade, without adequate funding and infrastructure. The research team’s mission is therefore to help the CIFS obtain official recognition. This could be done, for example, through a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the services they offer. This assessment would be essential to their submission to the department. The research team is also working various partners to develop a lobbying strategy.

Make Francophone and bilingual post-secondary institutions “producers” of Francophone immigrants

Sudbury is home to Laurentian University and the University of Sudbury (bilingual institutions) and Collège Boréal (a Francophone institution). Over the last decade, those institutions have hired more than 30 immigrant Francophone professors; and the number of Francophone students—on visas or settled in the country—has increased. Collège Boréal, in particular, has developed an effective marketing strategy focussed on recruiting in Francophone Africa. Laurentian University has also seen its Francophone population increase, although much remains to be done as far as a targeted recruitment policy is concerned. The research group has identified post-secondary institutions as the tool of choice for boosting the number of Francophone immigrants. In fact, during the various forums held on immigration in the city over the last two years, the issue of branding was often raised. The organizations found that Sudbury is not well known and that it is difficult to raise the city’s profile outside Canada.

As a result, in terms of attraction, there are three options: 1) word of mouth—in other words, immigrants who have settled here and are happy with their experience will encourage their families and friends to come; 2) the second migration—in other words, immigrants who arrived in the major urban centres and who will go to Sudbury because they will find employment that better

corresponds to their qualifications, because they do not like living in a large city and because the cost of living is lower in Sudbury than in Montréal or Toronto; and 3) since post-secondary institutions are already the main point of attraction for Francophone immigrants, synergy and coordinated policies must be created with them, in order to increase this appeal.

Develop the northern Ontario Francophone immigration support network

Based on the *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, the CIC-Ontario Region was divided into three networks: the east, south-west and the north. The CIFS organized a dozen meetings and forums in the north, during which it was decided that the CIFS would be the organization responsible for the northern network. The next step will be to develop welcome structures for immigrants (in Thunder Bay, Timmins, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie) within existing facilities (such as the Francophone centres or *carrefours*). The CIFS will contribute its expertise in helping set up these structures, training staff, offering awareness workshops for newcomers and for the communities, as well as putting together information kits.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This research has highlighted the fundamentally positive role played by the CIFS and the urgent need for recognition and stable funding of this organization by CIC. It also shows the importance of involving the three levels of government in discussions on immigration. Finally, the research team is beginning work on a project to develop beneficial tax policies on the transfer of funds from Francophone immigrants who settle in northern Ontario. This is seen as a financial instrument that could add to the appeal of the north.

To find out more

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Project partners

- Welcoming Communities Initiative
- City of Greater Sudbury
- Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury

Funding agencies

- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada—CURA (Community University Research Alliances) through the Welcoming Communities Initiative, promoting welcoming and sustainable communities in small and medium-sized cities and towns in Ontario.

IMMIGRATION TO FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES IN CANADA

March 2010

Research Capsule 7

French-Language Immigration in Calgary

Keywords: *French-speaking immigrants, integration, minority community, Calgary, socio-occupational integration, worker mobility, community life, multiple affiliations*

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study was to gain a better understanding of the redefinition, growth, diversity and determination of Francophone communities in Greater Calgary. A growing number of immigrants from French-speaking countries are settling in Calgary, a booming city, yet Calgary's Francophone population does not have the means to meet the reception, infrastructure, integration and linguistic identification needs of French-speaking immigrants or to accommodate their cultural plurality. The key issue in this study can be summed up in a single question: how shall we live together?

The study drew a contemporary portrait, looking at the current profile of Calgary's Francophone community, identifying problems encountered by various groups, and situating issues and needs within specific and general perspectives. The images and experiences of a number of immigrants were compared in order to gain insight into and grasp the complexity of identification, integration and Francophone life. What makes this study unique is that it examined statistical and in-depth individual profiles with a view to developing a new governance model that would help support residents in living together harmoniously.

METHODOLOGY

The study used two approaches: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach was based on data from the last three censuses compiled by Statistics Canada between 1991 and 2006, and information from Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Permanent Resident Data System.

Two alternate definitions were used for the statistical analyses of Francophones: people whose mother tongue is French, and people who understand and speak French well enough to carry on a conversation. Based on the first definition, the number of Francophones increased from 11,800 in

1981 to 18,240 in 2006. However, based on the broader definition, the number increased from 41,500 to 85,000 in the same period.

The qualitative approach was based on semi-directed interviews with 78 people: 40 men and 38 women. Of those, 47 were visible minorities and 31 were white. They were from a variety of places, including Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, Quebec, Europe, the Caribbean, Alberta, New Brunswick, Ontario, the United States and the Middle East.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

French-speaking people in Calgary have a greater tendency to be mobile, both within and outside Canada, than Anglophones. The French-speaking population increased 31% based on mother tongue and 51% based on proficiency. In the latter group, 22% of Francophones are members of a visible minority. Almost half the French-speaking population has at least a university degree, compared with only 27% among English speakers. Whichever definition is used, the economic situation of Francophones is as good as that of Anglophones in general, and of persons born in Canada in particular.

Newcomers, who by and large are well educated, have tremendous difficulty finding a job on par with their training and experience. With regard to residential distribution, Francophones tend to settle in the four areas on the edge of the city as well as in the downtown core, which includes the historically French-speaking neighbourhoods.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The analysis of the interviews focused on five major themes, which are summarized below.

Worker mobility

The interviewees moved to Calgary for many reasons: employment, family, workplace-related problems, low taxes and the booming economy. Francophones in Calgary followed one of two occupational paths: they either had a job when they arrived, or they started looking for a job when they arrived. Most of the people in the first group are fluent in English and are mostly from another Canadian province. Most of the people in the second group are immigrants with little knowledge of English. They came for economic reasons and generally hold low-paying jobs.

Socio-economic integration

Socio-economic integration refers to the process through which a person integrates into the socio-economic system and thereby finds a place in society and a particular social sphere. The main strategy used by the interviewees was to go back to school in order to improve their English or learn the language. The factors that made the interviewees' socio-economic integration easier included securing a job before moving to Calgary, being fluent in English or being bilingual, having

a Canadian diploma or degree, having a diploma or degree in a field in which there is strong demand, good luck, their social network (i.e, social capital), and technical skills.

Social and community life

Perceptions of Anglophone and Francophone life in Calgary are shaped by thirteen social dimensions, including arts and culture, communication and media, education and training, family, migration, heritage and history, religion, health and well-being, sports and recreation, and relationships among groups.

Four themes concerning the impact of immigration on Calgary's Francophone population emerged from the interviews: questions about bilingualism, strengthening of the Francophone community, diversity in educational and religious institutions, and cultural development.

Integration

The conceptions of integration are based on six elements: citizenship and access to all rights and services; adaptation to the locality; reception that relies on community support; knowledge of the city; success in employment and work life; and last but not least, the relativity of the concept of integration. Thus, integration into Canadian society is greatly facilitated by an appreciation of Canadian values, open acceptance of immigrants and the possibility of living in the French language.

Multiple affiliations

With respect to the international Francophonie, interviewees who so consider themselves view it as an open door to the world. The sense of belonging to one's roots (African heritage, for example) was revealed with respect to six major categories: 1. love for and knowledge of one's roots; 2. openness, adaptation and independence in the face of an array of possible affiliations; 3. promotion of a positive image and values of one's country or region of origin; 4. rejection of negative messages and images; 5. a desire to hold on to cultural and linguistic elements and to take the best of those elements to craft cross-cultural identification that shows creativity; and 6. the opportunity for greater self-knowledge.

CREATING A NEW GOVERNANCE MODEL

Calgary's Francophone population is bilingual, well educated, sophisticated and cosmopolitan, which has the potential to be a tremendous asset for the city, the province and Canadian society.

It is therefore important to reposition the city's Francophone population relative to its image, its representativeness and the way it functions. Francophones need to embrace globalisation and expand their view of the world, focusing on the inclusion of the French language and minority French-speaking cultural communities in Canada. Increased openness to and understanding of

others requires increased civic action and responds to the need to relocate the minority within citizenship and ensure public expression of cultural and linguistic differences.

Affirming one's status as a full-fledged Francophone means *taking one's legitimate place in Canadian society*. A number of tangible actions have been suggested domestically, among them shared governance, a community-based approach, increased civic involvement, promotion of the community's cosmopolitan nature, and strategic location of French-language institutions.

External repositioning requires a whole political program to ensure inclusion in society based on relationships rooted in collaboration and partnership, which need to be established and implemented with expertise, experience and elegance. Special attention must be given to precariousness, credential recognition and the evaluation of skills and experience.

CONCLUSION

The study attests to the mobility and adaptability of Francophones, whatever their origins. The reception and integration of immigrants and the involvement of Francophones in society in order to ensure a greater civic contribution to Canada depend on the internal and external repositioning of minority Francophone communities.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The subject is of interest to the Department of Canadian Heritage, whose mandate includes support for development of minority official language communities. The results of this study could be useful in developing policies and programs to address that priority.

To find out more

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Project sponsors

- Cercle de collaborateurs des organismes communautaires Francophones à Calgary, y compris l'Association canadienne française de l'Alberta – Régionale de Calgary

Funding Agency

- Canadian Heritage

Understanding Well-being and Healthcare Access in Francophone Minority Communities in Calgary

Key words: *Well-being, Healthcare Access, Minority Francophones*

INTRODUCTION

The fur trade, missions and early settlement led to significant populations of minority francophones in Alberta as is evident in places such as Lacombe, Brosseau, Bonnyville, Girouxville, and Lamoureux. Recently, immigration, internal migration, and demand for labor have influenced settlement patterns, newcomers choosing cities (e.g. Calgary) over smaller communities. Francophone minorities in emerging communities may not have the type of services that have developed in those smaller, historically francophone communities. As a result, difficulties with meeting expectations and integrating in the new society are eminent. The objective of our study was to qualitatively describe the meaning of well-being, and the experience of health care access and services utilization among Francophone immigrants compared to non-immigrants in Calgary.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative design was adopted. We used purposive and criterion sampling to recruit participants. Participants were between 26 and 86 years old and had used health care services in Calgary 12 months before the study. In-depth interviews were audio-recorded, interpreted and transcribed directly into English text suitable for analysis. Analysis involved reading of text, line by line coding, sorting, developing categories and identifying emerging themes.

HIGHLIGHTS

Contrasting needs within the francophone community in terms of health and well-being

Francophone immigrants and non-immigrants shared similar understandings of well-being. Immigrants were more concerned about fulfilling their basic needs (finding a job, integration) meanwhile the needs of non-immigrants were mostly directly related to the health care system (services and resources in French). Limited knowledge of the healthcare system and the process of finding a family doctor were often cited as factors influencing the use of healthcare services by Francophone immigrants.

The lack of health care services in French and the coping strategies of Francophone immigrants

We found that not having a French speaking health care provider, together with difficulties explaining oneself or being understood, coupled with a general preference for healthcare services in French, did influence healthcare decisions of our participants and had significant impact on their lives in numerous ways (e.g. delay in seeking care, discomfort, anxiety, depression, negative feelings about healthcare system). Our study participants identified several strategies used to cope with language barriers before, during, and after a visit to a healthcare provider to include:

1. Use of friends and/or family members as interpreters
2. Repeating oneself or asking for more explanation
3. Using body language (e.g. to describe pain)
4. Use of a dictionary (before and after consultation)
5. Using the internet (blogs) to verify information

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

There are similarities and differences between Francophone immigrants and non-immigrants in their perception of well-being and health service utilization. According to one immigrant, “following the way it is advertised”, most Francophone immigrants perceived Canada as a bilingual country prior to immigration. As a result, they expected to be able to communicate in French regardless of where they settled. On the other hand, non-immigrant Francophones feel entitled to have services in French, as guaranteed by the Canadian Constitution. Because of these differences in perspective, strategies to improve health services for minority Francophones require different starting points. Facilitating the process of finding a job and the ability to integrate into the new society should be the starting point for new immigrants compared to the needs of Canadian born francophones which are less basic.

Research team

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- Kathryn M. King, Nursing and Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary

Funding agency

- Canadian Institute of Health Research catalyst grant on Official Language Minority Communities

The best of both worlds: the geographic experience of francophone immigrants from Central Africa in the Ottawa-Gatineau Region

Keywords: *immigration, experience, geography, border, resources, National Capital Region*

INTRODUCTION

The National Capital Region is rather unique. It is divided in two by the most symbolically charged provincial border in the country and is marked by its very own kind of special energy that, in many regards, flows from a major lack of continuity. On each side of the natural border, populations, cultures and practices differ, as do laws and policies. However, this border is today no more than a minor obstacle to processes of exchange and interaction. The population residing in the region is provided with singular opportunities to access a wide variety of resources such as services and employment on either side.

This research aims to shed light on the inherently ambiguous and contradictory effects of the border in the Ottawa-Gatineau Region. The objective is to highlight the **everyday experiences of place and space** in a transborder context. The study examines the practices and representations related to the border, the cultures these practices and representations help to create, the identities that stem from them and the political actions they fuel. The narrative, which asserts not only progression, practices and representations, but also strategies and ploys, is our research material. We focused on **minority populations**, which are more vulnerable and thus more prone to develop **tactics** to take advantage of the opportunities the border affords them. Among targeted groups, francophone newcomers who have settled in the region by choice or necessity are of particular interest. The region in question has a unique linguistic environment because the French presence is strongly rooted on both sides of the border. However, concomitantly, the region's bilingualism is highly valued because it provides the population with access to the rest of Canada and North America.

METHODOLOGY

Two focus group interviews were conducted to recall the geographic experience of francophone immigrants in the region. Those interviewed were almost all from Central Africa (Brazzaville

(Republic of the Congo), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Cameroon, Rwanda and Burundi). One participant was from Burkina Faso. Of the 16 participants, 13 live in Ottawa, and another one has lived there in the past. All arrived in the region less than ten years ago, and the majority have lived in the region for less than five years. The two focus groups enabled us to gather information about these individuals' representations of the region, their uses of places and spaces on either side of the border in their everyday lives, and their sense of belonging and identity.

HIGHLIGHTS

The transparent border

The border hardly exists as far as the francophone immigrants we interviewed are concerned. Regardless of whether they choose to settle in Ottawa or in Gatineau, they will have similar experiences. On both sides, they find the same socio-economic polarization of neighbourhoods, similar business structures, and comparable ranges of employment opportunities. The river is not a barrier for these newcomers, who cross the border in both directions on a daily basis. Employment is the primary factor of mobility. Social networks are another reason for transborder crossing.

The border as fact

While the border might not affect them much, those interviewed nevertheless notice cultural differences on each side. Ottawa, being more multicultural, is more welcoming than Gatineau. Here, the presence of the French language and a certain cultural affinity helps newcomers feel more at home.

A number of participants decry the existence of the border because it creates problems for them, mainly of the administrative variety. They maintain that the border exists to provide Canada's two founding nations with their own clearly defined territory, in which each population group can wield a certain amount of control.

The strategic border

Most participants know little about the various aspects of life on the border and the differences it brings. Nevertheless, a number of them preferred settling in Ottawa rather than in Gatineau, despite the higher cost of housing on the Ontario side and their awareness of the limited services offered in French. Ottawa is seen as a more favourable location for immigrants because it provides them with more opportunities to learn English and to integrate into Canadian society, and thereby the international community. They claimed that the city offers **the best of both worlds**, as it enables them to access Gatineau's resources while opening a window onto the world.

Contrary to our expectations, the focus group participants spoke little of French life in Ottawa, and of its institutions and organizations. They consider themselves part of the African community and bemoan the absence of a cultural centre for them in Ottawa.

SCOPE

The border plays a key role in the geographic experience of francophone immigrants—at least those from Central Africa—in the National Capital Region. Gatineau, with its Frenchness, is overshadowing Ottawa's Franco-Ontarian community, which was barely mentioned in the discussions. The participants view Ottawa as their link to the English-speaking world, to Canada and to America. Ontario's francophone organizations clearly have an enormous amount of work to do to bridge the gap. In fact, interviews with representatives of immigrant-serving agencies in Gatineau and Ottawa revealed that Ottawa's francophone immigrants are left to fend for themselves. The former serve only the Quebec clientele, while the latter work primarily in English and show limited sensitivity to the linguistic duality.

Our research also examines the border experience of other immigrant groups, such as the Latin Americans, the Chinese and the Portuguese—three allophone groups that arrived in the region more or less recently. This research will enable us to compare the experiences of these immigrant groups with that of Francophones from Central Africa.

Research team

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Funding agency

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (2007-2010), Ottawa-Gatineau: everyday life along the border

New vitality factors for official language minority communities: the impact of arts, culture, intercultural dialogue and immigration to minority communities

Keywords: *Minorities, Francophones, immigration, arts and culture, (inter)cultural dialogue*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to document the evolution of factors contributing to the vitality of official language minority communities (OLMCs) by showing how culture and immigration have gradually come to be essential over the past 10 years. We will examine the interplay between these two factors by showing how culture contributes to the attraction, integration and retention of immigrants and how immigration leads to cultural evolution and changes in cultural identity. Ultimately, our research should demonstrate how certain cultural initiatives (such as cultural mediation processes) could become relevant considerations for the purpose of increasing both the quality and quantity communities.

BACKGROUND

This project is part of a series of research projects¹ on the vitality of official language minority communities which are underway at the Department of Canadian Heritage in the Policy Research Group and Official Languages Support Programs Branch. Specifically, the goal is to understand—and then support—the potential of immigration in contributing to community vitality. Although immigration is currently concentrated in large urban centres,² promoting immigration to OLMCs may produce positive results.

Given that immigration to minority communities is still limited we will attempt to understand which strategies might make these communities more proactive and welcoming to immigrant populations

¹ Ongoing projects relating to community vitality factors are listed in the “to find out more” section, at the end of this article.

² The latest census data (2006) indicate that 70% of immigrants settle in the Canada’s three largest cities (Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver), and 90% settle in the country’s nine largest urban centres. Although this has a positive impact on some OLMCs, such as Anglophone Quebecers in the Montréal region and Francophone Ontarians in new Francophone communities like Kanata, it is clear that immigration to OLMCs remains minimal.

(*How Could Canadian Communities Be More Welcoming?* was the title of a recent Metropolis seminar). Our research points toward an issue that has been virtually ignored until now, namely, the extent to which arts and culture, which have only recently been acknowledged as vitality factors, can make communities more creative and attractive on a cultural level as well as more open and welcoming vis-à-vis immigration.

METHODOLOGY

Because this issue has not been examined to any significant extent, our research is exploratory. The goal is to identify new vitality factors that the federal government may wish to examine more thoroughly in the years to come. We have focused on the following three elements to lay the groundwork and orient our research:

- **Literature review:** focussing on three community vitality factors which are considered separately at present but which we would like, eventually, to review in terms of interrelatedness:
 1. Immigration as a potential vitality factor for OLMCs. Review and build on existing research in this area, particularly research carried out by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.
 2. Arts and culture as qualitative determinants of OLMC vitality. For example, how do artistic productions (festivals, concerts, films, exhibitions, etc.) foster group cohesion in the public sphere by creating a third kind of space (outside of family and professional spheres) that promotes interaction, dialogue and the experience of difference?
 3. Community- or association-based cultural initiatives (such as cultural mediation) that promote the *democratization* of access to culture (to works, to support for creativity and to artists themselves), thereby stimulating creation and dialogue between artists and members of the public and promoting the integration of newcomers (through intercultural dialogue, creation, and expression of the hopes and fears of minority and marginalized populations who often lack the resources and means to express their own realities).
- **Analysis of the current state and impact of culture in minority communities:** show how culture acts and is tangibly expressed in OLMCs. Survey the “cultural density” of OLMCs by investigating how cultural initiatives and expressions affect not only community vitality but also, perhaps, the quality and quantity of (Francophone) immigration to minority communities. Quantitative data pertaining to immigration vitality and cultural vitality does not currently exist but may be obtained through partnerships with Statistics Canada (by integrating these determinants into specific studies, such as *community micro-projections* and the *Ethnic Diversity Survey*).

- ***Culture as an agent of social dialogue:*** achieve a better understanding of cultural practices (arts, sports, associations) that promote social inclusion by fostering interaction between (1) community stakeholders, (2) culture professionals and (3) populations deemed to be “at-risk” whether because they are remote, living in a minority situation or socially and/or economically vulnerable. We will survey various expressions/definitions pertaining to this kind of initiative and examine *how* they work and *why* they may be worth developing. We will analyse how they may be applied and their relevance in minority communities (be it in Moncton, Dieppe or Kanata -communities marked by recent immigration). Our study will be informed by what has been done elsewhere, such as in Quebec, where many initiatives fostering community creativity have arisen, so that we can identify, list and describe “best practices” and ascertain the lessons that may be learned from them.

HIGHLIGHTS

A new perspective on the study of community vitality?

Surprisingly, there is a conspicuous shortage of literature on the interplay of arts and immigration in minority communities. Very little, if any, public policy or academic research has been conducted on the subject, except for a few studies in the field of so-called “migrant” writing. The goal is to pioneer a new field of research related to OLMC vitality and the possible renewal of partnerships with the university research community.

Assess the efficiency of new inclusion strategies

With the exception of France and Quebec (with the relatively recent and sometimes vague emergence of the term “cultural mediation”), governments have typically not used arts and culture as a strategy for inclusion, citizen participation and intercultural awareness. However, some theorists, such as Christian Ruby, consider such cultural initiatives to be a particularly productive approach to fostering social dialogue by:

- making culture accessible to an entire population;
- supporting and understanding social transformation with a view to reconciling conflicting values;
- seeking solutions to frame of reference problems (limits of shared or common cultural identity, etc.);
- facilitating dialogue between cultural communities.³

³ Typical cultural mediation process as described by Christian Ruby, “*Médiation culturelle*”, in *Dictionnaire des politiques culturelles*, Emmanuel de Waresquiel, ed., Larousse CNRS, 2001, pp. 400-401.

This research will help us understand why culture, as a common denominator in defining identity and a shared frame of reference, may be an ideal tool for stimulating dialogue and improving quality of life.

New collaborative efforts related to participatory democracy

Beyond influencing an harmonious sense of community-in-diversity, our research shows that cultural initiatives designed to promote the arts in communities have the unique effect of fostering co-operation between various types of professionals while bringing to light the hopes, fears and issues experienced at a local level based on the following “bottom-up” movement:

Members of the public (expression and processing of day-to-day on-the-ground realities in neighbourhoods and communities)



Local stakeholders (interaction with the arts community and the general public, democratization of art, on-the-ground dialogue focused on drawing out and giving value to points of view from members of the public)



Academics (compiling data, analysis, diagnostics, hypotheses, recommendations)



Policy makers (flexibility, adapting policies to local realities)

Such processes are relevant because they better inform policy makers of needs and changes in social behaviour and, in some cases, they lead to policies and programs that are better adapted to on-the-ground realities at local and community levels.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We believe that this research is important because it builds on a number of Canadian Heritage’s priorities, such as issues surrounding citizen participation, intercultural dialogue and access to a range of outlets for the expression of free speech (of which arts and culture represent, in a way, the end result).

On an institutional level, this research may be used to inform the new framework agreement that Canadian Heritage is developing with Metropolis to redefine the connections (and shared issues) that unite the two organizations.

To find out more

Fred Dufresne, (forthcoming) *Un cadre de vitalité pour les communautés de langue officielle au Canada* [A vitality framework for official language communities in Canada], internal Canadian Heritage report, November 2009 (updated version planned for February 2010).

Ian Donaldson, Fred Dufresne and Mathieu-Alexandre Jacques, (forthcoming) *Immigration et culture en milieu minoritaire : état de la question et développements possibles* [Immigration and culture in minority communities: status and potential developments].

Mathieu-Alexandre Jacques, (forthcoming) *L'importance des arts et de la culture quant à la vitalité des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire : état des lieux d'une problématique récente* [The importance of arts and culture to the vitality of official language minority communities: the state of a recent issue], internal Canadian Heritage report.

RESEARCH TEAM

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Inclusion in Fransaskois Schools: Multiple Perspectives¹

Keywords: *inclusion, immigrants, francophones, schools, visible minorities, school cultures*

INTRODUCTION

The research studies the conditions surrounding the reception and inclusion of immigrant families in Saskatchewan French-language school communities. The main characteristics of newcomers are identified as well as the challenges they experience in their school and social participation in a minority language situation. As this is a university-community collaborative research project, the researcher works with her community partners in order to eliminate the obstacles that are identified.

METHODOLOGY

This three-phase study consisted of developing, in the first phase, a profile of the school and community experiences of the newcomers. Semi-structured interviews² were conducted with 29 immigrants in Saskatchewan (with a humanitarian, economic and family focus) who identified as francophones. The interviews, which lasted on the average an hour and a half, broached the school and community experiences of the newcomers, both present and past. In order to identify the themes which emerged from the transcripts, especially with regard to obstacles to a better academic and social participation of the participants, we used a qualitative analysis³.

During the second phase, we interviewed school staff members and administered sociograms to the students in seven schools, four in Saskatchewan and three in Manitoba. These interviews⁴ lasted on average an hour and a half and we discussed the changing population in the schools and the impact

¹ Fransaskois component of the research project *Inclusion des nouveaux arrivants en milieu scolaire : vers une pédagogie de réciprocité culturelle*, third part of the *Identités francophones de l'Ouest canadien* project; the Principal Investigator for this project is Léonard Rivard, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

² Piquemal, N. et Carlson Berg, L. (2007). *Guide d'entretien pour les nouveaux arrivants (Newcomer Interview Guide)*. Regina: University of Regina Research Ethics Board Application for Approval of Research Procedures.

³ Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON: University of Western Ontario.

⁴ Carlson Berg, L. Piquemal, N. et Bolivar, B. (2008). *Guide d'entretien pour le personnel scolaire (Interview guide for school personnel)*. Regina: University of Regina Research Ethics Board Application for Approval of Research Procedures.

of these changes on the work done by the members of school staff (teachers, principals, teaching assistants). The purpose of the interviews was to identify both the needs and strengths of the schools with regard to the social and academic inclusion of the students.

We studied the daily choices made by students with regard to inclusion by using a sociogram. It consisted of a list of the students in the same classroom. The students (from 8 to 16 years of age) in 26 classrooms completed a sociogram⁵ consisting of ten questions (for instance: Who are the three students in the class with whom you spend the most time in school? What three students in class would you prefer to do a group project with?). Statistical analysis identified whether there were differences in the school and social networking between the newly arrived students and the other students. The teachers completed a demographic profile of each student, including immigration status, visibly minority status, and level of functioning in school.

The third phase, consisting in consultations with the community partners, is currently underway.

RESULTS: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

When the transcripts of interviews with **newcomers** were analyzed in the course of the first phase of this exploratory investigation on school inclusion, the following themes emerged: (a) nature of the reception experience in the Fransaskois milieu; (b) differences in school cultures; and (b) racism and comments about difference. The participants also emphasized the shock they experienced when they arrived in Saskatchewan as they were expecting Canada to be entirely bilingual; they thought that knowing one of the official languages would be sufficient.

Nature of the Reception: Welcome to Saskatchewan?

Among our participants, there was only one family that had come to Saskatchewan as a result of the recruitment initiatives of the francophone community. During the first phase of the study, all of the official reception services were offered in English and information on the francophone community was only provided in one single case, following a request made by the immigrant himself. The websites of the reception organizations were in English only, and the French-language communities of Saskatchewan were not even mentioned there. However, the website of the *Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise* had one whole section devoted to new immigrants that provided the contact information for all the English-language reception organizations in the province. Several participants discovered the French-language community through the French-language Catholic parish. According to our participants, once they contacted the francophone community, either through relatives, the parish, the labour market or the Internet, it was easy to make contacts within the broad French-language community. The challenge seems to be to find that community in the first place.

⁵ Carlson Berg, L. (2007). *Sociogramme d'inclusion scolaire* (School inclusion sociogram). Regina: University of Regina Research Ethics Board Application for Approval of Research Procedures.

School cultures: School, “the world gone topsy-turvy!”

The participants perceived marked differences in the school cultures of the schools they attended in their countries of origin and their current French-language Saskatchewan school. The differences were related to universal access to education, how demanding the school curricula were, and the participation of parents. We note three components under the theme of universal access to education: the way in which the school is managed and subsidized in Canada, diversity in classrooms and the rights of children. The participants really wanted to participate more in school but did not know how to go about it. Certain parents wanted to devote more time to the education of their youngsters, but were themselves studying English as a second language. This research identified important discrepancies between the structure and conceptualization of the school they were familiar with and the new school landscape. Discussions are taking place between Carlson Berg and her community partners to attempt to identify how the principles of the teaching communities could facilitate cooperation between the members of the various Saskatchewan French-language school communities.

Racism: “Is it a disease to have brown skin?”

It became clear that racism was a major obstacle to the inclusion of new immigrants in school. The participants told about both explicit and implicit encounters with racism. In her current consultations with the community, Carlson Berg is basing her work, among others, on the work of Trepagnier⁶. She maintains that we must go beyond the current dichotomy of the “racist” and “non racist” labels, that, according to her, prevent an open discussion of racism. As members of the white majority in North America, the Fransaskois run the risk of manifesting daily behaviours that are not recognized by the individual as being racist, but that serve to maintain the *status quo*. To achieve successful inclusion, it is important to identify the power disparities that could prevent the full participation of each member of a school community.

The students’ perspectives:

The statistical analysis of the students’ sociogram responses show that the newly arrived students, or visible minority members, are not included a great deal, and remain outside the social networks that exist in their classrooms. The relationship that exists between being a member of a visible minority and poor school performance is statistically significant. The better the school performance, the higher the probability of being in a social network. In this study, we noted that if a student was well established in a network, it was highly probable that he was also a member of another social network in his or her classroom. Statistically speaking, it was not very likely that a newly arrived student or member of a visible minority (even in those cases where the student’s school performance was superior) would be within a social network in the 26 classrooms that

⁶ Trepagnier, B. (2006). *Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

participated in this study in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The analysis of the perspectives of school staff members is underway.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Carlson Berg is working with the community partners including the *Conseil des écoles francsaskoises*, toward eliminating the obstacles that were identified. She is also working with the Department of Learning in order to ensure that the reengineered school curricula for Saskatchewan's French-language schools will meet the needs of a community of intercultural learners.

To find out more

Carlson Berg, L. (Submitted). Experiences of newcomers to francsaskois schools. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, June, 2010.

Carlson Berg, L. (2009, October). *Inclusion of newcomers to Francsaskois schools: Challenges and opportunities*. Symposium of the Prairies Metropolis Centre, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Carlson Berg, L. (2009, September). *Vers une communauté collaborative : perspectives multiples*. Colloque en immigration : Accueil et adaptation des nouveaux arrivants [Immigration symposium: reception and adaptation of newcomers.] Regina, Saskatchewan.

Carlson Berg, L. (March 2009). *Vers une pédagogie de réciprocité culturelle : Expériences scolaires des nouveaux arrivants en Saskatchewan*. 11th National Metropolis Conference, Calgary, Alberta.

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Project partners

- Conseil des écoles francsaskoises
- Assemblée communautaire francsaskoise
- Saskatchewan Learning

Funding agencies

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- University Research Alliance (SSHRC – CURA), the *Centre des recherches sur les francophonies en milieu minoritaire*
- Humanities Research Institute of the University of Regina

Alter(n)ative Identities: Elementary Teachers' Inclusive Practices with Immigrant Children in One French-Language School in Ontario

Keywords: *minority learners, inclusive pedagogy, literacy, French-language schools*

INTRODUCTION

French-language schools in Canada, outside of Quebec, must engage increasingly not only with the challenges of cultivating French language and culture in minority contexts, but also with issues surrounding the integration of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) allophone students. This case study examines the inclusion of CLD learners within French-language elementary schools in Ontario and in particular, teachers' perspectives on and practices to support such students' multiple literacies development in one school in Toronto.

CLD allophone learners acquire a double, if not triple, minority status within French-language schools in which they may be both a linguistic and a cultural minority within an official francophone minority in Canada. This study analyzes teachers' views and literacy instruction practices in order to move towards the conceptualisation of an alter(n)ative literacies framework that integrates the mandate of French-language schools to promote French language and culture, while at the same time, values CLD allophone learners' home languages and cultural practices.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study was conducted over six months during the academic year between October 2008 and March 2009. The first stage involved a critical analysis of policies concerning the inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in French-language schools in Ontario.

The second stage consisted of semi-structured interviews with 1 school administrator, 3 elementary classroom teachers and 1 ALF/PDF teacher; 45 days of school observation, collection of students' work samples; and a final teacher focus group concerning the growing diversity within franco-ontarian communities and the implications for students' engagement in learning in French-language school.

Data analysis was guided by six main themes: participants' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, interpretation and enactment of language policies; approaches to literacy instruction; definition(s) of franco-ontarian culture and identity, in/ex-clusion of cultural and linguistic diversity; alter(n)ative classroom practices. The term alter(n)ative is developed to highlight the possibilities for *alternative* practices to provide non-traditional but legitimate options in classrooms and in research, along with, the potential *alter*-ative change or empowerment of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, teachers and researchers, particularly in minority settings, when we adopt such practices.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Equity and Inclusion Strategy

Although at their original conception, French-language schools were not established to meet the needs of allophone learners, Ontario's Ministry of Education vision "to reach every student" (2008) and Equity and Inclusion Strategy (2009) provide political and pedagogic impetus to examine the ways in which French-language schools respond to the changing demography of their communities and the social and academic needs of diverse learners and their families.

The Equity and Inclusion Strategy, in particular, marks a significant step toward both formalizing and strategically facilitating the procedure for admitting immigrant students into French-language schools. For the first time, non-rights holders are (re)constructed through this policy as being possible resources for the future growth of French-language schools and communities. This case study of *École Cosmopolite* highlights that while this policy fosters openness to cultural and linguistic diversity, pedagogical resources are required to support teachers and the integration of CLD learners into French-language school classrooms.

Developing inclusive school practices

Teachers interpret policy and curriculum through their classroom practice. As they do so, they privilege specific languages and modes of communication. This study found that while teachers often express a desire to adopt a transformative orientation in their classroom practice, a variety of factors limit the extent to which they can carry out such initiatives; including, time, materials, language acquisition and student-teacher and personnel dynamics. Through extended classrooms observation, teacher interviews and a focus group discussion, five types of inclusive and transformative school practice were documented: (a) activities bridging the home-school divide; (b) teachers' alter(n)ative messages; (c) students' alter(n)ative responses to traditional activities; (d) affirming the development of alter(n)ative literacies; and, (e) alter(n)ative expressions through the Arts.

This case study analyzes the conditions that help build alter(n)ative learning spaces in the classroom such that transformative learning occurs not only as serendipitous events in the life of a learning community but also as the result of intentional critical planning to create inclusive and equitable classrooms for all learners in French-language schools.

Arts as a mode for alter(n)ative expressions

As an example of alter(n)ative inquiry in research, the key findings of the teachers' focus group on franco-ontarian identities and literacies were represented through a poetic transcription of the group discussion as the poem, *Alter-natifs: Un poème à quatre voix*. Arts-informed poetic inquiry provided an alter(n)ative way to represent the culturally and linguistically diverse voices and perspectives of the four teacher participants. In addition, the representation of research through the Arts has allowed it to be more accessible and engaging as a point of entry for further discussion for participants and their community.

Re-conceptualizing CLD learners

Finally, this study demonstrates that how educators, policy makers and researchers conceptualize CLD learners directly informs our language and education policies and pedagogy. To envision alter(n)ative possibilities for CLD learners and French-language schools begins with re-conceptualizing CLD learners as intelligent, linguistically-rich and creative contributors to increasingly cosmopolitan francophone culture and communities in Ontario. When we adopt an asset-oriented view of students and invite them to draw on the diversity of resources they possess through their cultural backgrounds and linguistic repertoires, we create opportunities for student not only to see themselves reflected in their learning, but also to understanding themselves as valued agents within their learning communities.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This research contributes to our understanding of the complexities of and the need to develop curriculum and language-in-education policy to support the integration of culturally and linguistically diverse immigrant learners in French-language schools. The data collected through qualitative observation, teachers' narrative and students' work samples, in particular, demonstrate that at the early elementary level, children's relationships often extend across multiple linguistic and cultural borders as they find themselves together as members of shared learning communities. Policy makers, researchers and educators can respond to children's growing need to develop strategies to learn and live together in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse French-language classrooms and communities by evaluating, responsively creating and implementing policy and practices that value and affirm the diverse voices of all members.

To find out more

Prasad, G. (2009). *Alter(n)ative Literacies: Elementary teachers' practices with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse learners in one French-language school in Ontario*. Master of Arts Thesis. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1807/18108>

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Funding agencies

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Canadian Graduate Scholarship (2007-2008)
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto (OISE/UT), William Pakenham Fellowship in Education (2007-2008)
- Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) (2008-2009)

Theatre in my Toolbox: Using Forum Theatre to Explore Notions of Identity, Belonging and Culture with Francophone Secondary Students in a Context of Diversity

Keywords: *Theatre, Education, Francophone community, Identity, Culture, Refugees*

INTRODUCTION

The context of Western Canada

As Canada becomes increasingly multiethnic and multicultural as a result of transnational migration and changes in immigration policies that have characterized recent decades, teachers are seeking to meet the needs of their students whose various identities converge in the shared space of public schools. This task is complicated as students may construct multiple identities that can at times contrast with each other, and with those of their peers. Francophone schools in Western Canada now cater to a highly diverse student population that has a right to French education under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Students hail from a wide range of French Canadian and international backgrounds, including African-born students who arrive in Canada as refugees. These students hail from a wide range of backgrounds, including French Canadian and international students as well as African-born youth who arrived to Canada as refugees.

The challenge of creating an inclusive school environment

In this context of increasing heterogeneity, it becomes imperative for educators to explore innovative ways of engaging all students in the curriculum, understanding how they respond to pedagogical activities and determining how to best meet their needs. Moreover, to promote an inclusive school environment that fosters academic growth and social integration, teachers must create opportunities for students to explore their varied identities and the issues they face in society. Arts-based education may provide an avenue to do so, as engaging in the arts requires participants to consider issues from several different perspectives.

Theatre as a pedagogical tool

This project examines the use of theatre as a pedagogical tool for exploring notions of identity, belonging, and culture with secondary students of diverse backgrounds in a francophone minority

language school. Specifically, it uses *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1979)¹ techniques and explores how these might be useful for negotiating difference in a constructive way that fosters cross-cultural communication among refugee, former refugee, immigrant and Canadian-born students and teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This interdisciplinary project uses a variety of qualitative research methods to examine how students, particularly those of refugee background, experience life in a minority language school and the ways in which they forge a sense of belonging to their school, community, and Canada.²

The project was carried out over a period of four weeks in the fall of 2007 in a francophone secondary school in an urban centre in Western Canada. During the first week of the study, the researcher observed classes and daily activities in the school and conducted informal interviews. Over the following three weeks, she led a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop with 10 students enrolled in a professional-stream programme. As well, she conducted formal interviews with the students, their teachers and guidance counselor to find out how they defined membership in the francophone community and how they defined their identities in relation to it. The workshop and interviews were audio-recorded.

HIGHLIGHTS

Professional-stream programme: the result of unfair tracking?

In this case study Theatre of the Oppressed techniques were found to be useful for engaging students with curriculum issues, enabling them to communicate their experiences at school and beyond, and addressing some of the problems they encountered in and out of school. Important differences emerged in the reasons students believed they were placed in the professional-stream programme. African-born refugee and former-refugee students reported that they had been unfairly tracked as a result of their race and ethnicity, whereas Canadian-born students reported being tracked as a result of their academic abilities.

Contrasting conceptions of the francophone community

Interviews revealed that while the teachers expressed a variety of conceptions of the francophone community and had differing ideas about who belongs to it, the students offered a relatively

¹ Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. (C. A. Leal McBride & M. Leal McBride, Trans.). London: Pluto Press. (Original work published 1974).

² Methods of detailed observation, formal and informal interviewing were drawn from ethnographic traditions in Anthropology. As well, since the project introduced a change in curriculum, the researcher relied on participatory action research methods such as extensive consultation with participants and a constant re-evaluation of practice. Practice-based research methods were also used as they value art as a means of knowledge production and as a means of inquiry in research. This enabled the researcher to analyze observational and interview data as well as the theatre activities students produced.

consistent definition of this community as an international, imagined community of French speakers, to which all felt they belonged.

The sense of belonging: a complex issue

However, the students' participation in group discussions and Theatre of the Oppressed activities illuminated the fact that forging a sense of 'belonging' to a community is a complex process influenced by students' personal characteristics, desires, and ties and shaped as well by the oppressive situations they confronted in Canadian society. More specifically, the research revealed that students' experiences in and out of school were defined by issues of race, class, and gender, which had an impact on the attachment they felt to their school and country of residence. The degree of attachment differed between refugee, former-refugee, and Canadian-born students and even among them, so that some felt that citizenship is acquired through documentation, whereas others believed that popular conceptions of citizenship are determined by race and linguistic ability.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This project raises important questions about the ways schools respond to the diverse needs of their student populations. Specifically, it illuminates the particular challenges that youth who arrive to Canada as refugees face as they are integrated into Canadian school systems as a result of the years of schooling they may have lost during the refugee process. This study suggests that it is important for educators developing programmes for particular groups of students to evaluate whether the curriculum and pedagogical practices they adopt integrate or further isolate groups that are already marginalized in Canadian society.

It also finds that inclusion of arts-based education methods in formal schooling can be an effective way of opening a space in an academic curriculum for creative expression of deeply-felt experiences, providing students with a forum to voice their concerns and dialogue about issues related to identity, multiculturalism, and social inclusion that they grapple with on a daily basis.

To find out more

Schroeter, S. (2009). *Theatre in my toolbox: Using Forum Theatre to explore notions of identity, belonging and culture with francophone secondary students in a context of diversity*. (Unpublished Master's thesis). York University: Toronto.

Researcher

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Communication between Schools and Immigrant Families in Alberta: Some Possible Solutions

Keywords: *immigrant families, involvement, family-school communication*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing influx of immigrants from various backgrounds into Canada has implications for schools that now find themselves operating in an environment of ethnocultural pluralism. We cannot emphasize this enough: socio-cultural integration and especially the academic success of the students require collaboration between schools and families. But collaboration between schools and families is not always easy. The most obvious example is families that come from ethnic communities whose mother tongue, and cultural and religious values, share little with the host society, in this case the province of Alberta.

Since the beginning of the year 2000, Alberta's economy has been booming compared to the rest of the provinces in Canada. In addition to the interprovincial Canadian migrants, who choose to move in search of employment, there are immigrants who come directly from foreign countries (refugees, permanent residents, skilled workers, etc.). The last Statistics Canada census¹ shows that the province's population growth was three times higher (1.12%) than the national average (0.33%).

As an example, the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (The Greater North Central Francophone Education Region No. 2), which serves the francophone population in metropolitan Edmonton, welcomed approximately 700 new students during the 2006-2007 school year alone². As a result, it was important to find out how these newly-arrived families communicate with their children's teachers. The challenge is to come up with possible solutions that facilitate their social and academic integration.

¹ Statistics Canada. (2007). Community Profiles, 2006 Census. Catalogue Number: 92-591-XWE.

² Conseil scolaire centre-nord (Greater North Central Francophone Education Region No. 2). (2006). *Défis de l'éducation francophone à l'ère de la Croissance en Alberta*. Report. Edmonton.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study used the Bronfenbrenner and Morris bioecological model³ in order to better understand how different factors interact and how they affect a child's development. This analytical framework was useful for identifying factors conducive to effective communication between immigrant families and schools.

METHODOLOGY

Given that teachers and immigrant parents are the first to be affected by the problem, and since the proposed solutions must reflect their views, we used a qualitative approach and presented it in a constructive manner. To this end, participants were encouraged to make concrete and realistic suggestions on how to solve their communication problems.

Twelve teachers, recruited from the Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord (francophone) and from the Edmonton Catholic Schools (anglophone), and ten immigrant parents participated in the study. Three focus groups were formed: a group of teachers, a group of immigrant parents and a combined group, including both.

HIGHLIGHTS

Solutions to get to know one another better

At the **macrosystem level**, the following solutions were put forward: providing training (initial and/or ongoing) to teachers on cultural differences, appreciating the experiences and values of immigrant families, establishing a relationship of trust between partners, introducing immigrant parents to the values and culture of the host society as a means of integration, keeping an open mind (both parents and teachers), and recognizing the foreign credentials and qualifications of immigrants.

Solutions involving parents and the community

At the **exosystem level**, the participants, especially the immigrant parents, suggested solutions of a rather political nature: creating immigrant parent committees, establishing schools for young African Canadians, redefining the mission of schools in minority settings, immigrant parents assuming leadership roles in running the schools, using legal means to protect the interests of immigrant families and students, creating immigrant rights associations, calling upon (ethnic) community organizations and third-party mediators to facilitate communication, creating volunteer banks in schools and inviting relatives (extended family) to act as facilitators for family-school communication.

³ Bronfenbrenner, U. and Morris, P. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. *In* W. Damon and R.M. Lerner (Eds), *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol.1: Theoretical Models of Human Development (p. 993-1028). New York: Wiley.

Solutions for improving the immigrant family- school relationship

At the **mesosystem level**, the possible solutions for improving immigrant family-school communication fall into two subcategories:

- (1) Favourable conditions for establishing good relations, including workshops or information sessions held by the school for newly-arrived immigrant parents, responsibilities assumed by immigrant families, parent involvement in school community projects, teacher visits to the homes of immigrant families, more informal meetings, inviting families to the classroom, knowledge of the school systems in the immigrant students' countries of origin.
- (2) Lines and means of communication to be used. In the teachers' opinion, it is important to assess the linguistic needs of families from the beginning of the school year, and choose the appropriate channels of communication according to the different types of information. For public information, parents and teachers from ethnic communities have suggested verbal communication (word of mouth, networking, buddy system) and direct contact. For private information, the telephone, e-mail, lists of coming events, and liaison people could be used.

DIVERGING SOLUTIONS TOWARDS A COMMON GOAL

The results indicate that both parents and teachers want to be brought closer together. However, their solutions for achieving this reconciliation are different. The teachers' group leans towards immediate practical solutions, focused on the school and community, while the parents' group suggests more political solutions. The combined group emphasizes the importance of establishing open communication between teachers and parents.

It should also be noted that we observed some differences between teachers from ethnic communities, whose cultural values are similar to those of immigrant parents, and their colleagues who were born in Canada. The former were very supportive of some of the solutions proposed by immigrant parents, such as the use of verbal communication, networking and writing messages in the parents' language. However, all participants really wanted the involvement of community organizations and ethnic associations in the process of improving immigrant family-school communication.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The results of this study should serve as a basis for developing intercultural training and upgrading programs for teachers; they should also serve to implement policies that foster work-family balance and recognize the credentials and experience acquired abroad by immigrants.

Researcher

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Recruiting, integrating and retaining international students at the Université de Moncton

Keywords: *regional immigration, international students, francophone immigration, student mobility*

INTRODUCTION

Research context

The growing need for skilled workers and the problem of recognizing qualifications obtained abroad make international students ideal candidates for immigration because they are perceived as more capable of integrating economically and socially¹. In Canada, as in other countries, over the last ten or so years, immigration policies have included provisions designed to attract international students². The presence of international students has transformed the role of universities.

Our research focuses on the internationalization of four Francophone universities in Canada: Université de Moncton, Université du Québec in Rimouski, Laurentian University in Sudbury and Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg. The purpose of this study is to identify the various internationalization strategies that these universities are developing to attract foreign students: integration policies and practices on campus, and retention efforts.

Increasingly involved universities in immigration strategies

With the growing number of international students, Canadian universities in general are becoming increasingly involved in immigration strategies and policies, especially with efforts to regionalize immigration. In small communities, universities can play a significant role in economic

¹ Suter, B., and Jandl, M. (2008). "Train and Retain: National and Regional Policies to Promote the Settlement of Foreign Graduates in Knowledge Economies." *Journal of International Migrations and Immigration*, 9(4), 401–418; Tremblay, Karine (2005), "Academic Mobility and Immigration." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 196–228.

² Wade, M. and Belkhodja, C., (2010). *Gestion de la diversité sur un petit campus canadien : le cas de l'Université de Moncton* [diversity management on a small Canadian campus: the situation at the Université de Moncton], Working Paper Series, No. 27, Atlantic Metropolis Centre.

development and in forming ties with the other stakeholders in the immigration field— governments, municipalities and economic actors.

The campus as a “laboratory” for diversity

In addition, the university campus is becoming an excellent environment for studying the new dynamics of identity at work in areas with few immigrants and a more homogenous population than that of large urban centres. The university campus can be considered a laboratory for analysing diversity. This is particularly the case in Francophone minority communities, which are relatively homogenous and which suffer from both declining birth rates and linguistic assimilation. Universities contribute to the demographic, linguistic and economic vitality of those communities. As key agents of cultural diversity, they can also help redefine identity.

METHODOLOGY

Our research is based on several methodological approaches. First, we conducted a detailed analysis of the official documents produced by the universities, of their programs and services and of the student media. Second, we conducted semi-directed personal interviews with university administrators and a group of stakeholders in the communities. Third, we conducted group interviews with international students. Lastly, we are planning to conduct an online survey at each university in order to reach even more international students.

HIGHLIGHTS

The situation at the Université de Moncton

A cosmopolitan university

The situation at the Université de Moncton, in New Brunswick, is interesting because, for almost ten years, the university has been engaged in an international recruitment campaign and now considers itself a fairly cosmopolitan university in a city and province that are not.

Moncton is a city of approximately 130,000 residents, and just over one third of them are Francophone. Immigrants represent 3.66% of the population of New Brunswick and 3.42% of the population of Moncton—rates much lower than the national average of 19.8%—which demonstrates the uneven distribution of immigrants in the country. Despite the small population of immigrants in Moncton, more than 10% of the university’s student population comes from outside Canada. This proportion doubled from 2002 to 2008, and the current figures exceed the Canadian average of 7%. The university in this small city is an undeniable point of attraction for people from abroad, particularly for students who speak French—the language of the minority. The above-mentioned figures are due to factors related to recruiting and integrating these new clients and the efforts to retain them.

Innovative strategies to attract international students

First, the Université de Moncton has been actively recruiting international students for about ten years and has made up for Moncton's difficulty in attracting immigrants. International students, like immigrants, generally prefer large urban centres to small cities³. In 2002, the Université de Moncton created a full-time position to handle international recruitment and formed a network of recruiters. Former international students act as "ambassadors" and lead recruitment campaigns in their country of origin. They are paid based on the number of students they recruit, and they receive a bonus if they reach a certain quota. This tactic is part of a community-based approach that university administrators say is more dynamic than the traditional recruitment models. The approach seems to have worked, because the vast majority of the institution's international students come from the target countries.

Concrete means to foster the integration of new students

Second, the Université de Moncton offers ongoing support for new students and manages diversity on its campus. Integration spans a range of services, from providing a place of worship for Muslim students to accommodating dietary restrictions. Employment integration has become the top priority at the universities. In Moncton, international students have access to an employment assistance officer who has worked very effectively. Since the Off-Campus Work Permit Program was launched in 2004, 96% of students who have applied for a permit have found a job, mostly in the city's numerous call centres. Also, the employment assistance does not end when students graduate. Despite the specific assistance available and the other measures in place, the large presence of international students has not yet resulted in a large presence of Francophone immigrants in Moncton.

Lastly, the issue of retaining graduates is more complex, because it involves other stakeholders—the various levels of government, employers and settlement structures. In Moncton, student mobility is distinct from immigration mobility. None of the top six source countries for international students—Haiti, Morocco, Tunisia, Guinea, Mali and France—correspond with the top six source countries for immigrants to Moncton—South Korea, China, United States, United Kingdom, Senegal and Congo. This reality undoubtedly stems in part from the weak social networks of Francophone immigrants. Although a Francophone welcoming and settlement structure exists, its mandate does not include assisting international students or graduates. Therefore, they have no family, community or cultural resources after they graduate. This lack of support represents a barrier to employment and to social integration.

³ Racine, N., Villeneuve, P. and Thériault, M., (2003). "Attracting Foreign Students: The Case of Two Universities in Québec." *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7(3), 241–252.

CONCLUSION

At this stage, the results of our research enable us to better identify the role that a university can play in its community and how international students are targeted in immigration regionalization policies. While the Université de Moncton is helping change the cultural image of its home city by attracting a diverse Francophone population, the change is not yet sustainable. Nonetheless, the university is playing a significant role in diversity. It will be interesting to look at the impact on the relationship of the universities with the communities and on the communities themselves. Perhaps, with time, the Université de Moncton will change the city's identity and its cultural and economic image over the long term.

Research team

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IMMIGRATION TO FRANCOPHONE MINORITIES IN CANADA

March 2010

Reference document

Assessment of French Proficiency of Newcomers to Canada for Placement in French as a Second-Language Programs: Developing the French Placement Test Battery for the Canadian Language Benchmarks

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The French Placement Test Battery for the Canadian Language Benchmarks titled *Batterie de tests de classement aux Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (BTC-NCLC)* is built on the theoretical foundations of the CLB framework of reference. It is based on the foundational building blocks of communication, which means measuring the level of ability to communicate. This ability is expressed in five main areas:

- 1) Linguistic Competence;
- 2) Textual Competence;
- 3) Functional Competence;
- 4) Socio-cultural Competence;
- 5) Strategic Competence.

The theoretical model is derived from the combination of several models, including those of Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996), and the instruction model of Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995). The BTC-NCLC aims to do more than simply measure proficiency levels for a given curriculum; it is not designed to measure level of knowledge or ability to use French grammar and vocabulary correctly. It is, above all, a measure of the ability to communicate in French.

NCLC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE AND STRUCTURE

NCLC is in fact a generic term used to take several realities into account. It consists of

- a descriptive scale of language proficiency in French as a second language (FSL), comprised of 12 levels and focused on accomplishing communication tasks;
- a series of yardsticks to measure language proficiency based on a continuum;

- performance criteria statements allowing for the contextualization of knowledge according to a learner's four language skill areas: Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading;
- a common framework of reference for learning, teaching, programming and assessing French as a second language;
- a national standard for the development of a French as a second-language learning program in various contexts; and
- a common scale for assessing results in French as a second language.

The NCLC takes three components into account:

- the level of difficulty of communication tasks;
- the level of complexity of communication environments;
- the expectations for effectiveness and performance in communication.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BTC-NCLC

The BTC-NCLC covers levels 1 to 8 of the *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006 (NCLC)*. Primarily designed for adult immigrants, its purpose is to quickly and effectively measure proficiency of adults seeking to enrol in French as a second-language (FSL) at the beginner or intermediate level (1) in understanding a written or spoken message or 2) expressing themselves orally or in writing. It also allows FSL teachers and program directors to better determine the language needs of future learners and to point them toward courses that are suited to their language proficiency.

Versions 2 and 3 of the *Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test* were used as a starting point: an English version of this test already existed to assess the English as a second-language proficiency of newcomers and adult immigrants and was based on theoretical foundations similar to those of the NCLC.

We have, however, taken a completely different approach than the one followed in English. In fact, using NCLC descriptors, we began by identifying, for each skill, the inherent language competencies at each level. These competencies were then placed on a continuum in such a way as to show, in a table, the distinguishing textual and linguistic characteristics of each level. This exercise allowed us to isolate the unique and measurable behaviours for each NCLC level and served as a blueprint for developing various tests.

Then, specifications tables were developed for each test, that is, detailed plans indicating the number and type of tasks, the number and type of questions to assign to each level, as well as the competencies to be assessed. Finally, a series of tasks was designed for each test and items were written for the listening and reading tests. Rather than take a traditional normative approach,

all efforts were directed towards following a criterion-referenced approach in developing this test battery. For example, for speaking and writing, the assessor must consider the responses to some tasks according to a list of predetermined criteria. The various linguistic behaviours having been previously associated with given NCLC levels, it thus becomes possible to identify the performance level from the observed linguistic behaviours.

The various datasets created were submitted to a series of pilot studies. These studies were used to validate the material and the approach taken with learners in the classroom and to verify whether the material was in line with the target levels. This approach also allowed for the correction and fine-tuning of each element of the test battery. In the end, we grouped the tasks together in the test and, after verifying the workings of each set, we proceeded with a standardization study of the entire test battery. These various development and empirical testing phases extended over a two-year period for the four tests.

The BTC-NCLC is comprised of two pre-tests (one oral and one written) and four tests, one for each of the four language skills within the NCLC framework of reference.

Productive skills (speaking and writing) assessment tasks are derived from genuine communication tasks and the assessment of these tasks is based on a criterion-referenced approach. It is based on fair grading criteria.

Receptive skills (listening and reading) assessment tasks are based on reading texts or audio or video texts followed by multiple-choice questions. Assessment is also based on a criterion-referenced approach, even if we have to resort to using cut-off points to delineate levels.

For more details on the BTC-NCLC, click on the following link: www.language.ca.

STANDARDIZATION OF THE BTC-NCLC

The objective of this phase was to verify the BTC-NCLC process using the most realistic sample of the target clientele, to standardize the administration procedure and to obtain the necessary data for studying the psychometric properties of various tests. The absence of an external criterion was problematic at first. There are few standardized tests designed to rank immigrants according to their proficiency in French as a second language. The Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec (MICC) did have a placement test that was close to what we were looking for, but their scale, *Niveaux de compétence en français langue seconde pour les immigrants adultes*, while close, was not exactly equivalent to the NCLC. In particular, the oral test provided a composite score of oral interaction, in contrast to the BTC-NCLC, which consists of two different tests: one for speaking and one for listening. Another problem arose from the fact that, even though most of those taking the MICC placement test were given oral tests, this was not necessarily the case with written testing, which could compromise studies relating to the external

criterion for writing and reading tests. Lastly, since the study was Canada-wide, the lack of a comparable external criterion in provinces outside of Quebec compounded the problem.

Following an agreement with the MICC, we were able to test some of their clientele in the Montréal region during the fall 2008 session, and the MICC agreed to provide us with the ranking of successful candidates using their scale: this ranking was based on the results obtained on their placement test, or on the performance results after training.

Finally, to make up for the lack of a comparable external criterion in the other provinces, we administered the oral interaction segment of the MICC placement test to the successful candidates. This test was administered alternately and at the same time as the BTC-NCLC and allowed us to establish the same classification on the external criterion for all of the candidates.

Data collection commenced at the beginning of fall 2008 and lasted until the end of fall 2008. The cooperation of 12 institutions across Canada, including colleges and universities, allowed us to test 616 learners at different FSL levels.

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

We began by validating the content of the different components of the BTC-NCLC: Continuum, Specifications Tables and Test Material. Each document was shown to outside experts (test developers from the MICC) whose mandate was to ensure that the documents were consistent with test objectives. They were also required to ensure that the inherent principles of test construction were followed. Those mandated by the Ministère provided in-depth feedback on the compatibility between the methodological documents and the assessment tasks developed.

During the standardization process, the collection of data allowed for us to measure the internal consistency of the various tests and the inter-rater reliability of scale-based tests (speaking and writing), the degree of correlation between each test and the external criterion, as well as a whole series of other validity indicators. All of these measures indicate that the BTC-NCLC is a valid and reliable instrument.

CONCLUSION AND IMPACT

User feedback suggests that the test battery is living up to expectations: high degree of similarity between performance levels observed in class and those predicted, and an indication of the strengths and weaknesses that can be gleaned from the test results.

The introduction of the BTC-NCLC, particularly in minority francophone communities, is causing the federal and provincial governments to rethink the FSL training and assessment delivery model for newcomers and immigrants.

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- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec

Funding agencies

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Government of Ontario