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Brokering occupation:
The paradoxical role of non-profit organizations in a neoliberal era

Francophone immigrant integration

- Using Francophone immigration to increase demographic weight of Francophone minority communities (FMCs)
- Community organizations influence integration of French-speaking immigrants
- Integration refers to long-term process of becoming full and equal participants in society (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2006)

Occupational Possibilities

“ways and types of doing that come to be viewed as ideal and possible with a specific sociohistorical context, and that come to be promoted and made available within that context.”

(Laliberte Rudman, 2010, p. 55)

Technologies of neoliberal governance

- **Decentralization**
 - Devolution of federal responsibilities to other levels of government & intermediaries (e.g. community organizations)

Technologies of neoliberal governance

- **Shift in funding models**
 - Move from base and core funding toward contract or program-based funding

Technologies of neoliberal governance

- **Accountability**
 - Shift from public accountability toward administrative accountability

Community organizations as intermediaries

- Community organizations offer government funded settlement and integration services to immigrants
- Largely geared toward preparing newcomers for economic productivity
- Mainly include English language learning courses, employment searching and training, document translation and interpretation

Research questions

- How are community organizations affected by technologies of neoliberal governance characterizing social policy in Canada?
- How are occupational possibilities for immigrants shaped by community organizations embedded within this neoliberal context?

Methods

- Critical review of government documents
 - *Strategic framework to foster immigration to Francophone minority communities*
 - *Immigration as a tool for the development of official language minority communities*
 - *Strategic plan to foster immigration to Francophone minority communities*
 - *Immigration and the vitality of Canada's official language communities: Policy, demography and identity*
 - *Official languages and immigration: obstacles and opportunities for immigrants and communities*

Methods

- Interviews conducted with 6 representatives from governmental and non-profit community organizations
 - regional office of a provincial government funding agency
 - local branch of a provincial multi-service organization
 - community college
 - centre for women who have experienced sexual abuse
 - community centre
 - grass-roots organization geared toward French-speaking immigrants

Construction of integration in government documents

- Discussions of settlement & integration stress 2 primary issues:
 - Employment and qualification recognition
 - positioned as central to integration
 - French language service provision
 - cited as fundamental to reception structure of host community
- Barriers to integration = those posing obstacles to productivity

Role of community organizations – supporting integration

“[...] let's say if you have a project it's in the span of one year. When you start the project it takes three to four months for the project to start to run well, and as soon as it's started, you have to end it. And when it's over the funders don't want to finance the same project twice, so you have to come with another idea. So, there is no continuity in the projects. That penalizes us too.”

Enabling integration in FMC context

“Everyone has their priorities, and once we are in London and that we’re in an Anglophone work environment etcetera or when we’re in an exogamous family, it’s then a lot more difficult to find time to get involved in our Francophone community. You really need a will to fight, to continue to progress in terms of a Francophone community and it’s not everyone that has the time or the desire to do it.”



Influences upon integration into FMCs

“And especially when you leave your country and you arrive here, don’t expect to necessarily get a job right away like you want with the same advantages that you had back home, it’s impossible. So integration, when we abandon what we abandon, what we have in our country and when we arrive in a new country, you have, I think that it’s a question of mentality, to accept first that we’re going to start over at zero, like it or not. And that’s what immigrants in general have trouble accepting.”



Implications for Occupational Science

- Building on critical and transactional perspectives to emphasize contexts shaping occupations
- Focus on ‘intermediaries’ who shape occupational possibilities
- Implications of negotiating the tensions that arise from adopting and resisting neoliberal technologies

Huot, S. (2013). Francophone immigrant integration and neoliberal governance: The paradoxical role of community organizations. *Journal of Occupational Science*. Early online.

Thank you!

Comments? Questions?

