

# Evaluative perceptions of self and others: Immigration needs and preoccupations in the Estrie region.

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## Abstract

Of 258,057 immigrants admitted in Quebec between 2011-2015, 5228 came to the Estrie region. Recording immigrant attitudes towards the host majority culture and other ethnic minorities, 217 Estrie immigrants were surveyed on demographic, sociocultural, and psychological characteristics. Results show that immigrants' perception of ethnoreligious groups, their view of native Quebecers' tolerance and acceptance of them, their take on religious/cultural diversity, their self-rated life overall, social identity, and collective self-esteem, vary as a whole and/or as a function of region of origin or primary official language used. Implications for immigrant integration and retention are discussed.

## Introduction

- Protecting majority-group cultural identity and cohesiveness through the creation of the 'Other' leads to challenges of social integration – the process of 'Them' becoming one of 'Us'
- When perceived as the 'Other' immigrants are seen as different from the host community
- Western societies adhere to the ideals of secularism. Identifying ethnic groups with stereotyped faith traditions may cast immigrants as challenging these ideals. Seeing the 'Other' in religious terms and as a potential threat creates social distance and dampens motivation to meet accommodation requests.

### Previous Research and Poll Results

- The blending of ethnic/religious identities along with the recent debates over the meaning of secularism in Western societies suggest that the host communities see immigration as raising concerns about the space of religion in public space.<sup>i,ii,iii,iv,v</sup>
- Previous research has suggested that the tendency of rural Quebecers to conflate immigrants' ethnicity and religion enables the construction of an 'us and them' mentality.<sup>vi</sup>
- According to a 2013 Angus-Reid poll<sup>vii</sup>, 77% of Quebecers agreed that "the values of Quebec society are at risk due to reasonable accommodation". Only 23% agreed that "reasonable accommodation enriches Quebec society" while 65% thought that "laws and norms should not be modified to accommodate minorities".
- Public opinion polls have converged in documenting greater resistance by French over non French mother-tongue Quebecers to questions of reasonable accommodation.<sup>viii,ix</sup> When asked to consider accommodating cultural and religious diversity within Quebec society, a recent study shows that Francophones' conflation of immigrant ethnicity and religion tempers their willingness to accommodate immigrant special requests.<sup>x</sup>

## Present Study

- Between 2011-2015, 10.2% of the 258,057 immigrants admitted to Quebec were refugees. An estimated 5228 immigrants came to the Estrie region which ranks as Quebec's second highest in receiving refugees. During the same period, 2520 refugees resettled in the area
- Studies investigating immigrant attitudes towards host communities and the link between immigrant identity, health and well-being are underrepresented in the research literature
- Aimed at gauging local immigrant attitudes towards the host majority community and other ethnic minorities, this study provides a descriptive portrait of the demographic, social, cultural, and economic characteristics of immigrants in the Estrie region

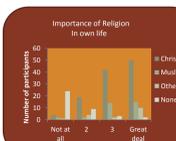
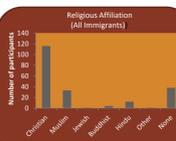
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## Participants (N=217)

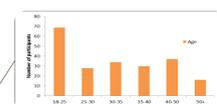
Quebec Estrie Immigrants tested individually drawn from the general population

- 49% male
- Average Age = 32
- 82% Urban
- Time living in Quebec Median = 4 years
- Official Language used outside of home
  - French = 74%
  - English = 18%

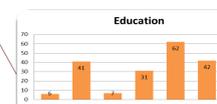


Muslim immigrants ( $\bar{X} = 2.42, n = 33$ ) more so than Christian immigrants ( $\bar{X} = 1.74, n = 116$ ) think that religious diversity enriches society ( $t = 3.3, p < .05$ )

Muslim immigrants ( $\bar{X} = 3.6, n = 33$ ) more so than Christian immigrants ( $\bar{X} = 2.9, n = 116$ ) feel their own culture is threatened ( $t = 3.28, p < .05$ )



	English-speaking	French-speaking
Comfortable	56%	29%
Making ends meet	31%	46%
Struggling	13%	24%



Region of origin	Asia	NW Europe	Europe Other	Central/East Africa	NW Africa	S America	Latin America (+SA)
Included Countries	Afghanistan, Bhoutan, China, Iran, Lebanon, Philippines	France, Germany, Lithuania, Portugal, United Kingdom	Bosnia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain	Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ile Maurice, Kinasa, Mauritius, Rwanda, Zambia	Algeria, Burkina, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia	Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela	Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad, USA

## Measures

**Reverse Bogardus scale** (RB scores):

- Revised seven-item scale reflects participants' perceptions of the extent to which ethnic/religious groups welcome close social contact with them (accept them).
- directs participants to a targeted group, say Iranians (ethnic) or Muslims (religious), and asks (in increasing order of closeness): "Would Iranians (Muslims) exclude you from their country", "accept you as a visitor", "as a citizen", "as a co-worker", "as a neighbour", "as a close personal friend", "as a close kin by marriage?"
- Targeted ethnic groups: Afghans, Americans, Quebec Anglophones, Bhutanese, Colombians, Chinese, Haitians, Bosnians, Iraqis, Algerians, Congolese, Indians, Israelis, Mexicans, Moroccans, Peruvians, French, Quebec Francophones.
- Targeted religious groups: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindus
- RB score was calculated for each ethnic and religious group and later combined into a Total Score for all ethnic targets and all religious targets
  - high RB score = target group perceived as more open to close social contact (more accepting).
  - low RB score = target group perceived as less open to close social contact (less accepting).
  - Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (Ethnic targets) = .95 (CI: .93 - .96); Religious targets = .89 (CI: .86 - .91)

**Reasonable accommodation (RA scores):** five-item Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 6=strongly agree)

- Every immigrant should respect Quebec's rules and laws even though they may go against certain of their religious beliefs or cultural practices (reversed scored)
- It is necessary to alter the application of Quebec rules and laws in order to accommodate some of the religious and cultural practices of immigrants
- Quebec Francophones are tolerant concerning the conventions and customs of different ethnic communities in Quebec
- It is necessary for immigrants living in Quebec to adopt a Quebec lifestyle (reversed scored)
- Quebec Anglophones are tolerant concerning the conventions and customs of different ethnic communities in Quebec

- high RA score (items 1,2,4) = greater willingness to accommodate immigrant religious/cultural practices
- low RA score (items 1,2,4) = lesser willingness to accommodate immigrant religious/cultural practices

**General perception of ethnic groups scale** : Likert scale (1=negative, 7=positive)

- same ethnic groups as those listed in the Reverse Bogardus Scale, each assessed along with the following composite dimensions: cold-warm, negative-positive, unfriendly-friendly, disrespectful-respectful, uncomfortable-comfortable, unwelcoming-welcoming, incompetent-competent
- high score= target group perceived positively
- Low score= target group perceived negatively

**Self-ratings of physical health and life overall** : Likert scale (0=worst, 10=best)

- high score= positive view of health and life
- Low score= negative view of health and life

**Social identity scale** : twelve-item Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

- 3 subscales: Ingroup ties, Centrality, Ingroup affect
- high score= strong social identification with own immigrant group
- Low score= weak social identification with own immigrant group

**Collective self-esteem scale** : sixteen-item Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

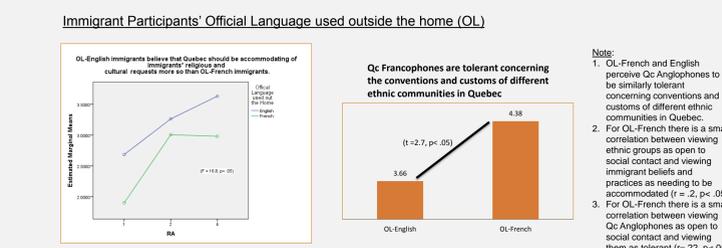
- 4 subscales: membership self-esteem, private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem, importance to identity
- high score= high collective self-esteem
- Low score= low collective self-esteem

## Results

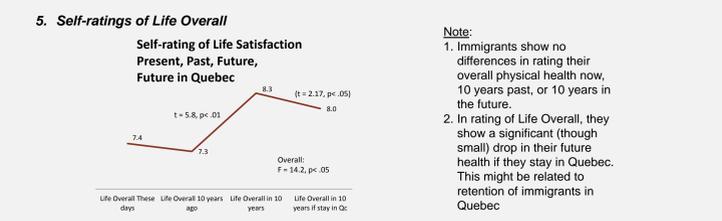
- Reverse Bogardus (RB Ethnic Targets)**
  - Native Quebec Anglophones and Francophones are perceived to be equally open to close social contact
    - This perception was shared by immigrants despite their region of origin
  - There was a "familiarity bias" in perceptions of social distance
    - Immigrants from the same region of origin as the participant were perceived more favourably, e.g., Colombians are perceived as significantly more open to social contact by immigrants from South America than by those from Central/East Africa; French (France) are seen as more open to social contact by immigrants of North/Western Europe than by those from South America.
  - When certain ethnic targets groups are perceived differently among immigrant participants from different regions, immigrants from South America are usually the ones with the least favourable opinion of these groups.
  - When looking at Official Language used outside of the Home (OL), English (OL-English) perceive ethnic targets (total score) as more open to social contact than do OL-French ( $t = 2.07, df = 197, p < .05$ )

- Reverse Bogardus (RB Religious Targets)**
    - Degrees of difference in openness to close social contact (Higher Score = Judged more open to close social contact).
    - Christians significantly different from the rest
    - Muslims significantly different from the rest
- Three Points of Interest:
- Immigrant participants' RB ratings of religious groups place Muslims as the second most open to close social contact. This contrasts with native Anglophone and Francophone Quebecers who always place Muslims as the religious group least open to close social contact.
  - South American participants perceive Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus as similarly less open to close social contact than do participants from NW Europe, other regions of Europe, North West Africa, and Asia (except for Sikhs).
  - OL-English and OL-French follow the same pattern of perception of religious targets (total score).

- Reasonable Accommodation (RA)**
  - Regardless of which region immigrant participants were from, their RA (total) scores were similar.
  - Native Quebec Anglophones and Francophones were both perceived to be similar in their attitudes towards accommodating immigrant requests.



- General Perception of ethnic groups**
  - Qc Francophones are perceived to be warmer, more positive, friendly, respectful, comfortable, welcoming, and competent than Qc Anglophones (Qc Francophones  $\bar{X} = 5.1$ , Qc Anglophones  $\bar{X} = 4.4$ , based on mean of total general perception score).
  - Americans, Qc Anglophones, Chinese, Indians, Israelis, Mexicans, and French are seen more positively by OL-English than OL-French.
  - OL-English & French are no different in their perceptions of Afghans, Bhutanese, Colombians, Haitians, Bosnians, Iranians, Algerians, Congolese, Moroccans, Peruvians, and Qc Francophones.
  - OL-English and French perceive more positively: Qc Anglophones, French, Colombians, and Mexicans.
  - Most negatively perceived (lowest scores) by OL-English: Bhutanese, Bosnians, Peruvians
  - Most negatively perceived (lowest scores) by OL-French: Bhutanese, Israelis
  - For OL-French a correlation exists between how tolerant they perceive Qc Francophones and their general perception of them ( $r = .3, p < .05$ ). There is no correlation between how tolerant they perceive Qc Anglophones and their general perception of them.



- Social Identity**
  - All immigrants showed the same patterns in social identity
  - Group membership is not as central to their social identity ( $\bar{X} = 14.6$ ) as are their feelings about ( $\bar{X} = 20.7$ ) and connections to ( $\bar{X} = 18.5$ ) their cultural group.

