

**Raising the profile of
Francophone minority
communities to support
the integration of
French-speaking immigrants
and refugees**

Pathways to Prosperity - 2018

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INTRODUCTION

- Francophone immigration has become a central priority of the Canadian federal government seeking to support the vitality of Francophone minority communities (FMCs)
- However, there is a lack of research on French-speaking immigrants' and refugees' lived experiences and practices in FMCs

INTRODUCTION

- **Community sites (physical and virtual spaces) are important for members of FMCs**
 - **Enable them to live, access services, & socialize in French**
 - **Offer important resources to support the active participation & social integration of French-speaking immigrants & refugees**

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- **Understanding social & cultural integration of French-speaking immigrants and refugees (FS migrants)**
 - **Minority community spaces**
 - **Social participation**
- **Examining experiences of belonging, inclusion & exclusion with respect to intersecting aspects of identity**

METHODOLOGIES

- **Critical qualitative research**
- **Ethnographic & case study approaches**
- **Observational, dialogic, visual, & participatory methods**
 - **Interviews (narrative, in-depth, focus group, key informant)**
 - **Occupational mapping**
 - **Observing & participating in routine activities**
- **Inductive & theoretically informed analysis**

FINDINGS

- 1) Invisibility within an Anglo-dominant context
- 2) Paradoxical role of FMCs
- 3) Participation in minority community spaces
 - Motivators, facilitators, barriers
 - Positive and negative experiences
 - Outcomes (benefits, results, social capital)

INVISIBILITY

- “Where are the Franco-Ontarians? They are where exactly? That’s the question because when you hear Franco-Ontarian it’s maybe when there are festivities or some Francophone half-day or a few hours that you spend together. Where is it?... There is nothing.” (FG1 Ottawa)

PARADOXICAL ROLE OF FMCS

- “I am Francophone first but I don’t want to restrict myself to one community because I am in a country that, practically 90% are Anglophone so I tell myself, I seek to look like all other Canadians, one who has English and who has French or who is Anglophone and Francophone. That’s my objective! I don’t want to limit myself to be Francophone, so I’m not on that path because I don’t think it’s the *Francophonie* that will facilitate my integration (...)” (FG3 Ottawa)

PARADOXICAL ROLE OF FMCS

- “There are plenty of opportunities to thrive in French, occasions to get together, there are occasions to celebrate the *Francophonie*, we thrive, we meet other Francophones, we meet on multiple occasions to exchange, share our experiences. I would say being Francophone in London is really stimulating because we don’t feel alone, we are in a community that is certainly in a minority context with a strong Anglophone majority pressure that is always acting all around us but we have opportunities to thrive, to share, to discuss and to have fun.” (FG1 London)

PARTICIPATION IN FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY SPACES

- “The first benefit is the valorization. There is nothing worse than to feel valueless, especially for a Francophone immigrant in North America, feeling like your language is worthless. All those years that you spent in school, we tell you that if you don’t know English, it doesn’t make sense. But all of a sudden you find yourself in a space where you are functional. [... at church] you feel valorized because you can communicate easily. Because the people you are with, you have the same language. It’s valorization and the participation that valorizes you even more. Because the language enables you to communicate and to be active, so it valorizes you. Valorization, it’s something very important and it can have an impact on your private life, you feel important, you see?” (Church, 2)

ENABLING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

- Access to & use of Francophone community spaces influenced by lack of visibility of FMCs
- Social & cultural integration into FMCs neither automatic nor necessarily desired
- While smaller & more linguistically isolated communities may be more tight knit, they also struggle with limited means & increased pressure to assimilate

ENABLING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

- Differences in the forms of social participation reflect diverse roles that FS migrants occupy within the varied community sites
 - Clients, volunteers, members, employees
- Participation targeted according to the type of Francophone community site (e.g., its mission, vision, mandate, objectives)
- Different types of social participation contribute to different experiences, outcomes & benefits

ENABLING SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

- FS migrants' social participation in diverse Francophone community sites is essential and represents a promising practice for:
 - Their social & economic participation & integration in FMCs & in Canadian society
 - Their sense of belonging & inclusion
 - The development of social, informational & professional networks, & of social capital
 - Uniting members of Francophone communities & for constructing a shared & solid Francophone identity

MOVING FORWARD

- **Study of Francophone spaces in Metro Vancouver, BC**
- **Funded by SSHRC**  **CRSH**
 - Francophone immigration & integration on the West coast is greatly understudied
 - It is the largest urban centre in BC
 - BC receives the second highest number of FS migrants after Ontario (outside Quebec)
 - BC has the highest concentration of FS migrants among its Francophone population of any Canadian province or territory

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Pathways to Prosperity: Canada



Immigration, Refugees
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