

WORKSHOP REPORT

Quebec's English-Speaking Immigrants and Poverty: Sharing our analysis and building a research agenda

A workshop jointly organized by

Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN)

And

Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)

And held at the Immigrant Workers Centre, Montreal, February 13, 2012

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Acronyms used in this document

COCo = Centre for Community Organizations

CSST = Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

ESCQ = English-speaking communities of Quebec

FOLS = First Official Language Spoken

GAR = Government-assisted refugees

MELS = Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

MESS = Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale

MICC = Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

PANA = Programme d'accompagnement des nouveaux arrivants (Support program for the integration of new arrivals)

QUESCREN = Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network

Background

The report below presents results of a one-day workshop held by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) in collaboration with the Centre for Community Organizations (COCO).

The origins of this workshop were discussions among community organizers and researchers in the field of immigration and of English-speaking Quebec. Frances Ravensbergen, staff member at COCo and Lorraine O'Donnell, coordinator-researcher at QUESCREN had been meeting with research consultant Karen Urtnowski and professor Eric Shragge of Concordia University's School of Community and Public Affairs to talk about the relatively high rate of poverty among the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ). We were particularly concerned about how the economic hardship faced by so many newcomers to Quebec, including those whose mother tongue or First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) is English, appeared to be one of the factors associated with this poverty. These "Anglophone" immigrants make up a significant part of the English-speaking population of Quebec.

Many English-speaking immigrants, after having started to settle in Quebec, migrate to other provinces. In our view, therefore, understanding the economic situation of English-speaking immigrants in Quebec was not only important for the sake of those immigrants. It was also a potential factor affecting the overall vitality of the Quebec population.

We wanted to better understand the poverty and related factors of unemployment and underemployment of Quebec's English-speaking immigrants. Our idea was to explore aspects of their economic exclusion with a view to finding ways that research could help, such as by developing research interest in the topic, and identifying research themes, priorities and next steps.

To this end, we organized a workshop entitled "Quebec's English-Speaking Immigrants and Poverty: Sharing our analysis and building a research agenda." We invited researchers interested in this field, people who work with Quebec's immigrants, especially English-speaking ones (some of whom are immigrants themselves), and people from key ESCQ organizations. The event was held at the Immigrant Workers Centre, Montreal, on February 13, 2012.

Thirty-two people attended and actively participated in the full day event. Participants were able to tell their stories, convey some of the most common difficulties that newcomers encounter, and reveal challenges they face in achieving economic security and prosperity. Some of these are the result of government policy. Some are directly relevant to the minority language status of English-speakers in Quebec, while others apply equally to French-speaking immigrants.

We hope this report captures some of the richness of the proceedings of the day.

Welcome and introductions

Lorraine O'Donnell, coordinator-researcher of the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN), welcomed the workshop participants. She explained that QUESCREN is a partnership of Concordia University's School of Extended Learning, which kindly provided lunch for the workshop, and the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, located in Moncton, with support from Canadian Heritage. QUESCREN's role is to help develop research capacity on the subject of Quebec's English-speaking communities (ESCQ). She presented the day's agenda (see **Appendix A: Workshop program**).

Eric Shragge introduced himself. He is Associate Professor¹ and Principal at Concordia University's School of Community and Public Affairs, and one of the founders of the Immigrant Workers Centre, which is hosting the workshop. Eric described collaborative research he has undertaken. He and other authors present results of some of this work in the book called *Fight Back: Workplace Justice for Immigrants*.² He welcomed the participants and invited them to consider working on collaborative research on the subject of poverty and immigration. The workshop on immigration and poverty is one step in this longer-term research project.

The participants introduced themselves. Participants included representatives of community vitality groups, groups from the community and government sectors working with immigrants and refugees, research institutes and universities (see **Appendix B: participants**.)

¹ Note: Dr. Shragge is now retired from Concordia University. He is currently a volunteer and staff member at the Immigrant Workers Centre.

² Shragge, Eric, Aziz Choudry, Jill Hanley, Steve Jordan and Martha Stiegman. 2009. *Fight Back: Workplace Justice for Immigrants*. Fernwood Books, Halifax.

Presentation

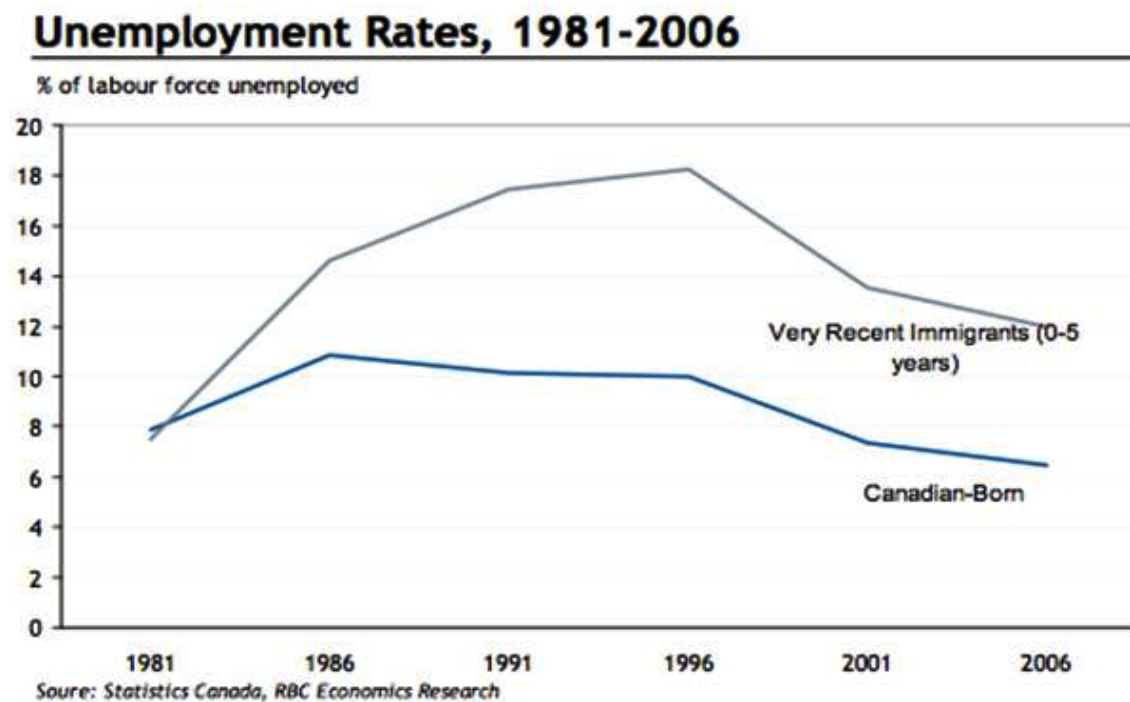
Karen Urtnowski, research consultant with QUESCREN, gave a presentation sketching a statistical overview of poverty among Quebec's English-speaking immigrants.

Main points included:

In the past thirty years, the labour market has changed with a rise in deregulation, signing of new free trade agreements, and a surge in power of the business sector.

In the same period, the economic situation has changed for the worse for immigrants: See **Figures 1 and 2**.

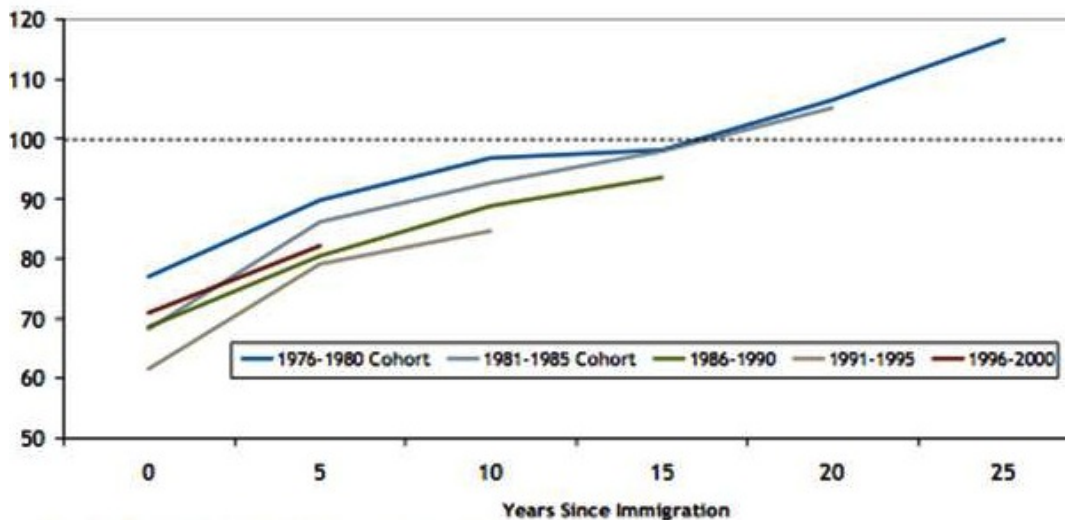
Figure 1: Unemployment rates, very recent immigrants and Canadian born, 1981-2006



Source: Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). 2011. "Immigrant Labour Market Outcomes in Canada: The Benefits of Addressing Wage and Employment Gaps." RBC Economics Research. Current Analysis December 2011 <http://www.rbc.com/economics/market/pdf/immigration.pdf>

Figure 2: Immigrant earnings as a proportion of Canadian-born earnings

Immigrant Earnings as a Proportion of Canadian-Born Earnings



Source: Statistics Canada, RBC Economics Research

Source: Royal Bank of Canada. 2011. "Immigrant Labour Market Outcomes in Canada: the Benefits of Addressing Wage and Employment Gaps." RBC Economics Research. Current Analysis December 2011. <http://www.rbc.com/economics/market/pdf/immigration.pdf>

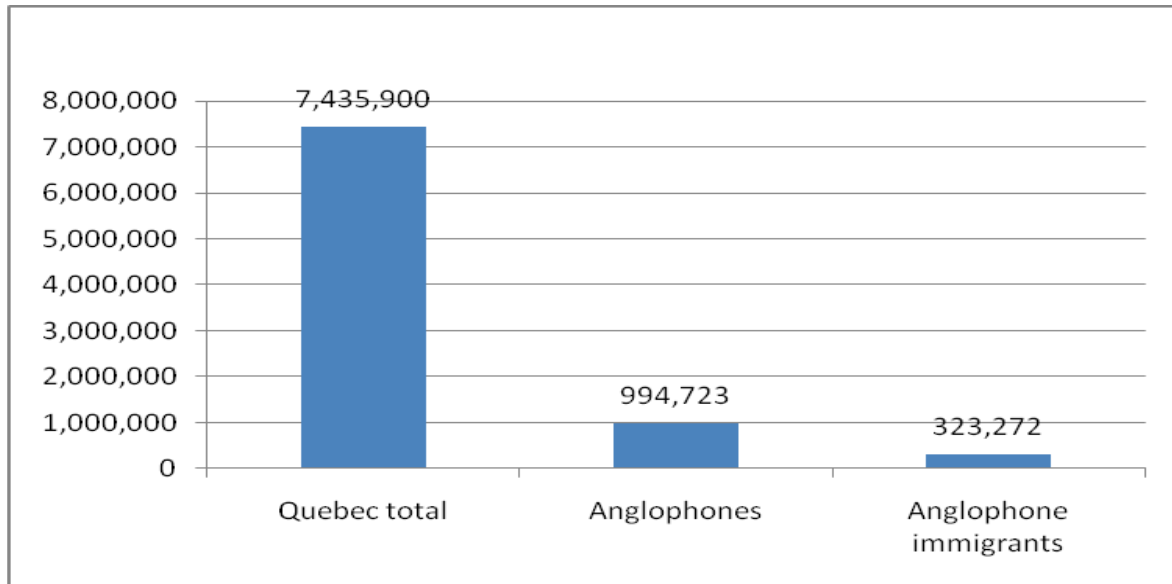
These figures show that the earnings gap between Canadian-born and immigrant workers has grown (Figure 1) and that the gap is now lasting for a longer period of time after immigrants' arrival (Figure 2). New immigrants will take longer to catch up to Canadian-born workers in earning power than did earlier generations of immigrants.

Who is an English speaker? The Quebec government uses the term "Anglophone" only for mother tongue English-speakers, dividing the population into Anglophone, Francophone, and Allophone. On the other hand, the Canadian federal government uses primarily the more inclusive "First Official Language Spoken" (FOLS) definition of English speakers, which includes Allophones who are more comfortable in English than in French. The FOLS approach divides most of the population into FOLS-English and FOLS-French. The federal government uses the term "Anglophone" and "English-speaker" to refer to FOLS English-speaker, and we will use that term in the workshop sometimes, too.

There are about 995,000 FOLS-English people in Quebec. This represents 13.4% of the population of the province. Of these, 323,000 are immigrants. See **Figure 3**.

This is a significant proportion of the overall English-speaking population—almost one third (32%). See **Figure 4**.

Figure 3: Relative sizes of Quebec’s general population, English-speaking population, and English-speaking immigrant population (2006)

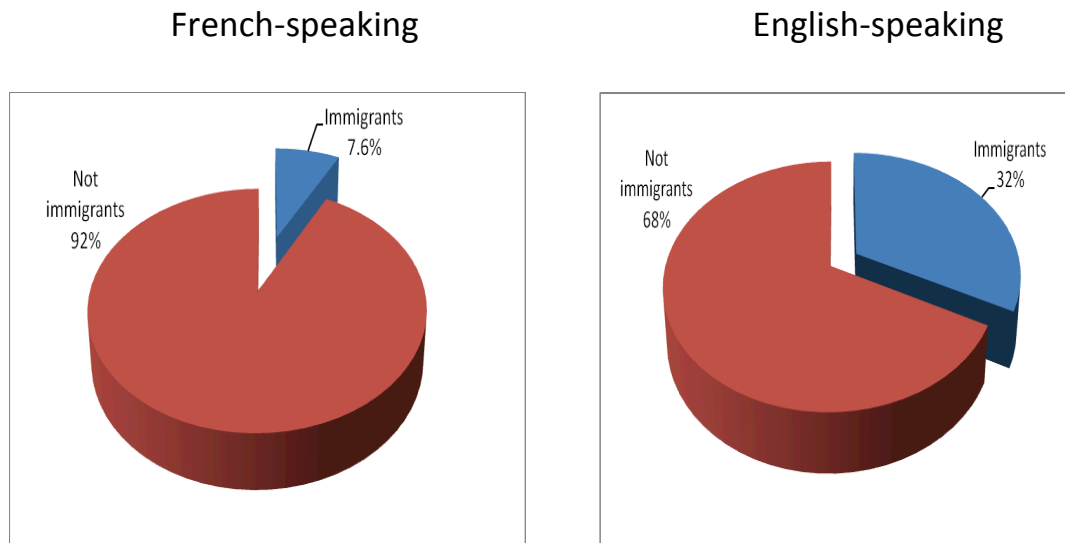


Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census (compiled from data in Corbeil et al., 2010: 13, 49).³

As a point of comparison, immigrants make up a mere 7.6% of Quebec's Francophone population.

³ Corbeil, Jean-Pierre, Brigitte Chavez and Daniel Pereira. 2010. *Portrait des minorités de langue officielle au Canada : les anglophones du Québec*. Ottawa: Division de la statistique sociale et autochtone, Statistique Canada, catalogue no. 89-642. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-642-x/89-642-x2010002-fra.pdf-X> (accessed December 17, 2010).

Figure 4: Portion of immigrants among the French-speaking and English-speaking populations of Quebec, 2006

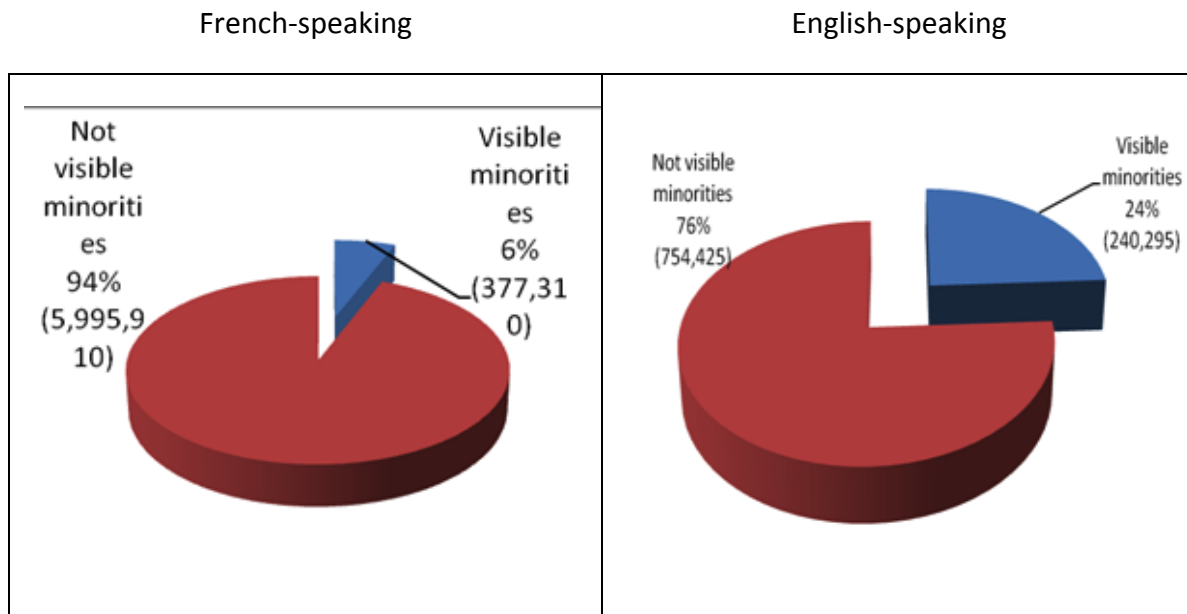


Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census (compiled from data in Corbeil et al., 2010: 13, 49).⁴

Immigration has always been a characteristic of the ESCQ with the English, Scottish, Irish, Jewish and many other communities establishing themselves over the centuries. A recent trend is the rise in the proportion of visible minorities within the English-speaking immigrant communities. **Figure 5** shows that there is a higher proportion of visible minority Quebecers within the Anglophone population (24%) than in the Francophone population (6%). Among the English-speaking visible minority groups are blacks of many origins, Arabs, West Asians, South Asians and Koreans.

⁴ Ibid.

Figure 5: Portion of visible minorities among the French-speaking and English-speaking populations of Quebec, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census (compiled from data in Pocock, Joanne. 2012: p. 11).⁵

Unemployment rates: **Figure 6** below shows that Quebec has an unemployment rate (for ages 25 to 54) that is near the Canadian average. But the immigrants to Quebec — particularly the newest immigrants—fare much worse than they do in Ontario or the Atlantic provinces, and their unemployment rates are far higher than the Canadian average.

⁵ Pocock, Joanne. 2012. *Baseline Data Report 2011-2012. Socio-Economic Profiles of the English-speaking Visible Minority Population by Quebec Health Region based on data from the 2006 Census of Canada*. Prepared for the Community Health and Social Services Network. [Quebec: the Network, 2012].

http://www.chssn.org/En/pdf/Baseline_Data_Report_2011-2012.pdf (Accessed on February 22, 2013).

Figure 6: Unemployment rate by immigrant status of population aged 25 to 54, by province (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario), 2011⁶

	Canada	Atlantic provinces	Que.	Ont.
Unemployment rate				
Total population	6.2	8.3	6.5	6.4
Landed immigrants ¹	8.4	6.0	11.9	8.7
Immigrants, landed 5 or less years earlier	13.6	8.6	19.5	14.8
Immigrants, landed more than 5 to 10 years earlier	8.2	x	9.6	8.3
Immigrants, landed more than 10 years earlier	7.1	5.1	9.3	7.7
Born in Canada	5.5	8.4	5.6	5.4
x : suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i> .				
1. Refers to people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Canadian citizens by birth and non-permanent residents (persons from another country who live in Canada and have a work or study permit, or are claiming refugee status, as well as family members living here with them) are not landed immigrants.				

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 282-0102.⁷

There is a high rate of outmigration of immigrants to Quebec. Is it possible that unemployment and poverty are factors leading to this outmigration of immigrants?

2006 data from Statistics Canada show that Quebec Anglophones are more likely to be poorer than Quebec Francophones: that is, there are higher rates of poverty among the general Anglophone population than the general Francophone population. Jean-Pierre Corbeil of Statistics Canada has explained that this might be in part due to the higher

⁶ It is important to note the age cohort in Figure 6 (25-54) is narrower than is usually used for unemployment data (15-64).

⁷ Canada. Statistics Canada. *Table 282-0102 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by immigrant status, age group, Canada, regions, provinces and Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver census metropolitan areas, annual (persons unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database).*
<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2820102&paSer=&pattern=&stByVal=2&p1=-1&p2=37&tabMode=dataTable&csid> (Accessed March 19, 2012.)

proportion of immigrants within the Anglophone population and the economic hardships that so many recent immigrants face.⁸

Of course, there is poverty among multi-generational Quebec Anglophones. This fact affects Anglophone poverty rates. However, since immigrants are more likely to be poor than non-immigrants, the much larger representation of immigrants in the Anglophone population than the Francophone population also helps explain some of the poverty disparity by language.

Education level: English-speaking visible minority groups are much more likely to have higher levels of education than non-visible minority English-speaking groups.⁹ This adds another layer to the tragedy of unemployment and outmigration rates.

Refugee claimants (who do not figure in these statistics) and family class immigrants make up a much higher proportion of the English-speaking immigrant population than of the Francophone immigrant population. This is because refugee claimants and family class immigrants are not selected by the Quebec government, but rather fall under federal jurisdiction. These groups do not have access to the same services as do government-selected immigrants, which could put them at an economic disadvantage.

The presentation offered a statistical sketch of English-speaking immigrants in Quebec and poverty, with significant comparisons to other Quebec Anglophones, to French-speaking Quebec, and to immigrants in the rest of Canada.

The next part of the workshop was a general discussion about the social reality behind the numbers.

⁸ Cited in Scott, Marian. "Wealthy English Must Have Left Town: Statscan Report: Anglophones Earn Less than Francophones and Have Higher Rate of Poverty." *Montreal Gazette*. September 24, 2010. A3.

⁹ According to Pocock, English-speaking visible minority groups are much more likely (30.6%) to have university level certifications than non-visible minority English-speaking groups (22.8%). They are also much more likely to have university certification when compared to the French-speaking visible minority group (24.2%). See Pocock, Joanne. 2012. *Baseline Data Report 2011-2012*: 11.

Discussion 1: Issues on the ground

Frances Ravensbergen introduced and moderated the next part of the workshop. Frances is a founding member, staff member and researcher at Centre for Community Organizations (COCO) in Montreal, and she also lectures at Concordia University.

Frances summarized the presentation and invited participants to respond to the presentation and share with the group if they agreed with points made or know of other realities that should be communicated.

Participants made the following main points during the discussion. They have been grouped by theme below.

Note that statements below have not been validated by research. They are presented as preliminary findings that may help shape a research agenda.

Factors in immigrant poverty

The situation of poverty

Many immigrants are living below the poverty line and even have to resort to food banks.

Problems with French language training

Many immigrants are kept off the job market to learn French. This contributes to their poverty.

French language courses provided by the government are in some cases inadequate for highly educated immigrants. The training provides what appears to be high school level French. French lessons in specialized domains are not offered. Thus, the immigrants do not learn a level of French that would enable them to work at a job suited to their professional capacities.

Problems with education attestation

Many immigrants are highly educated, but they have to obtain equivalency certificates to attest to their education level. This is expensive and takes a lot of time. The immigrants may or may not succeed in obtaining this certification. Often, regardless, they have to go back to school. They do not necessarily have enough money for this.

Difficulties in the labour market

Immigrants are often told that they need local work experience in order to find a job, but the experience is difficult to obtain. There are even barriers to volunteering; for instance, unions might discourage placing volunteers in the workplace. New arrivals are often concerned with having no money for rent and food. These people are worried that their needs will not be met. They often get underpaid jobs with no contracts. They accept this situation since they are desperate to have work.

Links between the factors

French language acquisition appears to be a central factor in immigrant poverty. It costs a lot of money to study French. Immigrants can survive on the stipend that Quebec provides for those receiving state-supplied language training, but often they still get into debt. A result is that many immigrants go as far as they can go studying French, possibly to the second or third level, but then they drop out of the French courses in order to get low-level jobs to pay the bills. They are forced to put off the process of re-professionalisation, [i.e., obtaining accreditation or obtaining local education in their field] in order to pay the bills. Obtaining accreditation for foreign diplomas is expensive.

The problem here appears to be under-funding for the French study allowance. The problem may also be of policies and services being spread out among various Quebec government Ministries. Immigrants experience a lack of coherence and overlapping responsibilities among the Ministries: it appears that everyone "passing the buck."

Problems with service provision

Why do immigrants go on welfare? It is because they perceive a lack of alternatives.

Welfare agents sometimes appear to use disrespectful tones and immigrants may feel that they are being treated as an underclass. It makes them fearful or prone to withdrawing from the process of obtaining or using welfare.

Mental health problems

Some immigrants suffer from mental health problems. Many new arrivals live with anxiety and depression due to the difficulties they face as immigrants, layered on top of any other problems that they may have had in the past. Immigrants have no health card (to receive free health and social services) for the first three months that they are in Quebec, and then it takes a long time to get treated for anxiety and depression. Immigrants do not always want to talk about their feelings, maybe due to language and cultural barriers. It is a long-term process to get some immigrants to open up and share, for instance in support groups developed by service agencies.

The special situation of immigrants with a precarious status

→ *Not reflected in the statistics*

Immigrants with a precarious status, such as temporary workers, people claiming refugee status, visitors who have overstayed their visa and people who have overstayed their removal order, are not included in the statistics that have been presented [in Karen Urtnowski's presentation, above].

In 2010, the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* reported that there were over 95,000 individuals with temporary resident status living in Quebec.¹⁰ A third of these were students, a third were temporary workers, and a third entered for humanitarian reasons (primarily refugee claimants). They are mostly in Montreal. They are not reflected in the statistics presented earlier.

→ *Limits to government assistance*

Immigrants who are government-assisted refugees ("GAR") selected abroad receive transportation loans to cover the cost of their travel to Canada. They have to reimburse these amounts, which constitute a very heavy expense. In addition, GARs are offered housing but not furniture, which they have to buy.

Temporary residents who enter for humanitarian reasons, primarily refugee claimants, must navigate the complex immigration system. Some receive bad advice or are poorly represented by untrained acquaintances in the community, lawyers or consultants. Single mothers claiming refugee status do not have access to subsidized daycare and cannot receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Quebec Child Assistance Payment, even if their children are Canadian citizens. This contributes to the poverty and poor employability of these mothers, as they often must rely on social assistance to survive. If they receive money for work, even at small jobs, they have their social assistance reduced dollar for dollar (after the first \$200 of income/month) or cut off.

Refugee claimants (and refused claimants up until the date of their removal order) have access to emergency and essential coverage through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP).¹¹ Some temporary resident immigrants are not eligible for Medicare

¹⁰ See Quebec. Institut de la statistique du Québec. 2012. "Number of temporary residents in Québec up by just over 50% between 2000 and 2010" [news release, February 7, 2012], available at http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/salle-presse/communiq/2012/fevrier/fev1207_an.htm

¹¹ Note: a workshop participant communicated to the authors of this report that the IFHP program was cut "drastically" in June 2012, but that most services previously provided through IFHP are now being provided through the Quebec Health ministry.

and must pay medical fees for themselves and their children. They live in poverty and fear. Immigrants with a precarious status wonder where they can go, and what they can do. Increased funding for the community resources that support these immigrants, including legal services, is needed.

→ ***Lack of access to services***

Access to services is an important research issue. Most immigrants with a precarious status, (i.e who are not permanent residents) have access to legal aid and some community organizations' services, but not to most official government services such as employment programs, tax benefits, subsidized daycare or social housing.

→ ***Immigrant status linked to job status***

A temporary foreign worker's status is linked to their particular employer and the job that employer provides. In some cases, the worker loses that job. To avoid removal from Canada, the worker therefore has to find a new employer who can demonstrate the need for a foreign worker for a job the employer has available. Then the worker must reapply for a work permit in order to stay in Quebec. This reality makes their stay in Canada precarious.

Factors in outmigration

French language education required for children

There are English-speaking immigrants, for instance, from countries formerly colonized by Britain, who are skilled and educated workers. They come to Quebec to better their children's future and education. They see that their children cannot be educated in English, so they leave. The participant who brought up this point emphasized that they are not criticizing the Quebec government policy, but just naming a fact.

Parents whose French is not very good cannot help their children with homework. They have to get tutors. This becomes an outmigration factor: people move to English-speaking provinces where they do not face this barrier to assisting their children.

Education attestation

It is difficult to get certification in this system for one's non-Canadian education; as a result, people with degrees end up with jobs not requiring formal education. There are cases of doctors, for instance, doing relatively simple lower paid jobs such as driving taxis. Immigrants are frustrated and some leave because of it. In addition, there are language barriers for Anglophones using Quebec government services such as welfare. This is another factor of outmigration.

A participant stated that it is hard for many immigrants to get work even though landed immigrants are "the cream of their countries," many with professional backgrounds.

French language barriers

There is a double problem of language and immigration. Those who go through the process of learning French learn to speak, but some cannot write well enough to work in French. As a participant stated, French is very difficult; even native French-speaking Québécois may have trouble writing it. A typical situation for immigrant couples is that while one person in the couple studies French, the other one works. Often the husband speaks French but the wife does not. In one service organization a participant knew of, out of 1200 client households, some 350 have moved away. Often it is the husband who decides to leave.

There has been a rise in the number of temporary foreign workers in Quebec; they surpass landed immigrants in numbers. They are skilled workers such as butchers, machinists, translators and cooks. They are allowed to eventually apply for permanent residency. The problem is that they have to obtain intermediate-level French, but often they do not have the time to take state-supplied French lessons because they work long hours. Some workers even take private lessons. A participant knew of a group of workers in this position who did not eventually apply for landed immigration status because they knew they were not at an adequate level of French.

In addition, some skilled workers are excluded from union activity because of the language barrier. The participant stated: "so Quebec is losing its skilled workers who leave for other places where there is no language barrier."

Complex problems

Some highly educated immigrants suffer severe hardships. Some lose their home country citizenship on applying for citizenship in Canada. Some are harassed at work but have difficulty going through the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST).

There are families who move out of province while the husband who has French language skills and a job in Montreal remains here to work. The husband then has to commute on weekends to see his family in Ontario. It is very difficult.

Policy and program design

A participant stated that programs should be designed and reviewed in their totality. The participant identified a problem of lack of coherence in government immigration policies.

Summary

Frances summed up the discussion. Some key points that may help set research directions into immigration and poverty are:

- We need to look at different immigrant groups: status, non-status, refugees.
- Many issues are related to French language acquisition and training.
- Immigrants need to get the right kind of support services. It is a challenge within community groups to provide them. Access to Quebec government services is limited by language and status barriers.
- Legal issues include obtaining landed immigrant status, and access to lawyers and legal information.
- Mental health issues have been mentioned.

Discussion 2: Research questions

Karen and Frances introduced the next session, the purpose of which was to identify possible avenues for future research. They emphasized that the particular interest of the groups organizing the workshop (COCO and QUESCREN) is participatory action-based research; their hope was that results of eventual research could lead to useful policy changes.

Karen presented a preliminary list of possible research questions. She noted that many had already been brought up in the discussion. She indicated that there are questions still requiring attention.

Preliminary research questions (list presented to participants)

General questions

- What are the factors causing English-speaking immigrant poverty and influencing the immigrants' experience of poverty? For instance, are there differences in access to resources? Special barriers to social action?
- Are English-speaking immigrants any more likely to be poor than French-speaking immigrants? If so, why?
- Who are the English-speaking immigrants in poverty? Which English-speaking immigrant groups (race, occupations, age of immigration, period of immigration, immigration status, level of French spoken) are most and least economically successful in Quebec, and why?
- What does or could advance the economic status of English-speaking immigrants?
- What poverty reduction strategies are currently underway? How effective are they?
- What is the link between poverty and outmigration of immigrants?
- What policy changes are needed? What are the components of success?
- Is it important to build bridges for social action between English-speaking immigrants and Francophone *regroupements* [umbrella groups]?

Specific questions

Learning French

- Are there barriers to accessing French language courses or opportunities to practise the language?

- Are *francization* students dropping out to take low-wage jobs because they cannot survive on the allowance?

Access to services

- Refugee claimants and sponsored family class immigrants are disproportionately English-speaking and these categories of newcomers are not eligible for certain settlement services and social programs. Is this a contributing factor to economic insecurity?
- To what degree is the mainstream settlement system satisfying the needs of English-speaking newcomers? Settlement workers are discouraged from using English with allophone clients. Is it also difficult to find services in English at provincial offices such as *Emploi Quebec*, and in health services? What is the experience of English-speaking immigrants as they use (or underuse) Quebec's mainstream settlement, employability, health and social services?

Labour market conditions

- What are the experiences of English-speaking immigrants in the labour market? In what sectors are they primarily employed? Who employs them? Who does not employ them? What job security or wages do they get?

Employability

- What is being done to address the problem of recognition of credentials and lack of Canadian experience for skilled immigrants?

Racial or other discrimination

- How significant is racial discrimination in immigrant poverty? Is there also labour market discrimination based on language?

Discussion

Participants made the following main points during the discussion. They have been grouped by theme below.

Note that statements below have not been validated by research. They are presented as preliminary findings that may help shape a research agenda.

Context of this discussion about research projects to pursue

→ ***Roadmap (federal government funding) renewal***

A participant explained that an element of the context to our discussion is the federal government "Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality", which outlines programming

and funding for the two Official Language Minority Communities of Canada (English speakers in Quebec and Francophones outside of Quebec) covers 2008-2013.¹² Under this framework, for immigrant retention and renewal funding, much more money is earmarked for the Francophone Official Language Minority Community (\$9M) than for Quebec's English-speaking Official Language Minority Community (\$63,000). The Roadmap is currently being reviewed and should be renewed next year (2013). The issues discussed here could serve as a point of discussion for new funding.

→ ***Quebec-Canada Accord and changes in Quebec service provision***

A participant stated that if the group wanted to have an impact on policy, it would have to focus on the specific situation in Quebec. They informed the group about the Quebec-Canada Accord of 1992:

- The Accord delegated to Quebec the provision of settlement services for newcomers (immigrants within the last five years).
- The federal government transfers money to Quebec for this service provision. The amount transferred will not go down, regardless of the number of immigrants Quebec receives; however, if program costs rise, the amount transferred rises. For instance, this year it went up by \$25M.
- Reopening the Accord would require the agreement of both parties, Quebec and Canada.
- This year (2012), Quebec received \$283M under the Accord. It is distributed among three Ministries: Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC) (around \$120M), Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) (around \$75M) and Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) (around \$80M or so).
- The participant noted that community groups had been asking the Quebec government to disclose these figures for some time.
- The Accord does not require Quebec to report on its activities. The participant asked: where does this money go?
- An important difference between the rest of Canada and Quebec is that in Quebec, State institutions have the mandate to integrate immigrants through services such as French language training. In the rest of Canada, 70% of the federal money settlement services is spent by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In Quebec, perhaps 6 or 7% is spent by NGOs.
- The French-language training allowance has not been indexed since 2004.

¹² Canada. Roadmap for Canada's linguistic duality, 2008-2013: acting for the future [Ottawa] : Govt. of Canada, 2008. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/slo-ols/strat-eng.cfm>

- MICC recently announced an important change. Whereas before it had offered direct services, for instance at airports, it will no longer do so as of April 1, 2012. Now organizations funded by the Programme d'accompagnement des nouveaux arrivants (PANA - Support program for the integration of new arrivals) will be offering direct services. Also, MICC is withdrawing from employment services for immigrants; Emploi Quebec will offer them though at this point Emploi Quebec does not have services tailored specifically for immigrants.

A participant noted that this Accord has the effect of differentiating Quebec's settlement approach from that of the rest of Canada. In Quebec, Quebec State helps settle immigrants whereas in the rest of Canada it is the community.

A participant indicated that there is a shortage of information required to sway policy makers and senior bureaucrats. When the Quebec-Canada Accord was implemented, for instance, it was without an impact analysis having been undertaken for how the Accord would affect Quebec's English speakers; the same goes for Emploi Quebec which has also been devolved from the federal government. Regarding the \$283M transferred to Quebec under the Quebec-Canada Accord this year: how much goes to Montreal? We need information. This participant agreed with the other participant who had said we need Quebec-specific information.

Immigrant and poverty research themes to consider

→ *Changes in the labour market*

Today's labour market is much more casualized, non-unionized and precarious than it used to be. Research should be undertaken to find out how precarity in labour status, mixed with race and gender issues, affects the situation of immigrants. Statistics on "temp" (temporary employment) agencies and temporary hiring are needed.

→ *Immigration and accreditation procedures*

Permanent residents on welfare cannot apply to bring their children into Canada. This leads to some permanent residents working at jobs that are not good just so they could be eligible to apply to bring their children over. Also, people waste thousands of dollars on lawyers to cope with immigration procedures. Research is needed on how immigration procedures themselves contribute to economic insecurity.

Research is needed on how long it takes for immigrants to obtain their status as permanent residents. This time factor appears to have a significant effect on how people are exploited and on their experience of poverty.

Another research priority is difficulties that immigrants face in obtaining accreditation for their education and diplomas. Apparently, the Manitoba government supports people applying for accreditation. This should be further researched.

→ ***Services including French-language training: History and access***

Research is needed on the history of service provision in Quebec since the 1960s, as well as on whether immigrants know about services available and barriers to their finding out about them.

An important research issue is access to services, especially the situation of people such as refugees who do not have access to resources (eg., Emploi Quebec programs, subsidized daycare and social housing). For instance, there are few groups offering legal services to refugees; a participant mentioned they had heard of only one, Just Solutions, which is not funded by government. Lack of access to services contributes to immigrant economic insecurity. A participant had heard that in Quebec there used to be job search assistance for refugee claimants, but that this was no longer the case. Research into the history of service provision to refugees is required, to uncover policy changes and why they occurred.

French-language training is an important issue. The financial support for people being trained is inadequate, especially those starting with no French. The State allowance for people in the training program has not been indexed for years. The language training issue is complex because of the three ministries involved; at this point, there is no research, no statistics, no knowledge of the outputs.

French language training is insufficient to work in French. Many people have to go on to take more private courses. Research is needed on the efficacy of the training: on the level people are at when they leave the course. Does the training get people to the level they need?

A participant stated that if the French-language training offered by the State really does lead to better jobs, then it is important to focus on this issue in the research, with a view to answering: what are the possibilities for changing policies?

→ ***Government actions that could alleviate immigrant poverty***

What actions can be taken at federal, provincial and municipal government level to alleviate immigrant poverty? At the federal level, maybe there are things to be done because the Official Languages Act obliges federal departments to implement positive measures for Official Language Minority Communities. What actions can be taken at the provincial and municipal level, eg., through economic development initiatives?

→ ***Cultural attitudes of employers***

Cultural attitudes of employers to immigrants in Quebec should be researched. The participant suggesting this acknowledged that this is a sensitive issue and that it would be a challenge to explore the issue productively.

→ ***Communities: their experiences, and mobilizing them for change***

A participant asked: what does it take to change policy? Not moral suasion, but mobilizing and pushing for change. Research should not be only about changing policy, but also on organizing strategies.

Another participant stated that in addition to "macro" research on policies, it would be useful to have research on "micro" situations: how different communities and groups, including the various ethnocultural and immigrant status groups, experience the immigrant situation. It is possible that many of these sub-groups do not identify as "English-speaking;" English may be simply a language they use to interact with society. It would be useful to have information on this point, as it would affect community development possibilities. How do we mobilize a varied group of people? Knowing these nuances would probably lead to better work on the macro policy demands.

Another participant built on this point, saying that information was needed on how to organize different immigrant groups such as temporary workers, factory workers and others often subject to exploitation. This participant stated that they did not think the issue was one of linguistic groups or French-language training, but of building cross-immigrant group alliances.

→ ***Best practices***

Best practices for services that work inside or outside Quebec should be researched.

→ ***Comparative research***

Regarding immigration and poverty, a participant noted that research has been done by the Canada Without Poverty organization on factors for poverty among ethnocultural minority groups in western Canada. It appears that there may be many parallels with the situation of English-speaking immigrants in Quebec.

At the same time, the approach to settlement in Quebec is very institutional whereas in the rest of Canada, it is more community oriented. There should be research comparing the value of the two approaches.

→ ***Existing research on the subject***

Existing ESCQ research projects should be built upon. For instance, the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation has researched mature workers. New research could investigate the effect of the additional impediment of being an immigrant.

The research done by Canada Without Poverty (see above) should be taken into account and possibilities for comparisons considered.

A bibliography is required of research that has already been done, whether formal or informal.

Discussion 3: Future prospects for a research working group on English-speaking immigration and poverty

Research resources available

The following institutions were identified sources of information pertinent to our discussion:

- Institut national de santé publique du Québec: references to research on poverty and social exclusion.
- Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI): data and information on policy issues such as access to services.
- Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN): information on the English-speaking communities including visible minorities.
- Canada Without Poverty: research done on poverty and immigration in Western Canada.

Strategy: ideas for next steps

- Organize a research team to take on groups of research questions.
- Determine which groups or individuals are interested in certain questions such as the cycle of poverty for newcomers, the demands of work.
- Identify potential research funding and apply for funding. Possible funding sources: Canadian Heritage, Immigration Canada. The context of approaching federal departments is the current discussions around the renewal of the "Roadmap" funding discussed above in the "Context" section. Specifically, seek funding from Immigration Canada framing our research as related to immigrant retention.
- To influence policy makers, we need to solidly express issues, to "create the narrative" through preparing documentation describing immigrant realities and issues and "busting myths." This could be done by capturing distinct stories and poignant vignettes to document the lives of immigrants, as well as issues that affect their lives. Information gathering could start with the groups present at today's workshop. Stories could be disseminated through film, social media as well as in written narratives and research reports. They could be also be used as policy discussion points.
- Involve communities in writing and disseminating research.
- Accompany the research with support for initiatives that promote better access for immigrants to services, and improved conditions for French language training.

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Appendix A: Workshop program

Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN)

Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)

Workshop

Quebec's English-Speaking Immigrants and Poverty:

Sharing our analysis and building a research agenda

Monday, February 13th 2012, 9 am

Program

9:00	Welcome & Introduction	Lorraine O'Donnell, Eric Shragge & Frances Ravensbergen
	Poverty and Quebec's English-speaking immigrants: statistical trends & issues	Presentation Karen Urtnowski, QUESCREN consultant
	What are our experiences? Issues, challenges & needs in community work with English-speaking immigrants	Discussion
10:30	<i>Break</i>	
10:45	What do we know? What don't we know? What do we need to know? Where do we go from here-- including exploring possibilities for collaborative research?	Discussion of research questions and research needs
12:00 – 12:45	<i>Lunch</i>	By Afghan Women Catering



ICRML
Institut canadien
de recherche
sur les minorités
linguistiques

CIRLM
Canadian Institute
for Research
on Linguistic
Minorities



Patrimoine
canadien

Canadian
Heritage

Appendix B: Participants

1. **Shipra Barua**, South Asian Women's Community Center (SAWCC)
2. **Evelyn Calugay**, The Filipino Women's Organization of Quebec (PINAY)
3. **Joey Calugay**, Immigrant Workers Centre
4. **Grace Campbell**, Women on the Rise
5. **Jocelyn Charron**, Centre for Literacy
6. **Aziz Choudry**, International Education Department of Integrated Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, McGill University
7. **Andrea Dawes**, Just Solutions legal information clinic (Montreal City Mission)
8. **Jorge Frozzini**, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and Immigrant Workers Centre
9. **Cheryl Gosselin**, Bishop's University / Quebec Community Groups Network / Eastern Townships Resource Centre
10. **Nadja Grabovari**, Youth Employment Services (YES)
11. **Leith Hamilton**, African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN)
12. **Hans Heisinger**, Carrefour jeunesse- emploi de NDG
13. **Jennifer Johnson**, Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)
14. **Nina Kim**, Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC), Greater Montreal Area
15. **Alexandra Law**, Volunteer, Immigrant Workers Centre
16. **Paul Loftus**, University College Dublin (UCD) Alumni Association, Montreal

Chapter

17. **Sylvia Martin-Laforge**, Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN)
18. **Harriett McLachlan**, Canada Without Poverty
19. **Elizabeth McLeod**, Youth and Parents AGAPE Association (AGAPE)
20. **Jonathan McPhedran Waitzer**, Head and Hands
21. **Lorraine O'Donnell**, English-Speaking Communities Research Network
(QUESCREN)
22. **Frances Ravensbergen, PhD**, Centre for Community Organizations (COCO)
23. **Stephan Reichhold**, Table de concertation des organismes au service des
personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)
24. **Mary Richardson**, Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ)
25. **Eric Shragge**, School of Community and Public Affairs, Concordia University
26. **Brian Smith**, Carrefour jeunesse- emploi de Cote-des-Neige
27. **Christian Tettey**, African Canadian Development and Prevention Network
(ACDPN)
28. **Karen Urtnowski**, English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN)