

WOMEN IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES



“Take Back the Night” march, Gatineau/Ottawa, September 21, 1984.
Photo by Gilles Benoît. University of Ottawa, CRCCF, Fonds Le Droit (C71), Ph92-7-21091984-15.

MAY 14, 2024
OTTAWA, ON

Conference organized by



ICRML
Institut canadien
de recherche
sur les minorités
linguistiques

CIRLM
Canadian Institute
for Research
on Linguistic
Minorities

WOMEN IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

May 14, 2024

91st Annual ACFAS Conference, University of Ottawa

DESCRIPTION

For women in Canada's official language minority communities (OLMCs), language issues "intersect" (Crenshaw 2022) with those linked to other social and identity markers besides language. Belonging to a racialized group, an Indigenous community, or a sexual or gender minority, and living in poverty or with a disability, being young or older, or being an immigrant are just some of these markers (Canton 2023; Jack-Monroe 2021; Chavez 2021; Roman 2022; Madibbo 2021).

To better understand the effects of these factors, cross-disciplinary, comparative, and intersectional approaches can account for inequalities and even discrimination against women in sectors including health, education, and employment. Indeed, OLMC women face unique experiences and challenges. Depending on the region, they can experience issues accessing healthcare in their own language (Auger et al., 2023). They are more often found in the role of caregiver and, in our reading, are over-represented in the charitable and community sectors (Williams 2023; Donovan 2016; Hampton & Rochat 2019). They are under-represented in political and decision-making bodies (De Geus et al., 2021; Andrew et al., 2009; Gingras & Maillé, 2018). They are treated differently in the media (Rouillard & Lalancette, 2023) and continue to be largely invisible in their contribution to community history and heritage (Lapointe-Gagnon, 2021; LeBlanc, 2022; Volpé, 2021; Bienvenue & Dorais, 2023; Thibault, 2020), while playing an important role in the transmission of their mother tongue (Vézina & Houle, 2014, Robineau & Guignard Noël, 202; Bouchard-Coulombe, 2011).

Furthermore, wider debates about definitions of "woman" according to the evolution of sexual and gender minority identities (Swamy and Mackenzie, 2022) question the inclusivity of "women only" spaces (Chanady 2023, Cardinal and Donatien, 2022), including in OLMCs. In the face of these challenges, a better understanding of the issues affecting women in these communities is needed. There are some community group and public policy strategies already in place, but others need to be implemented or improved. The aim of this conference is to bring together the expertise needed to better document and update research on women in OLMCs.

ORGANIZERS

This conference is organized by the Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) and the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities (CIRLM).

Established in 2008 at Concordia University, **QUESCREN** is a collaborative network of researchers, stakeholders, and educational and other institutions that improves understanding of Quebec's English-speaking communities and promotes their vitality.

Established in 2002 at the Université de Moncton, **CIRLM** is a centre of excellence whose role is to lead, bring together and partner with research centres, researchers, community agencies and government bodies in order to promote a greater knowledge of the status of Canada's official language minorities and a better understanding of the priority issues that concern them.

Evaluation Committee: Dr. Kim Dubé, Université de Moncton; Dr. Lorraine O'Donnell, QUESCREN; and Dr. Anne Robineau, CIRLM.

WORD OF WELCOME BY THE SECRÉTARIAT AUX RELATIONS AVEC LES QUÉBÉCOIS D'EXPRESSION ANGLAISE

Welcome, everyone, to the 91st Annual ACFAS Conference. We are at this hub of learning to deepen our understanding of issues experienced by women in official language minority communities.

Well aware of the paramount importance of women, who are at the heart of community action, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise is committed to supporting and promoting their invaluable work. We collaborate with a network of regional women's organizations to foster an environment in which women's contributions are not only valued, but key to community development.

This conference is meant to be a forum for discussion, reflection and innovative solutions aimed at building a more inclusive and equitable society.

We wish you fruitful discussions and a memorable conference.

Thank you.

William Floch

Sous-ministre adjoint

Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

Ministère des finances

Gouvernement du Québec

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

MAY 14, 2024, University of Ottawa

Building: Carrefour des apprentissages (CRX); Room: CRX C440

9:00 AM (EST)	OPENING REMARKS Lorraine O'Donnell , QUESCREN Anne Robineau , CIRLM
9:15 AM	KEYNOTE SPEAKER <u>Intersectional feminism and language oppression among francophone and Acadian women</u> (in French) Kim Dubé , Université de Moncton Moderator: Anne Robineau, CIRLM Although Kimberlé Crenshaw denounced unilingualism as a significant barrier for non-anglophone women in the United States, most English-speaking intersectional feminists have never denounced language oppression as a form of oppression that keeps women in a subordinate position. As a result, the issue of language and power relations is practically absent from anglophone intersectional feminist analysis. In francophone Canada, the intersectional approach was initially perceived as being anglonormative and was therefore met with resistance by francophone feminists. The opposition of many francophone feminists to the intersectional approach can be explained in part by the threat of once again being subjected to colonization and anglophone assimilation. It can also be explained by the fact that intersectional feminism encourages self-examination of one's own privileges. Francophone women in Canada, colonizers of Indigenous peoples, are therefore required to consider their position as privileged women. This presentation will address the reasons for Franco-Canadian feminists' reluctance to accept intersectional feminism and this stance's impact on access to services in French by francophone women in a minority context.
9:50 AM	BREAK
10:00 AM	PANEL I <u>Intersectionality and community action</u> Moderator: Kim Dubé, Université de Moncton <u>Women of South-Asian origin:</u> <u>Québécoises à part entière (tabarnouche!) at the South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC)</u> Dolores Chew , South-Asian Women's Community Centre Mela Sarkar , McGill University Women of South Asian origin have been present in Quebec, mainly greater Montreal, since the 1960s; successive waves of immigration from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka have transformed the Canadian urban landscape. Two hundred years of British imperialism, including invasion, occupation, brutal repression, and economic exploitation have meant that in South Asia, English is often a lingua franca across diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Montreal's SAWCC has served women of South Asian origin and their families since 1981. English is our usual common language; we identify, therefore, as members of Quebec's English-speaking community. French, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, & Bengali are also spoken.

	<p>In our presentation we will present arguments for our claim to status as Québécoises à part entière, who, although embattled/challenged on multiple intersecting fronts, including linguistic, racial, religious, socio-economic, and civic status, demand and deserve recognition as such by Quebec's Francophone de souche majority. We will tease out the significance and importance of recognizing and understanding 'minority within a minority' in order to ensure that all Quebecers can be supported, enjoy equality, and prosper.</p> <p><u>Intersectional feminism in action:</u> <u>From theory to practice in the Francophone minority community sector</u> (in French) Andrée-Anne Leblanc, Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick (RFNB)</p> <p>The RFNB is a nonprofit francophone organization with no ties to any political party. Unifying and inclusive, it advocates for radical social change by supporting the fight against all oppression. In its 16-year history, the RFNB has fulfilled its mission by achieving the following goals: promote and defend women's and gender minorities' interests and rights; fight all forms of violence, discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion with regard to women and gender minorities; promote gender equality in every sector of society; work on implementing conditions that facilitate the achievement of these goals in a pluralistic and intersectional perspective. In our presentation, we hope to demonstrate how, by drawing on research on women in OLMCs, organizations like ours manage to operationalize knowledge and take action through the implementation of strategic action. We will present the process behind the creation and implementation of our 2022-2025 strategic plan.</p>
<p>10:55 AM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BREAK</p>
<p>11:05 AM</p>	<p>PANEL 2 <u>Rights and community action</u> Moderator: Lorraine O'Donnell, QUESCREN</p> <p><u>Whose progress?</u> <u>Interrogating narratives of gay civil rights after the Québec Quiet Revolution</u> Robin Turner, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</p> <p>Research in gender and sexuality demonstrates that socially mediated discourses shape embodiments and imaginaries of identity, ultimately configuring how people navigate social space (Povinelli and Chauncey 1999). Hit television programming, lurid tabloid headlines, salable literature, and well-attended theatrical performances together fashioned public understandings of (homo)sexuality and the lives of gay Quebecers after the Quiet Revolution (1960-1966). However, scholars such as Leap (2018), Namaste (2003; 2005), Sivry (1998), and Higgins (2004) have evinced that mainstream discourses around homosexuality typically focus on gay men who were usually white and came from a middle socioeconomic background.</p> <p>This presentation will discuss a case study of narratives published in both French and English newspapers that focused on lesbian activists and lesbian life in Quebec. Following an intersectional approach (Combahee River Collective 1977; Crenshaw 1989) to critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1989), I will delineate features of medicalization, respectability politics, and citizenship applied to minoritized lesbians described in media outlets that exclusively targeted either francophone or anglophone consumers. Disparities between French and English narratives of lesbian life shown in this presentation foreground overarching cultural differences between English-speaking and French-speaking audiences in Quebec.</p>

	<p><u>Women’s movements and feminist groups in francophone Canada:</u> <u>A dual heritage</u> <i>(in French)</i> Anne Robineau, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities</p> <p>The aim of this presentation is to examine the key moments that led to the creation of feminist groups in francophone minority communities and the issues they face today. First, we will describe the women’s movements that contributed to the creation of the Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises (FFCF), the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (AFFC), and several provincial councils on the status of women. More specifically, we will address the connection between the dual heritage of the francophone rights movement and the women’s movement, and the issue of education in French in the 1980s.</p> <p>Then, we will explain how feminist groups have both diversified and structured their actions since the 1990s by adopting an increasingly intersectional approach in order to take into account minority groups within francophone communities. We will talk about the priority issues that incite them to action, such as violence against women, informal caregiving, young women in leadership roles, reproductive justice, and pay equity.</p>
<p>12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH</p>
<p>1:00 PM</p>	<p>ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION <u>Teaching history: Challenges and opportunities</u> <i>(in French)</i> Moderator: Anne Robineau, CIRLM</p> <hr/> <p>Participants: Anne-Sophie Ruest-Paquette, FrancoQueer Soukaina Boutiyeb, Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne Maria Peluso, Montreal Council of Women</p> <p>This roundtable will bring together members of community organizations (FrancoQueer, Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne, Montreal Council of Women) that meet the specific needs of women and sexual and gender minorities in OLMCs. They will discuss the multiple issues addressed by their respective organizations, as well as the strategies put in place to offer services to their target populations in the minority language. They will also address what sort of research and evidence they need to better understand the various situations they are dealing with.</p>
<p>2:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BREAK</p>

<p>2:10 PM</p>	<p>PANEL 3 <u>Memories and identities</u> Moderator: Anne Robineau, CIRLM</p> <hr/> <p><u>The Second Shift: Employment, Gender, and Minority Language Status in Québec</u> Morgan Gagnon, Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) Sta Kuzviwanza, Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT)</p> <p>Researchers will present an analysis of key employment and socioeconomic data from the 2021 Census of Canada that demonstrates the intersectional disparities between men and women in Québec’s official language communities. These disparities include English-speaking women faring worse in the labour market, particularly in terms of earning lower incomes. Researchers utilize additional Census data to identify factors that may contribute to the heightened precarity of English-speaking women, ranging from gender dynamics in specific industries to childcare responsibilities. Researchers conclude that gender interacts with minority language status in Québec in such a way as to marginalize English-speaking women from the labour force.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Feminist Founders:</u> <u>Making visible the women of Quebec’s English-language theatre</u> Erin Hurley, McGill University Dana Prather, McGill University</p> <p>We will present a synthesis of our last two years of research on the many women founders, builders, and “maintainers” of English-language theatre in Quebec. These playwrights, producers, and performers mark and even change the history of theatre in Quebec: in their institution-building (e.g., Playwrights Workshop Montreal; Concordia University’s theatre program), their aesthetic innovations (e.g., bilingual production; diverse representation), and alternative funding and production models (e.g., Altera Vitae Productions). Our presentation draws on interviews and archival research testifying to women’s remarkable contributions to English-language theatre in Quebec across the 20th century, with a particular focus on the period between referenda on sovereignty (1980-1995).</p> <p>Spotlighting the women behind this important but often overlooked cultural arena foregrounds theatre as a space of social reproduction and its contributions to OLMC vitality. Moreover, women’s roles in theatre reveal the full socio-economic and cultural complexity of English-speaking Quebec communities – rural and urban, wealthy and precarious.</p>
<p>3:00 PM</p>	<p>BREAK</p>

<p>3:10 PM</p>	<p>PANEL 4 <u>Barriers to well-being</u> Moderator: Kim Dubé, Université de Moncton</p> <hr/> <p><u>Perspectives of francophone mothers in the Canadian Prairies during and after the pandemic</u> <i>(in French)</i> Anne Leis, University of Saskatchewan Danielle De Moissac, Université de Saint-Boniface Sedami Gnidehou, Campus St-Jean, University of Alberta Kristan Marchak, University of Alberta Elyse Proulx-Cullen, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan</p> <p>Based on qualitative information provided by participants in two “Cafés du Monde” per province, a survey was developed and distributed online to members of francophone community organizations in those provinces. Descriptive and regression analyses were conducted. Of the 320 participants, 60% of whom were under the age of 45, most women reported an extremely negative and anxiety-provoking impact on their family. The impact of the pandemic was 2.4 times greater on those who found it very difficult to monitor their children’s learning at home than on those for whom this was not an issue. Priority recommendations focused on remedial measures, increased support, and policies to better serve francophone families. Positive measures to assist the official language minority in the Prairies were largely lacking during the pandemic. The lessons learned and future prospects will be discussed.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Exploring the Feminization of “Bientraitance” for Older, English-Speaking Adults</u> Sandra Smele, Centre for Research and Expertise in Social Gerontology Darla Fortune, Concordia University Meghan Joy, Concordia University Morgan Seeley, Concordia University</p> <p>Since the publication of Quebec’s second Action Plan against the Mistreatment of Older Adults (2017-2022), research on the “bientraitance” (good treatment) of older adults has been growing in the province (Ethier et al., 2022; Myrand, 2021; Rouiller, 2022). Among this research is the project our team has undertaken to better understand how “bientraitance” is experienced by older, English-speaking adults who participate in the Senior Wellness Centres (SWC) Program supported by the Community Health and Social Services Network. Previous research demonstrates that many older, English-speaking adults in Quebec face significant amounts of social isolation and loneliness (Kueber, 2019), and the SWCs are key sites of potential “bientraitance” that can address these problems.</p> <p>Our data collection indicates that SWCs are highly feminized spaces, both in terms of participants and program providers, thereby demonstrating the importance of attending to the relationship between gender and “bientraitance” at the SWCs. It also points to the importance of exploring the potential feminization of “bientraitance” at other sites designed for older, English-speaking adults, and the implications thereof.</p>
<p>4:00 PM</p>	<p>BREAK</p>

<p>4:10 PM</p>	<p>PANEL 5 <u>Perinatal vulnerabilities</u> Moderator: Lorraine O'Donnell, QUESCREN</p> <hr/> <p><u>The Perinatal Experience of Black Birthing People in Québec</u> Tanya Pierre-Sindor, McGill University Rachel Wilcoxson, Concordia University</p> <p>With the recent surge of research on American Black maternal health demonstrating apparent discrepancies between the rates of maternal morbidity and mortality, Canada's lack of interest in this potential issue is quite salient. Unlike its southern neighbour, Canada does not take a concise approach to data collection on maternal health in respect to the birthing parents' ethnicity or race. In an attempt to get a portrait of the perinatal experience of Black birthing people in Québec, our team created a comprehensive literature review and interviewed a medical student who is also pursuing a career as a doula. These qualitative tools allowed us to find the 7 main factors that influence the experience of Black birthing people in Quebec: (1) access to a Black physician, (2) healthy social support system, (3) access to complimentary medical resources, (4) lack of empathy from physicians (5) determinants of health, (6) overall culturally unsafe practices, and (7) the language in which care is delivered.</p> <p>This research could act as a stepping stone for further exhaustive research addressing the Black maternal experience in Québec. In creating this study, we seek to open the door for more conversations not only on an academic level but hopefully on a juristic level.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Risk of gestational diabetes in Anglophones and Francophones of Quebec</u> Nathalie Auger, INSPQ - Institut national de santé publique du Québec Marianne Bilodeau-Bertrand, Institut national de santé publique du Québec Nahantara Lafleur, Centre de recherche de l'Université de Montréal</p> <p>Anglophones are increasingly at risk of adverse birth outcomes compared with Francophones in Quebec. Our objective was to determine whether Anglophones have a greater risk of gestational diabetes than Francophones. Gestational diabetes is due to high blood sugar during pregnancy.</p> <p>Methods: This retrospective study included 853,595 pregnancies in Quebec between 2008 and 2020. We identified Anglophones and Francophones and examined rates of gestational diabetes in both groups. We measured the association between language group and risk of gestational diabetes using risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals (CI) from regression models adjusted for maternal characteristics.</p> <p>Results: Anglophones had a higher rate of gestational diabetes than Francophones (9.9% vs. 8.1%). Compared with Francophones, Anglophones had 1.07 times the risk of gestational diabetes (95% CI 1.05-1.10). The risk was particularly elevated among Anglophones lacking a high school diploma and Anglophones living in rural areas.</p> <p>Conclusion: This study suggests that Anglophones have a greater risk of gestational diabetes than Francophones in Quebec. The risk of gestational diabetes was greatest among disadvantaged Anglophones.</p>
<p>5:00 PM</p>	<p>CLOSING REMARKS Lorraine O'Donnell, QUESCREN Anne Robineau, CIRLM</p>

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