

# **Building Migrant Resilience in Cities | Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain**

## **BMRC | IRMU**

### **Research and Networking Activities**

**Title:** Sounding Different, but Still Equal? Assessing Discrimination against “Audible Minorities” in Urban and non-Urban Settings in Quebec and Ontario

**Date:** November 25, 2019

City Network or Networks	Montréal
Project Director with email address	Antoine Bilodeau, Professor, Political Science, Concordia (antoine.bilodeau@concordia.ca)
Co-investigators	Dr. Jean-Philippe Gauvin, Postdoctoral fellow, Political Science, Concordia
Community Partners	Delfino Campanile PROMIS Aid to immigrants and refugees (Montreal) (delfino.campanile@promis.qc.ca)

## 1. Rationale

Explain the purpose of the proposed research and networking activities, their links to the partnership's goals, and their relation to the partnership's current research activities and their relevance.

*(4,000 characters – including spaces – maximum for the text box, approximately 600 words)*

It is well documented that newcomers with foreign names and/or physical attributes that differ from the majority population suffer from discrimination when looking for housing or employment (Gaddis 2015; Gaddis and Ghoshal 2015; Hanson and Hawley 2011; Widner and Chicoine 2011). Similarly, members of visible minority backgrounds tend to be seen more negatively than others by the majority population (Terkildsen 1993; Harell et al. 2012; Iyengar et al. 2013; Weaver 2012). Being visibly different is thus a well-documented obstacle to successful inclusion. Beyond being visibly distinct, however, newcomers can also be audibly different, that is they may sound different when speaking the official languages of a society. We refer to these people as “audible minorities”. Yet, despite some evidence demonstrating that such audible minorities may also suffer from prejudices (Peled and Bonotti 2019), little research systematically studies how much speaking with a foreign accent may impede newcomers' successful inclusion. Our project tackles this question by investigating the prevalence of discrimination against audible minorities and its consequences on their capacity to be recognized as true members of the community.

The successful inclusion of newcomers depends in part on developing a sense of belonging to the community. The consequences of a weak sense of belonging and feeling of rejection range from low self-esteem, mental and physical illnesses (Branscombe et al., 1999; Finch et al., 2000; Whitbeck et al., 2002), to disengagement from the social and political affairs (Bilodeau et al. 2019; Oskooii, 2016). Accordingly, if speaking with a foreign accent serves as an obstacle to being accepted and recognized as true members of the community, identifying why and under which conditions such discrimination occurs becomes an important tool to help foster inclusion.

The objectives of our project are threefold. First, we assess the prevalence of discrimination against audible minorities and their consequences on the extent to which they are perceived as true members of the community. In order to reach this objective, we will conduct a survey with an embedded experiment aiming to assess how majority populations react to messages communicated by Canadians with accents of four different national origins: local mainstream, Polish, Haitian/Jamaican, and Chinese.

Second, we examine the intersectionality between being a visible and an audible minority. Following insights on intersectionality research (McCall, 2008), we want to know if the negative consequences of speaking with an accent are greater when locutors are also members of a visible minority. We hypothesize that respondents of all origins will be discriminated against when speaking with a foreign accent, but we expect the consequences of being an audible minority to be greatest for individuals who are also members of a visible minority.

Finally, we verify to what extent discrimination against audible minorities is context-dependent. To that effect, we assess the prevalence of discrimination against audible minorities separately in Ontario and Quebec. We hypothesize that discrimination against audible minorities will be more prevalent in Quebec than in Ontario given the centrality of language (insecurity) for Quebec identity (Bouchard, 2012). Moreover, in each of Ontario and Quebec, we assess the prevalence of discrimination against audible minorities separately in urban (Montreal and Toronto) and non-urban areas. Given that non-urban areas offer fewer opportunities of contact with ethnocultural diversity that are known to be of central importance to reduce xenophobic reactions (Forbes, 1998; Dirksmeier, 2014), we hypothesize that discrimination against audible minorities will be more prevalent in non-urban than in large urban ones such as Toronto and Montreal.

## 2. Activities

Outline the proposed research and networking activities. Specify the goals of the activities, including the research questions to be addressed and the research methods where relevant.

*(4,550 characters maximum for the text box, approximately 650 words)*

Our project on the prevalence and consequences of discrimination against audible minorities is articulated around three different types of activities.

1. The first activity will be to conduct a survey of 2,400 Canadians, of which 1,200 will reside in Ontario (600 from the Greater Toronto Area and 600 from the rest of the province) and 1,200 will reside in Quebec (600 from Greater Montreal, and 600 from the rest of the province). All respondents will be born in Canada, will not be members of a visible minority and will either be native English speakers (Ontario) or native French speakers (Quebec). We want to measure how “majority-group Canadians” react to foreign accents.

Respondents will be presented with an audio clip of roughly 20 seconds. This clip will be an advertisement for a “fake” awareness-raising campaign on a social-political issue (specific issue to be determined). The message will promote support for the issue using arguments, facts and statistics. The same message will be recorded using locutors with four different accents: local mainstream, Polish, Haitian/Jamaican, and Chinese. Respondents will be randomly attributed to only one version of the message. Given the prevailing language in each province, the experiment will be done in English only in Ontario and in French only in Quebec.

To assess how the prevalence and consequences of discrimination against audible minorities intersects with discrimination against visible minorities, the experiment will use a factorial design. This means that a second manipulation will be included in the design. All respondents will see a poster ad of the awareness campaign accompanying the audio clip. The poster ad will present the main topic of the issue with a slogan. One half of respondents will see a poster ad featuring nobody, only the text. The other half of respondents will see the same poster ad but this time featuring one of three people: a white person (for local mainstream or Polish narrator), a black person (for Haitian/Jamaican narrator) or an Asian person (for Chinese narrator).

Respondents will then be asked to answer a few questions about the clip they heard. We will assess the consequences of discrimination based on accents in terms of cognition, affection, and evaluation. First, in terms of cognition, we will evaluate whether respondents exhibit lower retention of key information from the audio message depending on the accent and origin of the locutor. Second, in terms of affection, we will evaluate how much respondents are able to identify with and trust the message depending on the accent and origin of the locutor. And third, in terms of evaluation, we will assess how effective and convincing survey participants evaluate the message to be, again depending on the accent and origin of the locutor. The survey will also include multiple controls, such as demographic characteristics.

2. The second type of activities are presentations. This includes one presentation at an academic conference (Métropolis 2021) as well as one presentation to our community partner, PROMIS. We are also open to present the findings of our research to other community and government partners in Quebec or Ontario. The objectives of these presentations are 1) to increase awareness about the prevalence of discrimination based on accent, 2) to better prepare service providers and beneficiaries to this reality, and 3) to develop better practices to address such discriminatory practices.
3. The third type of activities is the publication of one peer-reviewed scientific article. Consistent with the objectives pursued in this project, this publication will assess the extent of discrimination against audible minorities and evaluate the extent to which such discrimination varies across contexts (provincial and urban or not) and the extent to which such discrimination varies with the national origin of locutors and

intersects with being a visible minority.

#### **4. Roles of Team Members**

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Specify in detail the involvement of the co-investigators and students. Specify how community partners will be involved in all stages of the research and indicate how their involvement will create training opportunities for community partners.

*(3,500 characters maximum for the text box, approximately 500 words)*

Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin form, in collaboration with PROMIS, a strong team to conduct the proposed research project. While A. Bilodeau has acquired over the years a strong expertise in the field of immigration and ethnocultural diversity (both from the immigrant and majority-group perspectives), J.P. Gauvin provides the rich methodological skills in survey design and experiments that are necessary to conduct this project. PROMIS, a community organization that deliver services to immigrants and refugees in Montreal, complements the research team by providing invaluable insights from tangible experiences gathered both from service providers and beneficiaries with regards to immigrant inclusion.

Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin will have the primary responsibility of constructing the questionnaire as well as designing the experiment. This will include building and translating the questionnaire, submitting an ethics approval request, and working with the chosen survey firm to finalize details and supervise data collection.

Near the end of the data collection process, an MA student will be hired to help with database management. The student will receive training in statistical software and survey best practices. While some of this training will come from Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin, it will also be mandatory for the MA student to participate in the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (CSDC) Graduate Methods School. This consists in a series of methodological workshops available for free to student members of the CSDC, an inter-university network of researchers, to which Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin are current members. At this method school, the MA student will receive further training in coding and statistical analysis.

The role of the MA student will be to help with recoding variables in the dataset, such as open-ended questions and other transformations necessary before the data is ready for analysis. The MA student will also become familiar with Statistics Canada data in order to integrate crucial census data which will help compare metropolitan and other regions in Quebec and Ontario. As such, the MA student will gain important method skills, especially regarding survey analysis, which are invaluable skills for graduate students interested in pursuing research with a focus on quantitative methods.

The role of PROMIS is that of a support partner to guide Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin with invaluable insights from practitioners who are more in touch with the practical challenges faced by newcomers. Accordingly, throughout the research, Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin and PROMIS representatives will work in close collaboration. This means that if Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin lead the questionnaire and design of the study as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data, this will always be done in close collaboration with PROMIS representatives. Finally, once the analysis of the data is completed, Drs. Bilodeau and Gauvin will present the findings to PROMIS service providers and beneficiaries.

## 5. Schedule and Outcomes (timeline of activities and dissemination)

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Specify a schedule of research and academic activities, and other KM Outcomes.

*(2,800 characters maximum for the text box, approximately 400 words)*

This project contributes to our understanding of barriers to the successful inclusion of immigrants by looking at the role of discrimination against Canadians who speak official languages with a foreign accent. The planning includes four steps: 1) questionnaire construction, 2) data collection, 3) data analysis and 4) dissemination.

KM Outcomes will be ensured by extensive dissemination of the results. Such activities include participation to the 2021 Metropolis conferences, presentations to PROMIS and possibly other community and government organizations, as well as one peer-reviewed scientific publication.

### Proposed Calendar:

January to March 2020: Questionnaire construction and student training.

April to May 2020 : Data collection with hired survey firm.

July to September 2020: Data analysis and preliminary results

October to December 2020: Preparation of publications.

## 5. Budget Explanation

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Explain each budget line and fill in the SSHRC Budget Worksheet (Appendix 1). Be sure to comply with the Partnership policies and guidelines as well as SSHRC Eligibility rules.

*(2,800 characters maximum for the text box, approximately 400 words)*

Student Salaries: \$3000 (12% of BMRC requested budget)

- 1 Concordia MA Student: To help with data analysis and survey design  
120 hours at \$25 per hour (including benefits)

Travel costs for dissemination: \$2000 (8% of BMRC requested budget)

- Includes travel, accommodation, registration and meal per diem for J.P. Gauvin to attend 2021 Metropolis Conference (location TBA).

Professional services: \$20000 (80% of BMRC requested budget)

- Marketing firm: \$17,000 (of \$22,000; remaining \$5000 to be covered by other grant)
  - Includes questionnaire programming, distribution, and data collection.
  - Survey for 1200 Ontario respondents and 1200 Quebec respondents, including 600 from Greater Toronto and 600 from Greater Montreal
- Actor for audio clips: \$3000

## 6. Bibliography

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(4,200 characters maximum for the text box, approximately 600 words)

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