

Culture learning and culture shedding: Acculturation expectations among majority group Quebecers

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Abstract

Immigration scholars have long highlighted the acculturation strategies available to newcomers when settling in the host society, namely integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (see Berry 2001). Each strategy entails different degrees of culture learning and culture shedding. Through culture learning, immigrants learn and acquire (part of) the host society culture and through culture shedding, they come to abandon (part of) their origin culture. Acculturation studies also inform us that if acculturation strategies are a matter of individual choices, they are also context dependent and respond to the acculturation outcomes most valued by the host society. As debates about immigration and ethnocultural diversity continue to unfold in Quebec, the province has yet to adopt its own (formal) intercultural policy to set clear directions in relation to where immigration and ethnocultural diversity stands in defining the core of Quebec society. Accordingly, expectations with regards to culture learning and culture shedding have yet to be formally stated, creating ambivalence as to what norms immigrants should conform to. Are immigrants expected to learn Quebec culture? Are immigrants expected to shed their origin culture? In the absence of clear policy directions, this paper examines public preferences on these matters. After presenting aggregate views of Quebecers on acculturation expectations, the paper examines determinants of culture learning and culture shedding expectations. More specifically, it investigates how respondents' conception of Quebec national identity (civic, ethnic or cultural) shapes their expectations of immigrants' acculturation. The paper draws from an online survey of 2400 respondents conducted in Spring 2022 among majority group Quebecers defined as white, born in Canada, and having French as their mother tongue.

Biography

Antoine Bilodeau is a full professor in the Department of Political Science at Concordia University. He is the director of the Immigration Research Initiative (IRI) and a member of the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship (CSDC), the Équipe de recherche sur

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Audrey Gagnon is a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Research on Extremism, University of Oslo. Her doctoral dissertation explored the relationship between conceptions of national identity and opinions about immigration and diversity among the mainstream and more radical actors in Quebec, Canada. Her research interests include national identity, opinions about immigration, as well as far-right and right-wing populist movements. She recently was awarded the FRQSC Relève Étoile Paul-Gérin-Lajoie prize for her article published in the Canadian Review of Sociology and the Léon-Dion prize for the best article published in *Politique et Sociétés* in 2018-2019.