

**Francophones' Access to and Usage of French Language Public Services in Ontario Through a
Social Resilience Lens**

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Abstract

This thesis examines how Francophones across Ontario access and use French-language public services — specifically education, healthcare, and government services at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Drawing on data from a large-scale online survey of francophone residents (N = 1584) and a conceptual framework combining superdiversity and social resilience, the study compares patterns of service access across three regions of the province (Eastern, Central-Southwestern, and Northern Ontario) and between Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones, with finer-grained analysis of the Ottawa and Toronto metropolitan areas as the province's two largest Francophone communities. Three dimensions of access are analyzed: the language used to access services, awareness of French-language service availability, and the perceived importance of being able to access services in French. The findings reveal that regionality is the most significant factor shaping access to French-language services, with a descending gradient of accessibility from federal to provincial to municipal levels that reflects the distinct legislative frameworks governing each. Among the service domains examined, education stands out for its high rates of French-language access and strong perceived importance, particularly among Canadian-born Francophones, for whom French-language education carries historical and ideological significance. Healthcare, by contrast, shows considerably higher rates of English-only access, suggesting a less continuous French-language service landscape in this domain. Migration status plays a secondary and context-dependent role: Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones within the same region show broadly similar access patterns, though notable differences emerge at the municipal level, where immigrants tend to place higher value on French-language services. Knowledge gaps represent a substantial but underrecognized barrier: nearly 80% of participants who accessed municipal services in English only were unaware that French-language options existed in their area. Despite these structural constraints, Francophones across the province overwhelmingly value access to French-language services, and many employ adaptive strategies — particularly bilingual service navigation — to maintain engagement with French where full French-language provision is unavailable. As one of the first studies to include both Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones within a single comparative framework, this thesis contributes systematic, cross-regional evidence to a field that has relied

primarily on small-scale, locality-specific qualitative research, while accounting for how the geographic density of Francophone communities, their varying levels of institutional completeness, and their distinct demographic profiles shape service access across Ontario's regions.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine comment les Francophones de l'Ontario accèdent aux services publics en français et les utilisent, plus précisément dans les domaines de l'éducation, des soins de santé et des services gouvernementaux aux paliers fédéral, provincial et municipal. S'appuyant sur les données d'un sondage en ligne à grande échelle mené auprès de résidents francophones (N = 1 584) et sur un cadre conceptuel combinant la superdiversité et la résilience sociale, l'étude compare les modes d'accès aux services dans trois régions de la province (Est, Centre-Sud-Ouest et Nord de l'Ontario) ainsi qu'entre Francophones nés au Canada et Francophones immigrants, avec une analyse plus fine des régions métropolitaines d'Ottawa et de Toronto en tant que deux plus grandes communautés francophones de la province. Trois dimensions de l'accès sont analysées : la langue utilisée pour accéder aux services, la connaissance de la disponibilité des services en français et l'importance perçue de pouvoir accéder à ces services en français. Les résultats révèlent que la régionalité constitue le facteur le plus déterminant dans l'accès aux services en français, avec un gradient décroissant d'accessibilité du palier fédéral au palier municipal, reflétant les cadres législatifs distincts qui régissent chaque niveau. Parmi les domaines de services examinés, l'éducation se distingue par des taux élevés d'accès en français et une forte importance perçue, en particulier chez les Francophones nés au Canada, pour qui l'éducation en français revêt une signification historique et idéologique. Les soins de santé, en revanche, affichent des taux considérablement plus élevés d'accès uniquement en anglais, ce qui suggère un paysage de services en français moins continu dans ce domaine. Le statut migratoire joue un rôle secondaire et variable selon le contexte : les Francophones nés au Canada et les Francophones immigrants d'une même région présentent des modes d'accès globalement similaires, bien que des différences notables émergent au palier municipal, où les immigrants tendent à accorder une plus grande importance aux services en français. Les lacunes en matière de connaissance représentent un obstacle important mais sous-estimé : près de 80 % des participants ayant accédé aux services municipaux uniquement en anglais ignoraient que des options en français existaient dans leur région. Malgré ces contraintes structurelles, les Francophones de l'ensemble de la province valorisent dans leur très grande majorité l'accès aux services en français et bon nombre d'entre eux adoptent des stratégies adaptatives —

notamment la navigation bilingue — pour maintenir leur engagement envers le français là où les services ne sont pas entièrement offerts dans cette langue. En tant que l’une des premières études à inclure à la fois les Francophones nés au Canada et ceux issus de l’immigration dans un même cadre comparatif, cette thèse apporte des données systématiques et comparatives à l’échelle régionale dans un domaine qui s’est principalement appuyé sur des recherches qualitatives à petite échelle, tout en tenant compte de la manière dont la densité géographique des communautés francophones, leurs niveaux variables de complétude institutionnelle et leurs profils démographiques distincts façonnent l’accès aux services dans les différentes régions de l’Ontario.

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Preface

While writing this thesis, I made usage of generative AI models Copilot and Claude.ai to assist with proofreading the text of this thesis document, improving text and clarity, and presenting options on how best to restructure the text to go from draft to final version.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Ontario is home to Canada's largest Francophone Minority Community (FMC) outside of Quebec. As of the 2021 Census, Ontario's francophone population was approximately 650,000 individuals, a number that has continued to grow since then (Ministry of Francophone Affairs, 2025). This population is far from homogeneous: Ontario's Francophonie encompasses long-established communities in the North and East, newer communities in the South and Centre, Canadian-born Francophones from Ontario and other provinces, and an increasingly diverse immigrant population from around the world.

This diversity is also geographic. Francophone communities across Ontario vary considerably in size, demographic composition, and character (Gilbert, 2010; Gilbert et al., 2017; Gilbert & Brosseau, 2011; Langlois & Gilbert, 2006). Some FMCs, such as those in Ottawa and parts of Northern Ontario, have substantial francophone populations and relatively well-developed French-language institutions and services (Bernier et al., 2014; Gilbert et al., 2014, 2017). Others, particularly in Southern and Central Ontario, have smaller francophone populations that are more dispersed and have fewer dedicated French-language services available (Gilbert, 2010). This geographic unevenness reflects the historical development of the Francophonie in Ontario, but it is also being reshaped by contemporary population movements. International immigration, domestic migration from Quebec and other provinces, and internal movement within Ontario (including youth leaving Northern communities for cities in the South) are all contributing to an evolving demographic landscape (Gilbert et al., 2014; Veronis & Huot, 2017).

At the same time, access to French-language services remains uneven across the province. While the French Language Services Act (FLSA; GoO, 2024) guarantees access to provincial government services in French in designated areas, the availability and accessibility of services more broadly—including health, education, settlement, and community services—

varies significantly depending on the region and the local FMC (Cardinal & Forgues, 2014; Cardinal & Léger, 2017; Mousseau, 2010). Francophones living in communities with higher levels of institutional completeness generally have greater access to services in French, while those in smaller or more isolated communities often face barriers related to availability, visibility, distance, and quality of services.

These two realities are now converging: a diverse and continually diversifying francophone population distributed unevenly across the province is facing uneven access to French-language services. Francophone immigrants and domestic migrants settle in communities with very different capacities to meet their needs in French. Yet despite growing attention to francophone immigration and to service access challenges (Huot, 2013; Huot et al., 2014; Huot & Veronis, 2018; Veronis & Huot, 2017), most existing research examines either Canadian-born Francophones or immigrant Francophones separately. Comparative research that investigates how migration status shapes experiences of accessing and using French-language services across different regions remains limited.

Given the ongoing diversification and demographic transformation of the Francophonie in Ontario—including growing numbers of international immigrants and domestic migrants, an aging Canadian-born population, and continued internal movement within the province—there is an urgent need to better understand how francophones with different profiles experience access to and use of French-language services. Such understanding is essential both for francophone communities seeking to strengthen their institutional completeness and for policymakers and service providers working to meet the needs of an evolving population. Drawing on survey data collected from francophone residents across Ontario in 2023-2024, this study documents and compares how Francophones access and use public services (government services, health, and education) in French, with attention to variations across migration status (international immigrants, domestic migrants, and Ontario-born Francophones) and across regions (East, North, Centre-Southwest). In doing so, it aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of service access in Ontario's increasingly diverse Francophonie.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This study examines Francophones' everyday lived experiences of accessing and using French-language services in Ontario. Its focus is twofold: first, on how these experiences vary across different regions of the province; and second, on how migration status shapes patterns of service access and usage. Three research objectives guide this study:

- 1) To document Francophones' everyday lived experiences of accessing and using services in French in Ontario and across different regions;
- 2) To compare Francophones' access to and usage of services in French across migration status, distinguishing between international immigrants, domestic migrants (those born in other Canadian provinces), and those born in Ontario; and
- 3) To identify and compare factors that facilitate and/or hinder Francophones' access to and usage of services in French.

This structured approach enables two types of comparisons: comparisons across geographic scales (provincial, regional, and local) and between regions; and comparisons across groups of Francophones based on their migration status and place of birth. Together, these comparisons allow for a nuanced analysis of how the uneven distribution of French-language services across the province intersects with the diverse profiles of Ontario's francophone population.

To address these objectives, the study asks one overarching research question: How do francophone residents of Ontario access and use public services in French, and what factors explain variations in these patterns? Four sub-questions guide the analysis:

- 1) How do patterns of access and usage vary across different geographic scales (provincial, regional, local) and between regions?
- 2) How does migration status (international immigrant, domestic migrant, Ontario-born) shape patterns of service access and usage?
- 3) Among Francophones who access services in English, what proportion are (un)aware of French-language options?

- 4) How does the perceived importance of French-language services relate to actual usage patterns?

Definitions

Two key terms require clarification. First, this study adopts an inclusive definition of *Francophone*. The Government of Ontario's (2009) inclusive definition identifies Francophones as "persons whose mother tongue is French, plus those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English but have a particular knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home." This study extends this definition to also include francophiles and those who identify as being "*d'expression française*," in order to capture the full breadth of Ontario's Francophonie and reflect the diverse linguistic trajectories of its members—particularly immigrants for whom French may be a second or third language.

Second, this study takes a broad definition of *public services*. Public services, by definition, are services that are to the public's benefit that typically fit under the realm of either non-profit or governmental organizations (Cornell University, n.d.; Ontario Pay Equity Office, 2023). These organizations are varied—ranging from governmental agencies, schools, hospitals to cultural institutions—but can generally be characterized as entities that do not seek profit through service provision and instead aim to improve public welfare. This broad scope reflects the variety of services that Francophones may need to access in their daily lives and enables comparison across service types. However, for analytical clarity, this study adopts a somewhat narrower definition of public services than what exists in practice. Specifically, this study focuses on government services (at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels), health services, and education, including daycares and schools. The following section provides the broader context for the analysis, including an overview of Ontario's Francophonie, its regional diversity, demographic shifts, and the challenges associated with accessing French-language services.

1.3 Context

This section provides background essential to understanding the study’s focus on service access among Ontario’s diverse francophone population. It begins with an overview of Ontario’s Francophonie, including its demographic profile and regional variations. It then examines the demographic changes reshaping francophone communities, particularly through immigration and domestic migration. Lastly, it discusses the policy framework governing service provision and the barriers Francophones face in accessing services in French.

1.3.1 Ontario’s Francophonie: Diversity and Unevenness

According to the 2021 Census, 3.3% of Ontario’s population reports having French as their mother tongue, while 4.1% have French as their first official language spoken (Statistics Canada, 2023). Although the absolute number of Francophones in Ontario has increased gradually since 2001 (see Table 1), their overall proportion relative to the total provincial population has been declining steadily since 1986, when Francophones represented 6.2% of the population (GoO, 2019). This pattern—modest growth in absolute numbers alongside declining share—reflects broader demographic dynamics, including an aging francophone population and higher rates of population growth among non-francophone groups in the province.

Table 1.1. Francophone population in Ontario by mother tongue and first official language spoken (FOLS), 2001-2021.

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Francophone population (mother tongue)	485,630	488,815	493,295	490,720	463,120
% of provincial population	4.3%	4.1%	3.9%	3.7%	3.3%
Francophone population (FOLS)	527,715	537,600	542,390	550,600	582,695
% of provincial population	4.7%	4.5%	4.3%	4.1%	4.1%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2019, 2022b, 2022c.

Note: Mother tongue figures are for French only; they do not include those who reported both French and English as mother tongues. FOLS figures include those who reported French only as well as those who reported both English and French, following Statistics Canada’s methodology for deriving this

variable (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Beyond these aggregate figures, Ontario's Francophonie is characterized by significant regional diversity. Charron (2017) argues that Ontario's Francophonie is highly regionalized, with greater *francité*—that is, a stronger presence of French speakers and French-language spaces—in Eastern and Northern Ontario than in the Centre-Southwest. Francophone communities in Eastern Ontario, particularly in and around Ottawa, benefit from proximity to Quebec, a large francophone population, and relatively well-developed French-language institutions. Northern Ontario is home to historically established francophone communities in cities such as Sudbury, Timmins, and Hearst, where Francophones often represent a substantial share of the local population. In contrast, FMCs in Southern and Central Ontario tend to have smaller francophone populations that are more dispersed and, consequently, fewer French-language institutions and services (Gilbert, 2010; Huot et al., 2014; Lacassagne, 2010, 2017; Mougeon et al., 2018).

These regional differences have implications for institutional completeness—that is, the capacity of a community to provide the services its members require without relying on institutions led by other groups (Breton, 1964). For Francophone Minority Communities, institutional completeness is reflected in the availability of French-language services, institutions, and spaces that allow community members to live, work, and access services in French. The degree of institutional completeness varies considerably across Ontario's FMCs: communities with larger francophone populations and a longer history of francophone institutional development tend to have more complete service offerings, while smaller or more isolated communities often lack key services in French (Gilbert, 2010; Mougeon et al., 2018). Understanding this unevenness is essential to examining how Francophones across the province experience access to services.

1.3.2 A Diversifying Population

In response to demographic decline and concerns about the long-term vitality of Francophone Minority Communities, the federal and provincial governments, together with francophone institutions, have turned to francophone immigration as a key strategy to stabilize and grow the francophone population outside Quebec (Canadian Heritage, 2021; Forest, 2020; Huot et al., 2023; Veronis & Huot, 2017). This policy direction, initiated in the early 2000s, has had mixed results. For many years, the federal francophone immigration target—established in 2003 at 4.4% of permanent residents admitted—was not met, leading francophone organizations to argue that the number of francophone immigrants remained too low to support long-term vitality of FMCs (FCFA, 2022, 2025). After nearly two decades of efforts, the target was reached for the first time in 2022, and has since been exceeded. Following the federal government’s decision to raise its targets to 6% in 2024 and 7% in 2025, francophone permanent residents admitted outside Quebec represented 7.2% of all newcomers in 2024 (Vachon, 2025). Ontario continues to receive the majority of these newcomers, welcoming approximately 19,700 francophone immigrants in 2024, surpassing the province’s francophone immigration target for the third consecutive year (Ministry of Francophone Affairs, 2025).

Ontario has been relatively successful in attracting francophone immigrants compared to other provinces outside Quebec. This shift has contributed to the increase observed in the first official language spoken figures in Table 1.1, despite the decline in mother tongue indicators. In addition to international immigration, Ontario attracts substantial numbers of domestic francophone migrants from other provinces, particularly Quebec. Legault-Leclair and Meunier (2020), using Census data from 1991 to 2016, demonstrate that domestic migration has been an even larger contributor to Ontario’s francophone population than international immigration. Among all francophone newcomers to Ontario in 2016, 45.3% were in-migrants from Quebec, 42.9% were international immigrants, and 11.8% were from other Canadian provinces (Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020, p. 396). These figures highlight the importance of considering domestic migrants alongside international immigrants when examining Ontario’s diversifying Francophonie.

However, this population growth has been geographically uneven. Francophone newcomers—whether international immigrants or domestic migrants—tend to settle in Ontario’s larger metropolitan areas that are already home to larger FMCs (Lacassagne, 2017; Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020; Mougeon et al., 2018). As a result, FMCs that are already ethnoculturally diverse are becoming more so, while smaller and more remote communities are changing more slowly (Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020; Office of the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario [OFLSC], 2018). This pattern reinforces the regional unevenness described in the previous section: the communities receiving the most newcomers are generally those with greater institutional completeness, while communities with fewer French-language services receive fewer francophone newcomers.

At the same time, internal migration within Ontario is reshaping FMCs in other ways. Youth from Northern Ontario, for example, often leave for educational and employment opportunities in larger cities in the South, contributing to the aging of Northern and more isolated francophone communities (Labrie & Lamoureux, 2012; Lamoureux, 2010; OFLSC, 2018). These internal dynamics, combined with international immigration and domestic migration from other provinces, are producing a Francophonie that is simultaneously growing, diversifying, and redistributing across the province.

1.3.3 Access to French Language Services

In Ontario, the French Language Services Act (FLSA) provides the primary policy framework governing access to French-language services. The FLSA, which came into effect in 1989, guarantees individuals the right to receive services in French from provincial government ministries and agencies in designated areas. The Act identifies 27 districts, counties, and cities as French Designated Areas (FDAs), where provincial government services must be provided in French (see Appendix 1 for a map). To be recognized as an FDA, an area must have either a francophone population of at least 5,000 or a francophone population representing at least 10% of the total population. In addition, designated agencies—regardless of their location—are

required to provide active offer of French-language services and to ensure that these services are of good quality and available at all times (GoO, 2024).

While the FLSA provides an important foundation for accessing services in French at the provincial level, it does not regulate services at the municipal or community level beyond those provided by designated agencies. As a result, the availability and accessibility of French-language services varies considerably across the province. Existing research consistently identifies service access as a significant challenge for Francophones living in minority contexts in Ontario (AFO, 2025; Batista et al., 2021; Esses et al., 2021; Farmanova et al., 2018; Huot, 2013; Huot et al., 2014; Mougeon et al., 2018; Nakhaie, 2018; Sauvé-Schenk et al., 2024; Timony et al., 2022; Tremblay & Leis, 2021; Veronis & Couton, 2017). Challenges include limited availability of services in French, lack of visibility and information about existing services, uneven quality, geographic distance, and barriers related to specific demographic characteristics such as digital literacy (AFO, 2019; Charron, 2017; Esses et al., 2021; Éthier & Carrier, 2022).

These challenges have implications for service continuity and community vitality. When French-language services are unavailable, Francophones who are bilingual often seek services in English, depending on the local context and availability (Farmanova et al., 2018; Mougeon et al., 2018). While this may be a practical response to service gaps, it can contribute to a cycle in which demand for French-language services appears to decline, potentially leading to reduced service provision over time (Farmanova et al., 2018). Moreover, when Francophones access services in English rather than French, the visibility of francophone populations and spaces may diminish, with consequences for both community vitality and the integration of francophone newcomers (Huot, 2013; Veronis & Huot, 2019).

For francophone immigrants, access to French-language services presents particular challenges. Research indicates that newcomers are often provided with inadequate information about available French-language services in FMCs and do not receive effective referrals (AFO, 2017). Many are surprised by the realities of Canadian bilingualism—often experienced as asymmetrical bilingualism—and the minority status of French outside Quebec, and may struggle to locate French-language services or find that available services are inaccessible due to distance or lack of transportation (AFO, 2017; Huot et al., 2014; OCASI, 2012; Veronis & Huot,

2019). For those who are less comfortable or proficient in English, these barriers can significantly hinder settlement and integration processes, and may even contribute to linguistic assimilation into the anglophone majority (AFO, 2017; Huot, 2013; Lacassagne, 2017; Veronis & Huot, 2019).

Canadian-born Francophones face similar challenges in terms of service access, though many are fully bilingual, which may help reduce some barriers even if services are not accessed in their preferred language (Charron et al., 2018; Esses et al., 2021; Farmanova et al., 2018; Mougeon et al., 2018). However, not all Canadian-born Francophones actively seek French-language services; some use French primarily at home and with family while using English in most other contexts (Mougeon et al., 2018). These practices, while pragmatic, can contribute to the invisibility of francophone spaces and create difficulties for newcomers seeking to connect with the local francophone community (Veronis & Huot, 2019).

Despite growing attention to both francophone immigration and service access challenges, most existing research examines Canadian-born Francophones and francophone immigrants separately. Studies that include both groups often focus on specific issues such as healthcare access or social cohesion, but do not systematically compare how migration status shapes patterns of service access and usage across different types of services and regions (e.g., Huot et al., 2020, 2023; Sall et al., 2021; Sall et al., 2022; Timony et al., 2022). Given the ongoing diversification and demographic transformation of Ontario's Francophonie, comparative research that examines how Francophones with different migration histories experience service access across the province is both timely and necessary.

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature and presents the conceptual framework guiding this study, drawing on the concepts of social resilience and superdiversity to examine Francophones' experiences of accessing and using services in French. Next, Chapter 3 describes the methodology, including the survey design, sampling strategy, data collection process, and analytical approach. It also situates this study within the broader SSHRC-funded research project on the diversification of the Francophonie in Ontario of which it is a part.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the study's findings. Chapter 4 turns to government services, analyzing access and usage at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Chapter 5 examines access to and usage of education services (including daycares and schools) and healthcare services, comparing patterns across regions and migration status. Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by discussing the key findings in relation to the research objectives and conceptual framework. It considers implications for policy and practice, identifies limitations of the study, and offers directions for future research on service access among Ontario's diverse and diversifying Francophonie.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This chapter reviews the scholarly literature relevant to understanding Francophones' access to and use of French language services in Ontario, and presents the conceptual framework guiding this study. The first part of the chapter examines three interconnected bodies of literature: studies on Francophone Minority Communities (FMCs) in Ontario and their regional diversity; research on institutional completeness and access to French language services; and scholarship on francophone immigration and settlement in minority contexts. Together, these literatures inform our understanding of the challenges facing FMCs as they respond to demographic change and work to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse francophone population. The second part of the chapter introduces the conceptual framework, drawing on superdiversity to understand the increasing diversification of FMCs and the varied needs of their members, and on a social resilience perspective to examine how structural factors shape access to services across regions and demographic groups.

2.1 Francophone Minority Communities in Ontario: Context and Regional Diversity

While Ontario holds the largest Francophone Minority Community (FMC) outside of Quebec, this population is far from homogeneous. Francophones in Ontario are distributed unevenly across the province, with distinct regional concentrations that reflect different historical trajectories, demographic compositions, and institutional landscapes. Understanding this regional diversity is essential to examining how Francophones access and use services in French, since local contexts profoundly shape both the availability of services and individuals' experiences of navigating them.

Regional Francophonies

Scholars and policymakers commonly distinguish three broad regional Francophonies in Ontario: Northern, Eastern, and Central-Southwestern (Gilbert, 2010; Mougeon et al., 2018). Each region has developed its own distinct character shaped by settlement history, economic base, and relationship to the anglophone majority.

Northern Ontario's francophone communities—including Hearst, Timmins, Sudbury, and surrounding areas—have deep historical roots tied to resource extraction industries and agricultural settlement (Dupuis & Blais, 2018; Gilbert, 2010). These communities tend to have higher proportions of Francophones in their local populations and, as a result, have developed more robust francophone institutions and services that reflect their needs (Lacassagne, 2010, 2017). In some northern towns, French remains a language of everyday public life to a degree uncommon elsewhere in the province.

Eastern Ontario, centred on Ottawa, represents a different configuration. The national capital region benefits from its strategic location on the Ontario-Quebec border, its concentration of federal institutions with bilingual mandates, and its sheer population size (Gilbert et al., 2014; Jezak, 2018, 2019). Ottawa's FMC is the largest and most institutionally complete in the province, with a wide array of French language services, organizations, and cultural institutions. It is also one of the most ethnoculturally diverse FMCs in Ontario (along with Toronto), having attracted significant francophone immigration over recent decades (Veronis & Huot, 2019).

Central-Southwestern Ontario presents yet another reality. Communities in this region—including Toronto, Hamilton, and London—tend to have lower proportions of francophones in their populations and are more geographically dispersed (Langlois & Gilbert, 2006). Francophones in these areas often describe themselves as more isolated, with fewer French language institutions and services available (Huot et al., 2014). The relative invisibility of French in everyday life can make it difficult for Francophones to connect with one another and to access services in their language.

These regional differences have significant implications for service access. As Gilbert (2010) argues, understanding the local and regional context is essential to investigating the availability, accessibility, and use of services in FMCs across the province. What works in Ottawa may not translate to London; what is taken for granted in Hearst may be entirely absent in Hamilton.

Demographic Change and Its Uneven Geography

Ontario's francophone population is undergoing significant demographic change, yet these changes are unfolding unevenly across the province. Three interrelated trends merit attention: population aging and natural decline among established communities, interprovincial migration, and the growing contribution of international immigration.

The Canadian-born francophone population in Ontario is aging rapidly and experiencing overall demographic decline (OFLSC, 2018). Younger francophones, particularly in northern and rural communities, increasingly migrate southward and to urban centres in search of educational and employment opportunities, leaving behind aging populations in smaller FMCs, or simply choose to engage less in French in more southern communities (Labrie & Lamoureux, 2012; Mougeon et al., 2018). This internal redistribution of the francophone population has implications for the sustainability of institutions and services in communities experiencing out-migration.

At the same time, Ontario attracts significant numbers of francophone migrants from other provinces, particularly Quebec. Legault-Leclair and Meunier (2020), analyzing Census data from 1991 to 2016, demonstrate that interprovincial migration—especially from Quebec—has been a major contributor to Ontario's francophone population. Among all francophone newcomers to Ontario in 2016, 45.3% were in-migrants from Quebec, 42.9% were international immigrants, and 11.8% came from other Canadian provinces (Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020, p. 396). This interprovincial dimension is often overlooked in discussions focused primarily on international immigration.

International immigration has increasingly become a source of francophone population growth, particularly since the early 2000s when targeted francophone immigration became a policy priority (see section 1.3.2 in Chapter 1 for additional information). Francophone immigrants arriving in Ontario come from diverse origins—including countries in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Middle East—bringing varied linguistic practices, cultural backgrounds, and settlement needs.

Critically, these demographic changes are reshaping FMCs unevenly across the province. Francophone newcomers, whether from other provinces or internationally, tend to settle in large metropolitan areas rather than small towns and remote regions (Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020; Mougeon et al., 2018). Ottawa and Toronto, already the most ethnoculturally diverse FMCs, continue to diversify further, while smaller and more remote FMCs change more slowly (Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020; OFLSC, 2018). Cardinal and Léger (2019) emphasize that immigration contributes to population growth among Ontario’s francophone community overall, but in a geographically uneven fashion. The result is a growing divergence between metropolitan FMCs characterized by increasing diversity and complexity, and smaller communities facing demographic decline and limited diversification.

These patterns of demographic change raise important questions about service provision. As FMCs become more diverse in some regions while aging and shrinking in others, the needs of their populations are also likely diverging. Understanding these dynamics is essential for examining how different groups of Francophones (long-established residents, interprovincial migrants, and international immigrants) access and use services in French across the province.

2.2 Institutional Completeness and Access to French Language Services

Access to services in one’s own language is not merely a matter of convenience. For minority language communities, it is fundamental to community vitality, identity maintenance, and individual well-being. This section reviews the concept of institutional completeness and its application to FMCs, before examining the literature on francophones’ access to services in

French, with particular attention to healthcare and education as two critical service domains.

Institutional Completeness and the “Par et Pour” Principle

Raymond Breton (1964) introduced the concept of institutional completeness to describe an ethnocultural community’s capacity to provide all the services its members require without having to rely on organizations or institutions led by other, often dominant, groups. A community with high institutional completeness can meet its members’ needs—educational, religious, economic, social, cultural, health-related—through its own institutions, thereby maintaining group cohesion and cultural continuity. Conversely, a community lacking institutional completeness must depend on external institutions, which may not respond adequately to its specific needs and may contribute to assimilation over time.

The concept of institutional completeness has been widely applied to FMCs in Canada to examine issues of francophone minority rights and autonomy (Cardinal & Forgues, 2014; Cardinal & Léger, 2017; Chouinard, 2014; Sall, 2019) and francophone cultural vitality (Nault, 2019). For Francophones in Ontario, institutional completeness is often articulated through the principle of “*par et pour*”—services provided *by* and *for* Francophones. This principle recognizes that services delivered by Francophones, grounded in an understanding of francophone community realities, may better respond to their needs than services simply translated into French or offered by bilingual Anglophones.

Huot (2013) emphasizes that Francophones’ access to and use of francophone organizations, institutions, and services contributes not only to meeting individual needs but also “to community life, identity-building, and larger symbolic and political purposes” (p. 331). In other words, institutional completeness matters both at the individual level—enabling people to receive appropriate services—and at the collective level—sustaining community vitality and visibility. This dual significance makes access to French language services a central concern for FMCs facing demographic change.

Building on Breton’s foundational work, we can assume that any significant change in an ethnocultural community’s composition or structure—whether population increase or

decrease, aging, or diversification—warrants examination of whether existing institutions remain able to meet members’ needs. In the context of Ontario’s FMCs, this raises the question of whether French language services are sufficiently available and accessible both geographically and to various subgroups within the francophone population.

Access to Healthcare in French

Healthcare represents one of the most critical and well-studied domains of French language service access in Ontario (Bouchard et al., 2024). The literature consistently documents significant challenges facing francophones seeking healthcare in French, with implications for health outcomes and health equity.

Research demonstrates that accessing French language health services is a persistent issue across Ontario (Batista et al., 2021; Farmanova et al., 2018; Savard et al., 2021; Timony et al., 2022; Tremblay & Leis, 2021). Francophones who cannot access services in their language may struggle to communicate symptoms accurately, understand diagnoses and treatment plans, or navigate the healthcare system effectively. Language barriers in healthcare can lead to misunderstandings, reduced patient satisfaction, and poorer health outcomes.

Savard et al. (2021) highlight a particularly significant issue: the breakdown of service continuity between providers when French language services are unavailable. When francophones must move between French-language and English-language providers, or when referrals cannot be made to French-language specialists, continuity of care suffers. This fragmentation is especially problematic for patients with complex or chronic health conditions requiring coordination among multiple providers.

The availability of French language health services varies considerably across the province, reflecting the regional diversity of FMCs discussed above. While Ottawa benefits from relatively robust French language health infrastructure, francophones in Central-Southwestern Ontario often face greater challenges locating providers who can serve them in French (Timony et al., 2022). Northern Ontario presents a mixed picture, with some communities having strong French language health services and others facing significant gaps despite their proportionally

larger francophone populations.

Access to Education in French

French-language education in Ontario is primarily studied from the viewpoint of transitioning from secondary schools to post-secondary schools (Boissoneault, 2016; Labrie & Lamoureux, 2012; Lamoureux, 2010; Michaud et al., 2008), as this is when students tend to lose access to or experience a decline in the amount of French-language schooling available to them. Access to elementary and secondary schooling in French is a protected right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but while some post-secondary institutions are designated institutions mandated to provide good quality French-language services (for example, the University of Ottawa), this is not the case for all post-secondary institutions (GoO, 2024; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2025).

French-language education is also seen as a method of linguistic transmission in FMCs, as schools are a space where young Francophones can immerse themselves in their language and, as a result, improve FMC vitality (Bélanger et al. 2010; Lamoureux, 2010; Michaud et al., 2008; Sabourin et al., 2015). However, in FMCs with less overall *francité* around them, such as Welland in Central-Southwestern Ontario, schools and other educational centres can be infiltrated by English usage and see less overall usage of French within the classroom and school in informal interactions between classmates (Mougeon et al., 2018).

The Demand-Offer Cycle

A significant dynamic identified in the literature is the cyclical relationship between demand for and supply of French language services. Farmanova et al. (2018) and Mougeon et al. (2018) observe that many Francophones in Ontario, particularly those who are bilingual, tend to seek services in English depending on the social context of their FMC and the availability—or perceived lack—of services in French. When French language services are difficult to locate, require longer wait times, or involve greater travel distances, bilingual Francophones may opt for more readily available English services.

This pattern can create a self-reinforcing cycle. As Farmanova et al. (2018) explain, when Francophones use English services, demand for French services appears to decline, which in turn may lead to reduced investment in French service provision. The resulting decrease in available French services then makes it even more likely that Francophones will turn to English alternatives. Over time, this cycle can erode the institutional base of FMCs and contribute to the invisibility of francophone populations.

This dynamic has particular implications for understanding service access among different demographic groups. Canadian-born Francophones who are fully bilingual may navigate this cycle by shifting fluidly between French and English services depending on availability and convenience. However, as Veronis and Huot (2019) observe, these practices—while pragmatic for individuals—can contribute to the invisibility of francophone spaces and create difficulties for francophone immigrants who are attempting to locate French language services and integrate into the local FMC.

Variation Across Communities

The literature underscores that access to French language services varies significantly across Ontario's FMCs, reflecting differences in population size, institutional development, and geographic context. As discussed in the previous section, Ottawa benefits from a large francophone population, proximity to Quebec, and concentration of federal institutions, resulting in relatively high institutional completeness (Gilbert et al., 2014, 2017; Jezak, 2018). Northern Ontario communities such as Hearst, Timmins, and Sudbury, with their higher proportions of Francophones, have also developed substantial French language institutional infrastructure, though gaps remain (Lacassagne, 2010, 2017).

In contrast, FMCs in Central-Southwestern Ontario face more significant challenges. Huot et al. (2014), examining the francophone community in London, document how the lower proportion of Francophones and greater geographic dispersion result in fewer French language institutions and services. Francophones in these communities may need to travel significant distances to access services in French, or may find that certain services are simply unavailable in

their language. The isolation experienced by Francophones in these regions shapes not only their practical access to services but also their sense of connection to a broader francophone community.

This geographic variation in service availability and institutional completeness is central to understanding Francophones' experiences across the province. It suggests that access to services cannot be examined in the aggregate; rather, attention to regional and local context is essential for understanding how different Francophones navigate service access in their specific communities.

2.3 Francophone Immigration and Settlement in Minority Contexts

As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, francophone immigration has become a central policy response to the demographic challenges facing FMCs. This section reviews the growing body of literature on francophone immigrants' experiences with settlement and integration in Ontario, with particular attention to the challenges they face accessing services in French within minority contexts.

Settlement and Integration in Francophone Minority Contexts

A substantial body of scholarship has examined francophone immigrants' settlement and integration experiences in Ontario, documenting both the opportunities and the significant challenges involved in establishing oneself within an FMC (Farmer et al., 2003; Huot & Veronis, 2018; Mianda, 2018; Veronis & Couton, 2017; Veronis & Huot, 2019). This literature reveals that settling in a francophone minority context presents distinct challenges that differ markedly from settlement in majority francophone settings such as Quebec.

A recurring finding is that francophone immigrants are often surprised by the lived realities of Canadian bilingualism—often characterized as asymmetrical bilingualism—and the minority status of French outside Quebec. Many arrive expecting that their French language skills will facilitate integration, only to discover that English dominates public and professional

life across most of Ontario (AFO, 2017; Huot et al., 2014; Veronis & Huot, 2019). This disconnect between expectations and reality can be disorienting and may complicate the settlement process. Immigrants who lack strong English-language skills may face particular difficulties, as proficiency in English is often necessary for employment and for navigating daily life outside of francophone-specific spaces (see Fortier et al., 2018; Gabriel & Veronis, 2024; Mianda, 2018).

Huot and Veronis (2018) and Veronis and Couton (2017) emphasize that integration in minority contexts can be especially difficult for newcomers who do not have prior knowledge of the local francophone community and its spaces. Unlike in Quebec, where French is visible and dominant, francophone institutions and services in Ontario may be difficult to locate (Veronis & Huot, 2019). Immigrants must learn not only where French language services exist but also how to navigate between francophone and anglophone spheres—a skill that Canadian-born francophones have often developed over a lifetime.

The geographic dimension further complicates settlement. Despite policy initiatives aimed at regionalizing immigration and attracting francophone newcomers to smaller cities and rural areas (IRCC, 2025), francophone immigrants tend to concentrate in Ottawa and Toronto (Lacassagne, 2017; Legault-Leclair & Meunier, 2020). These metropolitan areas offer more extensive francophone institutional infrastructure, larger francophone communities, and more diverse employment opportunities. However, even in these cities, newcomers may struggle to locate and access francophone spaces and services, particularly in the early stages of settlement.

At the same time, a subset of francophone immigrants does settle in smaller communities, including Northern Ontario, where they encounter distinct settlement dynamics and challenges related to geographic isolation, limited service availability, and constrained labour markets. Yet these contexts may also present specific opportunities: recent research suggests that in smaller francophone communities, immigrants can benefit from greater visibility and, in some cases, a competitive advantage in accessing employment within francophone institutions faced with labour shortages, even as overall employment options remain limited (Deschênes-Thériault et al., 2024).

Access to Settlement Services

Settlement services—including language training, employment assistance, housing support, and orientation programs—play a critical role in supporting newcomers’ integration (Chai, 2021; Kaushik & Drolet, 2018; Zhu, 2016). Since the early 2000s, the provision of settlement services specifically for francophone immigrants has expanded significantly in Ontario, with dedicated francophone settlement agencies and programs now operating in several regions (Sall et al., 2022; Veronis & Huot, 2017, 2018).

The Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs) represent a key institutional development in this area. Created in 2003 to facilitate coordination of services for francophone immigrants, RIFs bring together service providers, community organizations, and other stakeholders to support francophone newcomers (L’immigration francophone au Canada, n.d.-a). Ontario benefits from three RIFs serving different regions: Central-Southwestern Ontario (based in Hamilton), Eastern Ontario (based in Ottawa), and Northern Ontario (based in Sudbury). The mandate of these networks is to improve the visibility and accessibility of French language settlement services and to develop strategies supporting newcomers’ integration into local FMCs (Paquet & Andrew, 2014).

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) also play a role in coordinating settlement services and developing community-level strategies to support newcomers (Praznik & Shields, 2018; Veronis, 2019; Veronis et al., 2024). These partnerships bring together multiple stakeholders—including settlement agencies, employers, educational institutions, and community organizations—to address local immigration and integration needs.

Research conducted in the mid- to late 2010s identified persistent challenges with the visibility and accessibility of French language settlement services at that time. Sall et al. (2022) and Veronis and Huot (2017) noted that while francophone settlement services had expanded considerably, many newcomers remained unaware of their existence or had difficulty locating them. In its *Livre blanc sur l’immigration*, the Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (AFO, 2017)—the organization representing francophone communities in the province—reported that francophone immigrants were often offered little to no adequate information about French

language services available in their community and did not receive effective referrals to these services. This invisibility of francophone settlement infrastructure meant that some newcomers accessed settlement services in English by default, resulting in missed opportunities to connect with the francophone community from the outset (see Veronis & Huot, 2018).

These research findings contributed to significant policy and program developments in the years that followed. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funded a number of new initiatives aimed at improving the visibility and accessibility of services for francophone newcomers, including the *Communautés francophones accueillantes* (CFAs) program (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2025), a welcome kiosk for francophone immigrants at Toronto Pearson Airport (*l'Immigration francophone au Canada*, n.d.-b), and the *Point d'accueil francophone* (PAF) in Ottawa—a one-stop information centre providing newcomers with comprehensive information about available services (PAF Ottawa Canada, n.d.). However, since the introduction of these initiatives, and particularly since the significant increase in francophone immigration following 2022, little research has examined how francophone newcomers' experiences with settlement services and integration may have changed.

Access to General Services in French

Beyond settlement-specific services, earlier research documented significant challenges francophone immigrants faced in accessing general services in French—including healthcare, social services, and government services. A study by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI, 2012) found that francophone immigrants were often unable to find services in French and instead used services in English. When French-language services did exist, they were not always practically accessible: services might be located far from the newcomers' residences, transportation might be unavailable, or wait times might be prohibitive. These access challenges can have significant consequences for settlement and integration.

Research conducted in the mid-2010s echoed these findings. The AFO (2017) warned that difficulties in finding, accessing, and using French language services could hinder

francophone immigrants' settlement processes—both their integration into the local FMC and into Canadian society more broadly. Studies by Huot (2013), Lacassagne (2017), and Veronis and Huot (2019) suggested that persistent barriers to accessing French language services might push some immigrants toward assimilation into the anglophone majority. This is an outcome that runs counter to the policy objectives of francophone immigration, which aims not only to increase the francophone population numerically but also to strengthen the vitality of FMCs.

These earlier studies also highlighted regional variation in access challenges. Nakhaie (2018) and Huot and Veronis (2018) found that francophone immigrants settling outside major metropolitan areas faced compounded difficulties: fewer French language services, smaller francophone communities offering less robust social support, and greater necessity for English in daily life. The regional variation in service availability documented in the previous section thus has direct implications for francophone immigrants' settlement experiences across the province.

It is important to note, however, that this body of research largely predates the policy developments and program expansions of the late 2010s and early 2020s, as well as the significant increase in francophone immigration that has occurred in recent years. The extent to which these earlier findings still characterize francophone newcomers' experiences with service access remains an open question requiring further investigation.

The Intersection of Immigrant and Canadian-Born Experiences

An important theme emerging from the literature concerns the relationship between francophone immigrants and Canadian-born Francophones, and how their respective practices shape the accessibility and vitality of FMCs. As noted in the previous section, many Canadian-born Francophones, particularly those who are fully bilingual, tend to use French primarily at home and with family, and navigate English-dominant public and professional spaces with relative ease (Charron et al., 2018; Mougeon et al., 2018). While these practices are pragmatic responses to the minority context, they can inadvertently contribute to the invisibility of francophone communities and spaces.

Veronis and Huot (2019) argue that this invisibility creates particular difficulties for francophone immigrants attempting to locate fellow Francophones and integrate into the local FMC. Newcomers may not realize that a colleague, neighbour, or service provider is francophone if French is not used in public contexts. The informal networks and unwritten knowledge that Canadian-born Francophones have developed over time—knowing which businesses are francophone-owned, which professionals offer services in French, where to find francophone social and cultural activities—may not be readily accessible to newcomers.

This dynamic points to a tension within FMCs. The individual strategies that allow Canadian-born Francophones to navigate the minority context successfully may, at the collective level, make it more difficult for newcomers to find their footing in the community. Conversely, the arrival of francophone immigrants who actively seek French-language services and francophone spaces may contribute to the visibility and vitality of FMCs, but only if they are able to locate and access these services in the first place.

Huot and colleagues' work on social cohesion in FMCs (Huot et al., 2020; Huot et al., 2023; Sall et al., 2021; Sall et al., 2022) represents an important effort to examine both Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones together, investigating how personal and community experiences are shaped by cohesion (or its absence), individual positionality, and relationships between established community members and newcomers. This body of research sheds light on the complex dynamics at play as FMCs diversify through immigration and grapple with questions of inclusion, belonging, and collective identity.

2.4 Toward a Comparative and Systematic Approach

The bodies of literature reviewed in the preceding sections highlight important dimensions of Francophones' experiences in Ontario: the regional diversity of FMCs, the significance of institutional completeness for service access and community vitality, and the particular challenges facing francophone immigrants in minority contexts. However, a review of this scholarship also reveals important limitations in what is currently known, particularly in light of the demographic changes and policy developments of recent years.

The Nature of Existing Research

Much of the existing research on francophone immigrants' access to services consists of small-scale qualitative studies focused on specific localities. Studies have examined francophone immigrant experiences in Ottawa (Veronis & Huot, 2019; Huot & Veronis, 2018), London (Huot et al., 2014), Northern Ontario (Lacassagne, 2010, 2017), and to a lesser extent in Toronto (Mianda 2018), providing rich, contextual accounts of settlement and integration in these particular FMCs. While these studies offer valuable insights into local dynamics, they do not provide a systematic overview of experiences across different regions of the province. Notably, despite Toronto's significant and growing francophone immigrant population, relatively little recent research has examined newcomers' experiences in that metropolitan context.

Furthermore, the existing literature has largely examined either Canadian-born Francophones or francophone immigrants, but rarely both groups in comparative perspective. Studies of FMCs and francophone vitality have tended to focus on the established, Canadian-born population; studies of francophone immigration have focused on newcomers' experiences. One notable exception is the work of Huot and colleagues on social cohesion in FMCs (Huot et al., 2020; Huot et al., 2023; Sall et al., 2021; Sall et al., 2022), which included both Canadian-born and immigrant francophone participants to investigate how community cohesion shapes experiences across groups. Similarly, Violette and Traisnel (2010) examined how Acadian militants and francophone immigrants perceive one another, showing how immigration reshapes identity discourses and boundaries of belonging in a minority francophone context. However, studies that include both demographic groups as a collective tend to examine specific issues without necessarily undertaking in-depth comparative analyses of how these issues affect Canadian-born versus immigrant Francophones differently (Timony et al., 2022).

A Changing Landscape

The limitations of existing research are particularly significant given the substantial changes that have occurred in recent years. As documented in the Introduction Chapter, francophone immigration to Ontario has increased considerably, particularly since 2022. The

francophone population is diversifying not only through international immigration but also through continued interprovincial migration, even as the Canadian-born francophone population ages and younger generations migrate toward urban centres. These demographic shifts are unfolding unevenly across the province, with metropolitan FMCs diversifying rapidly while smaller communities face different pressures.

At the same time, the policy and institutional landscapes have evolved. New initiatives aimed at supporting francophone newcomers—including the *Communautés francophones accueillantes* program, welcome services at major entry points, and enhanced coordination of settlement services—have been implemented since much of the foundational research on francophone immigrant service access was conducted. Whether and how these developments have improved newcomers’ experiences accessing services in French remains largely unexamined.

The Need for Systematic Comparison

These converging factors—the diversification of the francophone population, the uneven geography of demographic change, the ongoing struggles for access to French language services, and the evolution of policy and programs—point to the need for research that can provide a more systematic and large-scale understanding of Francophones’ experiences across the province. Such research would need to examine service access across different regions, accounting for the distinct contexts of Northern, Eastern, and Central-Southwestern Ontario. It would also need to compare the experiences of Francophones with different migration statuses—Canadian-born, interprovincial migrants, and international immigrants—to understand how their needs and challenges may differ or converge.

A comparative approach of this kind would contribute to understanding how the diversification of FMCs is shaping the needs of the francophone population and how existing service provision is responding, or failing to respond, to these changing needs. It would also help to identify where structural barriers to service access persist and where they may have been reduced through recent policy initiatives.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in the following sections provides the theoretical grounding for this comparative and systematic approach. It combines two complementary perspectives: superdiversity and social resilience. Superdiversity offers a descriptive lens for understanding the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity that characterize Ontario's francophone population today—not only ethnocultural diversity through immigration, but also diversity of migration trajectories, age, geographic location, and socioeconomic circumstances. Social resilience, in turn, provides an analytical lens for examining how structural factors—including government policies, institutional completeness, and the uneven distribution of services—shape Francophones' capacity to access services in French, and how individuals and communities navigate these structural conditions. Together, these conceptual approaches enable an analysis that accounts for both the changing composition of the francophone population and the institutional landscape within which Francophones seek services.

2.5.1 Superdiversity

Coined by Vertovec (2007), superdiversity is both a descriptive and dynamic concept that serves to understand how multiple characteristics and identities layer upon one another to create multifaceted diversity in given places and at given times. The concept serves to study the “multi-dimensional conditions and processes affecting immigrants in contemporary society” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1050) by considering not only racial and ethnic diversity, but also language, religion, country of origin, human capital, and other sociodemographic characteristics (Vertovec et al., 2024). These overlapping diversities create the opportunity for individuals in the same geographic area and affiliation with a sociodemographic group to coexist and interact. As such, superdiversity provides a tool for examining how multiple social factors—migration status, age, gender, language, family situation, geographic location—combine to shape individuals' experiences in complex and diversifying societies.

It is important to note that Vertovec's conceptualization of superdiversity extends beyond descriptive categorization. As Vertovec (2007) and subsequent scholarship have

elaborated, the concept also attends to how intersecting dimensions of diversity produce unequal power dynamics and differential access to resources among individuals and groups within the same geographic space (Vertovec, 2023; Vertovec et al., 2024). Superdiversity is, in this sense, a dynamic concept concerned not only with *what* diversity looks like but with *how* it shapes social relations, institutional access, and everyday experience. This study draws on superdiversity primarily as a descriptive framework, using it to map the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity that characterize Ontario's francophone population and the varying contexts of FMCs across the province. While a fuller application of the concept would attend more directly to the power relations and interactional dynamics among differently positioned groups, the descriptive application adopted here is appropriate to the study's empirical objectives: documenting and comparing patterns of service access across regions and migration status groups.

In the context of this study, superdiversity provides a framework for understanding the contemporary francophone population of Ontario in its full complexity. As documented in preceding sections, this population is diversifying along multiple axes simultaneously: through international immigration that is increasing ethnocultural diversity particularly in metropolitan areas; through continued interprovincial migration that brings Francophones with different life experiences and expectations; and through demographic shifts as an aging Canadian-born population and youth migration toward urban centres reshape the composition of communities across the province. These processes unfold unevenly, with metropolitan FMCs diversifying rapidly while smaller communities face different pressures. Superdiversity thus offers a lens through which to examine how the diversity of FMCs and the multiple dimensions of Francophones' sociodemographic characteristics—migration status, place of birth, language, age, location—shape experiences of accessing and using services in French.

Other scholars have taken similar approaches to studying service and resource access through a superdiversity lens. Hoekstra and Pinkster (2019), for example, use superdiversity as a descriptive backdrop to their study of a neighbourhood in Amsterdam, showing how residents' complex socioeconomic characteristics interact on a day-to-day basis and how these interactions influence their access to and use of a neighbourhood centre. Similarly, Neal et al.

(2015) investigate how diversity shapes individuals' relationships with and practices when accessing local parks. Through a superdiversity lens, they demonstrate that socioeconomic characteristics directly shape how and when individuals choose to use public spaces: while ethnic diversity positively influenced park usage, gender and age diversity determined when and how individuals used parks due to concerns about safety and personal security. These studies illustrate how superdiversity can illuminate the relationship between population characteristics and patterns of access to services and public resources.

Vertovec (2023) argues that superdiversity is particularly useful when examining resource and service access, noting that the "growing size and complexity of [immigrant populations carry] a range of significant public service implications" (p. 40). Without adequate understanding of a population's diverse characteristics, services risk being inadequate or poorly targeted. This insight is directly relevant to this study's objectives: documenting how Francophones access and use services across Ontario requires attention to the multiple dimensions of diversity that characterize this population. This approach aligns with the second research objective, which is to compare service access across migration status (international immigrants, domestic migrants, and Ontario-born francophones), and supports the broader aim of understanding how the diversification of FMCs shapes patterns of service provision.

To attend to the role of place and context in shaping these experiences, this study also draws on Fincher, Iveson, Leitner, and Preston's (2019) work on superdiversity and everyday encounters. Their theoretical framework offers a "relational theorization of encounters—insisting that while encounters are observable moments of interaction and 'being together in difference' that take place across distinct spheres of urban everyday life, such moments are profoundly shaped by their geographical, historical, and political contexts" (p. 19). This multisited and multiscalar approach is particularly relevant given the distinct regional contexts that characterize Ontario's francophone communities: Northern Ontario's historically rooted but geographically dispersed communities; Eastern Ontario's proximity to Quebec and relatively higher institutional completeness; and Central-Southwestern Ontario's metropolitan diversity alongside the challenges of dispersed settlement. By examining service access across these regional contexts, this study adopts the multisited and multiscalar approach that Fincher et al.

advocate, attending to how geographic, historical, and institutional factors shape Francophones' everyday experiences of seeking and using services in French.

This geographic dimension is central to how superdiversity operates in the Ontario francophone context. The uneven distribution of Francophones across the province means that the density of francophone communities in a given area shapes not only the availability of French-language services but also the social networks and local knowledge through which individuals learn about and access those services. In communities with higher concentrations of Francophones, such as certain areas of Ottawa or Northern Ontario, denser social networks facilitate the circulation of information about where to find French-language services. In more dispersed communities, such as those across much of Central-Southwestern Ontario, the relative isolation of Francophones from one another can limit access to this kind of locally embedded knowledge, compounding the structural barriers created by lower institutional completeness.

Lastly, Fincher et al. (2019) adopt an egalitarian standpoint in their approach to superdiversity, highlighting their aim to showcase “being together in difference as equals” (p. 44). This perspective strengthens the analysis by providing an approach that facilitates examination of where and how service accessibility is lacking, as well as a starting point for a relational framework to assess access across FMCs. As Ontario's francophone population becomes increasingly diverse, an assessment of accessibility across FMCs and regions can establish a baseline for understanding how service provision responds, or fails to respond, to this changing population.

While superdiversity provides a descriptive lens for understanding the multiple dimensions of diversity characterizing Ontario's francophone population, it does not fully account for the structural conditions that shape whether and how individuals can access services. Additionally, this study's primarily descriptive use of superdiversity means that other dimensions of the concept—including its attention to how power relations operate among differently positioned members of affiliated groups at the local scale—are not fully operationalized here. This is a deliberate methodological choice reflecting the study's empirical focus on documenting and comparing patterns of service access, rather than examining the

interactional dynamics among groups within specific communities. To examine how government policies, institutional arrangements, and the uneven distribution of resources create barriers or facilitate access, and how individuals and communities navigate these structural conditions, this study turns to the concept of social resilience.

2.5.2 Social Resilience

Building on broader conceptualizations of resilience—defined as “the capacity of individuals, communities and systems to survive in the face of stress and shocks, and even transform when conditions require” (Akbar & Preston, 2019, p. ii)—social resilience is a more focused concept that foregrounds social justice values and attention to power relations between institutions and communities. While scholars acknowledge that social resilience is a complex concept with limited consensus on its exact definition (Akbar & Preston, 2019; Gabriel & Veronis, 2025; Qamar, 2024; Rakhimova, 2018), it can be broadly understood as “the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organization, class, racial group, community, or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenges to it” (Hall & Lamont, 2013, p. 2). This conceptualization emphasizes the importance and interconnectedness of multiple stakeholders—social, economic, cultural, and political—across various structural contexts, enabling analysis of power relations and institutional inequality at multiple scales (Akbar & Preston, 2019; Hall & Lamont, 2013). As such, social resilience is a useful concept for studying social change and development in relation to policy and institutional decisions (Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Given that access to French-language services in Ontario is heavily shaped by government policy and institutional completeness, and thus varies considerably between individuals and across local and regional contexts, a social resilience perspective is well suited to help understand the structural factors that shape Francophones’ capacity to access and use services in French, thus directly addressing the study’s third research objective: to identify and compare factors that facilitate and/or hinder Francophones’ access to services in French.

For the purposes of this study, social resilience is applied as conceptualized by Qamar (2023, 2024), who positions it as a socially constructed phenomenon comprising two key components: adversity and resources. How individuals experience adversity in their environment and utilize resources to overcome this adversity forms the foundation of Qamar's approach. He defines adversity as "stressors, in other words, [that] cause changes that pressurize and threaten the social structure, livelihood, and resources" (Qamar, 2024, p. 137). In the context of this study, adversity is understood in part as not having access to French-language services—a stressor that threatens Francophones' capacity to fully participate in social, economic, and civic life in their language. Resources, meanwhile, include both formal institutional supports and informal networks upon which individuals draw to navigate these challenges.

This study also draws on Preston et al.'s (2022; see also Preston et al. 2025a, 2025b) work on social resilience in relation to immigration, which complements Qamar's framework. Preston et al. explain that social resilience "acknowledges the structural forces including the various services and other supports that shape integration in diverse places while still recognizing the agency of newcomers" (2022, p. 1). Their approach highlights how institutions "are dynamic agents providing services and voice that help support, represent, and empower newcomers" (p. 1). This conceptualization is inherently relational, examining how institutions and structural factors shape immigrants' experiences in accessing services and integrating into the broader community, and vice versa. It aligns with Qamar's (2023) identification of four institutionally embedded factors that shape whether individuals experience adversity: migrant status; accessibility of resources through community, family, and broader networks; support through network provision; and recognition as a member of society. Both Qamar and Preston et al. agree that access to appropriate services improves overall social resilience.

While Preston et al.'s (2022) focus is on migrant populations, their approach can serve to study other minority or marginalized groups. Other scholars have applied social resilience frameworks in diverse contexts, demonstrating its flexibility. Rakhimova (2018), for example, examines financial insecurity among low-income elderly individuals using a similar conceptualization. Through a mixed-methods study, she finds that local organizations and

government service providers contribute to the resilience of low-income elderly individuals by offering programs and advocating for their clients; in turn, elderly individuals accessing these services also support them through volunteering, illustrating the relational nature of resilience. Perez-Brumer et al. (2017) use a social resilience approach to evaluate the social capital and resiliency of transgender women with HIV in Peru. They report that strong social connections, support systems, and resource sharing among individuals bolster resilience, while structural barriers such as certain healthcare policies hinder resilience at the institutional level. These studies demonstrate how social resilience can illuminate the interplay between individual agency and structural constraints across different populations and contexts.

Preston et al. (2022) advocate for “an in-depth examination of the social characteristics of migrants to recognize their diverse needs and intersectional challenges followed by an inventory of organizations and their roles to understand the local institutional contexts where [they] live” (p. 16). They further recommend conducting comparative research between locations, different social groups, and institutions to fully utilize a social resilience approach. This study heeds these calls by combining social resilience with superdiversity: the superdiversity framework provides the lens for understanding Francophones’ diverse characteristics and the varying contexts of FMCs across Ontario, while social resilience provides the analytical tools for examining how structural factors—government policies, institutional completeness, the availability of services—shape Francophones’ capacity to access services in French and the strategies they employ to navigate barriers. Together, these concepts enable analysis of how the diversification of the francophone population intersects with the uneven landscape of French-language service provision across the province.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the scholarly literature on Francophone Minority Communities in Ontario, institutional completeness and French-language service provision, and francophone immigration and settlement. Taken together, this body of research reveals a complex landscape: FMCs vary considerably across the province in their historical development,

demographic composition, and institutional capacity; access to services in French remains uneven and often inadequate despite legislative frameworks; and francophone immigrants face particular challenges navigating minority language contexts that differ markedly from their expectations of Canadian bilingualism. At the same time, conducting the literature review made possible the identification of important gaps in existing research: a predominance of qualitative, small-scale, locality-specific studies; limited comparative examination across regions and/or between Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones; and a lack of systematic, large-scale analysis of service access in the context of recent demographic shifts and policy developments.

The conceptual framework developed in this chapter provides the theoretical grounding to address these research limitations and advance more nuanced understanding of the diversification of the francophone population in Ontario and francophone experiences with accessing French-language services in an uneven context. Superdiversity and social resilience offer complementary lenses that together enable a nuanced analysis of Francophones' experiences accessing and using services in French across Ontario. Superdiversity provides the descriptive tools for understanding the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity that characterize the francophone population today: diversity of migration status, place of birth, age, geographic location, and socioeconomic circumstances. This framework draws attention to how these characteristics combine to shape individuals' experiences and highlights the importance of attending to geographic, historical, and institutional contexts through a multisited and multiscalar approach. Social resilience, in turn, provides the analytical tools for examining how structural factors—government policies, institutional completeness, the availability and accessibility of services—create conditions of adversity and/or support, and how individuals and communities mobilize resources to navigate these conditions.

Together, these conceptual approaches support the study's three research objectives. The superdiversity framework informs the documentation of Francophones' diverse experiences across different regional contexts (Objective 1) and the comparison of service access across migration status groups (Objective 2). The social resilience framework guides the identification and analysis of structural factors that facilitate and/or hinder access to services in French (Objective 3). By combining attention to population diversity with attention to structural

conditions, this framework enables analysis of how the uneven distribution of French-language services across the province intersects with the diverse profiles of Ontario's francophone population.

The next chapter outlines the methodology employed to operationalize this framework and address the research objectives. It outlines the study's research design, data sources, and analytical approach, detailing how the conceptual framework informs the analysis of Francophones' experiences accessing and using services in French across Ontario's diverse regional contexts.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Methodological Approach and Rationale

The main aim of this study is to examine Francophones' everyday experiences of accessing and using French-language services in Ontario, with attention to how these experiences vary across regions and across groups with different migration statuses. Its research objectives require an approach capable of documenting patterns at the provincial scale while enabling systematic comparisons—between regions with distinct francophone community profiles, and between Ontario-born Francophones, domestic migrants from other Canadian provinces, and international immigrants. This chapter presents the quantitative survey methodology employed to address and meet these research objectives and describes the analytical strategies used to examine the resulting data.

A large-scale survey approach was selected for this study based on what the existing literature reveals about francophone service access in Ontario and what remains to be understood. As discussed in Chapter 2, research on francophone immigrants' experiences accessing services has produced valuable insights but has predominantly taken the form of small-scale qualitative studies examining specific localities—Ottawa, London, Northern Ontario, and, to a lesser extent, Toronto. These studies offer rich, contextual accounts of settlement and integration in particular Francophone Minority Communities (FMCs), but they do not provide a systematic overview of experiences across different regions of the province. Similarly, research on FMCs has documented the significant variation in institutional completeness and community vitality across Ontario's regions (Gilbert & Langlois 2006; Gilbert et al., 2010; Langlois & Gilbert 2006), yet few studies have directly compared how this regional variation shapes everyday service access for francophone residents.

Furthermore, existing scholarship has largely examined either Canadian-born Francophones or francophone immigrants, but rarely both groups in comparative perspective. Studies of FMC vitality have tended to focus on the established population, while studies of

francophone immigration have centred on newcomers' experiences. With notable exceptions examining social cohesion across groups in FMCs (Huot et al., 2020; Huot et al., 2023; Sall et al., 2021; Sall et al., 2022), research has not systematically compared how access to French-language services converges or differs across francophone groups with different migration trajectories and places of origin.

These characteristics of the existing literature point to the value of research that can provide a more comprehensive and comparative understanding of francophone service access. A large-scale survey methodology addresses this need in several ways. First, it enables data collection across the province, capturing respondents from Northern, Eastern, and Central-Southwestern Ontario in sufficient numbers to permit regional comparisons. Second, it allows for the inclusion of Francophones with diverse profiles—varying in migration status, age, language proficiency, and other characteristics—within a single study, making direct comparisons across groups possible. Third, a structured survey instrument ensures that comparable data are collected from all respondents, facilitating the systematic analysis of patterns across regions and demographic categories. Fourth, the scale of data collection supports analysis at multiple geographic levels: provincial trends, regional patterns, and where sample sizes permit, sub-regional dynamics, especially in major metropolitan centres such as Ottawa and Toronto.

At the same time, a quantitative survey approach has inherent limitations that shape what this study can and cannot reveal. Surveys using primarily closed-ended questions cannot capture the nuanced, contextual factors that shape individual experiences or probe the meanings respondents attach to their choices. The patterns identified through this analysis describe *what* is happening—which groups access which services in which languages, and where—but offer limited insight into *why* individuals make particular choices or how they interpret their experiences. These limitations are discussed further in section 3.8, and the findings presented in subsequent chapters should be read with these constraints in mind.

The data for this study are drawn from a larger multi-year mixed-methods research project, described in the following section, which employs complementary methodologies to examine francophone diversity in Ontario from multiple angles. This thesis draws specifically

from the project's large-scale survey, which provides the systematic, province-wide data needed to address the research questions guiding this study.

3.2 Research Context: The Larger Project

This thesis draws on data from a larger multiyear research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC; file number 435-2021-0983) of Canada. The project, entitled "Encountering francophone super-diversity in Ontario: Spaces, languages, practices and representations / *Hyper-diversité et francophonie en Ontario: lieux, langues, pratiques et représentations*," is led by Professors Luisa Veronis, Monika Jezak, and Brian Ray from the University of Ottawa. Using an interdisciplinary approach combining Geography and Sociolinguistics, the project aims to document how uneven processes of diversification, shaped by regional and institutional contexts, influence Ontario's Francophonie and the vitality of FMCs across the province.

The larger project comprises multiple stages with different methodologies: (1) a Census data analysis, (2) a large-scale survey, and (3) in-depth interviews. This thesis draws from stage 2, the large-scale survey, which was designed to document Francophones' socio-spatial and sociolinguistic experiences across the province. The survey examined experiences in relation to various types of spaces—public, private, community, and work—at different scales, while comparing participants' sociodemographic characteristics, with a specific focus on differences between immigrant and Canadian-born respondents.

3.3 Survey Design

The survey was created and distributed online using SurveyMonkey, a survey design and hosting software available at the University of Ottawa. Hosting the survey online facilitated distribution across the province, enabling broader geographical reach while enabling participants to complete it at their convenience. The survey was available in both French and English, and completion took approximately 30 minutes.

The survey featured primarily closed-ended questions, with very few write-in options. This design choice facilitated more efficient data analysis and comparison, since responses fell into a limited range of categories (McGuirk & O’Neill, 2016). All responses were recorded at either the ordinal or nominal level.

Survey Sections

The survey was divided into four sections. For this thesis, data are drawn from the first two sections only.

Section 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics

Participants were asked questions relating to their gender, age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, housing, language proficiency (in French, English, and other languages), identity (francophone, Franco-Ontarian, etc.), and sense of belonging (see Table 3.1 for the complete list of sociodemographic factors).

Within this section, a sub-section addressed participants’ origins, mobility, migration status, and citizenship. Participants’ place of birth was used to classify respondents into three migration status categories central to this study’s analysis:

- *Ontario-born*: participants born in Ontario;
- *Domestic migrants*: participants born in other Canadian provinces or territories, who were asked additional questions about their province/territory of origin and date of arrival in Ontario; and
- *International immigrants*: participants born outside Canada, who were asked about their country of origin, date of arrival in Canada and Ontario, migration category upon arrival, migration companions, and citizenship status.

Finally, all participants were asked to provide their forward sortation area (FSA)—the first three characters of their postal code—to identify their region of residence in Ontario.

Table 3.1. List of sociodemographic characteristics asked about in the online survey.

Sociodemographic factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gender• Age• Marital status• Level of education• Employment• Household income• Housing type• Proficiency in French• Proficiency in English• Proficiency in other languages (optional)• Sense of belonging• Mobility/migrant status/citizenship

Section 2: Language Practices and Service Access

The second section, which forms the main focus of this thesis, examined participants' language practices across a variety of everyday spaces and contexts. Questions addressed participants' access to and usage of eleven different types of public spaces, services, and organizations (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. List of everyday public spaces, services, and organizations asked about in survey.

Everyday public spaces, services, and organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daycares/schools• Community organizations• Religious spaces• Spaces of leisure and culture• Professional associations• Healthcare• Settlement services• Commercial services• Federal government services• Provincial government services• Municipal government services

Selection of Services for Analysis

While the survey collected data on all eleven service types listed above, this thesis focuses specifically on five of them: daycares/schools (education), healthcare, and government services at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. These services were selected for several reasons. First, they represent key domains of institutional completeness identified in the literature as central to francophone community vitality—education and health services in particular have been highlighted as foundational to FMC sustainability (Cotnam-Kappel & Woods, 2020; Farmanova et al., 2018; Gérin-Lajoie, 2020). Second, the inclusion of government services at three jurisdictional levels allows for examination of how access patterns vary across different levels of governance, each with distinct legislative frameworks regarding French-language service provision in Ontario. Third, unlike some services included in the survey (such as settlement services, which are primarily relevant to newcomers), these five services are accessed by Francophones across all migration status categories, enabling the comparative analysis central to this study’s objectives.

For each service, respondents were asked about: the language they used when accessing the service; their awareness of French-language options (for those who accessed services in English); and the perceived importance of having access to that service in French. These three dimensions of inquiry correspond directly to the study's research questions regarding usage patterns, awareness gaps, and the relationship between perceived importance and actual usage.

3.4 Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participation criteria were intentionally broad and inclusive to capture the diversity of French-speakers in Ontario. Three criteria determined eligibility: participants had to (1) identify as Francophone, Francophile, or "*d'expression française*"; (2) live in Ontario; and (3) be 18 years of age or older.

The first criterion warrants explanation, as it reflects a deliberate choice to adopt an inclusive definition of the francophone population. "Francophone" refers to individuals who have French as either their mother tongue or first official language spoken. "Francophile" includes individuals who identify with the francophone community but whose linguistic background is other than French—typically seen in relation to French-English bilingualism when one's first language is English but one chooses to identify as Francophone. The option "*d'expression française*" was included to ensure that second-language speakers who may not know of the term Francophile, or who do not feel confident enough in their French language skills or background to call themselves Francophone, would nonetheless feel eligible to participate. This inclusive approach ensured that responses came from individuals who choose to live mostly or partly in French and who have some knowledge of the institutions and services available in French in their community and region.

Recruitment Strategy

Recruitment for the survey ran from March 2023 until October 2024. This extended recruitment period reflected the challenges encountered in reaching potential participants. The

survey was launched in the period following the COVID-19 pandemic, when many individuals and organizations were experiencing fatigue and reduced capacity for engagement. The survey's length—which took some participants closer to 40 minutes to an hour to complete—may also have deterred participation. More broadly, reaching Francophones across the province proved difficult, as many community organizations had limited capacity to assist with recruitment efforts during this period.

To address these challenges, multiple recruitment strategies were employed. The research team contacted a wide range of francophone and non-francophone community organizations and institutions across the province, including public libraries, immigration agencies such as settlement organizations and Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs), and non-profit and francophone organizations. The Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) supported recruitment by featuring the survey in their newsletter. Recruitment was also conducted through personal networks and social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook.

A key partnership in the recruitment process was the collaboration with the three Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs) serving Ontario's regions, which facilitated outreach to francophone immigrant populations across the province. In Central-Southwestern Ontario, the RIF (Réseau en immigration francophone du Centre-Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario) implemented a prize draw offering gift cards to encourage participation, a strategy that was developed in consultation with the research team and conducted in accordance with ethics approval. The other two RIFs (Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario et Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone de l'Est de l'Ontario) were also essential to helping attract immigrant participants for the survey.

Since the aim was to recruit individuals living in each region of Ontario—Northern, Southwestern-Central, and Eastern—and to achieve a diverse sample from rural and urban areas of varying sizes, recruitment efforts encompassed the entirety of the province. Initially, recruitment proceeded at a broad, province-wide scale to attract as many participants as possible. As trends in participation emerged over time, more targeted recruitment was undertaken to ensure adequate sample sizes for each of the three regions, as well as sufficient

participants residing in Ottawa and Toronto to enable analysis of the province's two major metropolitan areas.

3.5 Sample Size and Characteristics

The overall sample size for this study is $N = 1584$. Of this total, $N = 912$ participants completed the entire survey, representing a completion rate of 57.6%. However, the survey was configured to autosave after every question, allowing partially completed responses to be retained for analysis. Since this thesis draws only from the first two sections of the survey, a larger portion of the dataset was available for analysis. By the final service question in section two, $N = 1009$ participants had responded, representing a completion rate of approximately 63.7% for the sections used in this study.

This sample size was selected following McLafferty's (2016) guidance that when survey data are used to examine population proportions, "improvements in precision diminish at sample sizes of 200-300" (p. 138). The target was to achieve approximately 300 participants from each of the three regions of Ontario (Northern, Southwestern-Central, and Eastern), with additional respondents to account for instances where participants skipped questions, thereby maintaining analytical precision.

For analysis, participants were classified into sub-groups based on their region of residence in the province and their sociodemographic characteristics (see Table 2), including their migration status as Ontario-born, domestic migrants, or international immigrants. This classification enabled the comparative analysis of trends and patterns across regions and across groups that is central to this study's objectives.

3.6 Geographic Classification

A central objective of this study is to compare francophone experiences of service access across different regions of Ontario. To enable this analysis, participants were classified into geographic regions using a two-step verification process.

Participants were initially classified into three broad regions—Eastern, Northern, and Central-Southwestern Ontario—based on their self-identification in response to a survey question asking which region they lived in. This self-identification was then verified using the forward sortation area (FSA) that participants provided. Where the self-identified region did not match the FSA, the region was reassigned to correspond with the FSA. This verification followed Canada Post’s guidelines for regional FSA classification: FSAs beginning with K were classified as Eastern Ontario; FSAs beginning with P were classified as Northern Ontario; and FSAs beginning with N (Southern Ontario), L (Central Ontario), or M (Metropolitan Toronto) were classified as Central-Southwestern Ontario (Canada Post, 2022). For participants who did not provide an FSA or who provided an FSA from outside of Ontario, the self-identified region was retained.

This three-region framework reflects the distinct francophone community profiles documented in Chapter 2. Eastern Ontario includes historically established francophone communities with relatively high institutional completeness, anchored by the Ottawa-Gatineau metropolitan area (Gilbert et al., 2017; Labossière, 2023; Miville, 2020). Northern Ontario encompasses communities with deep historical roots tied to resource industries, facing particular challenges related to geographic dispersion and an aging population. Central-Southwestern Ontario, including the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), is characterized by more recent francophone population growth driven substantially by immigration, with comparatively lower levels of institutional completeness despite large absolute numbers of francophones.

To enable finer-grained analysis where sample sizes permitted, sub-regional classifications were also established using FSAs. Toronto was identified using all FSAs beginning with M, which correspond exclusively to the City of Toronto. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was defined to include Toronto participants plus those whose FSAs corresponded to municipalities listed as part of the GTA on the City of Toronto’s website (City of Toronto, n.d.). The remainder of Central-Southwestern Ontario—participants with FSAs not associated with the GTA—formed a separate sub-regional category. Ottawa was isolated from the broader Eastern Ontario region using the 41 FSAs associated with the city.

These geographic classifications enable the multilevel analysis outlined in the research questions: provincial-level patterns, comparisons across the three broad regions, and where

sample sizes are sufficient, examination of sub-regional dynamics in Ontario's two largest francophone metropolitan centres.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This research received ethics approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board in August 2022 (see Appendices). Several measures were implemented to protect participants and ensure ethical data collection.

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary. Participants could choose to stop completing the survey at any point or to skip any question without penalty. All survey data were collected anonymously; no personally identifying information was requested beyond the forward sortation area used to determine region of residence. Participants were informed of these conditions before beginning the survey. In Central-Southwestern Ontario, a prize draw offering gift cards was used to encourage participation; this incentive was implemented in accordance with the approved ethics protocol.

Data security was maintained throughout the research process. Survey responses were stored on secure SurveyMonkey servers located in Canada and were accessible only through password-protected accounts through the University of Ottawa and on password-protected computers. Access to the data was restricted to members of the research team.

3.8 Analytical Approach

The analysis of survey data proceeded through descriptive analysis conducted using Excel. Data were coded according to a pre-established codebook to facilitate systematic analysis and comparison. The analytical strategy was designed to address each of the study's research questions. For the first research question, concerning geographic variation in service access patterns, analysis began at the provincial level to establish overall patterns, then disaggregated the data by region (Northern, Eastern, Central-Southwestern) and, where sample sizes permitted, by sub-region (Ottawa, Toronto, GTA, Central-Southwestern outside the GTA). This

multi-scalar approach enables identification of both broad regional differences and more localized patterns within regions.

For the second research question, concerning the role of migration status, participants were compared across three categories: Ontario-born, domestic migrants from other Canadian provinces, and international immigrants. These comparisons were conducted both at the provincial level and within regions, to examine whether migration status shapes service access differently depending on regional context.

The third research question addresses awareness of French-language service options among Francophones who access services in English. To address this question, analysis focused specifically on respondents who reported accessing a given service in English only, examining their responses regarding whether they were aware that the service was available in French.

The fourth research question examines the relationship between perceived importance of French-language services and actual usage patterns. This was addressed through cross-tabulation of respondents' ratings of how important it was to them to access a given service in French with their reported language of service use.

For each of the five services examined in this thesis, three crosstabulations were prepared: one for the language used when accessing the service, one for the knowledge gaps reported by participants who accessed the service only in English, and one for the perceived importance of having access to the service in French. These crosstabulations were generated for the provincial sample and then repeated for each region and relevant sub-group. From this analysis, key sociodemographic characteristics were identified based on their actual or theoretical potential to factor into participants' service access decisions.

The selection of sociodemographic variables for sustained analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 followed an exploratory process. Cross-tabulations were initially generated for all sociodemographic characteristics collected in the survey (see Table 3.1), including household income, employment status, age, gender, and education, in addition to migration status and region. However, not all variables produced analytically meaningful results. In several cases, the distribution of respondents across categories did not permit reliable comparisons — for

instance, when cell sizes were too small to support interpretation. In other cases, cross-tabulation revealed minimal variation across categories, with patterns that were largely uniform regardless of the characteristic examined. The variables retained for detailed analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 — including housing tenure, English proficiency, and household size — were those that either revealed notable differences in patterns of service access or had clear theoretical relevance to the services under examination. Housing tenure, for example, was retained because of its relevance to participants' interactions with government services at all three levels: homeownership entails direct engagement with municipal services such as property taxes, while housing status more broadly may reflect stability of residence and the development of local networks that facilitate knowledge of available services. These rationales are discussed further in the relevant chapters.

3.9 Sociodemographic Profile of Survey Participants

To provide context for the findings examined in Chapters 4 and 5, this section presents the sociodemographic profiles of the survey participants. These profiles serve two purposes: they demonstrate the superdiverse character of Ontario's francophone population, and they introduce variables that shape participants' experiences of accessing government, education, and healthcare services. Key sociodemographic characteristics have been selected for the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5; however, those characteristics will be presented at the beginning of each of the chapters.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of superdiversity draws attention to the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity that characterize contemporary populations. Ontario's francophone population exemplifies this complexity. Francophones vary not only by migration status—whether Canadian-born or immigrant—but also by region of residence, length of time in Canada, immigration pathway, household composition, and proficiency in English. These intersecting characteristics shape how individuals navigate access to French-language services in different ways. The profiles below illustrate this diversity across the survey sample.

Regional Distribution and Migration Status

Table 3.3 presents the distribution of participants across Ontario's three main regions, disaggregated by migration status. It should be noted that the total number of individuals in the sample is equal to N = 1397 in Table 3.3 and not the given total of participants noted in section 3.5 (N = 1584), as some participants who finished the survey did not give a region of residence or FSA and were therefore only counted in analyses at the provincial scale. Regional sample percentages do not total to 100% due to some participants identifying either their FSA or region of residence but not identifying their migrant status.

Table 3.3. Distribution of survey participants by region of residence and migration status (N = 1397).

Region	Total (N=1397)	% of Complete Sample	Ontario- born (N=415)	% of Regional Sample	Domestic migrant (N=228)	% of Regional Sample	Immigrant (N=730)	% of Regional Sample
Eastern Ontario	591	42.3%	140	23.7%	97	16.4%	339	57.4%
Central- Southwestern Ontario	582	41.7%	131	22.5%	99	17.0%	343	58.9%
Northern Ontario	224	16.0%	144	64.3%	32	14.3%	48	21.4%
Total (all regions)	1397	100%	415	29.7%	228	16.3%	730	52.3%

The total sample is relatively evenly divided between Eastern Ontario and Central-Southwestern Ontario, with a smaller proportion from Northern Ontario. The smaller sample size in Northern Ontario reflects both the recruitment strategy and the demographic reality of the region: francophones in Northern Ontario are fewer in absolute numbers and dispersed across a vast geographic area, making recruitment more challenging.

The composition of these regional populations differs markedly by migration status. Ontario-born participants are distributed fairly evenly across the three regions (approximately one-third in each), while domestic migrants are much more concentrated in Central-

Southwestern Ontario than the other two regions (Table 3.3). Eastern and Northern Ontario's domestic migrant samples are small, with less than 100 domestic migrants each; however, the proportion of the population that these domestic migrants encompass in each of their regions is drastically different due to Northern Ontario's low sample size.

Immigrant participants are concentrated in Eastern and Central-Southwestern Ontario, with very few (N = 48) residing in Northern Ontario (Table 3.3). Proportionally, immigrants represent a larger share of participants in Eastern Ontario (57.4%) and Central-Southwestern Ontario (58.9%) than in Northern Ontario (21.4%). This distribution partly reflects broader patterns of francophone immigrant settlement in the province, with newcomers tending to settle in larger urban centres, particularly Ottawa and Toronto. It also reflects the recruitment strategy, which benefited from the support of the Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs) in Eastern and Central-Southwestern Ontario. Given the small number of immigrant participants in Northern Ontario, comparisons involving this group should be interpreted with caution and are used primarily for descriptive purposes.

Immigration Pathways and Length of Residence

Among the 732 immigrant participants, for those who specified their immigration category, the majority entered Canada through an economic immigration pathway (Figure 3.1). Smaller numbers arrived through family reunification, as refugees or asylum seekers, or as international students. This pattern was consistent across all three regions, with economic immigration being the most prominent category in Eastern, Central-Southwestern, and Northern Ontario alike. It should be noted, however, that a substantial number of participants did not respond to this question, so the full picture of immigration pathways in the sample remains incomplete.

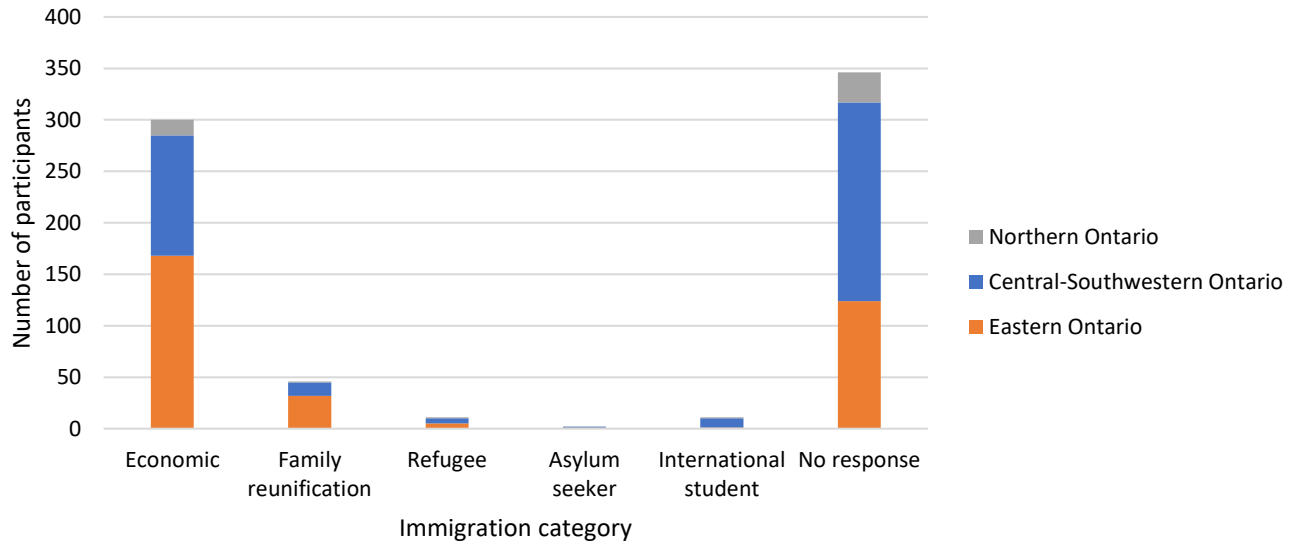


Figure 3.1. Immigration category of immigrant participants by region of residence (N = 751)

Among participants who immigrated through economic pathways and specified their category, the majority arrived through the skilled worker program (Figure 3.2). This was the case across all three regions. Smaller numbers used the Provincial Nominee Program, the Canadian Experience Class, business immigration programs, or temporary skilled worker pathways. This distribution reflects the broader patterns of francophone economic immigration to Canada, where skilled workers constitute the largest category of admissions.

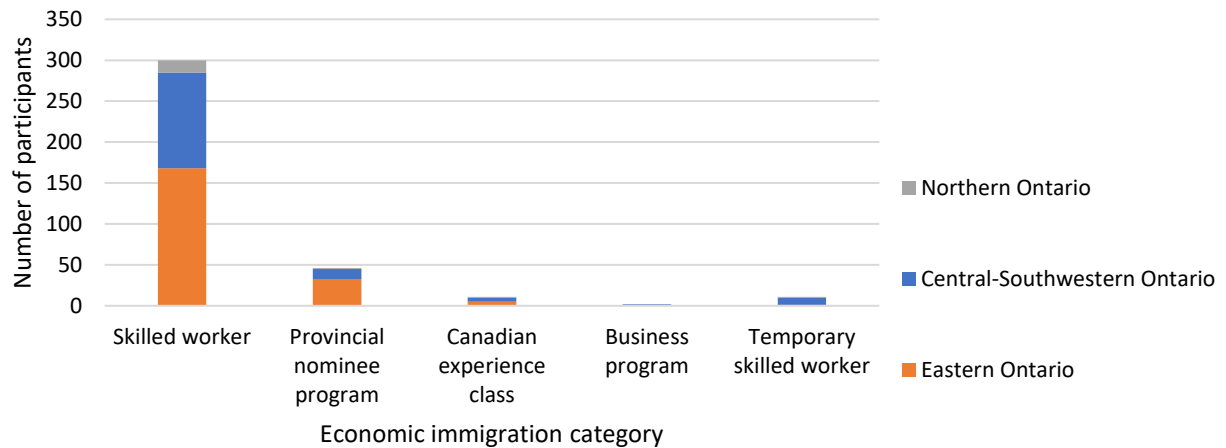


Figure 3.2. Economic immigration category among participants who immigrated via economic pathways, by region of residence (N = 374).

The length of time that immigrant participants have lived in Canada varies across the sample, though recent arrivals are particularly well represented (Figure 3.3). The largest single group comprises participants who have been in Canada for less than two years. When combined with those who have been in Canada for two to five years, recent and relatively recent arrivals constitute a substantial portion of the immigrant sample. Fewer participants fall into the five-to-ten-year category, while those who have lived in Canada for ten years or more form another sizeable group.

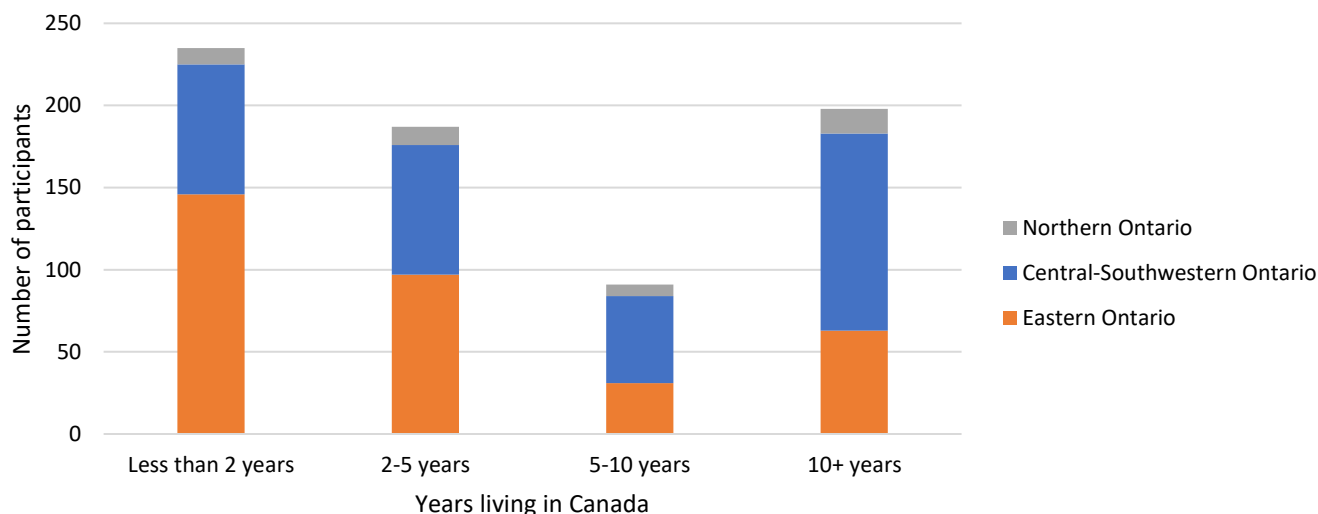


Figure 3.3. Length of residence in Canada among immigrant participants by region (N = 721).

Some regional variation is evident in these patterns. Eastern Ontario has a higher concentration of recent arrivals, particularly those who have been in Canada for less than two years. This likely reflects the recruitment strategy, as a contact at the RIF in Eastern Ontario was able to promote the survey among newcomers in Hawkesbury, contributing over 25 participants. In contrast, Central-Southwestern Ontario has a somewhat higher proportion of longer-term residents who have been in Canada for ten years or more.

Place of Birth among Canadian-Born Participants

The Canadian-born participants in the survey reflect the internal diversity of Ontario's francophone population. As Figure 3.4 shows, approximately two-thirds (417 individuals) of Canadian-born participants were born in Ontario, while one-third (229 individuals) were born elsewhere in Canada. This distribution was relatively consistent across regions, with all three regions—Northern, Eastern, and Central-Southwestern Ontario—including both Ontario-born participants and those who migrated from other provinces. However, there are fewer participants born outside of Ontario who live in Northern Ontario: 139 participants who were born in Ontario versus 30 participants who were not born in Ontario (Figure 3.4).

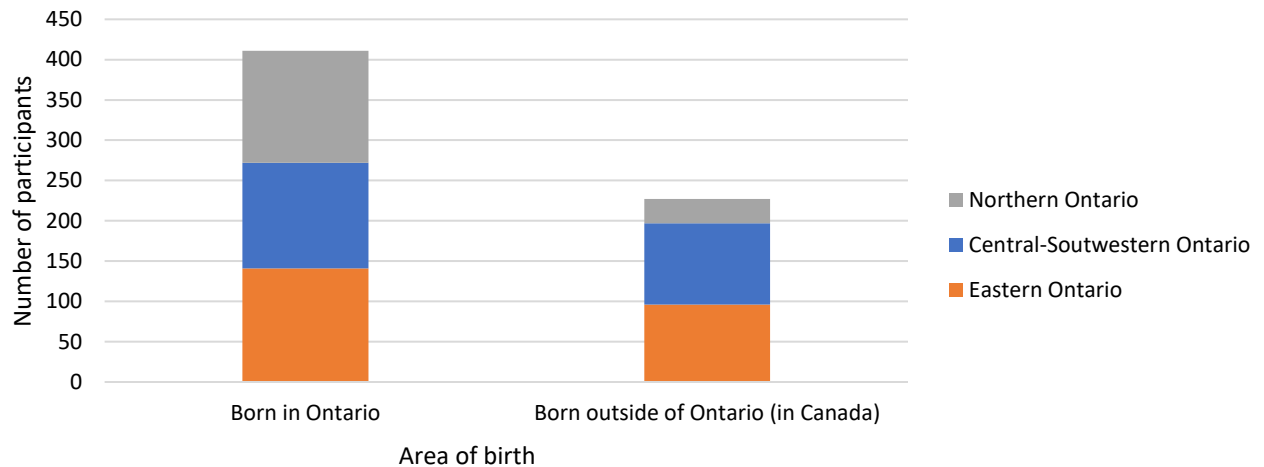


Figure 3.4. Canadian-born participants by region of residence and province of birth (Ontario vs. other provinces) (N = 638).

Among those born outside Ontario, the vast majority originated from Quebec (Figure 3.5). All other provinces and territories except Nunavut, Yukon, and Prince Edward Island were represented by at least one participant, reflecting the diverse origins of interprovincial migrants to Ontario's francophone communities.

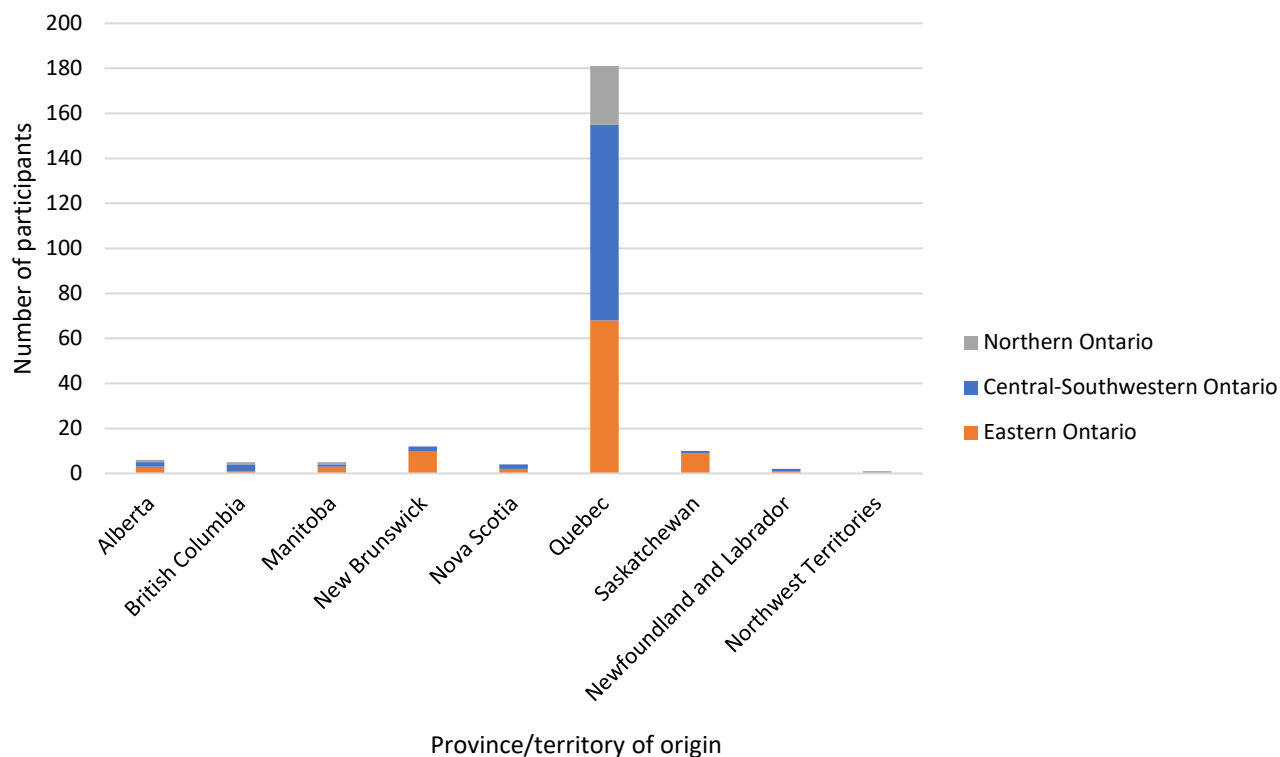


Figure 3.5. Province or territory of origin of domestic migrants, by region of residence (N = 226).

This pattern of interprovincial migration—particularly from Quebec—is significant for understanding service access. As discussed in Chapter 2, domestic migrants from other Canadian provinces may arrive with different expectations about French-language service availability, shaped by their experiences in their province of origin. Those from Quebec, in particular, may encounter Ontario's asymmetrical bilingualism as an unexpected adjustment.

Visible Minority Status

Variations in sociodemographic characteristics become apparent when comparing between immigrant and Canadian-born participants. Beginning with visible minority status in Figures 3.6-3.8, one can see that most immigrant participants identify as being part of a visible minority, while most Canadian-born participants do not identify as being part of a visible minority group.

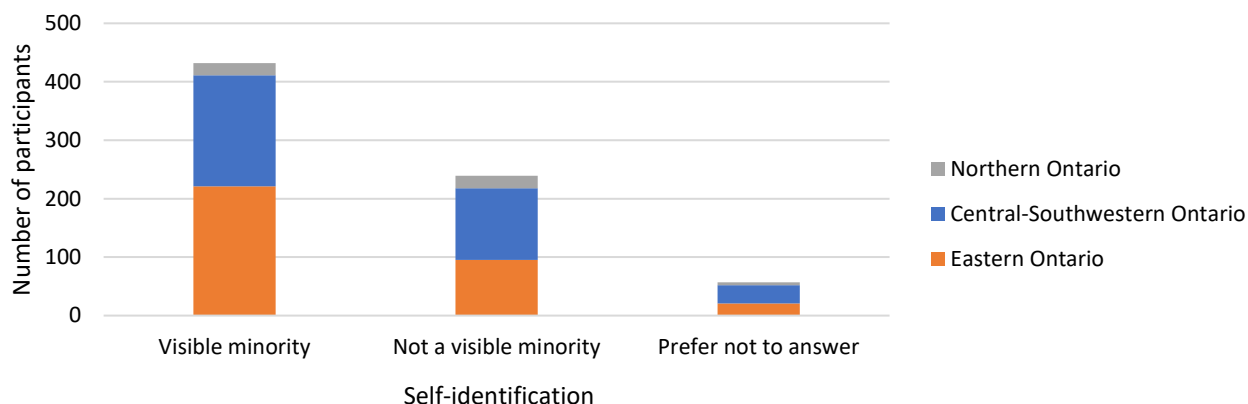


Figure 3.6. Self-identification by immigrant participants as to whether or not they are part of a visible minority group, by region of residence (N = 728).

Of immigrant participants, 432 individuals identified themselves as being part of a visible minority group, while 239 individuals identified themselves as not being part of one of these groups (Figure 3.6). Meanwhile, for Canadian-born participants across both Ontario-born and domestic migrant groups, only 73 individuals identified themselves as being part of a visible minority group and 554 Canadian-born individuals identified themselves as not being part of a visible minority group (Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

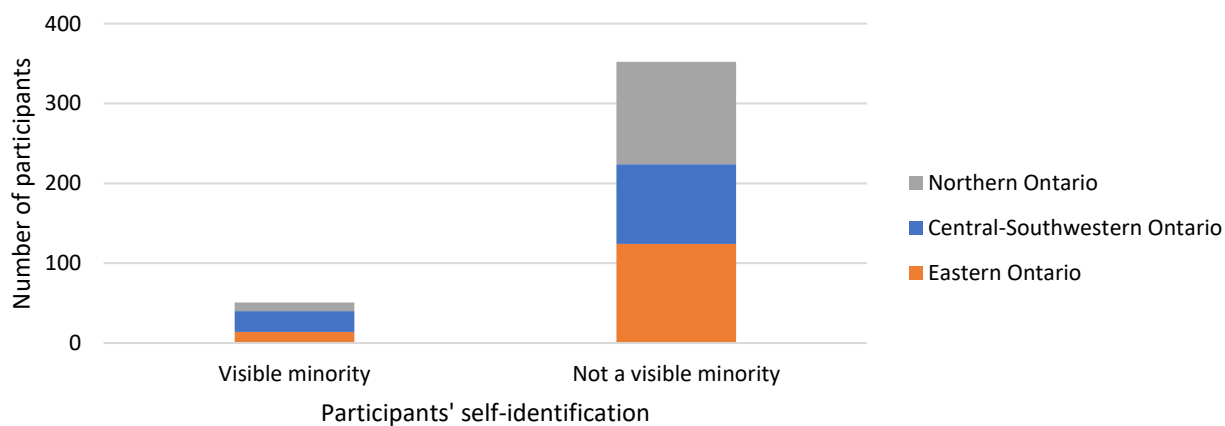


Figure 3.7. Self-identification by Ontario-born participants as to whether or not they are part of a visible minority group, by region of residence (N = 413).

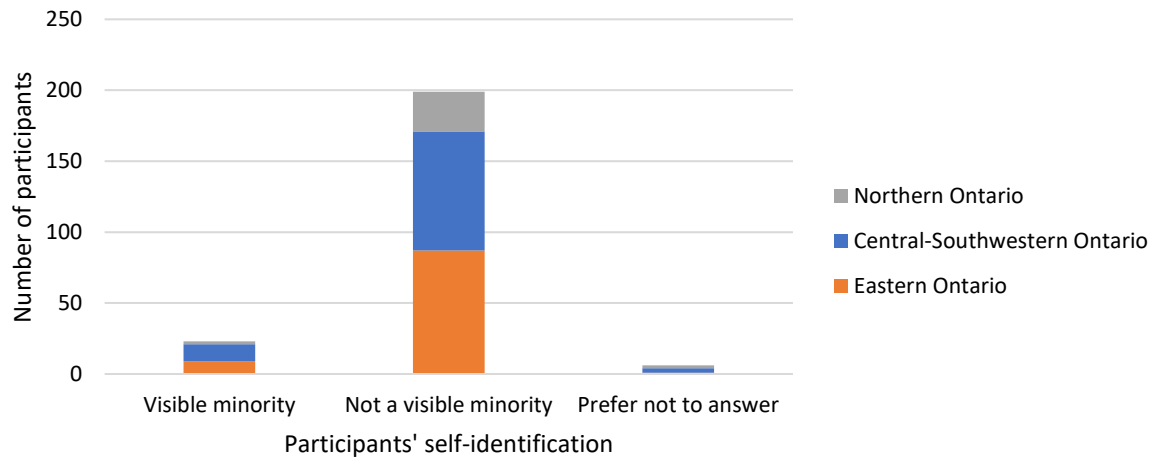


Figure 3.8. Self-identification by domestic migrant participants as to whether or not they are part of a visible minority group, by region of residence (N = 223).

Immigrant participants were a much more diverse group in terms of visible minority status, while Canadian-born participants, regardless of being from Ontario or not, were more homogenous.

Age

The sample was also varied by age trends between immigrants and Canadian-born participants. The immigrant population, shown in Figure 3.9, skewed towards being younger (25-44 years of age); while the Canadian-born population of the sample, shown in Figures 3.10 and 3.11, is more spread out amongst age categories.

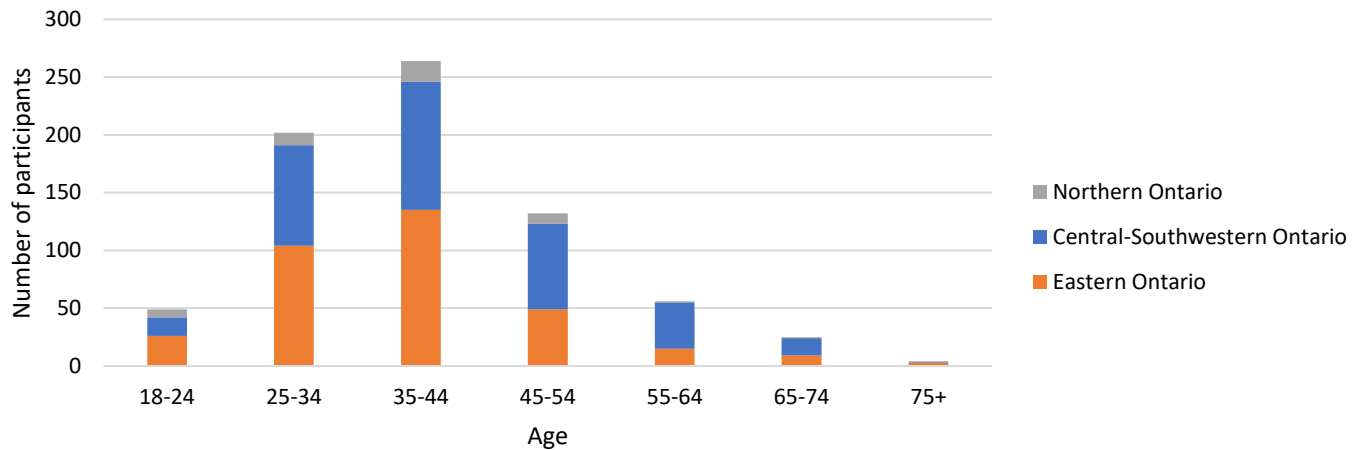


Figure 3.9. Age of immigrant participants, by region of residence (N = 728).

This skewing may be, in part, due to the way that participants were recruited. As snowball-type sampling was used, and myself and some of the other research assistants who helped to recruit fall within this 18-44 years-of-age range, our networks from which we recruited may have skewed to the younger side and impacted the sample more than expected. However, this is likely also due to the type of immigrants who responded to the survey. As seen in Figure 3.1, most immigrant participants came to Canada through economic immigration pathways, which would make most participants of working age if they had immigrated recently (which, looking at Figure 3.3, most have within the last 10 years).

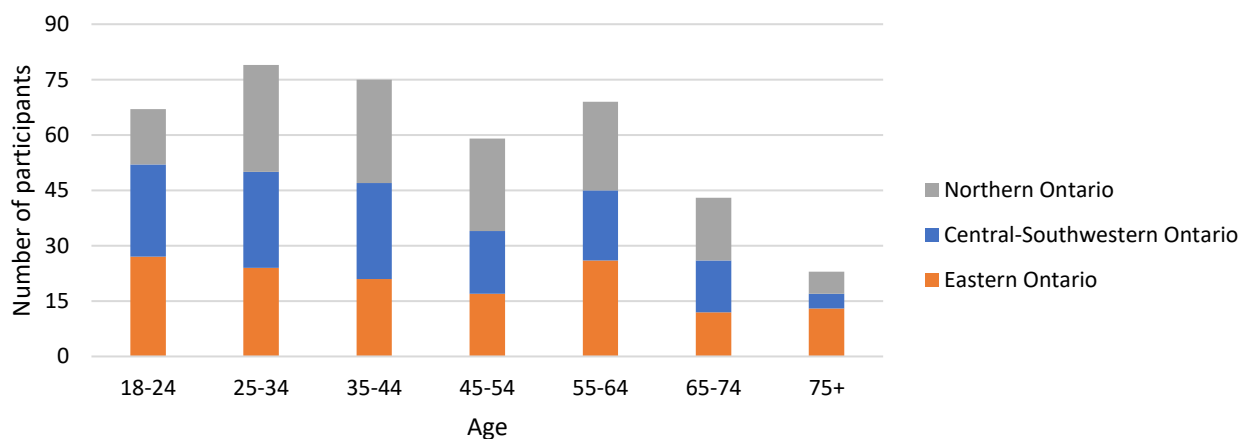


Figure 3.10. Age of Ontario-born participants, by region of residence (N = 415).

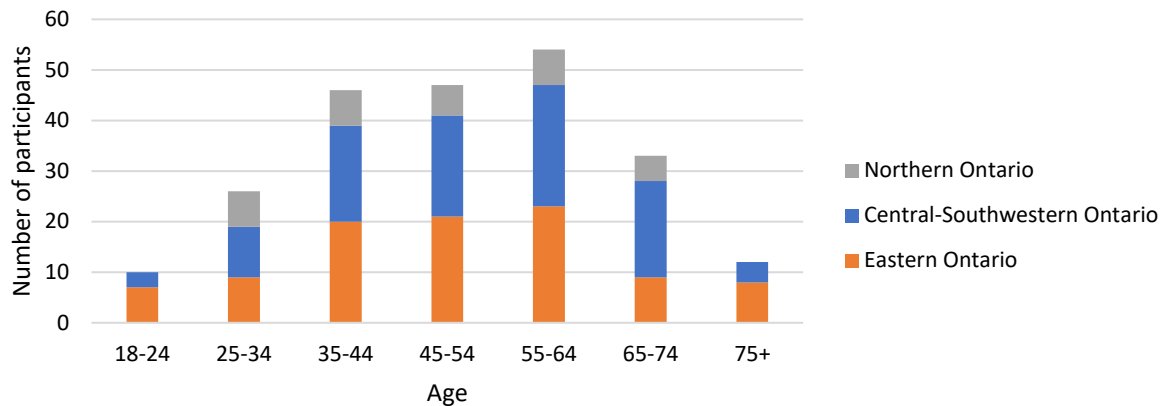


Figure 3.11. Age of domestic migrant participants, by region of residence (N = 228).

By comparison, both Canadian-born samples showed different demographic patterns (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). The number of Ontario-born participants in each age category tends to drop somewhat after age 44, whereas the number of domestic migrant participants is at its highest in the age 55-64 category. Ontario-born youth and young adult (ages 18-34) are more numerous than domestic migrants in the same age groups (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). The age distribution of domestic migrants likely reflects heterogeneous migration trajectories. Younger domestic migrants may include individuals who moved to Ontario more recently for postsecondary education or early-career employment, while older cohorts may comprise individuals who relocated earlier in adulthood, often in connection with longer-term economic opportunities or career advancement, and have since aged in place. Regardless of whether they were born in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada, Canadian-born respondents are more represented among older adults than immigrant participants (Figures 3.9-3.11).

Education

Although there are differences between the immigrant and Canadian-born samples, some sociodemographic characteristics presented little overall variation between the two groups. Education was one of those sociodemographic characteristics. Among both immigrants (Figure 3.12) and Canadian-born participants (Figures 3.13 and 3.14), the majority reported

having completed an undergraduate or graduate degree: 601 immigrant participants and 482 Canadian-born participants.

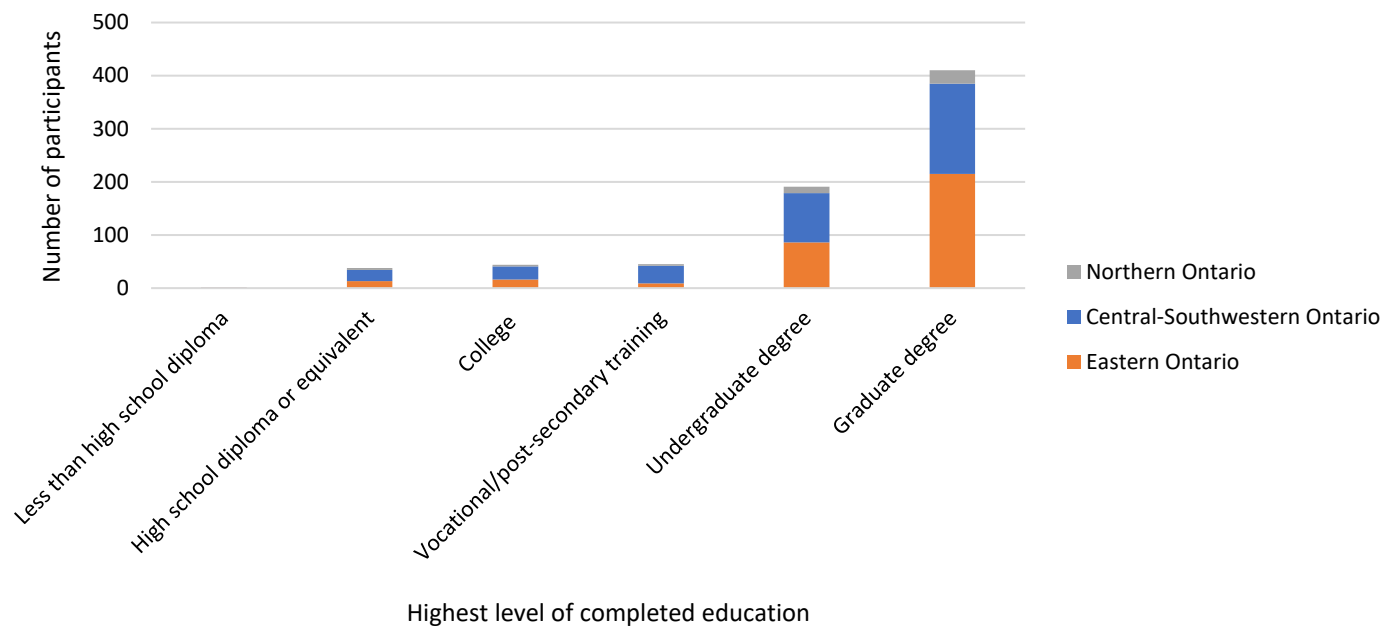


Figure 3.12. Highest level of completed education of immigrant participants, by region of residence (N = 730).

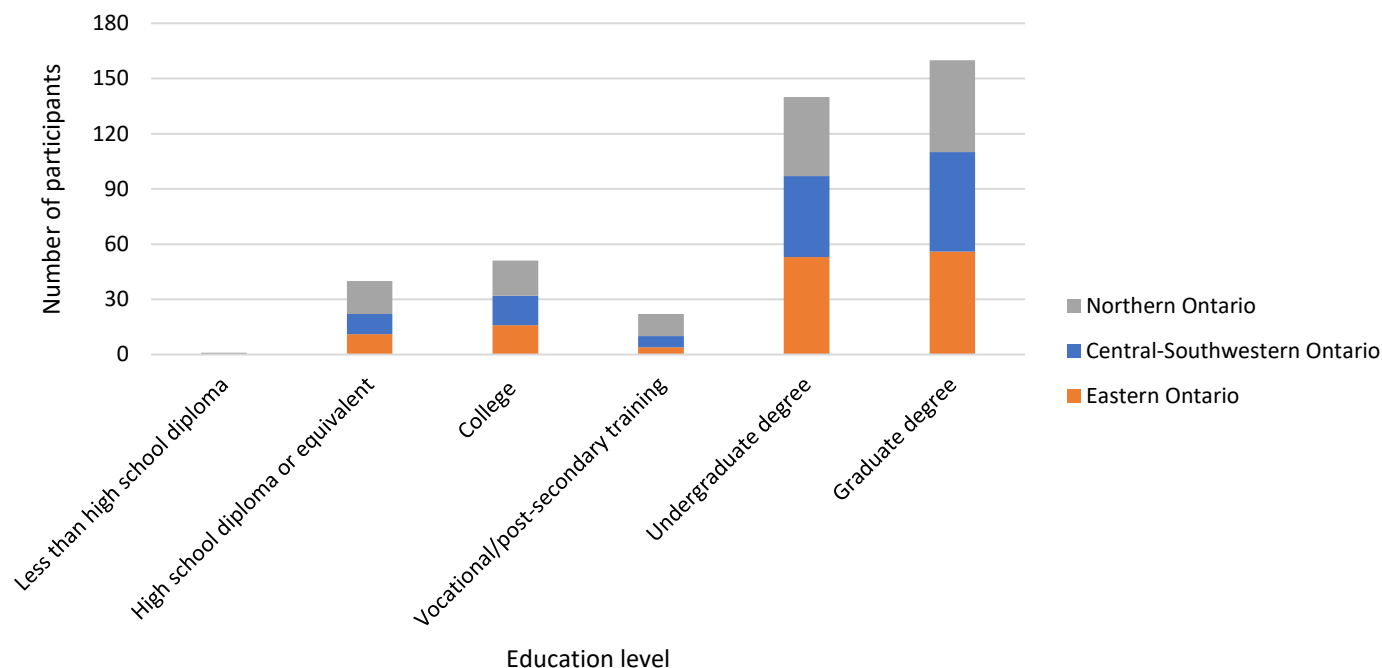


Figure 3.13. Highest level of completed education of Ontario-born participants, by region of residence (N = 415).

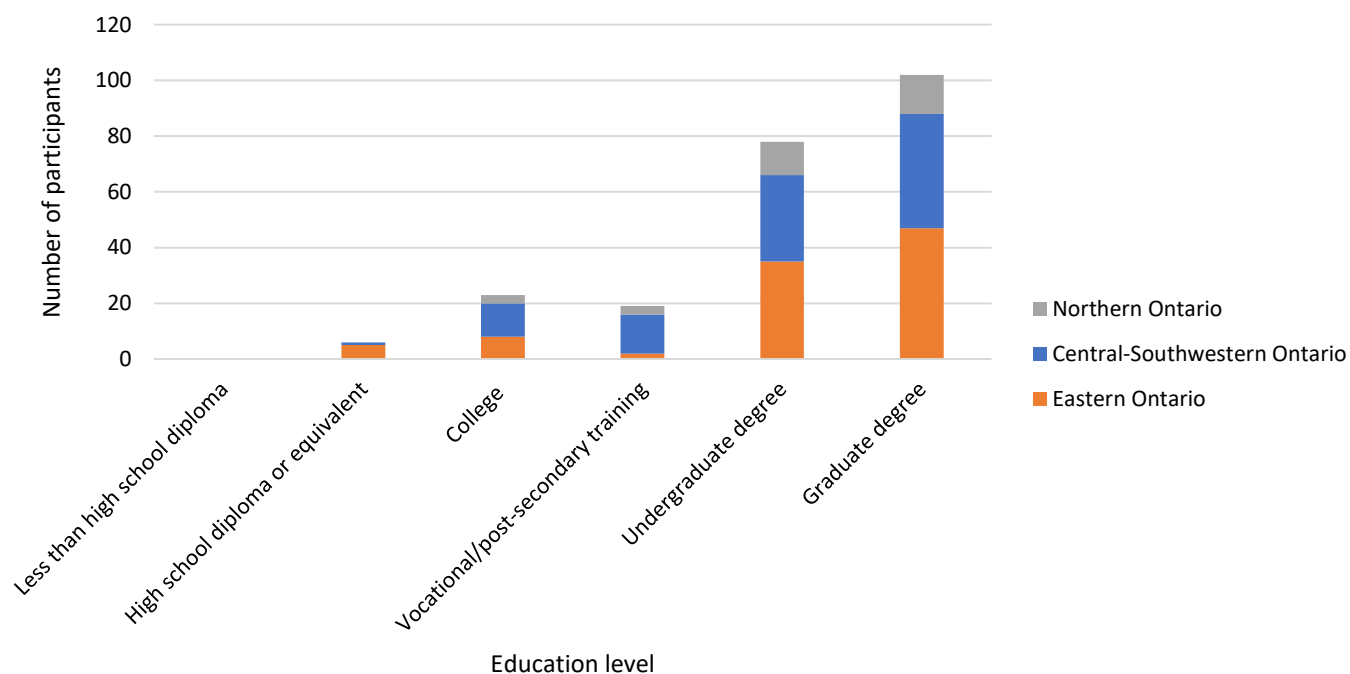


Figure 3.14. Highest level of completed education of domestic migrant participants, by region of residence (N = 228).

As shown in Figures 3.12-3.14, the highest level of education reported by participants was a graduate degree. This pattern is likely influenced by the recruitment methods: many of those involved in recruiting participants for the study were based in academia and post-secondary institutions and maintained professional networks with other Francophones working in educational settings across Ontario. These contacts were approached to help disseminate the survey within their networks, which are probably disproportionately composed of highly educated individuals. The high levels of educational attainment among immigrant participants may also reflect Canada's immigration selection policies, which prioritize highly educated applicants and thus contribute to the overrepresentation of individuals with postsecondary credentials among recent immigrants. Despite some variations across groups, the overall trend of high education levels is evident throughout the sample, including among Ontario-born, domestic migrant, and immigrant participants.

Annual Household Income

Annual household income was another sociodemographic variable that showed similar trends between all three participant groups, but ultimately still showed sharper differences between Canadian-born participants and immigrant participants than between Ontario-born participants and domestic migrants. Among immigrant participants, a high proportion stated that their annual household income was \$80,000 or more, similarly to Canadian-born participants; however, there was more variety in other household income categories. Nearly 100 immigrant participants stated that their annual household income was less than \$10,000 (N=98), while other income categories had between 25 and 50 participants stating that their annual household income fell into that category (Figure 3.15). These observations were consistent across the three regions.

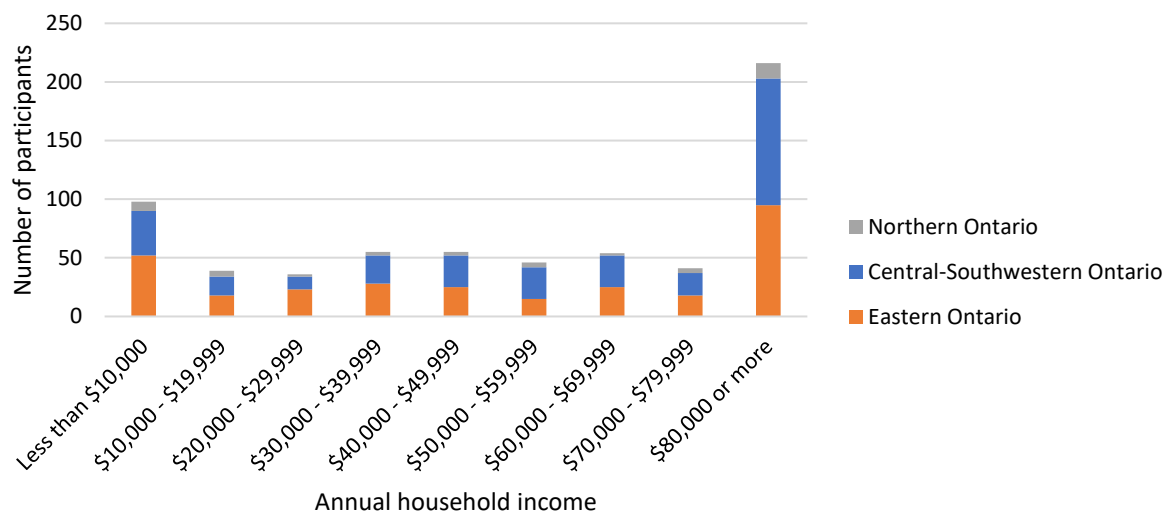


Figure 3.15. Annual household income of immigrant participants, by region of residence (N = 732).

By comparison, the income variations between Ontario-born and domestic migrant participants are minimal. The majority of Canadian-born participants have an annual household income of \$80,000 or more (Figures 3.16 and 3.17).

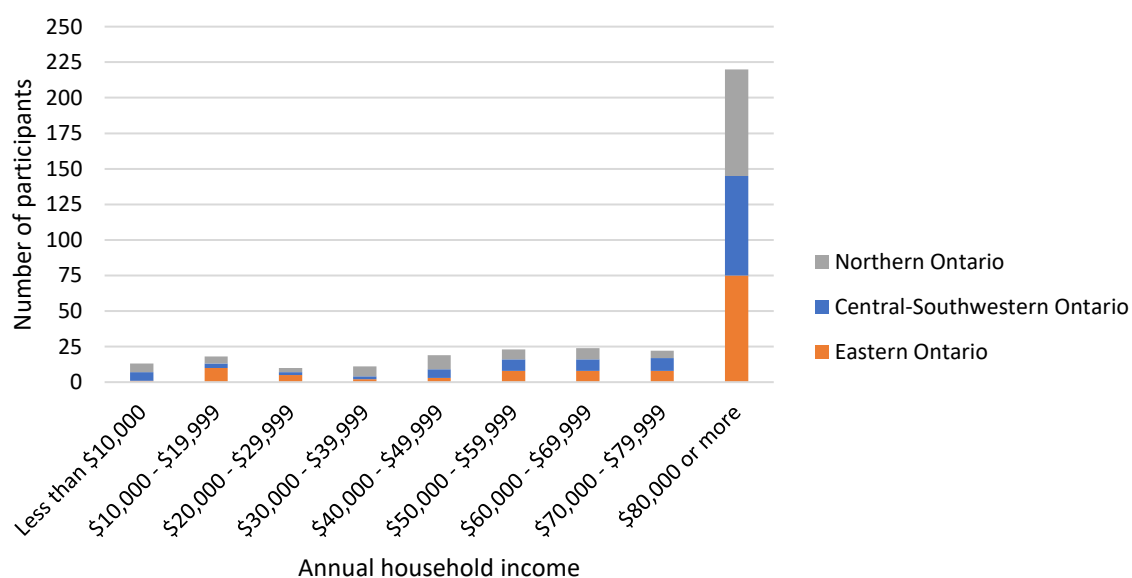


Figure 3.16. Annual household income of Ontario-born participants, by region of residence (N = 415).

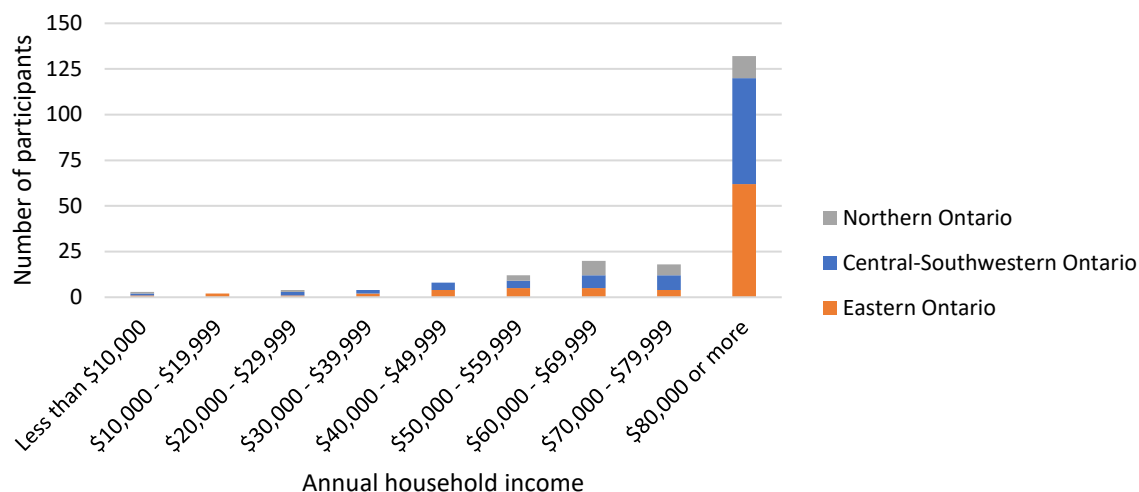


Figure 3.17. Annual household income of domestic migrant participants, by region of residence (N = 228).

Excluding the category of \$80,000 or more, all other annual household income categories for both groups of Canadian-born participants had less than 25 participants stating that they fell into that income category (Figures 3.16 and 3.17). The number of participants in each category tended to rise as the amount of annual household income went up, with the category of less than \$10,000 being one of the least selected options by Canadian-born participants. Immigrant participants show much greater variation in their annual household income than either Ontario-born or domestic migrant participants, along with more participants who fall below the poverty line. This may mean that immigrant participants have less access to costly resources to facilitate easier service access to French-language services (i.e., owning a vehicle and being able to drive directly to services versus having to use public transit to reach them).

Employment Status

Trends in the employment status of participants varied depending on migration status, with immigrant and Canadian-born groups showing their own distinct patterns.

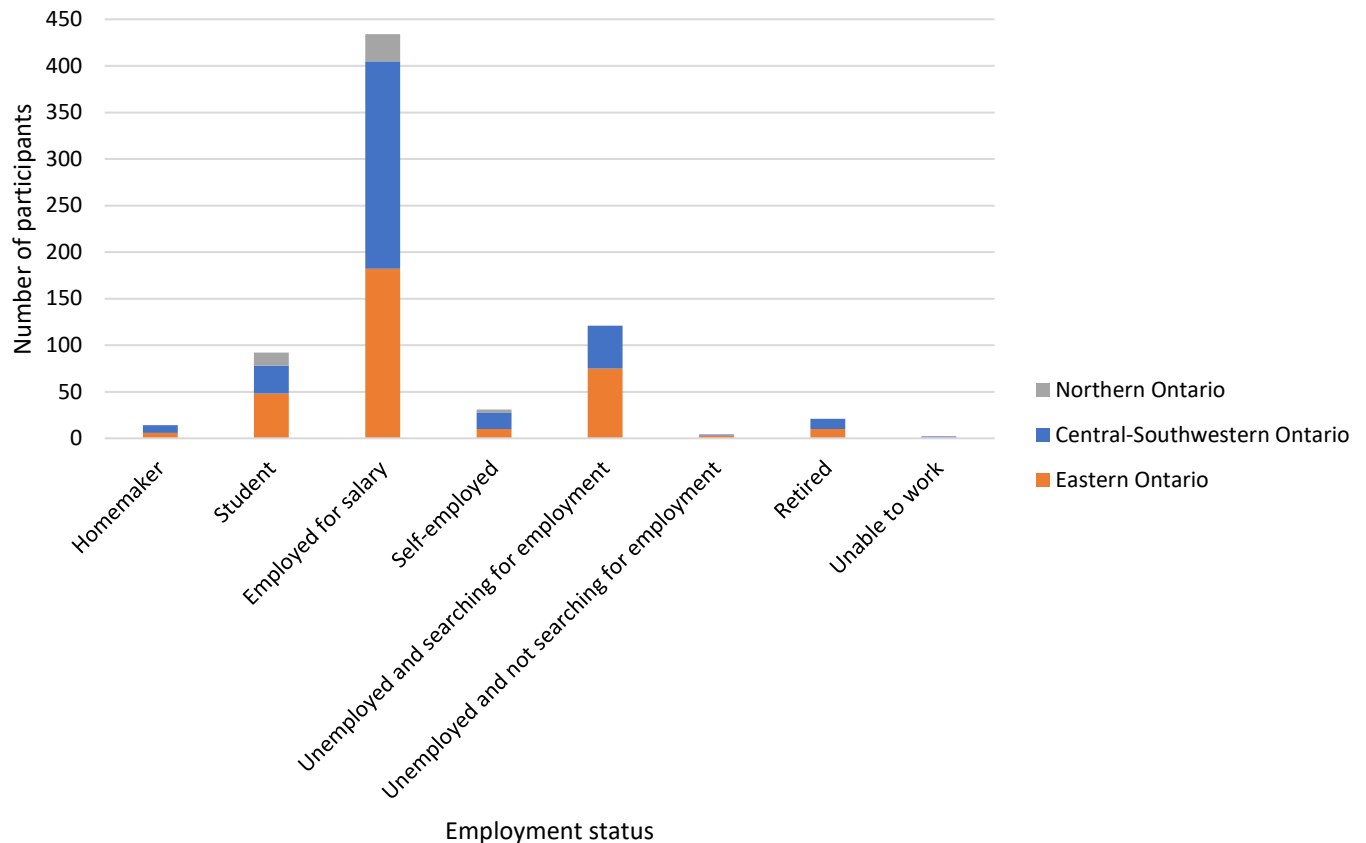


Figure 3.18. Employment status of immigrant participants, by region of residence (N = 732).

The majority of immigrant participants reported being employed for a salary (N=434), followed by those who were unemployed and looking for employment (N= 121) and those who identified as student (N= 92), which represented a much smaller proportion of respondents overall (Figure 3.18). Given that the largest proportion of participants in Figure 3.1 indicated having immigrated through an economic pathway, it is unsurprising that employment was the most frequently reported employment status among immigrant participants.

Comparatively, the highest proportion of Ontario-born participants also reported being employed for a salary (N= 217; Figure 3.19). However, the distributions diverge in the second most frequently reported employment status: unlike immigrant participants, Ontario-born participants most often reported being retired (N= 90). The two groups re-align for the third most common category, with students representing the next highest proportion among Ontario-born participants (N=53).

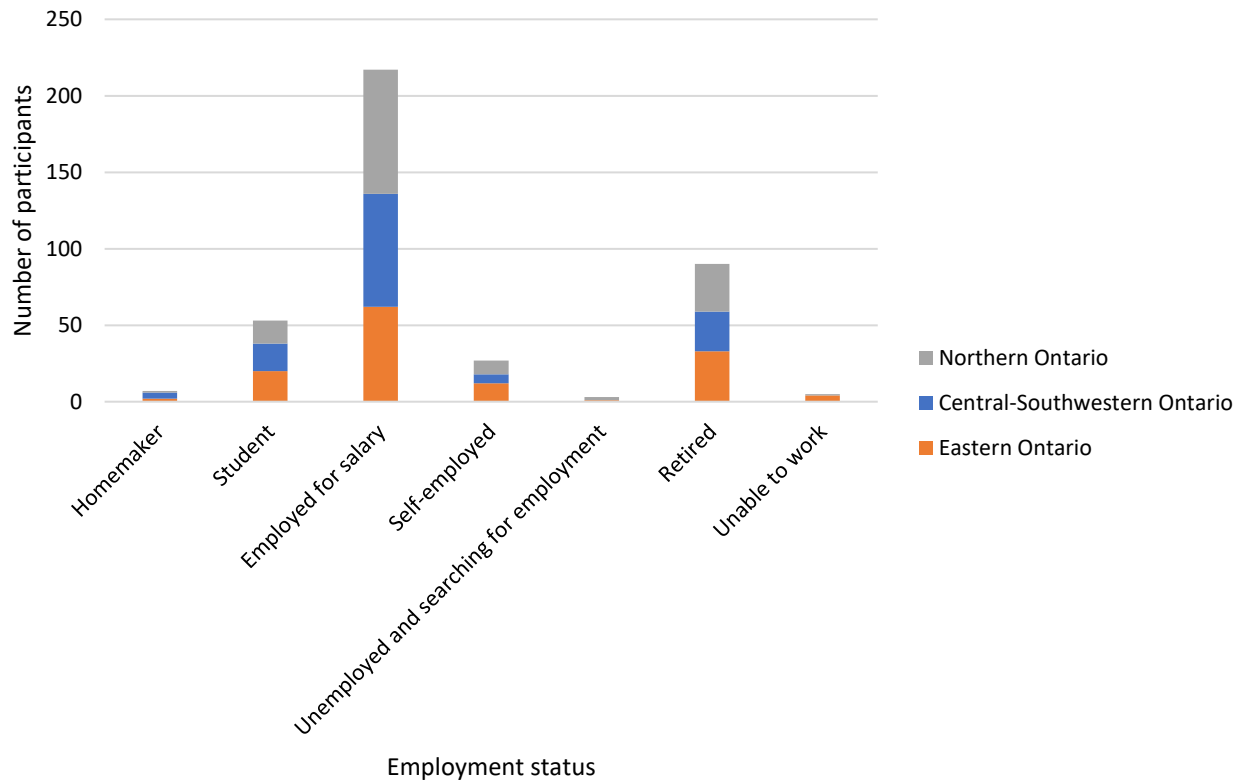


Figure 3.19. Employment status of Ontario-born participants, by region of residence (N = 415).

The trends regarding the employment statuses of domestic migrants tend to mirror those seen with Ontario-born participants. The highest proportion of domestic migrants responded being employed for a salary (N=126), followed by being retired (N=68) and being a student (N=15, Figure 3.20).

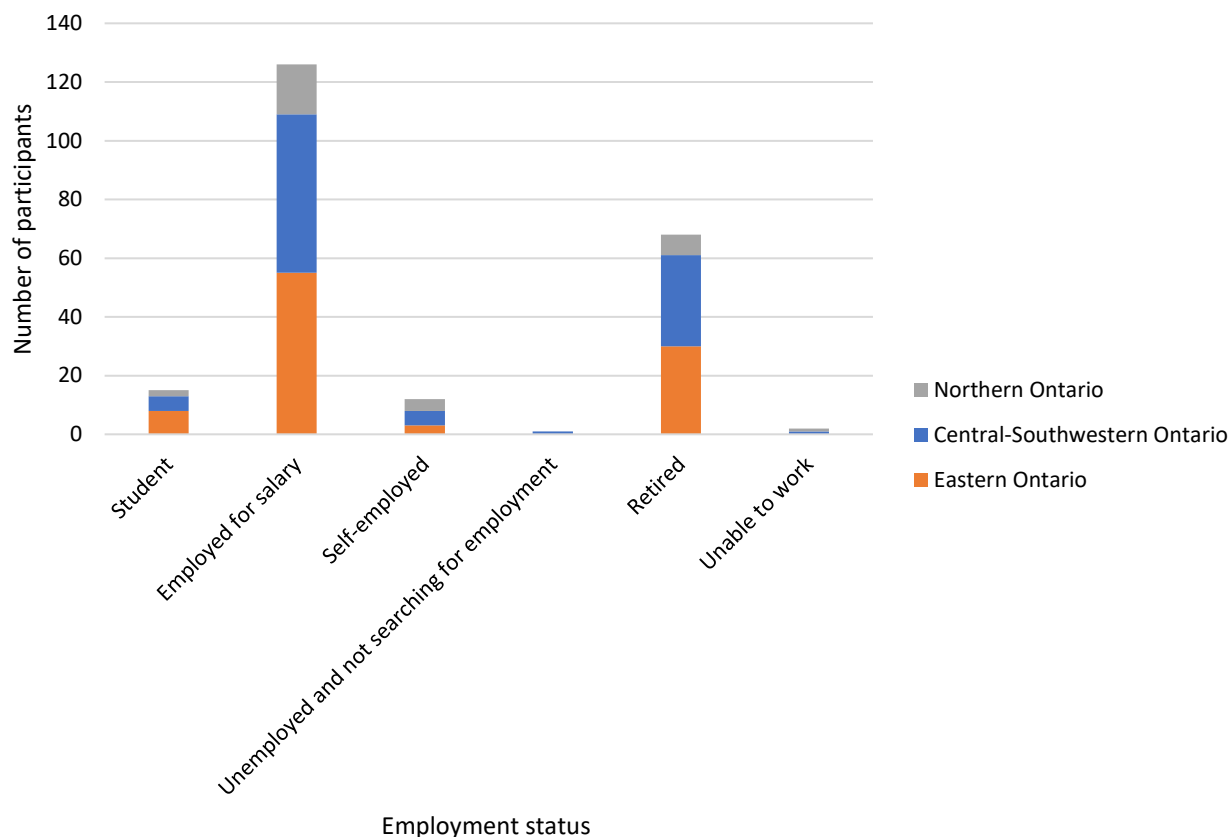


Figure 3.20. Employment status of domestic migrant participants, by region of residence (N = 228).

Overall, responses from both Ontario-born participants and domestic migrants indicate that unemployment (whether searching for work or not) (Figures 3.19 and 3.20) represents the smallest proportion of participants in both groups. This pattern contrasts sharply with that observed among immigrant participants, among whom unemployment was more prevalent (Figure 3.18). These differences may reflect variations in participants' length of residence, labour market experience, and degree of establishment in Ontario and in Canada more broadly. Immigrants, particularly those who have arrived more recently, tend to face greater barriers to labour market integration than Canadian-born individuals or more established immigrants (Hardy, 2026). Given that a substantial portion of the immigrant sample consists of recent or relatively recent immigrants (see Figure 3.3), this trend is also evident in the present study.

3.10 Methodological Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. First, a large-scale survey with primarily closed-ended questions cannot capture the finer details or specifics of the factors shaping each individual's experiences and interpretations. Participants' responses were limited to the pre-selected options included in the survey, with minimal opportunity for elaboration. As noted in section 3.1, the implication is that the analysis can document patterns—what is happening, where, and for whom—but offers limited insight into why individuals make particular choices or how they understand their experiences.

Second, the recruitment strategy relied largely on a snowball-like approach, distributing the survey through community organizations, institutions, and social networks. As a result, some sub-groups and regions may be overrepresented in the dataset while others may be underrepresented or absent. In particular, the experiences of francophones who are less involved in francophone spheres of activity and community life may not be as fully represented as those who are more actively engaged, since less-connected individuals may not have encountered the survey during recruitment. These sampling characteristics should be kept in mind when interpreting trends and patterns in the results, as the findings may not fully represent the entirety of Ontario's French-speaking population.

Third, while hosting the survey online enabled broader geographic reach across the province, the online format may have presented barriers for certain groups. Populations with lower digital literacy, such as some seniors (AFO, 2019), or those without reliable access to internet services or digital devices, may have been less able to participate. This limitation may affect the representativeness of the sample with respect to age and socioeconomic status.

Finally, as with any survey research, the findings represent a snapshot of experiences at a particular moment in time. The policy and institutional landscape regarding French-language services continues to evolve, and patterns documented here may shift as new programs are implemented or existing services change.

Despite these limitations, the survey provides a systematic, province-wide dataset that enables the comparative analysis across regions and migration status groups that existing

research has largely not undertaken. The findings should be read as identifying broad patterns and trends rather than definitive conclusions about all francophone Ontarians' experiences.

Chapter 4

Accessing Government Services in French: Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Patterns

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine Francophones' experiences accessing and using government services in Ontario at three levels: federal, provincial, and municipal. Unlike education and healthcare, which operate within relatively distinct policy frameworks, government services span multiple jurisdictions with overlapping and sometimes shared responsibilities. Immigration services, for example, involve both federal and provincial governments, while housing policy engages all three levels. This jurisdictional complexity creates particular challenges for service access, as gaps at one level can affect experiences at others, and navigating between levels can be confusing for service users (Esses et al., 2021; Fourot, 2021).

The chapter addresses the study's research objectives by documenting Francophones' patterns of government service access across Ontario's three regions (Northern, Eastern, and Centre-Southwestern Ontario) and comparing these patterns between immigrant and Canadian-born Francophones. Three dimensions of access are examined for each level of government: the language(s) participants use when accessing services, their awareness of French-language service availability, and the importance they place on being able to access services in French. Together, these dimensions reveal where French-language government services are accessible and used, where knowledge gaps exist, and how participants' values align with their practices.

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 guides the analysis. The sociodemographic profiles presented in Section 4.3 draw on the concept of superdiversity to illustrate the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity characterizing the survey sample—including region of residence, migration status, and housing tenure—and continue to build off from the sociodemographic profiles presented in Chapter 3. The findings presented in Sections 4.4 through 4.6 are then analyzed through the lens of social resilience, which directs attention to structural factors shaping service access, the resources available to francophone communities, and the strategies individuals use to navigate barriers. As discussed in Chapter 2,

a social resilience perspective foregrounds that individuals' capacity to access services depends not only on personal characteristics but also on the structural conditions that shape the landscape of service provision, including policy frameworks and institutional availability.

Government services present a distinct case for examining social resilience. The policy frameworks governing French-language access differ across the three levels of government, creating uneven structural conditions. At the federal level, the Official Languages Act (OLA) establishes criteria for designating bilingual service offices (GoC, 2025b). At the provincial level, the French Language Services Act (FLSA) guarantees access in designated areas (GoO, 2024). At the municipal level, however, no provincial legislation requires French-language services, leaving provision to the discretion of individual municipalities. These layered and inconsistent policy frameworks mean that Francophones face different structural conditions depending on which level of government they are accessing and where they live, conditions that the findings in this chapter document and help to interpret.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Section 4.2 provides context on the policy landscape for French-language government services in Ontario, outlining the frameworks at each level. Section 4.3 presents the sociodemographic profiles of the survey participants, demonstrating the superdiverse character of the sample. Sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 present findings for federal, provincial, and municipal government services respectively, each organized around language of access, knowledge gaps, and perceived importance. In Section 4.7, I discuss the findings through the lens of social resilience, examining how structural factors and regional variation shape the patterns observed. Section 4.8 concludes the chapter.

4.2 Context

Access to government services in French varies across Ontario depending on region and level of government. Each level operates under a different policy framework, creating uneven structural conditions for French-language service provision. This section outlines these frameworks, moving from the federal to the provincial and then to the municipal level.

Federal Government Services

Federal government services encompass a range of programs and administrative functions that affect residents' everyday lives. These include immigration and citizenship services, passport applications and renewals, federal income tax filing, employment insurance, pensions and old age security, and border services. At the federal level, in-person government services are available at Service Canada offices, although not all offices offer services in both official languages. The federal government designates bilingual offices based on criteria established in the Official Languages Act (GoC, 2025b). Table 4.1 summarizes the criteria that determine whether an office must provide services in both French and English.

Table 4.1. Criteria for designation as a bilingual federal government office (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2025).

Criterion	Description
Head or central office	The office is a head or central office of a federal institution
National Capital Region	The office is located in the National Capital Region
Reports to Parliament	The office belongs to a federal institution that reports directly to Parliament
Significant demand	The office is located in an area with significant demand for services in both official languages, including services for the travelling public
Nature of office	The nature of the office justifies bilingual service (e.g., public health or safety mandate)

These criteria mean that federal offices in areas deemed to lack “significant demand” are not required to provide French-language services, creating gaps in service provision for Francophones living outside major francophone population centres.

Provincial Government Services

Provincial government services include driver's licence and health card applications and renewals, provincial income tax, social assistance programs, Ontario Works, and various

regulatory services. At the provincial level, the FLSA is the key policy governing French-language service provision. First enacted in 1986 and updated in 2021, the FLSA establishes Ontario's legislative framework for French-language services. According to the Government of Ontario (2021), the Act seeks to “[ensure] greater accountability of ministries, government agencies and third-party organizations in the delivery of French-language services” and to “[make] active offer the cornerstone of access to quality French-language services.”

The FLSA designates 27 areas across Ontario as French Designated Areas (FDAs; see Appendix). In these areas, Francophones are guaranteed access to provincial government services in French. Designation is based on francophone population thresholds: an area qualifies if Francophones constitute at least 10% of the population or if at least 5,000 Francophones reside in an urban centre (GoO, 2024). Approximately 80% of Ontario's francophone population lives in an FDA (GoO, 2025a). The implication, however, is that about 20% of Ontario's Francophones live outside designated areas and do not have guaranteed access to provincial services in French. For these residents, accessing French-language provincial services may require travelling to an FDA or navigating services available only in English.

Municipal Government Services

Municipal government services touch many aspects of daily life, including property taxes, garbage collection, recycling and composting programs, snow removal, water and sewer services, public transit, building permits, and recreational programming such as sports leagues, community centres, and children's summer camps. Some municipalities also administer childcare subsidies, social and subsidized housing, and other local social programs – including for needs-specific or vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, at-risk-youth, unhoused).

At the municipal level, the policy landscape differs markedly from federal and provincial services. Because the FLSA is provincial legislation, it applies only to provincial services and designated agencies; municipalities are not required to comply, even those located within FDAs. In other words, whether to offer services in French is left to municipal discretion.

Some municipalities have adopted bilingual service policies. The City of Ottawa and the City of Greater Sudbury, for example, have established frameworks allowing residents to access municipal services in both official languages (City of Greater Sudbury, 2025; City of Ottawa, 2025). However, such policies are not consistent across the province and are particularly lacking in Centre-Southwestern Ontario. Moreover, even in municipalities with French-language service policies, the lived reality of access depends on the availability of bilingual staff and the adequacy of their language skills (Lacassagne, 2017).

Summary

The three levels of government thus operate under distinct policy frameworks with differing implications for French-language service access. Federal services are available in French at designated bilingual offices, provincial services are guaranteed in FDAs, and municipal services depend entirely on local policy decisions. This layered and inconsistent policy landscape points to uneven institutional completeness across the province: Francophones in some regions have access to a relatively complete set of government services in French, while those in other regions—particularly Centre-Southwestern Ontario—face significant gaps. As discussed in Chapter 2, these structural conditions shape Francophones’ social resilience, influencing both the resources available to them and the strategies they must employ to navigate service access. How francophones experience these conditions, however, varies not only by region but also by individual characteristics such as language proficiency, migration history, and household composition. The sociodemographic profiles and findings presented in the following sections document these patterns.

4.3 Sociodemographic Profiles

Building on the sociodemographic profiles presented in Chapter 3, which examined the overall sample and sociodemographic differences between immigrant, Ontario-born, and domestic migrant populations, this section focuses on two additional dimensions of diversity as key sociodemographic characteristics (aside from migrant status) in this analysis: housing tenure

and proficiency in English. Housing tenure—whether participants own, rent, or live in shared or subsidized housing—is relevant to government services because all three levels of government are involved in housing policy, from federal housing programs to provincial social assistance to municipal property taxes and tenant services (Atkey et al., 2022). Housing tenure may therefore factor into participants’ interactions with government services and their patterns of access. Similarly, proficiency in English is important to all levels of government services, but may be particularly important for accessing municipal services where there is no guarantee in most municipalities of these services being offered in French.

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure patterns differed notably between Canadian-born and immigrant participants in the survey. Among Canadian-born participants, regardless of province of origin, the large majority were homeowners, followed by renters, with a small number living in shared housing (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

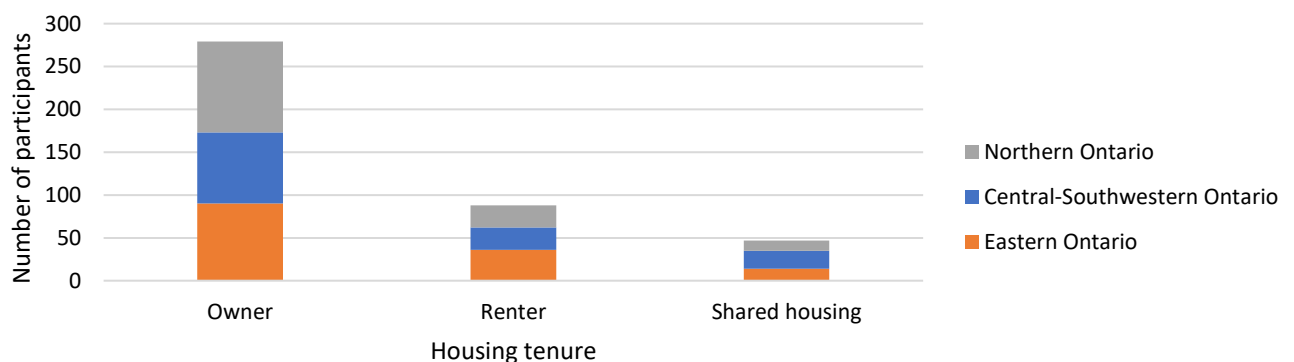


Figure 4.1. Housing tenure among Ontario-born participants, by region of residence (N = 415).

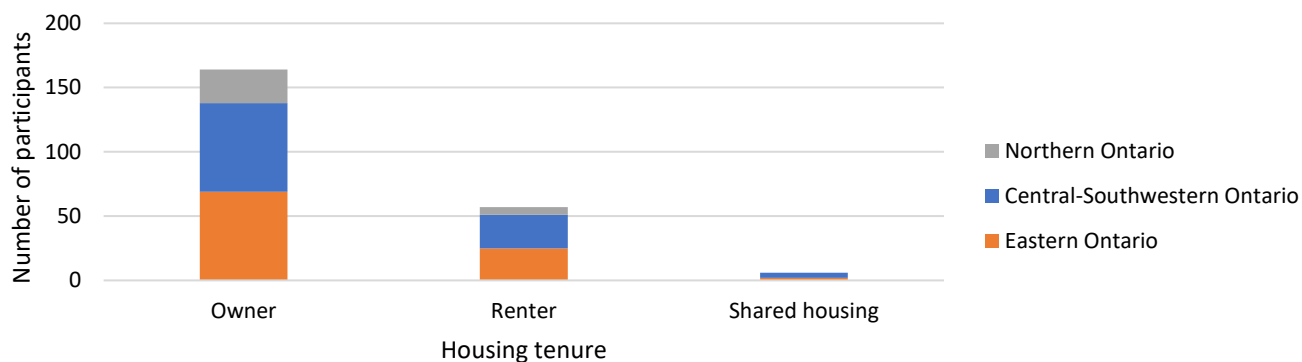


Figure 4.2. Housing tenure among domestic migrant participants, by region of residence (N = 228).

Immigrant participants showed a different pattern. The majority were renters (N = 460) rather than owners (N = 175), followed by those living in shared housing (N = 71), and a small number in subsidized housing (N = 19; Figure 4.3). This pattern is consistent with broader research on immigrant settlement, which documents that newcomers typically rent before transitioning to homeownership, and that recent immigrants are more likely to experience housing precarity (Atkey et al., 2022).

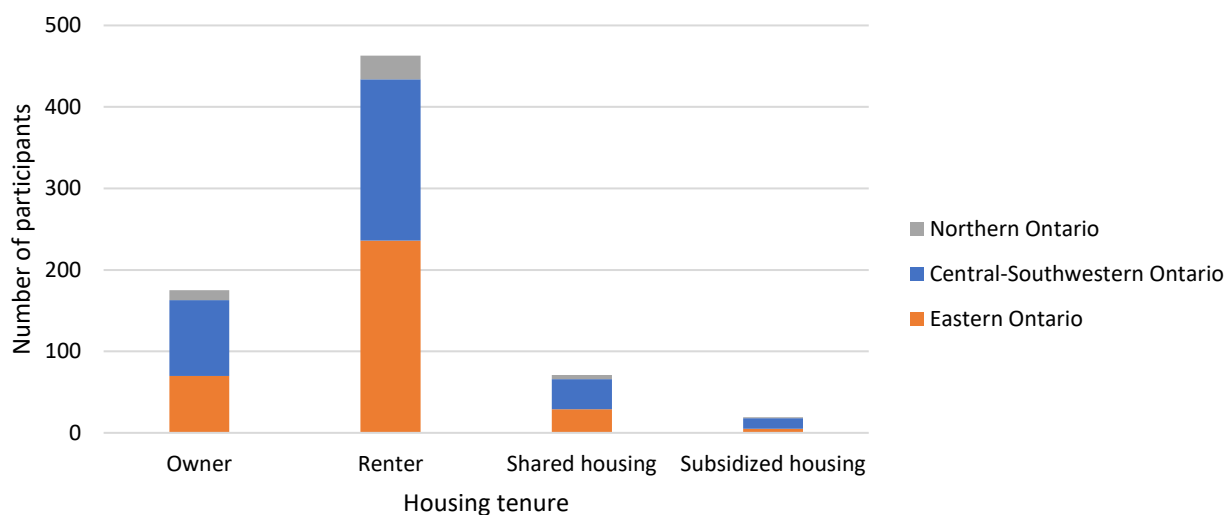


Figure 4.3. Housing tenure among immigrant participants, by region of residence (N = 728).

Notably, housing tenure patterns did not vary substantially across regions for either Canadian-born or immigrant participants. The differences observed were primarily between

migration status groups rather than between regions, suggesting that migration history shapes housing outcomes more strongly than geographic location within the province.

Proficiency in English

Another notable difference between Canadian-born (both Ontario-born and domestic migrants) and immigrant participants in the survey is their level of proficiency in English. As Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate, the vast majority of Canadian-born participants reported being fluent in English (level 5) or nearly fluent (level 4), whereas immigrant participants reported more varied levels of English proficiency across the sample.

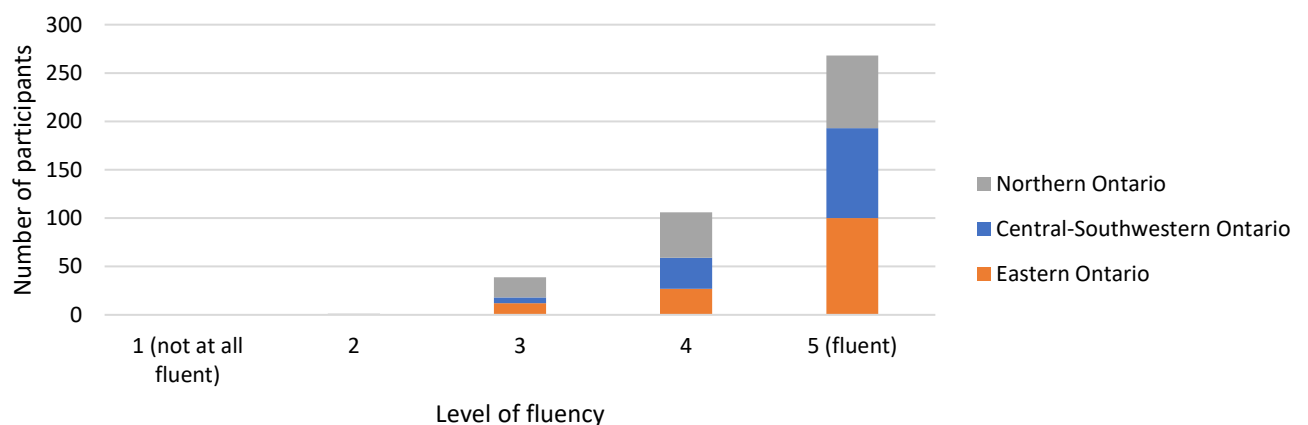


Figure 4.4. Self-reported English proficiency among Ontario-born participants by region of residence (N = 415). Scale: 1 = not at all fluent; 5 = fluent.

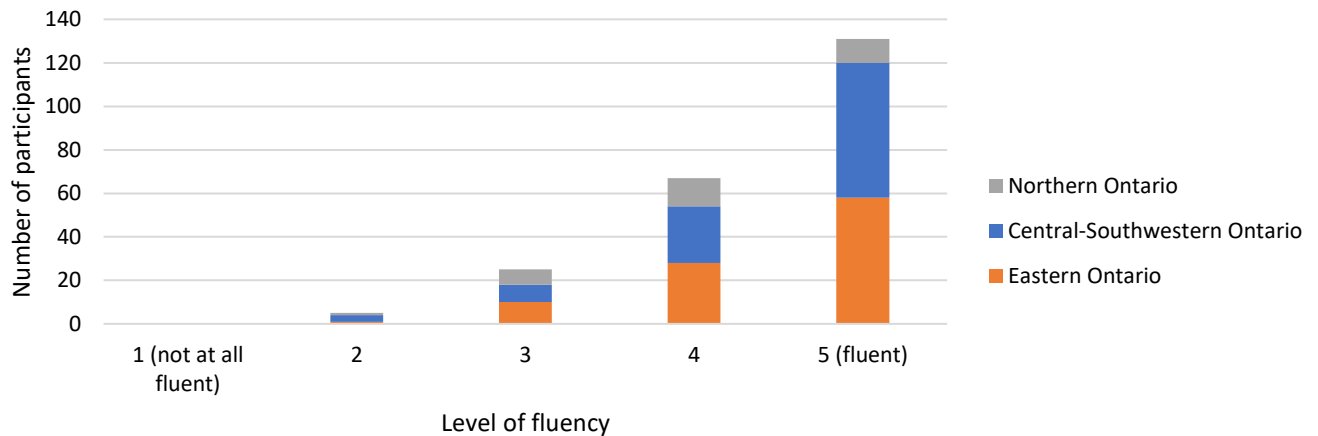


Figure 4.5. Self-reported English proficiency among domestic migrant participants by region of residence (N = 228). Scale: 1 = not at all fluent; 5 = fluent.

While most Canadian-born participants responded that they were fully fluent or very close (levels 4 and 5), there were several (N = 5) domestic migrants who indicated a low level of English proficiency. Some Ontario-born and domestic migrant participants indicated an intermediate level of fluency; however, it is notable that for domestic migrants these participants are relatively evenly spread between all three regions, whereas for Ontario-born participants, those with intermediate levels of fluency tend to live in either the Northern or Eastern regions of Ontario (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

Among immigrants, the largest group reported intermediate proficiency (level 3), followed by those who are nearly fluent (level 4) and fully fluent (level 5; Figure 4.6). A smaller share reported low or very low proficiency (levels 1-2). These patterns are relatively consistent across the three regions for both groups, suggesting that the difference in English proficiency is primarily associated with migration status rather than region of residence.

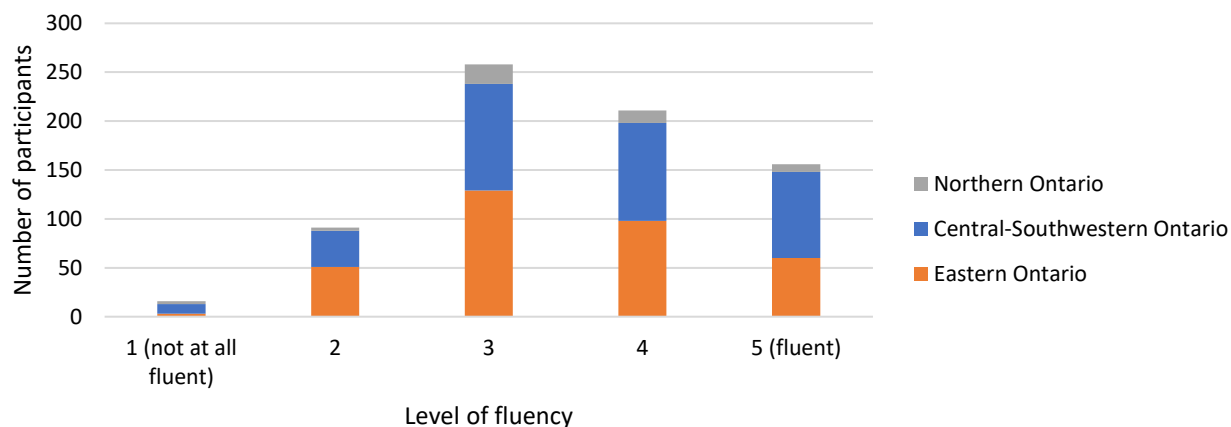


Figure 4.6. Self-reported English proficiency among immigrant participants by region of residence (N = 732). Scale: 1 = not at all fluent; 5 = fluent.

This difference has important implications for service access. Participants with lower English proficiency may face greater challenges navigating services that are not available in French, making access to French-language services more critical for this group. At the same time, participants with high English proficiency have more flexibility to access services in either official language, which may shape their usage patterns differently.

Summary

These sociodemographic profiles, along with those presented in Chapter 3, confirm that Ontario’s francophone population is not homogeneous. The sample reflects the superdiversity of FMCs across the province: participants vary by region, migration status, immigration pathway, length of residence in Canada, housing tenure and English proficiency. These multiple dimensions of diversity intersect in complex ways that shape participants’ experiences of accessing services in French. The findings presented in the following sections examine how these characteristics—particularly region, migration status, housing tenure, and English proficiency, and household size—relate to patterns of service access and usage for government services across all three levels.

4.4 Results: Language Use to Access Government Services

This section presents the findings on Francophones' experiences accessing government services in French across Ontario. The analysis is organized by level of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—reflecting the distinct jurisdictional frameworks and service obligations that shape French-language service availability at each level. For each level, three dimensions are examined: the language participants use to access services (French only, English only, or bilingually), knowledge gaps regarding the availability of French-language services, and the perceived importance of being able to access services in French. This structure enables comparison across geographic scales and regions (Research Sub-question 1), examination of how migration status shapes service access patterns (Research Sub-question 2), identification of awareness gaps among those accessing services in English (Research Sub-question 3), and exploration of the relationship between perceived importance and actual usage (Research Sub-question 4).

Throughout this analysis, a social resilience lens helps illuminate how Francophones navigate the structural realities of Ontario's asymmetrical bilingualism. Social resilience encompasses both the resources that facilitate service access in French and the adaptive strategies francophones employ when facing barriers. As the findings will show, patterns of bilingual service access, in particular, may represent one such adaptive strategy: a way of maintaining some French-language communication even where full French-language service provision is unavailable.

4.5 Federal Government Services

As government services provided at the federal level are subject to the Official Languages Act, participants across Ontario should theoretically have access to services in French at this level. Examples of federal services provided to participants in the survey included immigration, passport, taxes, and language rights. This section examines language of access patterns, knowledge gaps, and perceived importance for federal government services.

4.5.1 Language of Access

Regional Analysis

Table 4.2 presents the language participants use when accessing federal government services across regions of Ontario. At the provincial scale, approximately one-third of participants (37.2%) access federal government services in French only, while nearly one-half (44.5%) access them bilingually, and 17.3% access them in English only. These provincial figures, however, mask important regional variations that emerge when examining patterns across Ontario's three main regions and at finer geographic scales.

Comparing across the three main regions, an inverse relationship emerges between Eastern/Northern Ontario and Central-Southwestern Ontario with respect to French-only and English-only access. Eastern Ontario (41.8%) and Northern Ontario (38.7%) show higher rates of French-only access, while Central-Southwestern Ontario reports a lower rate (30.8%). Conversely, Central-Southwestern Ontario shows notably higher English-only access (26.4%) compared to Eastern Ontario (11.2%) and Northern Ontario (14.6%). This pattern aligns with the geographic distribution of francophone communities and the historical presence of French-language institutions, which are more established in Eastern and Northern regions. Notably, bilingual access remains relatively consistent across the three main regions, ranging from 42.4% in Central-Southwestern Ontario, to 46.1% in Northern Ontario, and 45.1% in Eastern Ontario, suggesting that accessing services in both languages represents a common navigation strategy regardless of regional location. Sample sizes are robust for Eastern Ontario (N = 490) and Central-Southwestern Ontario (N = 432), though somewhat smaller for Northern Ontario (N = 191), suggesting some caution in interpreting Northern Ontario figures. It should also be noted that not all regional respondent counts sum to the total respondents across Ontario, as some participants did not provide a region of residence or FSA.

Table 4.2. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing federal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	37.2%	44.5%	17.3%	1.0%	100% (1102)	69.6%	30.4%
Eastern Ontario	41.8%	45.1%	11.2%	1.8%	100% (490)	83.1%	16.9%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	30.8%	42.4%	26.4%	0.5%	100% (432)	73.8%	26.2%
Northern Ontario	38.7%	46.1%	14.6%	0.5%	100% (191)	76.7%	23.3%
Ottawa	39.8%	45.9%	12.6%	1.7%	100% (405)	84.4%	15.6%
Toronto	26.6%	50.0%	23.4%	0.0%	100% (128)	74.0%	26.0%
GTA	38.7%	30.1%	30.1%	1.1%	100% (93)	75.7%	24.3%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	30.7%	42.2%	26.6%	0.5%	100% (192)	73.6%	26.4%

Within Central-Southwestern Ontario, important variations emerge when comparing Toronto, the GTA, and the region outside the GTA. French-only access is lowest in Toronto (26.6%) and outside the GTA (30.7%), with the GTA showing a slightly higher rate (38.7%). English-only access follows a gradient, with the GTA showing the highest rate (30.1%), followed by outside the GTA (26.6%), and Toronto falling lowest out of the three geographies (23.4%). Bilingual access is highest in Toronto (50.0%), followed by outside the GTA (42.2%), and lowest in the GTA (30.1%). While Toronto shows a high level of bilingual access, this should be interpreted with some caution: sample sizes vary across these sub-regions and while outside of the GTA (N = 192) has a larger sample size, while Toronto (N = 128) and the GTA's (N = 93) samples are much smaller. Through a social resilience lens, bilingual access may represent an adaptive strategy that allows francophones to use French where possible while drawing on English when necessary—a pragmatic response to variable service availability that appears

more accessible in urban centres like Toronto and the GTA than in the more dispersed communities outside the GTA.

Comparing the two major urban centres, Ottawa shows notably higher rates of French-only access (39.8%) compared to Toronto (26.6%), while Toronto shows nearly the double rate for English-only access (23.4% in Toronto versus 12.6% in Ottawa). These differences likely reflect Ottawa's status as a designated bilingual city with a larger, more established francophone community and greater institutional presence of French-language services. Ottawa's sample size is reasonably robust (N = 405), though, again, Toronto's smaller sample (N = 128) suggests these comparisons should be interpreted with some caution.

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.3 presents language of access patterns by region and migration status. The regional patterns observed persist when migration status is considered: participants from Centre-Southwestern Ontario continue to report lower percentages of French-only access and higher percentages of English-only access compared to other regions (Table 4.3). However, migration status itself does not appear to be a significant differentiating factor within regions. Across all regions, the percentages of bilingual access remain similar between Canadian-born (both those born in Ontario and domestic migrants) and immigrant participants, suggesting that regional context may be a more influential factor than migration history in shaping language of access patterns for federal services.

Table 4.3. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing federal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by migrant status (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Migration history	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total respondents (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	Ontario-born	37.1%	44.0%	19.0%	0.0%	100% (417)	77.0%	23.0%
	Domestic migrant	40.9%	47.0%	12.2%	0.0%	100% (181)	79.0%	21.0%
	Immigrant	37.2%	44.7%	16.2%	1.9%	100% (580)	42.3%	57.7%
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	40.9%	44.6%	14.5%	0.0%	100% (193)	82.1%	17.9%
	Immigrant	43.0%	45.5%	8.2%	3.2%	100% (279)	83.9%	16.1%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	30.9%	40.4%	28.7%	0.0%	100% (171)	73.1%	26.9%
	Immigrant	30.5%	43.6%	25.1%	0.8%	100% (259)	76.4%	23.6%
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	40.3%	48.9%	10.8%	0.0%	100% (139)	79.5%	20.5%
	Immigrant	36.4%	36.4%	24.2%	3.0%	100% (33)	70.1%	29.9%

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.4 examines language of access patterns by housing tenure and English proficiency. Housing tenure shows no significant relationship with language of access for federal services. However, English proficiency does appear to shape access patterns: participants with lower English proficiency access fewer services in English only or bilingually, and report higher rates of French-only access. This finding highlights how language proficiency operates as a structural factor influencing service navigation options. For francophones with limited English proficiency, French-language service availability becomes not merely a preference but a necessity—a consideration with important implications for service planning and equity.

Table 4.4. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing federal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Key sociodemographic characteristics	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
None selected—all participants	37.2%	44.5%	17.3%	1.0%	100% (1102)	69.6%	30.4%
Housing Tenure							
Owner	39.2%	44.1%	16.3%	0.4%	100% (515)	79.8%	20.2%
Renter	36.9%	45.1%	16.6%	1.9%	100% (477)	74.9%	25.1%
English Proficiency							
Low (1-2)	57.3%	29.3%	10.7%	2.7%	100% (75)	60.3%	39.7%
Medium (3)	46.9%	39.3%	13.4%	0.4%	100% (262)	76.8%	23.2%
High (4-5)	32.0%	47.7%	19.3%	1.0%	100% (763)	77.0%	23.0%

4.5.2 Knowledge Gaps

Table 4.5 presents data on whether participants who accessed federal services in English only were aware that these services exist in French in their area. The majority of participants who accessed federal services in English only (65.6%) knew that these services were available in French but chose not to use them. However, approximately one-third of this group (34.4%) were unaware that federal services existed in French in their region. This knowledge gap represents a barrier to French-language service access that extends beyond service availability itself. From a social resilience perspective, local knowledge of available resources constitutes an important component of community capacity; these gaps may particularly affect newcomers to a region—both immigrants and internal migrants—who have not yet developed this local knowledge base. It should be noted that only the provincial-level scale has been shown in Table 4.5 because other geographies at the regional and local scales did not have a large enough sample size to adequately analyze.

Table 4.5. Percentage (%) of participants (N) across Ontario who responded that they only spoke English when accessing federal government services, divided based on whether they know that these services exist in French in their area. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

				Question Participation	
Region	Knows this service exists in French	Does not know this service exists in French	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	65.6%	34.4%	100% (212)	13.4%	86.6%

4.5.3 Perceived Importance

Regional Analysis

Table 4.6 presents data on how important participants perceive access to federal government services in French. Over 90% of participants across all regions of Ontario perceive it to be of high importance to have access to federal government services in French. This near-universal agreement transcends regional differences in actual access patterns, suggesting a shared valuing of French-language federal services across the province’s diverse francophone communities.

Table 4.6. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access federal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question.

Region	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	91.7%	8.3%	100% (1115)
Eastern Ontario	92.4%	7.6%	100% (489)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	91.0%	9.0%	100% (444)
Northern Ontario	91.2%	8.8%	100% (181)
Ottawa	92.8%	7.2%	100% (405)
Toronto	90.8%	9.2%	100% (131)
GTA	91.5%	8.5%	100% (94)
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	90.0%	10.0%	100% (204)

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.7 presents perceived importance by region and migration status. With the exception of immigrants in Eastern Ontario (89.2%), over 90% of participants across all regional and migration status categories indicate that access to federal services in French is of high importance (Table 4.7). Migration status does not appear to significantly differentiate perceptions of importance, reinforcing the finding that French-language federal services are widely valued across the francophone population regardless of migration history.

Table 4.7. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access federal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario and sub-grouped by migration history (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question.

Region	Migration History	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	Ontario-born	92.7%	7.3%	100% (327)
	Domestic migrant	95.7%	4.3%	100% (186)
	Immigrant	90.2%	9.8%	100% (582)
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	97.4%	2.6%	100% (194)
	Immigrant	89.2%	10.8%	100% (277)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	91.6%	8.4%	100% (178)
	Immigrant	90.5%	9.5%	100% (264)
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	90.8%	9.2%	100% (142)
	Immigrant	90.9%	9.1%	100% (33)

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.8 presents perceived importance by key sociodemographic characteristics. Across all sociodemographic characteristics examined—housing tenure and English proficiency levels—over 90% of participants indicate that having federal government services available in French is of high importance. The consistency of this finding across different sociodemographic groups underscores the broadly shared nature of this value among Ontario’s francophone population.

Table 4.8. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access federal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic(s).

Key sociodemographic characteristic		More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
None selected—all participants		91.7%	8.3%	100% (1115)
Housing tenure	Owner	92.5%	7.5%	100% (520)
	Renter	91.3%	8.7%	100% (480)
Proficiency in English	Low (1-2)	90.7%	9.3%	100% (75)
	Medium (3)	95.0%	5.0%	100% (259)
	High (4-5)	90.7%	9.3%	100% (774)

4.6 Provincial Government Services

Provincial government services in Ontario operate under a different legislative framework than federal services, with French-language service availability varying based on designated areas under the French Language Services Act. Examples of provincial services provided to participants in the survey included driver’s license or health card acquisition or renewal, social assistance, and Ontario services generally. This section examines language of access patterns, knowledge gaps, and perceived importance for provincial government services.

4.6.1 Language of Access

Regional Analysis

Table 4.9 presents the language participants use when accessing provincial government services across regions of Ontario. At the provincial scale, approximately one third of participants (29.2%) access provincial government services in French only, just under one half (45.4%) access them bilingually, and 25.1% access them in English only. Compared to federal services, French-only access is somewhat lower while bilingual and English-only access are both higher, suggesting that the more variable availability of French-language provincial services—

shaped by the French Language Services Act’s designated areas framework—influences how Francophones navigate service access at this level.

Table 4.9. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing provincial government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	29.2%	45.4%	25.1%	0.4%	100% (1111)	70.2%	29.8%
Eastern Ontario	25.1%	54.4%	18.9%	1.5%	100% (518)	82.7%	17.3%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	19.4%	39.7%	40.6%	0.2%	100% (443)	75.8%	24.2%
Northern Ontario	31.1%	49.2%	19.2%	0.5%	100% (193)	77.5%	22.5%
Ottawa	34.2%	49.1%	16.1%	0.5%	100% (403)	84.0%	16.0%
Toronto	16.7%	45.5%	37.9%	0.0%	100% (132)	76.3%	23.7%
GTA	17.4%	28.3%	53.3%	1.1%	100% (92)	77.3%	22.7%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	21.5%	42.5%	36.0%	0.5%	100% (200)	76.6%	23.4%

Comparing across the three main regions, the inverse relationship observed for federal services persists: Eastern Ontario (25.1%) and Northern Ontario (31.1%) show higher rates of French-only access compared to Centre-Southwestern Ontario (19.4%). English-only access follows the expected inverse pattern, with Centre-Southwestern Ontario (40.6%) showing notably higher rates than Eastern Ontario (18.9%) and Northern Ontario (19.2%). Sample sizes remain robust for Eastern Ontario (N = 518) and Centre-Southwestern Ontario (N = 443), with Northern Ontario’s smaller sample (N = 193) again warranting some interpretive caution.

A notable shift from federal services emerges in bilingual access patterns. While bilingual access was relatively consistent across regions for federal services, a clearer divide appears at the provincial level. Eastern Ontario (54.4%) and Northern Ontario (49.2%) show higher rates of

bilingual access compared to Central-Southwestern Ontario (39.7%). Through a social resilience lens, this regional divergence suggests that the adaptive strategy of combining French and English may be more readily employed, or more necessary, in regions with partial but not complete French-language provincial service coverage. In Central-Southwestern Ontario, where French-language provincial services may be less consistently available, participants appear to face a more binary choice between French-only and English-only access.

Within Central-Southwestern Ontario, variations across Toronto, the GTA, and outside the GTA reveal interesting patterns that differ somewhat from those observed for federal services. French-only access is relatively similar across the three sub-regions: Toronto (16.7%), the GTA (17.4%), and outside the GTA (21.5%)—with the area outside the GTA showing a slightly higher rate, though all remain well below the provincial average of 29.2%. English-only access is high across all three sub-regions, with the GTA showing the highest rate (53.3%), followed by Toronto (37.9) and outside the GTA (36.0%). Bilingual access shows less variation within Central-Southwestern Ontario at the provincial service level, with Toronto at 45.5% and outside the GTA at 42.5%; however, the GTA proves to be an outlier to this pattern at 28.3%. Again, Toronto and the GTA's smaller samples (N= 132 and N = 92) warrant interpretive caution.

The pattern for Eastern Ontario merits attention: this region shows the second highest rate of French-only access (25.1%) among the three main regions, following Northern Ontario (32.4%). Combined with the highest bilingual access rate (54.4%), Eastern Ontario participants appear to maintain stronger French-language engagement with provincial services, likely reflecting both the stronger institutional presence of French-language services and larger francophone population concentrations in this region.

Comparing Ottawa and Toronto, the differences observed for federal services are amplified at the provincial level. Ottawa shows approximately double the French-only access rate (34.2%) compared to Toronto (16.7%), and higher bilingual access (49.1% versus 45.5%). Toronto's English-only access (37.9%) is more than double Ottawa's rate (16.1%). These patterns reinforce the distinct service landscapes of these two urban centres: Ottawa's bilingual designation and established francophone institutional infrastructure appear to facilitate greater French-language engagement with provincial services, while Toronto's Francophones navigate a

context with more limited French-language provincial service availability.

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.10 presents language of access patterns by region and migration status. The trend of Central-Southwestern Ontario accessing provincial government services with less French overall—both in French only and bilingually—becomes more prominent at this level of government. However, as with federal services, migration status does not appear to be a major differentiating factor within regions. Only Canadian-born and immigrant participants in Central-Southwestern Ontario show much higher and lower patterns of language access than other regions, with immigrants having a lower percentage of French only access (17.4% versus Canadian-borns' 22.6%) and a higher percentage of English only access (41.7% versus Canadian-borns' 28.7%). This trend is flipped in Eastern Ontario, and immigrants have a higher percentage of French only access (39.9% vs. 32.0%) and a lower percentage of English only access (10.1% vs. 19.1%). However, Northern Ontario shows similar patterns to Central-Southwestern Ontario between migration groups, suggesting that regional context continues to exert a stronger influence than migration history on how Francophones navigate provincial service access.

Table 4.10. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing provincial government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by migrant status (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Migration history	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	Ontario-born	29.7%	43.7%	26.3%	0.0%	100% (327)	78.2%	21.8%
	Domestic migrant	27.0%	51.4%	21.6%	0.0%	100% (185)	80.8%	19.2%
	Immigrant	29.3%	44.3%	25.7%	0.7%	100% (580)	76.7%	23.3%
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	32.0%	49.0%	19.1%	0.0%	100% (194)	82.5%	17.5%
	Immigrant	39.9%	48.9%	10.1%	1.1%	100% (276)	82.6%	17.4%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	22.6%	39.0%	38.4%	0.0%	100% (177)	75.6%	24.4%
	Immigrant	17.4%	40.5%	41.7%	0.4%	100% (264)	76.1%	23.9%
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	33.3%	54.6%	12.1%	0.0%	100% (141)	80.6%	19.4%
	Immigrant	27.3%	36.4%	33.3%	3.0%	100% (33)	70.2%	29.8%

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.11 examines language of access patterns by housing tenure and English proficiency. The patterns observed for federal services are repeated for provincial services. Housing tenure shows no significant relationship with language of access, while English proficiency continues to shape access patterns. Participants with lower English proficiency report higher percentages of French-only access compared to those with higher proficiency, who show greater rates of bilingual and English-only access. This consistent finding across both federal and provincial levels reinforces the understanding that English proficiency operates as a structural factor determining the range of navigation strategies available to francophones. For those with limited English, the availability of French-language services represents a critical access pathway rather than simply a language preference.

Table 4.11. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing provincial government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Key sociodemographic characteristics		Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
None selected—all participants		29.2%	45.4%	25.1%	0.4%	100% (1111)	70.2%	29.8%
Housing Tenure	Owner	29.4%	48.1%	22.5%	0.0%	100% (521)	80.7%	19.3%
	Renter	30.4%	42.9%	26.0%	0.6%	100% (480)	75.3%	24.7%
English Proficiency	Low (1-2)	60.5%	23.7%	14.5%	1.3%	100% (76)	62.0%	38.0%
	Medium (3)	36.2%	43.6%	20.2%	0.0%	100% (257)	75.6%	24.4%
	High (4-5)	23.8%	48.2%	27.6%	0.4%	100% (776)	78.8%	21.2%

4.6.2 Knowledge Gaps

Table 4.12 presents data on whether participants who accessed provincial services in English only were aware that these services exist in French in their area. Knowledge gaps are more pronounced for provincial services than for federal services. Participants who accessed provincial services in English only were split approximately in half, with 49.4% knowing these services exist in French in their region and 50.7% not knowing. In Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA, the knowledge gap actually closes slightly: 55.3% of participants who used provincial services in English only were aware that these services existed in French in their region. Similarly to Table 4.4, only scales with large enough sample sizes of those who reported speaking English only when accessing provincial services were included in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. Percentage (%) of participants across Ontario and Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA who responded that they only spoke English when accessing provincial government services, divided based on whether they know that these services exist in French in their area. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Knows this service exists in French	Does not know this service exists in French	Total (N)	Question participation	
				Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	49.4%	50.6%	100% (288)	18.2%	81.8%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	44.7%	55.3%	100% (76)	29.1%	70.9%

This increased knowledge gap at the provincial level likely reflects the more complex geography of French-language service availability under the French Language Services Act, where designation varies by area. From a social resilience perspective, this complexity may pose particular challenges for newcomers to a region—both international immigrants and internal migrants—who must navigate Ontario’s asymmetrical bilingualism without the benefit of established local knowledge. The higher rate of unawareness in Centre-Southwestern Ontario outside the GTA suggests that knowledge of French-language service availability may be more difficult to acquire in regions where such services are less visible or less consistently present in the community landscape.

4.6.3 Perceived Importance

Regional Analysis

Table 4.13 presents data on how important participants perceive access to provincial government services in French. As with federal services, a high percentage of participants across all regions perceive access to provincial government services in French to be of higher importance. There is a slight decrease of a few percentage points compared to federal services,

but the overall pattern of strong perceived importance remains consistent across regions. This sustained high valuing of French-language provincial services, even in regions where actual French-only access is lower, points to an enduring attachment to French-language service access among Ontario's francophone population.

Table 4.13. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access provincial government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario.

Region	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	90.9%	9.1%	100% (1113)
Eastern Ontario	85.5%	14.5%	100% (468)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	89.8%	10.2%	100% (440)
Northern Ontario	88.3%	11.7%	100% (180)
Ottawa	92.3%	7.7%	100% (405)
Toronto	88.5%	11.5%	100% (131)
GTA	87.1%	12.9%	100% (93)
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	91.0%	9.0%	100% (220)

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.14 presents perceived importance by region and migration status. No significant differences emerge between participants' perceptions of importance for federal versus provincial government services when examined by migration status. Across regions and migration histories, participants consistently indicate that French-language provincial services are of high importance. This finding reinforces the pattern observed for federal services: the valuing of French-language government services appears to be broadly shared across the francophone population regardless of whether participants were born in Canada or immigrated.

Table 4.14. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access provincial government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario and sub-grouped by migration history (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant).

Region	Migration History	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	Ontario-born	90.8%	9.2%	100% (327)
	Domestic migrant	93.0%	7.0%	100% (185)
	Immigrant	90.5%	9.5%	100% (582)
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	95.4%	4.6%	100% (194)
	Immigrant	90.3%	9.7%	100% (278)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	89.3%	10.7%	100% (177)
	Immigrant	90.1%	9.9%	100% (263)
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	88.7%	11.3%	100% (141)
	Immigrant	90.1%	9.1%	100% (33)

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.15 presents perceived importance by key sociodemographic characteristics. While perceived importance remains high across all sociodemographic categories, more variation emerges when examining English proficiency levels. Participants with lower English proficiency indicate higher percentages of perceiving French-language provincial services as more important (97.4%) compared to those with higher proficiency (88.9%). This gradient reflects the structural reality that for Francophones with limited English, French-language services are not simply preferred but essential for effective service access. The relationship between English proficiency and perceived importance underscores how language capacity shapes both the practical necessity and the subjective valuing of French-language service availability.

Table 4.15. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access provincial government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic(s).

Key sociodemographic characteristic		More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
None selected—all participants		90.9%	9.1%	100% (1113)
Housing tenure	Owner	91.1%	8.9%	100% (518)
	Renter	90.5%	9.5%	100% (483)
Proficiency in English	Low (1-2)	97.4%	2.6%	100% (76)
	Medium (3)	94.9%	5.1%	100% (256)
	High (4-5)	88.9%	11.1%	100% (774)

4.7 Municipal Government Services

Municipal government services in Ontario operate under yet another jurisdictional framework, with French-language service availability largely dependent on local municipal decisions and whether municipalities fall within designated areas under the French Language Services Act. Examples of municipal services provided to participants in the survey included municipal services generally, garbage collection, snow removal, and water and sewer. This section examines language of access patterns, knowledge gaps, and perceived importance for municipal government services.

4.7.1 Language of Access

Regional Analysis

Table 4.16 presents the language participants use when accessing municipal government services across regions of Ontario. At the municipal level, patterns of French-language access shift notably compared to federal and provincial services. Only 19.1% of all participants access municipal services in French only—roughly half the rate observed for federal services (37.2%) and lower than for provincial services (29.2%). Bilingual access also decreases to 38.5%, while English-only access rises substantially to 42.1%, more than double the rate for federal services

(17.3%). These figures point to the more limited and uneven availability of French-language services at the municipal level across Ontario.

Table 4.16. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing municipal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	19.1%	38.5%	42.1%	0.3%	100% (1054)	70.3%	29.7%
Eastern Ontario	30.0%	48.2%	21.3%	0.4%	100% (456)	78.6%	21.4%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	6.8%	20.1%	72.7%	0.2%	100% (422)	72.3%	27.7%
Northern Ontario	20.0%	55.1%	24.3%	0.5%	100% (185)	74.3%	25.7%
Ottawa	27.2%	50.5%	22.0%	0.3%	100% (378)	78.8%	21.2%
Toronto	6.5%	22.8%	70.7%	0.0%	100% (123)	71.1%	28.9%
GTA	6.5%	15.2%	77.2%	1.1%	100% (92)	73.6%	26.4%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	6.8%	20.9%	72.3%	0.0%	100% (191)	72.0%	28.0%

Comparing across the three main regions, the inverse relationship between Eastern/Northern Ontario and Central-Southwestern Ontario observed for federal and provincial services becomes more pronounced at the municipal level. Eastern Ontario (20.0%) and Northern Ontario (19.4%) maintain higher rates of French-only access compared to Central-Southwestern Ontario, where French-only access drops dramatically to just 6.8%. English-only access in Central-Southwestern Ontario rises sharply to 72.7%—more than three times the rate in Eastern Ontario (21.3%) and Northern Ontario (24.3%; Table 4.16).

A notable shift occurs in bilingual access patterns for municipal services. Both Eastern Ontario (48.2%) and Northern Ontario (55.1%) maintain a bilingual access rate similar to those observed for federal and provincial services. Central-Southwestern Ontario, by contrast, shows a

sharp decline in bilingual access to just 20.1%, suggesting that the option of navigating services in both languages becomes considerably more constrained at the municipal level in this region (Table 4.16).

Within Centre-Southwestern Ontario, the three sub-regions show remarkably similar patterns for municipal services, in contrast to the variations observed for federal and provincial services. French-only access is uniformly low: Toronto (6.5%), the GTA (6.5%), and outside the GTA (6.8%). English-only access is uniformly high: Toronto (70.7%), the GTA (77.2%), and outside the GTA (72.3%). Bilingual access is also similar across the three sub-regions: Toronto (22.8%), the GTA (15.2%), and outside the GTA (20.9%; Table 4.16). This convergence suggests that French-language municipal services are similarly limited across Central-Southwestern Ontario regardless of whether one is in the urban core of Toronto, the broader GTA, or areas outside the GTA.

The contrast between Ottawa and Toronto is particularly stark at the municipal level. Ottawa maintains relatively high rates of French-only access (27.2%) and bilingual access (39.8%), with English-only access at 17.3%. Toronto, by contrast, shows minimal French-only access (6.5%), limited bilingual access (22.8%), and majority English-only access (70.7%; Table 4.16). This divergence—much wider than observed for federal or provincial services—reflects the fundamentally different municipal language policy contexts of these two cities: Ottawa’s official bilingual status provides a legislative foundation for French-language municipal services that does not exist in Toronto. Through a social resilience lens, Ottawa’s Francophones have access to structural resources that facilitate French-language service navigation, while Toronto’s Francophones face a context requiring greater reliance on English or on the limited bilingual options available.

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.17 presents language of access patterns by region and migration status. At the municipal level, migration status emerges as a more differentiating factor than observed for federal or provincial services, though patterns vary by region. Province-wide, Ontario-born

participants and immigrants show the similar levels of French-only access (19.9% and 21.5%, respectively), while domestic migrants have a lower level (10.6%). However, it is in the bilingual access patterns and regional variations where the most notable differences emerge.

Table 4.17. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing municipal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario and migration status (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Migration history	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	Ontario-born	19.9%	42.6%	37.5%	0.0%	100% (317)	76.0%	24.0%
	Domestic migrant	10.6%	44.1%	45.3%	0.0%	100% (179)	78.2%	21.8%
	Immigrant	21.5%	34.1%	43.8%	0.5%	100% (539)	55.9%	44.1%
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	25.9%	52.4%	21.7%	0.0%	100% (189)	80.5%	19.5%
	Immigrant	32.8%	45.6%	20.8%	0.8%	100% (250)	75.2%	24.8%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	2.9%	19.9%	77.2%	0.0%	100% (171)	73.1%	26.9%
	Immigrant	9.6%	20.1%	69.9%	0.4%	100% (249)	71.8%	28.2%
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	19.7%	61.3%	19.0%	0.0%	100% (137)	78.3%	21.7%
	Immigrant	15.2%	45.5%	36.4%	3.0%	100% (33)	70.1%	29.9%

In Eastern Ontario, Canadian-born participants show higher bilingual access (52.4%) compared to immigrants (45.6%), with both groups maintaining similar rates of French-only access (25.9% and 32.8% respectively). In Northern Ontario, Canadian-born participants also show higher bilingual access (61.3%) compared to immigrants (45.5%), though the smaller immigrant sample in this region (N = 33) warrants considerable caution in interpretation (Table 4.17).

The most striking pattern emerges in Central-Southwestern Ontario. While the region as a whole shows low French-only access, a substantial difference between this region's Canadian-born and immigrant populations and the rest of the province appears in English-only and

bilingual access: 69.9% of immigrant participants and 77.2% of Canadian-born participants access municipal services in English alone, while 20.1% of immigrants and 19.9% of Canadian-borns access municipal services bilingually (Table 4.17). This trend reinforces the idea that Central-Southwestern Ontario has a much more limited institutional completeness level for municipal-level services than the rest of the province, , weakening the overall social resilience of Francophones in this region and forcing these participants to access municipal services in English only.

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.18 examines language of access patterns by housing tenure and English proficiency. Some differences from the patterns observed for federal and provincial services emerge at the municipal level. For housing tenure, while previous levels showed no significant relationship with language of access, municipal services show a slight pattern: owners report somewhat higher bilingual access (41.4%) compared to renters (36.9%), and lower English-only access (40.8% versus 42.5%). These differences, while modest, may reflect the greater frequency with which homeowners interact with municipal services such as property taxes, permits, and utility services.

Table 4.18. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing municipal government services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Key sociodemographic characteristics		Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
None selected—all participants		19.1%	38.5%	42.1%	0.3%	100% (1054)	70.3%	29.7%
Housing Tenure	Owner	17.8%	41.4%	40.8%	0.0%	100% (512)	79.4%	20.6%
	Renter	20.1%	36.9%	42.5%	0.5%	100% (442)	69.4%	30.6%
English Proficiency	Low (1-2)	52.1%	22.5%	23.9%	1.4%	100% (71)	57.8%	42.2%
	Medium (3)	27.2%	35.1%	39.7%	0.0%	100% (239)	71.7%	28.3%
	High (4-5)	13.4%	41.5%	44.8%	0.3%	100% (737)	74.9%	25.1%

English proficiency continues to shape access patterns in ways consistent with federal and provincial services. Participants with lower English proficiency report higher rates of French-only access (52.1%) compared to those with medium (27.2%) or high (13.4%) proficiency. Bilingual access shows an interesting pattern: those with high English proficiency report the highest bilingual access (41.5%), while those with low proficiency report the lowest (22.5%; Table 4.18). This trend suggests that the adaptive strategy of bilingual navigation requires sufficient English proficiency to be viable—for Francophones with limited English, French-only access remains the primary pathway, making the availability of French-language municipal services particularly critical for this population.

4.7.2 Knowledge Gaps

Table 4.19 presents data on whether participants who accessed municipal services in English-only were aware that these services exist in French in their area. Knowledge gaps are substantially larger for municipal services than for federal or provincial services. Across Ontario, 79.2% of participants who accessed municipal services in English-only did not know whether

these services were available in French in their region—a dramatic increase from the 34.4% knowledge gap for federal services and the 50.7% gap for provincial services.

Table 4.19. Percentage (%) of participants (N) across regions of Ontario who responded that they only spoke English when accessing municipal government services, divided based on whether they know that these services exist in French in their area. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question

Region	Knows this service exists in French	Does not know this service exists in French	Total (N)	Question participation	
				Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	20.8%	79.2%	100% (454)	28.6%	71.4%
Eastern Ontario	37.9%	62.1%	100% (103)	17.5%	82.5%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	14.2%	85.8%	100% (309)	53.3%	46.7%
Northern Ontario	76.9%	23.1%	100% (65)	26.3%	73.7%
Ottawa	58.1%	41.9%	100% (86)	17.9%	82.1%
Toronto	21.3%	78.7%	100% (89)	51.4%	48.6%
GTA	13.9%	86.1%	100% (72)	77.3%	22.7%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	10.8%	89.2%	100% (139)	53.3%	46.7%

Regional variations in knowledge gaps are pronounced. As there were large enough sample sizes at the municipal level to show, almost all scales of geographies are included in Table 4.19. Eastern Ontario shows the lowest knowledge gap, with 37.9% of English-only users aware that French-language municipal services exist in their area—though this still means nearly two-thirds (62.1%) were unaware. Central-Southwestern Ontario shows substantially higher knowledge gaps, with only 13.8% aware and 86.2% unaware. Within Central-Southwestern Ontario, Toronto (21.3% aware) and the GTA (13.9% aware) show slightly higher awareness than outside the GTA (10.8% aware), though all three sub-regions show very high rates of unawareness (Table 4.19). However, it must be noted that these three sample sizes are relatively small and should be interpreted with caution.

From a social resilience perspective, these knowledge gaps represent a significant barrier to French-language service access at the municipal level. Local knowledge of available resources constitutes an important component of community capacity and resilience. The very high rates of unawareness—particularly in Centre-Southwestern Ontario outside the GTA—suggest that even where French-language municipal services may exist, Francophones may not possess the local knowledge required to access them. This challenge may be particularly acute for newcomers to a region, both international immigrants and internal migrants, who have not yet developed familiarity with the local service landscape and who must navigate Ontario’s asymmetrical bilingualism without established networks of local knowledge.

4.7.3 Perceived Importance

Regional Analysis

Table 4.20 presents data on how important participants perceive access to municipal government services in French. Perceived importance of French-language access drops notably at the municipal level compared to federal and provincial services. While over 90% of participants across regions perceived French-language access to federal and provincial services as more important, this figure falls to 80.0% at the provincial scale for municipal services (Table 4.20). This 10-percentage-point decrease suggests that Francophones’ expectations and priorities around French-language services may be calibrated to the realities of service availability at each government level.

Table 4.20. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access municipal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question.

Region	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	80.0%	20.0%	100% (1076)
Eastern Ontario	89.3%	10.7%	100% (524)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	72.3%	27.7%	100% (430)
Northern Ontario	79.9%	20.1%	100% (174)
Ottawa	85.0%	15.0%	100% (387)
Toronto	66.9%	33.1%	100% (127)
GTA	76.1%	23.9%	100% (92)
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	74.2%	25.8%	100% (194)

Regional variations in perceived importance are more pronounced at the municipal level than for federal or provincial services. Eastern Ontario maintains the highest perceived importance (89.3%), consistent with the region’s stronger French-language institutional presence. Northern Ontario shows somewhat lower perceived importance (79.9%, but with a small sample size) despite the region’s relatively high rates of bilingual municipal service access. Centre-Southwestern Ontario shows the lowest perceived importance overall (72.3%), with notable variation across sub-regions: the GTA (76.1%) shows slightly higher perceived importance than outside of the GTA (74.2%) and Toronto (66.9%; Table 4.20).

The lower perceived importance in Toronto and outside of the GTA—where only two-thirds of participants indicate that French-language municipal services are of high importance—may reflect an adaptation to the limited French-language municipal service landscape. When French-language services are rarely available or visible, Francophones may adjust their expectations accordingly. However, this interpretation requires caution: lower perceived importance does not necessarily indicate lower valuing of French-language services in principle, but may instead reflect pragmatic assessments of what is realistically available.

Migration Status Analysis

Table 4.21 presents perceived importance by region and migration status. Overall, the decrease in perceived importance at the municipal level compared to federal and provincial services is consistent across migration status categories: 80.2% of Ontario-born participants and 80.7% of immigrant participants indicate high importance, although a larger percentage of domestic migrants (77.8%) indicate that it is of high importance to have access to municipal government services in French. However, regional variations by migration status emerge more clearly at the municipal level than at other government levels.

Table 4.21. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access municipal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario and sub-grouped by migration history (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question.

Region	Migration History	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	Ontario-born	80.0%	20.0%	100% (318)
	Domestic migrant	77.8%	22.2%	100% (180)
	Immigrant	80.7%	19.3%	100% (559)
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	89.3%	10.7%	100% (187)
	Immigrant	82.4%	17.6%	100% (262)
Central-Southwestern	Canadian-born	65.5%	34.5%	100% (171)
Ontario	Immigrant	76.7%	23.3%	100% (257)
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	82.3%	17.7%	100% (141)
	Immigrant	90.9%	9.1%	100% (33)

In Eastern Ontario, Canadian-born participants show higher perceived importance (89.3%) compared to immigrants (82.4%). In Northern Ontario, the pattern reverses: immigrants show higher perceived importance (90.9%) compared to Canadian-born participants (82.3%), though the small immigrant sample (N=33) once again warrants considerable caution (Table 4.21).

The most notable difference appears in Centre-Southwestern Ontario, where immigrants show higher perceived importance (76.7%) compared to Canadian-born participants (65.5%; Table 4.21). This 11.2-percentage-point gap is the largest observed across regions and government levels. This may suggest that immigrant francophones in Centre-Southwestern Ontario maintain stronger preferences toward French-language service access than Canadian-born francophones who have more experience with the region’s limited French-language service landscape, despite participants of all migration statuses having similar difficulties accessing French-language municipal government services in Central-Southwestern Ontario.

Sociodemographic Characteristics Analysis

Table 4.22 presents perceived importance by key sociodemographic characteristics. At the municipal level, housing tenure shows no significant relationship with perceived importance of accessing services in French, with owners (79.1%) and renters (80.7%) reporting similar rates—a pattern consistent with federal and provincial services despite the slight differences in language of access patterns observed earlier.

Table 4.22. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access municipal government services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristics. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question.

Key sociodemographic characteristic		More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
None selected—all participants		80.0%	20.0%	100% (1076)
Housing tenure	Owner	79.1%	20.9%	100% (507)
	Renter	80.7%	19.3%	100% (455)
Proficiency in English	Low (1-2)	93.2%	6.8%	100% (74)
	Medium (3)	87.2%	12.8%	100% (250)
	High (4-5)	76.2%	23.8%	100% (747)

Meanwhile, English proficiency shows a stronger relationship with perceived importance than observed for federal or provincial services. Participants with low English proficiency report the highest perceived importance (93.2%), while those with high proficiency report the lowest

(76.2%)—a gap of 17 percentage points. This gradient is steeper than observed for provincial services and substantially steeper than for federal services, where perceived importance remained above 90% across all proficiency levels.

This finding underscores that for Francophones with limited English proficiency, French-language municipal services are not merely preferred but essential. The combination of high perceived importance and low rates of bilingual access among this group (as observed in Table 4.17) highlights a potential vulnerability: those who most need French-language municipal services may have the fewest alternative navigation strategies available when such services are not provided.

4.8 Discussion

In this chapter, I examined Francophones' experiences accessing government services in French across Ontario's three levels of government. The findings reveal a complex landscape shaped by geographic context, legislative frameworks, migration status, and individual language capacities. This discussion synthesizes the key patterns observed, organized around the study's four research sub-questions, and considers how a social resilience lens sheds light on the strategies Francophones employ to navigate Ontario's asymmetrical bilingualism.

4.8.1 Geographic Variations Across Scales and Regions

The results from this chapter strongly confirm that regionality plays a major factor in access to French-language government services in Ontario, as documented in previous research (Charron, 2017; Charron et al., 2018; Huot et al., 2014; Veronis & Huot, 2019). However, the analysis reveals that these geographic variations operate differently depending on the level of government and the geographic scale examined.

A clear descending gradient of French-language access emerges across government levels: federal services are most accessible in French across the province, provincial services occupy a middle position, and municipal services are least accessible. This gradient reflects the

distinct legislative frameworks governing each level. Federal services, subject to the Official Languages Act, should theoretically be available in French across Ontario. Provincial services operate under the French Language Services Act's designated areas framework, creating more variable availability. Municipal services depend largely on local policy decisions and designations, resulting in the most uneven landscape of French-language provision.

At the regional scale, the inverse relationship between Eastern/Northern Ontario and Central-Southwestern Ontario persists across all three government levels, with Eastern and Northern regions consistently showing higher rates of French-only access and lower rates of English-only access. This pattern aligns with the historical geography of francophone settlement and institutional development in Ontario (Charron et al., 2018). However, the magnitude of regional differences intensifies as one moves from federal to municipal services. While regional variations in French-only access range from approximately 10-15 percentage points for federal services, they widen to nearly 20 percentage points for municipal services, with Central-Southwestern Ontario showing dramatically lower French-only access (6.8%) compared to Eastern Ontario (30.0%).

Within Central-Southwestern Ontario, the analysis reveals important variations at finer geographic scales that differ by government level. For federal services, Toronto shows higher bilingual access than the GTA or outside the GTA, suggesting that the adaptive strategy of combining French and English remains more accessible in the urban core. For provincial services, patterns are more similar across the three sub-regions. For municipal services, the three sub-regions converge on remarkably similar patterns of very low French-only access, limited bilingual access, and majority English-only access—suggesting that French-language municipal services are similarly constrained across Centre-Southwestern Ontario regardless of urban or non-urban location.

The comparison between Ottawa and Toronto shows how municipal language policy shapes the local service landscape. The gap between these two cities widens progressively from federal to provincial to municipal services, with the starkest differences appearing at the municipal level where Ottawa's official bilingual status provides structural support for French-language services that does not exist in Toronto. This finding underscores how legislative and

policy frameworks at each level create the structural conditions within which Francophones navigate service access.

4.8.2 Migration Status and Service Access Patterns

The relationship between migration status and French-language service access proves more nuanced than a simple immigrant/Canadian-born distinction might suggest. For federal and provincial services, migration status does not emerge as a major differentiating factor: Canadian-born and immigrant francophones within the same region show broadly similar patterns of language access. Regional context appears to exert a stronger influence than migration history on how Francophones navigate federal, provincial, and municipal service access.

While migration status does not significantly affect the language that participants are accessing services in, the migration status patterns observed for perceived importance show that immigrants seem to place particular value on French-language service access and maintaining French-language practices, inviting interpretation through a social resilience lens. In Central-Southwestern Ontario, immigrants show substantially higher perceived importance for French-language municipal services (76.7%) compared to Canadian-born participants (65.5%). Canadian-born francophones in the region may have adapted to the limited French-language service landscape through longer experience and may have grown more accustomed to English for purposes of convenience (Sauvé-Schenk et al., 2024), leading to a lower perceived importance. This trend of higher perceived importance among immigrants suggests an alignment toward French-language service engagement that distinguishes immigrant Francophones from their Canadian-born counterparts in this region. While both represent forms of adaptation, they reflect different orientations toward French-language maintenance in a minority context. However, it should be noted that this may be due to a lack of English proficiency, making this orientation towards French-language services less of a choice and more of a necessity.

4.8.3 Knowledge Gaps and Awareness of French-Language Services

The analysis of knowledge gaps reveals a critical barrier to French-language service access that extends beyond service availability itself. Among participants who accessed services in English only, substantial proportions were unaware that French-language options existed in their area. These knowledge gaps widen progressively across government levels: approximately one-third (34.4%) for federal services, half (50.7%) for provincial services, and nearly four-fifths (79.2%) for municipal services.

This gradient likely reflects several factors. The Official Languages Act provides a relatively clear framework for federal service provision, making it easier for Francophones to know that French-language options should be available. Provincial services, operating under the more complex geography of designated areas, present a more difficult landscape to navigate. Municipal services, with the most variable and locally-determined availability, present the greatest challenge for Francophones seeking to identify French-language options.

From a social resilience perspective, local knowledge of available resources constitutes an important component of community capacity (Qamar, 2023). These knowledge gaps therefore represent a diminishment of social resilience among Ontario's Francophones. The challenge is particularly acute for newcomers to a region—both international immigrants and internal migrants—who have been newly confronted with Ontario's asymmetrical bilingualism (Sall et al., 2021; Veronis & Huot, 2019) and who may lack the established networks and local familiarity that facilitate knowledge of French-language service availability.

The regional distribution of knowledge gaps is also significant. Within Centre-Southwestern Ontario, participants outside the GTA show the lowest awareness of French-language service availability across all three government levels. For municipal services, only 13.8% of English-only users in this sub-region knew that French-language options existed. This finding suggests that in areas where French-language services are less visible in the community landscape and where francophone institutional presence may be more limited, the local knowledge required to access available services is more difficult to acquire.

While some participants actively choose not to use French-language government services despite knowing they exist, the prevalence of knowledge gaps—particularly at the provincial and municipal levels—indicates that unawareness represents a substantial barrier. Addressing these knowledge gaps through improved information dissemination and community outreach could enhance Francophones’ capacity to access services in their preferred language where such services do exist.

4.8.4 Perceived Importance and Usage Patterns

The relationship between perceived importance and actual usage reveals both strong attachment to French-language services and pragmatic adaptation to service realities. Across all regions and migration status categories, Francophones overwhelmingly perceive French-language government services to be of high importance—over 90% for federal and provincial services, and approximately 80% for municipal services. This consistency suggests a shared valuing of French-language service access that transcends regional differences in actual access patterns.

However, the drop in perceived importance at the municipal level—from over 90% to 80%—merits attention. This decrease is most pronounced in Centre-Southwestern Ontario, particularly in Toronto (66.9%), the GTA (76.1%), and outside of the GTA (74.2%), where only two-thirds to three-quarters of participants indicate that French-language municipal services are of higher importance. This pattern may reflect an adaptation of expectations to service realities: when French-language services are rarely available or visible, Francophones may adjust their expressed priorities accordingly. As noted in the results, the very low percentages of participants in these sub-regions currently accessing municipal services in French (under 7%) may contribute to lower perceived importance.

This interpretation requires caution, however. Lower expressed importance does not necessarily indicate lower valuing of French-language services in principle. Rather, it may reflect pragmatic assessments of what is realistically available, or a coping mechanism that reduces the cognitive dissonance between valuing French-language services and navigating a context where

they are largely unavailable. Without qualitative data, the underlying motivations for these patterns cannot be fully determined.

The relationship between English proficiency and perceived importance provides additional insight. Across all three government levels, participants with lower English proficiency report higher perceived importance for French-language services. This gradient is steepest for municipal services, where 93.2% of those with low English proficiency indicate higher importance compared to 76.2% of those with high proficiency. For Francophones with limited English, French-language services represent not simply a preference but a necessity for effective service access. Their high perceived importance reflects the structural reality that alternative navigation strategies—including bilingual access—require sufficient English proficiency to be viable. This finding is particularly impactful as the other key sociodemographic variable, housing tenure, and perceived importance had seemingly very little variation when cross-tabulated together.

4.8.5 Social Resilience: Adaptive Strategies and Structural Constraints

A key component of social resilience is adaptation to adversity (Qamar, 2024). The findings in this chapter reveal several adaptive strategies Francophones employ to navigate the uneven landscape of French-language government service availability in Ontario, while also highlighting the structural factors that enable or constrain these strategies.

Bilingual service access emerges as a primary adaptive strategy. Accessing services in both French and English allows Francophones to maintain some French-language communication where available while drawing on English where necessary. The consistency of bilingual access rates across regions for federal services (41.6-50.0%) suggests this represents a common navigation strategy regardless of regional context. However, the viability of this strategy depends on both individual language capacity and structural service availability. At the municipal level, bilingual access rates drop sharply in Centre-Southwestern Ontario, suggesting that this adaptive option becomes constrained when French-language services are largely unavailable.

Participants' adaptive strategies operate within structural constraints: legislative frameworks at each government level create the conditions of possibility for French-language service access. The dramatic differences between Ottawa and Toronto at the municipal level demonstrate how policy decisions—Ottawa's bilingual designation versus Toronto's lack thereof—shape the resources available to francophones navigating service access. Individual adaptation cannot fully compensate for structural absence of French-language services.

Furthermore, the adaptive strategy of bilingual navigation is not equally available to all Francophones. Those with limited English proficiency show lower rates of bilingual access and higher reliance on French-only service pathways. For this population, the availability of French-language services represents a critical access point rather than one option among several. Their high perceived importance of French-language services across all government levels reflects this structural vulnerability.

Finally, knowledge gaps represent a barrier that constrains resilience regardless of service availability. Even where French-language services exist, Francophones who lack awareness of these options cannot draw upon them. The very high rates of unawareness at the municipal level—and particularly outside the GTA—suggest that information dissemination and community knowledge-building represent important components of a broader strategy to enhance Francophones' capacity to access services in French.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined Francophones' experiences accessing government services in French across Ontario's three levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal. The analysis confirms that regionality remains the most significant factor shaping access to French-language government services, as documented in previous research (Charron, 2017; Charron et al., 2018; Huot et al., 2014; Veronis & Huot, 2019). However, the findings also reveal important nuances in how geographic, legislative, and sociodemographic factors interact to shape service access patterns.

A descending gradient of French-language access emerges across government levels, with federal services most accessible in French, provincial services occupying a middle position, and municipal services least accessible. This gradient reflects the distinct legislative frameworks at each level: the Official Languages Act at the federal level, the French Language Services Act's designated areas framework at the provincial level, and locally-determined policies at the municipal level. The comparison between Ottawa and Toronto illustrates how these policy frameworks shape local service landscapes, with the gap between these cities widening progressively from federal to municipal services.

Knowledge gaps represent a significant barrier to French-language service access, particularly at the provincial and municipal levels. The finding that nearly 80% of participants who accessed municipal services in English only were unaware of French-language options in their area points to the importance of information dissemination and community knowledge-building as components of francophone community resilience.

Despite varying levels of access across regions and government levels, Francophones overwhelmingly perceive French-language government services to be of high importance. This enduring attachment to French-language service access, even in contexts where such services are limited, speaks to the continued significance of language rights and French-language institutions for Ontario's francophone communities.

Through a social resilience lens, the findings shed light on both the adaptive strategies Francophones employ and the structural constraints within which they operate. Bilingual service access represents a common navigation strategy that allows Francophones to maintain some French-language engagement where full French-language service provision is unavailable. However, this adaptive strategy is not equally available to all: those with limited English proficiency face more constrained options, making French-language service availability particularly critical for this population. Ultimately, individual adaptation cannot fully compensate for structural gaps in French-language service provision. Enhancing Francophones' capacity to access government services in French requires attention to both structural factors—legislative frameworks, service availability, and policy decisions—and the community-level

resources, including local knowledge and information networks, that support navigation of Ontario's uneven bilingualism landscape.

Chapter 5

Accessing Education and Healthcare Services in French Across Ontario

5.1 Introduction

Continuing on with this study's results, this chapter examines Francophones' experiences accessing and using two key public services in Ontario: education and healthcare. These services represent distinct dimensions of everyday life in Francophone Minority Communities (FMCs). Education, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels, is fundamental to language transmission and the vitality of francophone communities (Lamoureux, 2010; Sabourin et al., 2015). Healthcare, meanwhile, is essential to individual wellbeing, and the ability to communicate with providers in one's own language has significant implications for health outcomes and quality of care (Cardinal et al., 2023; Sauvé-Schenk et al., 2024; Timony et al., 2022).

Education and healthcare services operate under different policy frameworks in Ontario that shape their availability and accessibility. French-language education for children of rights-holders¹ is protected under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Ontario's 12 French-language school boards provide relatively consistent access for most to French-medium schooling across the province (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2025). Healthcare services, by contrast, are governed provincially under the French Language Services Act (FLSA), which requires only designated Public Service Agencies (PSAs) to provide services in French (GoO, 2024). Because PSA designation is voluntary and unevenly distributed, access to French

¹ According to the Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: "a rights holder is a parent or guardian who lives in Ontario, is a Canadian citizen and meets at least one of the following criteria: their native language is French, meaning French is the first language they learned and still understand, they received their elementary education in a French-language school in Canada, (or) they are the parent or guardian of a child who attends or attended a French-language elementary or secondary school in Canada" (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982).

language healthcare varies considerably across regions.² These different policy contexts lead to distinct patterns of access, as the findings in this chapter reveal.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Section 5.2 provides context on the policy landscape for French-language education and healthcare in Ontario. Section 5.3 presents sociodemographic profiles of the survey participants, demonstrating the “superdiverse” character of the sample across regions and migration status. Sections 5.4 and 5.5 present the findings for education and healthcare services respectively, each organized around language of access, knowledge gaps, and perceived importance. Section 5.6 discusses the findings through the lens of social resilience, examining how structural factors shape the patterns observed. Section 5.7 concludes the chapter.

5.2 Context

Ontario’s French-language education and healthcare services are protected under a patchwork of language laws and service-related policies at both the federal and provincial levels to ensure that French-language services are accessible to Francophones. French-language education for children of Francophones is protected under a web of policy through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Official Languages Act, and Ontario’s Education Act (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2025; Pattison-Meek, 2025), while healthcare services are protected under the FLSA in Ontario.

Although there are now policies protecting education and healthcare, this has not always been the case. Most Ontarian policies relating to language laws and French-language service provision were not implemented until the 1980s or later (Bock & Charbonneau, 2015; Miville, 2020). This decade saw the establishment of the recognition of Francophones’ rights to receive their education in French across Canada, as well as the establishment of the first iteration of the FLSA (Cartwright, 1996; Jean-Pierre, 2020). In the 1990s, the Ontario

² These PSAs include organisations such as Hôpital Montfort in Ottawa, Health Sciences North in Sudbury, Hôpital Notre-Dame Hospital in Hearst, the Réseau des services de santé en français de l’Est de l’Ontario, Sensenbrenner Hospital in Kapuskasing, and Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara, to give several examples (GoO, 2025).

government created 12 French-language school boards across Ontario (Jean-Pierre, 2020)—both French public and French Catholic systems—which are publicly funded and now house more than 480 French-language schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2025). While these are all significant steps towards a more equitable level of accessibility to services for both Anglophones and Francophones, both individuals and organizations across the province recognize there is still more to be done to create more fully accessible French-language service provision across all of Ontario (GoO, 2025; AFO, 2025).

It is well established that FMCs are diverse and that access to services in French varies depending on region and institutional completeness (Éthier & Carrier, 2022; Forgues & Maillet, 2024; Lacassagne, 2017; Timony et al., 2022). While education services, at least at the elementary and high school level, are supported to ensure Francophones can access French-language education across the province and schools can remain open (Mayer-Crittenden & Cameron, 2022), the same cannot be said about healthcare services. By law, only designated PSAs must ensure that quality service in French is offered on a permanent and continuous basis; designation guarantees that service in French and active offer will be given at that PSA (GoO, 2025). These designated PSAs have chosen and applied to be designated across Ontario by the provincial government.

As not all healthcare services are designated PSAs that offer services in French, the result is that Francophones must typically travel further to get to a French-language healthcare service, if one exists that they know of within travelling distance, or must attempt to navigate the English healthcare system. The latter option is fraught with challenges, and reports show that Francophones experience service continuity breakdowns and worse health outcomes after not being able to access French-language services (Batista et al., 2021; Carr et al., 2024; Éthier & Carrier, 2022; Forgues & Maillet, 2024; Savard et al., 2021; Timony et al., 2022). These challenges are also typically made worse for francophone immigrants, as they tend to have less knowledge of how to access Canadian services generally, let alone finding linguistically appropriate ones in a minority context (Esses et al., 2021; Éthier & Carrier, 2022; Nakhaie, 2018).

5.3 Sociodemographic Profiles

To provide additional context for the results presented in sections 5.4 and 5.5, and to further support the argument that Ontario’s francophone population is superdiverse, brief sociodemographic profiles of the sample are presented below, in continuity with the profiles introduced in Chapters 3 and 4. Two key sociodemographic characteristics—the size of the participants’ household and their level of proficiency in English—were selected for the analysis because of their apparent influence on participants’ responses. These two key characteristics, along with regions and migration history, form the basis of analysis for Chapter 5.

Household Size

Generally, Canadian-born participants tend to live in smaller households, while immigrant participants more often live in larger and more varied household arrangements. Building on the sociodemographic differences outlined earlier, Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show that Canadian-born participants (both Ontario-born and domestic migrants) most commonly live in two-person households, whereas immigrant participants display a wider distribution with no single ‘typical’ size, including larger households of four or more people. These patterns hold across regions, with only minor variation among immigrant households.

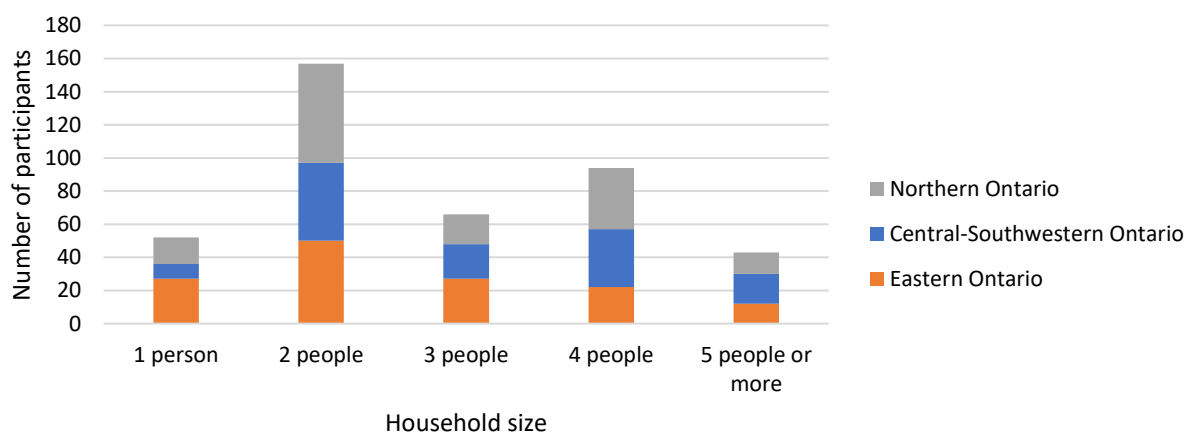


Figure 5.1. Household size among Ontario-born participants by region of residence (N = 415)

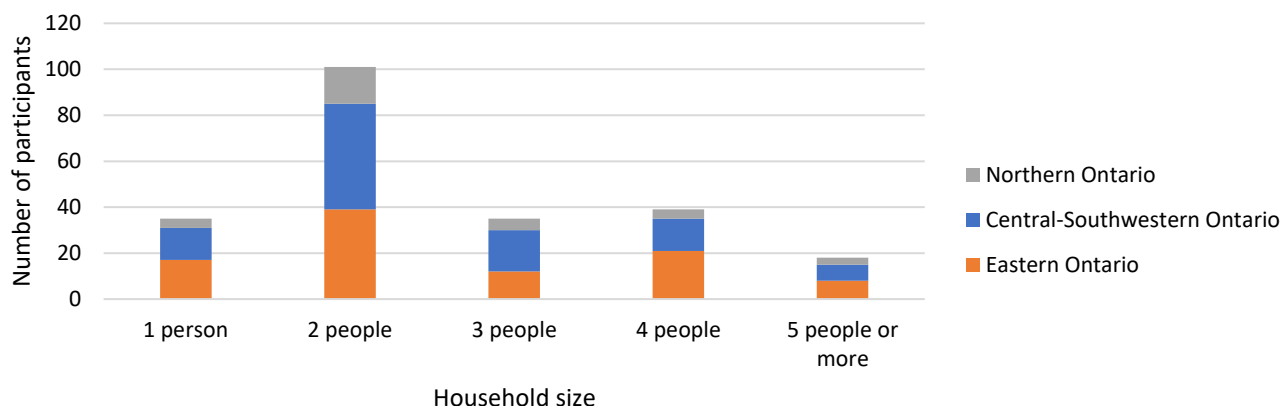


Figure 5.2. Household size among domestic migrant participants by region of residence (N = 228)

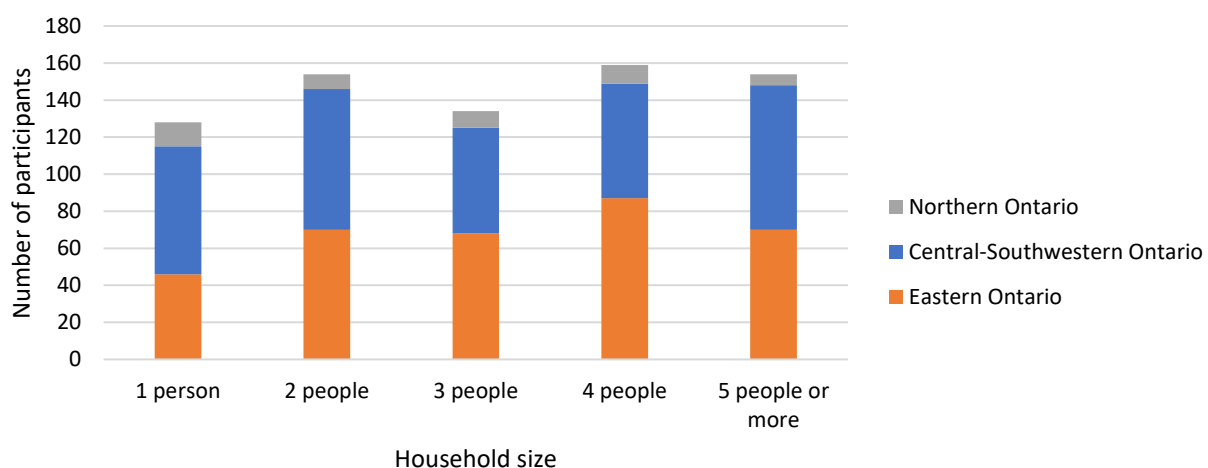


Figure 5.3. Household size among immigrant participants by region of residence (N = 728).

Household size is relevant to the analysis of education services in particular. Participants living in larger households—especially those with four or more people—are more likely to have children requiring access to daycare and schooling, which shapes their engagement with education services.

5.4 Results Relating to Education Services

This section examines Francophones' experiences accessing education services—including daycare, elementary, and secondary schooling—across Ontario. Education is foundational to language transmission and community vitality in francophone minority settings (Bock & Charbonneau, 2015; Mousseau, 2010). As discussed in Section 5.2, French-language education is relatively well protected through Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Ontario's 12 French-language school boards provide coverage across most of the province. This policy framework creates conditions that differ markedly from healthcare, where French-language service availability is more uneven.

The analysis addresses three dimensions of service access, corresponding to the study's research sub-questions. First, it documents the language(s) participants use when accessing education services, revealing how patterns vary across regions (sub-question 1) and between immigrant and Canadian-born participants (sub-question 2). Second, it examines knowledge gaps among those who access services in English, asking whether they are aware that French-language options exist (sub-question 3). Third, it explores the perceived importance participants place on French-language education and how this relates to their actual usage patterns (sub-question 4).

Through the lens of social resilience, these three dimensions document different aspects of Francophones' capacity to access services in their language. Language of access reveals how structural factors, including service availability and geographic location, shape everyday practices. Knowledge gaps point to barriers that may prevent francophones from using services that exist, while perceived importance speaks to the value communities place on French-language services, which itself constitutes a resource for community resilience.

5.4.1 Language Used to Access Education Services

Variation by Region

Of all the services examined in this study, education services showed the most consistent patterns across regions and sociodemographic groups. Across Ontario, over half of respondents indicated that they access education services exclusively in French, while a smaller proportion use both French and English (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing education services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	59.1%	26.9%	12.6%	1.4%	100% (906)	60.6%	39.4%
Eastern Ontario	63.6%	27.0%	7.8%	1.6%	100% (374)	63.5%	36.5%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	51.0%	28.1%	19.1%	1.8%	100% (388)	66.8%	33.2%
Northern Ontario	67.1%	24.8%	8.1%	0.0%	100% (161)	64.7%	35.3%
Ottawa	61.1%	28.8%	8.4%	1.6%	100% (309)	64.4%	35.6%
Toronto	51.9%	26.8%	20.4%	0.9%	100% (108)	61.9%	38.1%
GTA	53.8%	27.5%	16.5%	2.2%	100% (91)	76.5%	23.5%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	49.3%	29.3%	19.3%	2.1%	100% (170)	65.1%	34.9%

At the regional level, Northern Ontario (67.1%) and Eastern Ontario (63.6%) show the highest rates of French-only access to education services. These two regions have historically stronger francophone institutional presence and, in the case of Northern Ontario, higher concentrations of francophone populations in certain communities. This institutional completeness—a key structural factor in the social resilience framework—appears to facilitate

French-language service use. Central-Southwestern Ontario shows lower French-only access (51.0%) but notably higher English-only use (19.1%) compared to the other two regions (Table 5.1).

Examining the more local scales within Central-Southwestern Ontario reveals important variations. Toronto shows a pattern more similar to the regional average with 51.9% French-only access, but differs with 20.4% English-only access. However, when comparing the GTA as a whole to areas outside the GTA, a small difference emerges: participants outside the GTA report higher English-only access (29.4%) compared to those within the GTA (27.5%; Table 5.1). This pattern suggests that despite the challenges of accessing French-language services in a large, predominantly anglophone metropolitan area, the GTA's size and institutional diversity may actually provide more French-language education options than smaller communities in the surrounding region. Meanwhile, outside the GTA, the francophone institutional landscape is more uneven, with French-language schools likely less accessible or less visible to potential users—which may explain both the lower rates of French-only access and the notably higher reliance on English-only services.

The comparison between Ottawa and Toronto is also instructive, though it should be noted that the Toronto sample (N = 108) is considerably smaller than the Ottawa sample (N = 309), so the Toronto findings should be interpreted with some caution. Despite Ottawa's status as a bilingual national capital with a strong francophone presence, the rates of French-only access are not dramatically different (61.1% vs. 51.9% in Toronto). However, Ottawa shows notably lower English-only access (8.4% vs. 20.4% in Toronto), suggesting that the bilingual infrastructure in Ottawa may make it easier for families to avoid relying solely on English-language services.

Across all regions, an important pattern emerges: the proportion of participants accessing services bilingually is substantial (ranging from 22.1% to 29.4%), and in most cases equals or exceeds the proportion accessing in English only. This suggests that even where English-language services are used, many francophone families maintain connections to French-language education. This bilingual navigation may represent a strategic response to structural constraints: families accessing whatever combination of services best meets their needs within

the available institutional landscape.

Variation by Migration Status

Comparing immigrant and Canadian-born participants reveals distinct patterns in how these groups access education services (Table 5.2). Due to sample size limitations, this comparison is presented at the provincial and regional levels only; the smaller sample sizes at metropolitan and sub-regional scales do not permit reliable disaggregation by migration status.

Table 5.2. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing education services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by migrant status (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Migration history	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	Ontario-born	66.7%	22.5%	10.4%	0.4%	100% (240)	57.6%	42.4%
	Domestic migrant	63.7%	26.5%	9.8%	0.0%	100% (102)	44.5%	55.5%
	Immigrant	54.6%	29.0%	14.2%	2.2%	100% (551)	72.8%	27.2%
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	77.6%	15.9%	6.5%	0.0%	100% (107)	45.5%	54.5%
	Immigrant	57.8%	31.6%	7.8%	2.7%	100% (256)	75.7%	24.3%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	50.8%	31.5%	16.9%	0.8%	100% (130)	55.8%	44.2%
	Immigrant	50.8%	26.0%	20.9%	2.3%	100% (258)	74.3%	25.7%
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	74.8%	21.4%	3.9%	0.0%	100% (103)	58.9%	41.1%
	Immigrant	56.3%	34.4%	9.4%	0.0%	100% (32)	87.2%	12.8%

At the provincial level, immigrant participants show lower rates of French-only access (54.6% versus 66.7% or 63.7%) but higher bilingual access (29.0% versus 22.5% or 26.5%) compared to Canadian-born participants. This finding may initially seem counterintuitive—one might expect newcomers to face greater barriers to accessing bilingual services across the province. However, this pattern likely reflects two factors. First, minority language rights have

been hard fought for by French-Canadians and choosing to enroll ones' child in a French-language school or daycare may be an ideological choice as much as an educational one. Second, the higher bilingual rate among immigrants suggests a navigation strategy: newcomer families may be learning to access the education system through both official languages as they become familiar with available options.

These patterns are largely consistent across Eastern and Northern Ontario. In both regions, Canadian-born participants showing much higher French-only access (77.6% and 74.8%) than immigrants, while immigrants show higher bilingual use (31.6% and 34.4%). The difference is particularly pronounced in Eastern Ontario, where immigrants show substantially higher bilingual use (31.6% vs. 15.9%)—perhaps reflecting the region's more robust French-language infrastructure, which provides more opportunities for families to engage with French-language education even while also using some English-language services. Northern Ontario presents a different picture, with Canadian-born and immigrant participants having approximately equivalent percentages no matter what language the service was accessed in.

Variation by Household Size and English Proficiency

As stated above in section 5.3, two key sociodemographic characteristics emerged as particularly relevant to understanding variations in education service access: household size and proficiency in English (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing education services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Key sociodemographic characteristics		Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total respondents (N)	Responded	Did not respond
None selected—all participants		59.1%	26.9%	12.6%	1.4%	100% (906)	60.6%	39.4%
Household size	1-2 people	57.3%	29.4%	11.8%	1.5%	100% (262)	46.3%	53.7%
	3 people	54.0%	27.0%	16.8%	2.2%	100% (185)	73.4%	26.6%
	4+ people	62.3%	25.6%	11.0%	1.1%	100% (454)	84.5%	15.5%
English Proficiency	Low (1-2)	66.0%	18.1%	14.9%	1.1%	100% (94)	76.9%	23.1%
	Medium (3)	62.5%	25.4%	10.9%	1.2%	100% (248)	72.8%	27.2%
	High (4-5)	56.4%	29.0%	13.0%	1.6%	100% (562)	57.2%	42.8%

Household size shows a relationship with French-only access to education services. As household size increases, so does the proportion of participants accessing services exclusively in French: from 57.3% among those in one- to two-person households to 62.3% in households of four or more people. This pattern is straightforward to interpret: larger households are more likely to include school-age children, and thus more likely to be actively engaged with education services. The relatively low rate among smaller households reflects that many of these participants do not currently have children using education services. Notably, bilingual access decreases with household size (from 29.4% to 25.6%; Table 5.3), suggesting that families with children choose to primarily engage with the education system in French alone.

English proficiency reveals a more nuanced pattern that speaks directly to the resources and constraints shaping service access. Participants with low English proficiency (levels 1–2 on a 5-point scale) show the highest rate of French-only access to education services (66.0%), compared to 62.5% for those with medium proficiency and 56.4% for those with high proficiency. This gradient can be understood through the social resilience framework: for

participants with limited English, French-language education services are not merely a preference but a necessity—a critical resource that enables their children’s schooling. Those with higher English proficiency have more flexibility to navigate either language system.

However, it is important to note that higher English proficiency does not simply translate into greater use of English-only services. In fact, English-only access is highest among those with *low* English proficiency (14.9%) and lowest among those with *high* proficiency (13.0%). This seemingly paradoxical finding may reflect the particular challenges faced by recent newcomers with limited English: they may lack the knowledge or networks to locate French-language services, and thus end up in English-language settings despite the language barrier. Meanwhile, participants with higher English proficiency show proportionally higher rates of bilingual service use (29.0% vs. 18.1% for low proficiency), suggesting that language competence in both official languages enables more flexible navigation across institutional settings.

These findings should be interpreted with some caution regarding the low English proficiency group, which includes only 94 participants—considerably smaller than the medium (N = 248) and high (N = 562) proficiency groups. As noted in the sociodemographic profiles (Section 5.3), lower English proficiency is more common among immigrant participants, particularly recent arrivals. The patterns observed for this group may therefore reflect the specific circumstances of newcomers still in the early stages of settlement.

5.4.2 Knowledge Gaps Related to Accessing Education Services in French

Of all the services examined in this analysis, education services were among those most widely known among participants to be available in French across the province. In fact, knowledge gaps relating to accessing this service type in French can only be shown for the whole province because there are not enough participants across the smaller-scale regions who do not access services at least partly in French (Table 5.4). Over half of the participants who responded that they used English only to access education services also responded that they are aware that these types of services exist in French in their region, but choose not to use them.

Table 5.4. Percentage (%) of participants (N) across Ontario who responded that they only spoke English when accessing education services divided based on whether they know that these services exist in French in their area. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Knows this service exists in French	Does not know this service exists in French	Total (N)	Question participation	
				Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	56.9%	43.1%	100% (66)	7.3%	92.7%

5.4.3 Perceived Importance of Being Able to Access Education Services in French

Overall, education services were one of services that participants deemed to be quite important to have access to in French. Regardless of region, over half of participants who responded answered that it was more important (versus less important) to have access to these types of services in French (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access education services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario.

Region	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	86.8%	13.2%	100% (1262)
Eastern Ontario	85.6%	14.4%	100% (535)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	84.8%	15.2%	100% (519)
Northern Ontario	92.2%	7.8%	100% (205)
Ottawa	67.4%	32.6%	100% (417)
Toronto	84.0%	16.0%	100% (156)
GTA	80.6%	19.4%	100% (108)
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	87.6%	12.4%	100% (234)

All regions, with the exception of Ottawa, have a percentage of over 82% of respondents saying that it is more important to have access to education services in French. Ottawa, on the

other hand, has only 67.4% of participants indicating that it is more important to be able to access these services in French (Table 5.5). As Ottawa had a high, but not the highest, percentage of individuals accessing education services in French only (Table 5.1), this could perhaps be due to the fact that Ottawa's French-language education services are more accessible than other regions, and participants do not place as much importance on having them because they are more available.

When breaking down the perceived importance of having access to French-language education services into both regional and migration status sub-groups, further trends emerge (Table 5.6). The three larger regions of Ontario show high percentages with, again, above 82% responding that it is more important for each group to have access to French-language education services. However, Table 5.6 shows that Canadian-born participants place more importance on having access to French-language education services than immigrant participants.

Table 5.6. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access education services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario and sub-grouped by migration status.

Region	Migration History	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	Ontario-born	91.5%	8.5%	100% (365)
	Domestic migrant	91.7%	8.3%	100% (192)
	Immigrant	82.8%	17.2%	100% (687)
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	91.8%	8.2%	100% (194)
	Immigrant	81.6%	18.4%	100% (326)
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	87.7%	12.3%	100% (204)
	Immigrant	83.1%	16.9%	100% (314)
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	96.8%	3.2%	100% (156)
	Immigrant	90.0%	10.0%	100% (40)

When looking more closely at perceived importance as it relates to key sociodemographic characteristics, these same trends can be seen (Table 5.7). The data reveal

that neither the number of individuals in a household nor proficiency in English factor into the importance that participants place on French-language education services. Despite fluctuations in the percentage of participants accessing this service in French (Table 5.3), participants across sub-groups all agreed that this service is important to have in French (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access education services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic(s).

Sociodemographic characteristic		More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
None selected—all participants		86.8%	13.2%	100% (1262)
Number of Individuals in Household	1-2 people	86.9%	13.1%	100% (548)
	3 people	83.6%	16.4%	100% (219)
	4+ people	88.6%	11.4%	100% (196)
Proficiency in English	Low (1-2)	84.9%	15.1%	100% (106)
	Medium (3)	87.3%	12.7%	100% (299)
	High (4-5)	87.4%	12.6%	100% (844)

5.5 Results Relating to Healthcare Services

5.5.1 Language Used to Access Healthcare Services

Variation by Region

Regardless of geography, a much lower percentage of participants reported accessing healthcare services in French than in English, or a mixture of both official languages (Table 5.8). Across all geographies, the minority of participants who responded to this question answered that they use French only to access healthcare services. Instead, most participants used some variation of either English-only or bilingually to access healthcare services. For participants who used French in some context (either only French or bilingually), those in Eastern and Northern Ontario tended to use the most French.

Table 5.8. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing healthcare services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by region of Ontario. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that region who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
	French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	18.6%	46.4%	33.8%	1.2%	100% (1189)	75.1%	24.9%
Eastern Ontario	25.1%	54.4%	18.9%	1.5%	100% (518)	87.9%	12.1%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	11.1%	31.9%	56.0%	0.8%	100% (477)	81.7%	18.3%
Northern Ontario	19.5%	59.5%	19.5%	1.5%	100% (205)	82.3%	17.7%
Ottawa	22.5%	55.6%	20.3%	1.7%	100% (423)	88.1%	11.9%
Toronto	12.2%	37.4%	49.6%	0.7%	100% (139)	78.0%	22.0%
GTA	9.0%	30.0%	60.0%	1.0%	100% (100)	76.5%	23.5%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	10.7%	29.8%	58.1%	1.4%	100% (215)	82.4%	17.6%

Variation by Migrant Status

When breaking the three major regions in Ontario into migration related status, slightly more variation appears to exist between regions and groups (Table 5.9) than in Table 5.8. With the exception of Northern Ontario's immigrant sub-group (which should be yet again interpreted with some caution, given that the sample size is quite small and should only be used for descriptive purposes to complete all sub-groups of the three regions), all immigrant sub-groups had a higher percentage of speaking only French when accessing healthcare services. For Canadian-born participants shown in Table 5.9, a similar trend can be seen in which more Canadian-born respondents are accessing healthcare services bilingually than immigrants. Central-Southwestern Ontario had an overall much higher percentage of all participants (both

Canadian-born and immigrant) accessing healthcare services in English when compared to the other regions.

Table 5.9. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing healthcare services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by migrant status (Ontario-born, domestic migrant; combined as Canadian-born for regional geographies due to small sample sizes; or immigrant). Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Migration history	Language spoken when using service					Question participation	
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	Ontario-born	14.3%	49.6%	35.9%	0.3%	100% (343)	82.3%	17.7%
	Domestic migrant	11.9%	57.4%	30.7%	0.0%	100% (202)	88.2%	11.8%
	Immigrant	22.7%	41.6%	33.6%	2.1%	100% (622)	82.1%	17.9%
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	16.7%	62.3%	21.1%	0.0%	100% (204)	86.8%	13.2%
	Immigrant	30.6%	49.8%	16.8%	2.7%	100% (297)	87.9%	12.1%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	5.0%	33.2%	61.8%	0.0%	100% (181)	83.0%	17.0%
	Immigrant	14.5%	31.6%	52.1%	1.8%	100% (282)	81.3%	18.7%
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	19.4%	64.4%	15.4%	0.7%	100% (149)	85.2%	14.8%
	Immigrant	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	0.0%	100% (36)	76.7%	23.3%

Variation by Household Size and English Proficiency

Similarly to Tables 5.8 and 5.9, Table 5.10 shows which language is being spoken by participants when accessing healthcare services, but this time grouped by sociodemographic characteristic(s). Once again, French-only tends to be the lowest percentage of all three language options shown for each characteristic, with the exception of having low proficiency in English. Otherwise, for all other characteristics shown in Table 5.10, most participants accessed services bilingually.

Table 5.10. Percentage of participants speaking French only, English only, bilingually (FR/EN), or in other language(s) when accessing healthcare services based on survey responses to which language they use to access said service, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Key sociodemographic characteristics		Language spoken when using service				Question participation		
		French Only	Bilingual (FR/EN)	English Only	Other language(s)	Total (N)	Responded	Did not respond
None selected—all participants		18.6%	46.4%	33.8%	1.2%	100% (1189)	75.1%	24.9%
Household size	1-2 people	16.9%	49.9%	32.1%	1.1%	100% (527)	80.5%	19.5%
	3 people	22.0%	40.0%	37.0%	1.0%	100% (205)	81.3%	18.7%
	4+ people	19.2%	45.6%	33.8%	1.3%	100% (452)	85.0%	15.0%
English Proficiency	Low (1-2)	46.0%	31.0%	20.7%	2.3%	100% (87)	71.9%	28.1%
	Medium (3)	28.4%	43.6%	26.6%	1.4%	100% (282)	83.0%	17.0%
	High (4-5)	12.3%	49.1%	37.5%	0.4%	100% (818)	83.4%	16.6%

5.5.2 Knowledge Gaps Related to Accessing Healthcare Services in French

As many more participants used healthcare services in English only than for education services, there are more regions presented in Table 5.11 than in Table 5.4. Since only Southwestern-Central Ontario regions had 30% or more of their participants indicating that they used only English to access healthcare services, only these regions have been examined for knowledge gaps. Although the differences are slight, the further outside of Toronto, the less participants seem to know that healthcare services in French exist in their region. More participants in Toronto know that services in French are available in their region, but choose not to use them than in the GTA, and even fewer participants in Central-Southwestern Ontario know that healthcare services in French exist.

Table 5.11. Percentage (%) of participants (N) across Ontario who responded that they only spoke English when accessing healthcare services divided based on whether they know that these services exist in French in their area. Totals (N) are presented to show the number of participants who responded to the survey question, followed by the overall percentage of individuals in that group who responded or did not respond to show participation.

Region	Knows this service exists in French	Does not know this service exists in French	Total (N)	Question participation	
				Responded	Did not respond
Ontario	27.6%	72.4%	100% (414)	26.1%	73.9%
Central-Southwestern Ontario	22.7%	77.3%	100% (272)	46.9%	53.1%
GTA	16.7%	83.3%	100% (60)	50.4%	49.6%
Toronto	31.9%	68.1%	100% (72)	41.6%	58.4%
Central-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	20.7%	79.3%	100% (140)	48.3%	51.7%

5.5.3 Perceived Importance of Being Able to Access Healthcare Services in French

Although most participants do not access healthcare services in only French, they agree that it is important to be able to have access to healthcare services in French (Table 5.12). Across the three major regions in Ontario, over 80% of participants from each region deem that it is more important (versus less important) to have access to healthcare services in French. However, participants perceive French-language healthcare to be less important in the more urban sub-regions of Toronto and the GTA in Southwestern-Central Ontario when compared to other regions across the province.

When taking migration status into consideration (Table 5.13), one can see that there are no significant differences between regions like in Table 5.12. Across both immigrant and Canadian-born groups in the three major regions, there are no significant differences.

Table 5.12. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access healthcare services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario.

Region	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	85.5%	14.5%	100% (1184)
Eastern Ontario	89.3%	10.7%	100% (524)
Centre-Southwestern Ontario	80.6%	19.4%	100% (470)
Northern Ontario	84.8%	15.2%	100% (191)
Ottawa	88.8%	11.2%	100% (430)
Toronto	75.7%	24.3%	100% (140)
GTA	66.9%	33.1%	100% (239)
Centre-Southwestern Ontario outside of the GTA	84.8%	15.2%	100% (231)

Table 5.13. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access healthcare services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by region of Ontario and sub-grouped by migration history.

Region	Migration History	More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
Ontario	Ontario-born	84.1%	15.9%	100% (345)
	Domestic migrant	87.5%	12.5%	100% (200)
	Immigrant	85.9%	14.1%	100% (618)
Eastern Ontario	Canadian-born	88.3%	11.7%	100% (206)
	Immigrant	89.7%	10.3%	100% (301)
Centre-Southwestern Ontario	Canadian-born	80.7%	19.2%	100% (197)
	Immigrant	81.1%	18.9%	100% (281)
Northern Ontario	Canadian-born	85.8%	14.2%	100% (148)
	Immigrant	90.9%	9.1%	100% (33)

Similarly, looking at the key sociodemographic characteristics identified for this chapter in Table 5.14, there are no notable outliers in the perceived importance of healthcare. Overall, most participants agree that it is important to have access to French-language healthcare. The percentages of participants with low to medium proficiency in English that indicated it was more important that accessing these services in French are slightly higher; this makes sense as those with lower English proficiency may have a more difficult time navigating the healthcare system in a language that they may not be comfortable using, particularly with specialized medical jargon.

Table 5.14. Percentage (%) of participants (N) who responded that being able to access healthcare services in French is either more important or less important, grouped by key sociodemographic characteristic(s).

Sociodemographic characteristic		More Important	Less Important	Total (N)
None selected—all participants		85.5%	14.5%	100% (1184)
Number of Individuals in Household	1-2 people	86.8%	13.2%	100% (524)
	3 people	84.5%	15.5%	100% (207)
Proficiency in English	4+ people	84.2%	15.8%	100% (443)
	Low (1-2)	90.7%	9.3%	100% (86)
	Medium (3)	90.5%	9.6%	100% (149)
	High (4-5)	83.2%	16.8%	100% (700)

5.6 Discussion

Despite both being public services, there are important differences between how francophones across Ontario access, use, and perceive education and healthcare services across Ontario. Both are essential services, but for different reasons to Ontario's francophone community. Going back to its connection to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the right to education in both official languages is an inherent right in Canada and is directly connected to language vitality (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2016). Education services are essential to the survival and transmission of the French language in FMCs (Gérin-Lajoie, 2020; Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2016). Meanwhile, being able to access

healthcare services in French can be essential to *survival* for Francophones. Being able to access French-language healthcare means that Francophones with a lower level of English proficiency or simply less familiarity with specialized medical jargon are able to fully understand their diagnosis, ask questions to their care provider, and results in improved overall satisfaction related to the medical experience for both the patient and provider (Batista et al., 2021; Sauvé-Schenk et al., 2024; Timony et al., 2022).

While both education and healthcare services are available in French in Ontario, their regional availability differs between the two services. Education services are relatively consistently available and used across the province in French, but the same cannot be said of healthcare services. As seen in Tables 5.1 and 5.8, 49.4-67.1% of participants across regions speak French only when accessing education services (Table 5.1), while only 9.9-25.1% of participants across regions speak French only when accessing healthcare services (Table 5.8). In the Eastern and Northern Ontario regions, participants more commonly indicated that they accessed healthcare services bilingually, while the majority of participants in Central-Southwestern Ontario accessed healthcare services in English only (Table 5.8).

As there are fewer French-language healthcare services that have been reported to be available in Central-Southwestern Ontario as compared to the rest of the province, this is not necessarily a surprise (Carr et al., 2024; Timony et al., 2022). However, this is an indication that participants in this region are likely facing more social adversity, as support from appropriate service provision is a factor of good social resilience (Qamar, 2023). The fact that 56.0% (Table 5.8) of participants from Central-Southwestern Ontario who spoke only English when accessing healthcare services and 77.3% (Table 5.11) indicated that they did not know that any healthcare services existed in French in their area is concerning and means a large portion of participants from Central-Southwestern Ontario are facing significant adversity related to accessing linguistically-appropriate healthcare. In Eastern and Northern Ontario, the fact that participants are accessing healthcare services bilingually could either be a measure of adversity or social resilience: without qualitative evidence of how and why these services are being accessed bilingually, this study cannot say if participants are choosing to access some services in English

and some in French of their own volition or due to a lack of some types of healthcare services in their region in French.

Although education and healthcare services differed in whether they were available between regions, what does not change much between the two types of services, regions, migration related status, and sociodemographic characteristics, is that most participants perceive accessing these services in French to be of high importance. In all regions except for Ottawa, 80.6-92.2% of participants indicated that they thought having access to education services in French was of high perceived importance to them. In Ottawa, only 67.4% of participants indicated that it would be of high importance. As Ottawa is an officially bilingual city (City of Ottawa, 2001) and there are a wide variety of other French-language activities to do with children to allow them to engage with French (Charron, 2017; Huot et al., 2023; Jezak, 2018), Ottawa residents experience less adversity in this sense than in other regions of the province—particularly Central-Southwestern Ontario and its smaller sub-regions. In regions with larger non-French-speaking populations and less promotion of French in everyday life, Francophones face greater adversity (Charron, 2017) and may therefore be placing greater importance on having French-language education services available as a tool to improve their social resilience.

There is also a difference in perceived importance between immigrants and Canadian-born participants. A higher percentage of Canadian-born participants across Ontario and the three major regions indicated that it was of high importance to be able to access education services in French than immigrants. This is unsurprising as French-Canadians have fought for their right to French-language education, and both the higher rates of perceived importance and Canadian-born participants accessing education services in French-only tend to be ideologically-driven (Bock & Charbonneau, 2015; Bock & Frenette, 2019). Although having a higher perceived importance being placed on a service being available in French may be tied to that service being a tool for greater social resilience, should participants be minoritized on multiple fronts (a “minority within a minority” as coined by Madibbo in her 2007 book), it could also be that not accessing a service in French is a tool for social resilience for some groups of Francophones. Francophone immigrants may consider it to be a better choice to enroll their

children in English-language schooling so that they are fluent in English and are able to integrate into and seek opportunities in anglophone Ontario (Sall et al., 2021).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed how Francophones in Ontario access and use public services, along with factors that impact access, through the framework of superdiversity and social resilience. Accessing education and healthcare services in French Ontario is perceived to be of high importance to most participants, whether or not there is the ability to access the service in French in their region. This access varies based primarily on regionality, with some regions having more access to French-language services than others. I will now move to my concluding chapter to look at this thesis' contributions to the overall body of literature on FMCs, service access, and immigration, along with research limitations and future research directions.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how francophone residents of Ontario access and use public services in French, and what factors explain variations in these patterns. Drawing on survey data collected from 1584 francophone respondents across the province in 2023–2024, the study documented Francophones’ experiences with government services (at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels), education services (including daycares and schools), and healthcare services. The analysis compared patterns across three regions of Ontario—Eastern, Northern, and Centre-Southwestern—and across three migration status groups: Ontario-born Francophones, domestic migrants from other Canadian provinces, and international immigrants. Guided by a conceptual framework combining superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007, 2023) and social resilience (Qamar, 2023, 2024; Preston et al., 2022, 2025a, 2025b), this study addressed empirical limitations in the existing literature, which has predominantly consisted of small-scale, locality-specific qualitative studies examining either Canadian-born or immigrant Francophones, but rarely both in comparative perspective and across multiple regions simultaneously. This concluding chapter summarizes the study’s key findings in relation to the research objectives and questions, discusses the contributions of this research, considers implications for policy and practice, and identifies limitations and directions for future research.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

Three research objectives guided this study: (1) to document Francophones’ everyday experiences of accessing and using services in French in Ontario and across different regions; (2) to compare access and usage across migration status; and (3) to identify and compare factors that facilitate and/or hinder access to services in French. These objectives were operationalized through four research sub-questions, and the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 are synthesized below in relation to each.

How do patterns of access and usage vary across different geographic scales and between regions?

Regionality emerged as the most significant factor shaping access to French-language public services across Ontario, confirming and extending previous research (Charron, 2017; Charron et al., 2018; Huot et al., 2014; Veronis & Huot, 2019). An inverse relationship between Eastern/Northern Ontario and Centre-Southwestern Ontario persisted across all service types: Eastern and Northern Ontario consistently showed higher rates of French-only access and lower rates of English-only access, while the reverse was true for Centre-Southwestern Ontario. This pattern reflects the historical geography of francophone settlement and institutional development, as well as differences in the degree of institutional completeness across regions (Gilbert, 2010; Mougeon et al., 2018).

For government services specifically, a descending gradient of French-language access emerged across jurisdictional levels: federal services were most accessible in French, provincial services occupied a middle position, and municipal services were least accessible. This gradient corresponds directly to the distinct legislative frameworks governing each level—the Official Languages Act at the federal level, the French Language Services Act’s designated areas framework at the provincial level, and locally determined policies at the municipal level. The comparison between Ottawa and Toronto illustrated this dynamic starkly: the gap between the two cities widened progressively from federal to municipal services, reflecting Ottawa’s bilingual designation and more complete francophone institutional infrastructure.

Education services stood out as the most consistently accessed in French across all regions, with French-only access rates ranging from 49.4% to 67.1% across geographies (Table 5.1)—a pattern that reflects the relatively strong legislative protections for French-language schooling under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Healthcare services, by contrast, showed the lowest rates of French-only access (9.9% to 25.1%; Table 5.8), with most participants accessing healthcare either bilingually or in English only. Central-Southwestern Ontario was the region that showed particularly low French-only access to healthcare (11.1%), with the majority of participants in this region accessing healthcare in English only (56.0%).

How does migration status shape patterns of service access and usage?

The relationship between migration status and service access proved more nuanced than a simple immigrant/Canadian-born distinction might suggest. For federal and provincial government services, migration status did not emerge as a major differentiating factor: Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones within the same region showed broadly similar patterns of language access. Regional context appeared to exert a stronger influence than migration history on how Francophones navigate these services.

However, migration status became a more significant factor at the municipal level, particularly in Centre-Southwestern Ontario. In this region, immigrant participants showed higher rates of French-only access to municipal services, while Canadian-born participants reported much higher English-only access. This pattern suggests that immigrant Francophones may be more actively seeking opportunities to use French in service contexts—whether by necessity due to limited English proficiency or by deliberate orientation toward French-language maintenance—while Canadian-born Francophones in the region have adapted over time to the limited French-language service landscape (Sauvé-Schenk et al., 2024).

For all types of governmental services, it should be noted that a range of factors — including migration status, but also life course stage, household composition, employment status, and health needs — will influence which specific services individuals will access within a given level of government, and thus in turn whether they are able to access these services in French. For example, immigrant participants may be more likely to access immigration and citizenship services at the federal level, while Canadian-born participants may interact more frequently with pension or employment insurance programs; similarly, participants with school-age children will engage with education services differently than those without. As this study did not ask participants to identify what type of federal, provincial, or municipal services they were accessing, there may be some errors made in generalizing these services into their respective level of government and how they are accessed.

For education services, immigrant participants showed higher rates of both French-only and bilingual access at the provincial level compared to Canadian-born participants. This finding

likely reflects, in part, that immigrant households are more likely to include school-age children. The higher bilingual access among immigrants suggests a navigation strategy in which newcomer families engage with the education system through both official languages as they become familiar with available options.

For healthcare, immigrant participants showed higher French-only access across the province, while Canadian-born participants more commonly accessed services bilingually. English proficiency, which intersects with migration status, emerged as a key factor: participants with lower English proficiency relied more heavily on French-only service pathways, for whom French-language services represent not merely a preference but a necessity.

Among Francophones who access services in English, what proportion are (un)aware of French-language options?

Knowledge gaps represented a significant and underappreciated barrier to French-language service access. Among participants who accessed services in English only, substantial proportions were unaware that French-language options existed in their area. These gaps widened progressively across government levels: approximately one-third (34.4%) for federal services, half (50.6%) for provincial services, and nearly four-fifths (79.2%) for municipal services. For healthcare, 72.4% of English-only users were unaware of French-language options in their region, with this figure rising to 77.3% in Centre-Southwestern Ontario.

The gradient in knowledge gaps likely reflects the increasing complexity and decreasing visibility of French-language service provision as one moves from federal to municipal levels. It also suggests that in regions where French-language services are less visible in the community landscape—particularly Centre-Southwestern Ontario outside the GTA—the local knowledge required to access available services is more difficult to acquire.

How does the perceived importance of French-language services relate to actual usage patterns?

A notable gap existed between the high value Francophones place on French-language services and their actual usage patterns. Across all regions and migration status categories, participants overwhelmingly perceived French-language services to be of high importance—over 90% for federal and provincial government services (excluding the GTA; Table 4.6), approximately 84-87% for education and healthcare, and approximately 80% for municipal services. This consistency suggests a shared attachment to French-language service access that transcends regional differences in actual access. However, perceived importance dropped at the municipal level, particularly in Toronto (66.9%), possibly reflecting an adaptation of expectations to the limited service realities in this area. Similarly, Ottawa showed lower perceived importance for education (67.4%), which may indicate that when services are readily available, participants feel less need to emphasize their importance. English proficiency showed a consistent relationship with perceived importance across all service types: participants with lower proficiency reported higher perceived importance, reinforcing that for this population, French-language services are essential rather than simply preferred.

6.2 Contributions

This thesis makes several contributions to the existing body of literature on Francophone Minority Communities (FMCs) and service access in Ontario.

Empirical Contribution

The most significant contribution of this study is empirical. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, existing research on francophone service access has predominantly taken the form of small-scale qualitative studies focused on specific localities and examining either Canadian-born or immigrant Francophones (Huot et al., 2014; Lacassagne, 2010, 2017; Veronis & Huot, 2019). This thesis provides the first large-scale, systematic, province-wide survey that simultaneously compares service access across multiple regions of Ontario and across migration status groups.

By including government services at three jurisdictional levels alongside education and healthcare, the study offers a more comprehensive picture of how Francophones navigate the complex institutional landscape of service provision in the province.

The findings confirm that regionality is the primary factor shaping access to French-language services, building on Charron's (2017) work on the role of regionality in FMCs. However, this thesis extends that work by showing that the significance of regionality varies across service types and government levels: regional differences are most pronounced for municipal services and healthcare, and least pronounced for education. The study also reveals that migration status interacts with regionality in complex ways, emerging as a differentiating factor primarily at the municipal level and in Centre-Southwestern Ontario—a finding that could not have been identified through single-locality or single-group studies.

Importantly, by including both Canadian-born and immigrant Francophones within a single study, this thesis also provides an opportunity to examine both populations in dialogue — something that few existing studies have undertaken. The findings largely confirm what smaller-scale qualitative research had suggested about regional variation in service access and the particular challenges facing francophone immigrants (Huot et al., 2014; Lacassagne, 2017; Veronis & Huot, 2019), while extending those findings by providing systematic, cross-regional evidence that allows for direct comparison between groups. In doing so, the study demonstrates that many of the patterns documented in locality-specific research hold at a broader provincial scale, while also revealing dynamics — such as the interaction between migration status and regionality at the municipal level — that only become visible through comparative analysis.

Furthermore, this thesis documents an important finding regarding knowledge gaps, showing that unawareness of French-language service availability represents a major barrier, particularly at the municipal level and in Centre-Southwestern Ontario. The progressive widening of knowledge gaps from federal to municipal services had not previously been systematically documented.

Conceptual Contribution

This study also contributes to the conceptual literature by demonstrating the analytical value of combining superdiversity and social resilience as complementary frameworks for studying service access in minority language communities. Superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007, 2023; Fincher et al., 2019) provided the descriptive tools for capturing the multiple, intersecting dimensions of diversity that characterize Ontario's francophone population—migration status, place of birth, language proficiency, home tenure, household composition, and geographic location—and for attending to how these characteristics combine to shape experiences of service access across distinct regional contexts. Social resilience (Hall & Lamont, 2013; Qamar, 2023, 2024; Preston et al., 2022) provided the analytical tools for examining how structural factors—government policies, institutional completeness, and the uneven distribution of services—create conditions of adversity or support, and how individuals navigate these conditions through adaptive strategies such as bilingual service access.

Together, these frameworks enabled an analysis that links population diversity to institutional capacity. In this way, the study demonstrates that a social resilience perspective can serve as a means of assessing how well, or how poorly, the institutional completeness of FMCs responds to the needs of an increasingly superdiverse francophone population (Breton, 1964; Cardinal & Forgues, 2014). The findings show, for instance, that the same level of institutional completeness may produce different outcomes for different groups: immigrant Francophones with lower English proficiency face greater adversity in contexts of limited French-language service provision than bilingual Canadian-born Francophones, who can more readily draw on English as an alternative resource. This insight highlights the importance of examining institutional completeness not in the abstract but in relation to the specific characteristics of the populations it is meant to serve, an approach that the combination of superdiversity and social resilience makes possible.

6.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

Although this study is descriptive rather than prescriptive, several findings carry implications for policy and practice relating to French-language service provision in Ontario. First, the significant knowledge gaps documented in this study—particularly at the municipal level and in Centre-Southwestern Ontario—point to the need for improved visibility and dissemination of information about existing French-language services. When nearly 80% of Francophones who access municipal services in English are unaware that French-language options may exist in their area, the problem is not only one of service availability but also of service visibility. Targeted information campaigns, enhanced active offer practices, and better referral pathways could help close these gaps.

Second, the findings underscore that a one-size-fits-all approach to French-language service provision is inadequate given the diversity of Ontario's francophone population and the uneven geography of FMCs across the province. The demographic profiles of francophone communities differ markedly between regions—Centre-Southwestern Ontario has a younger, more immigrant, more ethnoculturally diverse francophone population, while Northern Ontario's francophone communities are older and more established—and service provision needs to be adapted accordingly. In Centre-Southwestern Ontario, where francophone newcomers are concentrated but institutional completeness is lower, there is a particular need to develop and strengthen French-language service infrastructure. In Northern Ontario, where institutional completeness is relatively higher but the population is aging and declining, attention should be directed toward sustaining existing services.

Third, the consistent finding that English proficiency intersects with migration status to shape service access highlights the particular vulnerability of Francophones with limited English. For this group, French-language services are not a preference but a necessity, and the absence of such services constitutes a significant barrier to accessing essential public services, particularly healthcare and municipal services. Service providers and policymakers should pay particular attention to ensuring that French-language services are available and accessible for this population.

6.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is not without its limitations, in addition to the methodological limitations outlined in Chapter 3. A key limitation was the number of participants recruited from Northern Ontario, particularly immigrant participants (N = 48). Had this study been able to recruit a greater number from this region, the analysis would have been more comprehensive and would have provided better insight into how immigration is reshaping Northern Ontario's FMCs. The recruitment challenges in Northern Ontario reflect both the geographic dispersion of francophone communities in the region and the smaller absolute number of francophone immigrants residing there.

Additionally, as a large-scale survey with primarily closed-ended questions, this study documents *what* is happening—which groups access which services in which languages, and where—but offers limited insight into *why* individuals make particular choices or how they interpret their experiences. The patterns identified, including the high rates of bilingual access and the gap between perceived importance and actual usage, raise important questions about the motivations, strategies, and lived experiences behind these patterns that cannot be fully addressed through quantitative data alone.

A further consideration concerns the relationship between the existing literature and the rapidly changing landscape of francophone immigration and service provision in Ontario. As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the foundational research on francophone service access and immigrant settlement was conducted in the mid-2010s, and the studies that inform this thesis's interpretive framework largely predate the significant shifts that have occurred since. These shifts are multifaceted. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) disrupted service delivery across all sectors — including shifts to online provision, temporary closures, and staffing shortages — and its longer-term effects on the availability and accessibility of French-language services remain unclear. At the same time, the broader socioeconomic landscape has changed considerably, with rising housing costs and cost of living pressures that may be reshaping settlement patterns and Francophones' interactions with government services. Immigration policy has also undergone dramatic changes, including a substantial increase in francophone immigration beginning in 2022 (IRCC, 2025), which has brought a larger and more diverse

cohort of francophone newcomers to the province — a shift that the survey may have partially captured, given the significant proportion of recent arrivals among immigrant participants. Furthermore, the institutional landscape supporting francophone immigrants has expanded since the earlier studies, with the launch of the *Communautés francophones accueillantes* (CFA; Welcoming Francophone Communities) initiative in 2020 (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2025), the opening of a francophone welcome kiosk at Toronto Pearson Airport (L’immigration francophone au Canada, n.d.-b), and the establishment of the *Point d’accueil francophone* (PAF; a one stop service hub for newcomers) in 2021 in Ottawa (Césoc, n.d.), among other initiatives. These developments represent a meaningful evolution in the infrastructure available to francophone newcomers that was largely absent when much of the foundational research was conducted. Taken together, these changes mean that the francophone immigration landscape in Ontario has undergone considerable transformation since the studies published before the 2020s. While this thesis draws on that earlier literature to contextualize its findings, the extent to which those earlier studies still fully characterize the conditions participants were navigating in 2023–2024 is an open question, and future research should attend to how these evolving conditions are reshaping both service provision and Francophones’ experiences of accessing services in French.

These limitations point directly to the most important direction for future research: qualitative inquiry that can capture the lived experiences, strategies, and impacts associated with accessing services in French in Ontario. In-depth interviews and other qualitative methods would enable researchers to explore how Francophones navigate the complex service landscape documented in this study, what strategies they employ when French-language services are unavailable, how they make decisions about which language to use in different service contexts, and what consequences these decisions carry for their daily lives and sense of belonging. Such qualitative research would complement the province-wide patterns documented here with the nuanced, contextual understanding needed to fully interpret them. This is, in fact, the next stage of the larger SSHRC-funded research project of which this thesis is a part, which will use in-depth interviews to explore these questions further.

Future research could also examine how the recent and significant increase in francophone immigration to Ontario—particularly since 2022—is reshaping FMCs and their institutional capacity to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. The policy and institutional landscape continues to evolve, with new initiatives such as the *Communautés francophones accueillantes* program and enhanced settlement services for francophone newcomers. Whether and how these developments are improving Francophones’ experiences with service access remains an open question. Finally, longitudinal research tracking changes in service access patterns over time would help assess whether the structural barriers identified in this study are being reduced or whether they persist despite policy interventions.

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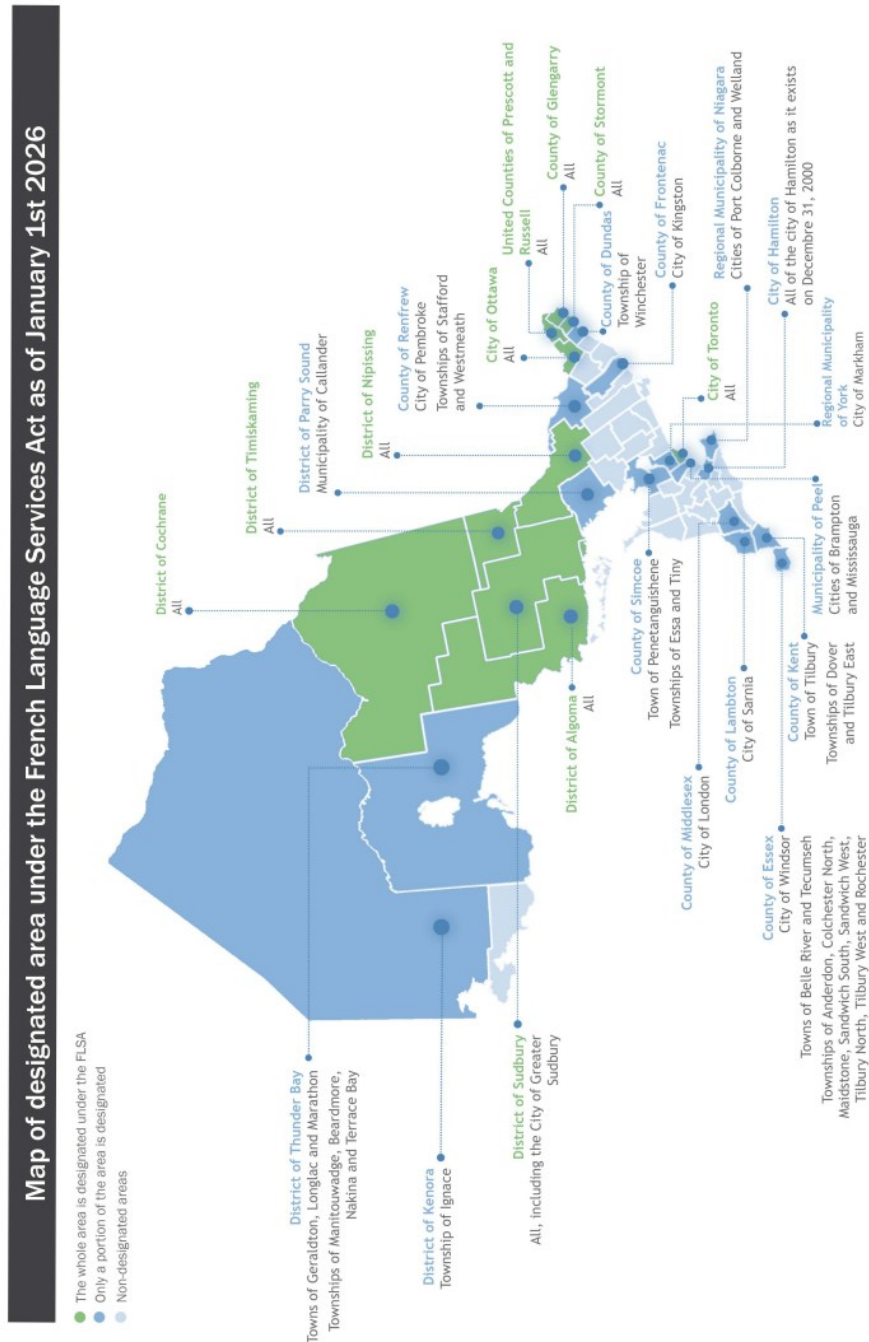
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Appendices

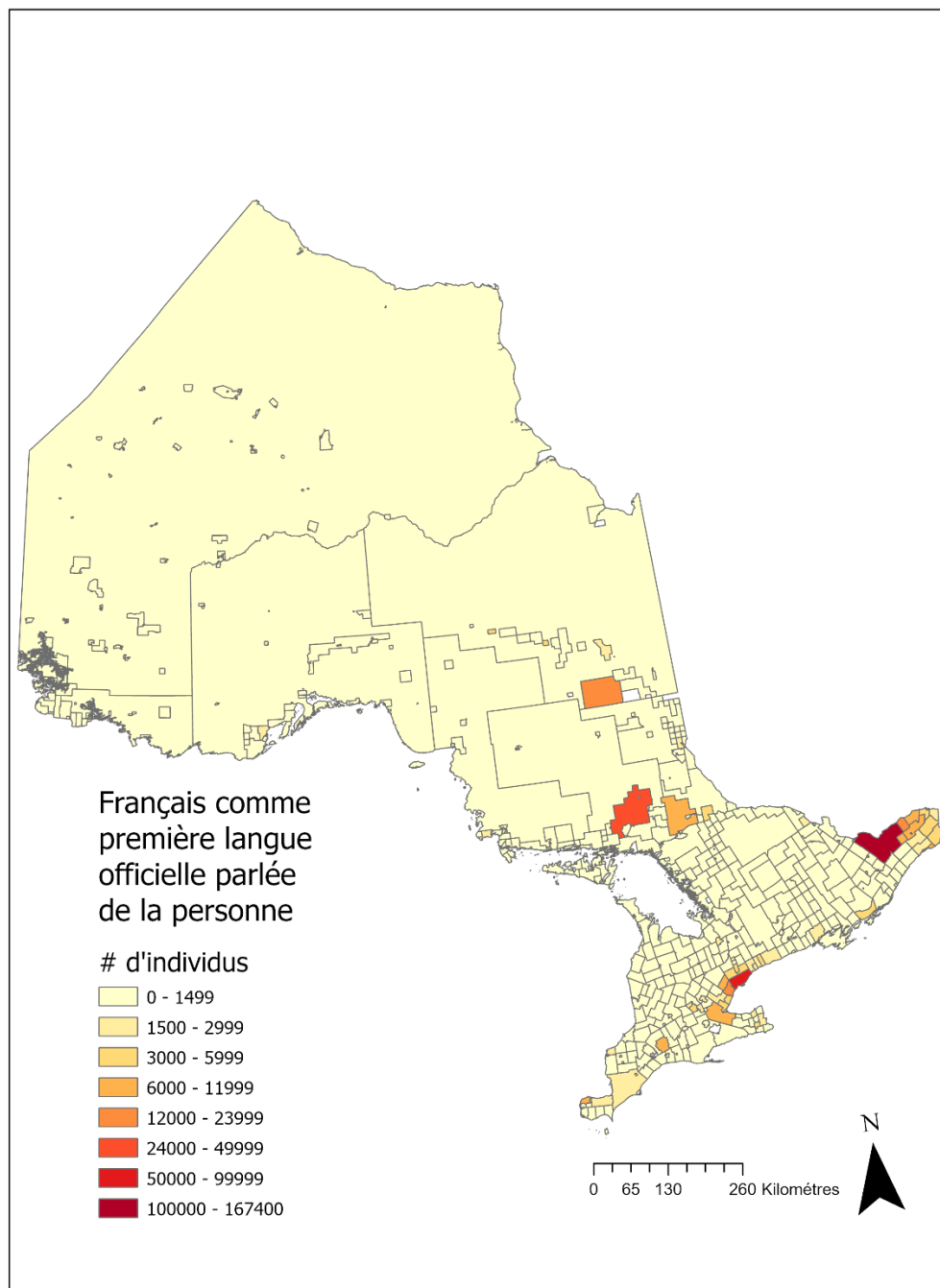
Appendix 1: Map of Ontario's FDAs.



Map 1. Official map of French Designated Areas (FDAs) in Ontario.

Source: Ministry of Francophone Affairs, 2025.

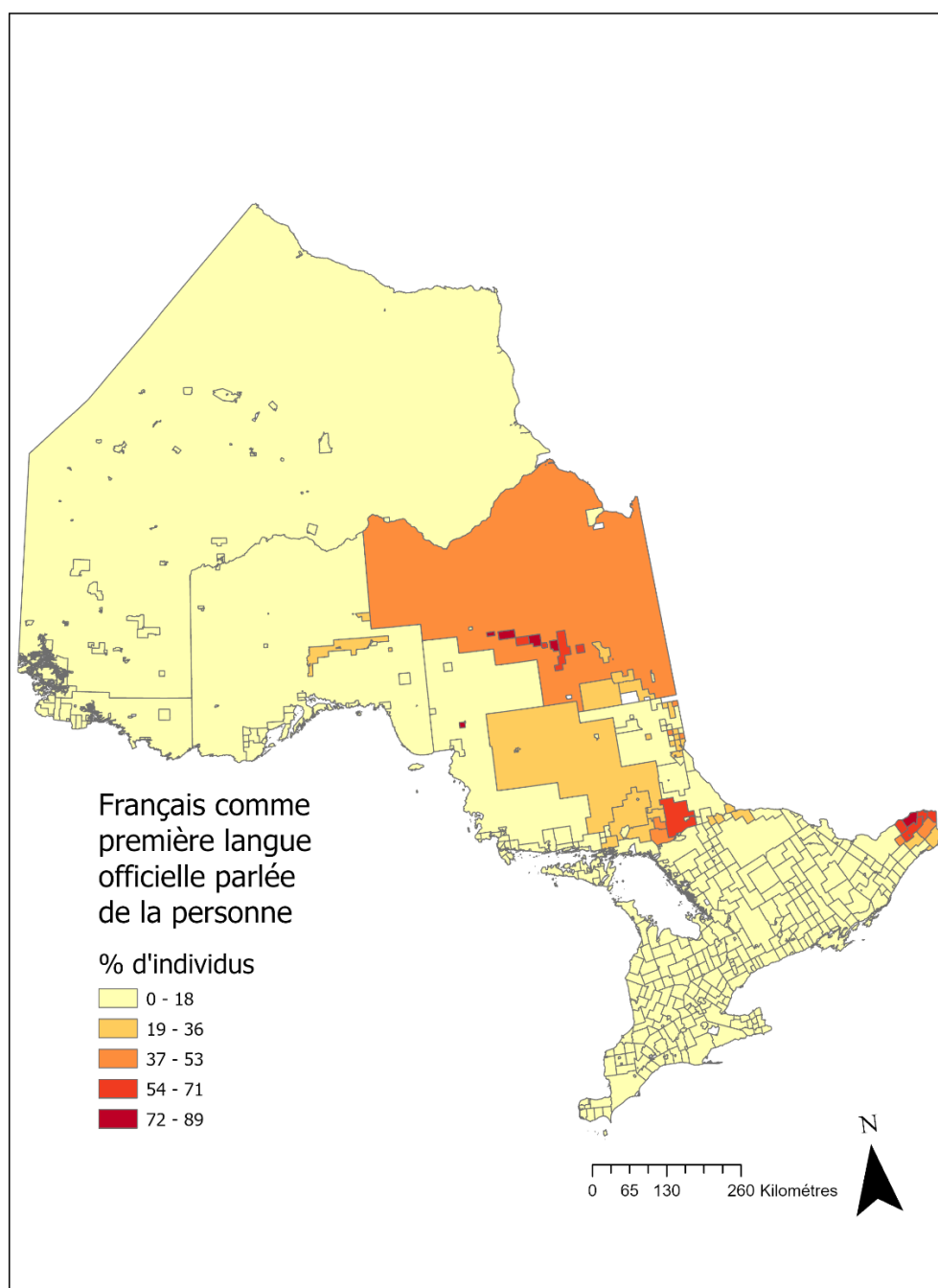
Appendix 2. Map showing distribution of French as a first official language spoken by individuals per Census sub-division in Ontario



Map 2. Map of total number of French as a first official language spoken (including both French and French/English bilingual) by individuals per Census sub-division in Ontario.

Data source: Statistics Canada, 2023b

Appendix 3. Map of percentage of individuals who have French as their first official language spoken per Census sub-division in Ontario



Map 3. Map of percentage of individuals who have French as their first official language spoken (including both French and French/English bilingual) per Census sub-division in Ontario.

Data source: Statistics Canada, 2023b

Appendix 4. Ethics approval from the University of Ottawa

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

S-04-22-7416 - REG-7416 - Certificat d'approbation éthique / Certificate of Ethics Approval

(English message follows)

Cher/Chère Luisa Veronis,

Veillez trouver ci-joint le certificat d'approbation éthique pour le projet intitulé «Encountering francophone super-diversity in Ontario: Spaces, languages, practices and representations / Hyper-diversité et francophonie en Ontario: lieux, langues, pratiques et représentations».

Le certificat est valide jusqu'au : 21-08-2023

I wish you pleasant and fruitful research activities.

Recherche financée : veuillez faire suivre une copie du certificat au [Service de gestion de la recherche](#).

Si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec le Bureau d'éthique à ethique@uottawa.ca ou en composant le 613-562-5387.

Vous pouvez voir votre demande en vous connectant à votre compte [eReviews](#).

Cordialement,

Germain Zongo
Responsable d'éthique en recherche

Ceci est une réponse automatisée, merci de ne pas répondre à ce courriel.

Dear Luisa Veronis,

Please find attached the certificate of ethics approval for your research project titled "Encountering francophone super-diversity in Ontario: Spaces, languages, practices and representations / Hyper-diversité et francophonie en Ontario: lieux, langues, pratiques et représentations".

This certificate is valid until: 21-08-2023

I wish you pleasant and fruitful research activities.

Funded research: A reminder that you must provide a copy of this certificate to [Research Management Services](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Ethics Office at ethics@uottawa.ca or by telephone at 613-562-5387.

You can view your project at any time by logging into [eReviews](#).

Best regards,

Germain Zongo
Protocol Officer

This is an automated message. Please do not reply directly to this email.

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
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Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Attachement(s) / Attachment(s)

[approvalLetter1661224688239.pdf](#)

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Appendix 5. Survey Questionnaire (Parts 1 and 2)



Collège des chaires de recherche
sur le monde francophone
de l'Université d'Ottawa

Chaire de recherche
sur l'immigration et les communautés
franco-ontariennes

ONLINE SURVEY

Sociolinguistic and geographic experiences, practices and representations of Francophones in Ontario

INFORMATION ET CONSENTEMENT

Title of project and invitation to participate:

You are invited to participate in a research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) entitled:

Encountering francophone super-diversity in Ontario: Spaces, languages, practices and representations.

Principal Investigator

Luisa Veronis, Ph. D.
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics
University of Ottawa

Research Coordinator

Shannon Leitch
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics
University of Ottawa

Co-investigator

Monika Jezak, Ph. D.
Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute
University of Ottawa

Co-investigator

Brian Ray, Ph. D.
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics
University of Ottawa

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to better understand the sociolinguistic and geographic experiences, practices and representations of Ontario francophones. The francophone population in Ontario is diversifying significantly - notably with the arrival of francophones from other provinces and territories, as well as through immigration - but its distribution across the province remains relatively uneven. On the other hand, opportunities to live in French vary greatly across the province given the uneven distribution and access to French language services. It is in this context that our study seeks to document the experiences and needs of Francophones according to their profile and region of residence.

Participation: Your participation will consist of completing an online questionnaire. This questionnaire will allow you to document your language experiences and practices in relation to various spaces, services and activities of daily life (e.g., in public spaces, at work, at school, at home, and in your social networks); you will also have the opportunity to indicate the importance of being able to use French and the factors that influence your choices in using these spaces, services and activities. The survey takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The data is collected anonymously and cannot be removed once submitted. By completing the online survey, you are consenting to participate in this research.

Risks and benefits of the research: There should be no significant inconvenience to you in participating in the research, other than giving of your time. Your participation in this study will contribute to a contemporary portrait of Ontario's Francophone community in all its social, cultural, linguistic and geographic diversity. The study will also provide a better understanding of the availability of and access to French language services, as well as the barriers and challenges to living in French, which could be used to develop better community policies and practices to meet the needs of Francophones across the province of Ontario.

Confidentiality and privacy: Before you decide to participate in this survey, you should be aware that we work within the ethical guidelines that govern privacy in the collection, use, and disclosure of data. Only those involved in the conduct and analysis of the survey will have access to the data. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline to answer any question. In addition, to minimize the risk of security breaches and to ensure your confidentiality, it is recommended that you use standard security measures, such as closing your Internet browser when you have completed the questionnaire. It should be noted that the survey is managed by the SurveyMonkey platform, an online survey tool that is secure and has Canadian servers. All data is encrypted and stored directly on the servers. Researcher access to the research data is password protected. Survey responses cannot be linked to your computer. Your anonymity is guaranteed, as we do not ask for your name or other identifying information.

Data retention: The data collected will be kept in a secure manner and stored on a secure server at the University of Ottawa accessible only by password.

Voluntary participation: Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable or withdraw from the survey at any time. Please note, however,

that data from partially completed surveys will still be used. We encourage you to save or print the consent form page.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this study, you may contact the principal investigator: Professor Luisa Veronis (lveronis@uottawa.ca).

For information on the ethical aspects of this research, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa at (613) 562-5387 or ethique@uottawa.ca.



Collège des chaires de recherche
sur le monde francophone
de l'Université d'Ottawa

Chaire de recherche
sur l'immigration et les communautés
franco-ontariennes

Enquête sur les expériences et pratiques sociolinguistiques et géographiques des francophones de l'Ontario

Projet financé par le Conseil des recherches en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH)
Hyper-diversité et francophonie en Ontario: lieux, langues, pratiques et représentations

I. Eligibility question	
QE1. Do you identify as: 1) Francophone, French-speaking individual or Francophile; 2) you are 18 years of age or older; and 3) you live in Ontario	a. Yes Go to Q1 b. No – if you answered "no" to any of these three criteria, you are unfortunately not eligible to participate. END
II. Sociodemographic data	
This first section contains questions to help us understand your socio-demographic profile.	
Q1. Do you identify as...	a. Woman b. Man c. Non-binary d. You don't have an option that applies to me. I identify as (please specify): _____
Q2. What age group do you fall into?	a. 18-24 b. 25-34 c. 35-44 d. 45-54 e. 55-64 f. 65-74 g. 75 or older

Q3. What is your marital status?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Single (never married or common-law) b. Married c. Common law/partnered d. Separated e. Divorced f. Widowed
Q4. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Less than high school b. High school or equivalent c. College d. Vocational/post-secondary training e. Undergraduate degree f. Graduate degree g. Other, please specify: _____
Q5. What is your employment status?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Homemaker (stay at home parent) b. Student c. Employed for salary If c : Please specify your occupation: _____ d. Self-employed If d : Please specify your occupation: _____ e. Unemployed and searching for employment f. Unemployed and not searching for employment g. Retired h. Unable to work i. Other, please specify: _____
Q6. What is your annual household income?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Less than \$10,000 b. \$10,000-\$19,999 c. \$20,000-\$29,999 d. \$30,000-\$39,999 e. \$40,000-\$49,999 f. \$50,000-\$59,999 g. \$60,000-\$69,999 h. \$70,000-\$79,999 i. \$80,000 or more
Q7. What is your housing tenure type?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Owner b. Tenant c. Shared housing d. Subsidized housing
Q8. What is the size of your household?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 person b. 2 people

	c. 3 people d. 4 people e. 5 people or more
Languages: proficiency in French, English and other languages	
Q9. What is your mother tongue (language you learned as a child and still speak)?	a. French b. English c. Other, please specify: _____
Q10. Please evaluate your level of proficiency in FRENCH.	a. Not good at all b. Not good c. Good d. Very good
Q11. Please evaluate your level of proficiency in ENGLISH.	a. Not good at all b. Not good c. Good d. Very good
Q12. Please evaluate your level of proficiency in another language.	Please specify the language: _____ a. Not good at all b. Not good c. Good d. Very good e. Does not apply to me Go to Q15
Q13. Please evaluate your level of proficiency in another additional language.	Please specify the language: _____ a. Not good at all b. Not good c. Good d. Very good e. Does not apply to me Go to Q15
Q14. Other languages that you speak and/or comprehend:	a. Please specify: _____ b. Does not apply to me
Sense of belonging	
Q15. I identify as (select all that apply):	Francophone Franco-Ontarian Québécois(e)

	French Canadian Canadian Immigrant Other: _____
Origins, mobility and citizenship	
Q16. Were you born in Canada?	a. Yes Go to Q16a b. No Go to Q17 Q16a. Were you born in Ontario? a. Yes Go to Q22 b. No Go to Q16b Q16b. What was the date of your arrival in Ontario? _____/_____ (month / year) Q16c. What was your province/territory of origin? - list of provinces/territories (scroll down menu of provinces/territories, select one) Go to Q22
Q17. What was the date of your arrival in Canada?	_____/_____ (month / year)
Q18. What is your country of birth or origin?	Menu with list of countries (scroll down menu of countries, select one)
Q19. Under which category did you immigrate to Canada?	a. Economic immigrant If a: Please specify: i. Skilled Worker ii. Provincial Nominee Program iii. Canadian Experience Class iv. Business Program v. Temporary Skilled Worker vi. Other temporary worker, please specify: _____ b. Family reunification c. Refugee d. Asylum seeker e. International student f. Other, please specify: _____

Q20. Did you come to Canada alone or with members of your family?	a. Alone b. With family members If b: Please specify (select all that apply): i. Spouse ii. Child or children iii. Parents iv. Other: _____
Q21. Are you a Canadian citizen?	a. Yes Go to Q22 b. No Go to Q21a Q21a. Are you planning on becoming a Canadian citizen? a. Yes, I am planning on becoming a Canadian citizen b. No, I am not planning on becoming a Canadian citizen c. I am not sure/I haven't decided yet
Region of residence (for all respondents)	
Q22. What are the first three characters of your postal code?	a. Box for the first three characters of postal code: — — —
Q23. In which region of Ontario do you reside?	a. Eastern Ontario b. Central/Southwestern Ontario c. Northern Ontario
III. Language Practices - What language(s) do you use in various spaces, activities and networks in your daily life? In this section, we are looking for information about your everyday language practices and in particular in relation to various spaces you regularly frequent (public spaces, work/study, home), your activities and your social networks (friends, media, etc.).	
<p style="text-align: center;">In public spaces</p> <p>For this section, please select the language you use most frequently in various public spaces, such as organizations, institutions, services or activities. For each public space, please also answer additional questions about the importance of the language used in this space and the factors that influence your language practices.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What language do you use? (check all applicable options for each question)</p>	
Q24. At children's daycare and/or school	a. French Go to Q24b

	<p>b. English Go to Q24a</p> <p>c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q24a</p> <p>d. Not applicable Go to Q24b</p> <p>Q24a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <p>a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French</p> <p>b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it</p> <p>Q24b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <p>a. Essential</p> <p>b. Important</p> <p>c. Sometimes or in certain cases</p> <p>d. Only a little or not important</p> <p>Q24c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <p>-availability in French</p> <p>-cost</p> <p>-ease of access / distance from your home</p> <p>-flexibility / convenience of schedule</p> <p>-friendliness and/or family-oriented</p> <p>-quality of service</p> <p>-Other(s), please specify: _____</p>
<p>Q25. In community organizations (ethnocultural, charitable, etc.)</p>	<p>a. French Go to Q25b</p> <p>b. English Go to Q25a</p> <p>c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q25a</p> <p>d. Not applicable Go to Q25b</p> <p>Q25a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p>

	<p>a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French</p> <p>b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it</p> <p>Q25b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <p>a. Essential</p> <p>b. Important</p> <p>c. Sometimes or in certain cases</p> <p>d. Only a little or not important</p> <p>Q25c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <p>-availability in French</p> <p>-cost</p> <p>-ease of access / distance from your home</p> <p>-flexibility / convenience of schedule</p> <p>-friendliness and/or family-oriented</p> <p>-quality of service</p> <p>-Other(s), please specify: _____</p>
<p>Q26. In spaces of leisure and culture (library, cinema, theater, sports, music, festivals, etc.)</p>	<p>a. French Go to Q26b</p> <p>b. English Go to Q26a</p> <p>c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q26a</p> <p>d. Not applicable Go to Q26b</p> <p>Q26a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <p>a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French</p> <p>b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it</p>

	<p>Q26b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q26c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
<p>Q27. In professional associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q27b b. English Go to Q27a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q27a d. Not applicable Go to Q27b <p>Q27a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q27b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important

	<p>Q27c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q28. For healthcare/medical services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q28b b. English Go to Q28a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q28a d. Not applicable Go to Q28b <p>Q28a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q28b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q28c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) - from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home

	-flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q29. In immigrant reception agencies or centres (settlement services)	a. French Go to Q29b b. English Go to Q29a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q29a d. Not applicable Go to Q29b Q29a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only): a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it Q29b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only) a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important Q29c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important: -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q30. For commercial services (shops, stores, professional services)	a. French Go to Q30b b. English Go to Q30a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q30a

	<p>d. Not applicable Go to Q30b</p> <p>Q30a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q30b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q30c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) - from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q31. In places of worship/religious spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q31b b. English Go to Q31a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q31a d. Not applicable Go to Q31b <p>Q31a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French

	<p>b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it</p> <p>Q31b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q31c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
<p>Q32. For federal government services (immigration, passport, taxes, language rights, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q32b b. English Go to Q32a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q32a d. Not applicable Go to Q32b <p>Q32a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q32b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important

	<p>c. Sometimes or in certain cases</p> <p>d. Only a little or not important</p> <p>Q32c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q33. For provincial government services (driver's license, social assistance, health card, Ontario services, etc.)	<p>a. French Go to Q33b</p> <p>b. English Go to Q33a</p> <p>c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q33a</p> <p>d. Not applicable Go to Q33b</p> <p>Q33a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q33b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q33c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p>

	-availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
Q34. For municipal government services (municipal services, garbage collection, snow removal, water and sewer, etc.)	<div data-bbox="824 478 1477 667"> a. French Go to Q34b b. English Go to Q34a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q34a d. Not applicable Go to Q34b </div> <div data-bbox="779 720 1390 793"> <p>Q34a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> </div> <div data-bbox="824 804 1445 993"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it </div> <div data-bbox="779 1045 1471 1161"> <p>Q34b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="824 1171 1258 1329"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important </div> <div data-bbox="779 1371 1471 1560"> <p>Q34c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> </div> <div data-bbox="779 1570 1323 1829"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____ </div>

<p>Q35. In other public spaces (institutions, organizations, services, activities)</p>	<p>Please specify the space (institution, organization, service, activity): _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q35b b. English Go to Q35a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q35a d. Not applicable Go to Q37 <p>Q35a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French b. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q35b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q35c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
<p>Q36. In other, additional public spaces (institutions, organizations, services, activities)</p>	<p>Please specify the space (institution, organization, service, activity): _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. French Go to Q36b b. English Go to Q36a c. Other language, please specify: _____ Go to Q36a

	<p>d. Not applicable Go to Q37</p> <p>Q36a. Which scenario best fits your situation (1 choice only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. I do not know if this space (organization, institution, service, activity) is available in French d. I know this space is available in French, but I do not use it <p>Q36b. Is it important that this space (organization, institution, service, activity) be available in French? (1 choice only)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Essential b. Important c. Sometimes or in certain cases d. Only a little or not important <p>Q36c. Rank in order of importance the factors that influence your choice to use this space (organization, institution, service, activity) – from most important to least important, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -availability in French -cost -ease of access / distance from your home -flexibility / convenience of schedule -friendliness and/or family-oriented -quality of service -Other(s), please specify: _____
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