Latin American Migration and the Border: A Preliminary Report
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Prepared by Luisa Veronis and Brie McAloney

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Department of Geography

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1. Project Ottawa in Brief

The Ottawa-Gatineau region is unique. Intersected by the country’s most symbolically charged provincial border, the region is characterized by a particular dynamic influenced by the border that, on several levels, represents a major spatial discontinuity despite the long period it has been in place. Populations, cultures, and practices, along with legislation and law, are different on either side of the border. Yet the border does not present substantial obstacles to the exchanges and interactions of everyday life. In some respects, the activities of individuals in the region limit the risks of Canadian dislocation by fostering a transboundary territoriality both for individuals and groups as the cradle for a new Canadian identity.

Objectives:

This research project seeks to shed light on the intrinsically ambiguous and contradictory effects of the border in the region known as the National Capital. Based on the premise that the border modulates the spatial practices of individuals and groups who live in the region, and who have appropriated the border both symbolically and materially, the project aims to reconstruct their everyday experiences of places and spaces that the border separates and brings together. The study examines the practices and representations associated with the border, the unique cultures it helps to create, the collective identities that emanate from its existence, as well as the political actions that fuel it. The study will show how these historically structured border features are taking on a new character in the contemporary context of the relations that develop between the populations of Ottawa and Gatineau under the influence of the larger environment. Inspired by the most recent work on the border concept, we are focusing on the following three dimensions: the border as a barrier, an interface, and a territory. Our analysis of the processes surrounding the construction of the border will be based on the theoretical and methodological propositions involved in the study of everyday spatial practices. Narrative, which asserts not only progression, practices and representations, but also strategies and ploys, will be our material. Our attention will focus on minority populations, who tend to be more vulnerable and prone to putting in place certain strategies for benefiting from the opportunity structure offered by the border. The targeted groups include official language minorities, populations of newcomers, gays and lesbians, single mothers, and street-involved youth. Each of the targeted groups acts according to a different logic in regional space.

Methodology

The Scope

Situated at a practice/theory interface, this project is a deliberate effort to show that the border continually acts as a structuring factor of the region’s social conditions. Whereas globalization, both economic and cultural, has led many to somewhat hastily declare the “end of territory”, one of the goals of the project is to renew interest in one of geography’s key concepts by illustrating its scope in understanding the everyday geography of a number of Ottawa-Gatineau’s more marginal groups. The research is being conducted in three stages, corresponding to the three-year duration of the project.

Stage 1. Establishing the context: the region, its populations (2007-2008). Not much is known about Ottawa-Gatineau’s social space. Different initiatives by public groups have, nevertheless, highlighted certain characteristics of the region’s social space. We seek out these traits and analyze them, paying particular attention to border-related issues. This first stage of research also seeks to build a solid base of information on the target populations through existing data on the groups (census, surveys, etc.), along with their organizations and institutions. It also seeks to conduct deeper analysis of directly and indirectly related programs and policies, at different levels of government, and the issues they raise regarding the management and delivery of services. Information-gathering will take several forms, including initial document review as well as interviews with representatives of agencies and organizations serving these populations.
Stage 2. Collecting narrative through discussions with individuals and groups (2008-2009). Of all the approaches used to reconstruct the everyday, the interview is the most common. We will focus on this approach to conduct two types of interviews: (1) group interviews (10 to 12 participants) to identify the issues surrounding the border experiences of the different target populations; and (2) individual interviews to deepen our understanding of different aspects of the experience. The goal of these interviews is not only to explicate the realities of the participants with respect to spaces and places in different contexts (living, appropriation, production, consumption, relaxation, management, etc.), but also to reveal the tensions and contradictions that enter into their relationships with social space. Interview themes include issues of difference, belonging, segregation, exclusion, identity, and power in relation to the concept of border.

Stage 3. Analysis and synthesis: the reconstruction of social space and the border effect (2009-2010). The information gathered through the interviews, especially the regional social space constructed through the process, will be analyzed during the third year of the project. In addition to transcribing the proceedings of the interviews, the research team will conduct an in-depth analysis of the content. Initially, the narratives related to each particular group will be studied in detail. A comparative analysis will then be carried out to determine the differences and similarities between the groups’ spheres of reference.

2. Immigration and the Border: A Broad Overview

Project Ottawa focuses on immigrants to Ottawa-Gatineau from Latin America, China, Portugal and the Azores, and French-speaking Africa. Each of these groups encompasses a different spatial, temporal, and linguistic dimension. Latin Americans, for example, are dispersed across both sides of the border. In contrast, the Chinese are largely concentrated on the Ontario side. Unlike the other groups, the Portuguese have resided in the Ottawa-Gatineau region for an extended period of time. Finally, while there are admittedly issues of language associated with each of the groups under consideration, Francophone immigrants have different experiences of the dominant language of the area.

Newcomers to Canada make settlement choices based on a number of factors including but not limited to available resources, services, knowledge of language and culture, and familiarity with existing communities. The Ottawa-Gatineau region is comprised of one urban region in two provinces with distinct approaches and policies to each of these issues. The region differs in terms of government funding structures, resources, opportunities for advancement, attitudes towards newcomers, and linguistic norms among other things. By choosing to settle in either Ottawa or Gatineau, newcomers make settlement choices that dramatically define their daily lives.

With the exception of Québec, immigration policy is under the responsibility of the federal government while settlement is a shared jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments. As a result, Ontario and Québec have different funding allotments, structures, and priorities for immigrant settlement. To understand the resources available to newcomers in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, it is therefore imperative to examine separately the structures that govern the provision of services to immigrants on each side of the border.

Funding Structures and Organizations in Ottawa, Ontario

In 2005, Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), which increased federal funding to Ontario for settlement related programs to $920 million over five years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005). Ontario settlement agencies obtain these funds through Calls for Proposals that are issued through Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
In the Ottawa area, a number of organizations work directly with immigrants and provide a wide range of services, most of which are focused on facilitating settlement, finding employment and learning English. The Catholic Immigration Centre (CIC), Ontario Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) and Ottawa Public Library are the largest organizations that provide such services. The YMCA’s Newcomer Information Centre (NIC), created in 2007, is also a valuable resource.

Other agencies focus on specific services. Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) and LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) provide support in finding employment. HIO works across the Ottawa-Gatineau region with employers to facilitate access to skills-appropriate employment. LASI is an umbrella organization formed in 1997 through a coalition of local immigrant-serving organizations (The Catholic Immigration Centre, Immigrant Women Services Ottawa, Jewish Family Services, Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, and the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre) and provides employment-based support services to newcomers.

Other organizations serving newcomers include Jewish Family Services, the Lebanese and Arab Social Services Association (LASSA), the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre, and the Conseil économique et social d’Ottawa (CÉSOC), each of which target their services to the needs of particular cultural groups. Some organizations, such as Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO), provide situation-specific services, in this case counseling and support for women that have experienced domestic violence.

In addition to the aforementioned organizations, newcomers also make use of the services offered by local community centers. These include organizations such as the YMCA, United Way, and Community Health Centres. Organizations such as these provide health and social services through a wide range of programming initiatives. For example, the Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre offers a fitness and multicultural health program for newcomers.

It is important to note that at the municipal level, in contrast to the City of Gatineau, there is no bureau or department at the City of Ottawa that deals directly with immigration issues.

**Funding Structures and Organizations in Gatineau, Québec**

Under the Canada-Québec Accord of 1991, Québec has the right to determine its own immigration levels, financial criteria for sponsors, and criteria for independent immigrants, including its own “points system” (Canada’s Immigration Program, 2004). The federal government transfers an amount of money to the province annually, currently set using a formula, though not less than $90 million (Canada’s Immigration Program, 2004). Annual funding for organizations is available through the Support Program for the Integration of New Arrivals (PANA), the Regional Integration Program (PRI), and the Support Program for Intercultural Relations (PARI) (Immigration Québec 2008).

Compared to Ottawa, there are relatively few settlement agencies that operate in Gatineau. At the municipal level, the City of Gatineau has a division which supports “Cultural Communities, Arts, and Letters”. Through the City, immigrants have access to French courses and a variety of workshops, as well as personalized assistance. Non-governmental organizations providing settlement services include the APO (Accueil-Parrainage Outaouais), Dépanneur Sylvestre, Réseau Outaouais, SITO (Service Intégration Travail Outaouais), and the Association des Femmes Immigrantes d’Ottawa.
Funding restrictions and eligibility criteria limit the degree to which newcomers residing in Gatineau may access services available in Ottawa and vice versa. There are also other differences between the two sides, including (among others) taxation levels, language of instruction in schools, attitudes towards immigrants, and language of daily life. This portion of Project Ottawa attempts to identify how the different realities of Ottawa-Gatineau influence immigrants’ everyday geographies: How do different cultural norms inform the settlement patterns of these individuals? How do settlement patterns inform access to resources? How, and for what purposes, do immigrants strategically use the spaces of Ottawa-Gatineau to organize their daily lives? What are some effects of these strategies in informing identities?

3. Interviews with Organizational Representatives in Ottawa

Given the important differences in the structure and organization of immigrant services on each side of the border, we conducted two separate focus group interviews with representatives of agencies serving immigrants in Ottawa and in Gatineau. The Ottawa group convened at the University of Ottawa on May 29, 2009, from 14:00-16:00. The roles and mandates of the organizations represented varied: a number of them provided settlement services to newcomers (CIC, OCISO, and the Somali Centre for Family Services); others worked in the areas of employment counseling (HIRE Immigrants Ottawa); health and community resources (South East Ottawa Community Health Centre); and community capacity building (United Way). Recruitment was done via email and telephone, sometimes through personal contacts within organizations. Dr’s Luisa Veronis and Caroline Andrew facilitated the session in English, while Brie McAloney took notes and undertook transcription.

The interviews focused on various issues relating to the agencies: their missions and objectives, the resources available to them, their geographic opportunities and constraints, partnerships, and clientele. The following paragraphs summarize the comments made by the representatives from the Ottawa organizations:

Resources
All participants agreed that the overall funding and resources are relatively good. They explained that the government has put a lot of money into settlement programs in the past few years. However, they agreed that even though funding and resources are reasonable, they are not adequate and a number of gaps exist.

- Gaps and needs in immigrant services
  - Participants mentioned the problem of eligibility for settlement services: refugees and those who are Canadian citizens are not eligible for settlement programs.
  - There is an issue in terms of access to services, particularly for newcomers who live in outlying areas of the city (but services are located in some parts of the city only).
  - Gaps in services exist for francophone immigrants.

- Francophone immigrants in Ottawa
  Participants noted that francophone immigrants in Ottawa face more challenges than those who are “more Anglophone.” Anglophone immigrants have more resources generally. For francophone immigrants:
    - There is a lack of knowledge of services
    - They do not feel welcome in an English environment
    - The network of services is smaller, there are fewer services, they are not well developed
    - Francophone immigrants are not as well connected (there is a problem of the lack of a network)
Collaborations with other organizations in Ottawa (and Gatineau)
Collaborations between immigrant-serving agencies in Ottawa (Ontario only) are significant. They play an important role to avoid duplication of services while improving provision by complementing existing services. Before the creation of LASI, agencies were competing, but they now work together. The creation of LASI seems to have been an important turning point in terms of service provision to immigrants in Ottawa. Participants noted that the fact that they work together makes a huge difference especially when looking at the existence of Hire Immigrants Ottawa (which was the outcome of the creation of LASI).

- LASI World Skills
  A coalition of local organizations founded by the Catholic Immigration Centre, Immigrant Women Services Ottawa, Jewish Family Services, Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, and the Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre in 1997. HIRE Immigrants Ottawa is the product of this coalition.

- HIRE Immigrants Ottawa works with employers in the region. It also works with other organizations across the city.

- Participants explained that there is a lot of collaboration between immigrant-serving agencies and community health centres in Ottawa; the latter collaborate amongst themselves through the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa (www.coalitionottawa.ca).

- The United Way also plays a role: it is a funder for many NGOs in the city. As a funder, UW has noted a strong gap or need in terms of capacity building among immigrant-serving agencies beyond service provision. The main challenges NGOs face are: (1) coordination of programs/services, (2) evaluation of programs/services (an area where the UW tries to help, but has met limited success due to lack of funding), and (3) capacity building. The representative of the UW believes that a project is needed to do research in this area but that funding is a major issue.

Profile of clients
- Ottawa has the largest rate of skilled migrants per capita in Canada. Although Canada’s migrants fall under the following categories: 60% skilled migrants, under 20% of refugees, and the rest made up of family reunification, students, temporary workers, etc.; the categories served by CIC are proportionally reversed: over 60% of refugees, 15-20% of skilled migrants, and the rest.

- Clients come from all over the word, with dominant group being migrants from China, followed by India and the rest of the South Asian continent; the diversity of immigrants has increased in the past few years.

- Participants suggested that clients shop around for services. Some even go to several immigrant serving agencies without disclosing the information that they receive services from more than one (they should receive services from one agency only according to provincial legislation). But service workers attend to their needs nonetheless.
**Differences in services on each side of the river**

Participants generally agreed that immigrant services are better developed in Ottawa than in Gatineau and that this difference is significant – i.e., services for immigrants in Gatineau are generally lacking and not well-developed/structured. They suggested that in Ottawa services are better developed as a result of collaborations (e.g. LASI World Skills) amongst immigrant serving agencies and sustained efforts to build a strong network of support for immigrants while complementing existing services (rather than duplicating).

**The border as barrier**

- Overall, it seems that the border acts like a barrier when it comes to immigrant services. This is mostly due to the existence of jurisdictional regulations and provincial legislations regarding the provision of settlement services: these services are only for those who reside in the province, whether Ontario or Québec.

- Participants acknowledged that they do not know one another (those in Gatineau) and that interaction is limited (they search information on the web only when they need it).

- Participants insisted that they “do not have the mandate to serve” immigrants from the other side of the river. Nevertheless, they confirmed that their organizations serve immigrants who live in Gatineau ("secret services" or unrecorded, undisclosed services). Similarly, they explained that they also provide ongoing attention and services to immigrants regardless of their status, including refugees and refugee claimants (who are not entitled to “settlement services”) and those who have been in Canada for a long time and are no longer eligible for newcomer/settlement services (again, a form of “secret services”). In these cases, participants said they provide these “secret services” on the basis of humanitarian and compassionate principles.

- They strongly argued for the “need to combine the two units” (meaning the two sides of the border) and the “need to coordinate [services on] both sides” of the river.

- In particular, representatives of Hire Immigrants Ottawa stressed that the border complicates their work in finding employment for newcomers. This is especially the case given that the Federal Government is the largest employer in the region and is located on both sides of the river. They suggested that the area of employment would benefit most if the region became one jurisdiction.

**The border in migrants’ everyday lives**

- There was a certain level of debate with regard to the effects of the border on migrants’ everyday lives (and mobility).

- According to some, there is a strong/clear, one-way movement from Gatineau to Ottawa. The major factors attracting immigrants to the Ottawa/ON side include: jobs/employment, (settlement) services, language (including for children’s education), and generally a better sense of inclusion (anecdotally).

- Others, however, disagreed and argued that there also is a movement from Ottawa to Gatineau; in this case, the strongest factor of attraction is lower housing costs (both rental and ownership) and to a lesser extent cheaper groceries (this was a factor in everyday movement across the border).

- Towards the end, it was suggested that many immigrants work in Ottawa but buy houses in Gatineau.
Immigrant geographies of settlement

- At the end of the focus group, it was suggested that there is no strong geographical pattern when it comes to immigrants’ distribution in Ottawa (and Gatineau); rather, immigrants seem to tend to be dispersed throughout the city. There was mention of the distribution of social housing being a factor in shaping immigrants’ distribution in Ottawa. Based on their own personal experiences (2 participants arrived in Montreal before coming to Ottawa), participants mentioned that some immigrants who arrive in Montreal decide to move to Ottawa (sometimes within a few months) mostly for linguistic reasons. Participants suggested that migrants who come to the National Capital Region have Ottawa as their destination, and not Gatineau.

4. Interviews with Organizational Representatives in Gatineau

Organizational representatives from Gatineau convened at the Université du Québec en Outaouais on June 5, 2009, from 14:00-16:00. Seven participants attended, including representatives from APO (Accueil-Parrainage Outaouais), L’Association de Colombianos en Gatineau, Dépanneur Sylvestre, SITO (Service Integration Travail Outaouais), and la Ville de Gatineau. Dr’s. Luisa Veronis and Anne Gilbert facilitated the session in French, while Christine Mousseau took notes and undertook transcription. The following paragraphs summarize the comments made by representatives of organizations in Gatineau:

Services available to immigrants

Local organizations offer a wide range of services. These services are largely funded by Immigration Québec, and include reception on arrival, aid in finding employment, francization, etc. Service organizations often work in isolation; they are not networked with each other. Further, there is no one portal through which an immigrant may obtain information and orientation on arrival.

Collaborations with Ottawa

- Little collaboration exists, largely due to differences in service organization between Ontario and Québec. Those interviewed do not have counterparts in Ottawa with whom it is possible to develop partnerships.
- Some links exist with federal institutions, particularly in the field of employment.

Profile of immigrants

The number of immigrants who arrive in the region each year is rising sharply: from 1000 per year in 2001 to nearly 1,500 now. While in 2001, two thirds were refugees, this number has declined. Immigrants are educated (70% have a university degree), they find employment easily, and many disagree with the label “vulnerable population”.

The attraction of Ontario immigrants

It is believed that Gatineau attracts some immigrants who settled in Ontario, including the French, who had been misinformed about the role of French in the province.

Immigrant retention

- The Outaouais boasts a very high retention rate of immigrants compared to other regions of Québec. Organizations in Gatineau make every effort to encourage settlement and employment in Québec, though it does not actively prevent crossing over to Ottawa.
Latin American Migration and the Border

- Whether or not a group lives on both sides of the border is a factor in determining residential choice. For example, the high concentration of Somalis in Ottawa facilitates their settlement there.

- Those immigrants that do settle in the Outaouais mainly locate in Hull. Others locate in Gatineau. Recent immigrants to Aylmer are noticeably absent.

Issues of language
- New immigrants are obliged to learn French. However, there is a gap between immigrants who attend French classes and others (those who already know French on arrival), as regards to their capacity for integration. French classes offer more than language courses: they increase the capacity to communicate by sharing cultural codes and social mores.
- The need for knowledge of English to access employment was discussed: participants stressed the challenge of learning English, which is often difficult. Others disagreed, emphasizing that English classes are available when required.

The Québec model of integration
The Québécois philosophy supports integration through an intercultural as opposed to multicultural approach. This philosophy plays itself out through a number of practical avenues, including the desire to avoid the ghettoization of immigrant settlements (for example, the City will not support cooperative housing for Colombians). While some representatives perceive this approach to be much different than the one undertaken in Ontario, others insist that the two provinces share the same general objectives (such as economic participation). Québécois organizations try to avoid a certain vocabulary, such as “host society”, which encourages division and reinforces hierarchies.

The "mental map" of immigrants
- For the immigrants in the region, the border does not exist. They came to Canada without knowledge of inter-provincial divisions, and do not understand the provincial and municipal restraints placed on them. For them, Ottawa is a part of their living space: the border is both more porous and more artificial than for the native-born.
- The size of the metropolitan area and the fact that Ottawa is the capital of the country was a source of attraction for many. Many aspire to governmental work.
- The use of an address in Ontario is common in some contexts. The reverse is also true.

5. Latin American Immigrants and the Border
Latin American migrants include individuals from Spanish speaking countries in Central and South America. In 2006, Latin Americans made up about 1.2% of the Canadian population; the majority of these were from Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, and Chile (Census Canada, 2006). According to the Canadian Census, there were 292,450 Latin Americans in 2006, largely concentrated in Toronto (93,805), Montreal (67,620), and Vancouver (24,765). Smaller numbers have settled in Ottawa-Gatineau (7,045 in Ottawa and 2,320 in Gatineau), representing approximately 3% of the total Latin American population in Canada.

Fernando Mata (1985), a Canadian sociologist, has identified four main waves of migration from Latin America to Canada: (1) the “Lead” wave – a small number of Latin Americans from European origin who migrated to Canada in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, only a few years after migrating to Latin America (a transition within their migration); (2) the Andean wave – immigrants from Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru who migrated primarily for...
economic reasons in the late 1960s and early 1970s; (3) the Coup wave – political refugees from Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay fleeing the political crises of 1973, 1974, and 1975 respectively; and (4) the Central American wave – mostly Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees escaping from the military, political, and social unrest prevalent in Central America since the early 1980s. The 1990s mark the beginning of a fifth wave, mostly professional immigrants from throughout Latin America coming under Canada’s “skilled worker” class of immigration. Immigrants still arrive under the refugee and family reunification classes, but the significance of these has decreased relatively to the economic class.

In other words, Latin American migration to Canada is a relatively recent phenomenon, with the first significant numbers being South American refugees in the 1970s (Ruiz, 2010). To a large extent, these migrations have been motivated by political and economic instability in countries of origin in conjunction with international circumstances that have favored entry to Canada (Simmons, 1992:282). Principal migrations include those from Chile, Colombia, and El Salvador motivated by political conflict, violence, and (in the case of El Salvador) civil war (Byrne, 1996; Palacios, 2006; Simalchik, 2006). A number of individuals have also arrived seeking economic advancement, often as a result of the imposition of neoliberal economic policies that have privatized government services in their countries of origin (Harvey, 2005; Wiarda and Kline, 2007). Since the early 2000s, Colombians form the largest group of refugees from Latin America. Finally, significant numbers of Mexicans arrive in Canada as guest workers, including seasonal agricultural workers (Basok, 1999, 2000).

Latin American migration to Ottawa-Gatineau has been ongoing since the early 1960s, with significant arrivals in the 1980s (Central American refugees) and 1990s (most probably family reunification of Central American refugees). Unlike other migrants to the area, many Latin Americans arrive with little knowledge of either English or French; it seems their choice of settlement locations are comparatively less affected by linguistic considerations. Perhaps for this reason, Latin Americans have settled in significant numbers in both Ottawa and Gatineau.

Population Characteristics
According to the Canadian Census (2006), Latin Americans in Ottawa represent nineteen different nationalities. The most highly-represented groups include Salvadorians, Colombians and Mexicans. Latin Americans in Gatineau encompass eighteen different nationalities. The most highly-represented groups include Colombians, Salvadorians, and Mexicans. The following maps represent Latin American settlement patterns across the region.

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2 Based on Census Canada 2006 Tabulations. “Latin America” includes individuals in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. We exclude individuals from Guyana, who are non-Spanish speaking.
Distribution and Relative Concentration, Central American Immigrants, Ottawa and Gatineau 2006

Total Population Ottawa - Gatineau CMA: 1,117,120
Total Central American Immigrant Population: 4,515

Statistics Canada: 2006
The tables below provide the demographic characteristics of Latin Americans in the Ottawa-Gatineau region as of 2006. While Latin American migration to Ottawa-Gatineau has been ongoing for several decades, it is important to note that over 50% of Latin Americans have settled in Ottawa since 1991; this figure reaches almost 70% for the Gatineau side. This said, Latin Americans are relatively well established in the region; a fare share of the group (approximately 44%) arrived in the region before 1991, settling more in Ottawa than Gatineau (48% in Ottawa and 33% in Gatineau). These settlement patterns became more evenly distributed in 1991-2000, when approximately 31% of Latin American migrants arrived in the area, settling on both sides of the border. Approximately 25% of the total Latin American population arrived in the area after 2000. While these individuals have settled on both sides of the river, 38% have settled in Gatineau (versus 21% in Ottawa). Gatineau’s rate can be explained by the fact that the government of Quebec has selected the city as a destination centre for many Colombian refugees who are sponsored by the government.

Latin Americans in Ottawa-Gatineau are relatively young: over 62% of these individuals are between 25-54 years old; 20% are aged 15-24. Over 80% of individuals that identify as “Latin American” are first-generation migrants.

These individuals' education and employment achievements are comparable between Ottawa and Gatineau. In Ottawa, 22% of the population has attained high school education, while 15% hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. The Gatinois are slightly less educated: 16% have attained high school education, and 14% hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Average employment incomes are also higher in Gatineau ($29,397, as compared to $24,375 in Ottawa).
Table A: Latin American Migration to Ottawa-Gatineau by Period of Immigration, Census Canada 2006 (20% Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Period of Immigration</th>
<th>OTTAWA-GATINEAU</th>
<th>OTTAWA (75%)</th>
<th>GATINEAU (25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001-2006</td>
<td>2,325 (25%)</td>
<td>1,475 (21%)</td>
<td>870 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td>2,865 (31%)</td>
<td>2,190 (31%)</td>
<td>690 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2000</td>
<td>1,335 (14%)</td>
<td>970 (14%)</td>
<td>370 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1995</td>
<td>1,525 (16%)</td>
<td>1,145 (16%)</td>
<td>320 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1991</td>
<td>4,145 (44%)</td>
<td>3,800 (48%)</td>
<td>765 (33%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Canada 2006. Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration (8) and Place of Birth (281) for the Immigrants and Non-permanent Residents (Table). Topic-based Tabulations: Immigration and Citizenship.

Table B: Age Groups of the Visible Minority Latin American Population under 15 Years Old in Ottawa-Gatineau, Census Canada 2006 (20% Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Age</th>
<th>OTTAWA-GATINEAU</th>
<th>OTTAWA (75%)</th>
<th>GATINEAU (25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>1,855 (20%)</td>
<td>1,450 (21%)</td>
<td>405 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54</td>
<td>5,785 (62%)</td>
<td>4,430 (63%)</td>
<td>1,355 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>740 (8%)</td>
<td>520 (7%)</td>
<td>220 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>280 (3%)</td>
<td>235 (3%)</td>
<td>45 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>145 (2%)</td>
<td>125 (2%)</td>
<td>15 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Canada 2006. Visible Minority Groups (15), Generation Status (4), Age Groups (9) and Sex (3) for the Population 15 Years and Over (Table). Topic-based Tabulations: Immigration and Citizenship.

Table C: Selected Characteristics of Individuals of “Latin American” Ethnic Origin Over 15 Years of Age in Ottawa-Gatineau, Census Canada 2006 (20% Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Generation Status</th>
<th>OTTAWA-GATINEAU</th>
<th>OTTAWA (75%)</th>
<th>GATINEAU (25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st generation</td>
<td>8,005 (86%)</td>
<td>6,120 (87%)</td>
<td>1,880 (81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd generation</td>
<td>750 (8%)</td>
<td>610 (9%)</td>
<td>140 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd generation</td>
<td>55 (0%)</td>
<td>30 (0%)</td>
<td>25 (0%)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>OTTAWA-GATINEAU</th>
<th>OTTAWA (75%)</th>
<th>GATINEAU (25%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No certificate, degree, or diploma</td>
<td>1630 (17%)</td>
<td>1190 (17%)</td>
<td>440 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or equivalent</td>
<td>1890 (20%)</td>
<td>1510 (22%)</td>
<td>380 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>1370 (15%)</td>
<td>1045 (15%)</td>
<td>325 (14%)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>OTTAWA-GATINEAU</th>
<th>OTTAWA (75%)</th>
<th>GATINEAU (25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rate</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>61.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average employment income</td>
<td>$28,274</td>
<td>$24,375</td>
<td>$29,397</td>
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</table>


3 These numbers were calculated based on “Place of Birth”. Again, Guyana has been excluded.
Local Latin American Institutions
The Ottawa-Gatineau region boasts a wide variety of Latin American institutions including local media, social groups, and businesses. There are two Spanish-language papers, both based in Ottawa – Eco Latino and Mundo en Español, each issued on a monthly basis. Additionally, CHIN radio provides regular Spanish programming.

A number of social and community organizations also support Latin American culture through social and other events. The Consejo Hispano Canadiense, LAZO (Grupo de Apoyo para la Mujer Latinoamericana), and the University of Ottawa Latin American Association are examples of some regional groups that are active in the community. Many organizations also support the social and political initiatives of particular nationalities (including the Asociacion de Colombianos en Gatineau, the Asociacion Salvadoreña Canadiense, and the Asociacion Venezolana Canadiense de Ottawa). A number of these organizations span the border (such as the Asociacion Cultural Mexicano-Canadiense Ottawa-Gatineau; the Association Argentine canadienne Ottawa-Gatineau; the Association des péruviens canadiens Ottawa-Carleton, Hull-Outaouais; and Colombian Community of Ottawa-Gatineau).

While some organizations are oriented towards cultural events (the Grupo Folklorico Mexicano, México Lindo, Nicaragua Mia, Perú Danza, and Viva México), others are sports organizations (Sporting México and Sporting Perú). The community is also served by local religious and educational institutions. In particular, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, an extension school of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, provides courses in Spanish language and culture.

A number of institutions supply social and other programming that, while not specifically oriented towards the needs of Latin Americans, benefits the community. In Ottawa, the Centretown Community Health Centre provides aid in accessing adequate employment, health services, and education. Many of these programs are oriented towards meeting the needs of new arrivals. Similarly, in addition to being a local restaurant and meeting place, Dépanneur Sylvestre provides community-oriented welcoming and settlement services for new arrivals to Gatineau.

Both new arrivals and established residents continue to benefit from the wide range of Latin American businesses that exist on both sides of the border. These include restaurants (Agave Grill, Ahora, Amazonas, Cuppedia, El Tucan, Pancho Villa Mexican Restaurant), grocery stores (Dépanneur Los Andes, El Barrio Latino, La Colonia, Mercado Latino), and travel agencies (Iberica Travel and Pardo Travel). Girol, a local bookstore, stocks exclusively Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American literature.

In addition to the social events supported by local Latin American institutions, the visibility of Latin Americans in Ottawa is increased through a number of public festivals and community events. These include (but are certainly not limited to) an annual Latin American parade in Ottawa (in September), festivities surrounding the Day of the Dead held at UNAM in Gatineau (in November), and the Latin American Film Festival (usually in the spring).

6. Potential Effects of the Border (Hypotheses)

Newcomers to the Ottawa-Gatineau region are not intimately aware of the differences existing between the two cities. Upon arrival, migrants may make settlement decisions based on the perceived advantages of one location over another. In the case of Latin Americans, who are neither native English nor French speakers, such decisions may be less based on language (hypothesis 1) and more based on factors such as housing and employment (hypothesis 2). After settlement, the border seems to play less of a role in organizing the everyday lives and
practices of this immigrant group compared to other marginalized communities (hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 1
Latin Americans have settled in large numbers on both the Ottawa and the Gatineau sides. To some extent, this distribution may reflect their Spanish-speaking origins. Many of these migrants arrive with little knowledge of either English or French. Because of this, it seems that their settlement choices are not necessarily based on an affinity towards one language over the other. Instead, these migrants may make settlement decisions based on socio-economic factors, namely their need to access affordable housing and employment.

Hypothesis 2
Immigrants tend to be overrepresented among families that spend more than 30% of their income on rent; the comparatively lower rental costs in Gatineau therefore make it an attractive location for newcomers who arrive with few resources. However, this low rent may be tempered by comparative isolation. Many recent arrivals are dependent on the STO (the local public transportation system). While the STO is functional, it can involve long wait times and be confusing for individuals that are not native French speakers. Sometimes, reaching Ottawa in a timely fashion via the STO is difficult.

Regular trips to Ottawa become necessary for employment purposes; 90% of the jobs in the region are located on the Ottawa side (Hire Immigrants Ottawa, 2009). This geographic concentration, coupled with the fact that it is often necessary to speak English to obtain employment, render Ottawa an attractive settlement destination for newcomers despite higher rental prices.

Hypothesis 3
While the border may play a role in determining initial settlement decisions, there is evidence that it plays a much weaker role in organizing the daily lives of individuals. Institutional support, in the form of Latin American community and social organizations, is strong on both sides of the border. Such organizations include pan-regional (Latin American) organizations as well as those affiliated with particular nationalities; individuals may participate in both varieties. There is anecdotal evidence that it is not unusual for an individual who lives in Ottawa to participate in Gatineau-based events and vice-versa; it is therefore likely that a large number of individuals are moving freely throughout the region in order to take part in activities that appeal to their personal identifications.

7. Discussions with Latin American Immigrants in Gatineau

On June 17, 2009 (from 6-9pm), we conducted a focus group interview with Latin Americans living in Gatineau. This discussion took place at the University of Ottawa. It was facilitated in Spanish by Dr. Luisa Veronis and transcribed and translated by Melisa Pubil.

Individuals were recruited through posters put up in public locations, ads in local Latin American media (both EcoLatino and Mundo en Español), and personal contacts (snowball method). In total, eleven individuals participated in this discussion. Among them were three families – one couple and two individuals who each brought one of their children. The majority of these individuals arrived in Gatineau as refugees from Colombia, though one participant was from Costa Rica, one from Mexico, and one from Venezuela. Most individuals were trained as professionals, and had resided in Canada for a range of 18 years to 2 months. The following issues were discussed:
One or two cities, the border, and differences
Participants expressed the idea that Ottawa and Gatineau constitute two distinct cities, but that there are variations in the degrees and nature of division. They argued that Gatineau is a francophone neighbourhood or suburb of Ottawa, also noting that the border is comparable to an international border between two nations.

Differences between the two sides
In general, participants felt that it was easier to connect with people from Gatineau/Québec in casual, everyday relationships because they share a “Latin” culture and tradition. Yet they also expressed that they cannot trust the Québécois and that Anglophones (people in Ottawa/Ontario) are more respectful. It was mentioned that it is more difficult to work with Québécois (who are more competitive), and easier with Anglophones (there is a culture of meritocracy).

Participants were very critical of the Québécois and their attitudes towards immigrants; differences in the history and purpose of immigration between Québec and the rest of Canada were underlined. In particular, it was suggested that language and language politics in Québec work as a process of exclusion. Participants felt that the mandate of bilingualism provides a tremendous challenge to newcomers who need to learn not one, but two languages. The advantages and disadvantages of having to send their children to French schools were also discussed.

Everyday needs and the neighbourhood
While participants generally have access to all the services they need in their neighbourhood and do not expressly need to go to other parts of the city, a number of individuals use health services on both sides of the river. Other reasons for crossing the border include visiting friends, attending cultural and other events, shopping, and going to the airport.

Settlement issues, employment, and language
Participants discussed the challenges of settlement and integration in Canada (e.g. accreditation process, barriers to the labour force, learning to live in a new culture, etc.), with some reference to the Ottawa-Gatineau region (e.g. bilingualism). They also talked about the problems associated with the accreditation process and their frustration with the barriers professional migrants face to enter the labour force.

8. Discussions with Latin American Immigrants in Ottawa
Five Latin Americans living in Ottawa were recruited for a focus group interview on June 22, 2009, from 6-9 pm. This group encompassed a wide range of nationalities; individuals had migrated from Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela. The group was composed primarily of professionals with post-secondary degrees. This discussion was facilitated in Spanish by Dr. Luisa Veronis and transcribed and translated by Melisa Pubil. The following issues emerged:

One or two cities, the border, and differences
Participants expressed the idea that Ottawa and Gatineau constitute two distinct cities. In particular, they noted cultural and linguistic differences that contribute to the mentality that the border functions as a barrier. Newcomers find the differences between the two cultures intimidating. A number of individuals stated that the region is a microcosm of the dichotomy that exists in Canada.
Latin American Migration and the Border

The role of transportation
Transportation plays a major role in individuals' abilities to access Gatineau. Newcomers to the area that do not own a car find it difficult to cross the river. In particular, they discussed the limits of the public transit system in the region, suggesting that it needs to be more integrated.

Everyday needs and the neighbourhood
In general, participants agreed that they had access to all of the services they need in their neighbourhood. Individuals discussed the necessity to “get involved” on arrival in Canada, noting that public services such as libraries, recreational programs, and community centres play large roles in facilitating community involvement.

Settling in Ottawa
Participants noted that language and language politics work as processes of exclusion, explaining that language requirements present large barriers in accessing employment. Despite differing linguistic norms, participants cross the river occasionally to visit friends and for recreational attractions (green spaces, museums). It was noted that housing costs are cheaper in Gatineau, as well as the fact that the Latin American community there is more visible/present and well organized. Despite these factors, participants were categorical about the fact that they would not live there.

Identity and belonging
Participants noted that they identify strongly with their neighbourhoods. They also expressed the idea that they belong to a “minority”. However, Ottawa participants also stated that they identify with the “large minority” of immigrants in Canada. One participant noted that the challenges immigrants face in Ottawa take precedence over and are not related to the presence of the border.

9. Synthesis and Conclusions
For Latin American newcomers in the region of the National Capital, the role of the border has both theoretical and practical implications. In theory, participants stressed that the border functions as a barrier. Individuals feel that Ottawa and Gatineau constitute two distinct cities, each with separate cultural and linguistic attributes. However, in practice, the border is much more porous; participants are willing to cross it in order to meet daily needs such as employment, shopping, socializing and recreation.

Participants of both focus groups stressed that they identify as minorities in the area. In so doing, they also expressed the fact that, for them, settlement issues such as the accreditation process and barriers to labour force participation currently take precedence over those related to the role of the border. Interestingly, the participants also noted that the border shapes these settlement experiences. In particular, they noted that language requirements contribute to processes of exclusion on both sides of the border.
10. Appendices

A. Recruitment Materials
Participants were recruited via newspaper ad, placed in one issue of both *Eco Latino* and *Mundo en Español*. Additionally, posters (in both English and Spanish) were placed in public locations including churches, community centers, and local Latin American businesses.

¿Eres un recién llegado a Canadá desde Latinoamérica?

**Proyecto Ottawa quisiera hablar contigo sobre tus experiencias en Ottawa-Gatineau.**

Conversaremos acerca de:
- Cómo imaginás tu vecindario y tu ciudad
- En qué parte has elegido establecerte y por qué
- Tus experiencias cotidianas en el trabajo o en la escuela
- Qué piensas acerca de los servicios comunitarios
- Dónde tienes tus lazos sociales

**Quién:** Proyecto Ottawa, un equipo de investigación del Departamento de Geografía, Universidad de Ottawa.

**Qué:** Un grupo de discusión de 3 horas sobre tus experiencias en Ottawa-Gatineau.

Por favor responder a Luisa Veronis
613-562-5800 x1046 • [GeoOtt@uottawa.ca](mailto:GeoOtt@uottawa.ca)

Se servirá un refrigerio y se ofrecerá una retribución.
Are you a new arrival to Canada from Latin America?

Project Ottawa would like to speak with you about your experiences of Ottawa-Gatineau.

We will be discussing:

- How you imagine your neighborhood and city
- Your everyday experiences at work or school
- How you feel about community services
- Where you maintain social relationships
  ...both within and between Ottawa and Gatineau.

Who: Project Ottawa, a research team with the Department of Geography, University of Ottawa.

What: A 2-hour group discussion about your experiences of Ottawa-Gatineau.

When: June 11, 2009, 6-8pm (Ottawa)
      June 17, 2009, 6-8pm (Gatineau)

Where: University of Ottawa

RSVP: Luisa Veronis, Research Coordinator
      613-562-5800 x1046 • GeoOtt@uottawa.ca

Refreshments will be served and compensation offered.
¿Eres un recién llegado a Canadá desde Latinoamérica?

Proyecto Ottawa quisiera hablar contigo sobre tus experiencias en Ottawa-Gatineau.

Conversaremos acerca de:
- Cómo imaginas tu vecindario y tu ciudad
- En qué parte has elegido establecerte y por qué
- Tus experiencias cotidianas en el trabajo o en la escuela
- Qué piensas acerca de los servicios comunitarios
  - Dónde tienes tus lazos sociales

Quién: Proyecto Ottawa, un equipo de investigación del Departamento de Geografía, Universidad de Ottawa

Qué: Un grupo de discusión de 2 horas sobre tus experiencias en Ottawa-Gatineau

Cuándo: 11 de junio 2009, 18:00-20:00 (Ottawa)
           17 de junio 2009, 18:00-20:00 (Gatineau)

Dónde: Universidad de Ottawa

Por favor responder a: Luisa Veronis, Coordinador de la Investigación
613-562-5800 x1046 • GeoOtt@uottawa.ca

Se servirá un refrigerio y se ofrecerá una retribución.
B. Interview Guide

An interview guide was used during the focus groups in order to structure the discussions. It was divided into three themes: “Imagining the City”, “Meeting Everyday Needs”, and “Social Connections”. Each group was asked the same general questions; whether or not and which “additional” questions were asked varied according to the topics individuals within the groups discussed. It is included below.

### Table B: Interview Guide for Discussions with Community Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Imagining the City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 10 minutes | General: Now, I'd like us to each reflect a little. Do you feel that Ottawa and Gatineau constitute one or two cities?  
Additional:  
• In general, do you feel a greater affinity with individuals from one side or the other? |
| 30 minutes | General: Do you experience any differences, or perceive of differences, when you are walking or driving down a street in your neighbourhood compared to others in Ottawa (or in Gatineau / Western Quebec), or others on the opposite side of the River?  
Additional:  
• Do you experience a greater sense of ease or unease from one neighbourhood to another? Where?  
• Do you feel more 'in place' or 'out of place' from one location to another?  
• Do you feel 'at home' on either side of the river? |
| 15 minutes | General: I'd like each of us to imagine for a moment that Ottawa and Gatineau constitute only one city – and that the entire city is located in one province. What would be the implications of this?  
Additional:  
• Implications for your sense of identity…. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Meeting Everyday Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 15 minutes | General: Where you live, do you have access to what you need or want? More specifically, are the services, jobs, shopping, community groups, churches, or other components of your everyday life available in your neighbourhood? Or, do you generally find these things elsewhere in the city or on the other side of the River?  
Additional:  
• Are these provisions similar from one side of the river to the other?  
• Are there advantages or disadvantages arising from living on the side that you do? |
| 15 minutes | General: Individuals may cross the border for different purposes, such as to: go to work, to visit friends, to access community or social services, to pursue recreational opportunities, to go shopping, for entertainment, for other reasons. What are some reasons you cross the border? Why do you cross the river for these things?  
Additional: Would answering this question be different if the mode of transportation available to you was different? |
| 5 minutes | General: In your view, why would someone move from one side of the river to the other?  
Additional:  
• Have you considered moving to the other side of the river?  
• What would stop you from moving to the other side of the river?  
• What keeps you on the side you live on now?  
General: Before moving on, are there any additional thoughts you really need or want to get out around these issues? |
|---|---|
| **Theme: Social Connections** | 15 minutes General: I'd like you to talk a little bit about where your social ties are predominantly located. I'm thinking about relationships with friends, community groups, church groups, book clubs, fitness groups, etc.  
Additional:  
• Are these ties stronger in one part of the city than another?  
• Are these ties stronger on one side of the border?  
• If you were to draw a map of your various connections within the Region overall, where would you place the most dots? |
| 15 minutes | General: I'd like to talk a bit about who you are, how you identify yourself, and how you identify the group to which you feel a 'sense of belonging.' What would be this/these identity/identities?  
Additional:  
• Do you feel these identity groups are coherent throughout the region of the national capital?  
• Do you feel some identity groups are dominant on one side of the river or the other?  
• Does this have an impact on your choice of place of residence or on what you think about the other side of the river?  
• Are there parts of the city where you feel in a more minority position? In a majority position? Does the border have an impact on your feeling in a position of majority or minority?  
• Are there ways, on a daily basis, in which you are made aware of living on the border? Think about some of the scenarios where or when this is more apparent.  
• What in your everyday landscape / travels confirms your identity? |
References


Census Canada, 2006. *Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration (8) and Place of Birth (261) for the Immigrants and Non-permanent Residents (Table). Topic-based Tabulations: Immigration and Citizenship.* Ottawa.


Census Canada, 2006. *Visible Minority Groups (15), Generation Status (4), Age Groups (9) and Sex (3) for the Population 15 Years and Over (Table). Topic-based Tabulations: Immigration and Citizenship.* Ottawa.


