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The Situation of Official-Language Minorities in the Labour Market



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Standard symbols

The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| .. | not available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| 0 ^s | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| ^p | preliminary |
| ^r | revised |
| x | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i> |
| ^E | use with caution |
| ^F | too unreliable to be published |
| * | significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05) |

Note to readers

The data for this article come from three questions added to the March 2012 Labour Force Survey at the request of the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The purpose was to identify selected language characteristics of the Canadian labour force and workers. This was the first time that questions about language had been added to the Labour Force Survey.

These optional questions were as follows:

1. Of English or French, which language do you speak well enough to conduct a conversation?
2. What language do you speak most often at home?
3. What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and still understand?

In this article, Anglophones and Francophones are identified according to the criterion of first official language spoken. The 'first official language spoken' variable is derived from three linguistic questions using a method that successively takes responses to the questions concerning official language proficiency, mother tongue and language spoken most often at home into account.

The concept of first official language spoken (FOLS) serves to allocate the Canadian population between the country's two main language groups. In Canada, just over 97% of the population has either English or French as its first official language spoken. The residual portion is comprised of persons who do not have either English or French as their mother tongue or language spoken most often at home and who cannot conduct a conversation in either of the two official languages (1.6%) as well as those who know both English and French but who cannot be attributed either of the two official languages on the basis of the three variables used (1.2%). These two residual categories have not been taken into account in the analyses proposed in this article.

The unemployment and employment rates presented in this article have not been seasonally adjusted. They therefore differ from those derived from the seasonally adjusted data released in the regular Labour Force Survey publications and thus reflect the employment situation in March 2012.

The estimates in this article are based on survey data, therefore there is a margin of error associated with them. Summary statistical tests indicate that the differences identified are statistically significant. In other words, the discrepancies observed in the sample likely reflect actual differences in the population and do not stem from the selection of the random sample used. The confidence level selected is 68%. When estimates are presented as similar, or when the text does not specifically mention a discrepancy, the difference between the estimates is not statistically significant at the selected confidence level. The differences in these estimates must be interpreted carefully.

The situation of official-language minorities in the labour market

In March 2012, Francophones in Canada posted an unemployment rate of 8.3%, higher than the national average of 7.7%. That month, the unemployment rate among Anglophones was 7.4%, slightly below the national average.

This difference is more a reflection of the distribution of Francophones and Anglophones in Canada than a lower level of 'performance' in the labour market by a particular language group. At the provincial level, the situation for Francophones is similar, or even better, to that for Anglophones, except in New Brunswick.

Overall, the unemployment rate for Francophones in minority communities (those living outside Quebec) was similar to that of Anglophones (7.5% versus 7.3%). However, the employment rate for Francophones, at 58.5%, was lower than that for Anglophones (62.4%).

In Quebec, the unemployment rate of the English-speaking minority did not differ from that of the Francophone population (8.7% versus 8.4%) nor did the employment rate (57.3% versus 59.1%).

With respect to the unemployment rate, there was no significant difference between official-language minorities and majorities, either for Francophones outside Quebec or for Anglophones in Quebec.

Across Canada, 18% of Francophones who are employed earn \$1,200 per week or more, compared with 24% of Anglophones. Once again, this has less to do with a disadvantage for Francophones in the labour market than the fact that the latter are concentrated in eastern Canada, where wages are lower than in the western provinces. In provinces other than Quebec, there are as many Francophones as Anglophones in the highest wage categories, with fewer of them earning less than \$500 per week. Employed Francophones in minority settings are more likely to be working full time (84%) than workers in the Anglophone majority (80%). In Quebec, data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) do not indicate a significant difference in earnings between Anglophones and Francophones.

Francophones in the Atlantic provinces

In the Atlantic provinces, where the unemployment rate for all language groups combined is higher than in the other Canadian provinces, the unemployment rate for Francophones (13.0%) is slightly higher than that for Anglophones (11.2%). This difference can largely be attributed to the situation in New Brunswick, where the unemployment rate of the Francophone minority is 13.7%, while that of Anglophones is 10.6%.¹

In New Brunswick, the employment rate of Francophones is 50.4%, compared with 55.6% for the province's Anglophones.² In comparison, the national employment rate is 60.8% for all language groups combined.

Also in New Brunswick, there is no significant difference in the unemployment and employment rates of Francophones and Anglophones in the 15-to-24 and the 25-to-44 age groups. However, there are differences between the language groups for the 45-to-64 age group, with Francophones posting an unemployment rate of 14.4% compared with 8.2% for Anglophones in the same age group. There is a large gap in the employment rate for the 45-to-64 age group: 55.4% of Francophones are employed, a smaller percentage than among Anglophones (67.1%).

With respect to wages, Francophones and Anglophones in New Brunswick have a similar profile. The proportion of employees earning less than \$500 per week is 30% for Francophones, similar to the 31% for Anglophones. The percentage of Anglophones earning more than \$1,200 per week is 17%, similar to the percentage for Francophones (16%).

1. It is not possible to produce precise estimates for Francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia due to the small proportion of Francophones in those provinces.

2. Francophones and Anglophones in this province are concentrated in distinct economic regions and structural economic factors (industrial structure) may be largely accountable for this difference.

Francophones account for 30% of employees in New Brunswick. Employed Francophones are overrepresented in certain sectors, including public administration (where they comprise 43% of employees) and the health care and social assistance sector (38%). However, they are underrepresented in such industries as trade (24%), transportation and warehousing (19%) and professional, scientific and technical services (17%).

Anglophones in Quebec

In Quebec, there are no significant differences between the unemployment rate of the Anglophone minority (8.7%) and that of Francophones (8.4%). The same observation applies to the employment rate, which is similar for Anglophones (57.3%) and Francophones (59.1%).

The unemployment and employment rates are similar for Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec irrespective of the age group studied. The same holds true for wage comparisons – the small differences are not significant. This does not indicate that the situation of the Anglophone minority in the labour market is the same as that of the Francophone majority, but the overall finding for the two language groups is nonetheless similar for the most part, with differences too small to be significant.

Nevertheless, Anglophones, who represent 10% of employees in Quebec, are overrepresented in certain employment sectors, namely finance, insurance, real estate and leasing (15%), accommodation and food services (14%) and professional, scientific and technical services (13%). Conversely, they are underrepresented in, for example, public administration (7%) and construction (5%).

Francophones in Ontario

In March, the Francophone minority in Ontario posted an unemployment rate of 5.4%, below the 7.9% for Anglophones. There was no difference in the employment rates of the two groups.

The unemployment rate of Francophones was particularly low for the 45-to-64 age group. The rate for Francophones in that age group was 3.9%, less than that of Anglophones in the same age group (6.4%). However, there was no difference in the employment rate (74.0% for Francophones compared with 71.8% for Anglophones). With respect to the unemployment and employment rates for the other age groups, LFS data do not point to any significant differences between Francophones and Anglophones.

Francophone employees in Ontario earn more than their Anglophone counterparts. In fact, 22% of Francophones who are employed earn less than \$500 per week, compared with 28% of Anglophones. Moreover, 30% of Francophone employees earn from \$800 to \$1,199 per week and 28% \$1,200 or more. The corresponding percentages for Anglophone employees are 24% and 25% respectively.

In Ontario, employed Francophones are overrepresented in public administration and educational services. While they account for 4.2% of the province's employees, they comprise 7.7% of the labour force in public administration and 6.4% in educational services. Conversely, they are less represented in manufacturing and trade, sectors in which they comprise 2.5% and 2.9% of the labour force respectively.

Francophones in western Canada

In the provinces west of Ontario, where unemployment rates are the lowest in the country, the rate for the Francophone minority is similar to that of the majority. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia combined, the unemployment rate is 6.1% for Francophones, compared with 5.9% for Anglophones. The employment rate is 60.3% for Francophones and 65.1% for Anglophones, but, despite this seemingly large gap, the difference is not statistically significant.

Among the 25-to-44 age group, the results are similar among Francophones and Anglophones for both the unemployment rate (5.5% for Francophones and 5.4% for Anglophones) and the employment rate (81.9% for Francophones and 81.7% for Anglophones).

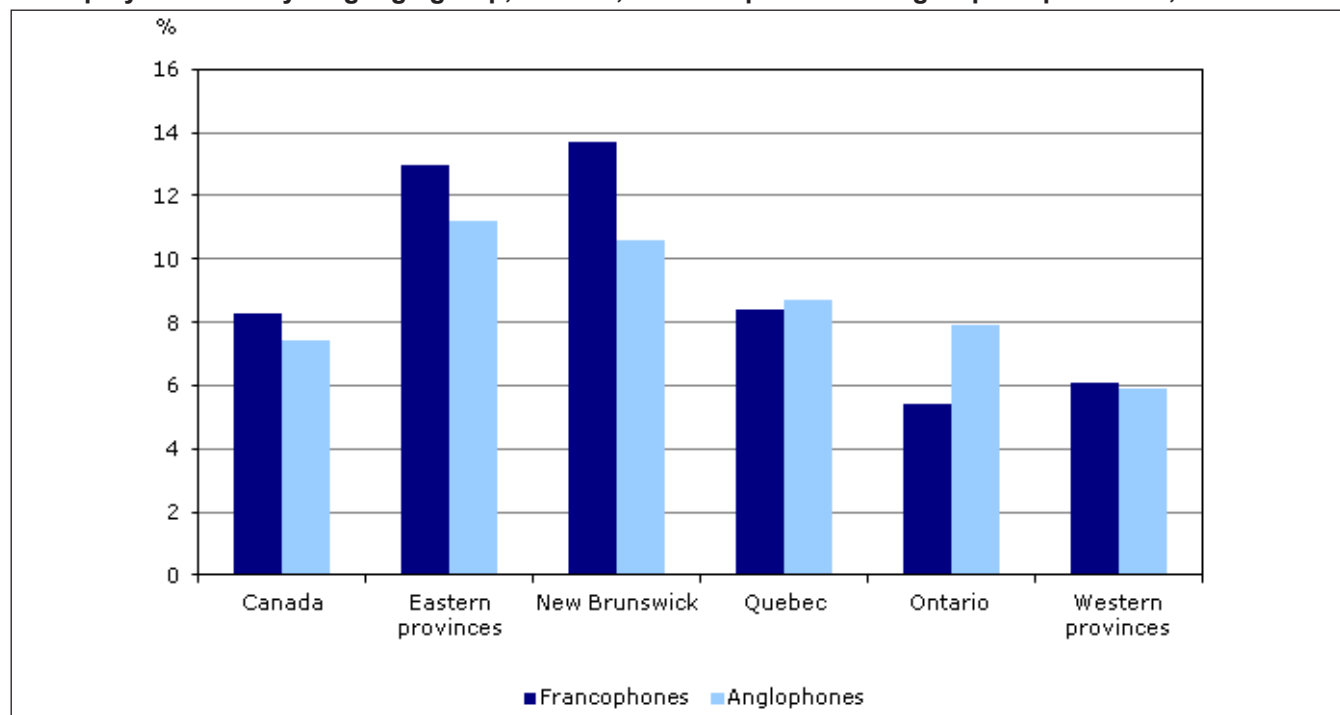
The same holds true for Francophones aged 45-to-64 in western Canada, whose unemployment rate of 3.3% is similar to the 4.7% rate for Anglophones in the same age group. There is no significant difference in the employment rate, which is 75.6% for Anglophones and 74.6% for Francophones aged 45 to 64.

The weekly wages of Francophones who are employed in the western provinces, like those in Ontario, are higher than those of Anglophones. Of employees who are in the official-language minority, 18% earn less than \$500 per week, compared with 25% of Anglophone employees. Moreover, 30% of employed Francophones earn from \$800 to \$1,199 per week, while 29% earn \$1,200 or more. In contrast, 26% and 25% of Anglophones respectively earn such wages.

Francophones make up only 1.7% of all employees in the western provinces. Nonetheless, they are proportionally more numerous in public administration (3.0%) and educational services (2.9%), although they are underrepresented in trade (1.0%).

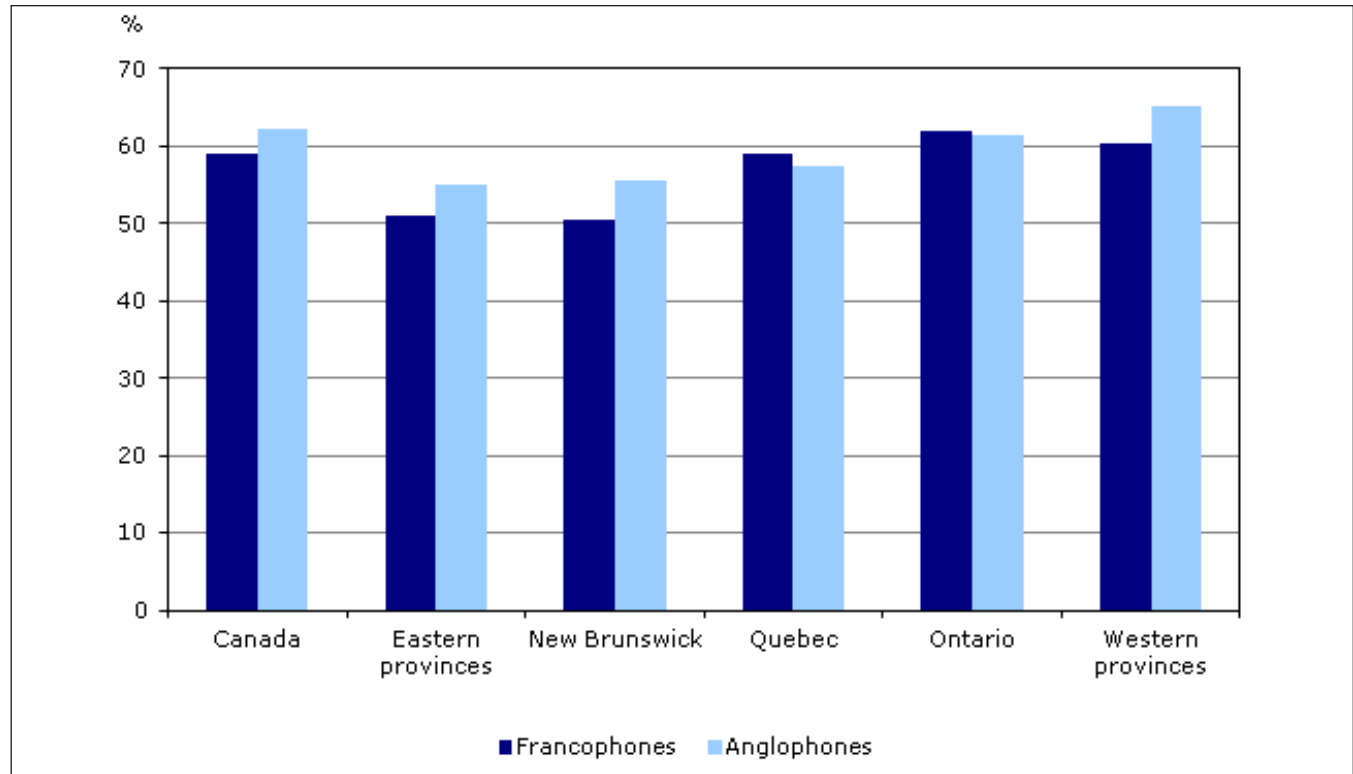
Chart 1

Unemployment rate by language group, Canada, selected provinces or groups of provinces, March 2012



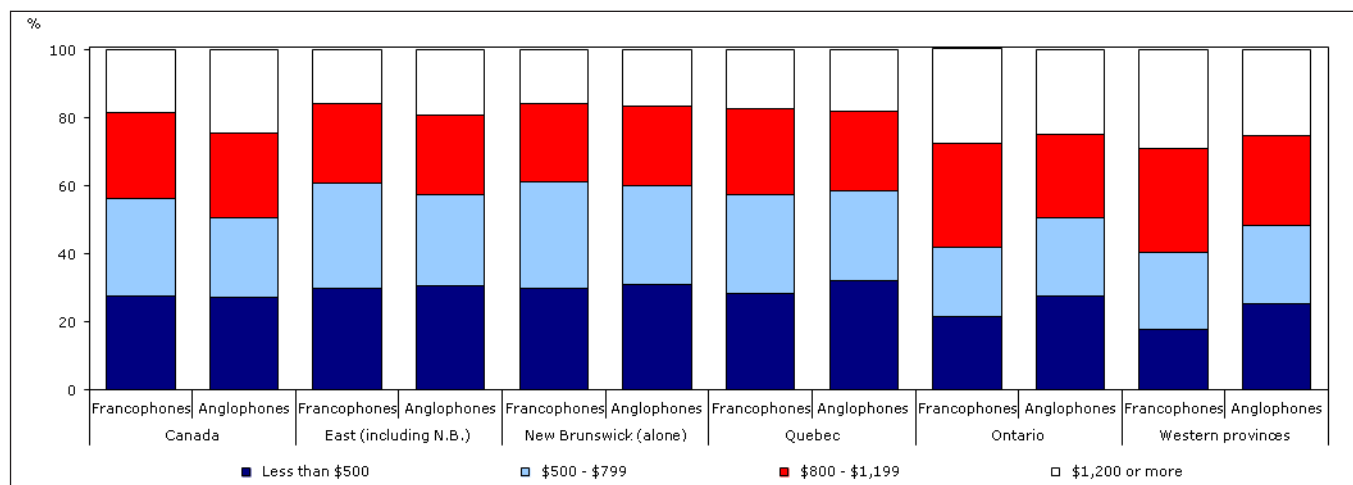
Note: The Francophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is French, while the Anglophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is English.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, March 2012.

Chart 2**Employment rate by language group, Canada, selected provinces or groups of provinces, March 2012**

Note: The Francophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is French, while the Anglophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is English.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, March 2012.

Chart 3**Proportion of employees by weekly earnings and language group, Canada, selected provinces or groups of provinces, 2012**

Note: The Francophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is French, while the Anglophone group consists of persons whose first official language spoken is English.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, March 2012.