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Prepared for

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NOTE

This study is based on the comments and opinions of 81 parents interviewed in four Canadian cities in the course of eight group meetings. The report's conclusions reflect the views of the participants in these meetings and not necessarily those of the author or of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada.

The study deals with the motivations underlying the school choices made by eligible parents (see definition on page 1) outside Quebec. By definition, these motivations are subjective and perceptual. Whether or not they actually reflect reality is unimportant since it is the perceptions of the parents which will influence their decisions and not objective facts. At various points throughout the text are excerpts from documents written by the participants at the request of the facilitator of the discussion groups.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Commissioner of Official Languages, concerned about the factors motivating official language minority populations, assigned the responsibility to conduct a study of the motivations prompting eligible parents to choose a French-language or English-language school for their children.

Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that:

Citizens of Canada whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province. Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

Essentially, the Charter defines a category of parents (known as "eligible parents") who have the right to have their children instructed in the minority official language where the number of children in question warrants (23(3)).^{1}

However, not all eligible parents exercise this right. Outside Quebec, a significant percentage of eligible parents, varying from one location or environment to another, choose to have their children attend English schools (including immersion classes). The aim of this study is to explore the reasons why eligible parents choose one school system rather than the other for the education of their children.

The study had three phases:

- We first reviewed the pertinent literature, i.e., that concerning the psycho-sociological aspects of the situation of the linguistic minorities, to identify working hypotheses on the motivations of eligible parents in their choice of a school for their children. We then developed an initial conceptual model which shaped preparation of the

discussion guide used in the second phase and the analysis carried out in the third phase.

- In the second phase, we met with groups of eligible parents in four Canadian cities. In Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax and Sudbury we brought together, in a first group, eligible parents who send their children to the English school (in regular or immersion classes). Eligible parents who had chosen the French school participated in a second group. In all, we met with 81 eligible adults in eight discussion groups. The participants had been recruited by correspondence in French schools, by direct contacts in English schools and by telephone calls at random. The discussions were based on the guide, presented in Appendix 1, which is itself based on the conceptual model presented in Chapter 2.
- When the meetings were completed, we proceeded to the analytical phase. The comments of participants in the discussion groups were analysed qualitatively. The reasons cited for the choice of the last school, as listed on paper by the participants in the group meetings, were summarized in Appendix 2. Analysis was carried out based on the motivation clusters set out in the conceptual model. As a result, Chapter 2, which presents the results of the analysis, is organized by motivation clusters. The analysis prompted us to review the conceptual model and offer a more parsimonious version of it, in Chapter 3, together with a summary of the study's conclusions.

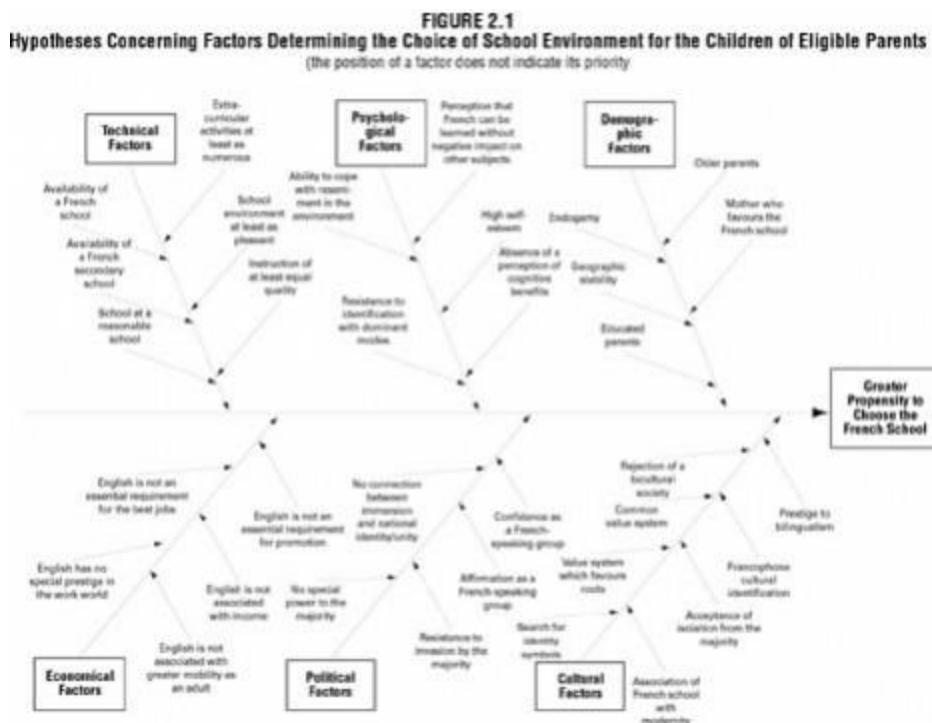


CHAPTER 2 - OBSERVATIONS

The sources listed in Appendix 3 and our conversations with persons familiar with the subject led us to construct a series of hypotheses about the reasons for the school choices of eligible parents placed in an environment where their language is the minority language. Figure 2.1 summarizes the structure of the model constructed on the basis of these hypotheses. We have organized the motivations affecting the choice of a school in a minority environment into six families:

- technical factors,
- psychological factors,
- demographic factors,
- economic factors,
- political factors, and
- cultural factors.

In the following sections, each of these families is the subject of a presentation and a verification in the discussion groups.



2.1 Technical Factors

We labelled "technical factors" all the reasons for choosing a school system which enter into any parent's choice of any school -- reasons therefore which are unrelated to the linguistic character of the school. Among them, we assumed that the following factors would favour selection of the French school:

- the availability, pure and simple, of a school -- a statement of the obvious, no doubt, but an important constraint in the minority situation,
- the availability of a French secondary school,
- a reasonable distance between the school and the home,
- instruction of a quality recognized to be at least equal to that available in other schools (Hébert, 1993),
- an environment regarded as at least as pleasant as that of other schools, and
- extra-curricular activities (sports and cultural) at least as numerous and rich as those available in other schools.

Let us look at what the parents told us.

On the whole, the parents expressed moderate satisfaction with the school system in general. While more than one complained about budgetary constraints, the dedication of the teachers and the existence of common learning goals that guarantee instruction of equal value in all schools were strong points, for both the English and French schools. In fact, it was immersion classes that were the target of the most criticism, although they were also the subject of much praise. Some parents whose children attend immersion classes were dissatisfied with the quality of the teachers' French and with the public resources that have been available for some years. A qualification: parents in Vancouver who use the French school -- all of whom originate from outside British Columbia -- were critical of the school system in general.

The following paragraphs present, first, the positions of parents who use the English school, and then those of parents whose children attend the French school. We will not repeat this point in the presentation, but it is important to note that some of the viewpoints presented below represent the perspectives of the Vancouver, Calgary and Halifax groups, but not the experience of parents in Sudbury. The reason is simple: in Sudbury there are many French schools and the French-speaking student population, while smaller than the English-speaking student population, constitutes a significant proportion of the total student population, with the result that technical factors tend to be the same for both school systems. The observations that follow therefore apply to the more minority environments.

It was difficult for parents using the English system to comment on the quality of the French schools. Most were not familiar with them at all, even to the point of questioning their existence. On the whole, their perceptions were neutral or positive: in their view, French schools, being required to meet department of education standards, offer instruction of equal value; in their view also, since the schools are smaller, they provide better supervision. However, their smaller size means that the French schools offer few extra-curricular activities and, in particular, no specialized programs (in arts, sports). Except in Sudbury, these parents made much of the distance from their home to the French school. Except in Sudbury, each locality has only one or two French schools, which are necessarily located at a greater distance than the English school -- in some cases a 90-minute bus ride away.

Parents whose children attend the French school also found it difficult to compare it with the English school, having little direct experience. However, they confirmed several opinions of the other group of parents: French schools are farther away from home, the sports and extra-curricular activities are more limited and technical programs are few at the secondary level.

Since French schools are less numerous, they have tended to become overcrowded in recent years. In Calgary and Halifax in particular, temporary classrooms are proliferating. Parents see this lack of resources as a threat in the long term.

The influx of new students for whom French is not the language spoken at home partly explains this overcrowding. It seems that there has been a rapid growth in the use of French schools by eligible parents who do not use French at home and see them as an alternative to immersion classes. Some parents who use the French school, in every city, were very critical of this growth of the student population -- particularly of students requiring increasingly scarce francization resources. In Calgary and Halifax, this situation was presented as a major problem for the French schools and for the French-speaking children who find themselves thrown into a mixed linguistic world and slowed down in their learning because the teachers must devote their time to basic linguistic instruction. This influx is also associated by the

parents with an increased presence of English in the schoolyard.

A number of French schools are Catholic in denomination. For some parents, this was an attraction. Others saw it as a barrier to access to the French school. Many parents associated the Catholic school with greater rigour and better discipline, two positive factors.

In Sudbury, the existence of Collège Boréal is seen by some as an important asset in convincing children to remain in the French secondary system.

Overall, the quality of instruction and of the school environment did not stand out as positive or negative factors of prime importance (except in Sudbury, but as a factor influencing their choice of a school and not their choice of a particular school system). The most important technical factor is **distance**, a very high barrier for parents using the English system, although parents who send their children to the French school see this as a rationalization. For a minority, **limited extra-curricular activities** are a significant factor at the secondary level.

2.2 Psychological Factors

The psychological factors are more subtle than the technical factors and more difficult to measure. We assumed that the following psychological conditions would be favourable to the French school:

- the ability to withstand resentment in the environment,
- resistance to identification with the dominant modes of behaviour and thought (Leclerc, 1992),
- absence of a perception of cognitive benefits associated with the acquisition of two languages (García, 1997),
- high self-esteem (García, 1997), and
- the perception that French is not so difficult to learn that it adversely affects other subjects.

When asked to respond to the statement, "Sending children to the French school means subjecting them to the disapproval of others," the parents in all groups at first denied this. Later, some referred to more or less critical comments by family members, neighbours or friends who felt that the children had to travel too far, that they were being cut off from their friends in the neighbourhood, that they were not being allowed to learn English, etc. However, other parents had experienced opposite situations where they had been complimented on their choice. It is difficult to gauge responses of this kind, but it seems to us that they are not a crucial factor in parents' school choices.

All the parents agreed that French is more difficult to learn than English. However, few of them made this a factor in choosing a school. Three or four of the participants sending their children to the English school said that one of their children was unable to learn French or to cope with two languages concurrently. Among the others, the difficulty of French was a justification for choosing the French school, contrary to our initial hypothesis: since French is difficult -- and as a corollary, since English "is not learned, it is picked up," (Calgary, group 2) -- children must be given an environment that properly supports their learning of French. Many of the parents who chose the French school did so on this basis. We will return to this in the analysis of economic factors.

Identification with dominant modes ("learning how the majority does things") was not seen as an important factor by parents who chose the English system. Similarly, none of the parents who chose the French school accepted the idea that it is important to imitate the majority's ways of doing things, except that it is necessary to know their language. However, among this latter group of parents, some (especially in Calgary and Sudbury) criticized the attitudes and behaviour of newly arrived parents, non-exogamous parents and, especially, new immigrants from Quebec who, according to the participants, want to integrate their children as quickly as possible into the English culture and society, believing themselves proof against anglicization.

On the whole, the psychological factors do not seem to be pre-eminent. An associated factor, the difficulty of French, together with great value attributed to its mastery, is, however, vital to understanding the choices of eligible parents. It will be analysed in depth with the economic factors.

2.3 Demographic Factors

The literature contains many references to the importance of demographic factors in the motivations of linguistic minorities. These sources prompted us to posit the following hypotheses concerning the demographic factors favouring the choice of French schools:

- endogamy (the fact that both parents have French as their mother tongue) (Leclerc, 1992),

- the family's geographical stability,
- the parents' level of education (Brenzinger, 1997),
- mothers will favour the French school (Brenzinger, 1997), and
- older parents (Brenzinger, 1997).

The link between the couple's exogamy and the choice of the English school is easy to make statistically. It was confirmed perceptually in the discussion groups: although many anecdotal cases can be identified which suggest the opposite, parents generally believe that exogamous couples more readily choose the English school (regular program or immersion class) than the French school. The English-speaking parent has two arguments of nearly equal weight in hand: first, at the primary level, he fears not being able to fully participate in his children's education because instruction will be given in a language he does not command; then, especially at the secondary level, he fears that the child will not learn English properly in a world that requires mastery of that language.

The great majority of parents believed that use of the English school system facilitated mobility and transfers "because there is always an English school, wherever one goes" (Halifax, group 2). However, since few expected to move in the short term, this was not a factor in their own decision.

In the questions asked of participants in the discussion groups, we did not deal with the issue of level of education. However, we can say that various external observations of the participants in both types of groups tend to confirm that parents of higher socio-economic status more readily choose the French school than parents of lower socio-economic status. This relationship is probably not direct; it is probably conditioned by greater self-confidence, stronger cultural identity and a certainty that children will learn English without attending the English school.

While most of the participants did not believe that the mother or the father has a special role in choosing the school, some stated that, in exogamous couples, the mother has the last word (since, according to the participants, it is she who looks after the children and their homework). A small number also believed that fathers tend to favour the English school, which they associate with a greater probability of success in career terms.

We assumed that older parents, who are probably closer to their cultural roots, would more readily choose the French school. The participants did not share this view. Most of them saw no link between the parents' age and school choices. A small number thought that older parents would be more attracted by the French school because their cultural values were more firmly rooted; an equally small number thought on the other hand that the most linguistically dynamic parents were the youngest.

The most critical demographic factor is undoubtedly **exogamy**.

2.4 Economic Factors

Our initial model, like the literature, makes much of the economic factors (Brenzinger, 1997; Leclerc, 1992). We assumed that the following factors would increase the probability of choosing the French school:

- English is not seen as having special prestige in the work world (Clyne, 1997; Leclerc, 1992),
- English is not viewed as a *sine qua non* for obtaining better jobs and promotions (Clyne, 1997; Nelde, 1997),
- mastery of English is not associated with higher income (Leclerc, 1992), and
- mastery of English is not associated with greater mobility as an adult.

As we shall see later, all these assumptions proved to be false, in a sense. More specifically, the role of economic factors differs depending upon whether one looks at factors of attraction to the French school or to the English school (and immersion classes).

In response to the statement, "Children must have complete mastery of English to obtain good jobs and promotions," all the parents, of both types, in every city, agreed. Some of them wanted to make a qualification, because of the word "complete," but without disagreeing with the gist of the message. According to the participants, English is therefore an essential prerequisite for success in the job market.

However, parents who chose the French school were unanimous in adding, unlike parents using the English system, that it is not English that is essential, but bilingualism. This position was very clear and fixed. To complete the reasoning, according to the participants, one had to know which school makes for better learning of two languages. Unanimity was quickly reached in favour of the French school.

The parents who chose the English school were far less categorical in their judgment. Many of them believed that English was essential and bilingualism useful; those in this group who considered bilingualism important tended to rely on the family environment and immersion classes to ensure sufficient knowledge of French -- for them, the French school was associated with thorough instruction in French to the detriment of English, while the immersion class was seen as offering a more appropriate balance. They feared that the English learned at the French school would not suffice to make their children adults at ease in English. ***An important factor in the decision to use the English school had to do with this negative perception of the French school with regard to learning English*** -- and, for some, a positive perception of immersion classes.

The responses concerning mobility as an adult were the same as those regarding economic success: English is essential to mobility, but, for parents who chose the French school, bilingualism is a better guarantee.

The question of prestige left more than one mouth agape. The very concept of prestige associated with a language was strange to most. However, other participants did not object to the link between language and prestige and expressed their agreement with the association between English and prestige.

2.5 Political Factors

Various sources suggest that political factors might play a role in the parents' choice of a school (Brenzinger, 1997; Hébert, 1993; Leclerc, 1992). The political quarrels that arise in establishing French schools in the majority Anglophone provinces -- although a subject dear to certain participants -- is not an issue here. The working hypotheses were that the following factors would favour the choice of the French school:

- absence of attribution of a special power to the majority which would be communicated by identification with it;
- rejection of the view of the immersion school as a contribution to national unity (Leclerc, 1992),
- confidence in the strength of the Francophone group,
- affirmation as a Francophone group (Boudreau, 1995), and
- resistance to invasion by the majority into the Francophone cultural field (Leclerc, 1992).

In general, these factors seemed of very slight importance and almost bizarre and incomprehensible to most of the parents. For the participants, the choice of a school for their children had no political connotation and was not the expression of a political commitment.

Most of the parents rejected the idea that the choice of immersion classes contributes to national unity (however, a few parents in Halifax accepted this idea; they were sending their children to immersion classes). They believed that some English-speaking parents hold this view, but not French-speaking parents. According to some, English-speaking parents see immersion classes simply as an enrichment for their children, as music or sports would be.

There is a thin line between cultural affirmation and taking a political position. The parents who took part in the discussion groups did not want to associate their school choices with a political act, but some who had chosen the French school loudly proclaimed their Francophone convictions and some who had chosen the English school explained their decision by the weakness of their position in relation to the English majority. One thing is certain: the parents do not see their decisions as falling within the political realm.

2.6 Cultural Factors

Cultural factors are extremely important in explaining the decisions of eligible parents regarding their children's school. The initial model predicted that the following attributes would increase the probability that an eligible parent would choose the French school:

- association of a certain prestige with bilingualism or, at the very least, the absence of high prestige associated with English,
- a sense of belonging to a Francophone cultural community (Fishman, 1997; Leclerc, 1992),
- acceptance of a degree of isolation from the majority socio-economic environment (Boudreau, 1995; Leclerc, 1992),
- association of the French school with modernity and the attraction of this modernity (Boudreau, 1995),
- a search for symbols of community identity (Leclerc, 1992),
- a system of values that favours roots (Brenzinger, 1997; Boudreau, 1995),
- existence of values common to the minority group and different from majority values (Clyne, 1997), and

- rejection of a bicultural society (Boudreau, 1995; Clyne, 1997; Leclerc, 1992).

In our meetings, it was clearly apparent that there is a close relationship between the sense of belonging to a local French-speaking cultural community and the choice of the French school for the children. Except in Sudbury, parents who had chosen the English school were almost unanimous in saying that there was no real French-speaking community in their city; some went further: for them, those who identify with the French-speaking community tended to be fanatics, "anti-English," people who reject the English language and would prefer that everything take place in French, people who reject anyone who is not "exclusively French-speaking." For their part, many of the parents whose children attend the French school described a lively and dynamic French-speaking community which encouraged them to pass their language and culture on to their children. For many, the school (or the school and community centre) is the linchpin of the community. It is thanks to the school, in their view, that members of the community, adults and children, find themselves, meet together and recognize one another. In Sudbury, a larger French-speaking environment, parents whose children attend the French school described a more segmented environment where a certain elite, referred to as a "clique," has developed.

In terms of personal identity, the groups showed significant differences. Parents who sent their children to the English school tended to identify themselves personally as Canadians or French Canadians. Parents who chose the French school presented a more varied profile: Albertan, Quebecer, Acadian, Brayon, Franco-Canadian, Franco-Ontarian and French Canadian. For a number of them, the French-speaking component was more important than the political or territorial component.

Even among the parents most culturally committed to the local French-speaking community and those who identified most with their French-speaking background, some expressed profound helplessness in dealing with the anglicization of their children, with the difficulty the parents have in conveying the value of the French language and culture.

Few of the participants accepted the idea that the French school was more or less modern than the English school. Those who saw a difference associated the French school with greater traditionalism but also with modern pedagogy. It was sometimes difficult to distinguish between what had to do with the French character of the school and what had to do with Catholic education.

The statement, "The French school is a way of consolidating values common to Francophones" found very few takers among parents who had chosen the English school. These parents were not comfortable with the concept of values common to the Francophonie, not knowing what reality to associate it with, in their environment. However, parents whose children were attending the French school were almost unanimous in accepting the same statement. For them, the French school is the cornerstone of their minority community.

Overall, the parents did not accept the idea that choosing the French school was a factor causing isolation for their children because they have many contacts outside the school. Some parents who had chosen the French school, however, expressed some discomfort about the choices they had had to make between the isolation required to build a Francophone culture and the need for contact with the environment and with the English reality. In half the groups, participants told anecdotes about friction with grandparents, other members of the (exogamous) family and friends regarding the justification for the choice of the French school.



CHAPTER 3 - CONCLUSIONS

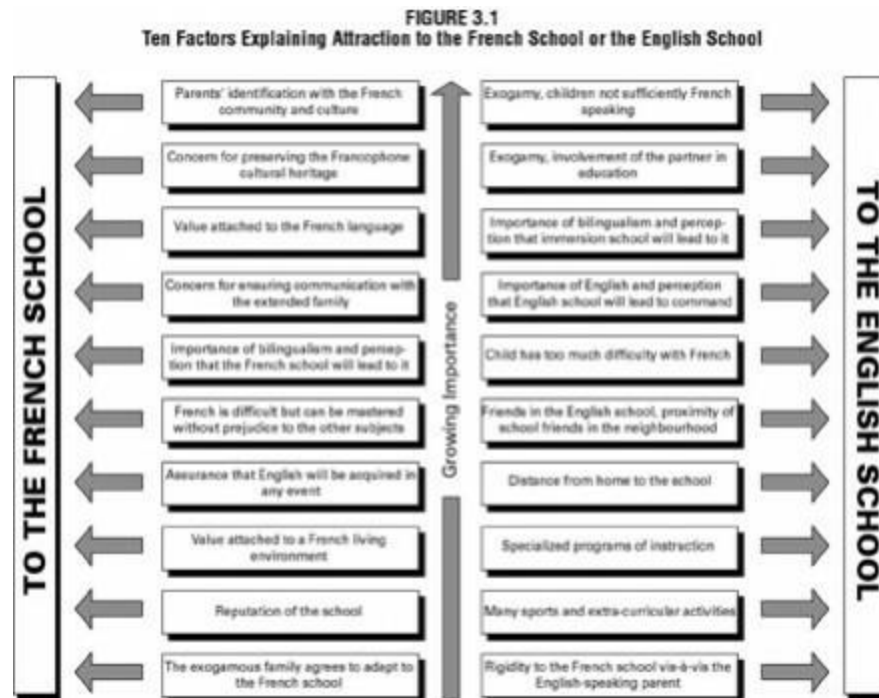
By way of conclusion, the first section contains a summary of the detailed observations found in the previous chapter in the form of factors of attraction to the French school and the English school. The second section incorporates the parents' suggestions regarding methods to be taken to increase use of the French school by those who are eligible. Finally, a third section briefly discusses the motivating factors observed in Sudbury, a less minority environment than that found in the other three cities visited.

3.1 Summary of Attraction Factors

Figure 3.1 summarizes the factors of attraction to the French school and the English school as found in this study. Not all of these factors have equal weight, [2](#) and certain prescriptive paths for increasing use of the French school can be identified.

- Any policy that has the effect of increasing the sense of a Francophone community will increase enrolment in French schools.
- Any increase in the number of French schools (or at least, the number of points of service) will reduce distances between homes and the school and increase enrolment.
- Enrolment in the French school can be increased by publicizing its performance in the acquisition of two living languages and by combatting the myth of a cost in terms of the other subjects.
- More parents will choose the French school if they are convinced that their children will have a command of English at the end of their schooling.
- Enrolment in the French school will increase if measures are taken to ensure the involvement of a non-Francophone parent in the French education of his or her children.
- Parents will have more opportunities to enrol their child in the French school if they view it as a comprehensive living environment.
- Without entering into direct competition with the English school, the French school will increase its enrolment if it offers a range of sports and extra-curricular activities.
- Enrolment in the French school would increase if non-Francophone parents felt more welcome there.

Finally, we note that a number of parents who send their children to French schools would have serious reservations if increased access to the French school resulted in attracting children who do not have a command of French when they arrive at the school. While being open to less francized families, a number of parents protested what they regard as insufficient resources to ensure effective francization of children from non-Francophone or anglicized exogamous families while also preserving high standards of instruction for other children.



3.2 Suggestions From Participants

In addition to these analytical prescriptions, the following suggestions come from the participants themselves. What is required is that:

- the parents are convinced that the program in French will be available throughout their children's primary and secondary education;
- the community environment is more lively and dynamic to attract parents to the French-speaking community;
- the school offer methods and opportunities to involve the non-Francophone parent, including agreeing to communicate with him or her in English;
- parents are convinced to try the French school by pointing out to them that immersion classes will always be there if they are not satisfied;
- it is pointed out that the French school's instruction is a window on the world.

3.3 Dynamics of a Less Minority Environment

The situation in Sudbury is very different from that found elsewhere. There, Francophones do not see themselves as a minority at risk in the same way as in the other three cities. Their number and their percentage of the total population mean that a real social environment exists. As a result, from the point of view of eligible parents who chose French school, the choice open to them was between one French school and another -- and not between the English system as opposed to the French system. For parents in Sudbury who did not choose French school, the choice was between the French school and immersion classes.

Everywhere else, Francophones described situations of cultural survival more than situations of prosperity. In these environments, immersion classes did not have the same attraction as in Sudbury. There, members of both groups of eligible parents weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the English school system and the French system.



APPENDIX 1

Discussion Guide

Discussion Guide for Eligible Groups

1. The facilitator welcomes the participants in the meeting room and asks them to be seated. He ensures that each person completes a name card so that everyone can address others by their first name.
2. The facilitator introduces himself and mentions the following points:
 - 2.1 the discussion is about schools; each of the participants is a parent
 - 2.2 the discussion is being recorded
 - 2.3 the comments are confidential
 - 2.4 there are no right or wrong answers
 - 2.5 all opinions are welcome
 - 2.6 we are not looking for a consensus; we prefer frank and open discussion
 - 2.7 observation from the other side of the mirror
 - 2.8 the participant's role is to express his viewpoint; that of the facilitator is to ensure the smooth conduct of the discussion and that everyone has a chance to speak.
3. I would now like all the participants to introduce themselves briefly and tell us their first name, where they are from, what line of work they are in and how many school-age children they have.

Francophone Identity

4. You may not all be French speaking, but you all have some link with the French-speaking community. Describe to me this link with the French-speaking community.
 - 4.1 Do you consider yourself primarily a Francophone or a Canadian without linguistic affiliation (British Columbian, Albertan, Ontarian, Nova Scotian, Acadian, other)?
 - 4.2 Is your spouse French-speaking?
5. Do you think that the Francophones here form a united group or are they more concerned about other issues, such as political or employment issues?
6. In your opinion, is the Francophonie a thing of the past or of the future? Is it a way of being nostalgic about the past or a way of preparing for the future?

7. Do you think that Francophones should see themselves as a political group or a cultural group, or should they instead concentrate on economic and social success like non-Francophones?
8. In your opinion, do Francophones have a harder time economically, in terms of salaries and income, than Anglophones?

The school system

9. I would now like you to tell me what you think of the primary and secondary school system in your locality.
 - 9.1 Is it of good quality?
 - 9.2 Is it satisfactory?
 - 9.3 Is it appropriate?
 - 9.4 Do the schools have a pleasant environment?
 - 9.5 Do the schools offer worthwhile activities to the children?
 - 9.6 How would you describe the instruction given in the schools?
 - 9.7 Are the travel distances acceptable?
10. Do these comments apply equally to French schools, English schools and immersion schools?
 - 10.1 Do the French schools have a better or worse reputation?

Reasons for choosing a school

11. (*Individual written exercise*) Now take a sheet of paper and write "1" at the top. List the reasons that prompted you to choose the school that you recently chose for your child. If you have or have had several children in school, think of your most recent decision. List three or four important factors that made you choose this school rather than another.
12. Before discussing the reasons you have given, I would like to know to which school you decided to send your children.
 - 12.1 Did all your children attend, or will they attend, the same school?
 - 12.2 Why?
13. Let us now return to the reasons why each person chose the school in question. (*The facilitator writes the major factors on a flip chart, keeping separate the reasons given for French schools, English schools and immersion schools*).

Systematic analysis of the six themes

14. I would now like to hear your views on a number of reasons that parents may give for choosing the French school, the English school or the immersion school. I will propose some viewpoints to you and I would like to know two things: (1) have you heard people using arguments like these?; and (2) do you think there is some truth to these arguments?

Arguments	Have heard people	There is some truth
The French school is not as good; it is further away; it offers less choice, fewer activities	a	b
Sending children to the French school means subjecting them to the disapproval of others; the language is too difficult; it is better to learn how the majority does things	c	d
Young people are sending their children to the English school; men prefer the English school; going to the English school offers greater mobility; in mixed marriages, the children nearly always go to the English school	e	f
Children must have complete mastery of English to obtain good jobs, promotions; English is more prestigious in the work world; it makes children more mobile later on	g	h
Parents who choose the French school are playing politics with school; the choice of an immersion school is a way of taking part in national unity; in the English school, you are closer to the majority, and it is the majority that has the power.	i	j
The English school is more modern than the French school; the French school is old fashioned; the French school is a way of consolidating values common to Francophones; sending children to the French school means isolating them from the real world around them.	k	l

Conclusion

- 15. Is there anything else you want to mention about schools in general or the French or immersion school?
- 16. Thanks.

Sentences classed according to factor cluster

Page of document presented to participants	Text of sentences submitted for discussion	Corresponding factor cluster in conceptual model
1	The French school is not as good. It is further away. It offers less choice, fewer activities.	Technical factors
2	Sending children to the French school means subjecting them to the disapproval of others. The language is too difficult. It is beneficial to learn how the	Psychological factors

	majority does things. Young people are sending their children to the English school.	
3	Men prefer the English school. Going to the English school offer greater mobility. In mixed marriages, children nearly always go to the English school.	Demographic factors
4	Children must have complete mastery of English to obtain good jobs, promotions. English is more prestigious in the work world. It makes children more mobile later.	Economic factors
5	Parents who choose the French school are playing politics with school. The choice of the immersion school is a way of participating in national unity. In the English school you are closer to the majority, and it is the majority that has the power.	Political factors
6	The English school is more modern than the French school. The French school is old fashioned The French school is a way of consolidating values common to Francophones. Sending children to the French school means isolating them from the real world around them.	Cultural factors



APPENDIX 2

Reasons for Choosing the Last School

During the discussion, the facilitator of the discussion groups asked the parents to write down, individually, the reasons why they had chosen the last school for their children. A summary of these answers is given on the following pages.

Vancouver, eligible parents using the English school or immersion classes.

- My son is enrolled at a French school and my daughter goes to a private gifted education English school. My daughter went to French school. There was no money for gifted programs in French. After battling with the school we gave up and home schooled her. Then we transferred her to an English program much to my chagrin. However, her happiness, educational opportunities, and chances to excel and succeed have increased many times over. This is a terrible situation since she has lost much of her French.

Vancouver, eligible parents using the French school

- To preserve the French language and culture. There is no other choice. The school is very important.

- French-language instruction and environment. Small class of 20 or less in a school of 180 students.
- No other choice if you want French. French is my soul, my life, my culture. I could not raise my children without French. They would be missing a part of their essence.
- One of the two French schools in the region. The school with a core program is more French than the immersion school.
- To invest in my children's future. So that they can communicate in French and in English. To maintain contact with the French-speaking world. So that my children can take their higher education in French.
- To retain the language and pass my cultural heritage on to my children. Small number in the school. To provide the opportunity to learn another language to broaden horizons. To keep in contact with the French-speaking community.
- So that my daughter continues to speak French and knows how to write it. To preserve ties with her whole family who live in Quebec. So that she makes friends who speak French. Because it is the only French school in Vancouver and so that my daughter will be bilingual.
- It was the only French school in Vancouver. The discipline is good. To give my daughter my French culture and the opportunity to get along in several languages.
- When we came to Canada my children did not yet speak English. I want them to keep the French language and culture. As for English, it will come; the life around them is in English. In addition, at home I try to preserve Russian. The school is the only place where they can keep French. I find that North American culture is more superficial and violent than French culture.
- We chose a French school, knowing that we will be returning to Quebec. I want them also to be able to speak English well. French is for roots, the heart and the culture.

Calgary, eligible parents using the English school or immersion classes

- The school was my daughter's choice and is close to our home. The music program is famous. The Catholic school is designated as "our (English) school" by the Catholic school board.
- We chose the French immersion school because we speak English at home.
- We chose the French immersion school because we are newcomers and our children are already used to the French immersion program.

Calgary, eligible parents using the French school

- The first reason is that we are Francophones. The first language of the children is French. French is a difficult language to learn. The children are in an English immersion situation. They must therefore learn to distinguish between the two languages well. However, even in a French school, English is omnipresent.
- For the French language and culture.
- For the proficiency of the teachers and the quality of their French. I want my children to think, speak, laugh, sing and live in French. I also want to know other Francophones.
- To learn a second language and for the education in the French culture. My elementary and secondary education were in French.
- I am French speaking and my children's language is French. The school is new and offers a great many activities.
- For the Francophone culture. The school is small, the staff is dedicated and the community is very involved.
- For the Francophone culture and the sharing of my cultural heritage. To guarantee the francization and bilingualism of my children.
- So that my children are able to speak with some facility in French. So that my children have the chance to know other French-speaking children and live some of their life surrounded by Francophones. So that they may be proud of their language.

Halifax, eligible parents using the English school or immersion classes

- The French school rejected my daughter because she had already studied in another system and was younger than the others.
- My son is in his first year of French. My daughter went to a city school and took French and had a good French teacher.
- For the location.
- My children are presently enrolled in an Anglophone school primarily based on location and their English

upbringing. It is our hope to enrol them into French immersion.

- Opportunity for my kids to enter into a French immersion program. Good playground facilities and school athletics. We were well received and we felt welcome. The French immersion classes are smaller than the English-only classes.
- I chose the English school for my children because they speak English. My wife is English speaking and since I arrived in Halifax my children have always been in an English-speaking environment.
- It is the school that my other children attended. It is the neighbourhood school where all their friends are.
- Since my children were older, they chose the school themselves.
- French school for second language. When changed to English school our children were able to walk home for lunch.
- I chose an English school because the French school was too far away.
- It was the only secondary school with the immersion program.
- The lack of a French school in the Halifax area meant choosing between English school and French immersion. Since our first experience with immersion had not worked out, we chose an English school. Our first child had gone through immersion but the school had given no support to the immersion program.

Halifax, eligible parents using the French school

- I want my children to speak both languages and to receive the best possible education. A French school in an English environment seemed the right decision.
- My son began kindergarten in an English school closer to home. My son began to stutter, could no longer communicate in French and felt isolated. Then I enrolled him in the French school and, even with two hours on the bus mornings and evenings, he has never wanted to return to the English school.
- Because I decided that my children should speak and be able to communicate with my family in my mother tongue, French. I knew that they would learn English by playing outside with the neighbours, by watching television and in their English courses. I wanted them to be bilingual because I myself have had a lot of trouble adapting to the English environment. I am not sure, however, that my youngest will always speak French. She tends to speak more in English than in French with her friends.
- My education was in French and I wanted the same thing for my daughters. I always found that English was an easy language to learn and that they could simply learn it later.
- Coming from Quebec with very little English, so as not to lose their school year, we chose the French school. It was a requirement for our children -- the main condition for making the transfer outside Quebec. It was a choice we made so that our children might be bilingual one day. Since the French language is much more difficult to learn, especially the written language, for us it is the only way to ensure that they learn good French, written and spoken.
- The French language is very important to us as Francophones. It would have been unacceptable for our children to attend an English school. Our children know only French. Our move to Halifax was possible because there is a French school. English will be their second language after they master French well.
- I wanted my children to be bilingual. I did not have my education in French and I wanted my children to have the chance to know both languages.
- To preserve my children's French language in a minority environment I find that it is almost impossible for the children to preserve French without going to the French school, especially since my husband is English speaking. English can be learned by itself here. The school, however, is overcrowded and the resources inadequate. In addition, a large number of eligible children do not speak French when they start school in kindergarten.
- I chose the French school because I wanted my children to be competent in both languages and thereby to give them greater openness to the world. I always spoke French to my children since their birth and my eldest daughter always answered me in French.
- I sent her to the neighbourhood English school thinking that she would go to university in French and that we would always continue to speak to one another in French. At the end of kindergarten, my daughter no longer spoke French to me. I decided to let her do another year and see if she would begin to speak French to me again. I never stopped speaking French to her, although she answered in English. At the end of her first year, she was still always speaking to me in English. Since her brother was beginning kindergarten the next year, my husband and I decided to send both of them to the French school. It took a semester for both of them to begin to speak to me in French again and, so far, they are continuing to do so. I know that if I sent them back to the

English school, they would stop speaking French after a few months.

- My daughter was enrolled in immersion and my wife and I were not satisfied with the quality of instruction. We decided to enrol her in the French school.
- To preserve the French language and culture for generations to come. So that my children learn their mother tongue well. To ensure a better career for my children because knowledge of both official languages is an asset in Canada. Because it was the natural thing to do.

Sudbury, eligible parents using the English school or immersion classes

- I chose to send my son to an immersion school because I am French myself and his father is English. When my son was small, I worked and his father was at home. I was afraid to speak French to him because some people told me that he would confuse the two languages. That is why he started school speaking English. He then learned French very well.
- I chose an immersion school because my child had difficulty speaking French well and we do not speak it at home. With the immersion school, he will at least have French at school.
- Because the quality of education is excellent.
- We chose immersion because my husband is English speaking. He wanted to be sure that he could be involved in their education.

Sudbury, eligible parents using the French school

- We decided to send our kids to all French school to give them a chance to learn the language. We figured they would have a better chance learning there, than they would in French Immersion. We were told that in French Immersion only 20% of the time was spent in French. My wife does not speak French but is learning. The children both started their schooling in French from Jr. kindergarten to the present and are doing well.
- Any policy that has the effect of increasing the sense of a Francophone community will increase enrolment in French schools.
- Any increase in the number of French schools (or at least, the number of points of service) will reduce distances between homes and the school and increase enrolment.
- Enrolment in the French school can be increased by publicizing its performance in the acquisition of two living languages and by combatting the myth of a cost in terms of the other subjects.
- More parents will choose the French school if they are convinced that their children will have a command of English at the end of their schooling.
- Enrolment in the French school will increase if measures are taken to ensure the involvement of a non-Francophone parent in the French education of his or her children.
- Parents will have more opportunities to enrol their child in the French school if they view it as a comprehensive living environment.
- I chose the French school. My husband is English speaking and understands the advantages of knowing how to speak more than one language.
- I chose the French school because I am French speaking. Our parents made many efforts to obtain French schools. It is very important to have at least two languages.
- The activities and instruction cover more than the academic subjects.
- There was never any question of going to the English school. I wanted the best school to meet my child's needs.
- Our neighbours are mainly Francophones. I was educated in French, as was my husband. I am proud of being a Francophone. The religion is in French at our church. We have French-speaking friends and a social life in French.
- I chose a French school because it is important to me that my children be able to speak French.
- Most of my daughter's friends also chose this French-language collège.
- My daughter wanted to attend a religion and French program for the first two years.
- Because of the quality of the French in a Catholic school, the commitment of the staff and of young people in the community.
- I chose a French school for its size and location. We wanted a school that could teach our language well and immerse us in a French-speaking environment.
- The activities are always in French and are very interesting.
- I was a student at this school. It was a very good experience. My husband is English speaking, but I insist that my son speak French.

- It is a good separate school where the French language is taught strictly.
- My children like to speak French with their friends. The two schools are French. They feel at home. This is very important to my husband and me. The teachers always speak to us in French. We have a sense of a French community when we enter the two schools.
- Promotion of the French language is important at the school.
- I chose the French language because I wanted my daughters to have the benefit of knowing two languages. It is a small school and is like a big family.



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Notes

1. The operating definition of eligible parents is:

(two criteria mandatory)

- Canadian citizen
- parent of at least one child

(one of the following criteria)

- French is the first language learned and still understood by one of the parents
- one of the parents received primary instruction in French
- another child received instruction in French.

2 The factors are listed in order of importance in Figure 3.1. Note, however, that, since this research is of a qualitative nature, this order cannot be justified numerically. Rather, it is the order that seems to emerge from the group discussions. The order of importance is essentially the same from one city visited to another, except for the "distance" factor, which is not pertinent in Sudbury.