

Call for Submissions
International Colloquium presented by
the **Chaire Fernand-Dumont sur la culture**
17–19 May 2023, in Montréal (Canada)

**The Contemporary Dynamics of Arts and Cultural Participation through
the Lens of Immigration: Atlantic Perspectives**

What do we know about the arts and cultural practices of immigrant individuals and groups? Currently, migrations are engendering unprecedented diversification and reconfigurations of the social fabric, particularly in the cities through which the majority of international immigrants transit and in which they settle. The resulting socio-demographic transformations are inducing changes to the local dynamics of supply and demand for arts and culture. Yet, within a vast corpus of research on arts and cultural participation, the issue of immigration is rarely discussed or weakly problematized (Bertacchini et al. 2019). Migration studies, meanwhile, tend to focus on analysis of the economic, social, political, or civic dimensions of participation, to the detriment of its cultural and artistic aspects (Martiniello 2015). This theme is undeniably of interest, however, as it captures the conditions and issues raised by the pluralization of cultural fields for everyone engaged in the production and circulation of arts and culture: artists, cultural workers, mediators, cultural entrepreneurs, private and public arts and culture intermediaries, cultural policy planners, researchers, and audiences in different cultural production sectors (Novak 2016).

In this colloquium, we aim to shed light on the dynamics of arts and cultural participation induced by immigration. At the intersection of cultural, urban, and migration studies, this colloquium calls for a dialogue among different research areas and disciplinary fields and offers an invitation to discuss different theoretical angles and methodological approaches. It also affords an opportunity to engage in a dialogue from either side of the Atlantic Ocean in a context in which, despite major developments over the last decade, few comparisons have yet been attempted between work done in Europe and in the Americas (Barsky and Martiniello 2021; DiMaggio and Fernandez-Kelly 2010).

The arts and cultural practices considered in this colloquium include multiple forms of expression – music, dance, visual arts, digital arts, theatre, film, literature, television, and so on – and may be amateur or professional, individual or collective, recurring or occasional, public or private, religious or secular. Their relevance is drawn from the fact that they are artistically and culturally significant for the immigrant individuals and groups

concerned.¹ Therefore, like practices that are established and have cultural legitimacy, a set of emerging and often neglected practices also deserve attention: “participatory” practices in which “audience” and “artists” combine (Alvarez 2005; Moriarty 2004), practices engendered by digital technologies – such as online cultural criticism and prescription (Casemajor et al. 2018) and sharing of content outside of official networks (Campos and Simoes 2014; Lena and Cornfield 2008) – and all activities that take place outside of institutionalized circuits (Wali et al. 2002). In short, we will take account of multiple cultural frames that now cohabit and orient arts and cultural participation within societies (Novak et al. 2014).

Although fundamental research is essential to a better understanding of the processes at play, the subject also calls for the mobilization and sharing of knowledge with the arts and cultural spheres. To this end, researchers engaged in collaborative or partnership approaches are invited to discuss the uses and outcomes of their research in the cultural field and among immigrant populations. In addition, sessions bringing together artists, cultural workers, and people from the immigration ecosystem will make it possible to expose and mobilize knowledge and knowhow drawn from lived arts and cultural experiences among local and immigrant populations.

The discussions in the colloquium will be articulated around the following three axes:

Political Axis: Pluralization of Practices, Institutions, and Forms of Mediation

How do the arts and cultural practices of immigrant individuals and groups transform local cultural ecosystems on the institutional, political, and artistic levels? How do these practices encourage us to rethink the very notion of arts and cultural participation? How can cultural mediation foster immigrant populations’ access to and inclusion in cultural institutions, and how can it highlight other means of participation in arts, culture, and urban life?

Although immigrants do indeed participate in arts and culture, this participation often remains “invisible,” as it takes place beyond the circuits supported by governmental bodies (Jeannotte 2015). In many cities, populations that have recently immigrated contribute to the development of an “informal” cultural sector through organizations and initiatives that generate significant participation (Stern et al. 2008, 2010). Yet, few – and

¹ The notion of “immigrant” encompasses people who have migrated, whatever their status at their destination, and their children born in the host country.

mainly exploratory – studies exist on this important and complex reality, which is transformed with each migratory wave and therefore requires constant updating of data. Quantitative analyses sometimes tend to contradict common preconceptions, notably with regard to attendance at cultural institutions and performances, which, far from being lower among immigrants, is higher than that of local populations in certain art sectors (Laur 2016; Paredes 2016; Saïre et al. 2020). Another example is the presence of “omnivore” cultural consumers among immigrant populations, which contrasts with the “univorousness” often attributed to minority groups (Kottasz 2015; Voisin 2013). Qualitative analyses reveal important nuances with regard to the use and meaning of tastes and practices that are nevertheless quantitatively similar (Bennett et al. 2009; Rebughini 2011).

The themes explored in this colloquium invite us to consider the redefinitions of modes of participation and of cultural policies, as well as the reconfiguration of art institutions (Delhaye 2008). To the issue of participation by and representation of immigrant artists (Leitgeb and Mokre 2021; Pruneau 2015) is added that of attracting “new audiences” (Saha 2017). In this sense, a number of institutions have engaged in cultural mediation activities (Cimoli 2014; Sacco and Jamar 2014), some of which are supported by governmental programs (Bellavance and Dansererau 2007). Such approaches raise issues of accessibility, inclusion, and equity (Beauchemin, Maignien, and Duguay 2020) and involve several levels of considerations, with barriers to access proving to be as much symbolic as material, as much economic as structural.

All of these questions call for a plural approach to the bottom-up dynamics associating the cultural sphere with identity-related issues (demands for recognition, decolonial critiques, social and art movements, creation of spaces for expression, claims and exchanges, and so on) and the concomitant top-down dynamics of a more institutional nature. More studies, both quantitative and qualitative, are needed.

Social Axis: Cultural Socialization and Sociabilities in the Context of Super-diversity

What interactions engender arts and cultural practices in cities super-diversified by immigration? What social dynamics do arts and culture highlight? What socio-demographic factors define the boundaries between and within respective immigrant populations’ arts and cultural practices?

More than “diversity,” we now talk about the “super-diversity” of contemporary societies, resulting from the complexification of ethnic, social, economic, religious, linguistic, and other aspects of migratory flows (Vertovec 2007). Cities, the main sites involved in receiving immigrants, may thus be termed cosmopolitan in terms of socio-demographic composition and demo-linguistic dynamics (Germain 1997), as well as socio-spatial interactions (Anderson 2004; Radice 2009). New forms of sociability are emerging, including inter-ethnic and inter-racial dynamics for which the arts may act as catalysts (Martiniello 2018; Murphy 2010). Super-diversity also leads to polarizations and cleavages conveyed by different forms of withdrawal or segregation (Chaudoir 2007; Chenchabi 2017) that affect both minority immigrant populations and majority local populations. In this regard, arts and culture offer a lens for observing tensions between phenomena of openness and isolation, coming together and distancing, and social interactions ranging from cooperation to conflict (Simmel 1908).

Finally, in the context of super-diversity one must be careful not to attribute to ethnicity alone behaviours that result, rather, from factors of class (Maira 2010), gender (Rosales 2013), generation (Giovanis and Akdebe 2021), or religion (Baily 1995). Indeed, research on the arts and cultural practices of immigrants must avoid reification of “communities” and “ethnicization of the social field” (Coulangeon 2007). Studies that combine a number of socio-demographic variables in an intersectional perspective are interesting in that they bring to light both inter- and intra-group divisions in arts and cultural participation, and therefore encourage us to reflect on the differentiations that arts and culture induce not only between immigrant and local individuals and populations but also within immigrant groups themselves. Research of this type is therefore strongly encouraged.

Spatial Axis: Territorialization and Scales of Arts and Cultural Practices

In which territories, physical and digital, do immigrant individuals and populations deploy their arts and cultural participation? What transnational connections are sketched through their arts and cultural practices? What scales must be considered in research on these practices?

Contemporary migrations involve trajectories that are increasingly multidirectional and polymorphous. The emigrant and immigrant contexts are interconnected both by individuals’ physical comings and goings and via the digital technologies now key to transnational processes (Collin et al. 2015; Nedelcu 2010). Research on the dynamics of arts and cultural participation by immigrant individuals and populations must now

proceed from a “multi-situated” perspective – that is, a perspective that takes account of different interconnected geo-cultural spaces, as well as the different stages of the migratory life cycle. Indeed, the uses and meanings of arts and culture become intelligible only in light of the contexts within which individuals are socialized and develop their relationship with cultural and artistic expression (Landau 2012; Turino 2008). Locally anchored events – such as shows, festivals, celebrations, and exhibitions – might involve several levels of sense of belonging to the extent that the galleries, streets, and neighbourhoods where they take place in an immigrant context evoke and refer to the immigrants’ cities, regions, or countries of origin (Poulot 2017). In addition, the social web itself has become a “socialization space” (Marchandise 2014, 42) in which cultural resources circulate and multiple forms of interactions are observed – a phenomenon that intensified during the pandemic. Therefore, we are soliciting submissions that are attentive to issues of scale and transnational connectivity that involve immigrants’ arts and cultural practices in both physical and digital territories.

Submissions (including **last name, first name, status, institution to which the person is attached, title, abstract of 300 words maximum, and 5 keywords**) should be sent to chaire.fernand-dumont@inrs.ca

This colloquium will be held **mainly in French**. Some sessions will also be held in English; we therefore welcome proposals in that language.

Schedule

Deadline for submissions: **31 July 2022**

Announcement of results: **Fall 2022**

Colloquium: **17–19 May 2023**

Organizing committee

- Guy Bellavance, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Canada
- Angéline Escafré-Dublet, Université Lumière Lyon-2, France
- Caroline Marcoux-Gendron, Université de Montréal, Canada
- Marco Martiniello, Université de Liège, Belgium
- Yana Meerzon, University of Ottawa, Canada
- Christian Poirier, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Canada

Scientific committee

- Art Babayants, Bishop's University, Canada
- Xavier Bouvier, Haute école de musique Genève-Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- Philippe Coulangeon, Sciences Po, France
- Nada Guzin Lukic, Université du Québec en Outaouais, Canada
- Laurie Hanquinet, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
- Sonia Mbarek, Université de Tunis, Tunisia
- Elsa Mescoli, Université de Liège, Belgium
- Amin Moghadam, Toronto Metropolitan University, Canada
- Sylvie Octobre, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, France
- Aly Tandian, Université Gaston Berger, Senegal

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