

Ice Hockey and the Social Integration of Newcomers and Racialized Minorities

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Poster Session
SCRI 2021



Research Question

- Does the game of hockey contribute to the cultural and social integration of immigrants and/or racialized minorities in Canada?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework for this research is at the meso level and include:

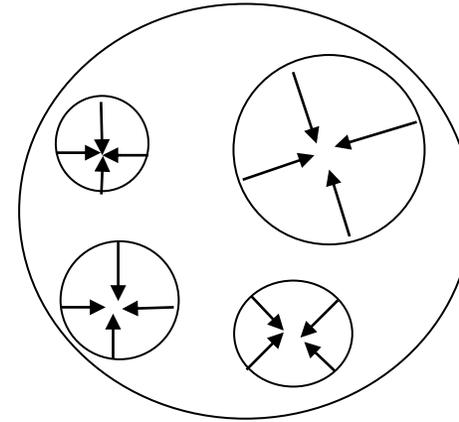
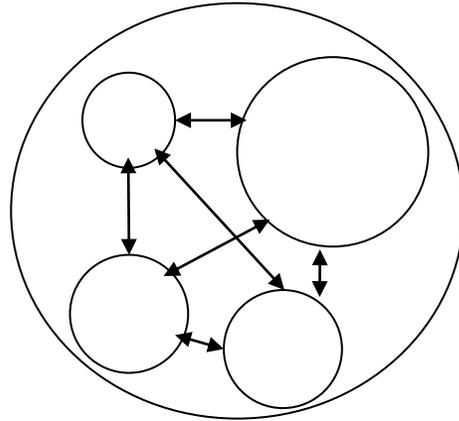
- Multicultural Common Spaces
- Interactive Pluralism

Multicultural Common Spaces

- Dib, Donaldson & Turcotte (2008), in an article published in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, point out the importance of multicultural common spaces for facilitating integration into Canada and a Canadian identity.
- **Multicultural common spaces are where people, of all backgrounds, are able to interact and contribute to an evolving shared identity which in turn fosters a sense of being Canadian and a shared sense of belonging.**
- Dib et al. (2008) further pointed out that multicultural common spaces allow diverse groups and people to nurture friendships and neighbourliness through activities such as sports, music, dance, etc.

Interactive Pluralism vs Fragmented Pluralism

Ethnic/
Immigrant
Communities



Interactive Pluralism

- cultivation of a common understanding
- mutual recognition and ongoing interaction

Multicultural Common Spaces

Hockey Arenas

Fragmented Pluralism

- insular and inward looking
- segregated

Ethnic Silos

Parallel Communities

Ethnic Enclaves

Hockey Arenas → Interactive Pluralism → Canadian Identity/Sense of Belonging

Methodology

Research methodology:

- semi-structured interviews with hockey players, fans (including parents of younger players), and key informants in Calgary, Toronto, and Halifax.
- Findings here are from interviews conducted in Calgary (40 interviews) and Toronto (45 interviews).

Findings: National Identity Via Hockey

TABLE 1. Hockey Contributes to Canadian Identity by Nativity

Hockey contributes to Canadian identity	Immigrant		Canadian-Born		Total	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Yes	25	(96%)	43	(73%)	68	(80%)
No*	1	(9%)	16	(27%)	17	(20%)
Total	26	(100%)	59	(100%)	85	(100%)

*also includes no response or ambivalent answer
 ε (maximum difference) = 34 percentage points = strong relationship (Healy and Prus 2016, 340)

While both immigrants and Canadian-born feel that hockey contributes to Canadian identity this association is much stronger for immigrants (96%) than it is for the Canadian-born (73%).

Findings: National Identity Via Hockey

TABLE 2. Hockey Contributes to Canadian Identity by Visible Minority Status

Hockey contributes to Canadian identity	Visible Minority Status		Total
	Vis Min n (%)	White n (%)	
Yes	41 (93%)	27 (66%)	68 (80%)
No*	3 (7%)	14 (34%)	17 (20%)
Total	44 (100%)	41 (100%)	85 (100%)

*also includes no response or ambivalent answer
 ϵ (maximum difference) = 27 percentage points = moderate relationship (Healy and Prus 2016, 340)

While both visible minorities and whites feel that hockey contributes to Canadian identity this association is much greater for visible minorities (93%) than it is for the whites (66%).

Findings: National Identity Via Hockey – Interview Data

- As a 30-year-old male born in Mexico, and a hockey fan, Juan discusses how becoming a Calgary Flames fan has allowed him to feel Canadian:

Q: Has watching hockey helped make you feel more Canadian?

Juan: *Oh yeah, that's the first time I felt Canadian.... I think there's something special where people are singing their national anthem before every...the Canadian national anthem before every sports game. It's just a nice reminder.... Just remind everybody who they are and where you are kind of thing, especially when you come from abroad. It's a nice touch. And yeah, I think after six years here, it wasn't until I got into hockey that I just kind of felt more Canadian. So yeah. So the answer is yes.*

- Moreover, Juan relates his sense of Canadian identity to a sense of hockey nationalism as he talks about patriotism and the singing of the national anthems to remind fans, like himself, about “who they are” (identity) and “where they are” (belonging).

Findings: Sense of Belonging Through Hockey

TABLE 3. Hockey Contributes to Sense of Belonging by Nativity

Hockey contributes to sense of belonging	Nativity		Total
	Immigrant n (%)	Canadian-Born n (%)	
Yes	23 (89%)	27 (46%)	50 (59%)
No*	3 (11%)	32 (54%)	35 (41%)
Total	26 (100%)	59 (100%)	85 (100%)

*also includes no response or ambivalent answer

ε (maximum difference) = 42 percentage points = strong relationship (Healy and Prus 2016, 340)

A vast majority of immigrants feel that hockey contributes to a sense of belonging to Canadian (89%) while only less than half of the Canadian-born feel that it does (46%).

Findings: Sense of Belonging Through Hockey

TABLE 4. Hockey Contributes to Sense of Belonging by Visible Minority Status

Hockey contributes to sense of belonging	Visible Minority Status		Total
	Vis Min n (%)	White n (%)	
Yes	35 (80%)	15 (37%)	50 (59%)
No*	9 (20%)	26 (63%)	35 (41%)
Total	44 (100%)	41 (100%)	85 (100%)

*also includes no response or ambivalent answer

ε (maximum difference) = 43 percentage points = strong relationship (Healy and Prus 2016, 340)

Similarly, a large majority of visible minorities (80%) feel that hockey contributes to a sense of belonging Canadian while a minority of approximately one-third (37%) of whites feel that it does.

Findings: Sense of Belonging Through Hockey – Interview data

- Araf, a Toronto Maple Leafs fan in her late 20s, came to Canada as a young child from India. She describes how hockey helps make her feel Canadian, by intertwining notions of belonging and identity from the perspective of being both an immigrant and a visible minority person. She states:

Araf: I think hockey is so, like, rooted in Canadian culture that even watching hockey will make you feel more Canadian and more, um, you know, it'll make you feel you belong. Definitely, when I go to Maple Leaf Square, even if I go to a hockey game, even if it's people that don't look like me around me, I still feel like I belong there, and I feel like I'm connected to the sport. Um, I think, uh yeah, especially with like newcomers and immigrants, it's, like, hockey is one of those things that you can watch, and you can kind of immediately feel like you're part of the bigger community. Like I was saying, in our Indian community in Toronto, everyone watches hockey, everyone loves hockey, everyone loves the Leafs. It's just like if you're an immigrant, you're kind of automatically thrown into the environment where you become a Leafs fan or you become a hockey fan. So, it definitely helps with feeling that sense of identity, especially as a newcomer.



Conclusion

Research Question:

- Does the game of hockey contribute to the cultural and social integration of immigrants and/or racialized minorities in Canada?

Answer:

- Based on our interview data we conclude that hockey **does** foster a Canadian identity and a sense of belonging to Canada for immigrants and/or racialized minorities who engage in the game.
- This, in turn, helps to facilitate their cultural and social integration into Canada.