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Article abstract

Many social studies teachers have argued that the mandate to distinctively value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives is unjust without similarly valuing other perspectives within Alberta's K–12 social studies curriculum (Gani, 2022a; Gani & Scott, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018). Rather than outlining why these two sets of perspectives need to be specifically taught, the current curriculum justifies this mandate based on vague and undefined "historical and constitutional reasons" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4). Using an online survey and a focus group interview, Raphaël Gani asked 13 Francophone education stakeholders in Alberta (e.g., teachers, heritage group representatives, education consultants) to justify the distinct attention given to Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the social studies curriculum. To facilitate this process, participants were asked to respond to quotes from Alberta educators questioning the need to distinctly acknowledge these perspectives. The participants' responses offered a vision of Canada, a goal for education in Alberta, and a means to achieve this goal. They also offered an original view on the nature of Francophone perspectives, their relationship with Indigenous perspectives, along with how both Francophone and Indigenous perspectives are distinct from the many other diverse perspectives in Alberta today.

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Defending Francophone and Indigenous Perspectives in Alberta's Social Studies Curriculum: The Views of 13 Francophone Education Stakeholders[1]

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Many social studies teachers have argued that the mandate to distinctively value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives is unjust without similarly valuing other perspectives within Alberta's K–12 social studies curriculum (Gani, 2022a; Gani & Scott, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018). Rather than outlining why these two sets of perspectives need to be specifically taught, the current curriculum justifies this mandate based on vague and undefined "historical and constitutional reasons" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4). Using an online survey and a focus group interview, Raphaël Gani asked 13 Francophone education stakeholders in Alberta (e.g., teachers, heritage group representatives, education consultants) to justify the distinct attention given to Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the social studies curriculum. To facilitate this process, participants were asked to respond to quotes from Alberta educators questioning the need to distinctly acknowledge these perspectives. The participants' responses offered a vision of Canada, a goal for education in Alberta, and a means to achieve this goal. They also offered an original view on the nature of Francophone perspectives, their relationship with Indigenous perspectives, along with how both Francophone and Indigenous perspectives are distinct from the many other diverse perspectives in Alberta today.

De nombreux enseignants trouvent que le mandat de valoriser distinctement les perspectives des francophones et des Autochtones est injuste puisque d'autres perspectives ne sont pas valorisées de la même manière dans le programme albertain d'études sociales pour la maternelle à la 12e année (Gani, 2022a ; Gani et Scott, 2017 ; Scott et Gani, 2018). Plutôt que d'expliciter pourquoi ces deux types de perspectives se doivent d'être spécifiquement enseignés, le programme d'études actuel justifie ce mandat en s'appuyant sur de vagues « raisons historiques et constitutionnelles » qui ne sont pas définies (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4). À l'aide d'un sondage en ligne et d'un groupe de discussion, Raphaël Gani a demandé à 13 intervenants en éducation francophone de l'Alberta (p. ex. enseignants, représentants de groupes patrimoniaux, conseillers en éducation) de justifier l'attention distincte accordée aux perspectives francophones et autochtones dans le programme d'études sociales. Pour faciliter ce processus, on a demandé aux participants de réagir à des citations d'éducateurs albertains remettant en question la nécessité de reconnaître distinctement ces perspectives. Les réponses des participants offrent une vision du Canada, un objectif pour l'éducation en Alberta et un moyen d'atteindre cet objectif. Ces réponses offrent également un point de vue original sur la nature des perspectives francophones, leur relation avec les perspectives autochtones, ainsi que sur la manière dont ces deux types de perspectives se distinguent de nombreuses autres perspectives en Alberta.

Francophone and Indigenous Perspectives in Alberta's Social Studies Curriculum

The current Alberta social studies curriculum mandates K–12 teachers to help their students examine the past and contemporary issues through the lens of both Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. The rationale for this mandate is not specifically outlined in the curriculum document, but rather, is justified through the phrase "for historical and constitutional reasons" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4). The government included this mandate in its social studies curriculum based on a series of curriculum innovations that began in the late 1990s (Gillis, 2005). These innovations involved an agreement between the Ministers of Education from Western and Northern Canada to design a common social studies curriculum (Western Canadian Protocol, 1993). A collection of Francophone, Anglophone, and Indigenous authors were tasked for the first time in Canadian history with designing as equal partners the new curriculum framework. The writers presented a vision of Canada as a partnership between three diverse groups—Anglophones, Francophones, and Indigenous peoples, which was used as a justification for the need to learn about the perspectives of these "partners" (Alberta Learning, 2002b, p. 84). The term "perspective" was defined as "the shared view" held by members of these respective groups (Hoogeven, 2008, p. 2). The inclusion of this perspectival approach to social studies was an educational novelty that challenged the curriculum status quo in Alberta (Osborne, 2012). That introduction of this mandate generated many questions from teachers (Gani, 2022b), such as the following, as articulated in an Alberta Teachers' Association (2016a) focus group:

> I think that is why we advocate for multiple perspectives. Recognizing that we do explicitly take on Francophone and Aboriginal in our program. But what about the immigrant perspective, what about the LGBTQ perspective? Why do we highlight those two perspectives, but what about others? Like you said we want students to see themselves in the curriculum.

The main question raised by this teacher involves the fairness of requiring teachers to distinctively value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives across the K–12 curriculum when there are so many other perspectives in Alberta. This curriculum requires students to "appreciate and respect how multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, shape Canada's political, socioeconomic, linguistic and cultural realities" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 2): the mandate names distinctively Indigenous and Francophone perspectives while it does not exclude other perspectives. Naming group perspectives in the Alberta social studies curriculum as needing distinct acknowledgement has fuelled a perception that particular perspectives are being unfairly "privileged" (Richardson, 2002, p. 8; see also Brown, 2004; Pashby, 2013; Stewart, 2002). The perceived unfairness of acknowledging Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in particular, reflects a popular "sense of justice" (Forsé & Parodi, 2020), found in Alberta and Canada (Bouchard, 2019; Kymlicka, 2001, 2003a), that every citizen, regardless of their group of belonging, should be treated equally by the government (Dorion-Soulié, 2013; Harder, 2005; Manning, 2005).

This argument is derived from a particular conception of the government as a neutral regulator that should not privilege any citizen over others to preserve their autonomy to become who they want to be (Kymlicka, 2003b; Taylor, 1994). Translated into education, this understanding of fairness becomes a mantra that finds expression in the statement of the teacher above: we want students to see themselves in the curriculum. Reflecting liberal multicultural

educational discourses (see Nieto, 2009), in stating that students should see themselves in what they learn, teachers become neutral arbitrators who seek to not privilege any one group of students over another. This notion of justice used by teachers to question the mandate to distinctively value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the social studies classroom has been corroborated by a range of studies (Alberta Education, 2016, 2017; Alberta Learning, 1999, 2001, 2003; Alberta Teachers' Association, 2016b; Berg, 2017; Brown, 2004; Donald, 2009; Scott, 2013; Stewart, 2002; Tupper, 2005; Windrim, 2005).

The belief that other perspectives deserve similar treatment in the curriculum to those of Francophones and Indigenous peoples proposes a particular logic that requires attention. Within this logic, the nature of groups, the relationships between them, and the goal of education are defined in particular ways. This logic can be unpacked through an analysis of the teacher's quote above:

- The teacher presented a particular definition of a group and its members: Francophones, Indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ community, and immigrant groups were positioned as fundamentally distinct from one another; as though valuing Francophone perspectives, for instance, excluded the recognition of LGBTQ groups.
- Next, the teacher presented a competitive view of group recognition, reflecting a "zero-sum" logic (Bar-Tal, 2007, p. 1433): the gain of acknowledging some groups (i.e., Indigenous peoples, Francophones) inevitably leads to a loss of recognition for other groups (i.e., the LGBTQ community, immigrant groups).
- Finally, a particular educational goal was attached to the teaching of a groups' perspectives. Within this logic, since groups are perceived as fundamentally distinct from one another, each group should be attended to on their own so that students who belong to each group will have an equal opportunity to see themselves in the curriculum.

This organizing logic around the teaching of group perspectives can be refuted on several grounds. Firstly, identifying as Francophone (i.e., French speaking) does not exclude someone from also being an immigrant to Canada and part of the LGBTQ community (Babayants, 2017). Seeing identity as heterogeneous and multidimensional, rather than self-contained, separate, and unique, ultimately disrupts a competitive image of group recognition where minoritized identity positions engage in a "zero-sum struggle for preeminence" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 3). Such a view, moreover, provides opportunities for teachers to help students examine the past and contemporary issues through the lens of a more complex and nuanced understanding of group belonging than the self-contained categories of singular group identification (i.e., Francophone) will allow. From an instructional standpoint, educators adopting this stance would want to expose students to resources that reflect the authentic voice of Francophone people, such as community leaders, writers, artists, and journalists, who hold additional intersecting identity positions beyond that of Francophone (e.g., immigrants, queer, and/or racialized).

The belief that other perspectives deserve similar treatment in the curriculum to those of Francophones and Indigenous peoples can also be challenged for the ways it positions the assumed language of instruction of English as both natural and neutral (Resnick, 2000). This perspective or logic, which is embedded in most liberal multicultural frameworks, has been noted and contested by many scholars within education and other social sciences (Bouchard, 2019; Mackey, 2002; St. Denis, 2011; Webber, 1994). As Kymlicka (2001, 2003a, 2011) has observed, the notion that citizens (and perspectives) should be treated as equals in English, reproduces the power of English-speaking groups to advance their own group interests and ultimately oversee

"who gets what" in education (Levin, 2008). This is a power that Francophones and Indigenous peoples have historically contested and against which they have gained some legal protections (see Sections 23 and 35 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*).

However, simply criticizing the logic some teachers have applied to the mandate to value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in K–12 social studies in Alberta has little effect on what gets taught in the classroom. After all, teachers have the professional autonomy to adapt curriculum mandates to fit their classroom needs. Also, teachers themselves have been educated within a broader Albertan and Canadian socio-cultural landscape that is, at times, unsympathetic to the distinct acknowledgement of groups such as Francophones, as well as Indigenous peoples (Brie & Mathieu, 2021; Frideres, 1998; Hayday, 2005; Taylor, 1994). The rationale for distinct acknowledgement must therefore be stronger than the undefined "historical and constitutional reasons" in Alberta's current social studies curriculum (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4).

To uncover such a rationale, the first author invited Francophones living in Alberta to participate in an online survey or a focus group. As a Francophone scholar living and working in Quebec, the first author had both an academic and a personal interest in this research. In another study, Raphaël Gani presented excerpts from Francophone-Albertan students' testimonies about the need to learn Francophone perspectives. Since they were local to Alberta, deemed authentic by teachers, and powerfully stated, the students' testimonies were successful, at least at a surface level, in convincing some teachers about the need to engage with Francophone perspectives distinctively (Gani, 2022b). The current study sought to continue this experience by gathering additional evidence and testimonies from French-speaking education stakeholders in Alberta[2]. Raphaël hypothesized that Francophone stakeholders could provide a more robust rationale than the vague and undefined constitutional reasons provided in the current curriculum document. Such a rational was needed due to the curriculum reform taking place in Alberta at the time, which included provisions to value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives across several subject areas beyond social studies including science, math, art, and language arts (Alberta Education, 2020). Raphaël hoped that the participant responses would provide insights on a topic that is rarely discussed in the current scholarship; namely, how Francophone educational stakeholders understand the relationship between Francophone and Indigenous perspectives.

Methodology

A mixed-qualitative methodology (Barbour, 1999) structured the gathering of 13 Francophone education stakeholders' responses to a frequently asked questions about the mandate to learn about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in social studies and other curriculum areas in Alberta. The study, which was approved by the University of Calgary's Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, drew data through an on-line survey and a focus group interview.

Online Survey

The initial study sample involved eight survey participants (S1–8). Responses were gathered through an on-line format hosted via Survey Monkey. The survey contained 15 questions asking participants to respond to concerns many Alberta social studies teachers had with the mandate to teach Francophone and Indigenous perspectives (i.e., "but what about other perspectives?"). The eight online survey participants were recruited during and after a one-day French language symposium in 2018, organized by the authors and Sylvie Roy from the Werklund School of

Education at the University of Calgary. During the symposium, the authors presented research on Alberta teachers who were questioning the mandate to learn about Francophone perspectives in social studies and other subject areas, as proposed in a curriculum reform taking place at the time (Alberta Education, 2020).

The study cohort drawn from this symposium constituted an informed sample who occupied a key role in the Francophone educational community (e.g., public servants, curriculum consultants, heritage group representatives). The participants included four females and four males. Age data was not collected. The answers gathered in the online survey displayed a level of formality that reflected the participants' educational background (e.g., most had university degrees), the time they had to formulate their answers (limitless), and the means of data collection (online survey). In contrast to the answers obtained during the subsequent focus group, the survey answers contained no personal experiences or anecdotes detailing the lives of Francophones in Alberta. Gathered during the span of one week, the survey responses were then retrieved in PDFs for analysis.

Focus Group

Since no teachers were included in the initial survey, a focus group with five teacher participants was set up. The goal of the focus group was to corroborate the survey results from the first cohort of Francophone educational stakeholders. Participants, which were each given a number, included five female teachers working in Francophone schools with various degrees of experience (FG1–5). As with the on-line survey, age data was not collected. Focus group participants were recruited through an email sent to a list of teachers working in Francophone schools in a southern Alberta town. The 45-minute focus group interview was held at the University of Calgary in 2019, one year after the symposium.

Following a similar format within the survey, two moderators presented a set of questions that asked focus group participants to justify the mandate to distinctively value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives compared to others. To spark discussion amongst the focus group participants, three quotes were used from an Alberta Education survey asking respondents to offer feedback on a draft version of the current social studies curriculum (Alberta Learning, 1999). One quote, for example, read: "there's too much emphasis on Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives, while ignoring or at the expense of others and 'Canadianism' as a whole" (Alberta Learning, 1999, p. 26). As with the survey, the nature of the prompts participants were asked to respond to implicated not only the mandate to teach Francophone perspectives, but Indigenous perspectives as well. Unlike the online survey, however, focus group participants were able to ask for clarification. They also shared more personal anecdotes, perhaps due to the similarity of their status (teachers in Francophone schools), the commonalities in their experiences as French speakers in Alberta, and the more informal focus group format.

Study Sample

The total sample of 13 participants involved individuals affiliated primarily with Francophone education and leadership in Alberta. All study participants were Francophone educational stakeholders who spoke French and worked in education or services related to the vitality of the French-speaking community in Alberta (university employees, teachers, and community group members related to education). The rationale they offered around the necessity to teach

Francophone and Indigenous perspectives was informed by their occupations in education, their high levels of education, and their interest in the curriculum mandate. However, it must be acknowledged that many opinions exist in the pluri-vocal Francophone communities in Alberta inhabited by individuals with conflicting interests and varying origins (Abu-Laban & Couture, 2010). The 13 opinions may not be representative of the entire Franco-Albertan community. Despite their differences, participants in the survey and focus group offered relatively similar answers, which might thus be considered a Francophone perspective on the distinct attention given to Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the Alberta social studies curriculum, as well as the proposal to do this in other subject areas as well. Tracing the link between Francophone educational stakeholders and this curricular direction helps to expose possible convergence and divergence in the ways in which the mandate is officially justified.

Data Analysis

To make sense of the data, the first author drew on the contextualizing analysis method proposed by Paillé and Mucchielli (2016). This approach to analysis involves a process where the researcher pays attention to the data itself (its meaning) and its context of enunciation (what connected the meaning to a larger purpose and stream of thought). Contextualizing analysis helped bring coherence to answers collected through different means by revealing underlying patterns of opinion through a search for similar utterances across the survey and focus group data sets. One criterion for classification was the similarity of utterances, including the occurrence of the same words (e.g., founders) or the same context of enunciation (e.g., valuing history). This analysis yielded two broad interrelated themes: Francophone and Indigenous peoples' distinct status as two of the three founding nations of Canada and their centrality to the history of the country.

These two broad themes were then further analyzed to identify and profile nuances within the underlying arguments put forth by the participants (Weston et al., 2001). Nuances appeared in the way participants described Francophones, for instance, as a relatively homogenous group or an intersectional group (e.g., a Francophone can also be an immigrant and/or a member of the LGBTQ community). Focusing on the underlying conceptions of terms such as Francophone helped define different types of justification for privileging Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum, which were not initially apparent in the initial thematic coding of the data. Numerous revisions and rewrites of the results section revealed many subtleties in the respondent's statements. All responses and statements, however, converged in defending Francophone and Indigenous perspectives—although in different ways—while linking them to history, rights, and fostering better intergroup relations especially among the three founding nations: Francophones, Indigenous peoples, and Anglophones.

Results

Distinct Status as Founding Nations

All respondents agreed that Francophone and Indigenous perspectives deserve distinct attention in Alberta's curricula. Six of 13 respondents responded that special attention is needed because of Francophones' distinct status in the creation of Canada alongside Anglophones and Indigenous peoples. The distinct status argument was evident in the survey response of a now-retired public servant who noted that the country's existence is "based on a foundation of three pillars that

include Indigenous citizens, English-speaking citizens, and French-speaking citizens" (S2). Along these lines, several respondents' arguments rested on a hierarchy of status based on an interpretation of Canada's history and its "founding peoples" (S1). The Constitution was also mobilized to validate Francophones and Indigenous peoples' distinct status: "the Constitution … recognizes three groups in particular. Francophones in a minority situation, Anglophones in a minority situation, and Indigenous peoples" (S7). In this way, the mandate was affirmed based on Francophones and Indigenous peoples' distinct historical and constitutional status in Canada.

Within the six answers that cited a trio of founders, Indigenous peoples occupied an ambiguous place. Indigenous people in this regard were not deemed to hold the same status as the Francophone and Anglophone "founders," notably because their languages are not put on the same pedestal as French or English. The power dynamics between the trio of founders was apparent in a response from a retired federal government official, who distinguished the power of two founders (Francophones and Anglophones) to linguistically assimilate the third founding people (Indigenous peoples): "The founding nations of French and British have evolved over time in Canada to become French-speaking and English-speaking linguistic communities [but] the Indigenous peoples who are also multicultural … belong to one or the other official languages groups" (S2). One teacher's justification also cast Indigenous peoples as a founder, not equal to the first two: "to interest young people and then make them understand that there are two peoples. That's where we come from, then with the Indigenous" (FG5). In that sentence, the reference to *then with the Indigenous* appeared to place Indigenous peoples as an afterthought, rather than on the same footing as Francophones and Anglophones.

This difference in status between the founding trio, however, did not cause the teacher or the retiree to advocate for less recognition for Indigenous peoples. Both respondents, along with four other participants, emphasized the need to learn the perspectives of the founding trio equally to "understand how we are three peoples now" (FG5). Many participants suggested that learning about the founders' perspectives provided a better understanding of the Canadian reality, both past and present. Knowing the perspective of these founders helped to situate Canada's origins, its Constitution, and its present, through a "domino effect" (FG3). During the focus group, teachers stated that it is "important to situate the founding of Canada" (FG4); "how Canada was founded, [so] we can understand how the Constitution was founded. It's like a 'domino effect'" (FG3). Similarly, an employee at a French language post-secondary institution in Alberta argued that teaching the founders' perspectives constituted a responsibility: "Indigenous peoples and Francophones are the founding peoples of Canada and schools have a responsibility to convey this reality to all their students" (S1). Learning about these founding perspectives may even help redress the uneven relations between the groups, since one teacher stated that "by valuing the Francophone perspective, even Anglophones would see Francophones as founders" (FG3).

It is noteworthy that participants largely directed their responses towards an Anglophone audience and did not address their answers to Indigenous peoples. The focus on an Anglophone audience may provide evidence of the perceived distinct status between the founding nations of Canada. However, it is important to note that the prompts they were given reflected the views of Anglophones, so this should also be taken into account when accounting for this focus on an Anglophone audience.

Centrality to Canadian History

Canadian history was another closely related theme present in the data that was mobilized to

justify the mandate to value Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. All five teachers in the focus group and six of the eight survey respondents referred to history in their responses. For example, when asked by the focus group moderator, "What criteria should be used to justify the asymmetrical recognition given to Francophones in the curriculum?" the first response was "History" (FG1). Mobilizing history meant explaining why Canada exists, and, by association, why learning Francophone perspectives explains why Canada is a country today: "Yes, Canada would not exist without the Francophones. Yes, historically it is" (FG2). An education consultant corroborated and synthesized the previous two comments as follows: "The reason we have these two perspectives [Francophone and Indigenous] in our current social studies curriculum is historical" (S3). Participants' responses therefore proposed a particular reading of Canadian history to support the learning of Francophone and Indigenous perspectives.

What history, specifically, was mobilized though? Very few participants specified the historical narrative to which they were referring; indeed, most stated history as a reason without further explanation. However, an expert working for a heritage group observed:

> The great Canadian conflicts (the constitutional crises, the referendums, the deportation of the Acadians, the act of union, the school crises, the residential schools) have all been caused by a separation between the perspectives of a minority and a hegemony. More often than not the disparity is between Francophone perspectives and the hegemony or Indigenous perspectives and the hegemony. Given that these communities have rights under the Constitution; failure to understand these perspectives can lead to further conflict. (S4)

In this answer, English speakers were associated with "hegemony," which was explained as follows: "English speakers are not a minority in Canada. They form the hegemony" (S4). This respondent's narrative resulted in an ultimatum—the choice between learning Francophone and Indigenous perspectives and preventing conflicts, or not learning about them and risking reproducing past conflicts. Further, a teleological reading of history appeared in this narrative, suggesting that history is doomed to be repeated if nothing is changed.

One teacher in the focus group also provided a specific narrative of Canadian history. For them, it was important to understand Francophones' role in safeguarding Canada's existence. Their account of Canadian history emphasized the protective role played by Francophone Quebecers in the face of American invaders:

> The United States wanted to incorporate Quebec with them, with Maine and everything. And if Quebec would have accepted to go with them, we don't know if Canada would exist now … I think that Canada would not have existed without this resistance. (FG3)

For this teacher, learning about Francophone perspectives was also about honouring Francophone Quebecers who have kept Canada intact. Quebec occupied a special place in the focus group, as teachers talked for several minutes about the ways many Albertans reduce Francophones to Quebecers.

Several participants brought up connections between the past and the present of Canada, but also between Quebec and Western Canada. One teacher mentioned the links between Anglophone Albertans and Quebec due to their perceived geographical distance:

> Often in the West especially, we feel really separated from Quebec. The Anglophones in general think that Francophones are in Quebec all alone. … I think that because Canadian Anglophones consider

> themselves so distinct from Quebec, there is a tendency to ignore the fact that … Francophones have contributed so much to history. (FG2)

This comment revealed a perception that many Albertans are ignorant of Franco-Albertan history and generally conflate Francophones with Quebecers. Paradoxically, the teacher's point also illustrated the importance they placed on Quebec to represent Francophones in the rest of Canada. Indeed, this focus group participant advocated for a better understanding of Quebec in Alberta:

> Not teaching a Francophone perspective perpetuates the separation between Quebec and the rest of Canada. And I think we should fight that. It just makes us richer to incorporate all perspectives of the culture. Quebec is such a big part of our history and geographically, and in terms of the population of the country, it seems clear that we need to put that first. (FG2)

The teacher's response suggested that learning about the contributions of Francophones could bridge not only the past with the present, but also reduce antagonistic relationships between provinces, such as Quebec and Alberta.

Differing Logics to Justify Hierarchies

As can be seen, participants emphasized the need to learn about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives distinctively compared to those of other groups, such as new arrivals to Canada and the LGBTQ community. A further analysis of the discourses operating within these two broad themes yielded nuances and subtleties in relation to the belief that Francophone and Indigenous perspectives should be prioritized over other groups due to their unequal status. Participants, however, made this argument through three distinct sets of logics:

a. *Status logic*: Eight participants prioritized the historical and foundational status of some groups over others.
b. *The pedagogical sequencing logic*: Three respondents favoured presenting certain perspectives in the classroom first, then introducing other perspectives later.
c. *The intersectional logic*: Finally, two participants argued that different perspectives can be learned at the same time because they are not mutually exclusive.

The next three sections outline the deeper arguments in which these responses were embedded.

Status Logic

Respondents who mobilized the status logic emphasized the place of Francophones and Indigenous peoples within Canadian history and the Constitution to justify the need to learn about their perspectives. Therefore, the unequal status of some groups compared to others (immigrants or LGBTQ people) justified prioritizing Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. For example, one participant indicated that immigrant and LGBTQ perspectives need to "be addressed" in the curriculum, but Francophone and "Aboriginal" perspectives need to be "highlighted" because they are "part of the Canadian Constitution and constitute its memory" (S5). A university lecturer's response might be understood as a synthesis of this and similar comments: "it's about respect for

Canadian diversity but it's not written into the Constitution as specifically as [Francophone and Aboriginal] perspectives" (S8).

The Constitution was interpreted to give primacy to collective over individual rights, and to justify that the groups who have been granted collective rights should have their perspectives learned about distinctively. A law student stated the need to "go back to the Constitution" to emphasize the distinct status of some groups "minority Francophones, minority Anglophones and Aboriginal peoples" compared to others" (e.g., immigrant and LGBTQ people) (S7). The latter groups had attributes related to "diversity" (S3; S8) or "sexual orientation" (S6) but Francophones and Indigenous peoples had "constitutional" (S7) and "historical" (S3) statuses. Another university lecturer synthesized this sentiment as follows: "cultural identity and sexual orientation are not part of the same basket. They are two important but distinct realities" (S6). Again, a distinction was made here between the protection of diversity (i.e., against discrimination) and the protection offered by the Constitution (collective rights). The status logic in this way emphasized a particular reading of the Canadian Constitution as giving primacy to collective rights that should be mirrored in the curriculum by focusing distinctively on the perspectives of collective rights holders (i.e., Francophone and Indigenous peoples).

Respondents who used status logic maintained that their claims were not exclusionary—acknowledging some groups (i.e., Indigenous peoples, Francophones) does not inevitably lead to a loss of recognition for other groups. An employee of a Francophone post-secondary institution stated that, "It doesn't preclude including the many other perspectives that exist in life, but we need to make sure that the Canadian reality is at the heart of our education" (S1). Therefore, according to some participants, specifying the distinct status of some groups did not exclude other groups, but rather established priorities. A heritage group representative described this logic at length by first defending the need for all "youth to see themselves in the [curriculum] and value their perspectives. We want them to understand how their languages, personal histories, sexual orientations, cultures, religions, etc. influence them through their identities" (S4). Yet, within three separate paragraphs, this same participant also made the following three points:

> Canada is a country with two official languages;
> The great Canadian conflicts … have all been caused … more often than not by the disparity between Francophone perspectives and [Anglophone] hegemony or Aboriginal and [Anglophone] hegemony; and
> The perspectives of LGBTQ or immigrant people are important, too, so that individuals in these groups feel valued. However, their rights are individual rights under Article 15, not collective rights [afforded to Francophone and Indigenous peoples]. (S4)

The participant concluded by reasserting that prioritizing does not mean excluding: "This is not to say that they [other perspectives] should not be treated, but they are not part of the minimum necessary to navigate political, economic and social systems" (S4).

In sum, a series of hierarchies emerged in the responses of participants who used the status logic. These hierarchies involved a particular understanding of the interrelationship between Canadian history, collective rights, and the linguistic features of the country. Within this logic, since groups do not have the same status, their perspectives should not be treated equally in curricula—although participants specified that these hierarchies should not exclude other groups from curricula.

Pedagogical Sequencing Logic

Three teacher participants drew on pedagogical sequencing to make sense of the need to learn Francophone and Indigenous perspectives distinctively. They asserted that it is essential to learn some perspectives first to learn from others later. One teacher prioritized the need to learn fundamental perspectives before moving on to others:

> And I think touching on other perspectives, like LGBTQ, and other countries and stuff, I think that can be incorporated … everywhere … Even talking about the news, it takes five minutes in the morning, discussing, pushing students to see each topic using … a new lens. But I think understanding the foundation of Canada … those three perspectives specifically, it's very important. (FG3)

For this teacher, learning about Francophone, Indigenous, and Anglophone perspectives did not preclude learning about others. Yet, their comment seemed to reduce other perspectives to "discrete pieces of information or 'stuff' allocated to certain grade levels and certain topics rather than integrated throughout social studies" (Tupper, 2005, p. 120). Their colleague emphasized the importance of "really understanding … three perspectives [Indigenous, Anglophone, Francophone]" as well as LGBTQ and immigrant perspectives, "but not without having a clear foundation of where we are coming from" (F4). The pedagogical sequencing logic, which was only used by three teachers, served as a reminder that many perspectives should be learned about, although their order requires choices to be made.

The pedagogical sequencing logic proposed an implicit developmental model of learning perspectives. Certain perspectives had to be learned first for students to understand others. A specific teleology emerged in these three teachers' responses, as though where we are coming from leads to a better understanding of where we are now. Here, the term "we" is used to describe Francophone, Anglophone, and Indigenous peoples from the past and a multitude of groups today. Accordingly, the pedagogical sequencing model placed a specific interpretation of Canada's foundation at its centre, then extrapolated it to groups perceived as having more recently come to define the country.

Intersectional Logic

Two participants used intersectional logic to affirm that recognizing Francophone and Indigenous perspectives meant learning about LGBTQ and immigrant perspectives at the same time. These respondents observed that the same person can belong to multiple communities (LGBTQ, immigrant, and Francophone) and may simultaneously possess multiple perspectives. This argument was contrasted with earlier responses, which seemed to homogenize Francophones and Indigenous peoples as founders of Canada but also as detached from immigrant and LGBTQ communities—as if these identities could not coexist in the same person. In reference to a comment about the possibility of excluding certain perspectives when learning about Francophones and Indigenous peoples, one teacher responded:

> I don't know who said that but that's not exclusive, it's not like wanting to teach Francophone perspectives, and Indigenous perspectives, it prevents us from teaching other perspectives. … Of course, Francophones and Indigenous people are part of the LGBTQ community. Why not address them all at the same time? (FG2)

Here, the teacher highlighted the possibility of imagining Francophone-LGBTQ perspectives, rather than compartmentalizing groups into separate entities. Multiple perspectives can, and do, intersect within the same person and that is why learning about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives need not exclude others.

Another example of the intersectionality argument was evident in a retired public servant's conception of Canada:

> If you consider Canada to be built on a foundation of three pillars that include Indigenous, English-speaking, and French-speaking citizens, you will likely realize that all other perspectives, including immigrant, multi, and LGBTQ, are found in each of the three pillars. (S2)

Recognizing Francophone and Indigenous groups means valuing the diversity within those groups. Francophones, for example, comprise "the Swiss, the Belgians, the Senegalese, the Acadians … The same would apply to Aboriginal peoples who are also multicultural" (S2). This response made clear that the terms Francophone and Indigenous peoples encompass an overall group of people, which then encompasses multiple diversities. Responses like this, however, were the minority.

Seen in relation to the other two sets of logics, most participants tended to compartmentalize groups to assess who deserved attention in the curricula. Only two participants acknowledged in a concrete way that other perspectives could receive attention at the same time as Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. The absence of more participants taking an intersectional stance, however, may be partially attributed to the ways a group perspective is presented within the program as "the shared view" held by members of specific groups (Hoogeven, 2008, p. 2).

Explaining the Resistance Toward Distinctively Acknowledged Perspectives

Although respondents made an argument for the need to learn about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives distinctively, teachers in the focus group suggested that these arguments may not be enough to convince Anglophone educators to do so. The teachers unpacked the challenge in the following exchange:

> FG5: I think the challenge is buy-in.
> Moderator: The what?
> FG5: Buy-in, we need buy-in.
> Moderator: Oh, buy-in, okay.
> FG3: They have to believe in it, yes.
> FG5: If they embrace it, if they are open-minded.
> FG2: And the parents.
> FG5: The parents.
> FG1: Also, how do you reduce the threat? I think when you want to add another perspective … So here with the group, we said that the curriculum and all of that is the English perspective. So to come in and say this is your perspective, we want to add the Francophone, the Aboriginal perspective, I really think that for them, it's a threat. It's a threat to my beliefs, my culture, so how do I explain that it's not going to take anything away from you, it's really going to add to the perspective and to tell the real story of Canada, not just one point of view. So I think that's the challenge.

These teachers suggested that the challenge of teaching Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in Alberta involves a perceived threat that by following this mandate, teachers are losing or taking something away. It is as if learning about group perspectives is a zero-sum proposition in which the acknowledgement granted to some groups undermines the recognition of others (Bar-Tal, 2007). Many participants sought to make it explicitly clear that granting distinct attention to Francophones and Indigenous peoples did not mean the exclusion of other perspectives. They did so to convince what they often described as their main interlocutor: the English perspectives and those who feel threatened by Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. Further, the Francophone teacher participants expressed that Anglophone teachers need to see the "value" (FG5) in teaching about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives to tell a truer story of Canada. Anglophone Albertans need to "believe in it" (FG3).

Discussion

The 13 Francophone participants supported the mandate to attend distinctively to Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the Alberta curriculum. Their responses mirrored but also articulated the historical and constitutional reasons that are outlined, but not specified, in the social studies curriculum. The study participants summarized the main reasons to grant distinct attention as follows:

- Canada as a country established by a trio of founders (Francophones, Indigenous peoples, and Anglophones);
- Canada as a country whose Constitution and history reveal the distinct status of Francophones, Indigenous peoples, and Anglophones; and
- Groups with unequal status deserve unequal attention in school, although this does not mean that some groups should be excluded at the expense of others.

These responses offered a particular sense of justice (Forsé & Parodi, 2020), in which "justice consists of treating equals equally and unequals unequally" (Smiley, 1992, p. 284, as cited in Laforest, 1993, p. x). The sense of justice put forward by the study participants was present in a draft version of the social studies curriculum that sought to acknowledge not only Francophone and Indigenous peoples as founders, but Anglophones as well (Alberta Learning, 2002b). In this way, Francophone respondents were echoing the core reasons conceived by the curriculum authors in the early 2000s about why Francophone and Indigenous perspectives needed distinct attention.

It is worth revisiting and citing the full rationale in the draft (erased from the finalized version of the curriculum), since it is similar to the rationale discussed by the participants in this study:

> Alberta's new social studies program recognizes that Canada is a partnership between culturally diverse Aboriginal Canadians, culturally diverse English-speaking Canadians and culturally diverse Francophone Canadians. Each of these groups enjoys collective rights that are rooted in Canadian history, entrenched in Canada's Constitution, and protected by Canadian law. To maintain Canadian unity, it is essential to promote mutual recognition, understanding and cooperation among these partners. One strategy to do so is to explore topics and issues from diverse perspectives. The new Social Studies program will do this by integrating Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives with those of other Canadians. By exploring divergent visions of Canada's national story, the various partners in the Canadian federation can maintain a dialogue with each other, learn from one another, and work

> together to build a Canada in which all citizens feel a strong sense of belonging. (Alberta Learning, 2002b, p. 84)

The reference to Canada's three partners, the need for mutual recognition, and the means to do so by learning about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives were all reflected by the participants in our study. It is unlikely that respondents had access to the original rationale included in the 2002 draft curriculum, which the first author obtained from the University of Alberta Library's curriculum archives. It is more likely that participants' answers reflected the power of Francophones in shaping that rationale in 2002. After all, the main curriculum authors for that draft included one Francophone, one Indigenous, and one Anglophone writer (Pashby, 2013). In that sense, the rationale to include Francophone and Indigenous perspectives, although removed from the final version of the curriculum, still lives in the Francophone cultural curriculum (what is learned outside schools by Francophones about themselves). Seen through the lens of the cultural curriculum, the reason why the term *English-speaking Canadians* may have been taken out of the final curriculum document is that Anglophones in Alberta and across Canada have been socialized to not see themselves as a national community (Gani & Scott, 2017). Rather, Anglophones have been socialized to see Anglo culture, language, and historical memory as synonymous with Canadian culture, language, and historical memory (Kymlicka, 2001; Mackey, 2002).

Reflecting a different frame of reference, Francophone participants' responses were also well aligned with comments collected during government consultations on the 2002 draft curriculum. A Francophone teacher asked to comment on what the social studies curriculum of the future would look like said:

> It is essential that students be familiar with the general history of Western Canada. There would be a better understanding of the founding groups (J. R. Saul's tripod image) if everyone had a better understanding of the relationship of Francophones and Aboriginal people to the development of the country. (Alberta Learning, 2002a, p. 171)

Such comments revealed the influence of intellectuals such as John Ralston Saul (1998), who popularized the three pillars metaphor at the end of the 1990s (see also Gillis, 2005). In another comment from the 2002 consultations, a Francophone student synthesized the need for a three-pillars approach to social studies:

> We need to rewrite all history books; we will need to combine the French version with the English version and also the Native version. Heroes will no longer be heroes and criminals will no longer be criminals (as each story has its own list of heroes). They will all be parts of the story told in an objective way (different perspectives on the story) so that students can form their own opinions. (Alberta Learning, 2002a, p. 173)

The three-pillars approach also resurfaced in Alberta Learning's (2002a) synthesis of stakeholders' feedback, which reflected hope that the inclusion of Indigenous and Francophone perspectives would lead to a reconciliation of the "'three solitudes' and a more unified Alberta/Canada" (p. 71). These values continued to be expressed 16 years later by most participants in our study, which replicated the themes outlined above (i.e., Canada as a partnership between three pillars, the need for mutual recognition, and distinct attention to the pillar groups' perspectives).

Three "Founding Peoples": Really?

Some people might argue that it is misleading to describe Canada as resting on three founding peoples. A participant in Alberta Education's (2018) consultation about curriculum reform revealed limitations in this narrative: "Much of our social studies curriculum perpetuates the myth of the British, French and Aboriginal founding nations. It was British colonialism that divided people by language. Aboriginal peoples were not 'founding nations.' They were colonized" (p. 407). Rather than being an accurate representation of history, it has been argued that the idea of Canada as a country built on three pillars is more of a myth (Bouchard, 2019) or "mythistory" (not totally true, not totally false; Turgeon, 2015). Mythic origin stories function not to accurately represent reality, but rather to establish principles that unite members of a polity under the same regime (Russell, 2004, as cited in Dubois & Dubois, 2018; see also Curriculum Studies in Canada, 2021).

The teacher who posed the original question taken up in this research ("but what about others?") and the Francophone participants who responded to this question may have provided misleading representations of Canada. Their representations of Canada propose different, and perhaps mythical, conceptions of equality. Two versions of equality were presented in this study, first by the teacher arguing that more perspectives need to be valued in the Alberta social studies curriculum, then by our study participants. In the first version, the teacher argued that students should be considered equal to one another in their opportunity to see themselves in the curriculum. For Francophone participants, what counted was equality among Canada's founding groups, which meant recognizing their contributions as equally valuable but also distinct from other groups. These two divergent visions for equality within Canada (ranking groups versus granting them equal opportunity) leads to what Charles Taylor (1993, 1994) identified as a fundamental tension within Canadian life—that is, the incapacity of Canadians to agree on a common perspective about justice and which groups deserve what kind of attention in schools (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2020; Levin, 2008). As political scientist Alain-G. Gagnon (2021) remarked:

> The most difficult challenge facing a country like Canada is the political obligation to balance the claims of the founding peoples (English, French, Aboriginal and Acadian) with those of the many emerging cultural minorities who settled in the country after its founding in 1867. (p. 99)

The two perspectives of justice outlined in this study define equality differently. One searches for an equal-to-equal relationship between three societies or founding groups, each of which became diversified over time. The other vision of justice seeks equality for an almost infinite number of groups whose status as members of three societies or within founding groups is taken for granted. Accordingly, in one vision, it is groups that contain diversity that need to be addressed as equals, but in the other, there is an almost infinite number of groups that constitute Canadian society. This study's central takeaway is that participants exemplified and made the case for understanding a Francophone perspective of Canada, equality, and curriculum based on the first interpretation of equality based on an understanding of Canada in which three founding groups have distinct, non-equivalent status. Within this interpretation, equality is sought distinctively among the founding groups compared to the groups that Gagnon (2021) called the "emerging cultural minorities" (p. 99).

The participants' responses offered a counterpoint to the perspective that compartmentalized groups as being equal in status, and therefore deserving similar attention. It is possible to refute the metaphor of the three founding pillars of Canada or to characterize it as romantic (Saul, 1998). After all, as the analysis above demonstrates, this metaphor is a founding narrative (Dubois & Dubois, 2018) that does not fully embrace reality. However, that metaphor is shared among several cohorts of Franco-Albertans. This study has provided insight into a Francophone perspective that is distinct from the one used to criticize the mandate to learn Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. In that sense, the study revealed the need to engage not only with different perspectives on Canada, but with different perspectives on the recognition of perspectives in curricula.

However, by limiting their arguments to the distinctive characteristics of Francophones in Canada, and not in Alberta, respondents left the door open to resistance. As many people in Alberta have argued, including many social studies teachers, it is the diversity found in Alberta classrooms that deserves distinct recognition. This oversight could be partially addressed, by more fully affirming the ongoing presence and participation of Francophone people in Alberta. For example, the first Europeans that many Indigenous Nations encountered coming into their territory were of French or French-Canadian origin, and French was the first colonial language spoken in what is now Alberta; today, 10.5% of the 4.3 million people residing in Alberta have French-Canadian ancestry (Government of Alberta, 2022).

Another blind spot that appeared in the responses of Francophone stakeholders was equity between French and Indigenous languages. Although the participants considered Indigenous peoples to be a founding partner of Canada, and although language was a central element in their responses, they did not adequately recognize Indigenous languages. Like the quotes to which they were responding, the participants disassociated Indigenous peoples from Indigenous languages, equated the need to recognize Indigenous peoples with other (founding) groups, and compartmentalized Indigenous peoples as separate from Francophones, without addressing their shared resistance to assimilation into English and Anglo-cultural values. In this sense, a limitation of the Francophone perspective presented in this study is that it recognizes Indigenous without reflecting on their distinct needs.

Ultimately, there was a reluctance, and even refusal perhaps, among the Francophone participants in this study to acknowledge the ways Francophone people in Alberta, Quebec, and other places across Canada, have been part of a settler colonial project that sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the Catholic faith and colonize Indigenous lands (Gaudry & Leroux, 2017). Although the Francophone participants in this regard could easily see Anglophones as a hegemonic presence, they had difficulty seeing Francophones both past and present in this way. Although this study sought to amplify the voice and perspectives of Francophone stakeholders, it is important to acknowledge this limitation in how they saw their relationship with Indigenous peoples and perspectives.

Another blind spot appearing across the participants' responses was a difficulty articulating precisely why it is necessary to learn about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives across multiple subject areas, in every grade, on a variety of topics, as proposed in a curriculum reform occurring at the time (Alberta Education, 2016, 2020). Constitutional rights, the bilingual nature of Canada, and the founding status of Francophones and Indigenous peoples do not automatically lead to the conclusion that their perspectives must be recognized systematically across all curricular subjects. Notably, participants' responses supported a broad recognition of Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in some disciplines, such as social studies and

language arts, but not in other subject areas like science and math. This stance contrasts with the work of Indigenous scholars who have made a compelling argument that foundational Indigenous philosophies should inform curriculum more broadly and holistically across all subject areas including math and science (see Donald, 2020). The inability of the Francophone stakeholder participants to make a similar argument may be rooted in how Francophone perspectives in math and science share the same Euro-western ontologically and epistemological curricular perspectives that these subjects are already embedded within.

Conclusion

The 13 participants in this study focused more on Canada than Alberta, which may make it difficult to use their responses to convince most Albertans of the need to learn distinctively about Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum. Although some scholars have argued that Canada's history and Constitution were built around three pillar groups (Bouchard, 2019; Gagnon, 2021; Russell, 2017; Webber, 1994), this is not arguably the case for Alberta (Anderson, 2005; Aunger, 2005). Regionalism is also a pillar of Canadian history (Savoie, 2019), but regionalism was notably absent from the respondents' arguments. Thus, their arguments for a vision of Canada based on its founding pillars ran counter to the regional approach often taken in Alberta, which seeks to promote equality between individuals and provinces, rather than among founding partners (Dorion-Soulié, 2013; Harder, 2005; Langlois, 2018; Manning, 2005). Striking a balance between the three-pillars approach and the call to respect equality among the citizens of provinces and territories remains one of the most important challenges in Canadian politics today (Gagnon, 2021), and in Alberta politics as well. This challenge also applies to curriculum and will be an important topic of future research, especially in light of the contested curriculum reforms currently taking place in Alberta that has been challenged for devaluing the place of Francophone and Indigenous perspectives in proposed curriculum frameworks (Alberta Curriculum Analysis, n.d.; Scott, 2021).

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Notes

1. This paper draws on data collected by Raphaël Gani as part of the research for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Ottawa.
2. All participants' answers have been translated from French to English.

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