Learning about immigrant and migrant readers, transforming libraries: Spanish-speaking readers in North America

Apprendre en matière des lecteurs immigrés et migrants, transformer les bibliothèques : les lecteurs hispanophones en Amérique du Nord

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"In memory of my mentor, Prof. Catherine Ross"

Abstract: Drawing on data from the qualitative survey study of avid immigrant and migrant Spanish-speaking readers residing in Canada and the U.S., this paper looks at their use of libraries, specifically, in the context of leisure reading. Acknowledging a gap in current research on Spanish-speaking immigrants/migrants, the study focuses on avid lifelong readers rather than information seekers; achieves an understanding of their reading practices and interactions with libraries in the context of their pre-migration experiences; and highlights readers' suggestions for the improvement of collections, spaces, services, and community engagement. Practical suggestions are made for public, academic, and special libraries.
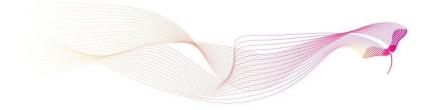
Keywords: Hispanic, immigrants, Spanish, readers' advisory, reading experience librarianship

Résumé : En s'appuyant sur les données tirées de l'enquête qualitative menée auprès des lecteurs passionnés venus du milieu des immigrés et des migrants hispanophones résidant au Canada et aux États-Unis, cet article examine les pratiques en matière d'utilisation des bibliothèques chez ces derniers, notamment dans le contexte de la lecture de loisir. En reconnaissant les lacunes qui existent dans la recherche actuelle sur les immigrés et les migrants hispanophones, l'étude se concentre sur les lecteurs passionnés de toute la vie plutôt que sur les clients en quête d'informations, facilite une meilleure compréhension de leurs pratiques en matière de lecture et d'interaction avec les bibliothèques dans le contexte de leurs expériences prémigratoires et met en évidence les recommandations des lecteurs pour l'amélioration des collections, des espaces, des services et de l'engagement communautaire. Des recommandations pratiques sont offertes en ce qui concerne les bibliothèques publiques, universitaires et spécialisées.

Mots clés : hispanophone, immigré, espagnol, service de conseil aux lecteurs, expérience de la lecture

Introduction

  Spanish-speaking immigrant and migrant library users and relationships between migrant communities and libraries of all types in North America comprise a significant and respectable body of LIS research and professional literature (e.g., Adkins and Burns 2013; Adkins, Moulaison, and Bonney 2019; Adkins, Moulaison, and Derpic 2017; Ceja Alcalá, Colón-Aguirre, and Alaniz 2018; Haras, Lopez, and Ferry 2008; Kaufman 2014; Lennon 2013; Nutta and Ventura 2013). However, one of the overlooked segments of the population is immigrant and migrant readers. Reading behaviors are different from information behaviors and, as a result, readers' expectations from libraries, librarians, and library collections may be different from those associated with information queries and needs. Leisure reading in one's native language leads us into a different area of engagement with libraries, one that is more emotionally charged, associated with less utilitarian and more personal aspects of life and, most importantly, closely connected with pre-migration personal histories, reader histories, and patterns of library usage (Dali 2012). This connection between pre- and post-migration library experiences is also infrequently seen in LIS literature. Partly, this lack of connection happens due to the applied nature of most LIS research: we need to know the "here and now," we need to know what our community members expect in the present and future, because this information is actionable and can be translated into practical changes in staffing, services, collections, programming, and library policies. A related concern, of course, is the scarcity of information about pre-migration lives of many ethno-linguistic groups available in English, if at all; and limited world language proficiency in the community of LIS researchers in North America.

  Moreover, leisure readers tend to be discussed by library type: public, academic, school, special, and so on. This distinction may make sense when we discuss readers whose reading practices and habits were developed in Canada, the U.S., or another Western country with a similar reading landscape and library system. However, libraries around the world may not have the same organizational structures as libraries in North America; they may fulfill different functions and have different access and services, as will be discussed below. Therefore, results of the study about immigrant/migrant readers may apply to different types of libraries, not only to public libraries, which have always seen reading as their primary domain of practice.

  Looking beyond public libraries, this paper focuses on avid Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers, rather than information and service seekers, and their relationship with and use of libraries. It reviews their post-migration behaviors in the context of pre-migration practices in their countries of origin, acknowledging that readers whose reading habits were formed outside of North America should be understood in relation to their personal reader histories, including their histories with libraries. While the "here and now" is practical and important, if the historical connection is broken or ignored, a crucial understanding is missing as well. Although participating readers were asked to reflect on public libraries specifically, their answers have much more general applicability. As a result, the findings of this study will benefit librarians working with Spanish-speaking immigrant and migrant readers across the board, insofar as they make leisure reading part of their library mission, be it a public

library; an academic library offering leisure reading collections and programming; or a special library, for example, a hospital library, featuring leisure reading collections for patients and their families and organizing bibliotherapy and medical humanities programs.

This paper relies on a logically selected data set from the larger study[1] and focuses on the following research problem: How do Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers interact with libraries in North America? To be sure, the focus is on avid leisure readers, not information users of library service seekers, in general. Also, it is the first known study that places post-migration usage patterns in the context of pre-migration experiences of readers with libraries in their countries of origin. This research problem is broken down into the following research questions (RQs):

> RQ1: How did readers use libraries in their countries of origin compared to how they use libraries in North America?
> RQ2: How do readers use reader services in libraries in North America?
> RQ3: What recommendations do readers have for the improvement of engagement with libraries in North America?

The data were collected in two large urban centers: Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, Canada, and New York City (NYC), New York, USA (Dali 2021[2]).

Literature Review
The state of research on Spanish-speaking immigrants and libraries: Research gaps and needs

Studies about Latinx and Hispanic communities, their information seeking practices and relationships with libraries, especially in the context of the U.S., comprise an impressive body of literature in LIS, ranging from empirical research to theoretical and conceptual papers to experience-sharing articles. Magro (2018), who employs a mixed method approach, turns attention to immigrant identities and resistance of Hispanic urban artists and their language choices on Instagram and "highlight[s] the differences and similarities between first and second-generation immigrant participants" (215). Taking a historical, analytical, and comparative perspective, Adkins and Burns (2013) review services to the Spanish-speaking users in the state of Arizona in the decade between 1999 and 2009, identifying demographic, socio-political, and LIS-specific factors that affect service provision to this population. In a broader societal and socio-political context, Ceja Alcalá, Colón-Aguirre, and Alaniz (2018) look into the roles of librarians and archivists in advocacy for oppressed and marginalized communities and the importance of information literacy, focusing on the Latinx community in Boston. At

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[1] This survey has resulted in several research reports, some of which have already been published. Data related to research participants and Spanish-speaking communities are found in all reports, albeit with a different level of detail and not repeated verbatim. Table 1 is also included in other articles for consistency of data reporting. Similar footnotes are provided in all published articles, thus cross-referencing all publications.

[2] A detailed analysis of the history and community compositions in NYC and Toronto is presented in the earlier report based on this study (Dali 2021).

the same time, Manuel Pérez (2019) takes a more applied approach to information literacy that libraries may offer to Hispanic community members, positioning libraries as safe and transparent public spaces and discussing bilingual collections and services and the availability of books in Spanish. Adkins, Moulaison, and Bonney (2019) engage in the proof-of-concept project and review how personas can "support library services and collections for Latinx community members in the Midwestern United States" and how they can be used by librarians in order to develop services and resources for this community. Adkins, Bossaller, and Thompson (2009) look at the notion of multiple, dominant, comparative, and vernacular literacies as a lens for learning about Spanish-speaking communities and in-depth understanding of their cultural and information needs, and as a way of augmenting and enriching more conventional community analysis done through statistical sources.

Yoo-Lee, Rhodes, and Peterson (2016) examine "the health information-seeking behaviors of Hispanics in the e-health environment and their use of public libraries as a health information source," listing some barriers to using public libraries, such as the "lack of time," "lack of skills in using the library materials, transportation," limited English proficiency, "lack of eligibility for a library card," and so on (85). Adkins, Moulaison, and Derpic (2017) investigate information sources used by Latin American immigrants in the U.S. Midwest in the context of "Trump-era rhetoric and actions affecting Latin American immigrants and the historical context for that immigration," recording a limited role that libraries play as sources of information for this community of users (243). In an earlier study, Bala and Adkins (2004) explore the shortcomings and successes of outreach to the Latinx communities in the American Midwest, while in a more focused and recent study, Adkins and Moulaison (2020) work specifically with Latina users, researching their use of ICT and positioning this community group both as a "vibrant, complex, and resilient population of women with intersectional identities" and as "a population vulnerable to digital exclusion" (n.p.). Some researchers, such as Denice Adkins and colleagues, have clearly created a remarkable legacy of multi-faceted research in Hispanic and Latinx communities; in addition to the aforementioned works, other attention-worthy publications are Adkins and Moulaison's 2018 article on the role of gatekeepers in engaging communities of Latin American immigrants in rural areas of the U.S. Midwest and Adkins' (2009) solo publication on libraries and reading practices in Honduras.

Academic libraries have also turned their attention to researching Hispanic and Latinx community members. For example, in a case study of first-year Latinx undergraduate students, who are 1.5 generation immigrants (i.e., those who arrived in a host country as children or teens), Haras, Lopez, and Ferry (2008) point to the correlation between information literacy and library use. Long (2011) explores perceptions of an academic library by Latinx undergraduate students, looking at the barriers for using the library through the case study design and noting cultural, social, and educational roles of academic library services in their lives and academic success. Reviewing literature on the use of academic libraries by Hispanic and Latinx students and providing specific recommendations for practitioners, Bladek (2019) investigates the avenues for academic libraries to better support this student population.

There is a vast number of book chapters and articles related to programming for and outreach to Latinx and Hispanic communities. Worthy of mentioning are Kaufman's (2014) "Outreach to Spanish-speaking families"; Nutta and Ventura's (2013) "'¡Soy Culto!': Connecting with the Hispanic Population"; and Lennon's (2013) "Cafe a las Siete/Coffee at Seven Cross-Cultural Programming at a Public Library." They reflect interesting experiences of engaging Spanish-speaking community members, although the focus is not necessarily on immigrant populations; also, all programs could benefit from a critical look and suggestions for improvement. There are also multiple publications about Spanish-language collections, bilingual programs, English as a Second Language classes, children's books, and other related topics.

Canadian LIS scholarship is also known for extensive immigration research. Publications, spanning decades of studies, range from comprehensive, such as Caidi and Allard (2005), to specific, spotlighting individual immigrant communities. For example, Allard and Caidi (2018) focus on information practices and the translocal meaning making process of Filipino Migrants in Canada. Shuva (2021) turns attention to exploring the information experiences of Bangladeshi immigrants in the context of informal networks used for coping in different situations. Using focus groups, van der Linden, Bartlett, and Beheshti (2014) examine library experiences and perceptions of libraries by immigrants to Canada who arrived from Asia, Central America, and Africa. Using ethnographic methods, Quirke (2011) highlights settlement experiences and information practices of young Afghan newcomers in Ontario. As in the case of U.S.-based studies, the frequent focus of research is on information behaviors and information needs, either in relation to libraries or irrespective of libraries, not on reading practices. One exception is Bordonaro's (2011) study that looked into the recreational reading preferences and outcomes of international studies in the context of an academic library in a mid-sized Canadian university. However, in the diverse group of students speaking 15 different languages, there were no Spanish speakers. In contrast to the U.S. situation, finding Canadian LIS studies focused on Spanish speakers is challenging.

Although reading scholarship is not as developed in LIS as scholarship on information behaviors and practices, there are a number of prolific researchers working primarily in this area. Most notable is the work of Catherine Ross (e.g., Ross, 2000)[3] on adult avid readers; Paulette Rothbauer's, Jennifer L. Pecoskie's, and Rachel Wexelbaum's work on reading practices of LGBTQIA+ readers (e.g., Pecoskie, 2012; Rothbauer, 2004; Wexelbaum, 2019); and Keren Dali's work with immigrant Russian-speaking readers (e.g., Dali 2012, 2013).There are numerous studies of reading preferences in academic libraries, some of which include empirical data collection (e.g., Gilbert and Fister 2010, 2015; Gladwin and Goulding 2012; Bridges-Rhoads, Hughes, and Van Cleave 2018). Except for Dali's (2012, 2013) and Bordonaro's (2011) studies, none of the above is focused specifically on speakers of world languages other than English.

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[3] Catherine Ross has published numerous works about reading in the last few decades; this is just one earlier example.

Hence, the focus on Spanish-speaking leisure readers, rather than information users and library service seekers, presents a noticeable gap in research and practice, which gives impetus to this article. As noted earlier, this research aims to address this gap and to begin creating a critical mass of research about reading practices by Spanish-speaking immigrant and migrant readers and their expectations of and relationships with libraries in light of their experiences with libraries in their countries of origin.

Reading in the readers' countries of origin: selected trends

Locating background information from surveys and other studies from all countries represented in this survey has been challenging. Nonetheless, several sources provide a glimpse into reading practices and library usage patterns by readers from the regions of interest. For example, compared to personal places of residence, residences by family members and friends, and even cybercafés, public libraries play only a minor role as internet access spots in Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela (comprising below or slightly over 1% of places chosen for access) (OEI 2014, 112, 117). It is "noteworthy that despite the efforts made in Latin America to incorporate ICT in education, training centers (college/institute/university) occupy the last spots as places of connection, along with libraries and public spaces" (OEI 2014, 118).

However, libraries remain important for other types of activities, including reading-related activities, which becomes clear from country-specific studies. For example, a comprehensive study from Mexico identified that 71.7% of respondents answered in the affirmative the question "Have you ever been to a library?" (Conaculta n.d., 125), with close to 7% of those indicating that they visited the library, on average, four days prior; close to 8% indicating that they visited the library about two weeks prior; about 25% indicating that they visited the library about three months prior; and about 60% indicating that they did so about five years prior (Conaculta n.d., 128). The top two reasons for visiting libraries were doing homework (54.2% of respondents) and reading for pleasure (22.1% of respondents) (Conaculta n.d., 129). In comparison, a lower percentage–58.1%–visited bookstores (Conaculta n.d., 131), although this percentage is still relatively high and consistent with the preference of Mexican readers to purchase books.

Most readers who shed light on the obstacles to reading indicated the lack of access to a library or a similar establishment nearby as the leading reason (57%), followed by the lack of time to read (52.2%) and the lack of money to buy reading materials (49.1%) (Conaculta n.d., 49). The latter is another piece of evidence that purchasing reading materials is a very popular method of gaining access to reading, which is confirmed by the readers' answers to the question about the source of books they read. Almost 60% mentioned purchasing books, over 45% and 40% respectively mentioned reading books received as gifts and books provided by family and friends, while 15.9% mentioned borrowing books from a library and 11.6% mentioned downloading free books from the Internet (Conaculta n.d., 85). Although most readers reported reading primarily at home (84.3%), other places of reading included school,

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public transit, workplaces and offices, parks and public places, and libraries (0.5%—the lowest percentage of respondents); preferences for places of reading varied by age, income level, and other categories (Conaculta n.d., 56). There was less variation in the preference for reading print versus digital reading, whereby 83% and 87.1% of respondents preferred reading books and magazines/journals, respectively, in print, with 4.9% and 9.6%, respectively, preferring to do so digitally, and 12.1% and 9.6% reading in both formats (Conaculta n.d., 169). Some of these patterns will be observed post-migration too while others will be reversed or reprioritized.

Fairly similar trends and patterns, with some variations, were observed in the Chilean study (CNCA 2011): out of responding readers, 35% reported buying books, 29% reported borrowing them from relatives, 11% reported borrowing from a library, and 3% reported downloading them from the internet (CNCA 2011, 34, 161). Just like in Mexico, many read at home; outside of home, 33% of respondents preferred to do so in an academic library; 45% reported reading at the workplace or office; 22% indicated that they sometimes read on public transit; and 24% said that they occasionally read while waiting for an appointment; cafés and public libraries were not often mentioned. The vast majority of those who responded shared that, during the year preceding the survey, they never visited a public library (85%), while academic libraries were regularly frequented. The main reasons for people not visiting a library were the lack of time (72%); inconvenient location (11%); and a preference for getting books by other means. The use of bookstores was not frequent, with 62% of respondents sharing that they never used bookstores, followed by 28% who said they visited bookstores occasionally, with 7% visiting one to three times a month and 3% visiting one to three times a week, with less than 1% dropping by a bookstore every day (CNCA 2011, 37). The survey disclosed a significant relationship between the frequency of reading and the frequency of library attendance—unsurprisingly, heavier readers used libraries more often. For readers who were over the age of 15, the library could be considered as a space of both access to reading materials and socialization (60).

In the Venezuelan survey (CENAL 2013), 80% of respondents reported not visiting libraries; public libraries were visited by 9.1% of respondents; school and university libraries by 8.5% of respondents; national libraries by 1.2% of respondents; special libraries by 0.3% of respondents; and common reading rooms and documentation centers by 0.2% each, respectively (CENAL 2013, 51). The leading reasons for using libraries were gaining access to books (56.3%), reading periodicals (19.8%), and using the Internet (16.2%) (CENAL 2013, 52).

It is to be kept in mind that libraries in Latin America do not always function similarly to or have similar types of access and organizational structure as libraries in North America. For example, in Honduras, the "national library, BINAH, is open to the public and much of the activity of Honduran public libraries is coordinated through BINAH" while "public libraries have been established in all eighteen departments of Honduras" (Adkins 2009, 221). There are also community libraries, reading rooms in museums that allow patrons to "access relevant historical materials," and documentation centers "for public consultation" in "governmental agencies and

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businesses" (Adkins 2009, 221). Readers are used to the system of "closed stacks" for adult collections, which contributes to the image of libraries as "information agencies," featuring reading rooms "with tables, chairs, and signs exhorting silence" (Adkins 2009, 221). One of the respondents in Adkins' (2009) study remarked that "Honduras does not have a reading culture," with reading associated "exclusively with books" and not viewed as characteristic and organic (Adkins 2009, 223). This fact notwithstanding, "Hondurans practice and respect reading, but they do not view themselves as readers and have a limited supply of books available to them," because books are "extremely expensive" (Adkins 2009, 223). Some materials are available online at no extra cost, which somewhat alleviates the problem with "news from Honduras and abroad, children's reading materials, and historical resources" (Adkins 2009, 223). There is significant governmental support for libraries "as a means of educating the Honduran population" and preserving the national cultural heritage; however, one serious downside is that libraries are used primarily by educated Hondurans (Adkins 2009, 224).

Spanish-speaking library users and the use of libraries in North America

In the U.S., Pew Research Center (PRC) has done significant and extensive studies on the use of libraries by Hispanic and Latinx users, which shed light on the attitudes of these users toward libraries, as well as differences between library users born in the U.S. and outside of the U.S. These differences are often substantial. For instance, only 60% of those born outside of the U.S. said that they have ever visited a library location (compared to 83% of those born in the U.S.); and only 27% of those born outside of the U.S. said that they ever used the library website (compared to 49% of those born in the U.S) (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, Figure 1). Similarly, while only 33% and 24% of immigrant users, respectively, say that it would be easy for them to visit a public library in person and use the library website if they wanted to, these numbers among U.S.-born Hispanic users are much higher, 60% and 42%, respectively (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, Figure 2). To some extent, these differences can be attributed to language difficulties, digital skills, and "the gap in internet access" (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 7). This fact notwithstanding, comprising "half of the adult U.S. Hispanic population," immigrants who have made their way to a public library stand out as the most appreciative of what libraries have to offer, from free books to research resources to the fact that libraries tend to offer a quiet, safe space. And they are more likely than other groups to say that closing their community library would have a major impact on their family (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 1)

It is clear that public libraries are not just sources of free books and information for immigrants but also "community center[s]" and "technology hub[s]"; however, "Hispanics are less likely than whites or Blacks[4] to know about the services offered by their local library" (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 7-8).

In terms of recorded demographics, 41% of Hispanic library patrons are born outside of the U.S., and 70% of library non-users are born outside of the U.S. (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 24). Hispanic users have, overall, a very positive attitude

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[4] The original cited report does not capitalize "Black." It is my decision to do so for considerations of social justice.

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toward and feeling about their libraries: 80% of them strongly agree that libraries "promote literacy and love of reading"; 75% strongly agree that libraries "give everyone a chance to succeed"; and 71% strongly agree that libraries improve the "quality of life in a community" (Brown and Lopez, 2015b, Figure 2.1) However, compared to other groups of users, Hispanics have the highest percentage of those who consider libraries to be not needed "because information can be found elsewhere" (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 16). It was also noted that "immigrant Latin[x] are more likely than others" to prefer audio-reading and watching videos to reading (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, para. 31). Many vital library services seem to be more important to Hispanic users born outside of the U.S. compared to the U.S.-born, including having a quiet and safe place (85% vs. 60%); having access to research resources (82% vs. 56%); accessing free books and media (83% vs. 55%); youth programming (77% vs. 49%); assistance from librarians (76% vs. 45%); access to the internet, computers, and printers (68% vs. 44%); help with job searching and applications (68%. vs. 43%); help with applications for governmental services (68% vs. 42%); and programs for adults (65% vs. 29%) (Brown and Lopez, 2015a, Table 1).

Methodology and research instruments
Research instruments and procedures

The self-administered qualitative survey employed in this study was relatively large and included 47 questions, most of them with sub-questions or boxes for open-ended responses. The questions were grouped into three sections: I. General Information About Readers (Q1-11; Prompt: "I would like to learn more about you in order to understand you better as a person"); II. Leisure Reading in Your Life (Q12-29; Prompt: "Now, I would like to learn a little more about you as a reader. Please tell me only about your leisure reading, not reading done for professional development, studies, or work"); and III. Libraries (Q30-47; Prompt: "Finally, I would like to find out a little more about your experience with and use of libraries in your home country and the U.S./Canada"). See Appendix A.

Survey responses collected on paper and electronically were processed using MS-Excel™; the survey did not collect any personal identifying information and no signed informed consent was involved; consent was implied through the survey preamble. The survey was qualitative and exploratory and relied on theoretically representative sampling and naturalistic and analytical generalizability. The former is rooted in the similarity of individual experiences and involves making generalization based on developing expectations about future situations; the latter is rooted in logical reasoning and developing expectations about the applicability of results in one study to the situations examined in studies with similar samples and settings (Kvale 1996, 232-233).

This paper relies on a logically selected data set from the larger study, as mentioned earlier, and focuses on the following research problem: How do Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers interact with libraries in North America? To be sure, the focus here is on avid leisure readers, not information users and library service seekers, in general. Also, it is the first known study that places post-migration usage

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patterns in the context of pre-migration experiences of readers with libraries in their countries of origin. This research problem is broken down into the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How did readers use libraries in their countries of origin compared to how they use libraries in North America?

RQ2: How do readers use reader services in libraries in North America?

RQ3: What recommendations do readers have for the improvement of engagement with libraries in North America?

It was hoped that the study design would encourage readers to reflect both on their pre-migration experiences with libraries and their current relationships with libraries and to weigh in on the ways to improve library services for Spanish-speaking readers whose reading habits were not formed in North America.

Participating readers

The study was conducted through a self-administered qualitative survey distributed in both geographic locations and available in both Spanish and English, both on paper and electronically. The focus here is on adult immigrant/migrant readers only and this paper does not address children or young adults, nor does it address 1.5- or second-generation immigrant/migrant readers. Readers from the following 13 countries responded: Argentina (2%), Chile (9%), Colombia (26%), Cuba (4%), Dominican Republic (11%), Ecuador (2%), El Salvador (4%), Guatemala (2%), Mexico (17%), Peru (9%), Puerto Rico (4%), Spain (2%), and Venezuela (4%) (n=47). Two readers replied "England" and "France," respectively. It is likely that these individuals arrived from a Spanish-speaking country to North America via England and France, respectively, which was confirmed through the reading of their subsequent answers. For this reason, and because both surveys were completed in Spanish, these responses were not invalidated.

As has been noted in the "Introduction," Spanish-speaking communities in NYC and Toronto are very diverse and include individuals from many Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America and Europe. However, the sizes of both communities and the sizes of diasporas within either Spanish-speaking community are quite different. Table 1 provides a detailed information in this regard. The largest communities in Toronto are Colombians, Mexicans, Salvadorans, Peruvians, and Ecuadorans, and in NYC are Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Ecuadorans, and Salvadorans. Also, an important note is that Puerto Ricans are international migrants, not immigrants, in the U.S.; they are U.S. citizens. However, while their geographic movements are considered "internal migration, not immigration," when they "leave a homeland with its own distinct identity and culture" and relocate to one of the 50 states, they may experience "the same cultural conflicts and emotional adjustments that most immigrants face" (Library of Congress n.d.). It is for this reason that Puerto Rican readers are included in this research, with a full recognition that, formally, they are not immigrants in the U.S., although they are immigrants in Canada.

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Country	Canada	Toronto	Country	U.S.	NYC
Colombia	66,265	15,600	Dominican Republic	1,085,321	520,866
Mexico	73,150	10,830	Puerto Rico	5,003,199	301,271
El Salvador	47,100	10,820	Mexico	11,573,680	241,710
Peru	27,210	7,335	Ecuador	439,123	179,812
Ecuador	10,305	7,285	El Salvador	1,387,022	104,420
Argentina	14,870	6,050	Colombia	704,587	103,612
Venezuela	19,330	5,560	Guatemala	935,707	71,224
Cuba	17,525	5,325	Peru	427, 445	50,105
Chile	16,595	4,760	Cuba	1,271,618	24,663
Guatemala	16,415	4,020	Argentina	189,126	20,542
Dominican Republic	10,280	2,990	Venezuela	290,224	12,468
Spain	4,705	925	Spain	105,975	11,744
Puerto Rico	380	95	Chile	93,647	9,840

Table 1. Characteristics of Spanish-Speaking Communities Addressed in the Survey (sorted by Toronto and NYC). Note: U.S. data except for Puerto Rico: U.S. Census Bureau (2018c); Data for U.S.-Puerto Rico: U.S. Census Bureau (2018d); Data for Canada: Statistics Canada (2016)[5].

Participating Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers were recruited in the Greater Toronto Area (Canada) and NYC and surrounding areas (U.S.) through key-contacts and subsequent snowballing. Key-contacts were individuals in respective communities as well as community organizations, such as public libraries, academic libraries, community agencies, and so on. As a study that was set "not to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share a certain characteristic" but "to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions" (McCracken 1988, 17), a non-probability sample was used with the intention to achieve theoretical, and not statistical representativeness, i.e., representativeness that makes sense in the context of study goals (Johnson 1990, 27). Recruitment requirements were explained in the "Key-Contact Letter of Information" and the "Survey: Letter of Information and Questionnaire" and readers were requested to self-select for participation based on the following criteria: having Spanish as their first language; being a first-generation immigrant (who arrived in North American at the age of 18 or older), and being a resident of the aforementioned geographic areas, who has been in the host country for at least two years. There were no other limiters or exclusion criteria. Participants were asked to self-identify as avid readers rather than to declare a fit with the definition proposed by the researcher. Externally proposed (and imposed) definitions, which build on quantifiable criteria (e.g., the number of weekly hours of reading), are reflective of the Western lifestyle and understanding of avid versus occasional reading versus non-reading. At the same time, the definition of avid reading depends on the cultural context; the most inclusive way to approach this issue is by giving individuals the

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[5] Table 1 and some versions of participant and methodology descriptions appear in other reports based on the same study in order to ensure consistency in reporting the data generated by the same research. Table 1 includes the data for Spanish speakers born outside of Canada and the U.S. Canadian data show arrivals between 1980 and 2016 only. U.S. data for Puerto Ricans also include individuals born in U.S. Island areas and to American parents abroad.

opportunity to self-identify. If they consider reading as integral to their lives, they can participate in the survey. This approach was spelled out in all recruitment documents. Readers who chose to respond to the paper-based questionnaire were given a self-addressed stamped envelope, as described above. There was no compensation for participants or key-contacts.

Data reporting choices

The histories and community characteristics of Spanish speakers in NYC and Toronto are quite different. NYC marks a much longer history for Hispanic and Latinx communities (e.g., Cordero-Guzmán 2019) than Toronto (e.g., Ruiz 2013); the sizes of these Hispanic diasporas in NYC are also much larger (e.g., Krogstad and Pew Research Center 2020; Statistics Canada 2017). However, this research does not look at communities in their entirety. It looks at self-identified avid readers only, the representatives of the so-called reading class, the characteristics of which are similar in diasporic communities in North America. Wendy Griswold (2008), credited with the definition of the reading class, asserts as follows.

> The reading class consists of those people who read for entertainment constantly. These are the folks who always have a book going, who never travel without something to read, who have print materials scattered in every room of their houses. […] Every society that has writing has a reading class, but not everyone who can read is a member. A reading class has a stable set of characteristics that includes its human capital (education), its economic capital (networks of personal connections), its demographic characteristics (gender, age, religion, ethnic composition), and—the defining and non-economic characteristic—its cultural practices. (37)

Griswold does not account for the situation of immigration and the change and stability of reading practices resulting from international migration; moreover, as a sociologist of reading looking at macro-level characteristics, she does not consider personal variations in reading practices when, for example, the level of readers' education may be lower than expected of a typical member of the reading class. Even accounting for these limitations of Griswold's approach, Spanish-speaking readers from Toronto and NYC can be defined as the reading class based on most characteristics specified in the definition. It should be reiterated though that the reading class is not representative of respective communities as a whole.

In the professional realm of LIS, the Canada-U.S. situation is unique and quite interesting. Both countries share the professional, educational, and scholarly space. LIS programs in Canada are accredited by the American Library Association. Those who work cross-border in both countries—teach, collaborate with colleagues, or just use libraries in both countries—realize a great degree of similarities in how LIS is practiced and taught. There are multiple reasons that U.S.-generated scholarship benefits Canadian LIS education and professional practice and vice-versa. Recognizing similarities does not mean being oblivious to socio-cultural and political differences, including differences in immigration policies and regulations and differences in the demographic composition of immigrant and migrant communities in both countries. It stands to reason that these differences will be particularly noticeable in information

services, the nature of and demand for library spaces, the use of the internet, resources and services, and the need for programming, including English-language learning.

However, as international, historical, and cross-cultural reading research reveals, there is a great deal of similarities among avid readers in their levels of literacy (relatively high), early influences on their formation as readers (early readers, with reading lovers as role models, be it family, teachers, or friends), and reasons for reading (a necessity of life, an integral part of their daily being, a favorite leisure activity, a part of their personal identity, a trusted guide and friend, an essential escape and relaxation technique) (e.g., Burke 1999; Dali 2012, 2013; Griswold 2008; Kraayakmp and Dijkstra 1999; Littau 2008; Rosenthal 1995; Ross 2000; Sabine and Sabine 1983; Schutte and Malouff 2006). These observations lend additional support for the affinity between the reading class of immigrant/migrant readers in Canada and the U.S. and, by extension, for reporting American and Canadian data in aggregate.

There is another reason for aggregate reporting. This is the first known study that has attempted reaching large immigrant and migrant readerships in more than one country. As such, it was nearly impossible to anticipate the type and rate of response. Receiving responses from immigrants/migrants from 13 different Spanish-speaking countries definitely exceeded expectations. However, a total of 50 usable responses, superimposed on a wide geographic distribution of responses, resulted in a low intersectional representation of participants by country of origin (13 different countries) and by host country (the U.S. or Canada). This rendered any meaningful comparison challenging. However, given the exploratory nature of this study and the reliance on naturalistic and analytical generalizability, the case is strengthened for reporting Canadian and American results in aggregate. Additional confidence in this decision is provided by very similar responses to most survey questions by Canadian and American Spanish-speaking immigrant and migrant readers. The overall number of responses— 50—is satisfactory in a study when the actual size of the population under study is unknown (there are no available numbers for avid Spanish-speaking readers in either country) and when the survey is qualitative, i.e., akin to interviewing (Jensen 2010). Unlike quantitative surveys, "the qualitative survey analyses the diversity of member characteristics within a population" (Jensen 2010, para. 1), which is in line with the chosen sampling and recruitment techniques designed "not to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share a certain characteristic" but "to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions" (McCracken 1988, 17). The abundance of open-ended questions aimed at eliciting lengthy responses, collecting examples, or soliciting stories is a hallmark of this survey, which aligns with the principles of qualitative survey design. Similarly, this survey does not operate with random representative sampling, nor does it lead to statistical generalizability.

Limitations of the study

As an exploratory study, a first study that attempted to reach immigrant readers in two different countries, it had many unknown unknowns, including a response rate that can be anticipated and response from different communities in the Hispanic population. There was no opportunity to go deeper into the socio-cultural and reader

studies within these community groups (e.g., Mexican American readers, Salvadoran Canadian readers), which is an approach that may provide richer and more culturally sensitive and contextualized data in future studies. Moreover, conducting research in specific community groups will allow for developing statistically generalizable investigations, which was not the case with the study at hand. A small size of diasporas within the research population of Spanish-speaking readers has rendered comparison between Canadian and American readers impossible and impractical. The amount of background information to build upon from the U.S. and Canada was uneven. For example, while the PRC data were incredibly important as a comparative set to the data from the readers' countries of origin, no equivalent set of data from Canada was located.

Findings
Demographic characteristics of the participants

Out of 50 usable responses, 24 (48%) were completed on paper and 26 (52%) were completed electronically; 37 (74%) were completed in Spanish and 13 (26%) were completed in English. Thirty-eight responding readers (78%) identified as female and 11 (22%) identified as male (n=49). The readers (n=44) held a wide range of occupations before moving to North America, including: social work, sales, accounting, office management, engineering, management positions in different industries, school education, IT, in the service industry, business, in medicine and therapeutic occupations, translations, sports, caregiving, and airlines. Some were unemployed and others were students; however, only five (11%; n=44), remained employed in their respective fields post-migration, with some individuals being unemployed at the time of the survey and others retired post-migration. Most readers had arrived in North America in the last 20 years (27, 56%, n=48); were 36 years or older (44, 88%, n=50); had some level of postsecondary education (36, 72%, n=50), ranging from vocational training to graduate degrees; perceived their English-language proficiency as high or good (32, 65%, n=49); and felt quite comfortable or at home in the host country (41, 82%, n=50).

One of the most important questions that this study tried to address is examining readers' interactions with libraries in North America in the context of their pre-migration library experiences (RQ1: How did readers use libraries in their countries of origin compared to how they use libraries in North America?).

The use of libraries in readers' countries of origin

When asked about whether or not the use of libraries was encouraged in their home countries, out of 42 (100%) readers who addressed this question (Q31), 31 (74%) indicated that it was not the case, and one person thought that "soccer was seen as more important." Eleven readers (26%) mentioned that they were encouraged to use libraries and gave examples. One reader from Spain noted that library use was encouraged "by creating 'book clubs' for all audiences and all ages," which were "very popular" and another reader mentioned that the use of libraries was encouraged by "improving the old libraries and creating new ones, more modern and technologically

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advanced." Several responses mentioned the role of schools and, specifically, teachers who brought children to the library. One reader from Ecuador commented that "students were encouraged to use library facilities as sources of knowledge and information" and another from Colombia reminisced that "both elementary and secondary schools had libraries, and so did every neighborhood. We especially enjoyed the movies they showed." One more Colombian reader shared that "Every town and every school had its own library." In Puerto Rico, another reader recalled, libraries "lent books to schools, for any kid who wanted to read." A reader from Mexico created connections between the school and family environments: "It depends on one's personal and family history. Love of books begins at home, and it is fostered by the (school) education one gets."

These findings are very consistent with the finding reported in the earlier paper based on this study where 31% of responding readers (n=49) credited schools for getting them into the habit of reading and even more readers (49%) credited family members and friends (Dali 2021). One person noted, however, that although the use of libraries was hypothetically encouraged, they did not have easy access to libraries, and another reader commented that it was not encouraged as much as it is in North America.

Despite the fact that, based on readers' reports, the use of libraries was not particularly encouraged in many cases pre-migration, 39 (83%, n=47) readers noted that access to public libraries, specifically, was free. Four more readers (9%) replied that it was fee-based and four others (9%) did not know (Q32). There were conflicting responses about Dominican Republic and Mexico, with some readers saying that it was free and others saying that it was not. Discrepancies could be a function of participants simply not knowing, regional differences, types of services which readers used, and even types of libraries to which readers referred. Although the question was specifically about public libraries, an understanding of what constitutes a public library can vary from person to person and from context to context. This is a methodological observation that should be taken into consideration by future researchers engaged in reading studies; perhaps, such questions should be differently worded for clarity. Also, future follow-up country-specific reader studies may provide nuanced pictures of readerships and disclose internal variations in reading practices within the bounds of a single country and reading culture.

Only 34 readers replied to the question (Q33) on whether or not they used public libraries in their home countries before migration. Twenty-three (68%) used the library, with one person elaborating that it was used primarily for schoolwork. Eleven readers (32%) shared that they did not use public libraries back home, providing an array of reasons. Four people used to buy books they wanted; the geographic move, however, has increased their options, and now they both use libraries "and also buy books." One person expressed a common sentiment that "there weren't any libraries like the ones you can find here," in North America. In some home countries, libraries were "very few and they did not provide comfort." Another person shared that their schedule in the past simply "did not allow" for visiting libraries. These responses serve as a good

transition to the discussion of post-migration reading practices and relationships with libraries.

The use of libraries in North America

In comparison, 44 readers responded to the question about whether or not they use public libraries in North America (Q36) and all 44 of them responded in the affirmative. Twenty-eight readers specified how often they use public libraries (Q38), with the following distribution: the largest group of responding readers (32%) visit libraries twice a month, closely followed by fairly frequent users who find themselves in the library two-three times a week (29%). Combined with those who visit the library almost every day (7%) and once a week (21%), 57% of readers who responded use the library at least once a week. At the same time, only 18 readers chose to address the question about their satisfaction with library collections in Spanish (Q40), with 44% (eight readers) being satisfied, 28% (five readers) claiming that the quality of the Spanish-language collection makes no difference to them, and 28% (five readers) being dissatisfied. Three of those dissatisfied readers complained about the "VERY limited [selection], with little variety" [emphasis original]; one more person surmised that this state of collections is "the result of a poor selection (of course, from the perspective of my own personal preferences)"; and another reader admitted that they had "not had the opportunity to do a full survey" of what the library holds in Spanish.

Reasons for using libraries among Spanish speakers range from borrowing books and other materials in Spanish, English, and other languages, to using reference sources and the Internet in the library, to attending programs and English-language classes and visiting libraries with their kids (Q37). It is clear, however, that using libraries for borrowing materials is the leading choice. Thirty-two readers responded to this question. Multiple responses were allowed, and a total of 137 responses were received (see Table 2).

Reasons for Using the Library (n=137)	Number
To borrow books and other materials for leisure reading in Spanish	**24 (18%)**
To borrow books and other materials for leisure reading in English and other languages (not Spanish)	**23 (17%)**
To borrow video/audio cassettes or CDs	**23 (17%)**
To participate in library programs	15 (11%)
To find out community information	14 (10%)
To bring my kids to the library	13 (9%)
To use the Internet	11 (8%)
To use reference materials, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, manuals, directories	10 (7%)
Other (specify)*	4 (3%)

Table 2. Reasons for Using the Library
*Two out of four responses were: Attending English-language classes

Libraries are not the only sources of gaining access to reading materials. A total of 112 responses were received from 47 readers to the question about other places from where readers get their reading matters (Q47). Out of them, online bookstores were mentioned 24 times; other bookstores—20 times; and Spanish-language

bookstores—17 times. It is entirely possible that these three categories overlap. Twenty-three responses mentioned buying books abroad and bringing them back to North America; and two more "other" responses also indicated purchases, locally or abroad. This shows that purchasing books is a meaningfully popular alternative among the readers who responded to the survey as the combined number of answers indicating bookstores and purchases as a possible way of gaining access to Spanish-language materials is 86 (77%) of responses. Borrowing from other people scored 21 mentions, with five more "other" responses including personal gifts, downloading PDF files of online documents, cellphone apps, and subscriptions. Libraries, in turn, have to be aware of the competing commercial and community entities that enable Spanish-speaking readers to gain access to reading materials.

Reader services for Spanish-speaking readers

A more specific interest of this study is the relationship of Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers with reader services (RQ2: How do readers use reader services in libraries in North America?).

Out of 27 readers who addressed the question on whether or not they are familiar with readers' advisory (RA) services in their public libraries, only one replied in the affirmative; the rest of readers were not aware of them (Q42). Even fewer—18 readers—responded to the question (Q43) on whether or not they would ask a librarian for a suggestion on what to read next. The vast majority—15 (83%)—said that they would, while three did not feel the need to do so, because they are "not used to doing it [and] tend to choose the books by [themselves]"; because they "already know what books [they] want"; and because they feel that librarians do not necessarily have this kind of expertise. As one reader summed it up: "The days when librarians had the necessary level of erudition (e.g., [the days of] Borges) are long gone."

Despite the hypothetical willingness of some readers to consult librarians about reading suggestions, only 26 readers answered the question about their experiences of doing so, and 24 of those simply said that they never had this experience, with one person noting that they prefer to ask people who work in a Spanish-language bookstore (Q45). Another person remarked that "There is always somebody willing to help and share their favorite titles," although it was not clear if they referred to librarians or other patrons in the library; and only one reader provided a description of a library interaction:

> My son's pediatrician recommended that I look for books on "social skills" for children. When I asked the librarian, she was very kind and gave me several titles that were very helpful. She also gave me the titles of books on good manners for children (I did not know there were books on that).

It feels as though, in this case, English-language books were discussed, not books in Spanish; and the question felt more like an information or reference query.

Thirty-one readers, who provided a total of 89 responses, shed light on how public libraries help them discover their next good read, in addition to librarians' advice (Q44). Top three reasons included searching in the library catalog (mentioned 23

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times); checking out displays in the library (mentioned 21 times); and consulting recommended lists on the library website (mentioned 18 times). Eight more responses indicate that readers check out what other people have borrowed, and four responses say that readers look at what other people just returned. In five cases, readers also consult online suggestions and specifically those on social media. Ten readers, however, said that they do not get much help in this regard from the library, and that they usually know which books they would like to borrow and get them off the shelf.

Recommendations to libraries for improving Spanish-language reader services

Finally, one of the major goals of this study was to provide a forum for participants to weigh in on improving services for Spanish-speaking readers. Although the question (Q41) was specifically about Spanish-language collections, twenty-three readers addressed various aspects of library work, including collections, programs, services, spaces, and community engagement.

Collections

The most frequent suggestion for improving the state of Spanish-language collections was to increase a variety of titles and to balance old and new books in Spanish:

> They should have books from new writers from all the Spanish-speaking countries, and should have more books, both for children and for adults, so Hispanic people have more choices, since we've already read most books that libraries have.

> They should increase their collections with classical works, award-winning authors, and topics of interest for all social groups.

Expanding the overall size of Spanish-language collections was another suggestion or, as one reader put it, ending their comment with a smiley face, "I wish they had all the books in Spanish :-)." Readers proposed that a more even distribution of titles among the branches could be achieved, and more titles by famous authors could be purchased. This would also allow librarians to keep their collections updated and relevant: "They should base acquisitions on best-seller lists; many of the books they have are old." Expanding the selection of children's books in Spanish, "so they could read to their children," was mentioned more than once, which is evident of the fact that readers care about passing on their cultural and linguistic heritage and see libraries as part of this tradition. A few suggestions addressed nonfiction and nonprint formats:
They should add more books, in general, and not only fiction; more books for children, more Christian books; more audiobooks in general, and Christian ones in particular.

> They should buy a larger variety of books in Spanish. They have lots of fiction in Spanish, but more books on personal growth and more educational books are needed, in my opinion.

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Services and spaces

On a related note, readers tied together collections and programming with services and library spaces, noting that

> The city should have more money to buy more books, and the washrooms should be available; they always have some excuse to keep them out of order.

> They should budget for collection development and give the overall administrative responsibility to a librarian who knows the language and cares for multiculturalism (particularly with respect to Spanish-speaking people).

Community engagement and reader services

Aside from collections, readers suggested that libraries should "[e]xpand collections, programs, and services not only in English so that adults and children could attend a greater variety of activities."

Last but not least, quite a few suggestions demonstrated that readers would like to be actively involved in planning and improving reader services. To be sure, they wanted to answer surveys and to be asked about their preferences and wishes; however, they also wanted libraries to tap into their personal and professional experience as advisors, not only as service recipients. In this regard, they proposed several very specific steps:

> I would recommend that they ask Spanish speaking users for the types of books they would like to have in the library.

> They should also have a book fair focused on books written in Spanish, inviting new writers, as well as those who have been around for some time; this way, they could compile a list of books for libraries to order.

> They should select and catalogue donations. They should also review what the distributors choose to make available.

Only one reader thought that libraries do not need any recommendations for improvement because they are already "well-organized."

Discussion
Implications for all libraries

One of the most important conclusions derived from both the literature review and the findings of the current study is the need for a more nuanced approach to the complex and rich Spanish-speaking communities. This certainly presents a challenge for researchers that the author also experienced firsthand. It proved difficult to find solid research-based publications about the use of libraries and reading practices by immigrant/migrant readers before migration. However, such sources are crucial because, although there are some similar trends in several Spanish-speaking countries, a historical and socio-cultural context of reading is unique in each country. The same can be said about library systems in these countries. In the absence of this background

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information, more effort should be made by library staff to get acquainted with the local Hispanic and Latinx community and carry out community studies to learn more of their unique cultural heritage based on the country of origin. In this study, the lack of complete background information about all thirteen countries of origin should be considered one of the limitations, and the findings of this research should be viewed and interpreted in the context of this limitation. In professional practice, scarcity of information complicates librarians' work with readers.

Librarians should be alert to distinguishing between Spanish speakers who are born in the U.S. or Canada; Spanish-speaking immigrants/migrants who have migrated a while ago (old-timers); and Spanish-speaking newcomers who have only been in the host country for a few years. The reading practices and relationships to libraries by all of these groups should be expected to differ, and this needs to be accounted for in managing collections, planning services and programs, and doing outreach and community engagement. By design, this study did not cover the latter group (newcomers); and this should also be taken into consideration in interpreting the findings.

From the survey responses, it has transpired that libraries used by readers before migration may have been differently conceptualized. What we envision as public libraries in the context of North America may not be understood in the same way in readers' countries of origin. Special libraries and documentation centers may fulfill some functions that we see performed by North American public libraries or open-stacks, publicly accessible academic libraries. It is also clear that school and academic libraries may function as public library spaces in some countries of origin and be associated with places conducive to both relaxing and educational reading engagements. Also, any type of library, be it public, academic, or special, in the countries of origin may have mandates and a range of services and resources different from what we are used to seeing in North America. This is something that can have implications for how libraries of all types in the U.S. and Canada, welcoming Spanish-speaking readers, structure their services for them in the best possible way.

As this study highlighted, libraries in North America are popular borrowing places for books and other print and audiovisual materials in Spanish and English (see Table 2). However, readers do not often see librarians as expert resources for facilitating their reading experience and receiving reading advice. It is also clear that urban centers with a large concentration of Spanish-speaking avid readers living in the diaspora are places for well-developed and vibrant reading communities. An integral part of these communities is Spanish-language bookstores, both online and bricks-and-mortar. It is not unreasonable to assume that those who work in bookstores can be seen as approachable and expert professionals who help with reading suggestions and facilitate the reading experience. Also, just as was customary in select countries of origin, readers like borrowing books from each other: family, friends, and other community members. These informal exchange networks should also be accounted for as an alternative way of gaining access to reading matter outside of libraries, especially if they are supported by the supply of materials brought by readers to North America from

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their home countries. These exchanges should also be noted as an important cultural trait of the Spanish-speaking reading community.

It was also remarkable that readers mentioned the importance of the physical space and the overall feel of the library as part and parcel of the reading experience they expect to find. This is an indication that readers do not seek only reading suggestions and reading promotion but pursue a holistic experience of reading, with physical spaces being an integral part thereof. Finally, it is imperative that our library practices be guided by the country-specific knowledge of readerships and unique reading cultures (which we currently lack, for the most part) in addition to our understanding of immigrant/migrant reading practices based on the shared language. These observations are quite important across different types of libraries.

Implications for public libraries

As many participants in this study indicated, the use of libraries may not have always been encouraged pre-migration, which is consistent with statistics from the select countries of origin on the generally low number of individuals who used the library regularly or at all. This probably means that readers who responded to the survey are likely among the minority of the population in their home countries who did use libraries pre-migration. Readers who participated in the study also connected barriers to leisure reading in their countries of origin to the lack of easy access to libraries, an insufficient number of libraries, an unwelcoming library environment, and poor collections. The libraries in countries of origin were not necessarily free, and some participants, despite the essentiality of leisure reading in their lives, were not in the habit of seeing libraries as a primary source of accessing materials.

Whatever the actual usage of libraries was in the countries of origin, it is clear that public libraries in the U.S. and Canada are loved and cherished by Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers who participated in this survey, which is consistent with the PRC findings of library users in general (Brown and Lopez 2015a, 2015b). As a result, in some ways, the use of libraries by Spanish-speaking readers may be similar to the use of libraries by Spanish-speaking information users and service seekers. However, one crucial difference could be that readers do not seem to be particularly eager to engage librarians with questions about reading suggestions or the reading experience.

This fact notwithstanding, and despite alternative channels of access to reading matters, reading promotion and marketing strategies employed by libraries seem to be effective and utilized by Spanish-speaking readers living in the diaspora. Moreover, it is clear that readers care about libraries and would love to have a say on the state of Spanish-language collections, programming, and services. They wish to see balanced collections, both recent bestsellers and classics, both fiction and nonfiction, including Christian and spiritual literature, self-help books, books that contribute to personal growth, and nonfiction that is informative and educational. Notions of diversity and inclusivity in collections are resonant in readers' wishes to see that Spanish-speaking readers have more choice and that "topics of interest for all social groups" are represented in their libraries. They want to see children's books in Spanish and bilingual

books in order to ensure the cultural heritage preservation and intergenerational connections between first-, 1.5-, and second-generation immigrants and migrants. They also mention that administrative backing for multilingual initiatives is a must, as well as the hiring of librarians with cultural and linguistic competencies. Finally, readers would like to be more directly involved, and not only as subjects of library services, by suggesting the formation of a consulting committee made of individuals with the necessary characteristics to acquire the requisite materials to increase the intellectual background of the general public.

Implications for academic libraries

Academic libraries have a large number of models and configurations for their services and access. There are research collections, available on the closed-stacks authorized-users-only system, and there are portions of academic libraries collections open to the general public. There are community college libraries and smaller or medium-sized academic libraries that welcome local community members, not to mention a growing number of academic libraries engaging in strategic outreach projects and partnerships with public libraries on community building, resource sharing, and programming. That is to say, with an increased interest by academic libraries in leisure reading collections and reading programming and given that academic libraries already collect fiction and imaginative literature for supporting research and curricula, academic libraries in certain geographic areas and communities can be just as natural places for leisure reading as public libraries and bookstores. They can be valued as physical spaces conducive to leisure reading and, if their policies and borrowing agreements allow for it, as places to access leisure reading materials as well, not only for students, faculty, and staff, but also for outside community members (e.g., Brantford Public Library 2021; Shires, 2006)

While leisure reading collections have mushroomed in academic libraries across the board (e.g., Behler 2011; Dewan 2010; Diers and Simpson 2012; Smith and Young 2008) these collections, much like public library collections, need to be multilingual, especially if fiction and narrative nonfiction is already purchased for curricular purposes. In the latter case, it will just be a matter of promoting and ensuring physical visibility and accessibility of the collection. It should be an expectation that academic library leisure reading collections have materials in world languages, including collections in Spanish, as appropriate for the community of users. This applies to different types of materials: books, audiobooks, music, and videos. Depending on the local situation, academic libraries may also think of newspaper and magazine subscriptions, electronic or print, as well as of developing collections of narrative nonfiction in Spanish, especially ones that can also fit with the scope of an academic library and support its educational and curricular mission. These conclusions draw from the readers' responses in the current study whereby they noted how much they loved to read nonfiction—both narrative and informative—for leisure. This is also supported by the reader surveys from the select countries of origin cited in the literature review and by the PRC research data. The PRC reports also recorded the ongoing popularity of audiobooks among

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Spanish-speakers and the growing interest in electronic formats, which also figured in this survey.

What if, because of their capacity, funding, and expertise, academic libraries in some areas have better leisure reading collections in Spanish than local public libraries? What stops them from participating in the facilitation of the reading experience for community members who prefer to read, watch, and listen to entertaining and self-educational materials in Spanish and other languages, not only in English? To mark the true revival of reader services in academic libraries around the beginning of the 21st century, we have to see a critical mass of studies and professional articles that advocate for the need for this practice to go beyond English-language genres and Western cultural production.

Implications for special libraries

Given the size of Spanish-speaking communities, especially in the U.S., special libraries, hospital, and museum libraries, in particular, would do well to address the leisure reading aspirations and sophisticated expectations of Spanish-speaking readers, in their specific professional contexts and in the context of their organizational missions. Hospital libraries that have not only consumer health but also leisure reading collections and provide refuge to patients and their families from a stressful hospital environment (e.g., Forsberg 2010; Shereff, Palmer, and Cannon 2017) should offer leisure reading in world languages, including Spanish, based on the demographics of their patrons. Museum libraries open to the public should pay particular attention to educational non-specialist materials in Spanish, especially given the fact that Spanish-speaking readers hold such reading materials in high regard and greatly value leisure reading for self-education and information.

Conclusion

This study would not be possible without the readers who generously lent their time and shared their wisdom and life experiences with the researcher. It would not be possible without Spanish-speaking librarians in Toronto and NYC who contributed to the study design by testing instruments and commenting on drafts at different stages of the manuscript preparation process. It is thanks to their dedicated efforts that a portrait of Spanish-speaking immigrant/migrant readers has become clearer, enriched by the opinions and worldviews of avid readers and adding to the substantial body of extant literature about Spanish-speaking library users and information seekers. Their post-migration perceptions of and relationships with libraries were analyzed in the context of their pre-migration experiences, despite the encountered difficulty of collecting requisite reading research from all 13 Spanish-speaking countries represented by the readers. Reader studies, such as ones analyzed in this paper, bring the readers' world closer to the attention of librarians who practice in North American libraries.

While the sample of avid readers may be not representative of the Hispanic and Latinx communities of immigrants and migrants, it may be typical of Spanish-speaking avid readers. This is an important observation and a topic requiring further investigation in future quantitative or mixed-method studies. As of today, there are no macro-level

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studies of immigrant/migrant readerships in either the U.S. or Canada. However, this qualitative reading study underscores the need for such an undertaking.

The combination of information about both pre-migration and post-migration experiences has also brought to light another interesting insight that has implications for how we go about building partnerships with, services for, and outreach to community members who come to the U.S. and Canada from countries with quite distinct library systems. Our default approach is that we need to familiarize newcomer users with the structure, organization, and services in our libraries. In other words, to make them feel at home, we need to teach them our ways. We make significant strides to meet their needs too, both responsively and proactively, by hiring staff proficient in world languages, by building collections in these languages, by adding signage and information about services in these languages, and so on. But is it enough? The case of Spanish-speaking readers may show that, in immigrant/migrant readers' minds, there may not exist a notable division (and ensuing siloization) among different types of libraries, especially, when reader services are concerned. This hints at great opportunities for collaboration among different types of libraries for a greater benefit of readers whose perceptions and expectations of libraries were not conditioned by North American conventions during the formative years as library users and, most importantly, as avid lifelong readers.

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About the author

Dr. Keren Dali is at the Research Methods & Information Science Dept., University of Denver (DU). Her research interests are in workplace equity and inclusion; relationships between LIS and social work; disabilities; and reading practices of adults, with the focus on immigrant and migrant readers. Dr. Dali holds several research, leadership, and service

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Appendix A. Survey Questions Addressed in This Article[6]

SPANISH-SPEAKING READERS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (relevant questions only)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT READERS

I would like to learn a little more about you in order to understand you better as a person

1. What year did you immigrate to the U.S./Canada?
2. What country did you come from?
3. What is your highest level of education? Choose only one.
   a. Did not complete high school
   b. High school or high school + vocational training
   c. Community college diploma
   d. University Bachelor degree
   e. Graduate degree (Master or Ph.D.)
4. Where was the highest level of education acquired? Choose only one.
   a. Canada
   b. U.S.
   c. Another country (specify)
5. What was your original occupation before immigration?
6. Do you work in your original professional field in the U.S./Canada?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Other (describe)
7. When you compare your economic/income level in the previous country of residence to that in the U.S., do you feel:
   a. Improvement
   b. The same
   c. Deterioration
   d. Other (specify)
8. What statement would best describe how you feel in the U.S.? Choose only one.
   a. I feel as much 'at home' in the U.S. as I felt in my home country
   b. Most of the time, I feel quite comfortable in American socio-cultural settings
   c. Sometimes I feel comfortable in American socio-cultural settings
   d. I rarely feel comfortable in American socio-cultural settings

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[6] The author can be contacted for the full version of the research instrument.

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  e. I never feel comfortable in American socio-cultural settings

9. Age
  a. 18-25
  b. 26-35
  c. 36-45
  d. 46-55
  e. 56-65
  f. Over 65

10. Sex
  a. Female
  b. Male
  c. Other
  d. Prefer not to disclose

11. What statement would best describe your level of reading English-language proficiency (in your own estimate)
  a. High (I can read ANY text in English almost with the same ease and comprehension as I read in Spanish)
  b. Good (I can read MOST texts in English with a fair degree of ease and comprehension)
  c. Average (Depending on the text and level of language, I can read in English with a satisfactory degree of ease and comprehension)
  d. Low (I experience difficulties reading MOST texts in English)
  e. Very low (With an exception of individual sentences, announcements, and signs, I cannot read in English OR I cannot read in English at all)

II. LEISURE READING IN YOUR LIFE

Now I would like to learn a little more about you as a reader. Please tell me only about your leisure reading, not reading done for professional development, studies, or work

[not covered in this article]

III. LIBRARIES

Finally, I would like to find out a little more about your experience with and use of libraries in your home country and Canada

31. Was the use of libraries encouraged in your home country?
  a. No
  b. Yes. Describe how
32. Was the use of public libraries free in your home country?
  a. Yes
  b. No
  c. Don't know
33. Did you use public libraries in your home country before immigration?

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a. Yes.
b. No. Why not?

[Q34-35 not covered in this article]

36. Do you use public libraries in Canada?
   a. Yes.
   b. No. Why not?

If you chose Q36 (b), keep answering in sequence. If you chose Q36 (a), please go straight to Q46.

37. I visit my public library in order
   a. To borrow books and other materials for leisure reading in Spanish
   b. To borrow books and other materials for leisure reading in English and other languages (not Spanish)
   c. To use reference materials, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, manuals, directories
   d. To borrow video / audio cassettes or CDs
   e. To use Internet
   f. To find out community information
   g. To participate in library programs
   h. To bring my kids to the library
   i. Other (specify)
38. How frequently do you use your public library in Canada to borrow leisure books?
   a. About once a month
   b. About twice a month
   c. Once a week
   d. 2-3 times a week
   e. Other (specify)
40. Are you satisfied with the collection of books in Spanish in your public library?
   a. Yes
   b. It does not make a difference to me
   c. No. Why not?
41. What recommendations would you make to improve Spanish-language collections in your public library?
42. Most public library branches today have so-called Readers' Advisory services. Are you familiar with them?
   a. No
   b. Yes. What kind of help, do you think, this service can offer you?
43. If you would like to get a reading suggestion on what to read next, do you ask a librarian for help?
   a. Yes
   b. No, because
44. Aside from a librarian's advice, how else can public libraries help you choose your next good read, in your opinion? Choose ALL that apply.

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a. I look on the recommended lists on the library website
b. I check out displays in the library
c. I see what other people are borrowing
d. I look at what other people just returned
e. I look in the library catalog
f. Not much help from the library. I usually know which books I would like to borrow and I go and find them on the shelf
g. Other (specify)

45. If you ever had the experience of asking library staff for a reading suggestion, please describe your experience
a. Never had this experience
b. My experience

[Q46 not covered in this article]

47. Aside from libraries, where else do you get a hold of books and other reading materials for leisure?
a. Online bookstores
b. Spanish-language bookstores
c. Other bookstores
d. Borrow from other people
e. Buy abroad and bring back to Canada
f. Other (specify)

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME LEARN MORE ABOUT SPANISH-SPEAKING READERS!