

Summary of

“Gestion scolaire et habilitation des communautés minoritaires de langue officielle au Canada”

Study by: Martin Normand

In this study, Martin Normand examines how participation in school management, as a result of judicial recognition of a constitutional right to school boards, contributed to the empowerment, in the legal sense of the term, of official language minority communities in Canada. The author examines how section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* constitutionalized access to education in the minority language in Canada, and how the courts’ broad and generous interpretation of section 23 served to reinforce the influence of linguistic minorities on school management. The author also mentions that despite their importance for linguistic minorities, school boards are the subject of little research in the field of political science.

The author of this impact study is inspired by the work on empowerment – more specifically, giving a person or group the legal capacity to make decisions or act - and institutional completeness – in other words, having institutions that offer services given by and for members of a specific community. The author proposes that school boards, created primarily following the entry into force of section 23, contribute to the empowerment of minority language communities by serving as spaces where these communities can make their own decisions in one area - education - which has a direct impact on their vitality.

The author begins his study with a review of the research on school boards in political science, and then proposes a framework of analysis based on the work on empowerment and institutional completeness. He continues by developing a review of case law in Canada on school management and by providing a description and comparison of school boards in each of the provinces and territories of Canada. The author concludes by saying that further study of school boards as “spaces of authority” has great potential and relevance. He specifies that studies on the dynamics of school boards and on the relationships between them as well as between the boards and the Ministers of Education could help continue to put into action the theory of empowerment in minority official language communities in Canada.