Social ties and settlement processes: French and North African migrants in Montreal
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Abstract (Summary)
Following a hundred year period during which immigration from England, Ireland, and Scotland was favoured, the second half of the twentieth century saw diversification of the sources of immigration in Quebec, as was the case in the rest of Canada (5) (see [Piche], this issue). In 1978, the Couture-Cullen Agreement gave Quebec the right to influence the volume and composition of immigration within its territorial boundaries (MRCI 2000). By this accord, Quebec could shape immigration in relation to its language policies and at the same time meet the labour and demographic needs caused by a decline in the birth rate. The Charter of the French Language (Bill 101), adopted in 1977, embodied a firm political desire to maintain and promote French as the primary language in Quebec, particularly through the obligatory enrollment of immigrant children in the French school system. Since 1990, Francophone immigration to Quebec has been promoted: "The desire to conserve Quebec society's cultural identity and to ensure the persistence of the French fact is one of Quebec's major development issues" (MRCI 2000:12). With 7.5 million inhabitants, contemporary Quebec is "a sort of Francophone majority enclave in a North American universe with a population of more than 260 million" ([B. Gagne] 1995:1).

Ethnic and national categories are not only empirically vague, but also constantly changing. Accessing informants' ethnic origins (French, Algerian, etc.) was complicated; trying to figure out the ethnic origins of those with whom they have social links presented yet another challenge. Informants alternate constantly between social and administrative categories when describing their "friends," "family," and acquaintances. And even then, within social categories, there is a great deal of variation. When we say "he is Italian," "she is French," or "she is Moroccan," to what are we referring? Place of birth? Place of origin? What about mixed origins? Are they sons and daughters of immigrants or are they immigrants themselves? Categories are constantly changing. The identification process ([Gallissot] 2000) takes place within a social relationship. Choices are made, and the multiple referents from which one can choose identities (for oneself or others) are but a mirror of the flexible and diverse possibilities of each of our interlocutors (Gallissot 1987). Furthermore, these administrative and social categories are even more vague when considered from a migration perspective, that is, from the perspective of migration and mobility. Our way of considering migrants and their social links is often coloured by the migration-integration-settlement paradigm. Yet as the French anthropologist Tarrius (2001; 2000) argues, mobility brings on a different set of referents which link social and geographical places. The pre- and post-migration dichotomy is of limited relevance, for social links cross borders and have no definitive time frame. And even those with whom migrants have social links are themselves on the move, whether concretely or in imagination (including life projects that become plausible), via the mobility of family members, friends, and acquaintances. This study has been most revealing in this regard, inasmuch as a number of difficulties were encountered in accessing who is who in the informants' social environments.

To return to "symbolic inclusion" as a condition of belonging, a distinction should be made between the social dimensions of symbolic inclusion and the way in which people are accorded recognition and validation in their life surroundings. This last can be considered as much a question of individual economic and social insertion as of macrosocietal factors. French professionals like the interviewees in this study are considered highly desirable migrants by the government of Quebec, and as already mentioned, French cultural products enjoy considerable prestige in Montreal as is the case elsewhere. Moreover, this study suggests that attention must be paid to the cultural dimensions of symbolic inclusion. The "cultural proximity" between French people and Quebecois of French-Canadian origin is not as "natural" as one might imagine. Even though the sharing of a common
language considerably eases the settlement process, the apparent linguistic proximity is misleading. As we have seen, despite great linguistic similarity, accent becomes a boundary marker and often a criterion of exclusion. Indeed, there is reason to question the very idea of "cultural proximity" along with its corollary, "cultural distance," both of which suggest the existence of homogeneous sociocultural entities defined by particular "cultural traits" ([De Rudder] 1994; Simon 1999; Bare 2000).

This study addresses issues related to belonging and to social organization in the context of migration. How do individuals connect in a new social environment? How are spaces of sociability created? Who takes part in these different environments? These questions are a way of looking at the settlement process while taking into account its economic, social, and symbolic dimensions (Taboada-Leonetti 1994). Are these dimensions reflected in the trajectories of "good migrants" (that is, migrants from France) in Montreal who display, according to Canada and Quebec's immigrant selection criteria, optimal characteristics (i.e., age, education, language skills, socio-economic status)? Do they become full participants in the host society? Do they identify with the expression Quebecois?

In order to answer these questions, the focus is on social ties built or maintained by migrants from France in Montreal. Which individuals are considered close and which peripheral? Do patterns of sociability reflect in any way the migrant's sense of belonging to the host society? Studying these patterns is a useful approach to understanding cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1994, 1986; Portes 1995) and how such capital is used, mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion, and how social relations develop between migrants within their own national group, between migrants of different origins, and between migrants and non-migrants (see also LeBlanc, this issue). History plays an important role here since the construction of social links within a given society and the social receptivity (Piche 2001) of that same society are partly the result of past history between sending and receiving countries. From this perspective, my argument draws on historical aspects of the actual relationship between the two states, on middle-level structures (social ties and networks), and on individual strategies of belonging adopted by migrants from France of French origin and of Algerian, Moroccan, or Tunisian origin.

The following pages will briefly present the study and discuss migratory movements from France to Quebec. This is followed by a look at the general profile of the migrants under study. Identity and social belonging are discussed in relation to Canadian and French citizenship, and how sentiments are evoked by entities such as Montreal or Canada, and how they are related to settlement conditions and to the sense of belonging vis-à-vis the point of departure and other places. Migratory trajectories, reasons for emigration, and multiple belonging are all part of the same dynamic. Examining how migrants' social ties are patterned according to the ethnic or national origin of those in their personal networks reveals the lack of congruence between these patterns and the feelings of belonging to the society of residence. Particular attention is paid to the ambiguous identification process involved when informants assign ethnic status to individuals and define social categories in ethnic terms.

The study also focuses on accent as a marker and how it is sometimes a criterion of inclusion, while at other times it is invoked as a means of exclusion. In Quebec, language is of particular importance and involves a number of issues, such as the demographic (and political) weight of Francophones in Canada and the Quebec national project, as well as the meaning of citizenship in Quebec. Moreover, the relationship to the French language and the perception of accent are part of a
dynamic in which the colonial past (France-Quebec) still colours the contemporary relationship of French migrants with Quebec society. Lastly, it will be seen that having access to material, social, and even symbolic resources of the settlement environment does not prevent the mobilization of "other" identities among "good immigrants."

THE STUDY IN CONTEXT

The empirical data for this field research was collected over a two-year period in Montreal (1999-2001). Of the many dozens of French migrants contacted, multiple focussed interviews and observations were conducted with sixteen key informants (eight women and eight men). All arrived in Canada from France; eight being born in France of French descent and eight of North African origin (i.e. born in France or in the Maghreb of Tunisian, Algerian, or Moroccan parents). Data pertaining to work life, leisure, religion, family, friendships, and acquaintances were collected, and for each of these domains, social links were documented. Who did these migrants link up with? Who did they meet through work or through activities related to their children? How did each contact fit into their overall social environment? Were they close links, moderately close links, or distant links?

More than eight hundred social ties were documented, with each key informant being an entry into a distinct social world. The documented social ties were those viewed by the informants as "significant": friends, acquaintances, and family, be they in Montreal, the country of origin, or elsewhere. These links were categorized from nearest to farthest away, depending on the subjective proximity and importance of the tie. These links were analyzed in terms of the nature of the bond (family, friend, colleague), by the other individual's ethnic or national origin, their geographic location (country of origin, settlement, or other) and gender. The informants' life histories, pre- and post-migration, were documented. A number of themes emerge from the data, notably in regard to feelings of belonging to the place of origin, the place of residence, and elsewhere. These feelings of belonging are analyzed in relation to the patterns in migrants' personal networks as they emerge from this corpus.(2)

The approach to the research was informed by grounded theory, in which fieldwork and analysis occur simultaneously (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Constant back-and-forth movement occurred between the two, with the framework of the interviews evolving in line with the materials collected. The ethnographic approach (extended participant observation, informal interviews) was combined with grounded theory(3) and more structured interviews. A "snowball" sampling technique allowed the progressive construction of the sample. Moreover, comparative data (Renaud, et al. 2001; Verquin 2001, 2000) corroborated that our study population was representative of the general socio-demographic characteristics of migrants of French origin.

AN HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between France and Quebec is part of an historical one which still influences social interaction between locals and migrants of French origin, whether they have been in Montreal for some time or are newly arrived. This relationship is not a neutral one. For some migrants, it is positive or has little impact, for others, it is a heavy weight.

The migratory flows from France to Quebec (known historically as la Nouvelle-France) have been continuous over time without ever becoming a mass migration (Goizet 1993). Beginning in 1608, this migratory movement slowed for nearly a century (between 1760 and 1850) due to the British conquest that led to Confederation in 1867. A distinction already existed during the colonial period of colonization between those who came to stay - the habitants - and the administrators who were
just passing through. French immigration picked up slightly after 1850 and then, shortly after the turn of the century, was restricted until 1940 (Gagne and Chamberland 1999).(4) In the early twentieth century, however, the Francophone presence was alive and well in Montreal because of Quebec's very high fertility rate and inter-provincial migration (Goizet 1993).

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Migrants of French origin accounted for less than 9 percent of arrivals to Quebec over the past six decades, though their presence has grown since the 1970s. As a group they are important because France has been among the main immigrant source countries since 1968 (MRCI 2000a; GRES 1997). North African (Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian) immigration via France does not constitute a clear administrative category making it impossible to trace their contribution to Quebec immigration over time.(10)

THE MIGRANTS

Our key informants migrated from France and were of French, Algerian, Moroccan, or Tunisian origin (either born in France or born in the Maghreb and residing in France before migrating to Canada). They resided in Montreal for between six and thirty years, the median residence being ten years. All but two considered France their country of origin (the two exceptions did not have French citizenship), though six were born in the Maghreb. Twelve of the sixteen key informants lived with a partner of a different origin (see Meintel this issue) while generally maintaining religious homogamy (Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim). All the couples had children.

These are "good migrants" (Goode and Schneider 1994) as measured by Quebec immigration policy. They were French speaking and well-educated (with a median of 18 years of schooling, whereas it was 12.7 years for the general Canadian population in 1996). Moreover, all took part in the mainstream workforce. More than 60 percent worked in the professional sector, with the average annual family income being around $50,000.(11) The jobs held were in line with previous work in France (where applicable), education, and formal training, whether it was acquired in France or in Canada.

All sixteen had "spaces of sociability" made up of post-migration links established with both migrants (co-nationals and others) and non-migrants (post-migration links being numerically more important than pre-migration ties). There were also links with family members (ascendants, descendants, and laterals). Generally, these social links were active, varying in intensity depending on the individual, and the links changed over time.(12) There was, however, one constant; the place of employment was an important source of societal links as compared to the neighbourhood or the educational environment. Activities related to children also engendered links, all the more so for
those who were less professionally active, as was the case with two of the women. This illustrates the close relationship between economic inclusion and social inclusion (Fortin 2000). Moreover, the migrants we met cultivated largely intra-generational (with the exception of relatives) and intra-class links.

STRATEGIES OF BELONGING

Individuals draw on their identity resources as a function of the exigencies of a given situation (Cuche 2001; De Rudder, et al. 1990). Many authors (see Taboada-Leonetti 1991, 1989; Vasquez 1990) note that this selection is not altogether voluntary, nor is it random. Interpersonal relationships are often conditioned, at least in part, by the macro-sociological context. Over and above the particular interests of the moment, identity strategies take into account the societal context and historically constructed relations of power, real or perceived (Peressini 1991; Gallissot 1987).

Strategies of belonging (Taboada-Leonetti 2000) are often multiple and diverse depending on the context. These are closely related to identity strategies. For example, some informants seek social ties within the group of origin while others avoid them. Some retain a strong accent from the place of origin, while others incorporate many local expressions in everyday speech. Shared values, religion, and language and, with these, affiliations of various sorts, are mobilized (or not) in line with a variety of factors, as are identity strategies within precise social situations. Belonging, as we shall see, also involves place of residence, place of origin, and other localities, since the host country and country of origin are often not the only places that are meaningful for migrants.

The post-migratory process has traditionally been seen as linear, marked on the one hand by "adaptation" to a new environment through entering the workforce, finding housing, schooling for children, etc., and, on the other hand, by the progressive acculturation of the migrant that eventually leads to complete "integration" to the host society (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart 1995). Several theoretical developments and many empirical findings demonstrate the limits of this perspective. The paths followed in the post-migration period are multiple and call for new theoretical approaches (Meintel 1993). One such approach, that of French sociologist Taboada-Leonetti (1994), proposes the concept of "symbolic" integration, whereby the migrant is granted social recognition in the new milieu and feels a sense of belonging there, along with economic and social integration. On the other hand, as Billion (1999) observes, access to symbolic resources is to some degree a factor of the concrete material conditions that make it possible to mobilize them. In this respect, the data is analyzed with respect to how our French interviewees see issues of citizenship and belonging in the migration context. In the process, fundamental questions are raised: Who is Quebecois? Who can be Quebecois?

MIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Access to French citizenship (in the legal sense of the term) is a very complex process. Thus it is not surprising that Canadian citizenship means a great deal to those of Algerian and Moroccan origin. In some cases, French citizenship has never been acquired or, if it has, it has entailed a problematic and difficult decision in relationship to family, especially for those of Algerian origin.(13) The French colonial past and the battle for Algeria's independence in the early 1960s left scars among the Algerian-born population in France and their children, often French born. For them, acquiring French citizenship is not a simple process.

For my generation, the generation that went through the war, it was something shameful, akin to treason, to request a French passport. My brother has lived in France for thirty-eight years, and still today he does not want it. For many Algerians it was very, very difficult to assume French
nationality.

- Zourik, (14) computer specialist, born in Algeria, lived in France as an adult, resident of Montreal for seven years.

Many people my age [forty-six] did not acquire French citizenship because of conflicts with family members [Algerians living in France]... I acquired French citizenship, and when the Algerians [i.e., Algerian authorities] found out I was French. They did not want to renew my Algerian citizenship. I had to go before a court and show proof of my lineage in order to obtain my Algerian papers.

- Nadia, accountant, born in Algeria and raised in France, resident of Montreal for twenty-five years.

In the Algerian community in France, if you are assimilated and if you acquire French citizenship, you are rejected.

- Jida, administrative clerk, born in Algeria, lived in France as an adult, resident of Montreal for seven years.

For such informants, acquiring Canadian citizenship is their first experience of a sense of belonging to a country for themselves and their children. For those of French background, Canadian citizenship is more likely to be considered an administrative formality.

We find ourselves in a territory. This allows us to have a passport; it is an administrative matter. It allows us to have access to facilities and participate in political life through voting. This is what I call administrative. For me, it has no sentimental value... I have travelled a lot. I have dual citizenship. My wife, too; and my daughters have triple citizenship.

- Gerard, engineer, born in France, resident of Montreal for thirty years.

When informants like Gerard express a sense of belonging, it is phrased in terms of being in a social and physical environment. As such individuals see it, citizenship gives access to political rights and to a passport and includes the right to vote, to participate politically, and to take part in the future of the community (be it to Canada as a whole, Quebec, Montreal, or even to the wider neighbourhood). Citizenship also entails responsibilities such as the acknowledgement of a common code of conduct and respect for the natural environment. Issues pertaining to cultural or ethnic identity are not at issue and are seen as being altogether of another domain by both subgroups (i.e., those of French and those of French North African origin). Rather, Canadian citizenship is viewed as a token of liberty associated with tolerance, neutrality, security, protection, and, often, a certain pride.

Feelings of belonging are expressed with regard to Canada, Montreal, and Quebec, and these are shared with other affiliations - to France, Algeria, Morocco, and Lebanon. People do not really choose between one and another affiliation; it is instead a question of accretion (see Meintel, this issue). Although many speak of how much they like Quebec and say that they chose it because of the French language, they also emphasize a sense of belonging to Canada and its imagined double culture and French-English bilingualism (the term "imagined" is used because very few have much first-hand knowledge of the rest of Canada). Nonetheless, only two respondents have considered living elsewhere in Canada.

Montreal appears to be a link between a plural Canada and a monolithic Quebec. In fact, many say
that they chose Montreal as a host society, and not Quebec (or Canada). Its ethnic diversity and its openness to the rest of the world, while being a relatively small city, make it a choice destination.

In Montreal, when you listen to the radio or the television, you can feel an openness to others. Blacks, Arabs, Muslims, all have the right to exist, and everyone does as they wish.

- Malika, informant's daughter, born in Algeria, living in Paris and visiting Montreal on a regular basis for the last seven years.

I like Montreal. I like its cosmopolitanism, its heterogeneity, and its tranquility... I want to live the Montreal style of multiplicity. Anything can happen, things aren't already decided. Something new is going on there...

- Gilles, informant of French and Italian origin, born in Morocco, lived in France as an adult, resident of Montreal for eleven years.

Although rootedness in the locale of residence is certainly coloured by the achievement of professional satisfaction (Helly and Van Schendel 2001), other factors are also important, including the spouse's origins (immigrant or Quebecois), reasons for migration, political ideologies, personal encounters, and life crises (divorce, etc.). Without dwelling on reasons for emigration,(15) it is worth noting that most of the migrants we interviewed reported that they were brought to Canada (Quebec) by the search for a different social environment or because of a couple relationship with someone who (immigrant or non-immigrant) lived in Canada.(16) As for other affiliations, whether French, Berber, or Lebanese, they are the result of multiple migration paths. Indeed, common to all informants are non-linear migration paths.(17) Residence in several different places, even several countries, mixed parental origins, and mixed marriages are all very common in key informants' backgrounds. In fact, in this study population those with a homogeneous background are the exception.

SOCIAL TIES

A typology based on the criterion of the "ethnic origin" of those with whom social ties are active emerges from the hundreds of connections we documented. While somewhat reductive, this typology nevertheless reflects different migration paths as well as different types of social lives and normative differences. It also reveals certain aspects of class, gender, and ethnic relations.

Forming relationships with mostly exo-group individuals is the case of three of the sixteen key informants, all of French origin and married to Franco-Quebecois partners. Their social environments indicate a break with the past, one that is often initiated before migration. These ruptures are often family-related and appear to be related to the type of social links formed after migration, notably in the case of Monique, an expert in communications who was born in France. Monique left France to follow the man she then loved to Quebec, seizing the opportunity to "break loose" from family ties and change social environments. Her parents appear in the zone of "peripheral" ties. Today, she nourishes little regard for France or for family members living there. Monique has changed her surname and taken on local expressions and accents in order to discourage any association with France. She no longer has a French passport. Her life, work, friends, and acquaintances are predominantly of Quebecois origin (as is her spouse), and she identifies with the milieu of residence, although she acknowledges her past and its impact.

My mother was particularly dominant, physically and psychologically aggressive. For me, France is associated with repression. One night I had a nightmare: the French police took my Canadian
passport and tore it up. When I go back to France, there is a measure of pretentiousness that I cannot stand. It is heavy, and I am unable to bear it... still, I am happy being French, of having my life experiences. For me, it is a plus. I am happy to have two places that I belong to. It adds something rich.

- Monique, resident of Quebec for thirty years, first in Quebec city, then Montreal.

Eric, an engineer, has a similar profile, in that the ties he has with this mother and sister, both living in France, are not close.

I am not very family-oriented, for reasons that date way back. I take after my father, who was not very family-oriented himself. He left his own family when he was twenty and never saw them again. His family only learned by accident that he had died... I stay in touch with my mother. I call her and visit her, but it is like an obligation. My friends are more important than my family.

- Eric, born in France, resident of Montreal for ten years.

About half of the key informants from each of the two subgroups (French and French North-African) in the study formed ties mostly with people of different backgrounds (both endo-group and exo-group in origin). This "open" pattern of social links reflects the interviewees migration trajectories (very often non-linear) while revealing class relations (the links are strongly intra-class) and gender relations (women link mostly with women and men with men), as well as ethnic relations. In all eight cases, the marriages are mixed, with the spouses being Franco-Quebecois, British, Algerian, Lebanese, or Guinean. Nadia, an accountant whose social ties are highly diverse in terms of ethnic origin, talks about the feeling of freedom she has in Montreal in comparison with her pre-migration life, which was governed by strict social codes:

In France, the Maghrebin community exerts a lot of pressure on people, in contrast to what it is like in Montreal, where there is much more freedom, where there is not the same kind of censure. For example, in France, a Muslim woman who consumes alcohol is strongly criticized by the community, whereas here nobody cares... In France, the French discriminate against the Maghrebins. But what is even harder to deal with is the pressure exerted by the Maghrebin community itself-on its own members.

-Nadia, born in Algeria, raised in France, resident of Montreal for twenty-five years.

Five of the sixteen informants have a personal network comprised of social relationships built mainly within ego's own group of origin (endo-group), reflecting personal social environments in which social and cultural prescriptions from the milieu of origin remain highly salient. These informants are of Moroccan and Algerian origin (2), French-North African (1), and French (2). Jida, an informant born in Algeria, has many reservations with regard to her daughter, who is thinking of marrying a Frenchman. Though the young man is from a respectable, well-to-do family, Jida is upset that her daughter might marry a non-Algerian (and non-Muslim). How will her family in Algeria and her relatives living in France react? Should our daughter marry a non-Algerian? Although Jida's social network is almost exclusively Algerian, her spouse (Algerian) and their children have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada and to Montreal.

I am convinced about wanting to remain in Canada, by the number of years I have spent here, by the environment of social relations, by the work milieu; I feel integrated and feel that people accept me.
The conditions that determine whether a migrant develops a sense of belonging to the host society are so varied as to resist generalization. Such sentiments are conditioned by many circumstances, including, to be sure, the generally favourable immigration policies toward French-speaking migrants in Quebec, entry into the mainstream labour market, and participation in the wider society beyond the group of origin, as well as the "social receptiveness" of the host milieu. Moreover, the motives for migration and the expectations linked to the migration project also play a role, as do life-cycle events. As we have seen the relationship with the host society seems to be affected by the tenor of the relationship with family members left behind. The more antagonism there is, the greater the sense of distance from the country of origin and the greater the emotional investment in the new society.

One clear tendency did emerge, however: the non-convergence of the social ties (be they predominantly endo- or exo-group) with feelings of belonging. Consider, for example, the case of Jida mentioned earlier, whose ties are predominantly endo-group. These intra-group relations do not preclude a strong feeling of belonging to Montreal. Moreover, mixed ties (endo-group and exo-group) with regard to origins do not preclude a feeling of belonging to the country of origin. A caveat is necessary, however, with regard to migrants of French North African and North African origin. Whether or not they have good relations with the family of origin, these informants tend to be deeply rooted in Montreal and also feel a sense of belonging to Canada and/or Quebec. This commitment to the society of residence results from feeling included in the host milieu and the sense of exclusion (real or perceived) on the part of France. Despite the events of September 11, 2001 and the ensuing stereotype equating terrorism with Arab identity (cf. Renaud, et al. 2002), the Maghrebin individuals we met mostly see their future in Montreal and Quebec, despite the fact that they have been the targets of a "witch hunt" in North America (Antonius 2002).

WHO'S WHO?

This brings up the issue of the differences between administrative categories such as "French" or "Canadian" and the social categories used by our informants. Consider, for example, Gilles, a Moroccan-born scientist whose parents were also born in Morocco but are of Italian origin. Gilles' mother tongue is Italian, thought he lived in Morocco for the first eighteen years of his life. He studied there in French and later in France; since then Gilles has worked in France, Algeria, and now in Montreal. He has French and Canadian citizenship. What about his children? Their mother is also a French citizen, but has lived most of her life in Tunisia and then in Algeria. Both her parents, like their ancestors going back four generations, have also lived in Tunisia and are considered French. This may not be a scenario that immediately comes to mind when we conceptualize a French citizen.

Ethnic and national categories are not only empirically vague, but also constantly changing. Accessing informants' ethnic origins (French, Algerian, etc.) was complicated; trying to figure out the ethnic origins of those with whom they have social links presented yet another challenge. Informants alternate constantly between social and administrative categories when describing their "friends," "family," and acquaintances. And even then, within social categories, there is a great deal of variation. When we say "he is Italian," "she is French," or "she is Moroccan," to what are we referring? Place of birth? Place of origin? What about mixed origins? Are they sons and daughters of immigrants or are they immigrants themselves? Categories are constantly changing. The identification process (Gallissot 2000) takes place within a social relationship. Choices are made, and the multiple referents from which one can choose identities (for oneself or others) are but a mirror of the flexible and diverse possibilities of each of our interlocutors (Gallissot 1987). Furthermore, these administrative and social categories are even more vague when considered from a
migration perspective, that is, from the perspective of migration and mobility. Our way of considering migrants and their social links is often coloured by the migration-integration-settlement paradigm. Yet as the French anthropologist Tarrius (2001; 2000) argues, mobility brings on a different set of referents which link social and geographical places. The pre- and post-migration dichotomy is of limited relevance, for social links cross borders and have no definitive time frame. And even those with whom migrants have social links are themselves on the move, whether concretely or in imagination (including life projects that become plausible), via the mobility of family members, friends, and acquaintances. This study has been most revealing in this regard, inasmuch as a number of difficulties were encountered in accessing who is who in the informants' social environments.

An ambiguous identification process is at work when informants assign social categories, be it for describing their personal links or for defining their own identity in ethnic terms. In fact, identity boundaries are constantly moving (Barth 1969) as they are played out in relation to the "Other." Monique (of French origin) explains: "It is the person with whom I am speaking who decides who I am. In Quebec, I am French. In France, I am Canadian. I sometimes feel like a ping-pong ball - but never at a loss for anything." According to Nadia, mentioned earlier, she is Algerian in her everyday encounters in France. For the French administration, she is French. When in the United States, she is Canadian.

Within these identity possibilities (which may at times seem like an "identity lottery"), there is one recurrent theme: no one feels like a true Quebecois, although some see themselves as Quebecois along with another identity. Above all, they will never be "pure wool" (pure laine, as per the Quebecois expression), because, they say, they do not share the same roots. Lionel, a filmmaker of French and Tunisian origin, born in France and raised partly in France, partly in Algeria, explains: "I did not grow up here, did not play hockey, do not share the history. But I am proud to be here, to be Canadian" (Lionel has been living in Montreal for nineteen years). In this case, citizenship is a way of living a common belonging that is beyond shared cultural and family roots.

Pierre, an engineer, explained it this way:

I will always be asked where I come from. But I am here, and have been for twenty years. I will never be a Quebecois. I am a hybrid and know the local codes. If I wind up in Chicoutimi, apart from my accent, I can make them laugh...

Indeed, who is Quebecois? Paule, a former journalist born in France who has been living in Montreal for ten years, says that, notwithstanding the fact that public discourse presents "Quebecois" as a multiple, day-to-day concept, life experience adds another signification to the word. As she puts it:

If you are not pure laine, you can't be Quebecois. Even if you live in the same territory, some things can't be shared. Presenting Quebec society as being divided into three categories - that is, Francophones, Anglophones, and Allophones - provides a false picture, in that Francophones are basically pure laine.

It is intriguing that when discussing their social links, informants tend to use the category "Quebecois" in the same way. For example, they identify people as being of French, Italian, or Greek origin even if they are Quebec-born. In referring to a Quebecois, they mean the person is of Quebecois ancestry and French-speaking. If, for example, they refer to an English-speaking individual, that person is referred to as a Canadian or an Anglophone, even if his or her family has been living in Montreal for generations. Popular categories appear quite distant from the "inclusive"
Quebecois category that has figured in government discourse for many years now, even by those immigrants who would seem to be the most likely to "blend" into Quebec society.

**THE STRENGTH OF A LOCAL ACCENT**

The France-Quebec relationship is complex. It is invested with an historical dimension, and in the day-to-day, is marked by both proximity and distance. Distance is not always the case but remains virtual, to be "activated" in given circumstances. The relationship to the French language and accent appears to crystallize this dynamic. According to one Montreal university professor from France,(18) "The level of French in the classroom is deplorable. Quebec and Arab students are by far the worst in French."

In Quebec, it is easy to forget that language acquisition is a social process, since linguistic categories such as "Francophone" and "Anglophone" are constantly confused with ethnic ones (Meintel and Fortin 2001). By the same token, being French and living side by side with "locals" on a day-to-day basis does not make one a local. In fact, Aurelie, a secretary born in France, said she felt like more of a foreigner here (in Montreal) than she had when she was living in Norway. Yet she appears to have lived much more among French migrants in Norway than she does in Montreal.

In terms of accent and pronunciation, many of the French immigrants we encountered describe themselves as an "audible minority." In Quebec, a distinction is often made between "local Francophones" and others. One can be, for instance, of Vietnamese or Haitian ancestry and speak with a local accent. This accent can, in certain contexts, be more a means of inclusion rather than a phenotypic similarity. In fact, in Quebec, language has a particular importance in establishing boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

The prestige enjoyed by France plays a role in how French immigrants experience Quebec. French gastronomy (food and wine, as well as restaurants, bistros, and bakeries) and French artistic expression (fashion design, music, literature, theatre) are held in high esteem; indeed, some chic boutiques are known to have a certain preference for hiring sales personnel with a metropolitan French accent. However, language is a major political and social issue in the Quebec context, such that language (including accent) has special importance as a social "marker."

Some French migrants cultivate their accent of origin as a criterion of distinction, whereas others leave it behind quite willingly or do not make a particular effort to keep or lose it. Those who cultivate it are likely to speak in terms of an opposition between "real French" and the local French, whereas local Francophones often make a distinction between native-born Francophones and Francophones from elsewhere. Either way, accent is a perceptible identity marker that maintains the boundary between "Us" and the "Other."

The importance of accent as a marker and how it influences social classification became clear at a social gathering where I was present. Fifteen women had met for an evening gathering in a public place, all of them from France except the observer. Most had met on several occasions previously and were on a first name basis. A newcomer to the group conversed with me and at one point realized that I was not French. "I didn't know," she said, "You don't have an accent." With that, the link was broken. The informal "tu" gave way to "vous," and our physical closeness came to an end as she moved to a group farther away.

At the same time, many of our informants tell of how a "French" accent maintains a boundary between locals and others.
Even after several years, we are still a "bloody French" (maudit Francais) person. There are audible minorities as well as visible minorities. As soon as I open my mouth, I see a look in the other person's eyes. If he is Quebecois, he says to himself that I am French...

- Paule, former journalist, born in France, resident of Montreal for ten years. She has kept a French accent.

When the French accent is retained, it becomes a criterion of distinction in many situations. It should be noted, however, that not everyone makes the same choice. Rather, language behaviour varies from one person to another. In some cases, changing one's accent is a choice made in order to blend into the new environment; in others, deliberately keeping an accent contributes to the maintenance of "Us/Them" boundaries. When it is kept, this accent has a "symbolic" character, serving as a marker of belonging to a given group.

Sometimes you hear the accent and you are surprised. They still talk like that even though they have been here for ten or twenty years. It seems to me that your vocabulary can change... It is perhaps deliberate. I don't know.

- Eric, industrial engineer of French origin, resident of Montreal for ten years. He has developed a local accent.

IDENTITY AND BELONGING STRATEGIES FOR MIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

A surprising pattern emerged from the data regarding accent, social ties (and the spaces of sociability they constitute), and, when relevant, choice of schools for children. Length of residence in the host country or in Montreal has no bearing on these results. One person might live in Montreal for twenty years and retain a strong accent from the country of origin while another who has lived in the city for half that time might have taken on a local accent.(19)

The six of our sixteen informants who have a local or unnoticeable accent are of French origin. All but one live with a spouse born in Quebec. Philippe is now married to a woman from France, but his first wife was from Quebec. By way of comparison, seven of the ten who retain a strong accent from the place of origin (usually a French urban metropolitan accent) are married to someone from France or educated in French schools in one of the North African countries. As for the other three, two have spouses who do not speak French and one is not married.

The choice of children's school is charged with meaning and has implications far beyond strictly academic considerations. Most of those who retain a strong accent send their children to a private French school.(20) This choice is presented by informants as a way of assuring that their children speak "proper French," that they acquire a "good" education and acquire "French values," thereby ensuring a lasting "cultural closeness" between parents and children. Some parents say that they choose the French system because it is present elsewhere in the world, and if they have to migrate again, their children will be able to attend a similar school. All who have adopted a local or unnoticeable accent have chosen to send their children to public school.

It was through many field observations that the link between accent, privileged social ties, and school choice emerged. During a social gathering at which most of those present were French-born, the conversation turned to this issue. A woman whose husband is also French said that she had chosen a "pluralist" school. A little earlier in the conversation she had said that she liked this school because it was small and, above all, the children do not adopt "the accent" (i.e., the local accent). She said she was very happy to have found a pluriethnic setting where everyone speaks properly.
For some of the migrant parents, the transmission of collective memory is a major issue and involves strategies such as repeated family visits to the country of origin, deliberate retention of a French accent, and schooling under the French system for the children. For others, family socialization suffices, and memory, as such, does not seem to be an issue. One cannot, on the basis of this study, draw any inferences between the importance assigned to this transmission and the documented feelings of belonging. Gilles (born in Morocco of Franco-Italian origin) does not like France, though he assigns considerable importance to French "culture." He feels he belongs in Montreal: his life is here. His social ties are predominantly with French-born individuals. Paule (of French origin) likes France and expresses the need to transmit a collective memory to her children. She is also attached to Canada and insists on the right to plural affiliations. She assigns considerable importance to the transmission of a French identity, and her social milieu is a plural one (her husband is Lebanese). Half of her important social links are with individuals of French origin, the others being Lebanese, Canadian (French and British), and immigrant (varied) origin. Jida has an ambivalent relationship with France. She feels rejected by France because she is Algerian, but is proud of her French education. At the same time, she values her identity as Algerian and insists on transmitting it to her children. Feelings of belonging to Canada as a country of adoption in all these cases is associated with generally endo-group spaces of sociability. For Michel (a French engineer who has an undefined accent), French memory is not an issue. His children are here, as well as all his important personal referents. When he thinks about France, the memory that matters for him is that of his family of origin, rather than that of any wider collectivity.

The mobilization of symbolic resources, along with the affirmation of the markers of difference that are considered important (Oriol 1989:121), takes on meaning in a given social context. Generally speaking, such mobilization of identity and the symbolic resources that go with it are discussed in terms of an asymmetrical relationship between migrants and hosts (Costa-Lascoux, et al. 2000; De Rudder 1993; Oriol 1979). However, this study has revealed that distinct identities and their associated symbolic resources can also be mobilized in the context of a relationship of equality. Migrants of French origin are part of the majority inasmuch as they have relatively unimpeded access to material resources and normative power (see Guillaumin 1972). The informants in this study have not had to adopt collective strategies to conquer a social status which, symbolically at least, is already acquired.

Distancing strategies (often referred to in the literature on immigrant minorities as "ghettoizing" or "withdrawal") employed by some of the informants are not intended to create social mobility for the group, because this mobility is already present. Rather, the "identity mobilization" here operates according to a different logic than is typically attributed to migrants.

CONCLUSION

Identity phenomena and markers involve complex issues. Social organization in migration contexts, such as that presented here, reveals, first, that migrants often have multiple affiliations and that they are not conditioned solely by the ethnic origins of those in their close social environment. That is, it is possible to feel that one belongs to the host society even while functioning mainly within an environment of sociability comprised of individuals of the same origin. Feelings of belonging to one or more social collectivities do not correspond to a particular type of personal social network.(21) More generally, feelings of belonging to the milieu of residence are conditioned not only by place of origin, but also by an individual's migration pathways and their reasons for emigrating. We have found that settlement trajectories are quite diverse, as are migration histories. Life cycle events, spouse's origin, access to employment, and general social receptivity are all factors that contribute to a feeling of belonging and help shape the spaces of sociability created and/or maintained in a migration context.
Second, emphasizing an ethnic identity based on the place of origin (French, in this case) and the construction of a personal social environment made up exclusively of links with persons of the same origin are not always an expression of minority social status, but can also be found among migrants who have claims to social majority status. (22)

To return to "symbolic inclusion" as a condition of belonging, a distinction should be made between the social dimensions of symbolic inclusion and the way in which people are accorded recognition and validation in their life surroundings. This last can be considered as much a question of individual economic and social insertion as of macrosocietal factors. French professionals like the interviewees in this study are considered highly desirable migrants by the government of Quebec, and as already mentioned, French cultural products enjoy considerable prestige in Montreal as is the case elsewhere. Moreover, this study suggests that attention must be paid to the cultural dimensions of symbolic inclusion. The "cultural proximity" between French people and Quebecois of French-Canadian origin is not as "natural" as one might imagine. Even though the sharing of a common language considerably eases the settlement process, the apparent linguistic proximity is misleading. As we have seen, despite great linguistic similarity, accent becomes a boundary marker and often a criterion of exclusion. Indeed, there is reason to question the very idea of "cultural proximity" along with its corollary, "cultural distance," both of which suggest the existence of homogeneous sociocultural entities defined by particular "cultural traits" (De Rudder 1994; Simon 1999; Bare 2000).

The expression "Quebecois" remains associated with Franco-Quebecois (or Quebecois of French ancestry) and refers to roots that, as they see it, immigrants cannot share. One can live, work, study, and take part in local life without feeling "a part of" the society. Moreover, acquiring citizenship, an easier matter in Canada than in most countries, does not necessarily imply a sense of belonging. Being able to vote is not everything. Yet, as one man put it: "If I were called to war, I would be in the Canadian army."

Even when migrants have access to the higher echelons of the social hierarchy in the host society, they can experience symbolic exclusion. Some migrants may find this difficult, others not at all, and still others may themselves exclude those not of the same origin. Sharing the same mother tongue does not eliminate the possibility of an exclusion-inclusion dynamic, it only makes it less obvious.

Has the monolithic national identity - one land, one people, one culture - ever existed? Indeed, the production of cultural difference arises in spaces criss-crossed by economic and political inequalities (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). But even when, as in this study, there is economic equality as well as social inclusion and symbolic capital, cultural difference and group boundaries can emerge. When informants relate to Quebec culture, their references change depending on who they are with and where they are. The same applies to their relationship with French culture. Speaking of his cultural background, an informant says: "The culture I inherited as a child is surely different from the one inherited by most children here. In fact, it may be different from French culture because there is not one French culture but 36 thousand variations."

While there is a strong political will to build an inclusive Quebec, the notion of the "real" Quebecois as a "pure laine" (Francophone of Quebecois ancestry) continues to operate in a cosmopolitan city like Montreal, where 27.6 percent of the population is of immigrant origin. (23) The children of immigrants have been attending French schools for some twenty-five years now. These new generations are likely to bring about change that will contribute to the goal of constructing a more effective pluralism in Quebec society (see Lamarre, et al. this issue, on the linguistic diversity of young Montrealers). However, equal access to the social, economic, and symbolic resources of the majority does not entail cultural homogeneity. Indeed, it is interesting to note how a strong feeling of belonging to a settlement environment can exist in individuals who have predominantly endo-
group spaces of sociability. In this perspective, patterns of sociability do not always have a clear association with feelings of belonging.

If full belonging to the host society requires shared roots, then even social, economic, and symbolic inclusion will not ensure it. This study showed that very few people can relate to a citizenship based on common historical roots (see Lapeyronnie, et al. 1990, in Castles 1998) though it can be argued that there are grounds for a political, social (Gallisso 2000), or practical citizenship (Daum 1997) among these migrants. Informants hold feelings of belonging toward more than one collectivity. Full access to economic, social, and symbolic resources (in terms of generalized participation in the host society) are the key to feelings of belonging, much more so than any alleged cultural proximity. Thinking about citizenship and more widely of settlement processes in a cosmopolitan world means taking into account the existence of these multiple orientations and affiliations for a growing part of the population.

NOTES

21. The expression "collective memory" is used here to mean the memory of a social group (as proposed by Halbwachs, cited in Namer 1993: 111). See Grosser 1996: 503. Collective memory does not correspond to individual remembrance nor to something personally experienced, but rather to something that is transmitted by the family, school, and the media.

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(1) "The image of the good migrant rests on two sets of assumptions: the background experience of
newcomers in their country of origin, and the mechanisms for incorporation in the United States"
(Goode and Schneider 1994: 15).

(2) For a more detailed description of the methodological approach used and research conclusions,
see Fortin (2002).

(3) Grounded theory seeks above all "to develop a theory which, though grounded in empirical
reality, is not a description; empirical cases are not considered on their own, but as instances of the
observed social phenomenon" (Laperriere 1997: 333).

(4) Until 1914, Canadian immigration policy favoured those who were "likely to work the land."
Following the First World War, this preference was extended to British and American citizens, and
in 1948 to the French in the wake of demands by Francophone groups (Jones 1986; Penisson
1986). A passport was no longer necessary, and a simple identity card permitted immigrants from
these countries to enter Canada (Jones 1986). However, the two World Wars and the inter-war
economic recession led to a general decline in emigration-immigration (Simmons 1999).

(5) In 1968, for example, immigration from Europe accounted for more than 60 percent of all
immigration to Quebec (nearly 22,000 immigrants out of a total of more than 35,000) (GRES 1997),
whereas in 1989 Europeans accounted for only 21 percent of new arrivals, and developing countries
for nearly 70 percent. This diversification was the result of an important change across Canada,
namely, the points system (1967) used to admit immigrants as a function of their adaptability, as
measured by education, professional qualifications, and language skills (also see Simmons 1999).

(6) This occurs within limits laid out by the federal government. Quebec is authorized to determine
its own annual immigration objectives to the limit of a percentage of the federal government's
immigration objectives, corresponding to Quebec's demographic weight, with a 5 percent surplus
allowance. The selection of immigrants destined for Quebec is a matter of joint (Quebec-Canada)
jurisdiction, with Quebec having the sole responsibility for creating and administering settlement
programs (with support from the federal government) (Simmons 1999). This selection process concerns the independent immigrant category. In 1979, Quebec developed its own selection grid (similar to the one described above) (Gagne and Chamberland 1999).

(7) Until then, for various reasons (the undeniable attraction of the English language in North America as well as the exclusion of people of other religions by the Catholic Church, and, therefore, by French teaching establishments), migrants had been largely drawn into Anglophone institutions (Meintel 1998, 1999).

(8) It should be noted that, in official discourse, one often finds the assumption that the French language and Quebec's cultural identity are almost equivalent. This premise is also found in Goizet, "French immigrants are culturally close to the host society. They have the same language and a shared history with Quebecers" (1993: 5).

(9) In 1996, for example, 81 percent of Quebec's population had French as their first language (whereas it is 68 percent for metropolitan Montreal and 53 percent for the Island of Montreal). For the same year, French was the working language of 87 percent of Quebec's population, 78 percent of metropolitan Montreal, and 71 percent for the island of Montreal (see also Piche, this issue).

(10) Data assembled by Statistics Canada, for example, are based on place of birth, and those used by Goizet (1993) refer to French people born in France and French ancestry, which excludes those who are French by naturalization. It was not until 1995 that France began to collect information on the birthplace of parents.

(11) Eight families had an annual income between $35,000 and $60,000, and eight families from $60,000 to over $80,000.

(12) This issue is discussed elsewhere (Fortin, Les espaces de sociabilite en contexte migratoire, forthcoming).

(13) Data produced by the Institut national de la statistique et des etudes economiques (INSEE), based on the 1999 census, provide a somewhat confusing reading of the Maghreb presence in France. Out of a population of 59.5 million, there are apparently 1.2 people who were born in Algeria, 13 percent of whom have acquired French nationality (by naturalization, marriage, declaration, or by coming of age), 33 percent are "foreigners" residing in France, and 54 percent are French citizens by birth. There are 709,500 Moroccan-born individuals living in France, of whom 19 percent have acquired French citizenship and 27 percent are French by birth, the remaining 55 percent being classed as foreigners. Lastly, of 340,700 individuals who were born in Tunisia, 24 percent have acquired French citizenship, 41 percent are French by birth, and 25 percent are foreigners. *Source: www.recensement.insee.fr, Table: IMG2 - Place of birth abroad by nationality (Lieux de naissance a l'etranger selon la nationalite).

(14) All names are pseudonyms.

(15) See Fortin, 2002; Why do They Leave? The Decision to Migrate, forthcoming.

(16) These reasons are not exclusive. A person might evoke a sentimental relationship as being the main reason for leaving France and also mention discriminatory practices there that he or she wanted to avoid.
(17) All informants had already left their place of birth and the locality where they had lived with their parents before arriving in Canada. Some left home to attend university or college in another town (or country), and some followed professional opportunities or personnel quests to other localities before coming to Canada.

(18) His spouse is a Canadian of British origin, and their children attend a French college, a private school in the mould of the French model and acknowledged as such by France.

(19) The term "local accent" refers to the incorporation of local expressions and/or pronunciation similar to those generally used by non-migrants.

(20) In Montreal there are a number of private schools that, like public schools, comply with the criteria established by the Quebec ministere de l'Education. The French private schools offer a French curriculum supplemented by local specialties and are part of a wider network of French schools across the world.

(21) This distinction is made by Gallissot (1987), who identifies two kinds of identification: that which occurs within the framework of immediate social relations and that which derives from more general community referents.

(22) For a more extensive discussion of the majority-minority relation, see Fortin (2002).

(23) Data from the 2001 Canadian census (Source:http://www12.statcan.ca/Profil01/Details/details1pop2).

(24) These different types of citizenship bring out the distinction between citizenship as a matter of taking on a national identity based on a shared cultural and historical patrimony, and citizenship as rooted in social practice, including participation in the society of residence.