Jérémy Mandin
IMMRC/CEDEM
Jeremy.mandin@kuleuven.be

Pathways of integration of young French of Maghrebi background in Montreal

Abstract:

In the French public debate, the French migrant is mainly described through the image of a white, middle class expat. This makes the diversity of the population who decides to leave France for extra-European destinations invisible. But what about the effect of such diversity on the integration process abroad? This chapter focuses on the integration process of young French of Maghrebi origin who moved to the city of Montreal (Canada). Building on the concept of "pathway" of integration, the chapter unfold both the structural dynamics shaping the opportunity for durable integration and the strategies that are carved out by individual Maghrebi French migrants to make Montreal home. Through the presentation of three selected cases, the chapter highlights the diversity of the pathways of integration followed in Montreal, in particular regarding the identification and the interactions with the French population in the city.[i]

Bio:

Jérémy Mandin is a PhD candidate in anthropology and in social sciences. He is a researcher at the Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and at the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (University of Liège). His research interests include contemporary migration practices of European citizens, integration processes, dynamics of social cohesion in urban spaces, and European far-rights movements. His most recent publications are: " When Belgians Are the Migrants: An Overview of Narratives, Public Policies and Actors Framing the Question of Emigration in Belgium" published in A. Weinar (ed.), *Emigration and Diaspora Policies in the Age of Mobility*, Springer, 2017 (DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-56342-8) and "(Re)producing others: diversity and discrimination in the discourse of Northern

League" written with Alessandro Mazzola and published in J. Jamin (ed.), *L'extrême droite en Europe*, Bruylant, 2016 (ISBN 9782802753629).

In France, migration and integration are hot political topics which are often at the forefront of public debates. These debates, however, remain quasi-exclusively focused on the immigration and integration of non-European people in France. In comparison, public discussions about the emigration of French citizens and their integration abroad remains virtually inexistent. When the migration of French citizens is addressed, it is predominantly about highly skilled "expats" whose international mobility is informed by individual career choices and entrepreneurial inclinations. These dominant representations of contemporary French emigration tend to leave aside the structural factors that contribute to the emergence of emigration projects. They also leave aside the diversity of profiles that exist among migrants. In particular, the emigration practices of the French minorities remain under-discussed. This is the case, for example, for the children of Maghrebi immigrants born and raised in France and this, despite the fact that beyond the long-lasting effects of the economic downturn of 2008 and the resulting austerity policies on the lives of many French people, they are overexposed to unemployment and precarious job situations (Beauchemin et al. 2016). Moreover, despite the *de facto* multicultural dimension of European cities inherited from long histories of immigration and sometimes a colonial past, many dominant public figures regularly describe multiculturalism as a "failure" (Lentin and Titley, 2011). The children of Maghrebi immigrants, despite being born and raised in France, continue to suffer from discrimination on the job market (DARES, 2016) and to be targeted by racist and identitarian discourses, now largely reframed as discourses against Islam (Fellag, 2014; Fernando, 2014).

Recently, organizations such as the Chamber of Trade and Industry of Paris (Biacabe and Robert, 2014) and the French independent organization for the defence of rights "le Défenseur des Droits" (2016) have published reports suggesting that phenomena of discrimination – in particular in the job market – do encourage some people to develop emigration aspirations. Despite this, in the academic literature, the international mobility of young Europeans of migrant origin continues to be mainly addressed through the perspective of "return migration". This incidentally reproduces the association of the children of immigrants with specific spacio-

temporal configurations, namely, the country of origin of their parents (Çağlar, 2016). Little is known therefore about the international mobility of French citizens of migrant origin to other destinations. Little is known also about the integration of French citizens (of migrant origins or not) abroad. Keeping in mind some of the structural reasons for their emigration, the chapter's key focus is on the integration process in the country of destination. How is this international mobility experienced? How do they incorporate abroad? And how are French and Maghrebi identity and social positionality renegotiated during the integration process?

By focusing on the case of young French citizens of Maghrebi origin who left France to go to Montreal, in the Canadian province of Quebec, this chapter will shed light on these questions. It is based on the result of multi-sited ethnographic research conducted from February 2015 to June 2017 in various European countries and in Montreal. The aim of the research was to explore the international mobility of European Maghrebi populations in non-European cities such as Montreal. It is based on interviews conducted with European citizens of Maghrebi background both in the European countries of origin and in Montreal. Thirty-four French citizens of Maghrebi background living in Montreal were interviewed during the research. The interviews included an important biographic dimension in order to unfold the different dynamics at play during the migration process. In a limited number of cases, people were interviewed several times during the research period. The fieldwork also involved episodes of participant observation (for instance during an emigration information session in France and social events in Montreal) in order to have a good understanding of the contextual dynamics of integration in Montreal.

After the introduction of the conceptual framework, the first part of this chapter describes the institutional context within which my interviewees' settlement takes place. One of the central dimensions of this context is arguably that the Quebec immigration policy facilitates the incorporation of immigrants of a specific profile. It also provides fast-track access to permanent residence status for immigrants who have already lived in the province as temporary migrants. The context in which the Maghrebi French settle is also influenced by the situation of Montreal as what I would call an aspiring global city that tries to attract what institutions working at the international promotion of the city call "strategic talents". Montreal is also characterized by a great diversity of populations in terms of ethnic origin, migrant background, nationality and class. The presence of both French and Maghrebi populations in the city also resulted in the development of specific institutions and networks potentially useful for the integration of the Maghrebi French. In the second part of the chapter, the focus lies on how French citizens with Maghrebi background navigate the context of Montreal and how they create networks to settle in the city. I have selected three cases to illustrate this process. My findings show a significant variety of pathways of incorporation that the Maghrebi French in Montreal carve out. Interestingly, these types of integration generate many forms of re-negotiation of my Maghrebi

French contacts' identity and their social position in terms of ethnicity or class. Finally, given this variety of pathways encountered in Montreal, the chapter proposes to understand the process of carving out one's integration pathway as a process of sedimentation.

Toward an analysis of contextualised pathways of integration

This chapter focuses on how immigrants navigate and incorporate (or not) into the Montreal society. The approach of integration used in this chapter builds on the concept of "pathways of incorporation" as proposed by Glick Schiller, et al. (2006). The authors define incorporation as follows:

> Incorporation can be defined as the processes of building or maintaining networks of social relations through which an individual or an organized group of individuals becomes linked to an institution recognized by one or more nation-states. (Glick Schiller et al. 2006)

My interest here is not about trying to draw a distinction between "incorporation" and "integration." I am more interested in the concepts of "pathways" – or "modes" – developed by these authors. "Modes of incorporation" refer to the different institutional domains and social fields that a migrant can engage in to facilitate incorporation. Ethnic organizations, religious groups, big and small businesses, and neighbourhoods are examples of the institutions that can play an important role in facilitating one's integration into a society.

Within these institutional and social frameworks, immigrants can develop different pathways of incorporation, building upon different dimensions of their social position such as ethnicity, class, religious beliefs, gender, etc. (Glick Schiller, et al. 2006). Ethnic pathways of integration may rely on the activation of a network built on the claim of a common origin. Non-ethnic pathways of integration are just as possible, and are based on other factors, such as class, religion or gender.

From this perspective, the concept of a "pathway" allows us to go beyond the traditional representation of ethnic groups and networks as the natural environment for migrant settlements in a given society. It invites us to move our empirical focus away from the analysis of reified groups, to look instead at the way immigrants navigate within a society and happen to interact, connect and bond (or fail to do so) with specific populations, thus producing different types of networks or groups. Put another way, it invites us to move from the reifying tendency of "groupism" to the analysis of "group-making" practices (Brubaker, 2002).

The point of entry of the study of incorporation "are individual migrants, the networks they form, and the social fields – on a local, national or transnational level – created by their networks." (Glick Schiller et al. 2006, 614). This approach to integration "from below" allows us to critically address the specific representations that are often linked with the concept of integration (Rytter, 2018) by observing the many ways through which individuals effectively insert themselves within a society. However, even if the focus on modes of incorporation looks at the pathways individual migrants take, it is deeply connected with a study of localities and the question of how local reality shapes the way migrants settle and create networks. In this sense, the study of pathways of integration is less about the study of individual motivations than it is the study of strategies developed by individuals within a structurally bounded field of opportunities (Glick Schiller et al. 2006).

Desired immigrants: French citizens of Maghrebi background in Montreal

In order to contextualise and understand the diversity of pathways of incorporation that are used by French individuals with Maghrebi background in Montreal, it is important to describe the context within which these pathways are carved out, particularly to address the forms of migration and the ideas of integration that are promoted by national and local institutions.

Immigration to Quebec: The unequal distribution of the opportunities for durable settlement

A first element to acknowledge in order to describe the context within which pathways of integration are carved out is the institutional structures that regulate immigration and integration in the province of Quebec. Immigration policies implemented by the province contribute to shape the opportunities for migrants to settle durably. They also convey specific representations of what integration is. From this perspective, it has an impact on the possibilities available for settlement and integration.

For roughly 40 years, the Canadian province of Quebec has defined its own selection criteria of immigrants, a prerogative that was previously limited to the Federal government. The acquisition of this power was instrumental in Quebec's nationalist agenda to secure and expand its cultural and linguistic distinctiveness from anglophone Canada by favouring the selection of French-speaking immigrants. The selection policy of Quebec has undergone significant fluctuations between two imperatives: on the one hand, the protection of Quebec cultural distinctiveness through the selection of French-speaking immigrants, even those with low levels of education and professional skills; on the other hand, the expansion of the Quebec economy

through the selection of skilled workers, including those outside of French-speaking countries (Houle, 2014).

Quebec has developed various immigration programs throughout the years. The programs most used by the people I met in Montreal can be roughly divided into two categories. The first category includes the permanent workers program which eventually leads to permanent residence status. This program is based on the selection of workers through a point system and is sanctioned by the attribution of a permanent residence visa for candidates who meet the required point limit. At the time of my fieldwork, the points were distributed across different categories: Education and training, professional experience, age, linguistic skills in French and English, links with Quebec (through previous stays and/or family relatives living in the region), as well a presence or absence of a signed job contract. The second category regroups a multitude of temporary immigration statuses, including, for example: student visas, international mobility programs or temporary workers visas.

An analysis of the evolution of the point system used by Quebec to select the candidates for the permanent workers program reveals the growing importance of economic imperatives over cultural and linguistic issues in the selection process (Houle 2014). Certain criteria such as the level of education and/or the professional experience of the applicant have become more and more decisive. This evolution is also illustrated by the 2017 Quebec Immigration Plan which mentions the augmentation of the share of "economic immigration" as one of the principal objectives for the years 2017 to 2019. In practice this means favouring the immigration of skilled workers at the expense of family reunification and asylum (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, 2017). Another objective of the 2017 Immigration Plan is to increase the share of permanent workers selected from a pool of workers on temporary statuses, such as students or other kinds of temporary work permits (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion 2017). This fast-track opportunity has existed since the implementation of the "Program for the Quebec Experience" (PEQ) in 2010.

Temporary residence programs are thus increasingly understood as a first step toward permanent residence – an orientation that is considerably different from the previous policy, which focused more heavily on the recruitment of permanent workers through the point system. The rationale of this, which corresponds to the practice at the Federal level, is that recruiting permanent residents among certain categories of temporary workers allows the selection of people who are already integrated in Quebec society, and in particular into its job market (Haince, 2010). Interestingly, such a policy partially exempts public authorities from the responsibility to help with integration, as it transfers the responsibility for integration onto the shoulders of the labour market, and ultimately onto the immigrants themselves.

Thus, rather than an idea of overall societal integration with the help of the state, the concept of integration is limited to an idea of integration within the job market at the responsibility of the individual migrant. The promotion of temporary residence programs also contributes to enhancing the role of employers as decisive actors in the immigration and integration in Quebec, suggesting an evolution from a migration policy mainly controlled by the Province to an "employer-driven migration", a dynamic that also corresponds with the overall Canadian experience (Valiani 2013). The importance of employers in the selection of immigrants became apparent during recruitment events organized in big cities in Europe by Quebec authorities. During these events, called *Journées Québec* (Quebec Days), a limited number of immigration candidates are invited to meet with recruiters from different Quebec companies, potentially resulting in the signing of job contracts. A job contract and relationship with a company can significantly facilitate the access to temporary visas. The increasing importance given to temporary residence permits and to employers also illustrates the Quebec desire for "just-in-time" and "to-the-point" migration that is pursued by many migration policies around the world (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012; Xiang, 2008). From this perspective, immigration is primarily perceived as a way to answer the needs of the economy. The "ideal" immigration is then both flexible (from the point of view of the employers) and perfectly adjusted to the employers' needs (in terms of skills, for example). This double requirement is met through the use of temporary visas and through the increasing involvement of employers in the process of selection.

As mentioned above, this evolution toward what could be called a 'flexibilisation' of immigrants' residence status has an impact on the possibilities offered to Maghrebi French in terms of settlement and incorporation. Indeed, in the course of my fieldwork in Montreal, it became clear that the most common pattern of immigration of my interviewees was characterized by a succession of temporary immigration statuses (as temporary workers, students, trainees or "Working Holiday" visas holder), that in some cases eventually resulted in a permanent status.

This tendency to begin with a temporary status was also illustrated by the fact that the immigration of my interviewees was rarely a linear process from France to Quebec; instead it often involved several back and forth movements between the first temporary visa and more durable statuses acquired either by applying to the point system procedure or by using the fast-track programs designed for certain holders of temporary permits, as described above.

However, despite the increased centrality of economic rationales, cultural and linguistic criteria remain nevertheless important to Quebec authorities as well. This strong demand for a Francophone immigration also contributed to the increasing importance of immigration flows coming directly from Maghrebi countries where skilled French speakers could also be found in abundance. Many of the French citizens of Maghrebi background in Montreal were "good"

immigrants in the sense that they often had the education, the professional skills, and the socio-demographic profile that the Quebec authorities were looking for. Many of them were young, skilled, often had tertiary educations, and were French speakers. Many of them settled in Montreal after one or several temporary stays in Quebec, either for their study, for previous temporary work contracts, or thanks to international programs of mobility such as the Working Holiday program.[ii] In this sense, many of the people I met during my research period had the required resources to comply with the regulations of Quebec immigration and therefore to secure a permanent status in Canada. Some others, however, had a less privileged profile, for example in terms of education, which pushed them – as I will further describe later in this chapter – to alternative pathways to secure a stable status in the country.

Montreal as an aspiring global city

It is difficult to understand the situation of the French and the possibilities that are offered to them that lead to pathways of incorporation, without an overview of Montreal's specificities and, in particular, of the city's position at the regional, national and global level (Glick Schiller et al. 2006).

With 1.8 million inhabitants in 2018, Montreal is Canada's second most populous city after Toronto. Historically, Montreal was a manufacturing stronghold and Canada's most important city for financial and trade activities. From the end of World War II to the 1970s, the city built on the important expansion of the Quebec economy (Geloso, 2017) to consolidate its status as the economic heart of Canada. In the 1960s, Quebec's important expansion of the welfare state resulted in significant progress in terms of health and education of the population. During the 1970s, well paid and stable jobs were created in the public sector in health, education and administration, resulting in a rapid expansion of the Francophone middle class in the city (Rose and Twigge-Molecey, 2013). From this time onward, however, the socio-economic position of Montreal within Canada started to decline. The industrial sector suffered from a crisis. As a result of this crisis and of the rise of Quebec nationalism, many head offices of anglophone private sector companies and many upper middle class anglophones moved to other cities, such as Toronto (Rose and Twigge-Molecey, 2013).

The combined effect of these different phenomena is that the predominance of Montreal in terms of population, financial and trade activities started to decline to the benefit of other urban centres in North America. After a period of economic stagnation and high unemployment, at the turn of the new millennium, Montreal – as with many urban centres in the Global North – managed rather successfully to position itself as a hub for advanced technology and the knowledge economy. Central to this repositioning strategy was the need to attract specific

migrant populations, i.e. highly specialized and highly educated workers of the tertiary sector. This led Montreal authorities to develop strategies to attract what Montreal International – the organization dedicated to the economic development of Montreal's metropolitan area – calls "international talents" or "strategic talents". In its 2017 activity report, the organisation listed the activities organized in order to attract this population which included, among others, overseas recruitment missions (Montreal International, 2018).

<INSERT IMAGE 1 HERE>

Image 1. Picture taken by the author at the *Salon de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration au Québec*, May 2016.

As a way to attract and retain these desired professionals, city authorities and Montreal International frequently advertised Montreal as a vibrant city characterized by a dynamic labour market, relatively low housing prices when compared to European cities, an exceptional quality of life, an openness toward diversity and multiculturalism, and a safe environment. This positive representation of the city is frequently displayed during events targeting potential immigrants as illustrated by Figure 1: a poster decorating the Montreal information stall during the "Quebec Immigration and Integration Show" ("*Salon de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration au Québec*" in French) organized in the city. Reading like a testimony by a newcomer, the quote displayed on the poster states: "Montreal, it's a 'multi-stopover' flight ticket. You discover new cultures, food, stories from all over the world. I feel at home and I am accepted as I am." This depiction of Montreal as a diverse, multicultural and cosmopolitan city is common in the events organized by the city for immigration candidates. On the Montreal International website, one can easily find numerous messages celebrating the city's dynamism and lifestyle, like in the excerpt below:

> "Greater Montréal is a hub of knowledge, high-tech, culture and *joie de vivre* [zest for life]. That's why thousands of skilled workers choose to move to the city every year. Looking to settle in a city that offers stimulating work and an exceptional quality of life? Look no further! Montréal is waiting for you."

(Montreal International, 2019)

French and Maghrebi immigrations in Montreal

Both French and Maghrebi populations are well represented in Montreal, though the French have a long history there, and, the presence of immigrants born in Maghrebi countries has been more recent. The French-born population in Montreal increased by roughly 50 percent, from roughly 24,000 in 2001 to approximately 38,000 in 2016. Within the same time span, the Algerian-born population more than tripled from roughly 13,000 to 40,000, while the Moroccan-born population more than doubled, from 16,000 to 37,000 (Ville de Montréal, 2017, 2016). This development put Algerian and Moroccan populations into the top five immigrant populations living in Montreal (which in 2016, was): Haitians, Algerians, Italians, French and Moroccans (Ville de Montréal, 2016).

Some authors assert that the increase of Maghrebi immigration in Quebec was fuelled by the increasing closure of Europe – and in particular France – toward migrants (Ferhi, 2013). For aspiring emigrants in Maghrebi countries, Quebec gradually became a desirable alternative

destination. This was also encouraged by Quebec authorities who were looking for French-speaking, skilled workers.

The various immigrant populations significantly shaped Montreal's urban and social context with the emergence of a wide range of formal or informal institutions. Regarding the French population, for example, an association called "Union Française" was created as early as 1886. Initially, the association's primary goal has been the organisation of cultural events, but later it also developed other services, such as the provision of social and juridical support to its members. During the 1990s, three France-based schools were created in Montreal (Grosmaire, 1983). Until 2015, the French State (through the French Office for Immigration and Integration) also had an office in Montreal providing information and administrative support to French immigrants. Comparatively recently, in 2012, the Moroccan government opened a cultural centre called "Dar Al Maghrib" in Montreal. The centre describes its mission as to promote Moroccan culture abroad and to facilitate the integration of Moroccan citizens, while simultaneously providing a link with their country of origin. A similar cultural centre called the "Dar Ettounsi Cultural Centre" was opened in Montreal in 2000 by the "Office for Tunisians Abroad" (an organization of the Tunisian government). Many associations and cultural centres have also been created within the Algerian community, but as local initiatives (Khelfaoui, 2006).

The immigration of French, Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian nationals in Montreal also have had an impact on the urban landscape and, more precisely, on the social representations that affect different areas of the city.

The arrival of French skilled and educated professionals had an impact on the urban, cultural and even linguistic or acoustic landscape of the city. Indeed, the concentration of French immigrants in certain parts of the inner city resulted in the emergence of many shops and businesses referring to French culinary tradition, such as bakeries, pastry shops or restaurants, often targeting a well-off clientele. Walking through the area called the Plateau – a neighbourhood historically inhabited by Italian immigrants and today renowned for its high concentration of economically well-off French people – one frequently recognizes the French accent spoken by many passers-by in the street or by individuals enjoying a summer afternoon in one of the district's parks. Finally, the Plateau is also identified as one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in terms of housing. The high housing prices are routinely attributed to the economic power of the highly-educated French professionals working in the tertiary economy who settle in the area and contribute to driving the housing price upward.

The immigration from Maghrebi countries has also impacted the representation of certain areas, yet in a slightly different way. Indeed, as Manaï (2015) describes in her study on "Little Maghreb", a commercial neighbourhood of Montreal, the presence of the Maghrebi population in the city has been largely perceived through the prism of social problems, such as unemployment,

precarity and criminality. The creation of the label "Little Maghreb" originates from a project emerging in the late 2000s from a collaboration between the local shop and business owners and the city authorities, eager to capitalize on the ethnic identity of the neighbourhood in a context of social valorisation of the cosmopolitan global city. Despite these efforts, "Little Maghreb" continues to be identified as a dangerous place. Unlike Le Plateau described earlier, Little Maghreb is commonly perceived as a place characterized by economic and social relegation (Manaï, 2015).

Exact data on the integration of French citizens of Maghrebi origin in Montreal is not available. However, general data seems to suggest that immigrants from France and immigrants from Maghrebi countries face unequal conditions in terms of integration in the job market. For example, in Canada, European immigrants suffer much less from unemployment than immigrant populations from African countries. In 2018, the unemployment rate among the European-born population was 4.9 percent for the whole country, while it was nearly double that for the African-born population. (Statistics Canada 2018). For the region of Quebec, statistics show that while being comparatively more educated than the average Canadian-born population, immigrants from Morocco and Algeria experience a much higher unemployment rate and receive lower incomes when compared to the rest of the population (Allali, 2010).

After this contextualisation of immigration policy to Quebec and the defining characteristics Montreal as a city, including the French and Maghrebi immigration to the city, the following section explores three case studies of different ways French immigrants of Maghrebi origin have navigated immigrating to Montreal.

Pathways of incorporation

Despite the very visible presence of both French and Maghrebi-related institutions in the city., when I started my fieldwork in Montreal in 2015, I soon experienced difficulties identifying people who fit in the category I was interested in; *i.e.* people of Maghrebi background born and raised in France. For many people in Montreal, it seemed that my categories were not making sense at all, especially for people born and raised in Montreal. Very often, people would orient me toward people they identified as "Maghrebi" rather than toward French immigrants. Going through French and Maghrebi-oriented institutions gave more results but hardly enough to start what is called a "snowball effect", the situation that is when an interview allows the researcher to obtain new contacts for further interviews. In other words, I quickly realized that this group can hardly be considered a community, either from the outside or from the inside.

Consequently, I could not immediately identify places or events during which I was sure to find people to interview. One element of this difficulty to describe the Maghrebi French

population in Montreal as a community was the great diversity of pathways of incorporation that I encountered during the fieldwork. I will address this diversity by describing the pathways of three of my contacts in the city, Karim, Zineb and Ilian[iii]. These pathways involve the creation of various types of networks involving different attitudes regarding dominant forms of ethnic categorisation as "French" or "Maghrebi", for example. The aim of this selection of cases is not to provide a statistically representative depiction of the different pathways carved out by Maghrebi French in Montreal. Rather, its goal is to illustrate the diversity of such pathways and the variety of practices of identification and/or distinction within such pathways. This diversity suggests that it is indeed difficult to talk about a Maghrebi French community in Montreal and invites us to address the multidimensionality of "group-making" practices (Brubaker, 2002) among Maghrebi French immigrants.

Karim: Work-related forms of incorporation and the importance of the French network in Montreal

Karim is a French man in his thirties. He grew up in France, in a working class city near Lyon. His parents were born in Algeria. In France, Karim completed a university degree in social sciences. Immediately after his study, Karim lived for three years in England. Back in France, he experienced a long period of unemployment. Facing the lack of result of his intense effort to find a proper job - Karim told me that he sent over five hundred applications and received only fourteen answers, all negative - he started to consider moving to Canada to find better opportunities. When I met Karim in 2016, he had been living in Montreal for five years. He first arrived in Montreal in 2011 with a temporary visa to work as a trainee in a company that he soon quit due to very bad work conditions.

Karim managed to prolong his stay in Montreal by one year through the "Working Holiday" program. He began temporary work for a French association in Montreal. Through his work and through the networks of French Working Holiday visas holders, he made many contacts with other French immigrants living in the city. It is through these contacts that Karim really started his professional career in Montreal, when a French acquaintance introduced him to an advertising firm.

When we met, Karim was still working in this sector. This job contract allowed him to renew his visa. He first obtained a temporary worker visa and then applied for the permanent residence, which he obtained thanks to the Program for the Quebec Experience. During my repeated conversations with Karim, I was initially surprised by the centrality that he gave to his professional career when describing his experience of Montreal. Indeed, Karim frequently described to me the hard work he put in his different jobs and the recognition he progressively

gained in his field. Also, he proudly described to me the evolution of his professional incomes which doubled over a couple of years. Karim also described in great detail how he constantly jumped into various job opportunities in order to progress professionally. His professional success did not only provide him with enough income to envision the acquisition of an apartment in Montreal, his professional experience also allowed him to get fast-tracked for obtaining permanent resident permit.

Karim's professional activity also appears as central in the way he built his network of local social relationships. Indeed, beyond the French acquaintances that Karim still maintained from his first years in the city, many of Karim's contacts in Montreal were coming from his job, and were also highly skilled and highly educated immigrants living in the city. Beyond the professional context, Karim also seemed to have forged many contacts with other French immigrants in Montreal even if – as he put it himself during one of our conversation – the temporary stay of many French people in Montreal made the relationship more difficult to sustain. For example, during the summer, he frequently played soccer with a group of French people that he got acquainted with during his work for the French association mentioned above.

According to the Quebec administration's criteria, as described in the first part of this chapter, Karim is an 'ideal' migrant. He speaks French, he has a Master's degree from a French University, and he is young. Furthermore, his previous experience as a temporary trainee and worker in Montreal fit in with the current orientation of Quebec immigration policy favouring temporary work contracts as a first step to access permanent residence. Karim also internalised the institutional discourse about the 'good integration'. He worked very hard, started his career with lower wages than what he could have asked, and he managed to stay very flexible in his professional career. In 2016, he was just buying an apartment and was also planning to apply for Canadian citizenship.

Zineb: Building a network outside of French and Maghrebi communities.

Zineb is a French woman and daughter of Algerian-born parents. She grew up in Paris. After she obtained a master's degree in law, she decided to move to Toronto for one year with a "Working Holiday" visa to strengthen her English skills. During this first stay in Canada, she worked in small jobs like cashier in a supermarket but not in highly skilled sectors that could have allowed her to expand her stay in the country. After this first experience in Canada, Zineb returned to France – with the aspiration to leave again. While Zineb didn't explain further the reasons that pushed her to leave, she was attracted to Montreal because of the relative accessibility of residence permits in Quebec and also because of the French-speaking dimension of Montreal which, she hoped, could facilitate her professional integration.

Back in France, she started the procedure to obtain permanent residence status and went through the point system evaluation. During the time of the procedure, which lasted about 18 months, she engaged in a second master's degree and worked for a while in an IT company in France. She finally arrived in Montreal in 2012 with a permanent residence permit.

Unlike Karim, however, Zineb's professional integration was not exactly easy. Indeed, her first work in Montreal was as a secretary, and well below her professional qualifications and expectations. After a few months, following a friend's advice, she decided to go back to university to study Human Resources in Montreal. She financed her education by working as a French language teacher, a job through which she met some of her closest local friends.

After completing her education, Zineb worked successively in different companies, two of them being French companies. Zineb experienced discomforts in these jobs has she repeatedly faced comments and questions from French co-workers about her ethnic and - despite the absence of any religious sign - her religious background. Unlike Karim who built a good part of his social network in Montreal among the French community, Zineb explained to me that she tried to avoid such networks. All too often she feels that she is reduced to identities that she did not consider relevant for her, as she explained to me during an interview:

Zineb: So my friends are mostly Italian.

JM: Ok yes.

Zineb: They are mostly Italian. I also have a good Saudi friend. So it is really… my friends here are not French. But they are also not Maghrebi. It is maybe a bit special but I think that… you are also studying this so I can explain to you that the French community is… I know some of them! Not among my closest friends but… well anyway I may be able to explain that by the fact that we [the French people, ed.] have a tendency to categorize people.

JM: Ok yes.

Zineb: And French people, even if they have diverse origins, they have a tendency to see you as a French with, well, a Maghrebi origin. So you always stay in these stereotypes. Always in stereotypes. And this is not only about the Maghrebi or the French […] it is about the francophones here. It is really the francophone mentality. And this is not true with other nationalities. The other nationalities, they really consider me as I am, Zineb with my full personality. Not Zineb, the French of Algerian origin.

It is interesting to note that Zineb's effort to escape ethnic categorizations also translates into putting some distance between herself and both the French and the Maghrebi population in Montreal. Zineb mainly built her social network in Montreal by interacting with other international immigrants coming from different countries.

Ilian: Ongoing incorporation and the building of transnational networks based on urban class belonging

Unlike Karim and Zineb, Ilian was not durably settled in Montreal. I met him first in Paris. At that time, he was just returning from Montreal where he had stayed for a few months and was actively trying to get back to Quebec. In the meantime he was working in a warehouse, a job that he described as hard and poorly paid. Unlike Karim and Zineb, Ilian did not hold a tertiary degree and was thus not considered a candidate with the right skills and education, something which made immigration more difficult, especially through the point system. For this reason, Ilian was relying a lot on the people he met during his stay in Montreal to help him get the right papers, in the form of a proper job offer, which would increase his chances to be accepted for a temporary worker residence permit.

Ilian's motivation to leave France was mainly informed by his inability to foresee any desirable future at home. During our discussions, Karim described his emigration aspirations as a way to escape his precarious economic situation and the increasing hostility toward Muslim minorities that he experienced in his everyday life. The network that Ilian had already forged in Montreal was very much built on the basis of him being born and raised in one of the Paris working class *cités*.

A *cité* is one of the urban districts of big cities, most notably Paris, characterized by a strong working class population, often of immigrant origin and often organized in the form of collective public housing projects. In contemporary French public discourse, the *cités* are often associated with social problems such as crime, poverty, unemployment, and – more recently – religious extremism. When Ilian arrived in Montreal, he first struggled to make meaningful contacts in the city and, during an interview, he described how he finally met some people that he felt connected with thanks to their common *cité* of origin:

Ilian: And after, well listen, I went to… I met some guys from Paris. I talked with them. Because I was wearing a [soccer] shirt… a shirt from the Brazilian team with my name on

it and 94 on it. And so the guys they came and say 'How are you doing? Are you ok? Where do you come from?' Well, I say I come from the 94. And they were coming from the same place!

JM: Ok, ok, ok

Ilian: So we met. We have some friends in common. So really.

JM: So they came from the same district as you?

Ilian: Well not the same district but not far.

(Ilian, 2016, Paris)

The 94 that Ilian mentions in the quote above refers to the French numeric reference of the department "Val de Marne", an administrative department at the periphery of Paris. Some of the emblematic *cités* of the Parisian periphery are often referred to by using these numeric references, most of the time detaching the two digits (for example, "nine-four" instead of "ninety-four" to refer to the Val de Marne). This encounter in Montreal was an important event in Ilian's efforts in forging his pathway toward incorporation. After this short discussion about their common origins from the Parisian *cité*, these other Parisians offered to let Ilian stay with them in their apartment, saving him money for accommodation. They directed him to the boss of a fast food restaurant in Montreal, a French man who also came from a *cité* in Paris and who opened a restaurant based on the types of restaurant that are typical of working class and immigrant neighbourhoods in Paris. Through this contact, Ilian obtained the promise of a work contract which, he thinks, could help him to obtain a visa to go back to Montreal.

Integration as a process of sedimentation and the diversity of pathways of incorporation

The cases of Karim, Zineb and Ilian illustrate different elements that were decisive for the modes and pathways of integration developed by French citizens of Maghrebi origin in Montreal. The first element relates to the temporal dimension of such integration. Indeed, due to the specific structuration of the immigration possibilities in Quebec, as described in the first section of this chapter, many of the people I met in Montreal and who durably settled in the city went through

different types of statuses, often from a temporary status as student, working holiday visa, or temporary workers, to a permanent status (permanent resident and sometimes citizenship). As the examples of Zineb and Ilian illustrate, this process was not linear but often involved numerous back and forth movements between France and Canada, sometimes with long intermediary periods of time in France. These rather fragmented patterns of migration often brought about reorientations, or even interruptions of migration projects. For example, some of the interviewees that I met in Montreal were temporarily coming back to France with the firm idea to return to Quebec, but they changed their plans to other destinations for various reasons. In the same way, in the case of Ilian, it is also very possible that administrative regulations will actually prevent him from ever durably settling in Montreal. In a more general sense, rather than a clear desire to settle in Montreal, most of my interviewees were in a sense cultivating the idea of open futures. This is illustrated by Zineb's response when I asked her about her plans for the future:

> Zineb: Well it's just that I feel good here. I feel good, and the day I will not feel so good, well, I will start to look somewhere else, that's it. […]. I feel ok here so I stay here. Until the day I will feel less ok, then, I will ask myself the question. It will maybe be France, maybe another country, it will… but for now no […].

> (Zineb, 2016, Montreal)

The process of integration in Montreal is characterized by i) a non-linear aspect of migration, ii) the sometimes unclear perspective of the future and iii) the typical succession of temporary statuses and more permanent statuses. I propose that this process can be described as a process of progressive "sedimentation", as with a geological process that involves the progressive stabilization of particles into layers. This concept helps us to understand that the integration process is characterized not by a unidirectional and linear process, but rather by the progressive consolidation of networks – based on nationality, profession, class belonging, and so forth – that sometimes may bring about opportunities for durable settlement in a specific place.

The term "sedimentation" also suggests that this process can be interrupted, reversed or reoriented depending on the localisation, the individual's life conditions and the degree of stability of the network. The sedimentation process can be facilitated for some and made more difficult for others. Indeed, national, local and transnational institutions, play an important role in deciding who can access certain networks and who cannot. In the case of French citizens with the right professional skills and education, this process of sedimentation is supported, while for people who do not exactly fit with the Quebec figure of the 'good' migrant (like Ilian for example) the available opportunities for durable settlement can be much harder to reach.

A second element revealed in the case studies is the role of transferable education and professional skills and how it intersects with attributes of ethnicity and class in developing the pathways of integration developed by French citizens of Maghrebi origin in Montreal. More precisely, an important dimension of these pathways was the ability (or inability) of migrants to transfer their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and in particular their educational qualifications acquired in France, to Montreal.

Looking at the different pathways developed by young French people of Maghrebi origin also showed how my interviewees' positionality in terms of ethnicity and class was renegotiated within these pathways. Karim, for example, built an important part of his integration in Montreal using French-oriented networks that allowed him to initiate a successful professional integration in the city. Zineb, on the other hand, actively tried to avoid both French-oriented and Maghrebi-oriented networks because of her discomfort with the constant categorization as "Muslim" or "Maghrebi" that she faced in such networks. Instead, she mainly built a social network of other immigrants from different countries.

Ilian's pathway of integration goes beyond the traditional division between ethnic communities such as "French" and "Maghrebi." The social relationships that Ilian engaged in in Montreal were not based on ethnicity *per se,* but rather on a form of urban belonging strongly connected with class characteristics. During my fieldwork, Ilian was not the only person I met who relied on such networks of solidarity based on urban and class-based forms of identification. To a certain extent, the existence of such networks in Montreal illustrates the reproduction of forms of symbolic distinctions that are typical of the French context (as the distinction between the middle class youth of the French cities and the youth of the working class "cité", often from immigrant origin). As one of my informants explained to me during a discussion, in Montreal one can easily find both the upper middle class of Paris and the "bad boys in sweatpants and sports shoes [from the *cités*]".

Interestingly, the development of such pathways of integration in Montreal goes along with a re-negotiation of how French culture is represented in the city. Indeed, beyond the presence of traditional French bakeries and restaurants in Montreal, part of the "French culture" was also celebrated through events explicitly referring to this working class urban culture of the *cité*. This diversity of representations of the French culture also provides people like Ilian, with a working class background, the chance to find access to networks outside of the higher-status networks of the highly skilled professionals.

Finally, it is interesting to note that, as illustrated by the three cases described and analysed in this chapter, most of the French of Maghrebi origin that I met in Montreal developed pathways that stayed largely outside of Maghrebi-oriented networks in Montreal. This distinct pathways, I would argue, are largely explained by differences in terms of condition of access to

stable residence status as well as dynamics of class distinction between immigrants from Maghrebi countries and countries like France.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the different pathways followed by French immigrants of Maghrebi origin to integrate into the social fabric of Montreal, as well as the structural conditions within which these pathways occurred. In the case of Montreal, these structural conditions refer to different elements. First, the effects of the Quebec selection policy, which tends to favour the immigration of young, highly skilled French-speaking individuals. And second, the ambition of the city to position itself as a competitive hub of the knowledge economy and thus to attract highly skilled professionals to meet the needs of local companies. The conjunction of these different factors tends to facilitate the integration of some immigrants, in particular through the provision of relatively easy access to residence status. It also contributes to favouring some forms of migration – for example, migrations that make a first stay with a temporary visa and then the access to a permanent visa – over others.

Within this complex field of opportunities in terms of migration and integration, the chapter sheds light on the diversity of pathways followed in Montreal by French Maghrebi immigrants. The different cases presented in the chapter illustrate different degrees of linearity in the migration process, from the relatively linear trajectory of Karim to the back and forth travels that Zineb and Ilian undertook between France and Canada. At the same time, as illustrated above, the migration projects of my interviewees were often open to reorientations, or even interruptions. The process of integration in Montreal seems to be a non-linear process of sedimentation characterized by the progressive consolidation of networks (of different types) that sometimes results in durable settlement. This process of sedimentation is shaped by the field of opportunities produced by structural factors.

Finally, while the chapter stresses the importance of skilled employment in the process of incorporation, it also shows the significant diversity of pathways that are built, in particular regarding the relationship built with different groups in the city. The different pathways of incorporation presented in this chapter illustrate how people build and sustain social relationships within or outside the French and the Maghrebi communities in Montreal. The development of such pathways of integration, through the development of various networks, also produces a renegotiation of certain forms of identification and belonging that goes beyond the traditional understanding of ethnic groupism widely practiced in migration research.

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[ii] The Working Holiday Programs (*Programme Vacance Travail* in French) are mobility programs that allow young people (usually under 30 years old) to go to a foreign country for one or several years and to benefit from a working visa for the same period. Such programs are typically based on bilateral agreements between countries. The idea of the Working Holiday programs was to encourage young people to experience life in other countries and to discover other cultures while being able to work in order to pay for their trip. The Franco Canadian Working Holiday Program was implemented in 2003.

[iii] The names have been changed to ensure the participants' anonymity.