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Leaving Europe: Emigration, aspirations and pathways of incorporation of Maghrebi French and Belgians in Montréal

Jérémy MANDIN

Proefschrift aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van de
graad van Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen

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Abstract

When it comes to migration, Western European countries such as Belgium and France are typically described as destination countries. Yet, emigration remains an important phenomena in most European societies. This emigration is often portrayed as somehow different from migrations 'from the South'. The western European migrant – sometimes referred to as 'expat' – is generally depicted as a dynamic individual characterized by an entrepreneurial spirit and a taste for adventure. At a time where many European societies experience both the consequences of financial and economic crises and growing tensions about cultural and religious diversity, very little attention has been given to the relation between such structural dynamics and the emergence of emigration practices among young Europeans. This research is an attempt to explore these relations by focusing on the migration practices of Belgians and French youngsters of Maghrebi origins leaving Europe for the Canadian city of Montréal. More precisely, the research focuses on the aspirations – defined as socially situated representations of the future – that inform the emigration practices of Maghrebi Europeans.

Building on ethnographic field research conducted in France, Belgium and in the city of Montréal (Canada), this thesis is an exploration of migration related aspirations and their evolution at three stages of the migration process: before departure, during migration and once arrived at the destination. The goal of the research is to understand the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi European people, how these aspirations are channeled during migration and how they evolve after migration. Through this focus on migrants' aspirations, the research questions how perspectives for a desirable future are distributed both in Europe and in Montréal and how this distribution is highly dependent on one's social position. The collection of biographical interviews with Maghrebi European migrants allows us to understand the various representations of the future that inform the emergence of migration desires. This highlights a set of various experiences – experiences of 'existential stuckedness' or of 'existential mobility' – that evolve during the migration process. The ethnographic data also allows an exploration of the various pathways of incorporation that are carved out by Maghrebi Europeans in Montreal in order to sustain possibilities for a desirable future. These pathways sometimes constitute alternatives to the types of incorporation promoted by the Canadian and Québec authorities. In this sense, looking at how migrants think about their future and how they try to organize it also highlights forms of agency that exceed societal expectations.

Abstract

Wanneer het migratie aan belangt, worden West-Europese landen als België en Frankrijk voornamelijk beschreven als bestemmingen. Echter, emigratie blijft een belangrijk fenomeen in de meeste Europese maatschappijen. Zulke vormen van emigratie worden vaak als dusdanig verschillend beschouwd van migraties vanuit 'het Zuiden'. De West-Europese migrant—soms getypeerd als 'expat'—wordt in het algemeen beschreven als een dynamisch individu met een ondernemende geest en een zin voor avontuur. Op het ogenblik dat vele Europese maatschappijen de gevolgen dragen van zowel de economische en financiële crisissen, en groeiende spanningen kennen over culturele en religieuze diversiteit, wordt er zeer weinig aandacht besteed aan de relatie tussen deze structurele dynamieken en het ontstaan van emigratiepraktijken onder jonge Europeanen. Dit onderzoek is een poging om een dergelijke relatie te verkennen en dit door middel van een focus op de emigratiepraktijken van Belgische en Franse jongeren van Maghrebijnse origine, die Europa verlaten en naar de Canadese stad Montreal trekken. In het bijzonder buigt dit onderzoek zich over de aspiraties—gedefinieerd als sociaal gesitueerde representaties van de toekomst—die de emigratiepraktijken van Maghrebijnse Europeanen voeden.

Vertrekkend vanuit etnografisch veldwerk uitgevoerd in Frankrijk, België en de stad Montreal, is deze scriptie een verkenning van migratie-gerelateerde aspiraties en diens evoluties tijdens drie fases van het migratieproces: voor vertrek, tijdens migratie en bij aankomst in de bestemming. Het doel van dit onderzoek is om begrip te vergaren over de factoren die de ontwikkeling van emigratie-aspiraties bij Maghrebijnse Europeanen voeden, hoe deze aspiraties worden gekanaliseerd tijdens migratie en hoe ze ontwikkelen na migratie. Door middel van de focus op de aspiraties van migranten bevraagt dit onderzoek hoe perspectieven over een gewenste toekomst worden gedistribueerd, zowel in Europe als Montreal, en hoe deze distributie sterk afhankelijk is van hun sociale positie. Het vergaren van biografische interviews bij Maghrebijns-Europese migranten laat toe om tot een begrip te komen van de verschillende voorstellingen van de toekomst, die het ontstaan van migratiewensen voeden. Dit ontsluit een resem aan verschillende ervaringen—ervaringen met 'existentiële *stuckedness*' en met 'existentiële mobiliteit'—die evolueren tijdens het migratieproces. De etnografische data laat tevens toe om de verschillende kanalen van incorporatie te verkennen, die worden uitgebouwd door Maghrebijnse Europeanen in Montreal met als doel de mogelijkheden omtrent hun gewenste toekomst te onderhouden. Deze kanalen belichamen soms alternatieven ten opzichte van het soort van incorporaties die gepromoot worden door de Canadese en Québecse autoriteiten.

Bijgevolg kan men stellen dat een onderzoek naar de manier waarop migranten kijken naar hun toekomst en hoe zij deze trachten te organiseren ook vormen van *agency* ontsluit die evenwel te boven gaan aan maatschappelijke verwachtingen.

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Introduction

0.1. The starting point: Interrogating the emigration practices of European minorities

"*Islamophobie: La France on l'aime mais on la quitte*". This is the title of an online article published in April 2012 on www.al-kanz.org,[1] a website dealing mainly with topics related to Islamic economy and Islamic consumption. In English, the title reads as follows: 'Islamophobia: France, we love it but we leave it.' It was a play on words, building on a famous slogan of the French far-right and right wing political formations against immigrants that typically goes 'France, you love it or you leave it.' Substituting the 'or' of the initial slogan by an 'and', the author of the short article suggests a form of coexistence between two apparently contradictory dynamics within the Maghrebi Muslim community in France: loving France and – nevertheless – leaving it. The short article began with these lines:

> "It is the story of someone. In France. Liberal profession, CSP+, high purchasing power, largely above average, married, with children, well 'integrated' as they said. He lives in Paris, pays more taxes that the big majority of French people, is part of the France that wins, travels all over the world.
>
> But, he is Muslim. So he decided to quit his very well paid job. Just as his wife, well paid as well. And together, as a family, they will leave the country to settle in the Maghreb. France loses two of its children that it had trained at great expense."
>
> blog Al-Kanz, 17/04/2012, my translation

In the rest of the article, the author explained this emergence of emigration aspirations through the 'islamophobic atmosphere' which – according to the author – characterized the France of Nicolas Sarkozy and of an increasingly islamophobic left. He stated, at the end of one of the article paragraphs that "the question is not anymore to know if leaving is necessary. It is rather to know where to leave" and continued by citing a number of destinations: Great Britain, Canada, Belgium, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Dubai, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Later the same year, the French newspaper *Libération* published an opinion piece signed by three French personalities: Félix Marquardt, ex-communication director of the International Herald Tribune and head of a communication consultancy company; the French rapper Mokless; and

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1. https://www.al-kanz.org/2012/04/17/islamophobie-france/print/, last access: 31/05/2020

Mouloud Achour, a journalist hosting a famous TV and internet magazine about popular culture called *Clique*. The paper is titled "*Jeune de France, votre salut est ailleurs: barrez vous*" which could be translated as follows: 'youth of France, your salvation is abroad: get-out'. While Al Kanz's paper specifically addresses the emigration of French with a Muslim faith, the opinion published in *Libération* addresses the emigration of young French people in general. France is described as a "sclerotic and ultra-centralized gerontocracy" and, more generally, as a society "in decay" characterized by a high level of unemployment among young people and by a lack of opportunities.[2] Contrasting with this representation of a stagnant society, the authors give an enthusiastic description of what they describe as "a major rebalancing" of the world order, characterized by the emergence of new hubs of dynamism and creativity. This second article had a relatively important impact in French public debate. A few days later, in the same news-paper, François-Xavier Bellamy – at the time professor of philosophy and deputy mayor of Versailles – wrote a response to the article in which he denounced a call for 'evasion'. As a counter-argument to the previous article, the author then encouraged French youth not to "get out" (*dégager*) but to "act" (*s'engager*) in France.[3] Another opinion piece, published in the newspaper *le Monde*, also reacted to the call of Marquardt, Achour and Mokless. The authors adopted a less critical tone than Bellamy. They celebrated moving abroad as a way to enlarge the horizon of young people and to address contemporary challenges at a more global level. But the paper also warned the young French against the illusion of the expat life and defended some of the French strengths (in terms of sustainable development for example) when compared to other places of the world like China or India. The authors also stated that even from abroad, that is "as French and European citizens that [young French people] will be able to fight."[4]

Both opinion pieces unsettled some of the central narratives about what France and Europe are supposed to be and what moving out of these places was supposed to mean in the 2010s. First, these articles challenged the traditional narrative surrounding European emigration as something positive, driven by an entrepreneur spirit, a taste for adventure and an openness to other cultures. Neither articles deny such a positive dimension. But they focused on the 'exit' factors, suggesting that European emigration is a question of "exit strategy" (Hirschman 1970) as

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2 http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2012/09/03/jeunes-de-france-votre-salut-est-ailleurs-barrez-vous_843642, last access: 08/01/2020
3 https://www.liberation.fr/societe/2012/09/09/jeunes-de-france-battez-vous_845036, last access: 08/01/2020
4 https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2012/09/14/jeunes-de-france-battez-vous-au-lieu-de-vous-barrer_1760116_3232.html, last access: 08/01/2020

well as a question of positive mobility. One of the paragraphs of the article from *Libération* reads as follow:

> "Put simply, get out to enhance your living standards. Because while you not automatically earn more money by (re)starting your career abroad, the probability that your living standards increase after a few years is statistically much better than if you stay stuck in France."
>
> *Libération*, 03/09/2012, my translation

Related to this first aspect, the second element that is characteristic of both papers was that they directly link the question of international mobility practices with the development of structural dynamics shaping French society. In his blog article, Al-Kanz – as illustrated above – drew a direct relation between the development of Islamophobia in France and the emigration desires of Muslim French. The piece from Marquardt, Achour and Mokless opened with the following paragraph and draw extensively on the description of dynamics such as unemployment and lack of socio-professional opportunities in France:

> "Youth of France, this is an encouragement not to tax evasion but to evasion plain and simple. As they say in the Maghreb and in the most disadvantaged French neighborhoods, your elders are seeing you as *des ânes sans oreilles* («khmar bla ouinedine» [in Arabic in the text]). Their nice discourses hide less and less an embarrassing truth: you are living in a sclerotic, ultracentralized gerontocracy which is collapsing more and more every day.
>
> How could you describe differently, in 2012, a society where an elite of a few thousand people, whose age is about sixty years old, decide nearly everything.
>
> How could you describe differently a system which, for more than thirty years accepts the fact that nearly one in four young people is unemployed (in many neighborhoods we mentioned above it is closer to one in two) […]"
>
> *Libération*, 03/09/2012, my translation[5]

5 https://www.liberation.fr/societe/2012/09/03/jeunes-de-france-votre-salut-est-ailleurs-barrez-vous_843642 Last access: 10/06/2020.

This line of reasoning contrasts with the traditional perception of European 'expats' as successful individuals and European emigration as the result of personal initiatives and personal life-choices.

The third element is maybe more visible in Al-Kanz's blog article and regards the specific geography within which the author situated young European Muslims. This geography in includes North African countries such as Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, but also places such as Great-Britain, Canada, Dubai, Malaysia or Saudi Arabia. This largely exceeded the geography within which the life of young Europeans of Maghrebi Muslim background was traditionally imagined: i.e. the country in which they grew up and the country of origin of their parents. Finally, the two articles challenged the common idea that Europe (and in general western countries) was the best place on Earth to live. Indeed, dominant representations of migration including the spectacle of boats full of people trying to reach Europe (Graw and Schielke 2012b, 8) and fleeing armed conflicts, authoritarian regimes and poor socio-economic conditions tended to reproduce a discourse about Europe as a place of uncontested freedom, modernity and socio-economic promises. What the two articles depicted instead was a western European country (France) characterized by poor economic prospects, the erosion of democratic promises and the development of discrimination and racism. Worded differently, Europe – and France in particular – was largely described through the vocabulary of backwardness rather than modernity. In many ways, these expressions of emigration desires were going against the common sense about migrations and the situation of Europe within such migrations. At a more fundamental level, these opinion pieces – and those that were produced as a response – illustrate conflicting representations of the future. For the authors of the opinion pieces, it seemed that indeed, no desirable future was to be expected in France.

The analysis of these specific representations of the future, their contextualization within structural social dynamics and their relation with (e)migration practices constitutes the core topic of this thesis. This topic seems to have been insufficiently addressed when it comes to the migration practices of European citizens. Indeed, most academic work into the international mobility of citizens from western Europe have focused on figures of privileged migrants such as "expats" (Fechter and Walsh 2010) or "lifestyle migrants" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009) moving not so much because of a lack of desirable futures at home but rather for capital accumulation and/or in the pursuit of specific lifestyles and cultures. Yet, especially after the financial and economic crisis of 2008 one could see the necessity to explore further the emergence of new motivational dynamics behind the emergence of emigration aspirations among European populations. For example, established strategies for social reproduction and upward social mobility became more

uncertain, making the future more uncertain for significant parts of the population (Narotzky and Besnier 2014). A sense of crisis has also been identified regarding the *de facto* multicultural composition of European societies (Martiniello 1993) in which new forms of racism have been articulated (Lentin and Titley 2011). These different dynamics seem to particularly affect some segments of European societies such as the so called 'second' and 'third generations' of Maghrebi background who continue to suffer many forms of discrimination including in the job market (DARES 2016; Piton and Rycx 2020). Despite evidence that such structural dynamics might have contributed to the emergence of emigration projects (Le Défenseur des Droits 2016), only a few studies have addressed the relation between European emigrations and the unstable future produced by these two crises (for a notable exception, see Lafleur and Stanek 2017). This, in a way, constitutes the starting point of this doctoral thesis.

My doctoral research was conducted within the framework of a collective research project called *Redefining home: Transnational practices of European Muslims in Montréal and the United Arab Emirates*. It was initiated in 2015 under the collaboration of three universities: The Catholic University of Leuven, the University of Liège and the University of Amsterdam. One of the project's main goals was to address contemporary forms of European emigration beyond the traditional focus on 'privileged' forms of international mobility mentioned above and with a special attention to the effect of the multidimensional crisis and societal tensions that seemed to characterize the European context at the time. In order to explore these dynamics, the research project focused on a European population that seemed to be particularly exposed to such societal tensions: i.e. the European citizens of Maghrebi/Muslim heritage. By focusing on such a group, the goal of the *Redefining Home* project was to explore the complex relationship that Maghrebi Muslim populations hold with Europe and to unfold the complex transnational ties that might be developed by these populations beyond the traditional focus on the so called Maghrebi 'home countries'. I explain later the implications of this collective project on my research design and methodology but I would like to stress the fact that the premises of this project very much provided me with my case study: the emigration of European of Maghrebi/Muslim background to the city of Montréal (Canada). The research project was also oriented towards a number of focus points: the motivation and considerations informing the emigration of Maghrebi European citizens; the modes of incorporation and the networks built by Maghrebi European abroad; the re-articulation of multiple identities and the redefinition of 'home' during the migration process.

In the context of this doctoral research – as interviews, observations and provisional interpretations of my material were building up – I progressively decided to transform these focus points in research questions engaging with the notion of 'aspirations'. One reason for doing

so was related to the material organization of my fieldwork that I describe in more detail later; that involved interviews in Europe with people aspiring to emigrate. One of the elements that struck me during my research was how these emigration aspirations seemed to be very strong for many of my interlocutors but also how very few of them seemed to be converted into actual migrations. Despite this absence of conversion into migration these aspirations nevertheless seemed to have some impact in my interlocutors' life in Europe. After all, many of my 'aspiring' interlocutors were, one way or another, organizing part of their life around this aspiration to leave, for example by postponing professional or personal choices in order to be able to leave. Aspiration, it seemed to me, was something to take seriously in the context of an analysis of the country of origin (Bal and Willems 2014; Mescoli 2014). Going further into my fieldwork, I also discovered that aspirations were actually present everywhere during the migration process, especially in the context of the migration to my focus destination: Montréal. Official migration agencies, for example, were often speaking the 'language of aspirations' when addressing potential European emigrants. Finally, my fieldwork in Montréal also confronted me with the frustrated aspirations of my interlocutors leading to new visions of a better future. In this context, this thesis became very much an attempt to explore further the relation between specific representations of the future among European populations of Maghrebi origins and the emergence of emigration practices.

In order to address this topic, the thesis is organized around three main sets of research questions:

Q1: *What are the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans people? What kind of future is envisioned and in what places is this future is imagined? And how is Montréal envisioned in this imagined geography?*

Q2: *To what extent and under what conditions do these aspirations translate into actual migration? And to what extent and how are these aspirations transformed, channeled, and sorted during the migration process?*

Q3: *How do aspirations and the relationship with Europe as a desirable place for the future evolve after migration?*

In order to answer these questions, the thesis build on the concept of aspiration in relation with other concepts. In the first part of the thesis (focused on Q1), I explore the concept of regime of hope distribution and of social imaginaries in relation to emigration aspirations. In the second

part of the thesis, focused on Q2, I build on the concepts of migratory disposition and migration infrastructure to analyze the complex channeling process that happens during the migration process. In the third part, focused on Q3, I bring the concepts of pathways of incorporation and arrival infrastructure to understand my interlocutors' new situation in Montréal and the corresponding evolution of their aspirations. All these concepts are further introduced in the following section.

0.2. Aspiration and its conceptual framework

The starting point of this thesis is an exploration of current European emigration practices with a focus on the specific types of representations of the future that inform such practices. In the following sections I describe the conceptual apparatus developed throughout the thesis. I start with a conceptualization of aspirations and continue over several considerations about the structure/agency relations that characterize the analyses developed in the thesis. This conceptual introduction is designed to provide the general framework of the thesis and to clarify the relation between different notions that will be used in the different chapters of the thesis. The chapters then include their own introductions where some of the notions presented below are further discussed.

0.2.1. Exploring migration desires: The concept of aspiration

I conceptualize the emergence of emigration desires and the specific representations of the future that are associated with them in terms of 'aspirations'. Looking at emigration practices through the prism of aspirations echoes a Weberian concern with understanding human actions through an attention to the subjective meanings attached to these actions (Weber 1964). Defining "motive" as "the meaning an actor attaches to [his action]" Weber (1964, 95) proposes an understanding of human action through an attention to "motivation" by "placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning." As authors have argued, Weber's motivational understanding of human actions – best exemplified in his essay *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* – cannot be restricted neither to an exploration of the reasons that an actor give to justify his actions nor to a rational choice theory approach. Instead, Weber's notion of motive rather refers to "psychological pressures which [impel actors] to embark in specific courses of action" (Campbell 2006, 216), these psychological pressures being informed by specific historical and cultural configurations and by specific systems of values. While the developing literature about aspirations rarely builds explicitly on Max Weber's work, such attention to the effect of

specific system of values on the understanding of the aspirations of an individual is certainly an important element in it as well as in my own approach to aspirations as discussed in this thesis. However, unlike the Weberian use of motive and motivation, I address aspirations not only as an explanatory tool in understanding a specific course of action (i.e. European emigration practices) but also as an object of study in itself. From this follows that neither I – nor the migration literature on aspirations – necessarily direct the analysis of aspirations towards effective migration practices. Indeed, as I emphasize later, looking at aspirations also means looking at desires and projects that might never be realized. Finally – as I extensively describe in the following paragraphs – I do not see aspirations as the pure product of specific systems of value (despite the fact of course that systems of value have an important impact on the expression of aspirations). I also see it as a practice that allows certain forms of agency. In the following paragraphs, I clarify my conceptual framework and my use of the concept of aspiration throughout the thesis.

In social sciences the concept of aspiration has been used for a long time in relation with educational and occupational trajectories (Haller and Miller 1963; Haller et al. 1974; MacLeod 2018). Such focus on educational and occupational aspirations has also been applied to immigrant populations. In the late 1970s, Portes, McLeod and Parker (1978) published the results of a research addressing the aspirations expressed by Cuban and Mexican immigrants newly arrived in the United States. In this research, aspiration was largely understood as a central element in guiding immigrants' future behaviors and achievements in the destination country and they were therefore discussed in terms of status attainment and assimilation processes (Portes, McLeod, and Parker 1978). The central conclusion of this work was that – despite being understood as a future oriented attitude – the nature of educational, occupational and income related aspirations expressed by immigrants when entering the US were very much informed by the immigrants' past professional and educational experience. From this perspective, the research provided evidence that, rather than the product of subjective personality traits, immigrants' aspirations were much more dependent on the previous experience of the individuals (such as the previous professional experiences) as well as on the type of resources (such as proficiency in the English language) available to these immigrants. In doing so, the research emphasized the importance of the social in the production of aspirations. But the focus on educational, income related and occupational aspirations somehow failed to address the great diversity of desires that migrants can carry with them during the migration process. In the same manner, addressing the aspirations that immigrants pursue in the destination country as a way of integration does not necessarily inform us about the factors that push people to actually leave

their country of origin. Therefore, it does not necessarily inform us about the role that aspirations play at different stages of the migratory career (Martiniello and Rea 2014).

In recent years, the nexus of 'migration/aspirations' seemed to have gained renewed attention from the social sciences (de Haas 2011; Carling 2013; Bal and Willems 2014; Carling and Collins 2017; Boccagni 2017). Part of this new literature was rooted in an effort to better understand the "determinants" (de Haas 2011) or "drivers" (Carling and Collins 2017; Hear, Bakewell, and Long 2018) of human migrations. While Portes, McLeod and Parker's (1978) research was addressing aspirations in relation with the integration process in the destination country, many authors started to address migration aspirations in relation with local and global dynamics that impact the countries of origin. In a special issue they edited, Bal and Willems (2014, 254) proposed to "redirect the central focus away from the migration process itself to the formation of migration aspirations." Migration-related aspirations were used as an analytical lens to approach "how people make sense of their life worlds, their individual lives, their pasts, presents and futures" (Bal and Willems 2014, 254). Throughout the special issue, the articles provided insights on various social dynamics and their role in the development of migration aspirations. Bal (2014) for example, looking at the emigration desires of young educated Bangladeshis in Dhaka, argued that her informant's emigration aspirations were "emanating from the gap between negative day-to-day experiences" and imagined "global potentials" (Bal 2014, 277). For the specific case of the young people interviewed by Bal in Dhaka, a significant factor in the development of migration aspirations seemed to be the experience of a gap between promises of upward social mobility associated with the fact of being educated and the lack of real opportunity for such upward mobility. In the same special issue, Mescoli (2014) showed how the emergence of emigration desires in a Moroccan city was fueled by the everyday experience of local crisis. Mescoli also showed how local and global institutions actively worked to monitor and sometimes discourage such aspirations (Mescoli 2014).

While authors have explored pre-departure aspirations and their impact in migration practices, other have addressed the temporal dimension of aspirations and their evolution during and after the migration process (Boccagni 2017; Scheibelhofer 2017). Building on biographic interviews with immigrant domestic workers in Italy, Boccagni (2017) drew a comparison of his interlocutors' aspirations *then* (before migration) and *now* (after having spent many years in Italy). In the case of immigrant domestic workers, he argued that migration was typically an "aspiration leveler or a source of downward aspirations" (Boccagni 2017, 16) during which the relatively clear cut and socially accepted aspiration to leave was transformed in much more blurred and modest aspirations once the migrant faced the limited field of opportunity for

upward social mobility in Italy. However, Boccagni argued that beyond the typically predominant occupational aspirations that characterized the decision to leave, laid a great diversity of subjective aspirations in terms of contents (what is aspired), relational references (who is identified as the beneficiary of the aspirations), and space-time horizons (where and when the aspirations are projected) (Boccagni 2017, 14). Among other elements, Boccagni unfolded the complex way the notion of home intersects with these complex aspirational constructions. If for many migrants, returning home in the future was often a predominant aspiration, it was often balanced by the necessity for the same migrants to take into account and support the aspirations of their children whose desire to return to the country of origin of their parents happened to be much less obvious. Of course, such evolutions of aspirations were at least partially dependent of social hierarchies in term of class, race, gender, ethnicity or other factors.

In Europe, the life of immigrants and of their children have been traditionally addressed – both in the political and in the academic discourse – within very specific spatio-temporal configurations or chronotopes (Çağlar 2016). For example, the future of the Maghrebi workers who came in France and in Belgium after the Second World War was largely imagined – even by many migrants themselves – through the idea of a return in the country of origin. (Martiniello and Rea 2012; Sayad 1977). When it became clear that many immigrants were actually going to stay, the future of immigrant populations was framed in terms of integration. For the children of Maghrebi immigrants, the focus on 'return' versus 'integration' tended to frame their life within a limited geography encompassing the country of origin of the parents and the European countries of birth. This, I would argue, obscures the complexity of the international mobility practices of second and third generation Maghrebi populations and the representations of the future that are related to it. When the international mobility of this population was addressed it was mostly through the lens of the relation with the so called countries of origin. In this context, the international mobility of second generation migrants in Europe was mainly addressed in connection with questions about diasporic belonging and cultural identity (See for example Bidet and Wagner 2012 concerning the holiday's destination choice among second generation Algerians and Moroccans in France). By addressing migration practices that do not involve the country of origin and, most of all, by looking at the aspirations that are related to such migration practices, I aim at addressing the complexity of ways in which second and third generation of Maghrebi Europeans imagine their future in relation to Europe.

In the thesis, I address aspirations both as a pre-departure phenomenon and as a dynamic and evolutive phenomena. I use it as a tool to explore individual subjectivities but also as an analytical lens to analyze how people make sense of the different societal contexts they live in. In order to

do so, I start here with a relatively broad understanding of aspiration provided by Boccagni (2017, 2):

> "[Aspirations are] Emotionally thick representations of what one's future *might* and *should* look like, given the present circumstances and the experience of the past as re-codified from the 'here-and-now'." (emphasis in original).

This definition stresses both the strong subjective dimension of aspirations as well as its social grounding. The auxiliary verbs 'might' and 'should' emphasized by Boccagni suggest this social grounding by introducing not only a dimension of social probability (might) but also a dimension of social normativity and desirability (should). This is the delicate balance between aspirations, social structures, subjectivity and agency that I would like to address in the following section.

0.2.2 The production of aspirations: Aspirations, structure and agency

Boccagni (2017, 3) presents aspirations as a "valuable research field on the interaction between structure and agency; [or] put differently, between mutually interconnected structural factors (i.e. family backgrounds, education, social class, or employment) and individual orientation to social action." From this perspective the representations of what the future might and should look like cannot be understood only as the expression of purely individual and personal inclinations but rather as the expression of these inclinations within specific social environments that encourage some course of action and discourage others. Regarding this particular aspect of aspiration, Carling and Collins (2017) adopted a similar definition, reminding us that aspirations refer to "socially sanctioned behaviors" that depend on the development of "social mechanisms of diffusion" (Carling and Collins 2017, 916). Aspirations are socially and culturally embedded (Bal and Willems 2014) views of the future. This means that not all aspirations are equally valued in a given society and that they are always situated in specific systems of values, or, to use Boccagni's (2017, 9) words, in a "broader texture of pervasive social representations and shared aspirations." The effect of social representations is certainly central in the case of migration where people are projecting their aspirations to a destination that they often do not know from personal experience. Analyzing migration related aspirations thus requires taking into account the "socially shared and transmitted" imaginaries (Salazar 2011) that inform such aspirations.

A similar concern for structure-agency balance can be found in Hage's (2003; 2004) definition of hope as "the way we construct a meaningful future of ourselves" (Hage 2003, 15). Both Boccagni and Hage recognized the socially situated dimension of these representations of the future.

However, while Boccagni, in his 2017 article, placed his focus on the subjective expression of aspirations and its evolution during the migration process, Hage (2003; 2004) asked for further attention to be paid to the societal dimension of the construction of meaningful futures. Indeed, Hage suggested that the construction of meaningful futures was also a matter of societal production and distribution (Hage 2003). A society, Hage (2003, 15) argued, "works as a mechanism for the distribution of hope" which suggests that – within a society – some receive more hope, or different types of hope, than others. This type of socially produced and distributed hope was termed by Hage (2003, 15) "societal hope."

This relation between the development of migration aspirations and specific modes of distribution of societal hope is one of the themes running through this thesis. In this way, the thesis is an attempt to reflect on the relation between subjective desires and structural dynamics in the expression of migration aspirations, a relation that is at the core of my first research question. This is framed more broadly within what I call 'regimes of hope distribution'. In migration studies, the concept of 'regime' has been used in relation to mobility (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Shamir 2005). In Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) regimes of mobility, the word 'regime' conveyed two complementary elements. The first of these elements is "the role both of individual states and of changing international regulatory and surveillance administrations that affect human mobility," with the second element being "a notion of governmentality and hegemony in which there are constant struggles to understand, query, embody, celebrate and transform categories of similarity, difference, belonging and strangeness" (Schiller and Salazar 2013, 189). This second element is close to Shamir's (2005, 199) understanding of regime as a configuration of "cultural/normative global" principles. In this thesis, I apply this multidimensional understanding of regime to the notion of hope. In relation with migrants' aspirations, the regimes of hope distribution therefore designate the different institutional contexts that contribute to the unequal distribution of desirable futures and that migrants experience at different stages of the migration process. While I primarily engage with the notion of aspiration from a bottom up perspective (that is to say, by looking at aspirations as expressed by Maghrebi European people), the notions of societal hope and of regime of hope distribution refers to a more top-down dynamic. In this thesis, aspiration refers to the way people project themselves into the future. Societal hope, and regime of hope distribution, refers to the societal context within which these projections into the future happen and to the dynamics that tend to attribute or bar certain types of futures to certain types of populations. Hage's (2003) work on hope was mainly focused on its distribution in a national context. By using the concept of regime, I also try to expend the exploration of societal hope to other scales. Indeed, regimes of hope distribution can include local configurations of hope distribution (at the level of a city like

Montréal for example) as well as configuration of hope distribution that operate at a more transnational or global level as I suggest in the last part of this thesis.

If hope is understood as something that is unequally distributed across society, then, looking at the relation between aspirations and broader regimes of hope distribution demands paying attention to the social position of the actors within the different regimes. Phrased differently, it becomes important to understand what the factors are (class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality) that are central in the distribution of hope or – in my case – why a specific population (i.e. Maghrebi European youngsters) appear to receive less hope in Europe than others. This question of the intersection between social position, distribution of hope and the development of aspirations is at the core of my first and third research question. A useful concept to address such a question is the concept of social location as defined by Pessar and Mahler (2001). According to these authors, social location refers to "persons' positions within power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors." (Pessar and Mahler 2001, 6). The social location of a person can then be affected by local hierarchies of class, race, gender, sexuality or nationality for example, that confers some advantages to certain people and some disadvantages to others (Phillips and Potter 2006). In a context of migration, it is therefore central to address to what extent physical mobility translates into a different social location in the country of destination and to what extent such a shift in social location is characterized by the opening of new hopes.
Looking at different local hierarchies and at how they inform the unequal distribution of hope across society, I will touch upon the relation between the aspirations of Maghrebi Europeans and the processes of racialization that characterizes the different steps of the migratory career (before departure, during the migration process and once in Montréal). By racialization, I mean "the processes through which any diacritic of social personhood – including class, ethnicity, generation, kinship/affinity, and positions within fields of power – comes to be essentialized, naturalized, and/or biologized." (Silverstein 2005, 364). Race then refers to a "cultural category of difference that is contextually constructed as essential and natural" (Silverstein 2005, 364). The thesis will then include the question of racialization to the debate about the distribution of hope and the emergence of migratory aspirations in Europe.

At this stage, aspiration has been defined as a socially and culturally sanctioned behavior taking place into specific regime of hope distribution. My second set of research questions is focused on the translation of such aspirations into actual migration practices. In this context, it might be fruitful to address emigration aspirations in terms of dispositions in Bourdieu's sense of the word, disposition being defined as the main component of habitus; as a "way of being" or as a

"predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination" (Bourdieu 1977, 214). In this perspective and following Bourdieu's notion of "causality of the probable" (*causalité du probable*) (Bourdieu 2003, 332; Narotzky and Besnier 2014, 11) one could argue that the expression of emigration aspirations is in fact very much the product of internalized dispositions acquired in specific social positions (or location if you will). This is the argument made by Kalir (2005), who analyzed the migration of Ecuadorian persons to Israel in terms of what he called migratory dispositions. Kalir argued that the concept of disposition, while stressing both the significance of social structure and the capacity of the actors to make sense of the situation they are living in, nevertheless "clearly indicates that actors are constrained in the possibilities they see in front of them, and which they are likely to prefer." (Kalir 2005, 175).

Looking at how aspirations are developed, expressed and how they evolve through migration and through a variety of regime of hope distribution requires looking at how these aspirations are mediated during the migration process – another focus of my second set of research questions – and also after arrival at destination, which is considered in my third set of research questions. For a migrant, aspirations are regularly tested, evaluated, validated or rejected, encouraged or disapproved, during the migration process and this at multiple occasions involving a multiplicity of actors: family members during family reunions at home, algorithms during an online evaluation process, immigration authorities during the deliverance (or not) of a visa, the border officer during the border check, or an employer assessing skills in the country of destination. All of these more-or-less institutionalized practices, which involve different types of actor, can contribute in the 'channeling' and 'sorting out' of migrants' aspirations. In order to explore the diversity of actors and institutions that contribute to shape people representations of the possible futures, I build on the recent literature about migration infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) and arrival infrastructure (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) that focus on "the systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility" (Xiang and Lindquist 2014, 124). More precisely, I address the effect of different types of infrastructures in shaping people's perception of the possible futures, particularly in Montréal. I focus on two dimensions of these infrastructures as defined by Xiang and Lindquist (2014) – the regulatory dimension and the social dimension – in order to relate to the complex apparatus of administrative procedures and regulations that shape the migrants' possibility of moving and/or staying in Montréal, and to the various "combinations of objects, spaces, persons, and practices (Simone 2004, 408) that allow people to develop forms of stability in the city. Building on Bourdieu's (1986) definition of capital I describe how arrival infrastructures also work as platforms of capital conversion (Arnaut et al. 2020) allowing – for example – the conversion of cultural capital (e.g. a university degree or shared cultural reference related to the French urban

context of the *cité* for example) into social (e.g. local networks of acquaintances or professional networks) or economic capital (linked to good professional situations). In order to unfold what type of arrival infrastructures are central in the migration process of Maghrebi French and Belgians in Montréal, I address the question of the pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) that Maghrebi Europeans migrants follow when they arrive in Montréal.

Emphasizing the role of social structure, regime of hope distribution or infrastructure in the production of migration related aspirations is certainly crucial to understand the emergence of emigration projects within a given society. But then the risk is to fall into an over-deterministic approach which would imply an understanding of aspirations as purely conformist behavior reproducing the social order. In fact, when one looks at the two articles mentioned in the introduction above, one could easily draw contradictory conclusions depending on the chosen point of reference. Indeed, it is possible to see in the opinion pieces referred to above the elements of a dominant neoliberal discourse in which the international mobility of young, skilled people from the north is presented as a typical road for professional and personal success, promising the development of 'human capital' as well as a celebrated openness to 'other cultures'. From this perspective (regardless of the defiant tone of the articles) given the social location of young and educated Europeans in a globalized economy, the aspirations expressed by the authors could be analyzed as the result of internalized dispositions. On the other hand, however, as stressed above, the same emigration aspirations, when comprehended from the level of French society for example, can equally be interpreted as expressions going very much against what is socially expected from such young Maghrebi French. In this way, emigration aspirations can be understood not so much as the expression of internalized dispositions but rather as expression of a certain level of agency used to escape an undesirable situation at home.

From the previous paragraphs, it can be seen that my conceptualization of aspirations relies on a balance that defines aspiration as both structured by broad social dynamics but also – as I further argue in the last part of this work – as the location of a certain margin for agency. While being partially produced and/or structured by social dynamics, aspirations also constitute a form of surplus that is never fully defined and/or controlled by social structure. This is particularly clear in the case of the emigration aspirations that I describe in this thesis where aspiration appears both as the product of specific dynamics (such as the hegemony of a neoliberal representation of success) and as a means of overcoming other structural dynamics (such as the shrinking of local professional opportunities or the persistence of racial discrimination in Europe). In many way, this echoes the dual dimension of subjectivity as proposed by Casas-Cortes et al (2015, 83) and

its "[oscillation] between the subject as subjected by power and the subject as imbued with the power to transcend the processes of subjection that have shaped it."

0.3. Ethnographic research and methodology

0.3.1. The general research framework

As explained above, the three main questions addressed in this research are the following: what are the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans people? To what extent and how are these aspirations transformed, channeled, sorted, during the migration process? How do aspirations and the relationship with Europe as a desirable place for the future evolve after migration? These questions are addressed through a contextual analysis of the experiences, discourses and practices of the Maghrebi European migrants themselves. This research then largely engages with contemporary migration practices approached from below.

This research was conducted within the framework of the *Redefining Home* project which included two case studies: the migration of European citizens of Maghrebi Muslim origin toward Montréal and the migration of the same population toward Dubaï. Both cities have been chosen because they were two important poles of attraction for immigrants, including important populations of European immigrants. Seen from France or Belgium, both cities also seemed characterized – while in very different ways – by a cosmopolitan population and by policies regarding cultural and religious diversity that differed from Europe.

The case of Montréal has been chosen for different reasons. It is the second most populated city of Canada and the economic center of the province of Québec. The city is also characterized by the presence of an important population of French immigrants which (in 2016) constituted the fourth biggest immigrant community, with 38,170 people living in the Montréal area (Ville de Montréal 2016b). During the last decade, the number of French people emigrating to Montréal and to the province of Québec increased dramatically. According to the French consular authorities, between 2005 and 2019 the number of French people registered to the consulate of Québec city and the city of Montréal increased by 76%. Every year between 3000 and 4000 French persons are settling in the province as permanent residents, a figure which does not include all the students, temporary workers and young people benefiting from international

mobility programs.[6] As a French speaking province, Québec also developed an active policy of recruiting immigrants, aiming particularly at French speaking populations, in particular in France but also in Maghrebi countries (Haince 2010). This was a policy that was concretely implemented by the organization of information sessions in Europe, and also by participation at many events aiming at attracting young people and students in the province. The Québec province and – to a certain extent – the city of Montréal, were active actors in emulating the development of emigration aspirations among young French and Belgian populations.

Another reason to choose Montréal as a case study for this project was that Canada and the Québec province developed cosmopolitan and multicultural policies that were described as significantly different from France or Belgium. Indeed, Canada is frequently perceived as an example of the relatively peaceful coexistence of multiple ethnicities and religions; the notion of multiculturalism has been introduced into the constitution, therefore becoming not only a social reality but also a predominant social discourse (Wood and Gilbert 2005). The Québec province, partly against the Canadian conception of multiculturalism, developed its own notion coined as 'interculturalism' that – while recognizing the possibility for minorities to develop their own cultural life – nevertheless considers the Québec French cultural heritage as a point of convergence for all the populations of the province (Rocher and White 2014). The situation of the Québec province and of Montréal at the crossroads between the Canadian multicultural model, and the valorization of the French language and French culture, constituted an interesting setting to study the re-negotiation of Maghrebi French and Belgian's social position within a different regime of hope distribution. It also provided a good setting to address the redefinition of what it means to be French or Belgian in a non-European context.

Initially, the *Redefining Home* project was focused on the migration of young second generation Maghrebi Muslims coming from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. For various reasons I decided, over the course of my research, to narrow the terms of this initial category. The first choice that I made was to reduce my focus population to European citizens of Maghrebi/Muslim background coming from France and Belgium. This choice was mainly made for practical reasons. Addressing the migration of French and Belgian citizens to Montréal already involved a large amount of work and many journeys between Belgium and France. I felt that including the Netherlands within my multi-sited fieldwork would have complicated my work too much by

6 https://quebec.consulfrance.org/La-communaute-francaise-au-Quebec Last access: 03/06/2020

multiplying the types of setting to take into account. Another very important limit was my lack of knowledge of the Dutch language.

The second choice is related to the reference of the Maghrebi/Muslim background of my interlocutors. In this thesis, religion is not my main focus and I am more interested in people who share a common migratory heritage. This is why I refer to my interlocutors with the terms 'Maghrebi Europeans' or 'Maghrebi French and Belgians'. This categorization of my interlocutors is of course potentially problematic as it identifies persons born and raised in France or Belgium through a supposed relation with the country of origin of their parents or sometimes grand-parents. This reproduces an assignation of interlocutors with an identity that they might not necessarily consider as relevant for themselves. This touches upon the tension between categories of analysis and categories of practice (Brubaker 2013) that I address in more detail later in this introduction.

0.3.2. Research strategy and data collection

The fieldwork itself started in March 2015 and ended in June 2017. It was concretely organized in four research stages. An exploratory fieldwork was conducted in the context of departure (Belgium and France) from March 2015 to November 2015. A first trip to Montréal was organized from November 2015 to June 2016. From June 2016 and April 2017 I returned to Europe, and from April 2017 to the very beginning of July 2017 the final trip to Montréal took place.

The reasons for such fieldwork organization lies at the crossroad of scientific choices and the material, social and relational conditions that characterized my situation at the time. It is certainly useful to spend some time explaining the last of these here. Indeed, the fragmentation of my fieldwork was a way to make the research tessellate more with my family life. More specifically, the succession of shorter stays – as opposed to one long stay – in Québec was designed to make the distance with my partner less difficult. This personal situation also impacted the way I conducted fieldwork in Europe, and I tended to favor short day trips in Belgium and France (in the latter case, mainly in Paris) for interviews and observations, rather than longer stays. This organizational strategy in Europe, balancing work and family obligations, echoes what Ong (2003) called 'commuter fieldwork'. Such commuter fieldwork obviously led me to favor some interlocutors over others (those living in Paris over those living in the less accessible cities of France for example) during my fieldwork in Europe.

Despite (or because of) these personal constraints, the organization of different back and forth movements between Europe and Montréal also helped me in the exploration of the diachronic dimension of Maghrebi European migrations between Europe and Montréal. The extensive time spent in Europe allowed me to conduct interviews with people who had not actually migrated to Canada but who were aspiring to do so. It allowed me to extensively explore a usually understudied part of the migratory process: its emergence as a desire and its preparation (Mescoli 2014). In the same manner, this allowed me to address the impact that such emigration desires had on Maghrebi Europeans' representations of their life world, even if most of these emigration desires might never be translated into actual international mobility (Carling 2013).

Interviewing people and conducting observations both in Europe and in Montréal helped me to gain insight on different stages of the migration process: the pre-departure stage but also the post-migration period and sometimes the return in Europe, with all the in-between situations including short vacation periods in Europe or transit situations before another emigration.

Finally, dividing my fieldwork between trips to Montréal and research in Europe also helped to implement a multi-sited dimension for my ethnography (Marcus 1995). While the practical and empirical limits of multi-sited ethnography have been described by others (for example Hage (2005)) and certainly applied in my case, my multi-sited strategy gave the possibility of following a limited number of my interlocutors in their back-and-forth movements between France, Belgium and Montréal. This dynamic of "following the people" (Marcus 1995, 106) was implemented by meeting with them in different European and Canadian contexts, and following them at different stages of their migration process.

The fieldwork was focused on an analysis of the migration process as experienced by the Maghrebi European migrants themselves. It was built on an ethnographic exploration of migrants' practices as well as an exploration of how migrants made sense of their practices and of their situation at different stage of the migration process. In order to do so, I used a series of qualitative methodological tools that are frequently used in anthropology.

The first type of tool used during this research was the semi-structured interview. These interviews were usually recorded. They typically started with me presenting my research. They were semi-structured in the sense that I prepared a number of topics that I wanted to address during the discussion. The order in which the topics were addressed however very much varied depending on the specificity of the interaction. The discussion was typically very open and I let my interlocutors unfold their own story relatively freely, allowing them to develop thematics that

I did not initially plan to address. Such an openness in the structure of the interview played an important role in the inductive dynamic of the research, allowing me to identify new themes during the fieldwork and to gradually refine my empirical focus.

In total, 95 interviews were recorded over the course of my fieldwork. 16 were recorded in Belgium, 17 in France and 62 in Montréal. These interviews can be divided into two main categories.

The first category could be described as exploratory interviews. They are interviews conducted – often at the beginning of my field trips – with personalities or groups that I identified for their involvement either with the Muslim and Maghrebi community (either in Europe or in Montréal) or with the migrations between Europe and Canada. Such personalities and groups included – among others – leaders of Islamic associations, members of Muslim students' associations, or members of institutions offering mobility programs to young people (such as the *Office Franco Québécois pour la Jeunesse* – OFQJ). These exploratory interviews were used in different ways. The interviews with personalities involved in the Maghrebi community in Europe, my goal was to "test" in some ways the relevance of my research topic but also to be able to "enter the field" and to collect my first contacts with Maghrebi Europeans aspiring emigrants. The interviews with members of institutions dealing with the migration of young European to Canada, Québec and Montréal were used as a way to have a first general view of the regulations and dynamics structuring such migration in particular in what regards the administrative procedures and steps that one has to go through to move to Montréal.

The second category of interviews are those conducted with Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal or aspiring to move to Montréal. They constitute – together with my participant observation notes – the main material of my research. Such interviews were mainly conducted with two groups of people. The first group of people could be described as aspiring emigrants. They were people who manifested the desire to leave Europe to Canada but who were not engaged in concrete steps to realize such desire at the time of the interview. The focus of the interviews with this group was mainly a discussion about the reasons they planned to leave Europe and also about their aspirations and expectations regarding a possible life in Montréal. The second group of people with whom I conducted interviews were European citizens of Maghrebi origins living in Montréal. I met these people either in Montréal or during their vacations back home in Europe. Here, the focus of the interviews was broader, including the reasons they planned to leave Europe but also their experience of the migration itself, their life in Montréal and their plans for the future.

The interviews with Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal or aspiring to had a strong biographic dimension due to the collection of life stories. The timespan covered by these life stories varied from one interview to another but always exceeded the story of migration. Very often, when asked to present themselves and their and their journey to Canada, the interlocutors started by precisely describing things such as their early youth, their school years or their first experiences of intra-national mobility. As migration scholars, we tend to consider migration as a highly significant moment in the life of a person. The variety of topics – beyond migration related topics – addressed during these biographic interviews reminded me that transnational movements (or international migrations) were not necessarily the most significant movements (Hage 2005) from the point of view of my interlocutors. Addressing pre-departure trajectories during the interviews allowed me to contextualize migration desires and practices within complex biographies.

Looking at the evolution of migration desires and practices through the medium of semi-structured biographic interviews certainly raises some difficulties. As has been discussed in the literature, the relation between reality (what happened), experience (how what happened is perceived and understood) and expression (how experience is told in a specific context and a specific audience) is a complex one (Eastmond 2007). This is of course true when it comes to tracing the emergence of aspirations and their evolution through time. Indeed, as Boccagni (2017) has argued, in the context of an interview the past is always reconstructed from the present and the future is always projected from the present. The influence of present life circumstances impacts the way people make sense of their past and also contributes in the reconstruction of the narrative regarding past aspirations. In the same way, the representation of the future also impacts how people make sense and describe their present situation. Following Boccagni's (2017) suggestion, I used questions about the personal motivations for leaving as a way to approximate my interlocutors' aspirations. But even then, difficulties sometimes occurred. For example, one of the elements that I noticed during the interviews was a tendency for my interlocutors to 'naturalize' their decision to come in Montréal or in Canada. When asked about their migration to Montréal, many of my interlocutors started by using sentences such as: "I always wanted to come to Canada" or "I always felt an attraction to Montréal." Part of my effort during the interviews was to make sense and to unfold such a sense of obviousness. This was often made possible through relatively long conversations (sometimes carried on throughout multiple interviews) allowing the interlocutor to progressively engage with an analysis of their own trajectory. The question of the evolution of aspirations was often approached by asking my

interlocutors to what extent Montréal met their previous expectations and also what their plans were for the future.

Beyond the biographic dimension, the interviews also included many thematic questions regarding, for example, my interlocutors' experience of Montréal's social context as well as their relations with different populations in the city. These questions were important in order to contextualize their perception of the future within their present life circumstances.

A second type of tool that was used during the research was participant observation. Observation was conducted in two main circumstances. The first of these might be defined simply as the every-day life practices of my interlocutors. Concretely, this means that I regularly met my Maghrebi European interlocutors during mundane everyday private or public activities including lunch, suppers, parties, sport practice, civic and associative events, football watching or professional activities. Sometimes this involved simply hanging around (Whyte 1969) with people. These types of every-day observations allowed me to access many life stories and anecdotes through unrecorded and informal discussion as well as to observe the interactions of my interlocutors with different populations in Montréal. It also allowed me to see how various configurations of identities and aspirations were enacted in different social contexts in Montréal.

A second type of circumstances included events that frequently emerged from my interlocutors' account of their migration. Such events were, for example, information sessions organized in Europe by the Québec authorities to attract immigrants or international salons during which representatives of different national and international organizations promoted international mobility programs. The selection of such events was made because they often constituted moments during which my interlocutors built their representation of the destination country as well as their expectations and aspirations regarding their migration. It is important here to state that my observation of such events was very much conducted from the perspective of a participant and that, even though interviews were occasionally conducted with representatives of migration authorities, these interviews did not constitute the core of my research. Participation in such events, however, allowed me to gain insight into the complex ways aspirations and migration projects are both encouraged and valorized but also channeled and sorted out during the migration process. During these events, I frequently collected a variety of documents including posters, leaflets, brochures, magazines and pictures that I included in my analysis, in particular in relation to the production of specific imaginaries of migration and of specific representations of Montréal.

Regarding participant observation, I sometimes took very few notes during the observation in itself, especially when it occurred during informal events such as social meetings among friends or acquaintances. The situation was different for more formal events such as information sessions, where the public was actually supposed to take notes. Usually, just after (ideally, the same day or if impossible, the day after) my participation in formal or informal events, I went back to my computer to write an extensive description of my observations based on my fresh memories of the event and on the notes I took in my field book.

Regarding interviews, I proceeded as follows: just after the interview, I usually wrote a first description of the discussion based on my fresh memories. This included a short presentation of the interlocutor and of his journey to Montréal. It also included some elements of the interview that I found particularly surprising or interesting. After my first stay in Montréal and when my fieldwork was over, I started processing my recorded data by listening to all the recorded interview and by completing the notes that I initially took. During this process, I tried to identify the different thematics raised during the discussion and incorporated this in my note. I did not fully transcribe all the interviews. Instead, after this first listening session, I selected a small number of interviews for full transcription. These were interviews that I found particularly illustrative of the different observations I had made during my fieldwork and which I identified as good material to build a number of cases that would be used as the main support of my writing. Based on the notes and on my second listening and coding of the interviews, I then partially transcribed the interviews by identifying passages and quotes that were related to the thematics that I was to discuss in the thesis.

During my research I also collected material such as journal articles, interviews with politicians, and other publications related to the ongoing debates (in Belgium, France and in Québec) about ethnic and religious diversity. I did not however conduct a systematic reading of the Belgian, French or Canadian press. The material included in this thesis was selected because it was discussed by my interlocutors during interviews and/or informal conversations. This means that more than a statistically representative picture of public discourses about ethnic and religious diversity in these different contexts, the material presented in this thesis gives information about the experiences that my interlocutors have had about the ongoing debates happening around them, and how it affects their world views and their representation of the future.

All my semi-structured interviews were conducted in French. My observation accounts and my field notes were also routinely taken in French. The quotes and excerpts reproduced in the thesis

are my translations. For anonymization reasons, the names of my interlocutors have been changed and some personal details have been kept voluntarily imprecise.

0.3.3 Introduction of the sample

Criteria and method of selection

Regarding the constitution of the sample of interviews and as introduced above, I based the initial selection of my interlocutors on the following criteria: People who 1) were born and/or grew up in France or in Belgium and 2) who had parents or grand-parents coming from a Maghrebi country (mainly Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia) and 3) who either moved or were aspiring to move to Québec and in particular Montréal. Following my goal to embrace the whole migratory process (from the emergence of migratory aspirations to the incorporation into Montréal society), I chose not to include administrative status in Montréal as a criteria of selection. Indeed, as I will make clear later in the thesis, statuses that are normally excluded from the analysis of migration (such as the status of visitor) are often central in the migration patterns of young European moving to Canada. In the same way, as mentioned in part 0.3.1, I preferred to select my interlocutor on the basis of the country of origin of their parents and grand-parents rather than on the basis of other identity markers such as religion. Indeed, I realized that if my interlocutors were regularly identified by others as "Muslims" this was not always the way they identified themselves. Of course, selecting people on the basis of the origin (and therefore of the migration to Europe) of their ancestors also contributes to assigned identities that were not necessarily shared by my interlocutors (as illustrated in part 0.4.3). However, I found this criterion easier to work with as it referred to the history of my interlocutors' family and therefore appeared as a more operational criteria to contact my interlocutors.

Starting with the three criteria mentioned above, I selected my interlocutors in order to obtain a diversified sample of profile in terms of gender, class and migratory statuses. My goal here was not to collect a statistically representative sample but rather to be able to address a variety of situations in order to assess how different factors were informing the emergence of emigration desires in Europe and their evolution during the migration process.

I used mainly two approaches to identify and contact potential interlocutors for interviews. A first approach was to use what is sometimes called "snowball" or "chain referral" sampling (Biernacki et Waldorf 1981). After an interview, I usually asked my interlocutor if he or she had other persons in mind who might fit with the aim of my research. The idea was to use my interlocutors'

knowledge of the field to collect – through their networks – additional participants for my research. This approach had a few limits. For example, it was highly dependent on my interlocutors' understanding of my research objectives and of my research focus. Many times, the persons who were referred to me were not fitting the profile I was looking for. Another limit was that – because the sampling was based on the networks of my interlocutors – it ran the risk of orienting me toward some profiles whilst excluding others from my data. For example, a young interlocutor who arrived in Montréal only a few years ago had much more chance of referring me to a person in the same age group and in the same situation rather than an older person living in Montréal for an extended period of time. In order to nuance this last potential problem, I progressively had to control the snowball sampling effect, mainly by: 1) refining my description of the contacts I was interested in during the interviews in order to have specific profile referred to me and 2) by selecting – especially during my second field trip in Montréal – the persons to contact among the pool that I collected during the previous interviews. In other words, the selection of my interlocutors typically went from quite broad at the beginning of my research to more selective in the later phases.

Presentation of the sample

I was able to collect the story of fifty people mainly through recorded interviews but also through notes in my field notebook. The sample includes eighteen women and 32 men. Ten interlocutors where from Belgium and forty from France. seventeen had Moroccan origins, 25 had Algerian origins and eight had Tunisian origins. Among my interlocutors, three were born from mixed couple in terms of national origin. Two were born from Franco-Algerian parents and one from Franco-Tunisian parents. My sample was quite diversified in terms of age but the majority of my interlocutors were between 25 and 35 years old when I contacted them (as shown in Table 1). From this perspective, the sample was significantly younger when compared for example with the characteristic of the whole French population living in Montréal (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration 2019).

Table 1: Interlocutors by age groups

Age Group	**20-24**	**25-29**	**30-34**	**35-39**	**40+**	**No Information**
Number of interlocutors	7	13	19	8	3	0

In terms of level of education (Table 2), the majority of my interlocutors (80%) had a tertiary education degree or were engaged in tertiary education when I met them. In this regard, the level

of education of my interlocutors was coherent with the level of education of the general French population living in the Québec province (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration 2019). The relatively high proportion of tertiary educated people among my interlocutors is largely due to the way Québec authorities select immigrants. Despite this relatively high level of education within the sample, some of my interlocutors only had a secondary degree (vocational and/or general) and one person did not have a degree at all, either from tertiary or from secondary level education.

Table 2: Interlocutors by level of education

Level of education	**No degree**	**Secondary (general)**	**Secondary (Technical and professional)**	**Tertiary (Academic)**	**Tertiary (Technical and professional)**	**No information**
Number of interlocutors by level of education	1	1	6	30	10	2

While very often being tertiary educated, many of my interlocutors also came from a working class background.[7] Indeed, as illustrated by Table 3, the fathers of nearly half (24) of my interlocutors were working as skilled or non-skilled blue collar workers or were employed in lower level white collar jobs (such as salesman). Five interlocutors had fathers working as small employers (in the construction sector for example) or self-employed (independent contractors, shop owner, and so forth). Five had fathers working in higher level positions including engineers, schoolteachers and IT technician. Unfortunately, information was lacking for fifteen of my interlocutors. Here, the relative importance of the working class background of my interlocutors contrasts with their comparatively high degree of education. This illustrates the trajectory of upward social mobility that many of them had undertaken, especially through education, and which will inform their aspirations for the future as explained further in Chapter 1.

7 Here, I use the profession of the father as a proxy to identify the class background of my interlocutors.

Table 3: Interlocutors by class background[8]

Profession of the father	Managers, Professionals, Technicians and administrative occupations	Intermediate employees	Small employers and self employed	Lower white collar workers	Lower technical and routine operations	No information
Number of interlocutors by profession of the father	5	1	5	3	21	15

The people I met were at different stages of their migratory process. Ten people were interviewed before they engaged in concrete steps to move abroad. Twelve persons were living in Montréal for less than two years, which is the duration of the very popular working holiday visa which often constituted the first step of a more durable migration in Canada. Seven persons were in Montréal for two to five years and thirteen for more than five years. Precise information was missing for eight of the people I met during interviews. This diversity in terms of duration of stay was also echoed by a diversity in terms of status of immigration in Canada:

Table 4 : Number of interlocutors by status

Type of status in Canada	Temporary status in Canada					Permanent status in Canada		No information
Status in Canada	No legal status	Visitor	Youth Mobility Program (including WHV)	Temporary worker visa	Student Visa and Post study visa	Permanent Residence	Canadian citizenship	
Number of interlocutors by status	1	2	8	3	5	16	1	4
Number of interlocutors by type of status.	19					17		4

As Table 4 shows, my sample was relatively evenly distributed between people living in Montréal with temporary statuses and people living in the city as permanent resident of Canadian citizens. Unsurprisingly, interlocutors with permanent status were often older (over thirty years old) than interlocutors with temporary status. This illustrates the fact that when it comes to migration to Canada, temporary statuses such as the working holiday visa are often a first step in accessing

8 I use here a simplified version of the European Socio-Economic Classification (ESeC) to draw the different categories of professions. A detailed description of the different categories can be found in Rose and Harrison's article: "The European Socio-Economic Classification: a new social class schema for comparative European research" (2007).

permanent statuses (see section 4.1.4). Only one of my interlocutors was living in Montréal without any legal status but it is very probable that many other French and Belgian citizens were in the same situation in the city.

In terms of employment status, my sample also present a range of diverse circumstances. Among the ten people I met in Europe and who aspired to go to Montréal, three were still students. Two were unemployed. Three had a job and two were working independently or in entrepreneurial activities.

Table 5: Interlocutors living in Montréal by employment situation

Employment situation	**Student**	**Unemployed**	**Employed**	**Under-employed**	**No information**
Number of interlocutors by employment situation	1	8	24	5	2

In Montréal (Table 5) my interlocutors also had different employment situations. Among the forty interlocutors living in Montréal, the majority was working (mainly as employee but for a minority also as independent workers). However, some of them had professional situations that were either under their level of qualification or that they described to me as being not fully satisfactory. This was the case for the five people I put under the category 'under-employed' in Table 5. This dimension of my sample allowed me to question the notion of upward social mobility that was often associated with the migration to Montréal.

0.4. Research conditions: Socio-political context, positionality, categories and limits

Above, I broadly described my research strategy, the main methodological tools that I used during the research, and the sample. In the following lines, I would like to describe further the implementation of my research strategy in Montréal, and in particular the limits of my research design.

0.4.1. The political context of the research and its effect on the fieldwork

My ethnographic fieldwork ran from the very beginning of 2015 to the summer of 2017. In France and Belgium, this period was characterized by a very tense socio-political context, especially

regarding the situation of Islam in Europe. After several Islamist attacks perpetrated in both countries (attacks on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in May 2014, an attack on the offices of French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, an attack in Paris in November 2015, and the March 2016 attacks in Brussels), the public debate was saturated by discourses associating Maghrebi minorities, Islam and terrorism. The situation of Islam in Europe was mainly addressed through the thematic of so-called 'radicalization'. Such totalizing associations were not limited to the European context and travelled within the Canadian-European French-speaking space. The socio-political context impacts the way individuals perceive the researcher and the nature of his research, and in Montréal, the saturation of the public discourse by the thematic of radicalization sometimes led people to associate my research with such a theme. It was the case for example, during this short online discussion with a member of a Muslim association in Montréal:

> "JM: Hello Amina, thanks for your thanks for your rapid answer ☺ My research mainly addresses the case of European Muslims who leave Europe for Québec. I am interested in several questions: what are the factors which push some people to leave Europe? And once arrived in Québec, what are the links they maintain (or not) with their country of birth or, in some cases, the country of birth of their parents? […]
>
> Amina: I am not sure I understand very well because looking at your questions, it seems that there is a bias. Reading your questions, one can clearly see that you want to understand better the phenomenon of radicalization (it is not explicit from the w[…]ay you are writing it but it is implicit ☺
>
> JM: Ah no, no, it is not related to radicalization
>
> Amina: I would just like that you start on pertinent bases and despite the fact that I am personally very attached to my country of origin I am not intending to radicalize… There is no link between the two ☺"
>
> Facebook discussion, November 2015

At the time of this discussion, I was trying to make contact with the association in which Amina was involved to find potential interlocutors. In this case, even if I did not mention radicalization at any point in our discussion, this was nevertheless the topic that Amina identified my research with. Even though the misunderstanding with Anima was quickly resolved after some more explanation about my research topic, it nevertheless illustrates the effect of the political context on the perception of my research by potential interlocutors.

I would just like to add here that the tense socio-political context might also have played not as an obstacle but rather as a facilitator in a certain number of cases. Indeed, in a context where the voices of the Maghrebi Muslim minorities were largely absent from the mainstream media debate, discussing with a researcher might have been considered by some as an occasion to express their point of view on topics that were not directly linked with my research focus. For example, in many interviews, interlocutors took some time to give me their own analyses regarding the recent terrorist attacks, or the so-called phenomena of radicalization.

During fieldwork I dealt with this specific context by progressively emphasizing migration between Europe and Canada as my primary interest when I was presenting my research to my interlocutors. I frequently introduced my focus on French and Belgian citizens of Maghrebi origin as a secondary element in my research. This is the choice of words that I – for example – would typically use to present my research to a new interlocutor: "Hello, I am a researcher and I study French and Belgian people who leave Europe and come to Montréal. And I am focusing more specifically on people from Maghrebi origins."

0.4.2. The ethnography and my position in the field

Gold (1958) developed a description of four theoretically possible roles or positions that social scientists can endorse while conducting field work: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant and the complete observer. Each of these positions are situated in a theoretical continuum. They imply different types of balance between the researcher's involvement in the life world of his interlocutors and his position as an observer who aims at collecting data for scientific purposes. They also imply different types of balance between the role that the researcher assumes during their fieldwork, and the researcher's self. The two extremes of such a continuum are the positions of the complete participants and of the complete observer. In the position of the complete participant, the identity of the researcher as researcher and their research project are not known by the people they interact with during the research. The researcher chooses to engage in the type of activities that his interlocutors are engaging in without presenting himself as a researcher, hoping to gain insight into the everyday life of the population he had chosen to study. In the position of the complete observer, the identity of the researcher is also not known by the people they chose to focus on. Instead of engaging in the activity of his interlocutors, the researcher actually tries to exclude all social interaction with them.

Between these two extremes, Gold (1958) identifies two positions. The first of these is the participant-as-observer. In this situation, the researcher chooses to actively engage with the activities of his interlocutors. But contrary to the complete participant situation, both field worker and interlocutors are aware that they are in a field work relation. In this type of situation, the uneasiness that both the researcher and the interlocutors might experience about the presence of the researcher is expected to diminish through time, allowing the researcher to progressively participate more in the every-day life of the interlocutors and therefore gain a richer insight into the social dynamics they decide to study. The second position is that of the observer-as-participant. In this position, the identity of the researcher as researcher is also known by his interlocutors. But in this case the researcher is usually much less involved with participating in the life of his interlocutors. This type of approach typically consists in one-visit interviews or occasional participation in events without an attempt to engage in long term or repeated contacts with the interlocutors.

During the course of my research, my own engagement with the field balanced between these latter two positions. Regarding my role as a researcher, I chose to systematically present myself as a researcher during my interactions with interlocutors. During recorded interviews for example, I typically started the interview by presenting myself as a researcher and by explaining the goals of my research. During more informal conversations, I also tried to present myself quite clearly as a researcher, especially when the conversation was oriented toward my research interests. This was not particularly an issue in my exploration of the French and the Belgian populations in Montréal, as questions about professional activities or the reasons for moving to Canada were a relatively common way to start a conversation. In Montréal, I also tried to engage on a regular basis with certain groups of people that I met during the first month of the fieldwork. Among these people, I developed privileged relations of trust with a small number of people that progressively became allies (F. Weber and Beaud 2003). They were the persons that were the most aware of my research and of its advancement. This was for example the case of Nacim, a French man of Algerian origin in his thirties. After I met him in a fast food restaurant and talked to him about my research, Nacim and I met regularly both in Montréal and in Europe over the course of my research. Nacim was much more involved in my research than most of my informants in Montréal. Being aware of my research topic Nacim frequently helped me to attend social events and gave me contacts for interviews both in Montréal and in Paris. When we were together with a group of people, he often asked our interlocutors their reasons to come to Montréal, knowing that it was one of the central questions in my research. In order to test some of my ideas and interpretations as my fieldwork progressed, I also shared sometimes shared them with him. Allies such as Nacim were more involved in my research than most of my other

interlocutors. Progressively, repeated contacts, interactions and meeting also contributed to drew us closer in terms of trust and mutual sympathy. However, such a privileged relationship did not necessarily mean that my allies were the people that I was the most comfortable to work with in terms of research. Going back to the case of Nacim for example, as our relationship drew closer and as I continued to meet him in social events and informal contexts, our interactions progressively entered the realm of friendship. At one point, I actually realized that – given our pleasant, informal interactions – I would feel very uncomfortable to ask him to do a recorded interview, something that I was planning to do since we first met in Montréal. While this friendly relationship made the use of traditional research procedures more difficult, it also opened rich potentials by allowing me to share with my interlocutors experiences that I might have been unable to share by staying in a traditional posture (Tillmann-Healy 2003).

At the same time that I was endorsing the position of participant-as-observer in parts of my research context, I also approached others in a more distanced way, closer to Gold's (1958) idea of observer-as-participant. For example, I conducted many one-visit interviews, especially in my European fieldwork where I often had to travel to reach my interlocutors. In Montréal too I utilized such one-visit interviews, even if the more spatially and socially defined dimension of my fieldwork there regularly allowed me to meet some of my interviewees in multiple contexts. The position of observer-as-participant was also the position that I adopted during my observation of events organized by the Québec authorities in Europe and Montréal. While I tried to communicate in advance my identity as a researcher to the organizers of such events, and while I also presented myself as a researcher during the informal conversations taking place during these events, my presence was too short and too episodic to build durable fieldwork relations with the organizers or with the other actors involved in the working of such events. I approached these events more as a context to make observations about the migration process and its dynamics rather than with the intention of producing an in-depth understanding of the work of the events themselves.

The way I positioned myself as a researcher during the research cannot be disconnected from my position within the many power hierarchies characterizing my fieldwork. I would like, in the following paragraphs, to describe several dimensions of my social position in the field and the way they influenced my work as a researcher.

As my primary interest was the study of migration aspirations and migration practices, I should start by saying that, as a French citizen in his 30s' holding a university degree and working as a PhD student, my own concerns with migration matters were much less important than the concerns of many of my interlocutors. Being enrolled in a prestigious European university with

the right contacts within the Canadian authorities, I was given access to the right papers which allowed me to avoid applying for a visa for my two stays in Canada. In other words, my movements between Europe and Montréal were relatively easy and did not require much administrative work, which was not always the case for my French and Belgian interlocutors. During my fieldwork in Europe in particular, I met people who were aspiring to go to Montréal but unlike myself, did not possess the diploma, socio-professional skills or institutional support that would have made their migration possible or – at the very least – easier. This specific situation occasionally produced uncomfortable power relations between me – an academic, who did not even plan to stay in Montréal but was nevertheless allowed to come and go apparently without trouble – and some of my interlocutors who – despite their ardent desire to go to Canada and to make sacrifice to reach their goal – constantly had to face the fact that Canadian authorities were actually not very interested in them coming in the country. I have in mind in particular my relation with one of my interlocutors, a Belgian man in his twenties that I interviewed at the very beginning of my research. He had a hard time in Belgium as a student and was hoping to be able to leave the country as soon as possible. I remained in contact occasionally with him throughout my research while I was moving back and forth between Canada and Belgium and during that time he was still in Belgium. At one point, our relation (mainly sustained through social media) started to evolve. Indeed, during one of our online discussions, he – politely – started to begrudge me about the fact that I was not giving him information about the possibility to emigrate to Canada. From this moment onward, he contacted me several times to ask me questions and advice about emigration. I chose to deal with this by sharing with him general and publicly available information such as the program of the information sessions organized in Belgium by the Québec immigration authorities, or the webpage describing the different immigration programs. This new mode of interaction did not necessarily ease our fieldwork relation. He became frustrated, realizing that he did not fit the profile of the migrant that most of these programs were aimed at. From my side, I grew uncomfortable and I was reticent to give him my opinion about what kind of program he should engage in or what kind of strategy he should choose as I felt that this would take me too far-away of my role as a researcher.

In Montréal, the situation was different as I mainly interacted with people who – like me – have been able to cross the border. In this context, my position as a 'mover' myself mainly helped in bringing me closer to the experience of my interlocutors. Indeed, even before starting my PhD I had already experienced several episodes of international mobility: as an ERASMUS student during my Master and as a working holiday visa holder in Canada in 2009-2010. I shared many commonalities with the life trajectory of a good number of my interlocutors in Montréal. Many (but not all) of the people I met in Montréal were tertiary educated like me and roughly the same

age (from the mid-20s to the mid-30s). Moreover, being of French origin, I also shared with my French interlocutors many common cultural references. As children, we saw the same TV programs and read the same comic books. We had many music references in common. We followed comparable school courses, even though in sometimes very different schools in terms of social contexts. As young adults we also experienced the same enthusiasm for destinations like Québec and mobility programs such as the working holiday visa. Of course, this does not mean that there was no significant difference between my life trajectory and the life trajectory of my interlocutors in Montréal. However, these points of commonality, especially in a foreign context where power hierarchies are potentially – at least partially – rearticulated, helped me to rely to the experience of my interlocutors and – in a way – not to arrive on the field as a complete outsider.

For a researcher, working in a field that they are – at least partially – accustomed with through their own social experience is not without difficulties. On the one hand, such a situation can make the access to the field easier for the researcher. But on the other hand, it requires the researcher to be able to take some analytical distance with the phenomenon that he is looking at. Indeed, as Weber and Beaud (2003) argue, the researcher who focuses on a topic he is familiar with before the research runs the risk of falling in the illusion of 'knowing everything', using preconceived ideas to analyze the practices of their interlocutors while elements that would have struck another researcher as surprising (and therefore interesting) might appear so banal that it does not deserve any further exploration. Having experienced forms of international mobility before – including in Montréal – I ran the risk of interpreting my interlocutors' aspirations and practices from the perspective of my own experience of (temporary) migration and the personal aspirations that I projected abroad during my previous mobility experiences. Part of my fieldwork was an effort to "make the mundane strange" (F. Weber and Beaud 2003, 37, my translation). Of course, reading ethnographic works focusing on migration practices similar to those I was studying was a way to distance myself from my own perspective and to give attention to aspects that I might have previously neglected. In the field, I also tried to question what I first found relatively obvious: why does it seem so evident to my interlocutors (and to myself) that Canada is a desirable destination in the first place? Why do I feel so confident in my ability to travel back and forth between Europe and Canada while some of my interlocutors are much more worried? Why does it seem so evident to me and to my interlocutors that international mobility is in itself something good?

If I had many social characteristics in common with my interlocutors, my position was also characterized by some differences, one of them being the fact that I do not have any Maghrebi or

Muslim background myself. In a way this also helped me into putting some analytical distance between myself and my fieldwork because in significant ways, my interlocutors' experience of living in Europe and their aspiration to leave were at least partially different to mine. In many ways I would say that this form of social distance helped me during the interviews, as it often encouraged my interlocutors to describe with great precision experiences that they might have mentioned more casually with another researcher (for example the cases of the discrimination experienced with the police or in school in Europe).

It is important here to also mention my position as a man. In terms of access to interlocutors, I tried to interview both men and women during my research. My corpus of recorded interviews however includes more men than women respondents. 34 out of the 95 recorded interviews were conducted with women. At the analytical level I did not address extensively the effect of gender on the production and the evolution of emigration-related aspirations, which is one of the limits of this work. In this way, my position as a man in the field has certainly shaped some of my approach to my topic, a shaping that remains largely unexplored in the present work.

0.4.3. Dealing with my research categories in the field

As I described before, the focus of this research was placed on the migration practices of second generation European citizens of Maghrebi Muslim background. This multi-dimensional category (European citizens, of migrant origin, from Maghrebi background, and of Muslim tradition) was already a quite complex research category to begin with, but it was also a difficult category to use in the field. When I went to the field, looking for participants and trying to build and sustain fieldwork relations with them, I had to transform this abstract category into concrete field-work relations. Very often the way I was perceiving people – through my lens of the social scientist interested in migration – did not fit with the way those people were perceiving themselves. As a short example, this quote from the very beginning of an interview with Sonia; in the quote, she reacts to the presentation of my research as focused on the migration of Europeans of Maghrebi immigrant origin (*issus de l'immigration Maghrébine*):

> "Sonia: So, I don't like when someone tells me that I am of immigrant's origin because it is not me who is of immigrant origin, it is my parents. I didn't leave a country to come to another country [France]. So first, I think that some words are not appropriate when someone talks about me who was born in… In Paris.
>
> JM: OK yes.

Sonia: And for me it is something that is difficult to swallow.

JM: OK, yeah, yeah.

Sonia: Because when you say 'of immigrant origin' you create a difference, whereas I am not different…"

Field interview, 23/05/2017, Montréal

In the quote above, Sonia actively contests being categorized as someone 'of immigrant origin'. In this specific case by describing my research project to Sonia, and the reasons why I contacted her, I was at the same time assigning her to a specific identity category that, at the same time, was defining her as an 'other' among the French population. These forms of categorization, as the quote shows, did not always fit with the representation that my interlocutors had of themselves, and was sometime actively resisted by the people I met in Montréal. This quote illustrates the gap between what Brubaker (2013) calls the categories of analysis and the categories of practice. Or, more precisely, it illustrates the tensions and misunderstandings that can arise when a category of analysis (elaborated as a category for *scientific* analysis) is also a category of practices (used to identify oneself and others in social interactions). However, for Brubaker (2013) researchers should not stop using "heavily loaded and deeply contested categories of practice" as categories of analysis. Rather, they should adopt a critical and self-reflexive attitude towards their categories. More fundamentally maybe, researchers can "make the category […] the *object* of analysis, rather than simply using it as a *tool* of analysis." (Brubaker 2013, 6 emphasis by author). This is what the thesis does throughout its exploration of Maghrebi Europeans' emigration aspirations and practices. More specifically, the thesis addresses the ways that categories of ethnicity, class, religion or nationality are renegotiated and rearticulated through migration and in different regimes of hope distribution. I included the ambiguity of my research categories and the difficulty I had using them during my fieldwork into the analysis. This is particularly the case regarding the third part of this thesis when I had to confront my categories in the Montréal social context. In this way, transforming my research category into an object of analysis allowed me to reflect on the multiple identity re-articulations that I encountered in the city.

An element related to this question of research category is my choice to focus my research and the selection of my interlocutors on a categorization based on the migratory heritage rather than on religious markers such as Muslimness. This of course, does not mean that religion or forms of religious categorization were not central in the experience of the persons I met; Indeed, the religious dimension is definitely present across the thesis, playing out in different ways. It was a marker of exclusion impacting the life of many of my interlocutors both in Montréal and in

Europe, but also as a fulfilling element and as a support of aspirations, or as an element of shared cultural references that contributed to the carving out of pathways of incorporation in Montréal. My choice to use migratory heritage as my primary category of analysis does not mean that I exclude the religious dimension to my discussion. Instead it means that I try to unfold the relation between the religious and with other dimensions (for example class or citizenship) in the production of specific migration aspirations and with specific experiences of migration itself.

In a more formal way, I also propose to use the term 'Maghrebi Europeans' or 'Maghrebi French' or 'Maghrebi Belgians' to refer to my interlocutors in the thesis. I take here my inspiration from Fernando (2014). In her research on French youngsters of Muslim faith, Fernando chose to use the terms Muslim French over the more common French Muslim label. One of the reasons for this choice was to counter the prioritization of Muslim identities over the French identity, a prioritization that did not fit with the way Fernando's interlocutors perceived themselves (Fernando 2014, 62–63). I follow the same idea here. By using the term Maghrebi French or Belgians, I intend to reflect the fact that many of my interlocutors were strongly identifying themselves as French or Belgian and asserting this identity, especially during the interviews.

0.5. Structure of the thesis

As an initial note, it is important to state that some parts of this thesis have been used as a basis for two publications (Mandin 2020; 2020). In order to avoid confusion, the parts and chapters which include some published material are identified by a footnote indicating the reference of the relevant publication.

The thesis is structured as three main parts that respectively address my three sets of research questions. They also represent three stages of the migration process: the pre-departure stage, migration in itself and finally the incorporation process at destination. This structure has been chosen because it allows me to address the development and evolution of aspirations at different moments of the migration process. However, it is important to say that this structure also fails to translate the complexity of the migratory pathways of some of my interlocutors. Most of the time, the migration patterns of the Maghrebi Europeans I met were much more non-linear and fragmented than the structure of the thesis might suggest. Back and forth movements between France, Belgium and Montréal were common, as well as the succession of short stays before a more long term settlement. These non-linear patterns are frequently underlined in the thesis, for example when introducing some of my interlocutors. I also address this theme in some of the

chapters and describe the relation of this non-linearity with the development of specific representations of the future.

My datasets are integrated into the chapters in different ways. Contextualized quotes from interviews are frequently included in the text as well as pictures, social media posts and internet publications. These pieces of material are usually quite short and are integrated into the analyses developed in the different sections. Part of my data is also presented through a set of longer accounts that typically focus on a specific interaction or on a specific episode of observation occurring during research. These accounts are typically several pages long and are included in the text using italics. This longer format allows me to provide more context and to give a sense of the richness of the material that I collected during the research. I also tried to include in these accounts a sense of my own positionality in the field by describing my own point of view within the depicted interactions and/or events and the way I accessed them. These accounts include many elements taken directly from my fieldnotes but they also include elements of interpretation. By using this format, I wanted to make my action of interpretation visible for the reader. In the sections where they appear, such long accounts typically introduce more analytical paragraphs.

In the first part of the thesis I address my first set of research questions: *what are the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans people? What kind of future is envisioned and what are the places where this future is imagined? And how is Montréal envisioned in this imagined geography?* Chapter one focuses on the emergence of emigration projects among young – often highly educated – Maghrebi French and Belgians. It also unfolds the aspirations that are associated with such emigration projects and contextualizes them within a specific regime of hope distribution. I argue that migration projects can be analyzed as an exit strategy to overcome a sense of material and symbolic immobility in Europe that I thematize in terms of stuckedness (Hage 2009). Chapter two addresses more specifically where the emigration projects of my interlocutors were projected: where the future is perceived to be. Put differently, it investigates the specific mental geography within which the aspirations of young Maghrebi Europeans are expressed. I argue that this imagined geography is mainly constituted of global cities clearly identified as hub of economic dynamism. Very often, this imagined geography of opportunity does not include the Maghrebi countries of origin as desired destination to fulfill my interlocutors' aspirations. This chapter also addresses the specific situation of Montréal in this imagined geography as a place combining the representations of the American dream and as a place more accessible because of its French speaking population. By developing emigration aspirations and by projecting them in specific geographies, my interlocutors contribute to the

destabilizing of the chronotopes within which they are frequently assigned. They also participate in contesting the status of Europe as center of economic, social and democratic progress.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the transformation of migration desires into actual international mobility, relative to my second set of research questions: *to what extent and under what conditions do these aspirations translate into actual migration? And to what extent and how are these aspirations transformed, channeled, and sorted during the migration process?* It contextualizes the emergence of emigration practices within the distribution of specific dispositions as well as within a complex migration infrastructure. In chapter three I argue that the expression of emigration aspirations cannot be separated from a reflection on dispositions and more specifically migratory dispositions (Kalir 2005). Through the description of a number of cases, I unfold how, for many of my interlocutors, seeing migration as a possibility and as a field of aspirations was already the result of the acquisition – often outside of their family social environment – of specific knowledge, competences and dispositions. I argue that these dispositions also echo a dominant discourse that tends to celebrate the international mobility of young, skilled people. Chapter four addresses the question of the migration itself and how the aspirations of young Maghrebi French and Belgians are ‘filtered’ or ‘channeled’ in the process. This channeling process is the result of complex configurations of regulations, administrative processes and public policies that I thematize as “migration infrastructure” (Xiang and Lindquist 2014). Such infrastructures filter people’s aspirations by distinguishing – through multiple types of discourses and practices – good and bad migrants. This filtering practices also contributes – while never exhausting the complexity of people’s aspirations – to shape the self-representation of Maghrebi Europeans migrants by validating the aspirations of some and resisting the aspirations of others.

The third part of the thesis focus on Maghrebi Europeans’ experience of Montréal and address the third set of research questions: *how do aspirations and relations with Europe as a desirable place for the future evolve after migration?* Chapter five investigates the very diverse pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) carved out by Maghrebi French and Belgians in the city. Building on the concept of arrival infrastructure (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) it describes the new social positioning Maghrebi Europeans found themselves in the social context of Montréal, especially when interacting with Maghrebi and European populations in the city. The chapter illustrates the great diversity of pathways of incorporation followed by my interlocutors and the importance of class, ethnicity and nationality in such pathways. The chapter also illustrates the creative dimension of such pathways that contribute to a redefinition – from below – of the characteristics associated with Frenchness and French

culture in the city. This constitutes in a way the new social settings from which new aspirations are expressed. These new aspirations are the focus of the sixth chapter which investigates new experiences of stuckedness in Montréal. It is argued that the re-articulation of dimensions of class, origin and religion in the Montréal context contribute to open new representations of the future among immigrants in the city but also new experiences of socio-professional stagnation and discrimination. I argue that rather than systematically producing a form of "downward levelling" (Boccagni 2017: 11) of aspirations, the difficulties experienced in Montréal often translated into renewed migration aspirations toward new destinations identified as still more promising.

Part 1. Existential stuckedness and the development of emigration aspirations

The first part of this thesis addresses the following question: what are the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans people? What kind of future is envisioned and what are the places where this future is imagined? And how is Montréal envisioned in this imagined geography? I address these questions in two chapters.

The first chapter focuses on the experience that young Maghrebi French and Belgians have of their own country of origin (i.e. France and Belgium) and on the relations between these experiences and the emergence of emigration aspirations. I would like to explore these emigration aspirations in relation to particular sets of experiences, always experienced and narrated subjectively but also always taking place in the everyday actualization of a specific regime of hope distribution. More specifically, I discuss the relation between the development of specific representations of the future and structural dynamics including – for example – the aftermath of the 2008 financial and economic crisis or the persistence of discriminatory practices against Muslim minorities.

In a second chapter, I address the social imaginaries that underlie these emigration aspirations. In other words, I try to answer the following questions: what kind of future is envisioned and what are the places where this future is imagined? And how is Montréal envisioned in this imagined geography? In order to answer these questions, the chapter provides an exploration of the "global awareness from below" (Vigh 2009, 92) that is developed by my interlocutors. By doing so, I unfold alternative imagined geographies of opportunities that unsettle the traditional depiction of Western European countries as preferred destinations for migrants. Instead, I argue that during my research, Europe is often described as a space 'in crisis' and that the future is located in alternative destinations such as Montréal.

Chapter 1. When the future is not as expected: Existential stuckedness and the projection of hope abroad.[9]

This first chapter addresses the following question: *what are the factors that inform the development of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans people?* Another way to phrase it would be: *why does emigration becomes a desirable perspective for the future for some Maghrebi French and Belgians?* I start this thesis by addressing the emergence of emigration projects among Maghrebi French and Belgian populations and the factors that inform this emergence. I particularly focus on the specific aspirations that are related to these projects and that are unfolding in a specific configuration of hope distribution in Europe. In the following sections, I start my exploration of the emigration projects of my French and Belgian interlocutors by providing a contextualization of the emergence of such projects within my interlocutors' experience of the French and Belgian regimes of hope distribution. I then describe the main characteristics of the aspirations that are pursued through these migration projects.

I argue that the development of emigration projects among young Maghrebi Europeans, and the projection of their aspirations abroad, tend to nuance the traditional perception of Europe as a place of hope. Indeed, as I describe, the emergence of these projects is linked with a sense of existential stuckedness (Hage 2009) in Europe and with a projection of aspirations to socio-economic mobility and recognition abroad. Emigration aspirations are then often connected with an aspiration of self-realization outside of the social constraints that are experienced in Europe.

The first section provides an introduction to the chapter through the description of an encounter with Fouad, one of my interlocutors during the research. This ethnographic account is based on what I could observe during my interaction with Fouad and on what Fouad himself told me, and is meant to give a sense of the complex configurations from which emigration aspirations emerge. It puts together, without a specific analytical effort, different elements that emerged from our interactions and that I transcribed in my field notes. Sections two, three and four are focused on different types of experiences that inform the development of emigration aspirations. I describe the sense of 'stuckedness' that is connected with many of the emigration aspirations expressed

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9 This chapter includes elements that have been published in the following article: Mandin, Jérémy (2020) "Aspirations and hope distribution in the emigration of Maghrebi Europeans in Montreal" in *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.

by my interlocutors. The last section addresses the main characteristics of the aspirations that my interlocutors pursue through their emigration projects. I argue that one of the central elements of such aspirations are the desire for self-realization.

1.1. Personal aspiration and the shrinking of local opportunities for social mobility: The case of Fouad

*In June 2016, after my first stay in Canada, I came to Paris to visit Fouad, a young French man of Algerian descent whom I first met in Montréal during an event organized in the French immigrant association '*Union Française*'. Fouad's father was a driver and his mother worked at home. He grew up in a working class neighborhood (a* cité *in French) in* Le Blanc Mesnil, *a* banlieue[10] *of Paris.[11] He held a technical degree in optical care. Like me, Fouad came back to France a few weeks before our meeting but unlike me, his return was not entirely voluntary. His stay – organized with the support of a local association – was supposed to last longer than it actually had. Due to an error from the association, Fouad was forced to enter Canada with a tourist visa and therefore to reduce his stay from one year to only several months. His experience in Montréal was not his first experience of international mobility. Beyond the family holidays back in Algeria, Fouad also went to Malta and Ireland, still with the support of the same association where he discovered the different programs designed to support the 'international experience' of young people.*

Arranging our meeting by text message, we decided to meet near the place where Fouad lived: in a city of the North-Est of Paris' banlieue. The city, situated just outside the Parisian peripheral boulevard, was characterized by a harsh socio-economic situation. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE),[12] the median income in the city was way lower than the national one. In 2014, the poverty rate in the city was over 35%, more than twenty points over the national figures. At the same time, the unemployment rate of people aged between fifteen and 64 years old (fourteen percent at the national level) was much higher than twenty percent. This difficult situation is reflected in the urban landscape of the city. When I went out of the metro station where Fouad and I have decided

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10 In France, the term *banlieue* refers to the municipalities or the districts situated around big urban areas (for example Paris).

11 In France, the term *banlieue* refers to the municipalities or the districts situated around big urban areas (for example Paris).

12 https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1405599?geo=COM-93008+FRANCE-1 Last access: 03/06/2020

to meet, I noticed the old and degraded aspect of most of the urban infrastructure surrounding me. From the Metro station, one can see an ageing shopping mall with a concrete façade, numerous buildings of collective housing. The surroundings of the Metro stations were quite busy in this early afternoon. Some young taxis drivers were chatting outside their cars.

*When Fouad arrived, we decided to take a walk. Fouad guided me in this city where he spent most of his life. The primary and secondary schools that he attended when he was young were very close to our meeting place. It was also in these surroundings that he spent a lot of his free time with his friends. Our first destination was the shopping mall that was visible from outside the metro station. We entered the ageing, concrete building. Inside the mall, many of the commercial spaces were empty. The shops present in the mall were of a modest size and seemed to sell mainly low quality products except for the presence of a well-known franchise of sport shoes shops. During our walk inside the mall, I asked Fouad about the evolution of his city. He answered: "I have the feeling that it is dying." As an example, he shown me the shopping mall and explained to me that many of the shops and coffee bars that he knew as a child and during his youth had closed and have not been replaced. Despite this, employment opportunities existed as Fouad explained to me. Indeed, the city hosted an important number of administrations and public institutions, including a cultural center a library, a police station and a tribunal. However, these jobs were rarely occupied by local inhabitants. Many workers of the various administrations were highly educated people who worked here but who lived in other cities and neighborhoods of higher socio-economic profile. Fouad explained to me that this phenomena was visible at the end of the afternoon when all these highly skilled professionals were rushing toward the metro which would bring them home. For the less privileged and less educated inhabitants of the city, few job opportunities seemed to be available locally and many, Fouad explained to me, were making their 'own business' (*faire leurs affaires*), a way to describe the informal (and sometime illegal) work that some people relied on. When we passed by the cultural center of the city, Fouad told me that, just like jobs in administration, the public frequenting the cultural center was not composed of local inhabitants. He reflected on the security arrangements which were usually implemented when a show was scheduled, as if the cultural center was not intended for the people living here but for a more bourgeois public who rapidly left the city after every presentation.*

Fouad learned early enough that the pathways for social and professional upward mobility were scarce and not easy to access for someone like him, coming from his city and especially

from the city public housing projects. During one of our previous encounters in Montréal, Fouad had mentioned his experience of secondary school where – despite his interest in artistic and literary disciplines – the professors insisted on guiding him toward vocational and technical training. Unable to pursue his aspirations through a standard school curriculum Fouad developed alternative strategies. He managed to attend writing workshops in an association located in Paris. This eventually led him to win several writing contests and – as he put it – to build self-confidence. Fouad also regretted the lack of figures of success in his city. Successful people, he explained, were either involved in illegal activities or had left the city once they earned enough and never returned. For the others, Fouad told me, the city was "like a magnet." The lack of good jobs and – more generally – of social mobility opportunities, forced the less privileged inhabitants to rely on local networks of relations and solidarity.

*Beyond the lack of professional and social mobility opportunities, Fouad also regularly mentioned the tense atmosphere that he experienced in the city, in particular during his interactions with the police. During one of our discussion, he precisely described his first control (*contrôle de police*) when he was seventeen years old. He was in a nearby city with a friend when policemen drove toward them, suddenly stopped with the handbrake, and pressed them against a wall starting to search their bodies. The police were apparently looking for the suspects of a robbery. "We were fitting with the 'profile'" explained Fouad with bitter irony. He told me about the humiliation that he felt this day, as well as during other police controls that he experienced.*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Fouad did not imagine his future to take place in his city. He mentioned how local social workers tried to encourage him to participate in the selection exams to become a social worker himself but he rapidly dismissed this idea, arguing that he would not like to do paperwork all day. Instead, Fouad – at the time of our meeting – was engaged in a relentless quest for further opportunities of international mobility. The energy that he was spending in this quest, as well as the multiple projects that he pursued in order to leave, contrasted with the impression of temporal suspension and spatial holding that transpired from our visit. The day before our encounter, he was attending an information session at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris about the programs for international mobility. A few weeks later, when I spoke with him on social media, Fouad explained to me that he had enrolled in a training program in law and that – thanks to this program – he hoped to be able to take part in an international exchange program and go abroad. Another day, he spoke to me about how he hoped to be able to go to Peking thanks to another

program. This projection of the future abroad was translated in how Fouad organized his life in the city. Indeed, when I met him, he was not trying to find a stable job and he had not looked for an apartment here or in Paris. He was living instead with his parents and he was only looking for temporary jobs, waiting for the possibility to leave.

His experience in Montréal was not his first experience of international mobility. Beyond the family holidays back in Algeria, Fouad also went to Malta and Ireland, still with the support of the same association where he discovered the different programs designed to support the 'international experience' of young people. But when I first discussed with Fouad what had led him to Montréal, he mentioned still another kind of spatial mobility: his experience of participating to a writing association which made him travel from the banlieue were he was living to the center of Paris. For Fouad, this experience of spatial mobility was also an experience of social mobility, to a much more bourgeois and highly educated environment.

In the course of my doctoral research, I encountered many French and Belgian people of Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan origins who decided to leave France or Belgium, more or less permanently. Many of them had a life that differed from the life of Fouad in several aspects. Some of them grew up in more well-off neighborhoods, other achieved higher levels of education, and some had a good professional position before moving to Montréal. Most of the people I met, however, shared several kinds of feeling with Fouad. The first one was the strong feeling that a satisfying level of social mobility could not be achieved locally, in Belgium or in France. Or, in other words, that the place they were calling home was not really providing hope for a better future. The second was the idea that international mobility could be a way to bypass such a lack of local hope for social mobility opportunities and to achieve – abroad – aspirations that seem impossible to fulfill at home. The third thing was an idyllic representation of international mobility. During my research, international mobility was virtually always imagined in relation to positively connoted values such as the openness to other culture, the opportunity to learn new languages, new skills and to become familiar with different cultural habits.

In the following sections, I focus more closely on some of these shared feelings. Indeed, I address the question of the emergence of emigration projects in Belgium and in France, through the lens of the aspirations of Maghrebi French and Belgian. I mainly address such emigration projects through the prism of my interlocutors' relations with the future. In other words, I try to analyze how Maghrebi Europeans perceive their future in Europe and how this perception of the future contributes to the development of migration projects. By doing so, I also provide an insight into how my interlocutors "make sense of their life worlds" (Bal and Willems 2014, 254) and in

particular of their local realities in France and Belgium. I address Maghrebi Europeans' perception of the distribution of hope in France and in Belgium and their perception of their own situation regarding how hope is distributed across society.

In the course of this chapter, I argue that the emergence of emigration projects among French and Belgian citizens of Maghrebi descent is linked to a sense of existential stuckedness (Hage 2009) in Europe. This sense of stuckedness exists in a context where the capacity of European societies to provide the descendants of immigrants with hope for a desirable future is experienced as shrinking, producing a displacement of my interlocutors' aspirations to socio-economic mobility and recognition in foreign places such as Montréal. In this sense, I nuance the traditional representation of the European emigrant as an 'expat' whose mobility is the result of inclinations such as a taste for adventure, a cultural openness or an 'entrepreneur mentality'. Instead, I would like to emphasize the importance of the every-day experience of structural phenomena of precarisation – both at the material and symbolic level – in the development of emigration projects. It is worth noting that in this first chapter, I am more interested in the aspiration pursued "through migration" than in the aspiration "for migration" in itself (Carling and Collins 2017, 917).

1.2. 'La galère': The aspiration to a stable socio-professional life and the experience of stuckedness

> "Sonia: And then, the troubles (*la galère*) began.
>
> JM: OK and so when you say 'troubles', it was a time when you were looking for a job, right?
>
> Sonia: Well in fact, I ended up in this company where I have been harassed, in September 2009. Between 2009 and 2011, I did some temporary contracts. It was really very, very short contracts. One month, two months, etc.
>
> JM: So, precarious, not something which could…
>
> Sonia: Precarious exactly. I was actively looking for a job though, and people were satisfied with my work. And there was always something that didn't work. And so… And it started in January 2011, I don't remember the month, then, impossible to find any job.

> When I say impossible, it was impossible! So impossible that after a while, I stopped looking because my motivation was so low and all."[13]

Field interview, 23/05/2017, Montréal

Sonia is a 37 year old woman that I met in Montréal. She comes from *Saint-Denis,* a city on the periphery of Paris, and holds a bachelor degree in education. At the time of the interview, she was living in the city for the second time and she was unemployed. In the above quote, she explains how she decided to apply for a Québec visa for the first time. The expression that she is using to describe her professional situation in France before coming to Montréal, *la galère*, was regularly used by interviewees in both Europe and Canada. Typically, this expression is used to describe a situation of precarity characterized either by a situation of unemployment or by a succession of temporary jobs. It is important to note that *la galère* does not only involve an economic and material instability but also, very often, a social and psychological one. Sonia explains this later in the interview:

> "Sonia: I was unemployed for one year and a half, I… I couldn't endure it actually. At one point you feel almost pathetic.
>
> JM: OK, OK yes.
>
> Sonia: You see? You see the others moving forward and you, you are here 'OK, well listen…' You always wanted an expatriation… A try, a try abroad, well it is the occasion to try."

Field interview, 23/05/2017, Montréal

Sonia's account of her precarious situation in Saint-Denis and in Paris illustrates several interesting elements, in particular when she refers to her seeing others 'moving forward' in life. First, it reminds us that *la galère* as an experience of precarity can only make sense in relation to the experiences of others. In other words, it is because Sonia sees other people moving forward with their lives that her own experience becomes so difficult to endure. Indeed, in many interviews, the precarity experienced by my interlocutors was compared with what they consider as normal and stable modes of life or, using Boccagni's words, what their future should look like (Boccagni 2017). During an interview, Leila, a thirty-year-old woman from *Brunoy*, a city of the

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13 All of the interviews were conducted in French and translated into English by me.

Parisian suburbs holding a Master in management and employed at the moment of the interview describes some features of what one's future should look like:

> "Leila: In France, it really is a job issue you see, because you study, you play by the rules… I did five years in University, this is something, and I don't find a job. Then, I get depressed! You can't avoid the truth, I was gaining weight, I was doing nothing anymore, you have time when you are completely demotivated, you regret the curriculum you chose. And you don't have… I turned thirty, no job, no permanent contract, no way to think about an apartment, a loan… You don't have… You don't have perspective."
>
> Field interview, 22/03/2016, Montréal

Coming close to her 30s, Leila was expecting a form of socio-professional stability that is illustrated by her reference to the CDI (a form of permanent contract) and to being able to buy an apartment. Leila's frustration is not only produced by the difficulty she has in trying to access better life conditions in France. It is also produced by the fact that – as she expresses it – she "played by the rules." Indeed, Leila's aspirations, in terms of her socio-economic situation, is built on a central expectation: the expectation that a high level of education would ensure a certain level of material and economic comfort.

Sonia's and Leila's accounts of their situation in France before moving to Montréal illustrate what Hage (2009) calls a sense of existential stuckedness. In his work, Hage (2004; 2009) suggested that a desirable life supposes a form of symbolic upward mobility also defined as existential mobility. The nature of such mobility and its destination might vary depending on the type of society. At a more fundamental level this sense of existential mobility can be identified as the experience of 'going somewhere' (Hage 2009), with this 'somewhere' being potentially defined differently depending of the type of accomplishments a specific society values. According to Hage (2004) for example, under capitalism, symbolic upward mobility is often translated into a desire of upward social mobility (for example accessing better jobs or better wages) and access to more commodities, aspirations that echo Sonia's and Leila's conception of a desirable future. The opposite of the experience of existential mobility is a sense of existential immobility or existential stuckedness (Hage 2009), that is, the feelings of being stuck in a particular situation and being unable to fulfill aspirations of mobility. It is important to note that, as Hage points out, existential stuckedness in capitalist societies does not always coincide with a complete lack of upward social mobility. Indeed, some of the aspiring emigrants that I met during my fieldwork had actually been employed in Europe before leaving, some of them with stable contracts. However, most of them

seemed to share the idea that more could be achieved abroad, and in particular in Canada. In other words, existential stuckedness is less about not moving at all but more about not moving as fast or as far as expected.

This sense of stuckedness was one of the important elements encountered during my interviews with emigration candidates. This idea that one's aspiration for a stable socio-economic situation is difficult to fulfill resonates with the objective shrinking of social mobility opportunities in Europe, in particular after the financial and economic crisis of 2008. Between 2007 and 2015 (the beginning of my research) for example, the unemployment rate rose from 7.7% to 10.4% in France and from 7.5% to 8.5% in Belgium. Similarly, the youth unemployment rate rose respectively from 18.9% to 24.7% and from 18.9% to 22.1% between 2007 and 2015.[14] At the same time, situations of underemployment were also on the rise in France and especially for workers under thirty years old.[15] The diminishing of socio-economic options for French and Belgian citizens in general is aggravated by the fact that the descendants of immigrants also face experiences of inequality and discrimination when it comes to the access to the job market.

In February 2016, the French National Institute for Demographic Studies (*Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques* – INED) published a report titled *Trajectoires et origins: Enquête sur la diversité des populations en France* (Beauchemin et al. 2016). The report, based on the results of an extensive survey called *Trajectory of Origin* (abbreviated to TeO), explored the trajectory of immigrants and their children in French society. The survey included 21,800 questionnaire-based interviews that had been conducted with first generation immigrants, second generation immigrants, as well as with inhabitants from French overseas territories and persons from the 'majority population' (i.e. people with no identified migrant background). A survey of such scale was quite new in the French context, the last example being back in the 1990s (Tribalat 1995).[16] Among other things, the report addressed the inequalities that immigrants and their offspring

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14 Numbers from OECD: https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm#indicator-chart Last access: 03/06/2020
15 For France, see for example the report: DARES (2017) "Emploi et chômage des 15-29 ans en 2015. Un jeune sur dix au chômage".
16 When the TeO survey was designed and proposed, it also triggered vivid debate in France because of some of the questions that were included in the questionnaire, in particular questions regarding how people perceived their skin color, questions about religious belonging, and questions about origin. Such questions and in particular the question focused on the ethno-racial characteristic of an individual are highly problematic in the French context. In fact, the CNIS (National Concil of Statistical Information), the authority in charge of the labelisation of such survey, forced the research team to remove the questions regarding the skin color from the questionnaire. An anti-racist association (SOS racism) also criticized the survey.

were facing in different domains of social life including employment and housing. Regarding employment, the report showed that the offspring of immigrants from Maghrebi countries were over-exposed to unemployment, even when characteristics such as age, level of education, or social origin were statistically controlled. Children of immigrants were also over-exposed to part-time jobs and to lower wages compared to the non-immigrant population. But more interestingly for us, the research showed that children of immigrants were also over-exposed to what the authors call an "*indétermination statutaire*" (or statutory indetermination) (Brinbaum, Meurs, and Primon n.d., 221). This statutory indetermination is characterized by the fact that the offspring of Maghrebi immigrants have more chance of experiencing episodes of unemployment during the first years of their working life than the population without an immigration background. In other words, beyond the over-exposition to unemployment and lower wages, the French citizens of Maghrebi origin have to deal with a greater uncertainty regarding their future.

Building on data from the Belgian Labor Force Survey (LFS) and from the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (CBSS) covering the period between 2008 and 2014, Piton and Rycx (2020) compared the employment outcomes of first and second generation immigrants in Belgium and found similar results. These showed that the children of immigrants from the Maghreb continued to face difficulty in accessing the labor market. Their research also found that while the employment penalty was generally decreasing between the first and the second generation immigrants, this was not the case for immigrants coming from the Maghreb and their children. Their employment penalty remained stable (Piton and Rycx 2020, 12–13) across generations, which suggested a lack of intergenerational upward social mobility, at least in terms of position on the job market. In surveys like the ones administered by TeO or Piton and Rycx (2020), the link between this unequal access to stable socio-professional futures and practices of discrimination is difficult to corroborate with certainty. However, research based on a testing methodology tend suggest that discrimination based on race and/or origin is still common practice among employers (For France, see DARES 2016).

Sonia's and Leila's accounts of their situation in France before moving to Montréal illustrate one dimension of the sense of stuckedness (Hage 2009) shared by many of the Maghrebi Europeans I met during the research: the lack of opportunity for upward socio-economic mobility and – more broadly – the increasingly uncertain outcome of aspirations to a stable economic situation. The situation of Sonia and Leila illustrates a gap between personal aspirations for a stable and rewarding life and the post-crisis regime of hope distribution as experienced in France and in Belgium. In this sense, their sense of stuckedness illustrates the failure of a major dimension of

the distribution of hope within capitalist societies: the "ability to maintain an *experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility" (Hage 2003, 13 emphasis by author).

Another dimension of Sonia's and Leila's account is that the emergence of emigration aspiration was associated with considerations regarding the transition to adulthood. The relation between migration and the transition to adulthood has been explored in the social sciences in different ways. Some authors have shown that for some young people coming from developed countries, (temporary) migration could be lived as a 'self-searching' experience, allowing young people to 'postpone' their passage to adult life and extend their 'subjective youth' (Kato 2013). Without denying the central dimension of the 'self-searching' dynamic in the emergence of emigration projects (addressed further in section 1.5.) the material conditions of existence constitute a central dimension of Sonia's and Leila's account of the emergence of their migration aspirations. The frustration experienced by Sonia while "looking the other moving forward [with their life]" and Leila's anxiety experienced while "turning thirty" with no stable job indicate that their aspiration to leave was deeply connected with the impossibility to access the standards of living that are socially expected in becoming an accomplished adult. This situation of extended transition between youth and adulthood, characterized by under-employment and uncertain futures have been called "waithood" (Honwana 2014, Hashemi 2015, Ungruhe et Esson 2017) by researchers working on the youth of Africa and the Middle East and their relation to enduring situation of crisis. The emergence of emigration aspirations among my interlocutors often intervened during these moments of extended transition when leaving the education system or having experienced a few years on the job market. They were waiting for uncertain opportunities for better employment, decent housing and the possibility of building a desirable life. In that way, the experience of stuckedness shared by many aspiring migrants in France and in Belgium was also an experience of being stuck into a never ending transitional state of waithood, thus suggesting commonalities between the situation of my interlocutors in Europe and the experience of other young people in situation of enduring socio-economic crisis across the world and in particular in the global south.

1.3. 'We will never be home': Stuck into the racialization of Maghrebi Europeans as other

1.3.1. 'France is like my mother': Emigration projects and the question of belonging

Alia, is a dynamic young woman, born from Moroccan parents and living in Paris. She holds a technical degree in management and she is an entrepreneur. When we meet, in a restaurant of

the Place de L'Opéra in Paris, she is wearing an elegant Islamic headscarf. During our interview, she describes to me some of her projects in which she tries to bring together part of the north African culture of her parents but also a bit of this bourgeois culture (called '*bobo*' for '*bourgeois bohême*') that she learned to be familiar with. At the very beginning of our discussion, after I had explained who I was and the different objectives of my research, Alia started to describe to me her different professional projects. The focus rapidly turned to her experience as a French woman of Moroccan origin and of Muslim faith.

> "Alia: […] anyway there is, in the attitude that I have, and that my friends have and that [my friend] that you had over the phone, it is this attitude where we are actually asking ourselves: 'Should we go? Should we not go? We stay? We want to stay. Should we leave? We are lost. It's really… I always make this metaphor: for me, France is my mother. Or my father, we can pick either one. But at the end it is like one of my parent who does not recognize me as his child. And I have this image and so it is really something that hurts me. It is something that really hurts. I think that for my friends, it's the same. We are all… Yes, it is like a parent who says 'no, I don't recognize you, you are not my child, go away!'"

Field interview, 23/09/2016, Paris

Alia had already experienced period of living outside France. She lived for one year in Morocco after the terrorist attacks on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, which profoundly shocked her, in part because she was familiar with the work of one of the artists (Cabu) working for the journal, an artist that she considers to be one of the cultural references of her childhood such as the TV programme *Club Dorothée*. In Morocco, she lived a relatively bourgeois lifestyle in a trendy neighborhood of Tanger. If she enjoyed the experience, she also experienced a feeling of *décalage*. This sort of feeling has already been pointed out in pioneer works about children of immigrants (For example Sayad 2006). An interesting element however is that during the discussion, Alia explained to me that one conclusion made during her trip was that she could consider leaving France, but only for another 'occidental country'.

Alia's quote above also contains a reference to France as a parental image. This illustrates an important point: the fact that the vast majority of the persons that I encountered during my research felt a strong sense of attachment and a strong sense of belonging to their country of birth. As a French researcher living in Belgium, I experienced on a daily basis my cultural proximity with my interlocutors. After all, we grew up in the same countries, we watched the same TV programs when we were children, we heard about the same political news and the same

music bands. In other words, we shared many cultural references. These observations illustrate the fact that the emigration projects of my interlocutors cannot be understood as a sign of cultural differences and incompatibility, or, to use a formula present in many dominant discourses, as a sign of a 'lack of integration'. One of the questions that I regularly asked the people I met was where they considered their home (*chez-soi* in French) to be. The most common answer was France or Belgium. Sometimes, my interlocutors mentioned their city of origin or the neighborhood where they grew up instead of their country. In any case, the interviews largely illustrate a strong belonging to the French and/or Belgian society. This belonging is not only a question of statement. It is also reflected in the life story of my interlocutors through their insertion into the school system which often allowed them to achieve a better level of education than their parents or through their political and civil involvement.

1.3.2. Stuck into otherness

> "Tayeb: Well because my parents, they came [to Belgium] in another context. They came asking something. […] So they didn't have the same expectations, they were more job seekers and so they are grateful to Belgium because you know, Belgium allowed them to escape poverty. That is the case for my father, […] it allowed him to have a decent life, to make some money, etc. So, I think that they are grateful. But what they don't understand is that Belgium cannot offer us what it has offered them. Why? Because their expectations are different from ours. […] But also because we are born in Belgium. We have this idea that the country has to accept us as we are while they [his parents] didn't come with this idea that Belgium had to accept them. They still consider themselves immigrants. We are born here, so if [Belgium] continues to identify us as immigrants, it means that we will never be home!"
>
> Field interview, 16/01/2016, Montréal

Tayeb is a man from Belgium whose parents emigrated from Morocco. He grew up in a city – Antwerp – where the Flemish far right party *Vlaams Belang* (translated as 'Flemish interest') was well established which, for him, translated into an early experience of explicit racist discourses. He moved to Montréal first as an exchange student and then started to work in several HR companies. He studied at a business school and holds a Master degree. At the time of the interview he was working in a company specialized in human resources in Montréal and was also involved in teaching activities. During the interview, he frequently attributes his experiences of discrimination and social stigmatization to his being 'Arab' or a 'Muslim' in Belgium. In the quote

above, Tayeb also shares his exasperation with the fact that – despite being born in Belgium – he is continuously identified as an 'immigrant'. As illustrated by Tayeb's quote, the sense of being somehow stuck in a precarious and uncertain situation is not only expressed in relation to material and/or economic aspirations. It is also often linked with questions of belonging and recognition.

While sharing some commonalities, public discussions about Maghrebi Muslim communities in France and in Belgium were rooted in different historical trajectories and in different institutional contexts. In France, the contemporary racialization of the Muslim Maghrebi as an other partially echoes French colonial practices and discourses. And specific representations spread by the media – such as those of the supposedly violent, impulsive Arab boys – largely mirror archetypal representations of the supposed Arab cruelty that was a central representation of the French colonial culture and that was yet distinctive from a more transnational repertoire making a connection between Islam and terrorist violence (Valerie Amiraux 2010). In Belgium the public discussions about Maghrebi Muslim minorities were greatly impacted by the effect of international dynamics concerning the local realities of Islam in Belgium. According to Fadil et al (2015, 225), from the late 1980s onward "the interplay between local and international events informing the organization of Muslim communities in Belgium was increasingly framed in terms of 'radicalization'", with many commentators expressing concerns about the sympathy of Belgian Muslims for 'radical' Islam. The Belgian context was also characterized by the coexistence of significantly different discourses about integration and the management of cultural and religious diversity between the different regions and in particular between the Flemish part of Belgian and the French speaking part of Belgium. While the French speaking part of Belgium was considered closer to the French republican model in its reluctance to implement categorical policies aiming at specific cultural minorities, the Flemish region has been considered to have implemented a more mixed approach combining multicultural policies (including the recognition of ethno-cultural groups) and more assimilationist stances (Jacobs and Loobuyck 2010). Another important difference between the two regions relates to local political configurations. In Flanders, through the 1990s onward, the far right party *Vlaams Block* later renamed *Vlaams Belang* (VB) gained very significant electoral successes both at the local level (Antwerp 2000) and at the regional level, but also at the federal level. At the time of writing, after the 2019 federal, regional and European elections, *Vlaams Belang* was considered the second most important party in Flanders. At the time of my research, Flemish political life was also saw the domination of the nationalist formation *Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie* (NVA) which, as I will describe later, was characterized by strong discourses aiming at ethnic and religious minorities. In the French speaking part of Belgium however, at the time of my research far right formations were virtually

absent from the political landscape. A similarity between France and Belgium is the centrality of class in the racialization of Maghrebi minorities. Indeed, following the recruitment of Maghrebi workers after World War II and the following widespread labor migration in the 1950 and 1960s', the racialized figure of the Maghrebi has been essentialized through an association with working class characteristics as well as societal problems such as poverty, lack of education, unemployment or delinquency (Galonnier 2015).

The production and reproduction of the figure of the Maghrebi as an essentialized category of difference was largely occurring in public discourses. During my fieldwork, the political and media spaces in France and in Belgium were saturated by rhetoric essentializing Muslim-Maghrebi minorities. In the following lines, I briefly describe several examples of such discourses. On the first of October 2014, Eric Zemmour, a French journalist and essayist, published a book titled *Le Suicide Français* (*The French Suicide*). The book is a charge against multiculturalism and feminism which are presented as the causes of the decay of France. The book was, and remains at the time of writing, a success in terms of number of copies sold .[17] A month after the publication of the book, Eric Zemmour – during an interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* – proclaimed that "Muslims have their own civil code, It is the Koran. They live among themselves, in the peripheries. French people have been forced to leave."[18] Later in the interview, Eric Zemmour commented on the idea of chasing French Muslims away from France. In a rather ambiguous fashion, Eric Zemmour described this idea as "unrealistic" but immediately added: "But history is surprising. Who could tell in 1940 that one million pieds-noirs,[19] twenty years after, would leave Algeria to come back in France? Or that after the war, five or six million Germans would leave central-oriental Europe where they were living for centuries."[20] As the journalist pointed out that he was referring to "exodus caused by immense tragedies", Zemmour answered: "I think that we are going toward chaos. This situation of a people inside the people, of Muslims inside the French, will bring us to chaos and civil war. Millions of people are living here

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17 http://www.lepoint.fr/livres/trierweiler-zemmour-et-modiano-les-cartons-de-l-annee-09-12-2014-1888256_37.php Last access: 03/06/2020
18 http://superdupont.corriere.it/2014/10/31/zemmour-e-la-rabbia-anti-elite/?refresh_ce-cp Last access: 03/06/2020
19 Pieds noirs (black feet) is a term which is used to designate the French population of European descent who lived in Algeria until the independence. The term is often used to refer to the European population who left Algeria and came to France after the independence.
20 http://superdupont.corriere.it/2014/10/31/zemmour-e-la-rabbia-anti-elite/?refresh_ce-cp Last access: 03/06/2020

in France and do not want to live as French."[21] A group of anti-racist associations filed a report which led to a legal prosecution for incitement to racial hatred and to the condemnation of Eric Zemmour.

Zemmour's suggestion may appear particularly extreme but it is not an entirely isolated proposition in the French political landscape. Indeed, since the beginning of the 2010s, a far-right group called Bloc Identitaire started to develop the concept of '*remigration*' which is presented as an inversion of the migratory flows. This means that populations identified as non-compatible with French society should be encouraged to return to what is supposed to be the country of their ancestors. This idea was then used and developed by other far-right and conservative actors and media figures. The second example, also from the French context, comes from the political sphere. On 26 September 2015, Nadine Morano, a French member of the European Parliament and former Minister during Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency, stated on public television that France was a "Judeo-Christian country" of the "white race." In reaction, one of the show's commentators' remarked that there was no such thing as an "everlasting France" and that one day France could be Muslim too. Nadine Morano added: "I want that France stays France. I don't want France to become Muslim."[22] It is interesting to note that these examples do not come from marginal actors. Eric Zemmour is (or at least was, during my research) a well-known figure of the media landscape in France. Nadine Morano is a mainstream politician, holding official mandates. This seems to suggest a certain form of banalization of these discourses. This example is characterized by the construction of 'non-white' and Muslim minorities as figures of alterity. Put differently, it tends to categorize French Maghrebi-Muslims as others despite the fact that many are actually born in France and hold French citizenship. As a French IT specialist of Algerian background told me during one of our discussions: "What shows me that I am [French]? Apart from… Well, nothing does. I turn on the TV and I am told that I am not." This resonates with Tayeb's account of his situation and his comparison with the situation of his parents.

The Belgian context was not immune to such rhetoric about Muslim Maghrebi communities. In 2014 for example, a social media post from the – at the time – Federal State Secretary for Asylum and Migration Theo Francken resurfaced. In this post, Theo Francken, reacting to an article for the Economist entitled "the Magic of Diasporas" stated the following (my translation): "[…] I can imagine the added value [for the Belgian economy] of the Jewish, Chinese and Indian diasporas

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21 Our translation from italian: http://superdupont.corriere.it/2014/10/31/zemmour-e-la-rabbia-anti-elite/?refresh_ce-cp Last access: 03/06/2020
22 TV show "On est pas couché", France 2, 26 september 2015

but less of the Moroccan, Congolese or Algerian (diasporas)."[23] After the attacks that occurred in Brussels in March 2016, the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Security and Home Affairs Jan Jambon declared in a Flemish newspaper that many members of the Belgian Muslim community 'danced' after this attack and protested against the imprisonment of one of the person involved in the 2015 Paris attacks. Jan Jambon also mentioned a supposed deep and diffuse dynamic of radicalization among Muslims that he compared to a "cancer" that Belgian society should deal with (Mescoli 2017). As the different quotes above show, Maghrebi minorities in France and in Belgium were also largely essentialized as 'Muslim', making religion another central dimension of the racialization process experienced by my interlocutors in Europe.

As a result of this process of racialization, Maghrebi French and Belgians – despite their strong identification with France and Belgium – are frequently recognized and categorized through a number of labels that do not always reflect their own modes of identification. Among these labels, the religious one ('Muslim') is of great importance (Fernando 2014; Fellag 2014) along with ethnicity ('Arab', 'Beur') and the supposed national origin ('Moroccan', 'Algerian', 'Tunisian'). Another predominant label, more specific to the French context, is the label of *la cité* attached to the identification of Maghrebi youth (especially young men).[24] This label carries the connotations of impoverished urban suburbs and stereotypical representations of places of crime, insecurity and low levels of education. These modes of recognition, as Fernando points out, "*fixes* the meaning of one's self before one even has had the opportunity to *live* and *make* a self more nearly of one's own choosing" (Holt 1995, 2 cited in Fernando 2014, 48). As argued by Fernando for the French context (Fernando 2014, 70) these modes of recognition largely contribute in the categorization of Muslim French as others that are "rendered hypervisible as Muslims and invisible as French."

These are not abstract constructs restricted to the realm of political and media discourses, but are also produced and reproduced in every-day interactions. These forms of labelling are enacted at different levels and with different intensity in their violence. For many of my interlocutors, they are part of their intimate experience of French and Belgian society. One of the examples that was often given to me during the research is the relation with the police. During our interview, Tayeb described the many instances of police controls when he was working in a train company:

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23 https://www.rtbf.be/info/societe/detail_theo-francken-doute-de-la-valeur-ajoutee-des-marocains-et-des-congolais?id=8378856 Last access: 19/02/2020
24 'La cité' is a term used to name the working class suburbs of the big French cities, often characterized by a high concentration of social housing.

"Tayeb: […] You know, there is a racism that is accepted [in Belgium]. And I always had a problem with that.

JM: Yes, and it touches your every day life.

Tayeb: It's clearly accepted. You know, when I was working in [the train], I had to take the train from Antwerp to Brussels and before I put my uniform on, I was systematically controlled by police officers who were patrolling the trains."

Field interview, 16/01/2016, Montréal

These repeated and insistent controls are also an experience largely shared by French men, especially when they come from a *cité* and are from a Maghrebi background. People who are "fitting with the profile" to use the words of Fouad already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter – that is to say, young working class looking men of foreign background – are more frequently arrested for control check in France (Défenseur des droits 2017). Beside the often humiliating and violent dimension of this experience, the control check contributes to – using the words of one of my interlocutors – "to question their presence in public space" (*questionner [leur] présence dans l'espace public).* Or, put differently, it contributes to the reproduction of what Etienne Balibar calls "internal borders"[25] (Balibar 1992, Part 2, Chapter 6, Section 4) between different racial and social groups sharing the same formal citizenship.

These modes of racialization through specific labels do not only occur during interactions with institutions. Indeed, many of my interlocutors told me about being increasingly labelled as Muslims in their work place or sometimes even when spending time with their friends, especially after the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels. For example, Ahmed, one of Tayeb's friends living who grew up in Brussels and who also lived in Montréal for a time, described the evolution that he perceived in his interactions with one of his group of friends after the terrorist attacks:

"Ahmed: And even with [these friends met at the university] where I think OK they should be… You know, the should be a little bit more nuanced… You know I thought that I couldn't really feel judged because we evolved more or less in the same way, we had the same interests, with some minor differences, we shared the same way of seeing things so I didn't understand why about this subject… Well when it's me, why do I have to explain myself

25 My translation from French

about certain things or to feel forced to comment on some news [reference to the terrorist attacks that occurred in Brussels and in Paris in 2014-2015] with which I have absolutely nothing to do. You see, I don't have more information than anybody else.

JM: OK I see, but they ask you to talk about things…

Ahmed: Yeah! To justify actually yourself actually: 'what is your point of view about this?' To say… Clean hands you see… You have to show clean hands. And this, yeah, it definitely upset me. When I saw it coming from them, in a thing where I am supposed to feel totally comfortable, yeah, it sent me a message telling: here something is maybe changing."

Field interview, 27/07/2015, Brussels

At the time of the interview, Ahmed held a bachelor degree in communication and was unemployed. Ahmed's account of the uncomfortable feelings he had even in banal conversations with his friends echoes what Appadurai (1996, 156) describes as a "cascade" effect of contemporary episodes of ethnic violence which "over time […] influence the interpretation of mundane occurrences and gradually create a repertoire of adversarial ethnic sentiments." Appadurai focuses mainly on episodes of ethnic violence but this idea of a "cascade" effect or, as the author also phrases it, of "implosion" (Appadurai 1996, 156), is particularly useful to underline how episodes of violence (such as the terrorist attack against the French satiric newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*) and the way they are framed in the public discourse produce a sort of voice-over that infuse daily life in its more mundane dimensions. For many Maghrebi Europeans that I encountered, this translated into uncomfortable feelings triggered by many small interactions such as capturing a hostile look from a stranger in the metro of seeing someone walking to the other side of street when approaching.

The experiences of Tayeb and Ahmed illustrate how a sense of stuckedness emerged from the ongoing process of racialization of Maghrebi minorities in France and in Belgium. In both countries, Maghrebi minorities have been consistently categorized as irreducible 'others' especially in France (Lamont, 2003). This categorization, built on various and intersecting racialized dimensions of class, religion and ethnicity cannot be separated from the legacies of the colonial past (Bancel & Blanchard, 1997). This racialization process involves a number of practices of essentialization that prevented them feeling properly recognized in their country of origin. Among those practices, the persistent essentialization of French and Belgian youngsters of Maghrebi origin as 'immigrants' (as illustrated by Tayeb's quote) whose national loyalty is regularly questioned including in mainstream media discourses. Another form of essentialization

is the categorization of young French and Belgians of Maghrebi origins as culturally distinct from the rest of the population. This categorization largely builds on the racialization of Maghrebi minorities as Muslim and as potentially dangerous populations (as illustrated by Ahmed's quote). These everyday life experiences – sometimes occurring during very banal interactions – of being recognized as 'other', as someone whose presence in public space and in national society more generally is perceived as somehow problematic, have an important effect on how many of the interlocutors perceive their situation in Europe. Many perceived that they were not wanted, that they were not authorized to fully belong to France or Belgium. In other words: that they were – in a sense – expected to leave. What Tayeb and Ahmed experienced in Europe and in Belgium in particular was not exactly a lack of recognition, but rather a form of hyper-recognition as undesirable and potentially dangerous 'others'.

1.4. The projection of the future outside of home

Aspirations, as Carling and Collins (2017, 8) reminds us, are socially sanctioned behavior. They are socially and culturally embedded views of the future. In our societies, for example, it is widely accepted that one should aspire to certain forms of social mobility by – say – finding a job that fits with your skills, therefore becoming able to buy a house or have a family. Moreover, the routes that allow the realization of such aspirations are also largely institutionalized. It is understood for example that education, and in particular tertiary education, should give access to such upward social mobility.

Fouad, Sonia, Leila, Alia, Ahmed, Tayeb, were all born and raised in France or in Belgium. They gladly recognized these countries as their home. They also internalized the socially accepted pathways of social mobility that were supposed to make their future different from the life of their parents or grand-parents both in terms of socio-professional status and in terms of recognition as part of the national community. They went to school, they engaged in higher education, they tried to find a good job that fit with the skills that they acquired. Some of them, like Tayeb, have also been involved in civil society associations (in the case of Tayeb, a student association). In other words, they played by the rules (they "followed the rules" as Leila put it) in the pursuit of what life should look like according to widely accepted normative social standards such as having a stable job and being able to be recognized as part of the society.

What characterizes the experience of the people mentioned above is the feeling of a gap between what has been promised and what is finally envisioned. Or put in other words, a gap between their aspirations and their reality. This feeling is illustrated by Jamila, a 22 years old Belgian

woman living in Brussels and who was, at the time of writing, pursuing a Master in biomedical studies:

> "Jamila: You can… Well you are a *cas soc…*[26] *T*hey say that you are a *cas soc'*… They say you are a *cas soc'* when you don't study. When you study, they make it difficult for you, they say… Well it's true! I mean Belgium needs to know what it wants. Does Belgium want people of immigrant origin who are intellectuals, who show their value in school, at work or I don't know where, in businesses and so one, or does it want *cas soc'* in a sense? They don't do what it takes to allow us to access some jobs. For example, I know that me, when I will look for a job, I will struggle because I know that the first cause of discrimination in Belgium, it's the fact to have a Maghrebi name, Moroccan… and female. So it's…"
>
> Field interview, 23/03/2015, Brussels

Jamila's father was an independent worker in the construction industry. Jamila's quote illustrates the importance of the class dimension in the racialization of young Maghrebi Europeans in France and in Belgium. More specifically, Jamila's feeling of being constantly identified as a '*cas soc*' and of being denied the possibility of upward social mobility can be seen as part of a broader identification of Maghrebi minorities as working class associated with "poverty, crimes, delinquency and social exclusion" (Galonnier 2015, 578). It is possible here to build on Bourdieu's notion of capital (Bourdieu 1986, Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013). The racialization of Maghrebi Europeans not only goes hand in hand with practices of discrimination that make the access to opportunity for social mobility more difficult but it also largely prevents the conversion of Maghrebi Europeans' cultural capital (acquired within the education system) into symbolic capital, that is to say into the recognition by others of their upward social mobility and therefore of their new position in the society.

In this chapter, I have identified two dimensions of the sense of stuckedness that many of the Maghrebi Europeans I met experienced in Europe. The first one regards the difficulty in accessing a stable socio-professional status despite the investment in higher education. The second one regards the multiple discourses and practices that contribute to the racialization of the offspring of Maghrebi immigrants as others, despite the fact that they are born and raised in Europe. An element of Jamila's quote is her projection into the future. As a student who will complete her

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26 The expression '*cas soc*' that Jamila was using in the quote above was the short version of the expression '*cas social*' which, in France and in Belgium, was used to refer to persons with social difficulties such as unemployment, economic hardship, lack of education or delinquency

degree in the coming months, she was convinced that she would have trouble in finding a job that fit with her aspirations. This uncertainty regarding the future was an important aspect of the interlocutors' experience of Europe.

In an article about migrants' home building practices, Ghassan Hage (1997), drawing on the anthropological literature on 'home', identifies four types of feeling that are essential in the affective construct that home is (Hage 1997, 2 and sq.). The first of these is a feeling of security, which derives from the satisfaction of basic needs and by the fact to "*feel empowered to seek* the satisfaction of [these] needs and to remove or exclude threatening otherness" (Hage 1997, 2–3 Italics in original). The second of these is a feeling of familiarity, when people know how to act in a particular space. The third is a feeling of community, when one recognizes the people around them as part of a community and is recognized in return as part of the community. The fourth feeling is the feeling that home is a space open "for opportunity and hope" (Hage 1997, 3), a space where views of a desirable future can be projected. In other words, a space that allows the development of aspirations.

As argued in the previous sections, the every-day experience of the shrinking of socio-professional opportunities and of the practices of racialization and discrimination tend to complicate the relationship of the interlocutors with France and Belgium, their home country. Indeed, if most of the people I met experienced a deep sense of familiarity in these countries and consider themselves as French or Belgian, the hyper recognition as Arab and/or Muslim 'others' and their non-recognition by the dominant discourses as full members of society make the feeling of community problematic. This observation invites us to reconsider the fact of feeling at home not only as an attitude to cultivate individually, but also as an unequally distributed capacity and thus as a field of political struggles (See for example Duyvendak 2011).

Another element is that the sense of stuckedness that is experienced in the European context seems very much linked with the idea that this very context offers only limited opportunities for the future. In this sense, many of the emigration aspirations that were addressed during this research were informed by the idea that opportunities to achieve a desirable future at home were shrinking.

The previous sections argued that the emigration projects that are developed by the Maghrebi French and Belgians that I have encountered are very often considered as an alternative strategy in order to deal with a sense of stuckedness at home. This sense of stuckedness is produced by the limited opportunities for a desirable future that are available locally due to the increasing

precarity of socio-professional pathways of social mobility and due to the enduring practices of discrimination and stigmatization of Maghrebi minorities in France and Belgium. In France and in Belgium, the racialization of Maghrebi minorities as perpetual immigrant others and their durable identification with working class characteristic and societal problems played an important role in the lack of hope experienced by my interlocutors at home. These observations invite us to consider further the dimension of race in the distribution of hope.

1.5. 'Finding who I really am': International mobility and the quest for self-realization

A sense of stuckedness was often expressed during the interviews I conducted with European Maghrebi emigrating to Montréal. If this sense of stuckedness gives valuable information about the social context in which the projects of emigration emerge and how this context is experienced, it does not give much information regarding the aspirations of the emigrants. In other words, it does not tell us much about the kinds of futures that my interlocutors are looking for through their migration projects. Emigration can certainly be seen as a way to escape the context described above, but toward what kind of future? In the following paragraphs, I would like to argue that the aspirations connected with such emigration projects are often oriented toward the possibility of self-determination and self-realization.

When I asked my interlocutors why they came to Montréal or why they were planning to go to Montréal, I usually got different answers. Professional opportunities and work related reasons were often mentioned as well as the pursuit of university studies. Many emphasized their desire to escape a European context that they perceived as becoming increasingly hostile toward Muslim and Maghrebi communities. Sometimes, moving to Montréal was also justified by the idea that international mobility would be in itself a positive experience, providing such things as an openness to other cultures, new experiences or even a pleasant break away from the obligations of professional life back home.

Despite the variety of answers, I have encountered during my research, one common aspect emerged: the idea that moving to Montréal would allow my interlocutors to become who they truly are. In other words, a central aspiration expressed by my interlocutors was that of achieving self-realization and self-development outside of the social constraints experienced in Europe. The centrality of such aspirations of self-development in the migration process has already been highlighted by Scheibelhofer (2017) in an article about Austrian migrants in the U.S. Scheibelhofer, which analyzes these aspirations of self-development as the product of a context

of second modernity (Beck and Lau 2005; Beck and Grande 2010). This is characterized by a fluidification of social structures, as well as an individualization and a diversification of life courses (Scheibelhofer 2009; 2017). In the case of Maghrebi French and Belgians, however, the aspiration to self-development was sometimes expressed as a reaction against the rigidity of the ethnic and social categorizations experienced in Europe.

1.5.1. Looking for fulfillment through indifference

One of the notions regularly used by my interlocutors to describe their emigration projects was the notion of *épanouissement* (fulfillment). During an interview, Sana, a woman in her thirties who arrived in France in her early youth, describes to me her decision to go back to Canada with her husband after a first temporary stay:

> "Sana: [Moving to Montréal] was a statement. The idea was: I refuse to live in a country which is openly racist… Which… Well, it doesn't even try to hide that because it is institutionalized, but I have to say, this was part of the story.
>
> JM: In what sense?
>
> Sana: Well in the sense that I think that what interested me first was to be in an environment where… where I was feeling that I would have a certain quality of life.
>
> JM: OK.
>
> Sana: A form of… I don't know, of fulfillment, of well-being… I don't know, I was really seeing it like that.
>
> JM: Could you define that a bit? Because actually, a lot of people tell me about fulfillment. And it is funny because people actually use the very word 'fulfillment'.
>
> Sana: OK, well, what I experienced the first time [in Montréal], I didn't have the feeling of a constant burden when… When I was speaking about my origins for example. I didn't have the impression to be very rapidly and very directly or immediately… With something which brought me to an elsewhere if you want, even if this elsewhere, I assume you know it!"
>
> Field interview, 08/07/2015, Skype Interview

Sana was not born in France. She arrived in France as a refugee when she was a child and applied for citizenship just before moving to Canada, partly because of the difficulty of moving with

refugee status. At the time of the interview she held a PhD in Social Sciences and worked as a researcher in Montréal. She grew up in a small city in the periphery of Paris. As Sana points out during the interview, her choice to come to Montréal can be interpreted as a conjunction of what she called "semi-choices" (Sana, 08/07/2015, Skype Interview) in the sense that the choice of the destination (Montréal) has been the result of a negotiation between her husband's desire and hers, as well as the result of several administrative facilitations (in particular for students) which made Québec a possible option. In this quote, Sana's aspiration to acquire a form of fulfillment is strongly associated with her experience of being identified as 'other' in France, which she identifies as a '*chape de plomb*' (a lead weight). The fulfillment aspired to by Sana, and by many of my interlocutors, is not only a matter of symbolic recognition. It includes diverse criteria such as being able to access a proper job or being able to freely live one's religious faith. During an interview, Jamila, a young Belgian woman of Muslim faith presented above, describes what she means by '*épanouissement*,' a term that she used during one of our previous discussions:

> "Jamila: Why do I want to go to Canada? It is mainly for personal fulfillment, not even for a professional one. Because I know that if I abandon my culture, if I take off my headscarf… It is a bit extreme. Not if I abandon my culture but if I take off my headscarf, I know that I would be able to find a job here, well… […]
>
> It is really about… The journey that I would undertake, it is really for a fulfillment in every level. At the religious level, at the cultural level, and at the professional level. It would be really… I don't leave like that… I leave to have a better career, I don't leave to have better financial opportunities. It is really for myself, to feel that I can do something while being accepted actually."
>
> Field interview, 14/06/2015, Brussels

At the time of the interview, Jamila was still a student in Belgium. Her feeling was that due to her headscarf, she experienced several obstacles to finding an internship in her field and she grows anxious about her future professional opportunities in Belgium. When we met in 2015, moving to Canada still seemed to be a distant project, one option among others, and she had not really taken any steps toward realizing such a move. However, Canada – a country that she visited with her father several years before – still held a sort of fascination for her, in particular because of her impression that living her faith would be easier there. An interesting element of this quote is the different dimensions that Jamila mentions within her definition of fulfillment: the religious, the cultural and the professional. More specifically, Jamila's idea of fulfillment is not limited to one of these dimensions but is rather described as her ability to realize herself in all these different

dimensions at the same time. This is illustrated by her rejection of one of the alternatives that is imposed on her in the Belgian context: abandoning her headscarf in order to find a job that matches her qualifications.

It is interesting to note that for both Sana and Jamila, the aspiration for fulfillment projected in Canada is less an aspiration for a positive recognition or celebration of their ethnic and/or religious background (as opposed to the negative recognition experienced in France and in Belgium) than it is a desire to "be accepted," as Jamila puts it. In other words, the key factor is that they be able to fully participate in society whatever their ethnic background or their religious practices. My interlocutors' aspirations for fulfillment and self-realization were mainly linked with an aspiration to experience what Fernando (2014, 790 calls an "indifference to difference." In her work on Muslim French persons, Fernando argues that her interlocutors' demand was that their identity is "neither abstracted nor overdetermined" Indeed, for many of my interlocutors, moving to Montréal was connected with an aspiration to live in a society which would be relatively indifferent to their ethnic or religious background, or, more precisely, to live in a society where all the different dimensions of their identity could be recognized.

1.5.2. Finding who you truly are and the aspiration to an uncharted society

This aspiration to a form of indifference is often connected with the idea of finding who you truly are. But 'who you truly are' is very difficult to define positively. For many of my interlocutors, 'finding who they are' is very much about escaping practices of social control that they experience in Europe.

At the very beginning of my research, I spoke with Nora, a Belgian woman from Brussels working as a researcher at a university, that spent a year in Canada where she had some family (an aunt and several cousins). During our discussion, when I asked her about the reasons of her stay there, Nora answered that she was interested in the Canadian integration system. She describes her stay as an attempt to escape what she describes as the development of a strong 'communitarian sentiment' in Belgium. She felt that this sentiment develops both ways. One the one hand, she feels that the identification of the children of Maghrebi immigrants as Muslim and/or Maghrebi is stronger than ever, and on the other hand, she feels that the Maghrebi community reacts by developing even stronger social control. "It is as if we have to choose a side" Nora explains. In contrast, she enthusiastically described to me what she sees to be the situation of her cousins in Canada. She explains that they are free to choose who they want to be.

This discussion with Nora illustrates how moving abroad is perceived as a way to escape two types of social control: the social control exercised by the majority against population identified as 'Muslim' or 'Arab' and the social control from the Maghrebi community itself.

Nora's reasoning illustrates an element that was often central in the emigration project of my interlocutors: the idea that moving abroad would allow them to 'start from zero' in a social context where they would not be categorized. During an interview, Ahmed, a Belgian man of Moroccan origin living in Brussels whom I introduced above explained to me one of the reasons behind his first stay in Montréal, a few years ago:

> Ahmed: "The friends I grew up with in the neighborhood, well, they stayed in a situation where they did more manual things [training] and we are two, in this group, to pursue university studies. And in the… Well, in the interactions I had with them I felt that they were seeing me… Always from their situation and the image of myself that they were returning me… Well this image, I had the feeling that it was not me. Well, sometime, there were huge differences [between us] on how we perceived things. And I needed to experience something where I would find myself in a totally unknown environment with complete strangers in order for me to see where I was, you see, me, as Ahmed. At this time, I left I think I was 24 or 25 I don't know… But I wanted to know where I was personally. And finally, going there [in Montréal], well it was super nice, why? Because the people I met didn't have preconceived ideas. I was not in a box, yes, they didn't define me as Ahmed with all sorts of characteristics. The fact of being out there [in Montréal] with people with a completely fresh look [on me]…"
>
> Field interview, 27/07/2015, Brussels

Ahmed grew up in Brussels, in a popular neighborhood. His father was a blue collar worker and his mother worked at home. Ahmed's friends in Brussels were mainly from a working class background like himself. In fact, as he mentions in the quote above, he was one of the few who pursued higher education. For Ahmed, moving abroad was very much about proving something to himself. It was, in his own words, a 'challenge'. A challenge that he undertook in order to temporarily escape the working class social environment that characterized his personal life in Brussels and that – according to him – did not fully correspond with what he truly is. An interesting element of Ahmed's account of the aspirations that led him to move to Montréal is the idea that moving abroad would allow him not to be 'put in a box', as if Montréal was a sort of neutral social space without any forms of social labelling. This is emphasized by the last sentence of the quote above where Ahmed mentions the 'completely fresh look' that the people he met in

Montréal had about him. During his six-month stay in Montréal, Ahmed indeed enjoyed a life that was different from his usual social environment in Brussels. He met people who, like himself, were mostly highly educated and shared his taste for cultural and intellectual activities. Among others, via a friend of his, he goes to parties which are regularly organized by a professor from the University of Montréal. During the interview, he described with great enthusiasm his discussions with what he calls '*le gratin académique*' (the academic cream-of-the-crop). Discussions that, he thought, were impossible to have in Belgium. Knowing if Ahmed's access to such social circles – that are so different from the circles he is used to in Brussels – is the result of the 'completely pristine look' of his acquaintances in Montréal, or rather the result of his capacity to mobilize different forms of capital (social, cultural, in particular) in the context of Montréal, is not the main point of attention here (this is explored further in the third part of this thesis). In Ahmed's quote, emigration is described as a personal challenge, as well as a way to escape his social milieu in order to find who he truly is.

If both Nora and Ahmed express aspiration to become 'who they truly are', these aspirations are framed in different ways, largely informed by the gender dynamics affecting them. For Nora, moving abroad is a way to 'escape social control' from different groups and gain access to a higher level of autonomy and agency. For Ahmed, moving abroad is not so much a way to escape forms of social control. It is rather framed as a 'personal challenge', as a way to escape a social environment that was 'holding him down.'

In this context, Montréal is often initially perceived by my interlocutors as an 'open' city where one's ethnic background does not impact social interactions. Even if this perception of Montréal is strongly nuanced in the view of my interlocutors who lived several years in the city, it is still a powerful driver of the emergence of emigration projects.

1.6. Conclusion

This first chapter addressed the question of the emergence of emigration desires among Maghrebi Europeans. It argued that such emigration desires are – at least in part – informed by a sense of stuckedness that was experienced at home. This sense of stuckedness – the impression of 'going nowhere' – was mainly associated with the difficulty of finding a proper professional situation, in particular because of persisting practices of discrimination connected with broader process of racialization of Maghrebi minorities in Europe. It is associated with the experience of being categorized as an 'other' in the French and in the Belgian context. The experience of *galère*

as well as the impression to have the possibility to feel at home denied contribute to make the projection of one's aspirations difficult in the European context. Emigration desires, it is argued, are often developed as a way to cope with a sense of frustration produced by the gap between the aspirations of my interlocutors and the actual regime of hope distribution as experienced in France and in Belgium. In its last part, the chapter describes the aspirations that are often associated with emigration project. It is argued that these aspirations are often expressed as aspiration to self-realization. This implies, among other things, the possibility of escaping configurations of social control – either from mainstream society or from the Maghrebi community itself. Emigration is often presented as a way to start from zero, away from this configurations of social control and to find a form of indifference to difference. This first chapter contribute to move away from the traditional representation of the European emigrant as an 'expat' or as a 'life style' migrant (Benson and O'Reilly 2009) whose international mobility is driven by a taste for adventure, cultural openness and an entrepreneurial mind-set. Such inclinations are not denied here, but the research points out the important role of more structural phenomena of precariousness and uncertainty in the emergence of emigration aspirations, as well as the relevance of the racial dimension of the unequal distribution of hope.

Breaking down the complexity of the emergence of emigration aspirations among Maghrebi Europeans also contributes in shedding a new light on contemporary European migration practices. Indeed, in many ways, the emigration projects of the Maghrebi French and Belgians I met were experienced as – if not forced – at least constrained migration envisioned largely as an alternative solution to escape a sense of lack of hope at home. This experience of migration not only as a possibility but also as a quasi-necessity echoes observations that have been made about migration from the South (Graw and Schielke 2012b). In this sense, the emigration projects of Maghrebi Europeans contribute to the nuancing of the position of Europe in a global regime of hope distribution.

Yet, migration is not only about leaving a place, it is also about going somewhere. But what kind of future is envisioned and what are the places where this future is imagined? And how is Montréal envisioned in this imagined geography? These are the questions that I address in the second chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 2. Where is the future? Global awareness from below and the imagined geography of hope

In the first chapter I contextualized the emergence of migration aspirations within the everyday experience of Maghrebi French and Belgians in Europe's regime of hope distribution. I argued that such aspirations are often expressed as an alternative strategy to escape a sense of stuckedness experienced in Europe because of the difficulty in securing stable socio-professional statuses, and also because of enduring practices of discrimination and stigmatization of Maghrebi minorities in France and in Belgium. Europe, for many Maghrebi Europeans, is characterized by the shrinking of configurations hope for the future. The first chapter was very much about the emergence of the desire to leave Europe. However, migration projects do not only imply a desire to leave. It also implies a desire to go somewhere or, in other words, to pursue aspirations somewhere else. But where is this somewhere? What kind of future is envisioned and what are the places where this future is imagined? And how is Montréal imagined in this imagined geography?

This second chapter explores a more positive dimension of my interlocutors' emigration projects by focusing on the destination. More precisely, it addresses the social imaginaries that are attached to specific destinations and that make them desirable in the eyes of young Maghrebi Europeans. Indeed, the sense of stuckedness that I described earlier does not produce a sense of hopelessness but rather a displacement of my interlocutors' aspirations abroad. In other words, to refer back to the discussion about the distribution of societal hope (Hage 2003), the following chapter is about the projection of hope abroad. More precisely, it is about where people locate the societal hope that is lacking in France and in Belgium.

In order to address this question, I unfold my interlocutors' understandings of the world before they actually engage in international mobility – the way they perceive their own circumstances in relation to the way they understand the situation of others in other places. In other words, while the first chapter was mainly focused on my interlocutors' perceptions of their future at home, this chapter is mainly about their perception of the possible futures when the future is envisioned abroad, in alternative destinations. In this second chapter, I focus on the specificities of these imagined destinations, these places where – it is hoped – a desirable and fulfilling future

would be possible. The question that is addressed in this chapter is the following: what is the understanding of the world underlying the emergence of emigration projects among young French and Belgians of Maghrebi background? What are the characteristics of the various destinations which are valued by would be emigrants? And what is the place occupied by Montréal within such desired destinations?

In order to answer these questions, the following sections explore the representations and imaginaries that French and Belgians citizens of Maghrebi background develop about possible destinations. Imaginaries are understood according to Salazar's definition, as "socially shared and transmitted […] representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices" (Salazar 2011, 576). While recognizing the social dimension of imaginaries, this chapter does not directly address the question of the production of such imaginaries (for example through the analysis of ideology and institutionalized discourses), something which is explored further in the second part of this thesis. At this stage, the goal of the chapter is to unfold the specific understanding of the world that is developed among aspiring emigrants in Belgium and in France.

The chapter is interested in exploring where hope for a better future is located, from the point of view of aspiring emigrants in France and in Belgium. It focuses on the social imaginaries of distant places that are produced, received, shared and understood by and among Maghrebi European in Europe. Through the analysis of such practices, the chapter engages in an unfolding of what Vigh (2009, 93) called a "global awareness from below," which refers to the ways that people understand the world and their place in it.

Unfolding these forms of 'global awareness from below', as produced and reproduced through the production and reproduction of social imaginaries of possible destinations, I draw the contours of what I call an imagined geography of hope that is shared by many of my interlocutors, and I contextualize Montréal in such an imagined geography. I use here the term 'imagined' in reference to the idea of imaginaries described above but also to refer to the fact that these geography of hope were unfolded in the pre-departure context, with aspiring emigrants having very short or, sometime, no first-hand experience of actually living in Canada or Montréal.

In this context, the following analysis is interested in unfolding specific connections between the spatial (possible destinations) and the temporal (where the future seems to be). Such connectedness between the spatial and the temporal dimension has been conceptualized as chronotope, first in literature studies (Bakhtin 1981), and then extensively discussed in linguistic

anthropology (See for example Agha 2007; Blommaert 2015). Chronotopes have also been expanded to the questions of migration (Dick 2010; Çağlar 2016; Kang 2018). Dick (2010) for example contextualizes the experience of the inhabitants of the Mexican city of Uriantago in relation with what she calls a "modernist chronotope" that tends to define Mexico as a place of morality, family but also socio economic difficulties, and the U.S as a place of socioeconomic mobility, progress but also moral decline (Dick 2010). This chronotope, she argues, is a central element in the practice of imagining a possible life beyond the place where they live; practices that are not only used to contemplate the possibility of migration but also to position oneself in the local context of Uriantago (Dick 2010).

In the following parts, I address such specific space-time framings that are central in the way French and Belgian aspiring migrants imagine possible life abroad. I argue that these imagining practices nuance the traditional representations of western Europe as places of societal advancement and modernity. Indeed, from the point of view of my interlocutors, places such has France or Belgium are rather perceived as place of stagnation, decline or even societal backwardness.

2.1. The transnational circulation of imaginaries about Canada

Early in my research, while I was still conducting exploratory fieldwork in Europe, I realized that representations of Québec were actually very present in the French and Belgian public space. And this through many formats such as magazines covers, press articles or TV coverage. Discourses and images about Québec and Montréal spanned beyond the realm of embassies and Québec official representations. They could be found in train station's bookshops, employment agencies and even in French and Belgian mainstream newspapers and television.

One of the reasons for this relatively visible presence in Europe is certainly Québec's active immigration policy, which is aimed at attracting skilled, young French speaking workers – a policy on which I elaborate further in the second part of this thesis. Indeed, at the time of my research, the Québec authorities actively contributed to the spread of specific representations of Québec and Montréal in the European context, in particular through the organization of information sessions, advertisement campaigns, events related to immigration to Québec and the circulation of information online. I address the dynamics and underlying logic of such governmental practices later in the thesis.

At the time of my research, an important part of the circulation of imaginaries of Canada happened through social media and other internet based platforms such as discussion forums, blogs and online newspapers. For example, many of the aspiring migrants I met, before they actually moved to Montréal, had already developed a form of knowledge of the city through the information received from friends or acquaintances through social media. The discourses which circulated through those networks during my research generally depicted Canada and Québec as welcoming places for immigrants, with plenty of work available and an attractive quality of life. When explaining her interest in Canada, one of my interlocutors, Alia, mentioned an online post that she saw. The post, showing a picture of a beautiful Canadian landscape can be described as follows:

> "Upper text:
> "A Job, a land a quality of life and a perfect Prime Minister [*un premier ministre de rêve* – reference to Justin Trudeau]… what else?
>
> Title of the article shared:
> "A nice little town in Canada offers a job and a land to those who want to settle."
>
> Subtitle of the article:
> Cape Breton, a town in Canada offers a job and a land to the newcomers. In fact, Cape Breton has all it need, except… people."

Fieldnotes, 27/09/2016

Internet based social networks also provided my interlocutors with the possibility to interact with organized groups of emigrants before their departure. When I did my fieldwork, several Facebook groups were active, with members comprising French and Belgian people living in Montréal. Examples of such groups were *PVTisites à Montréal* ('Working Holiday in Montréal'), a French speaking group of beneficiaries of the working holiday visa; *Les expatriés Français à Montréal* ('French expatriates in Montréal') or *Belges à Montréal – Belgen in Montréal* ('Belgium in Montréal' spelled in French and in Flemish). Many aspiring migrants still living in Europe were participating in such groups and were using them to access information about the city, migration procedures or job opportunities.

As mentioned in introduction of this section, another channel of images and discourses about Montréal was mainstream mass media such as magazines and TV programs. Magazines with special issues focusing on expatriation in general, but also on Canada or Québec specifically, were regularly available in Belgium and France during the research. Some publications such as

ParisMontréal and *Québec Mag* were even specifically focused – as their names suggest – on Québec and Montréal.

In the same way, TV and radio programs about Belgian and French persons going to Canada were quite common. On French television, the evening news broadcast of 14 November 2012 from the national public channel France 2 included a 6 minutes report titled "Québec: the Eldorado of the French" (*Québec: l'eldorado des Français*). More recently, on 9 January 2018, France 24 (a state-owned channel) broadcast a five minute report titled "Canada, new Eldorado for jobs" (*Canada, nouvel Eldorado de l'emploi*) followed by an interview with a representative of the Canadian authorities. These are only two examples of the many TV reports about French people going to Canada and Québec.
Examples could also be found in Belgium. In November 2014 for example, RTL-TVI, a private French speaking TV channel, broadcast a report about an immigration recruitment event organized by Canadian authorities in Brussels. Canada and Québec were also regularly the focus of a popular programme of the Belgian French speaking radio station *La Première*: "Belgians from the other side of the world" (*Les Belges du bout du Monde*). Every week, the programme is focused on a specific destination and presents an interview between the host of the programme, a Belgian citizen living in the country of the week and a citizen of the featured country who is living in Belgium. This radio programme – characterized by a very positive presentation of expatriation and international mobility – focused several of its broadcasts on Canada.

All these anecdotal examples illustrate the relative presence of images and discourses about Canada, Québec and Montréal in the Belgian and French media. And indeed, such TV programs and radio broadcasts regularly came out during my discussions with young French and Belgians aspiring to leave Europe.

Another channel of circulation of imaginaries about Montréal and Canada was the transnational family networks of my interlocutors. For some French and Belgians of Maghrebi origin, the idea of leaving their country of origin and going to Canada was often reinforced during interaction with family relative from the country of origin of their parents. Jalil was a French man in his early 30s' I met in Montréal. He had a Master in physics and after a few months spent in Montréal, was still unemployed. During an interview, he described to me how his interactions with one of his Tunisian cousin contributed to the emergence of his emigration project to Canada:

> "Jalil: OK yes, what you should know is that I have… I have a cousin that I saw this weekend, who… I have a cousin yes, who lives here [in Canada] apart from Osman

[another of Jalil's cousins]. He arrived here fifteen or twenty years ago but he came from Tunisia. He was a student in economy […]

JM: OK. And he stayed here… He's been living [in Canada] for fifteen years you say.

Jalil: Yes. He is married, he has two daughters. […] All this, I can say that it… I don't know, I saw this from abroad because this cousin, I don't see him much, but I saw, it is true, the social success which was behind. I cannot say that I was jealous but it intrigued me.

JM: OK, but social success..? Because you had news from him at this time?

Jalil: Him, yes, I was seeing him. From time to time, he dropped by in Paris. But yes, I also perceived that he had a certain comfort of life [in Canada]. Then, well, he doesn't come every day in Tunisia or France but when he comes, he enjoys himself [*il se fait plaisir*]."

Field interview, 15/12/2015, Montréal

Jalil's difficulties to find a stable and gratifying job in France, and the signs of economic success that his cousin displayed during his stays in France worked to 'trigger' (Jalil used the French word *déclic*) the concretization of Jalil's project to leave Europe. In the case of Jalil, the family network contributed to the circulation of positive imaginaries about Canada as a place of economic opportunities. For some people that I met during my research, such positive representations of Canada and Montréal were encountered during trips to the country of origin of their parents. Fouad, who I presented extensively in the first chapter, explained to me how he was surprised by the very positive image that Canada had in Algeria. We are sitting in the dining room of the Youth Hostel where he has a room. At the time of our discussion, Fouad does not know exactly if he would be able to expend his visitor visa and stay in Montréal. Actually, he already envisioned the possibility to go back in France and to prepare a more permanent stay in Montréal for the future:

"Fouad: I went… For the funeral of my grandmother I went to Algeria you see, I have a cousin who did a Master in engineering and all that is related with petrochemistery and all, you see. I was talking to him and you see, even for Algerians… I will not speak for all the Algerians because I didn't meet all of them but apparently, in Algerians' minds, Canada is the Eldorado too you see. And here [in Montréal] I also met Algerians from Algeria who told me that well… I asked them the question because you see, there is a lot of Algerians in France you see, and I was asking to them: France or Canada? You see, I was asking this question.

JM: And what did they answer?

Fouad: Canada!

JM: Canada?

Fouad: And I ask them: why? And they say to me: for everything you see! And I found this incredible because you see, France, before, it was the Eldorado for Algerians. But this guy [his cousin] he says to me: 'No! France? Look at what's happening in your country!" etcetera, 'liberty is violated!' etcetera. And I say to him 'But wait, what about Canada?' I ask him because [at the time] I didn't know you see. And he tells me 'Not at all!' and all. And I ask him: 'But racism exists here no?' He says yes […] but it is not present in society [la sphère] in general you see."

Field interview, 26/02/2016, Montréal

According to many of the French and Belgian people of Maghrebi background that I met in Europe and in Montréal, Canada is a very popular destination for aspiring migrants in Maghrebi countries. Fouad's surprise came from the unexpected vision of the world that he encountered while speaking with his Algerian cousin; a world understanding where Europe was not the preferred destination but was instead perceived as a rather undesirable one, especially for people of a Maghrebi background. Like in the case of Jalil and Fouad, my interlocutors' interest for Canada and/or Montréal was often triggered by conversations with family relatives from Maghrebi countries.

2.2. Experiencing crisis, imagining El dorado: Toward an imagined geography of possibilities

In an article about young would-be migrants in Bissau, Vigh (2009) proposes an exploration of the understanding of the world in which these migration projects are embedded. He shows how the individual motivation of young Bissauian to reach Europe is informed by a very specific representation of the world order within which Bissau is perceived as a place of incompetence and hopelessness, whereas Europe is perceived as a place of modernity and technological mastery. Throughout the article, Vigh unfolds what he calls a global awareness from below that he defines as:

"an understanding of a world order consisting of societies with different technological capacities and levels of masteries over physical and social environment, as well as the

> spaces and social options which are open or closed to persons of different social categories within it." (Vigh 2009, 93)

From this definition, it is clear that this global awareness from below is not only about the imaginaries attached to specific places in the world. It is also about an understanding of the possibilities that are accessible to certain persons in these different places. In other words, it is not only about how a person sees the world, but also about how they see their situation and their potential futures in it.

In the following sections, I propose to start from Vigh's concept to describe the specific understanding of the world that informs my interlocutors' emigration aspirations. In order to do so, the first section addresses the way young French and Belgians of Maghrebi background understand the situation of their European country of origin. A second section then moves to my interlocutors' understanding of the world and more precisely to their understanding of where the future is located in the world.

It is first argued that the understanding of the world that is developed by some of my interlocutors destabilizes the traditional representations of western European countries as places of linear modernization and societal advancement. Instead, countries like France and Belgium are frequently understood within a chronotope of stagnation, crisis and decline. The destinations envisioned by the would be emigrants that I met, while staying within places of high socio-economic status, unfold an imagined geography of hope built around ideas of possibility and openness.

2.2.1. The understanding of Europe as a place of enduring crisis

> *In February 2017, I attended an event called the 'International Day' (the original name of the event was in English) in Brussels. The event was organized by an association called 'International Contacts', and was supported by organizations including city and regional authorities, private companies and associations of professionals. The International Day comprised different activities for the people who attended. Conferences were organized during which speakers gave information about how to 'live and work' in different countries. Typically, these conferences included overviews of the job markets in destination countries as well as practical advice regarding housing, insurance and social security systems. The core element of the event however was the presence of representations of a wide range of organizations interested in international mobility, including representations from*

destinations country. The stands of the different organizations – that the public was invited to visit – were arranged inside a sort of congress hall. Job offers from different countries were pinned on two big boards arranged in a way that made them highly visible in the hall. During my visit, the most successful stands were the stands occupied by representatives of destination countries which were, for the 2017 edition: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Québec (with a separate stand from Canada) and the USA. The people present at the event were lining up in front of the different stands, waiting for a short conversation with the government officials during which they would be able to ask their questions about the often complicated immigration procedures. These short face to face conversations were often perceived as precious by the candidate for emigration, partly because most of the migration procedure – at least in the case of Canada – had to be done online with very few chances to contact a person directly. Among the different destinations represented during the event, the most successful were certainly Québec and Canada. During my visit, around eighty people were waiting in front of these two stands, which meant – according the estimation that I made onsite – that a person would wait more than an hour, standing in the line, before having a chance to speak with a Canadian or Québec representative for a few minutes. Many participants were joking about the incredibly long line waiting in front of the Canada's and Québec's stands while the visits to other stands remained relatively low.

Hanging around among the different stands, I noticed a group of young students accompanied by two teachers. Most of the students seemed to be of immigrant origin. I decided to present myself to the two professors. I told them that I was doing a research about Belgian and French who left Europe to Canada. This was the occasion for the two professors to make jokes about the extraordinary line forming in front of the Canadian and Québec stand. They also explained to me that they came from a secondary school in Laeken, a suburb of the north-west of Brussels, because the students were preparing a short stay in Spain supported by the EU Erasmus+ program. One of the professors offered me an opportunity to speak directly to the students, and introduced me to a group waiting in front of the stand devoted to the Erasmus program. The group consisted of three young men and one young woman. Two of the young men were born in Belgium. One was of Moroccan origin and the other of Turkish origin. The third young man was from Kosovo and had arrived in Belgium a few years ago. I did not learn however where the young woman came from.

During the first minutes of our discussion, my interlocutors seemed unanimous in saying that – while they all considered international experience as a 'plus' for their professional career – they did not want to leave their country, Belgium, in the long run. However, after part of

*the group left the conversation, one person (the young man of Moroccan background), who had remained silent during the previous exchanges told me: "I, I want to leave my country [Belgium]! I don't say now but maybe later." When I asked him why he had such a project, he answered: "Because there is no future" (*Il n'y a pas d'avenir*). I asked him what made him think that. He said, after a moment of thinking: "I don't know… It is the crisis." The discussion continued, and I asked if he knew somebody who already left Belgium:*

> *"Student: Yes, my brother. But it is not the same because he went to Morocco*
>
> *JM: OK, but why is it not the same?*
>
> *Student: Well… He returned to settle back (*il est retourné s'installer*) in Morocco, so it is not the same.*
>
> *JM: Ah you are from Moroccan origin? That is why your brother went back here?*
>
> *Student: Yes exactly. But me, I wouldn't want to live there.*
>
> *JM: Why?*
>
> *Student: Because I want to live in a place with a future."*

This brief discussion illustrates an element that came out regularly when speaking with aspiring emigrants in Belgium and France: the definition of France and Belgium as countries without future. Here, it was not the experience of the lack of desirable futures for oneself that was emphasized (experience that I described in the first chapter), but rather the lack of future for French and Belgian societies in general. In other words, an idea that I encountered regularly during my research was that France and Belgium were not desirable places any more. This was illustrated by the fact that my interlocutors often described their home environment using the vocabulary of decline, crisis and socio-economic backwardness. This was the case during a conversation with Ilian, a young French man of Algerian descent who was living in Charenton, a city of the southern suburbs of Paris. When I met Ilian in Paris in 2016, he was working in a supermarket warehouse and had a technical degree from secondary school. His job was exhausting and did not give him much time to 'enjoy' life, as he put it. Nevertheless, he did a lot of extra hours, saving money to go back to Montréal after a first stay with a tourist visa. During the discussion, Ilian frequently insisted on the difficulty of life in Paris, the poverty that he was seeing every day in the street, the fatigue induced by his long (and poorly paid) working hours, and the suspicion toward people identified as Muslim that he experienced regularly. Ilian explained to me:

> "Ilian: So, I am thinking… I don't see myself staying here [in France], even a few more years actually. I have convinced myself that it is not possible. I see how things are declining more and more (*comment ça se dégrade de plus en plus*). In ten years, it will be over! In ten years, people will be… You will see more and more homeless people out there [in Paris]… There is already a lot of them today but it will get worse.
>
> JM: OK, you have the impression that it will…
>
> Ilian: Oh yes! Yes! Look, I am young and I have the possibility to leave. Why should I… It's now. Nothing holds me here. I don't have children, I don't have a wife.
>
> JM: So it is the right time to go…
>
> Ilian: It is the right time."
>
> Field interview, 29/06/2016, Paris

"It's over." (*C'est fini*). "France is over." (*La France, c'est fini*). I was surprised to encounter these kinds of expressions regularly during my fieldwork. The use of these specific formulations echoes Vigh's observations about the concept of crisis (Vigh 2008). Indeed, while crisis is often understood as a temporary state of abnormality that someone has to go through, the use of formulae such as '[France or Belgium] is over' suggests an underlying impression of the world where crisis has instead become an enduring state, or, in other words, the new normal. It also suggests that this sense of crisis or decline is not an abstract construct but rather something that deeply shapes how some of my interlocutors experience and make sense of their everyday life. Such extreme statements were typically more frequent with interlocutors who were still in Europe at the time of the interview. They also were more frequent with people experiencing higher levels of economic uncertainty and stagnation with only few resources (such as academic degrees) to secure opportunities for better jobs and a better economic situation in general. However, this sense of crisis was also present among more educated interlocutors whose cultural capital – because of the shrinking of socio-economic opportunities for young people and because of enduring discrimination practices against Maghrebi Europeans – would not necessarily mean total protection against risks of socio-economic precariousness.

Of course, this type of strong statement expressed by Ilian, while being regularly encountered during the fieldwork, was not shared by all of my interlocutors. Indeed, especially after a few years had passed in Montréal, many persons came to develop more nuanced vistas about Europe France and Belgium, emphasizing, for example, the performance of the health care system or of the social security system. What was widely shared however was the idea that European

countries like France and Belgium, instead of being described as highly advanced societies at the forefront of societal pioneering, were suffering some sort of societal backwardness especially when it came to the attitude toward immigrants and cultural diversity in general. This idea of societal backwardness was used by one of my interlocutors, Lounès, a French man of Algerian background living in Montréal and who came from a small rural city in the periphery of Avignon. Comparing Montréal and France, Lounès explained to me:

> "Lounès: Here, even if they are [in Canada] ten or fifteen years late on certain things, well, they are twenty or thirty years ahead on others. Especially regarding social problems. Or integration problems. We have seen this with Syrian refugees, how it has been dealt with here."

Field interview, 25/02/2016, Montréal

When I met Lounès in Montréal, he presented himself as an entrepreneur even if he also worked for a web company in order to make a living before his projects came to fruition. He had a technical degree in business, and explained to me that he left France unwillingly, mainly because of the experience of racism in his job back home. Lounès clearly described France as a declining country, characterized by an atmosphere of 'gloominess' that he opposed to the sense of optimism that he experienced in Québec. One of his hopes, he explained to me, is that 'expats' like himself would one day return to France and bring back with them the new ideas and new 'energies' that are lacking in France and that will facilitate the revival of the country's dynamism. Lounès' reference to Syrian refugees followed the highly mediatized decision from the Justin Trudeau government to welcome 25,000 of these refugees. This was a decision that, at the time of my research, contrasted with the attitude of the Trump government in the U.S. and with similar attitudes of closure in Europe. For Lounès, this decision was also understood more generally as a sign of openness toward immigration and cultural diversity in general.

Central to the discourses of Lounès, Ilian and the young student I met at the 'International Day' event are the temporal frames that are associated with the European space. The young student implied that his country (Belgium) is 'without future'. Ilian spoke about 'decline' and how things are 'getting worse'. Lounès compared France and Canada in terms of being 'late' or 'ahead' in different domains. These discourses echo Ferguson's (2005) reflection about the recent disjuncture between history and hierarchy that happened in the discourses about modernity. Ferguson, focusing on the case of Africa, argues that after World War II, the dominant grid of interpretation of the world order was expressed through the idea of "processes of modernization"

(Ferguson 2005, 167) which – concerning Africa and other poor parts of the world – was translated through the narrative of 'development'. These discourses, Ferguson demonstrates, were largely based on a very specific type of spatio-temporal thinking which presents modernity not as the static label of a global hierarchy but rather as the result of a temporal evolution. Societies were expected to become more and more modern and poor countries were expected to 'develop' and eventually catch up with richer parts of the world. This type of thinking, Ferguson argues, has lost a lot of its credibility in many parts of the world where any perspective of significant improvement in terms of well-being is perceived with great skepticism and/or incredulity. Modernity is increasingly perceived not as a temporal dynamic but rather as a spatial characteristic (some countries are modern, other are not). To borrow Ferguson's words (2005, 173): modernity moved from "Telos to Status." According to Ferguson, an effect of this evolution is – at least in Africa – a shift from strategies built on the perspective of local societal progress to strategies of spatial mobility, i.e. migration. While Ferguson's argument is mainly focused on Africa, the discourses of Ilian, Lounès and the student met at the International Day illustrate a similar loss of credibility in the idea of local progress. The emigration desire of the three of them leans back on a specific understanding of the temporal dynamics characterizing Europe: dynamics of negative evolution, decline or – at least – stagnation. It was as if the idea of a positive societal progress was becoming harder and harder to imagine in France and Belgium.

The striking element is that this loss of credibility occurs not in supposedly 'poor' countries – as described by Ferguson (2005) – but in France and Belgium, countries that are supposed to be at the top of the global hierarchy. This suggests that the disjuncture that Ferguson identifies does not only operate between nation states or societies but also within these so called 'modern' western European societies where – for an important part of the population – the accepted strategies to achieve well-being are being reshuffled and weakened, especially after the financial and economic crisis of 2008 (Narotzky and Besnier 2014). New questions then arise: what happens when people want to leave places that are already areas of apparently high status? What are the destinations that are envisioned and why are they envisioned as possibilities? The following part answers such questions by unfolding the imagined geography that is shared among young Maghrebi French and Belgians aspiring emigrants.

2.2.2. Where is the future? A geography of global cities and high status societies

> *In March 2015, at the very beginning of our research, my colleague Jaafar Alloul and I met several members of an association of Muslim students in Brussels. The meeting was organized by email. After a first contact in which I described the focus of our research,*

mentioning our interest in the emigration of European Muslims with Maghrebi background toward Montréal and the United Arab Emirate, our request was validated by the executive board of the association and I was put in contact with one of the association members to organize the meeting. We met the students at the association's premises at the direct vicinity of the university campus. The meeting was organized during a time slot that was regularly used by the association to organize debates and discussions of different kinds. Our group sited in circle on sofas and Jaafar and I were introduced by the president of the association.

Nine students were present during our visit: five women and four men probably aged between nineteen and 23. Some of the female students were wearing headscarves. Some of the students who were present were international students coming from Maghrebi countries and studying in Brussels. However, most of our interlocutors were born in Belgium from parents of Maghrebi origins (mainly from Morocco). A few people present remained silent during the discussion. The social and cultural codes that were usually valorized in universities were also at work during the discussion which was rapidly organized by our interlocutors themselves as a sort of debate, an informal moderator giving the floor to the persons eager to talk. Those who engaged more actively with our questions spoke with passion and did not hesitate to extensively develop their own analyses about the reasons that push people to leave Europe.

The discussion mainly developed along the lines of the reasons that push people (and in particular young Maghrebi Muslim people) to leave to other places. While the discussion unfolded, the question of the destinations also emerged. The participants discussed – often with great passion – the characteristics of different countries perceived as possible destinations.

Because of our research focus, the discussion was mainly oriented toward the question of emigration to Canada and/or the United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, the discussion quickly expanded and some other destinations emerged. During the exchanges, some of these destinations were clearly presented as 'unthinkable' in the context of an emigration and choosing these countries was presented as somehow absurd. Haroun, one of the participants in the discussion, mentioned two of these places:

> *"Money is one of the variables. In fact, it is just like an equation, with ponderings. Personally, money is the highest pondering. Then, it is different for everyone. If you say that you go in a place where you will have a good salary but where you will not*

be able to live in a fulfilling way, with your spirituality, then I am not interested. If you tell me that you go to North Korea or I don't know, if you go to North Korea and that I give you a huge salary, I don't go you see. And the other way around, if you tell me: 'Go to Bangladesh, you will live your spirituality easily but you will have no money, you will be poor', I don't go either."

Field interview, 23/03/2015, Brussels

On the contrary, as the discussion unfolds the participants mentioned places that they presented as more desirable – or at least, as possible destinations – though they often disagreed on whether they would like to go there or not. Places such as Qatar, London, England, America, and Saudi Arabia were mentioned. A participant also talked about Germany for example.

This list of possible destinations that emerged during the discussion also illustrated two elements that came out from my research. First, most of the time, Canada was not the only destination that my interlocutors envisioned for their future. Second, the list of places that were presented as possible destinations was rather limited, revealing what could be called an imagined geography of destinations. As illustrated in my short account of the collective discussion with the Muslim students in Brussels, this imagined geography of destinations typically included a limited number of places that came out in many interviews during my fieldwork. Indeed, some countries were regularly mentioned as potential destinations by my interlocutors: The United-States, the Gulf countries or Australia, among them. But interestingly, these imagined geographies were often constructed around cities rather than nation states. Among the cities often mentioned by the people I talked with: London, New York, Miami, Dubaï, Montréal, Toronto. As Haroun's quote illustrates, the identification of such possible destinations was informed by different dimensions. Haroun's quote introduces the religious aspects – expressed in terms of spirituality – in the identification of possible destinations. Spirituality or – more precisely – the possibility to live one's spirituality freely, is presented by Haroun as a central element of the aspiration to fulfillment that I describe above. In the case of Haroun, as with many of my interlocutors during the research, the religious or spiritual dimension was placed in relation to other considerations in the identification of possible destinations. In the quote above, he puts this dimension in balance with the economic one. For many of my interlocutors, the spiritual dimension was an important element in identifying desirable destinations. Most of the time, these destinations were not so much desired because of a local predominance of Islam but rather because they were perceived as places where conditions would have allowed my interlocutors to combine their aspiration to

socio-professional success with the possibility of pursuing spiritual development in a fulfilling way.

Interestingly, the countries of origin of the parents of my interlocutors were rarely perceived as part of these geographies. During my interviews, I frequently asked my interlocutors if they thought about moving to the country of origin of their parents: Morocco or Algeria for example. I was surprised to discover that this was actually rarely seen as an option. Some of my interlocutors mentioned the possibility of going to live in the country of origin of their parents but only in a distant future, for retirement for example. Very few actually thought of Maghrebi countries as a possible alternative to France or Belgium. Tayeb, explained to me why he did not considered Morocco as a possible destination for him:

> "Tayeb: And I always lived in society with a minimum degree of organization. Belgium has a minimum degree of organization, Canada is very organized and Morocco is completely disorganized. So I think that I would… Every time I go to Morocco, I struggle with Moroccans because they are pffff…. When I say that I identify with my culture etcetera, I struggle to identify with Moroccans. Because it is a society that is not… That is for me, very far [from us] [*à des années lumières*]."
>
> Field interview, 06/01/2016, Montréal

Many of my interlocutors underlined this kind of cultural and social gap they experienced between their country of birth (France and Belgium) of which they share the culture and the habits and the country of origin of their parents, a gap that has been documented in early work about the second generation (see for example: Sayad 2006 [1979]). Others mentioned the limited professional opportunities or the less attractive wages in Maghrebi countries when compared with other destinations. Finally, some of my interlocutors also described to me their feeling of being considered as an 'other' in the country of origin of their parents (a feeling experienced during holidays spent in these countries).

London, New-York, Miami, Dubaï, Montréal, Toronto. All these destinations – regularly mentioned by my interlocutors – are global cities (Sassen 2001) perceived as hubs of economic dynamism and providing plenty of job opportunity for highly skilled workers. All these destinations are also situated within countries of high status, at least in terms of economic power.

This geography of socioeconomic status, shared by many of my interlocutors, was also displayed in many magazine and newspaper articles dealing with the question of 'expatriation'. During my

frequent train trips between Brussels and Paris to meet my interlocutors, I found many examples of such publications that were typically present in the train station bookstores. Here is an example from a special issue of the French magazine *Management* that I found in Paris North Station:

Cover of a special issue of the French magazine *Management*, June-July 2016.

On some occasions during research, alternative geographies emerged from the interviews. Sana, who I already introduced in the first chapter, explained to me that – other than Canada – one of the destinations that she envisioned was Sweden. While Sweden is not particularly conceived as a place of exceptional economic opportunities, it fits with Sana's search for a country in which she would be allowed to live in a more progressive environment, especially regarding identity politics.

While my interlocutors regularly challenged the traditional representation of western Europe as a place characterized by societal advancement and modernity, it is interesting to point out that the places that they saw as possible destinations are still situated within a broadly accepted geography of socioeconomically advanced societies. In other words, the international mobility envisioned by my interlocutors was very much a mobility from one country of high status to another. Why then are places that are actually comparable with western Europe in terms of socio-

economic status perceived as more suitable places to live? In the following part, I argue that the practices of imagining alternative destinations to live in was based less on a modernist chronotope (looking for more modern, more advanced places) than on a chronotope of possibilities or hope – i.e. looking for places where 'something happens', where one could 'have their chance'.

2.2.3. 'They give you your chance': El dorados and the chronotope of possibilities

During my research, a term was sometimes associated with the description of such aspired places of destination: the term 'El dorado'. Two dimensions were central to the idea of El dorado as it was used by my interlocutors. First, El dorado referred to a place that is characterized by a huge amount of wealth. Second, and maybe more importantly, the idea of El dorado implied that this wealth was within reach, available to those who would travel there, and was relatively easily accessible. Frequently, the idea of El dorado was associated with the perspective of socio-professional opportunities. Coming back to the collective interview with the group of Muslim students, one of the participants – Selim – a students of Algerian origin born in Russia referred to this idea of El dorado when discussing the reasons that would push people to move abroad:

> "Selim: OK, that's also my opinion, but I think you have to see this as an El dorado for work, for a career. When we say Canada, we say… We see big things, we see a lot of interest (*beaucoup d'appels*). When we say Emirates, we also say development, money. Well unfortunately what comes out is the money. It is also close to the developing countries. The Emirates are closer to India, Africa and China than we are."
>
> Field interview, 23/03/2015, Brussels

Selim's description of Canada and the Emirates insisted on a socio-professional definition of success. Career, work and money were central elements of his view about El dorados. Another interesting element was the reference to 'development' and 'developing countries'. These terms lead back to Ferguson's analysis mentioned earlier (Ferguson 2005). In a sense, if Selim described Canada and the Emirates as El dorados, it was not only because of their position at the top of the global hierarchy but also because something seemed to happen there. Both places, according to Selim, seemed to be characterized by a sense of 'possibility' at least professionally speaking. Fouad, the young man that I introduced in the beginning of the first chapter, also mentioned the El dorado in relation with a similar sense of possibility – even if he did not explicitly mention the question of professional mobility:

"JM: And so Canada, how did it happen then? I mean… Why did you want to come here?

Fouad: Canada, it's a bit particular because Canada for ten years, fifteen years… No ten years, everybody tell me about Canada as the El dorado you see.

JM: But who is that 'everybody'?

Fouad: Well, part of my family, TV report, immigration you see. They say that for the immigrants, it's easier in Canada.

JM: But where did you...?

Fouad: It's like… Now to put it, it is an image… It's… It's a stereotype you see! It's the image that I heard you see: 'Canada is amazing! They will give you your chance more easily [than in France]! For immigrants, it's perfect!'"

Field interview, 26/02/2016, Montréal

Fouad's description of his image of Canada before his departure conveyed a similar sense of open possibilities. As he said, one of the 'stereotypes' (to use his own words) he encountered was that Canada was a place where one was given a chance. In the cases of both Selim and Fouad, and in the case of many of the aspiring emigrants I met, the geography of potential destinations was very much an imagined geography of possibilities, of openness to possible futures and hopes, thus contrasting with the sense of stuckedness experienced in Europe.

All the aspiring emigrants I talked with during my research considered France and Belgium as modern and rich societies. The imagined geography produced and shared, that I described in the sections above, were not based on a time-space frame opposing less modern to more modern societies, per se. Instead, the structuring opposition in my interlocutors' understanding of the world seemed to be situated between stasis and mobility, between stuckedness and openness to various futures. In other words, I would argue that French and Belgian discourses about emigration were grounded in a chronotope of possibility.

2.2.4. Imagined geography and the spatio-temporal framing of Maghrebi French and Belgian

The relationship that citizens of migration background in Europe have with the rest of the world is traditionally described through a very limited spatial and temporal framing, explicated in a 2016 article by Çağlar (2016). In terms of spatiality, the very fact of speaking of 'people of migrant background' already establishes a link with a specific form of mobility that the persons

themselves have not experienced. This mobility is supposed to occur between two national spaces that are the so called 'country of origin' (in fact, the country of origin of the parents or grand-parents) and the country of destination (i.e. in the case of my participants, France and Belgium).

Academic and political discourses about French and Belgian people of migrant background also entail a specific temporal framing. Çağlar (2016) identifies two of those framings; the first one is the "integration chronotope" based on an idea of deficiency. Here, Çağlar argues, the idea of integration is a "teleological perspective" where the present of the so-called second generation is evaluated in relation with an ideal future of "full integration" in the "country of settlement" (Çağlar 2016, 958). The second framing is the "post-migrant chronotope," where this emphasis on an ideal future is replaced by the reference to a particular past of cross-border mobility.

In this context, the future of European minorities is imagined within a binary spatiality: either in Europe, through 'integration', or in the country of origin, through a so called 'return migration.' My interlocutors' understanding of the world, unfolded in the two sections above, challenges such dominant representations. First, the world views of the Maghrebi Belgians and French people that I encountered tend to unsettle the traditional representation of Europe as a desirable and somehow final destination for migrants and their offspring or, to put it differently, as places of hope. Instead, according to my interlocutors' understanding of the world, countries such as France and Belgium are often described as place of crisis, places without future or hope, characterized by certain forms of economic limitations and societal stagnation. Second, the specific geography that unfolded when I asked my interlocutors about the destinations that they envisioned for themselves were not really tied with the so called countries of origin, nuancing the dominant chronotope of integration and return migration that characterizes many discourses about populations of migrant background in Europe. This imagined geography of possibility was characterized by the predominance of global cities perceived as hubs of socio-economic opportunities and openness to newcomers. Within this imagined geography, Montréal occupies a particular place that is described in the following sections.

2.3. Montréal as a preferred destination: Social options and imaginaries of an open society

In the introduction of the second section, I pointed out how Vigh's (2009) concept of global awareness from below is not only about social imaginaries and vistas of distant places. It is also about the understanding that people have about their position within such imagined geography.

Or, to use Vigh's words, it is about an understanding of "the spaces and social options which are open or closed to persons of different social categories within it" (Vigh 2009, 93).

In the following pages, I continue my analysis of the migration aspirations of Belgian and French people of Maghrebi background by unfolding the status of Montréal within my interlocutors' understanding of the world. I try to understand why Montréal is perceived as a possible and desirable destination for some people. Perceiving Montréal as a desirable option, I argue, is highly related to the type of capital possessed by aspiring emigrants and by the type of capital conversion they envision as possible in this particular destination. I use capital in Bourdieu's (1986, 46) understanding of the term: "capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated' embodied form) which, when appropriated […] by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor." This conceptualization of capital includes the different forms that have been described by Bourdieu (1980): economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and symbolic capital. In the following section, I argue that Montréal is seen as a destination in which my interlocutors' cultural capital (in particular the fact of speaking French) could be valorized, and where new cultural capital (in particular the fact of learning English) could be accumulated.

2.3.1. 'Canada is more accessible for me': Desired destinations and social options

In order to start this last section, I would like to come back to the case of Ilian, who was introduced earlier.

> *Ilian was a 23-year-old French man of Algerian descent who was born and raised in a* cité *in* Charenton*, an area in the southeastern suburbs of Paris. When I met him for an interview in July 2016, he was trying to find a way to go back to Montréal, where he had already stayed for a few months before. Ilian did not exactly fit with the profile of the highly skilled and/or highly educated migrants that Québec wanted to attract. He did not pursue higher education and his professional experience comprised low-skilled and precarious jobs. Ilian also felt uncomfortable with the complex immigration procedure. He did not fully understand the administrative language that was used on the Québec official website for immigration. He mainly relied on the help of a social worker to prepare his immigration application. He also received some help from an acquaintance who lived in Montréal.*
>
> *Central to Ilian's emigration project was the idea of '*profiter*', which could be roughly translated as 'enjoying life'. Enjoying life, according to Ilian, was very difficult in Paris for*

someone with his professional qualifications and his ethnic and religious background. Ilian described to me the long and exhausting working hours that let no time for leisure. The pay, despite the extra hours was not enough to contemplate the possibility of a decent apartment in Paris. Luckily – at least according to Ilian – he lived at his parents' place, which allowed him to save some money for his desired departure to Montréal.

*Like many of the interlocutors I met during research, Ilian mentioned not one but several cities during our conversation: Montréal of course, but also Miami and Dubai. All of these destinations that Ilian imagined were deeply linked by this idea of being able to 'enjoy life', to be able to live a pleasant life outside of work. As he put it, Miami and Dubai were his 'dreamed' destinations (*c'est mon rêve*). Ilian also mentioned Australia, which was actually his first planned destination before he finally decided to go to Montréal. For Ilian, Miami, Dubai, and Australia were associated with professional opportunities, a lavish lifestyle, plenty of leisure time and good weather. However, Ilian also developed a clear understanding of what was a possible destination for him and what was not. For example, regarding his first plan to move to Australia, he explained:*

> *"JM: OK. And first, you said that you had Australia in mind. So what changed your mind?*
>
> *Ilian: Well, in fact, someone told me... I saw two or three people who told me Australia is more... First, its Anglophone, and I kind of struggle with it. But you have to go through. When you go somewhere, you have to go through, to learn. It's true, it is not my thing, English is not my field but when you don't have a choice, you have to deal with it.*
>
> *JM: Yes OK.*
>
> *Ilian: And so someone told me: 'You know, Australia will not be as easy as Canada. Canada, in Montréal, it's French, you will be able to integrate faster.' I thought 'well why not.'"*
>
> *Field interview, 29/06/2016, Paris*

In the same way, when I asked Ilian about his 'dream' to go and live in Dubai – a city that he briefly visited during a flight stopover – he explained to me:

*"Ilian: Dubai is different. It's different. It's two different things. Canada, Dubai, it's… Because Canada is more accessible for me. I can manage (*me débrouiller*) there. Dubai, I would really need some help. I would really need to find someone who could help me, introduce me, who… I couldn't leave just like that, as I do to Canada. It's too hard.*

JM: Why then? Why is this so hard?

Ilian: I could go for vacations, no problem…

JM: Like two weeks, no problem…

*Ilian: Two weeks, even one month, crazy vacations, yeah. But I couldn't… First of all the English, it will limit me. And there, it's the classical Arabic language (*Arabe littéraire*) and I don't speak classical Arab, it's a very difficult language."*

Field interview, 29/06/2016, Paris

Ilian's considerations about Australia and Dubai was illustrative of the complex assessment process through which many of my interlocutors evaluated and understood their social options in terms of international mobility. For Ilian, cultural capital and in particular language skills, were a central element in the distinction between his 'dreamed' destination – '*ses rêves*' to use his own words – and what he considered to be more realistic choices.

As I did with other interlocutors, I also asked Ilian if he thought about Algeria, his parents' country, as a possible destination. If Ilian did not completely exclude living in Algeria at some point in his life, he nevertheless discarded this option in the near future. As he explained to me, he would consider it for later, when he would retire.

These elements from my discussion with Ilian illustrate a form of hierarchy of the different destinations according to my interlocutors aspirations but also according to the social options that are offered to them. In the following paragraphs, I focus on the place of Montréal within my interlocutors' understanding of the world and see how this destination is imagined. I also describe the type of migration that is imagined by the Belgian and French people that I met in Europe and in Montréal.

2.3.2. Montréal imagined as a French speaking America

One element that was often put forward in the discourses and images that circulate within the European public is the description of the Québec and of the city of Montréal using the imaginary of North America. The imaginary of North America and more specifically of the United States was sometimes mobilized as illustrated by this cover picture of the Magazine *ParisMontréal*, a magazine distributed both in France and in Montréal:

Picture from the magazine *ParisMontréal*, septembre-octobre 2015

The title, the urban imagery as well as the reference to two emblematic streets of New York (Broadway) and Montréal (Rue Sainte-Catherine) tends to strongly associate Québec, and in particular the city of Montréal, with the broader imaginary of the North American (and here in particular, the US) cities.

For my interlocutors, this identification of Montréal as a 'North American' place did not only concern the urban landscape but also the social organization and more particularly the distribution of socio-economic opportunities. Many of the aspiring migrants I met envisioned

Canada and Montréal as places characterized by the mythical idea of the American dream that Yanis, a Belgian student in his 20s living in Liège, mentioned during one of our interview.

> "Yanis: Not like Belgium, [Montréal] is still America (*les Amériques*).
>
> JM: Yeah, OK? And how is that America? What is…
>
> Yanis: It always gives you… You always have this image that it [Canada] is a place which allows people to evolve, whatever their origins, whatever… [A place] which really focuses on skills. For example, here, in Belgium, you can be whoever you want, I mean really whoever, if you don't have a piece of paper which justify it, you can go fuck yourself. […] This disadvantage, I don't think it exists in Canada. At least, I know that it doesn't exist in the States [Yanis pronounces 'States' in English]. In the States, even with nothing… Well again, it's the American dream: from nothing, you become what you want. And what matters is the guts you have (*ce que tu as dans les tripes*)."
>
> Field interview, 24/06/2015, Liège

At the time of our interview Yanis was studying at a technical school in Belgium but was thinking about dropping out. He never went to Canada when I met him. For Yanis as for many of my interlocutors, Canada, Québec, and Montréal were perceived as places of numerous opportunities for those working hard enough to seize them. This type of imaginary was particularly vivid in the representations of people with less qualifications and lower job expectations in Europe. It was also very much connected with the aspiration of being able to make a 'fresh start', one outside of the many processes of social categorization experienced in Europe.

2.3.3. The question of the language: Montréal as a transitional space?

Another type of representation circulating among my interlocutors was related to the question of language. Québec is predominantly a French speaking province. According to the results of the 2011 census, French is the first language of 78. 1% of the Québec population.[27] The situation, however is significantly different in Montréal, where French is the first language for 52.4% of the city population. 13.2% have English as their first language, and 34,4% of the population has

27.http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/recensement/2011/recens2011_reg/langue_logement/lan_mat_reg.htm Last access: 03/06/2020

another first language.[28] Language was certainly a major element that led many of my interlocutors to project their migration plans to Montréal rather that to another destination. Despite the fact that Montréal is still predominantly depicted as a French speaking city in Belgium and in France, the multiplicity of languages present was somehow also present in the representations aspiring emigrants held. During an interview, Alma, a French woman of Algerian origin in her 30s living in Malakoff, an area situated in the south of Paris, explained to me why she had chosen Montréal as a destination for her first stay in Canada. Among the different factors that contributed to her choice, she mentioned the language:

> "Alma: And then, I chose Montréal, well, because of the francophone aspect because I don't master English. And I also knew however, that there was the possibility to learn English there. So here is why."
>
> Field interview, 31/01/2017, Arcueil

Alma had a technical degree obtained in a secondary school and was unemployed at the time of the interview. Alma's account of the multiple elements that made Montréal a viable option for her illustrates the complex ways in which the question of language was dealt with in the formulation of emigration projects. It also illustrates how the multilingual dimension of the city is incorporated by aspiring emigrants.

On the one hand, as Alma's quote suggests, the French speaking dimension of Montréal is perceived as a facilitator as well as a form of security for migration. For Alma, as well as for Ilian, being able to speak French in Montréal significantly reduced the investment necessary to move abroad as they do not have to learn another language. In other words, Montréal, as a French speaking city, was perceived as the perfect place to maximize their cultural capital. This was important for Alma and Ilian who – when I met them – were already anxious about other aspects of their emigration plans such as going through the complicated and sometimes cryptic administrative processes, saving money in case of hardship or trying to secure job opportunities in Montréal through their contacts there. Leaving for a city where they could speak their own language was also perceived as an additional safety net, something that would prevent them being totally lost abroad. Language, as Forlot (2008) argues in his book about French emigration

28 See the statistics from the city of Montreal: https://statistique.quebec.ca/statistiques/recensement/2011/recens2011_reg/langue_logement/lan_mat_reg.htm. Last access: 03/06/2020

in Canada, constitutes a "risk management tool" and the French speaking dimension of Montréal is seen as a "risk minimizer" (Forlot 2008, 102 and sq.).

But on the other hand, Alma's quote reveals another way in which language enters the formulation of her emigration project. Indeed, she did not choose Montréal just because she would be able to speak her own language there but also because she envisioned the possibility to perfect her English, or to accumulate cultural capital. The case of Alma illustrates an interesting apparent paradox that I encountered regularly during my discussion with young French and Belgians of Maghrebi background in Europe or in Montréal: Montréal was chosen because of its French speaking dimension, but one of the aspirations that was often expressed at the same time was to learn English. This illustrates the fact that the multilingual dimension of Montréal was often very important in the emergence of my interlocutors' emigration projects. In a way, Montréal was imagined as a city providing both a sense of security and a sense of possibility in terms of cultural capital accumulation.

Because of this hybrid dimension of Montréal, perceived as a place of relative (cultural) security and as a place of possibility for cultural capital accumulation (especially language skills), some of the young Maghrebi French and Belgians I met in Europe considered Montréal as a transitional destination, as the first step toward other aspired destinations either in other countries or in Canada. Some of them for example imagined Montréal as a first destination before moving to an English speaking city in Canada such as Toronto. What I want to emphasize here is that Montréal was not always envisioned as a final destination but sometimes as a specific stage within a broader mobility project.

2.3.4. A country where you will become yourself: Montréal imagined as a model of societal openness

On the website of the Québec Department for Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, on the page dedicated to the immigration of the 'permanent workers' (*travailleurs permanents*), one can find the following lines:

> **"Why choose Québec?**
> Because immigrants to Québec find good job opportunities and one of the best qualities of life in the world—both in urban centers and outlying regions.

> Because in Québec you can achieve your goals, push your limits and expand your horizons.
>
> Because Québec allows you to lead a full life. It's as simple as that!"[29]

This type of statement from Québec authorities resonates with the aspirations for fulfillment, self-realization and indifference to differences that were described in the first chapter. Indeed, among my interlocutors – especially those that I met before they moved – Canada and Montréal were largely imagined as places open to ethnic and religious diversity. Discourses about the openness of Canadian society were largely shared by and among my interlocutors during my research. For example, Idriss, one of my interlocutors that I met in Montréal, shared a video of the prime minister Justin Trudeau expressing his wishes for Eid al-Fitr on a social media platform. Idriss was a young man in his 30s holding a degree in communication, and unemployed when I met him in Montréal. He grew up in a small city near Lyon. In his social media post, he commented as follows:

> Upper text:
> "It is not like François Hollande! What a country, what a politic, return will be painful! Aid Mabrouk to all my friends and Muslim families! May GOD keep you close to me, with happiness and health…"
>
> Commentary under the video:
> "Here, in #Canada, the head of State wishes a happy Aïd to all the Muslims and knows that #Islam doesn't mean #Terrorism! Bravo #Justin Trudeau #AnExample #HappyAid #AidMabrouk #AllMyWhishes #ProudToLiveInCanada"

Fieldnotes, 06/07/2016

Facing camera, Justin Trudeau – Prime Minister of Canada since the federal election of October 2015 and leader of the Liberal Party – expresses his wishes to the Canadian Muslim community who celebrate Eid al-Fitr. The video, which is published on the official website of the Prime Minister, starts with Justin Trudeau greeting the spectators in Arabic (*As-salāmu ʿalaykum*) and in French/English (the video exists in both versions).[30]After a short introduction presenting Eid al-Fitr, the Prime Minister lists a number of values that are traditionally attached to the month of Ramadan and expresses – in his own words – his "honour to partake in this special time which celebrate the common values that unite us all, values like empathy, generosity, discipline and

29 http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/permanent-workers/index.html English translation from the website. Last access: 26/10/2018
30 See: https://pm.gc.ca/eng/videos Last access: 31/10/2018

respect."[31] These values, Justin Trudeau argues, are "tenets of [the] charter of rights and freedoms and vital principles upon which Canada in founded." At the end of the video, the Prime Minister expresses his wishes and the wishes of his wife to those celebrating Eid al-Fitr and concludes using the Muslim greeting: "Eid Mubarak." As Idriss' post presented above illustrates, such a message, delivered by the head of the Canadian government himself, was often received with great enthusiasm among the French and Belgian people of Maghrebi origin that I encountered in Montréal and in Europe.

Just like Idriss, many of my interlocutors used this type of video or other emblematic characteristics of the Trudeau government to illustrate the differences that they perceived between the socio-political context in Canada and in France or Belgium. For example, Wassim – a French man of Moroccan origin from Soisson, holding a technical degree in accounting and living in Montréal where he worked in a daycare center – described his views on Justin Trudeau and his discourses about cultural diversity:

> "Wassim: You know these are things… […] I really speak about the intercultural aspect here [in Canada]. On the intercultural aspect, what Justin Trudeau did in a few days, not even in weeks, in a few days, a few hours even! Even his first discourse it… You know, it gives you the tone. So [Trudeau] makes you feel at ease [*à l'aise*]. He makes you feel at ease and then you see, it doesn't mean we can't have different opinions on things. But you know what is sad in France, it is that we are against difference of opinion. You see what I mean? 'We want you to be this!' 'If you are not, we have a problem.' You see?"

Field interview, 13/01/2015, Montréal

Another typical example that many interlocutors mentioned as a sign of Canada's openness to cultural diversity was the nomination of Harjit Sajjan (a Canadian military and police officer born in India) – whose picture in military gear and wearing a Sikh turban rapidly became popular – as Minister of National Defense. Among the people I worked with during my research, these examples were perceived as signs of a greater openness to multiculturalism and also as proof that diversity (including religious diversity) could be peacefully accepted without harming the institutions or the social cohesion of a liberal democracy such as Canada. Such social media posts were not only shared among people already living in Montréal but also with people still living in

31 See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=kD-F4m9t_Ac Last access: 03/06/2020

Europe, contributing to the production of specific imaginaries about Canada and Québec. This idea of Montréal as a city open to ethnic and religious diversity was particularly shared among the French and Belgians of Maghrebi background that I met during my research.

As illustrated throughout this chapter, social media and internet-based platforms were important channels through which aspiring emigrants constituted their representation of Canada, Québec and Montréal. In recent years, many studies have addressed the role of social media in the migration process. Most of these studies have focused on how online communications contributed to the creation of new forms of communities in which different types of capital (mainly social capital) (Bourdieu 1986) are exchanged and shared (Komito 2011; Hiller and Franz 2004). Others have addressed the role of the internet in the national and transnational political participation of the migrants (Kissau 2012). Dekker and Engbersen (2014) question how the internet and social media transform migrant networks and also facilitate (or not) migration itself. They identified four ways in which social media potentially facilitates the migration process. First they facilitate the maintaining of strong ties (Granovetters 1973) with family and friends. Second, they facilitate access to weak ties which are useful in the migration process. Third, they create an infrastructure of "latent ties" that can be activated by the migrant. Lastly, they create a "rich source of insider knowledge on migration" (Dekker and Engbersen 2014, 401). Regarding this fourth dimension, Dekker and Engbersen focus mainly on practical information that is used by migrants during the migration process or after arrival (information regarding their rights, the language, schools or jobs). My data suggests a fifth way in which social media and internet based platforms – if not facilitate – at least impact migration. This fifth way does not exactly regard the migration process in itself but rather the pre-migration stage: it is by establishing what could be called an aspirational infrastructure. What I mean by that is that social media, as illustrated throughout this chapter, facilitate the circulation of "socially shared and transmitted [...] representational assemblages" – or social imaginaries – (Salazar 2011, 576) that impact how people understand the world and their place in it. This circulation of information and imaginaries – by sharing articles, personal stories and advice – produce an expansion of the field of aspiration in a context where "local means" are measured by "global standards" (Graw and Schielke 2012b, 12).

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter continued my exploration of Maghrebi European migration aspirations by exploring the social imaginaries of potential destinations that underlie such aspirations. These social imaginaries are deeply related to global flows of discourses, pictures, video and personal stories, especially through social media and internet based platforms but also through transnational social networks (extended family members and friends for example) and classic media such as television, radio and magazines. This circulation of information contributes to the transformation of Maghrebi European's horizons of expectation (Graw and Schielke 2012b) allowing – as my data suggests – multiple practices that put into perspective local experiences of stuckedness and stasis with global possibilities (Willems 2014).

Most interlocutors projected their aspirations and hopes within a specific imagined geography. Of course this imagined geography can vary significantly from one person to another but throughout my research, my data suggests several dominant traits. The first and maybe more obvious element is that the destinations deemed desirable by the Maghrebi Europeans I met were mainly places of high socio-economic status, often at the forefront of the globalized capitalist economy. A second element of these geographies was that they were often constructed around cities rather than nation states. Global cities (Sassen 2001) such as New-York, London, Dubaï, Toronto or Montréal were often perceived as desirable destinations. Finally, it is important to note that the countries of origin of my interlocutors' family were rarely viewed as desirable destinations.

These practices of imagining possible destinations provide understanding of the world in which places such as France, Belgium are attributed specific positions. The research suggests that – while some migration movements are organized around what has been described as a "modernist chronotope" (Dick 2010, 276) – the migration aspirations of young Maghrebi Europeans, which are mainly envisioned between places with comparable positions in terms of wealth and economic prosperity – are structured around a binary which opposes stuckedness and stasis (i.e. in Europe) to opportunity and possibility for upward mobility (i.e. in destinations such as Montréal, Dubaï or New-York for example). This understanding of the world, that I have described through the term 'chronotope of possibility', illustrates alternative perceptions of Europe as a place characterized not by a leading position in societal advancement but rather as a place of social stagnation.

Interlocutors' practices of understanding the world was not only about identifying desirable destinations It was also about understanding their own position within such a world. In this context, the choice of Montréal as a possible place to go was largely the result of forms of representations of what was desirable and what was possible. By assessing their social options, interlocutors often identified Montréal as a place where they could valorize their cultural capital as French speakers. But it was also identified as a place allowing for additional capital accumulation and conversion – for example through the learning of English. This suggests that – while the French speaking dimension of Montréal was traditionally presented as the main point of attractiveness for French speaking emigrants – Maghrebi Europeans were actually very much interested by the multilingual dimension of the city and not only by the French speaking dimension.

Part 2. Becoming a mobile subject: The development of migratory dispositions and the effect of migration infrastructure

The first part of this thesis has been focused on the question of the emergence of emigration projects among young Maghrebi French and Belgians. In Chapter 1, these projects were contextualized within European regimes of hope distribution. The aspirations of young Maghrebi Europeans have been analyzed in relation with broader social dynamics such as the shrinking of desirable futures as well as the persistence of discriminatory discourses and practices against Maghrebi and Muslim minorities. It has been argued that these emigration projects were often motivated by an aspiration to self-realization and fulfillment which is perceived as something difficult to achieve in the European context. In Chapter 2 I focused on the importance of social imaginaries in understanding how my interlocutors were considering moving abroad as a desirable future. It has been argued that aspirations for self-realization were largely envisioned within a specific geography of global cities perceived as hub of socio-economic possibilities and cultural openness (at least toward populations with Maghrebi/Muslim heritage). In the specific case of Montréal, the city was largely imagined as a space of progressive politics, openness to religious and ethnic diversity as well as a space where rapid socio-economic mobility (sometimes framed according to the vocabulary of the 'American Dream') was possible.

While the first part was focused on the emergence of emigration aspirations, this second part now moves to the question of the translation of such aspirations into actual international mobility. It is focused on my second set of research questions: *to what extent and under what conditions do emigration aspirations translate into actual migration? And to what extent and how are these aspirations transformed, channeled and sorted during the migration process?* After all, as many authors have emphasized, many emigration desires never materialize (Bal and Willems 2014; Mescoli 2014; Salazar 2014; Carling 2013). Moving requires access to specific resources (such as visas for example) as well as knowledge, skills and competences that are not shared by everyone. In other words, moving requires specific types of capital (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004a; Bourdieu 1986). At the same time, not all forms of international mobility are equally socially valued. Some are highly promoted and encouraged by eminent institutions while other are discouraged and negatively sanctioned (Mescoli 2014).

Chapter three focuses on the conditions of realization of my interlocutors' mobility, in particular on the European side, by drawing on the concept of migratory disposition (Kalir 2005) and mobility capital (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004a; Lévy 2000). First the chapter questions how Maghrebi European mobility to Canada relates to the past experience of migration of this population, as well as the dominant discourses that develop around the question of the international mobility of French and Belgian citizens. Building on Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of capital, the chapter then moves to the question of the concretization of

international mobility projects by the acquisition of different forms of mobility capital including a privileged access to visa exemptions and mobility programs to Canada. I argue that for some of my interlocutors, the acquisition of such capital was very much a progressive and non-linear process involving previous intra- and inter-national mobility. Rather than a routine reproduction of inherited capital, moving abroad was often experienced as a self-conducted (and sometimes painful) process.

Chapter four turns to the Canadian side of the migration infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist 2014; Meeus, Arnaut, and Van Heur 2019). More precisely, it addresses how Canadian and Québec regulations and administrative practices contribute to the 'channeling' of the aspirations of young Maghrebi Europeans engaging in migration toward Montréal. Building on a series of observations conducted during migration information sessions and integration courses in Europe and in Montréal, it unfolds macro and micro practices of aspiration management (Carling and Collins 2018) and the effect of such practices on would-be emigrants. I show that this complex and multiform infrastructure of regulation, information sessions, and integration courses, actively encourage the development of certain forms of aspirations and discourage the development of others.

Chapter 3. Widening the 'field of the possible': The development of migratory dispositions among Maghrebi French and Belgians

In the first part of the thesis, I described the emergence of emigration projects among young Maghrebi French and Belgians and the aspirations that underlined these emigration projects. The main argument proposed in the first part was that such desires to emigrate were largely connected with a lack of hope for a better future at home and with the everyday experience of a sense of stuckedness in French and Belgians contexts. One of the effects of these experiences for young Maghrebi French and Belgians was the displacement of aspirations abroad – of what the future might and should look like (Boccagni 2017) – and in particular in Montréal. The first part mainly addressed the emergence of emigration projects as alternative strategies to overcome the difficulties experienced in the European context (i.e. a context of socio-economic instability and pervasive discrimination against minorities of Maghrebi and Muslim background). In other words, until now, international mobility and the aspirations that are pursued through that mobility have mainly been presented as a reaction to a specific social context; as a way to relocate hopes for a better life abroad because of the lack of desirable futures at home. What the first part does not address is the very specificity of this reaction: of emigration. After all, leaving is only one of the numerous responses that one can use when facing a critical situation (Hirschman 1970). What I would like to address in the following chapter are the specific conditions in which international mobility becomes a plausible and desirable option for people. This time I do not focus on push and pull factors as in part one, but rather by focusing on the very conditions under which emigration – becoming mobile – is envisioned as a possibility for some people.

In order to do this, it is essential to acknowledge the fact that both aspirations pursued through migration and migration aspirations themselves are socially sanctioned behaviors (Carling and Collins 2018). As Pierre Bourdieu (2003) argued, a strong relation exists between hopes and aspirations on the one hand and socially distributed possibilities on the other.[32] This idea is summarized by Bourdieu through the notion of "causality of the probable" (*causalité du probable*) (Bourdieu 2003, 332; Narotzky and Besnier 2014, 11) which suggests that people's perceptions

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32 In the original French version of the texts, Pierre Bourdieu talks about the relation between "*les espérances subjectives et les chances objectives*" (See Bourdieu 2003, 311).

of the future tends to adjust to the possibilities that are objectively offered to them in a specific context. The experience of these possibilities, that are unequally distributed across society, produces specific dispositions which are defined by Bourdieu as the main component of habitus; as a "way of being" or as a "predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination" (Bourdieu 1977, 214). Dispositions, as Bourdieu argues, are not a natural given but are the result of a learning process (*apprentissage*) during which actors such as family members, peers or institutions assess, value, encourage and/or discourage one's aspirations depending on the futures that are deemed acceptable or unrealistic for a particular person.

The following chapter moves from the question of aspirations developed in part one (what makes emigration from Europe desirable) to the question of dispositions (what makes emigration from Europe plausible/conceivable). Through this move, I would like to address the symbolic and material conditions within which aspirations are translated into actual physical movement. It addresses the first question of my second set of research questions: *to what extent and under what conditions do Maghrebi Europeans emigration aspirations translate into actual migration?* I build on Kalir's effort to bring the Bourdieu concept of disposition within the field of migrations through the notion of "migratory disposition" (Kalir 2005, 175). For Kalir, migratory disposition refers to "the subjective perception of people with regard to the possible adjustments of their position in relation to their social and economic environment" (Kalir 2005, 175). As proposed by Kalir, the concept of migratory disposition brings together the "significance of social structure in forming people's inclinations" (Kalir 2005, 175) by limiting the range of possibilities that are offered and the agency that people exercise by making sense of their experiences and by dealing with the (limited) possibilities that are available in a specific context. I am using the concept of disposition here to refer to the more structuralist side of the expression of aspirations. Phrased differently, 'dispositions' refers here to the work of social structures of reproduction (through education and socialization) in the emergence of migration aspiration. The concept of disposition – because it addresses dynamics of social reproduction – caries a deterministic undertone. In the cases I describe however, I argue that the development of migratory dispositions without being free from all forms of structural influences happens largely "off tracks" which is to say, outside of the social milieu of origin and rather through secondary forms of socialization (such as the access to higher education) or through long and more individual processes of accumulation of mobility experiences.

In the following sections, I address three dimensions of the development of migratory dispositions among French and Belgium citizens of Maghrebi background. In the first part, I describe how the project of moving abroad is experienced Maghrebi Belgians and French. I argue

that, for a significant part of the people I met, moving abroad was very much experienced as a form of detachment of the social milieu of origin (for example family, or peers) rather than as a form of social reproduction of established life strategy. Developing a migratory project and aspiration was very much linked with the feeling of becoming an exception and of widening the field of the possible. In the second part, I move to a more focused discussion of the social production of migratory desires. I examine various dominant discourses which valorize migratory dispositions in the French and Belgian contexts. These discourses, I argue, tend to socially valorize certain forms of international mobility, forms that many of my interlocutors can relate to because of their education and their professional aspirations. Finally, in part three, I go deeper into the material conditions of my interlocutors' production of migratory dispositions. I argue that many young Maghrebi French and Belgians occupy an ambivalent position when it comes to the production of a migratory disposition. On the one hand, as French and Belgian citizens, they benefit from a rather privileged position in terms of access to mobility opportunities because of visa-free destinations and/or advantageous international mobility programs. On the other hand, because they do not necessarily inherit routine access to international mobility, many of my interlocutors needed to build their own set of experiences and to accumulate mobility capital on their own. The production of a migratory disposition then appears as a complex learning process rather than as a routine reproduction of inherited competences and knowledge.

3.1. Becoming an exception: The development of migratory dispositions and the social background of young Maghrebi Europeans

Most of the Maghrebi French and Belgians that I met were young adults (between 25 and 35 years old) born and socialized in Europe. Most of them were tertiary educated, often having a university degree. Because of their (young) age, their education titles and their professional skills, many of them would appear as legitimate movers in the sense that they fit with the figure of the mobile and skilled worker whose competences could be valued internationally.

However, an interesting characteristic of the great majority of the persons I met during my research is that their project of emigration was often elaborated within a broader context of social mobility when compared with the situation of their parents. Even if this social mobility was uncertain, as described in the first chapter, they were nevertheless the pursued horizon. Indeed, most of the Maghrebi French and Belgians that I met came from working class or lower middle class families. Their parents were often working as blue collar workers or as small entrepreneurs (sometimes running small businesses) and had a lower level of education than their children. What I would like to emphasize in the following section is that for my interlocutors the pursuit

and the realization of emigration aspirations was very much about acquiring new dispositions rather than the reproduction of dispositions acquired within family. I would argue that the emergence of emigration aspirations among the young Maghrebi French and Belgians that I encountered took place in broader trajectories of social mobility producing new dispositions toward alternative life strategies such as emigration.

3.1.1. The development of migratory disposition as the extension of the 'field of the possible': The case of Clarisse

I met Clarisse in April 2016 during a demonstration in Montréal. The demonstration was named 'Nuit Debout' *(Standing Night) and was largely an emanation of the social protest of the same name organized in France at the same period. Many French people were involved in the organization of the event in Montréal. The protest was materialized by a long occupation of Philips Square, a small square situated on Sainte-Catherine Street, in the middle of Montréal's business and commercial district. My first contact with Clarisse happened while I was trying to engage with some of the people involved in the demonstration, partly from personal curiosity for this transnational (but apparently very francophone) mobilization and partly with the idea of making contacts for my doctoral research. I was rapidly redirected to Clarisse who was one of the people who was frequently involved in the movement. After a short discussion, we found out that we were both PhD students and we started talking about our own research interests. After I described my topic to her, she explained that her parents had Algerian origins. She also gave me her email address and agreed to organize a discussion about her experience of migration to Montréal. Because of my return to Europe for several months in 2016, we only met in May 2017. We arranged to meet on Sainte-Catherine Street, in the* 'Village' *(historically identified as the gay neighborhood in Montréal). Clarisse suggested to meet in one of the trendy cafés in the area; it was a place – as she explained to me later – that she did not like so much because of its 'hipster' ambiance but that she found convenient for a meeting because of its location and its visibility from the street. Indeed, the Village was usually well known among French and Belgian people in Montréal. Despite the strong presence of homeless people and visible signs of urban poverty in the immediate surroundings, the area counted a number of popular bars, coffee shops and restaurants attracting the middle class youth. During the summer, Sainte-Catherine Street was also closed to automobiles which made it a popular place for people to wander and enjoy the area. This was not to say that Clarisse was particularly comfortable in this environment. As she explained to me, coming from a small town in Dordogne, a rural department of France, she was not used to such a trendy environment that she progressively*

*learned how to deal with during her studies in Bordeaux and then in Paris. Even today she explained, she continued to feel a form of mismatch when she entered such trendy places, as if it was not exactly a place for her. At the time of the discussion, Clarisse was 29 years old. She was a student doing a joint PhD in Paris and in Montréal where she arrived in 2015. When I met her in 2017, she did not plan to stay in Québec but also did not exactly know what she would do after her research. Going back to France was certainly one of her options but she also mentioned her fascination for the US. Clarisse was born in a small rural town of south-western France. Her father was French with a Polish background and her mother came from an Algerian family who lived in a working class suburb of the North of Paris. Despite these mixed origins, Clarisse – during our conversations – regularly presented herself as a 'racialized woman' (*une femme racisée*). Clarisse came from a lower middle class family. Her mother worked as a caregiver and she was now selling clothes in marketplaces with her husband. Clarisse insisted on the fact that the relatively low level of education of her parents (her father did not finish secondary school) was largely compensated by a strong militant culture (her mother was a leftist union activist and her father an anarchist one) providing her and her sister with a strong background, especially in social sciences and political culture.*

*Clarisse's mobility to Montréal was not the only spatial mobility that was mentioned during our discussion. Indeed, Clarisse described me extensively the other mobilities that punctuated her life so far. First, the move between the rural region where she grew up and Bordeaux, the 'big city', where she went to university. As a good student at school and because of the importance that her parents attributed to academic education, going to university appeared as a logical step for Clarisse. However, this move to Bordeaux and to the university – she explained – was not only a spatial move. It also made her an exception among the group of friends she built in her town of origin because – among them – only a few entered tertiary education, let alone moved abroad. In this context, Clarisse explained to me the importance of the example of her nanny's daughter who was one of the few acquaintances who went in Bordeaux before her. Because moving to the city was not the norm among her group of friends and acquaintances, this example contributed – as Clarisse described – to 'open a field of the possible' (*créer un ordre du possible*). She and her mother received helpful advice from her ex-nanny, in particular regarding how to find an apartment in Bordeaux. Another element that facilitated this move was Clarisse's involvement in political activism which occasionally involved trips to Bordeaux for demonstrations. This helped her to get in touch with urban life, and Clarisse described this arrival in Bordeaux's university as an important move for her.*

*When Clarisse was at Bordeaux University, moving to Montréal was not yet among her plans. However, as she explained to me during our discussion, moving abroad – especially across the Atlantic Ocean – was slowly entering 'the field of the possible' (*de l'ordre du possible*), to use Clarisse's expression. As we continued our discussion, Clarisse mentioned different elements that – she believed – contributed to the emergence of international mobility as a possible option for her. Among these elements, a trip that her younger sister made to New York during secondary school. Despite the fact that her family travelled a lot across Europe during vacations, it was the first time that someone went across the Atlantic Ocean, very far from what she imagined as a possible destination at this time. Another element that Clarisse mentioned was her friendship with a Québec student that she met during her years at the university through her union's activity. This friendship brought Clarisse to Montréal and New York several years before her move to Canada.*

Clarisse's project to move to Montréal was deeply linked with her university trajectory. After a positive experience during her Master degree in Bordeaux, Clarisse decided to pursue a PhD in Paris, in a prestigious research center. Here, she learned – through the example of a colleague – about the possibility of organizing a joint PhD with a foreign university. At this time, Clarisse considered that internationalizing her PhD was a good strategy. As she explained to me, she wanted to enroll in a 'North American' university, in particular because of the prestige of U.S. universities in her field of study. However, she rapidly faced the reluctance of U.S. universities to organize a joint PhD. Her project was reoriented toward Montréal where she had some contacts with researchers due to her political activity.

In many ways, the life-story of Clarisse differed from those that I encountered during my research. First, Clarisse's mixed origins constituted a difference in regards to the biography of the vast majority of my interlocutors during the research. Despite this mixed origin and the fact that Clarisse's name was not immediately associated with a Maghrebi background, she nevertheless was regularly identified as an Arab, as she explained to me during our discussions. Another element of difference was that most of my interlocutors, for example, came from an urban environment rather than a rural one like Clarisse. As a PhD student, Clarisse's level of education was also higher than the level of education of most of the people I met in Montréal. However, many of the people I met during my research shared some types of experience with Clarisse. First, many of the Belgian and French people who I met in Montréal and in Europe came from working class and/or lower middle class families and were engaged – just as Clarisse – in a trajectory of upward social mobility when compared with the situation of their parents, at least in terms of

level of education. In this context the people I met could hardly be categorized as hyper-mobile elite. They were closer to what Favell, Feldblum and Smith (2007, 17) called a middle-class "spiralist" who, as the authors describe are "often not at all from elite background but are provincial, career frustrated [people], who have gambled with dramatic spatial mobility in their education and careers abroad to improve social mobility opportunities that are otherwise blocked at home." An important element of this specific situation was that, for Clarisse as for many interlocutors, moving abroad was not something self-evident (*qui va de soi* in French). It was rather the result of what Clarisse called a progressive extension of the 'field of the possible'. Clarisse's expression about the field of the possible echoes the concept of "horizon of expectation", as conceptualized by Graw and Schielke:

> "[…] the notion of horizon refers not only to what is actually visible but to what is familiar, known, and imaginable for a person […]. Here the notion of horizon not only describes a limit of perception but becomes almost synonymous with the world itself as that which can be grasped, understood, or thought of by individuals, societies, or cultures in a given moment of life or history." (Graw and Schielke 2012a, 14)

Developing the concept of 'horizon', Graw and Schielke are particularly interested in questioning the emergence of "global horizons" characterized by the increasing presence of "global references" in the way people evaluate their local worlds (Graw and Schielke 2012a). Through the example of Clarisse, I described a different dynamic of production of new horizons: as the result of a slow process of socialization. The question that arises then is to what extent this process of socialization happened within or outside the social milieu of origin. According to Clarisse accounts of her national and international mobility what she experienced was not so much a form of social reproduction (in the sense of reproducing life strategies considered as normal within her milieu of origin) but rather a form of social (upward) mobility. This is a point that I explore further in the following paragraphs.

3.1.2. Moving within or against the family background? The Emigration of the children against the emigration of the parents

> *Nacim is a French man of Algerian origin coming from Antony, an area in the southern suburbs of Paris. He was one of my main interlocutors in Montréal. During my fieldwork, we met regularly, both in Canada and in France. As with many of the Maghrebi European that I met, Nacim grew up in a working class family. His father was a taxi driver and his mother worked at home. As many of my interlocutors, he also accessed a higher level of education*

than his parents and completed a degree from a University Technology Institute (IUT in French). Among the many things that Nacim explained to me during our numerous talks, one was how he was surprised to discover how moving abroad was actually relatively easy. 'It was too easy!' he told me during one of our encounters in Paris. As an IT worker, Nacim was typically the type of worker that the Québec government was craving for at the time of my research. Moving abroad, however, had never really been part of Nacim's horizon of expectations (Graw and Schielke 2012b) until just before his first stay in Montréal. The first time he remembered mentioning the possibility to go to Montréal was through a joke with a friend. Both of them experiencing difficulties to find decent jobs in France, they challenged one another to go to Québec. Before this, Nacim would not have seriously considered moving abroad. 'We didn't have this culture' he explained to me, 'We didn't have big brothers [grands frères][33] who moved abroad.' Like Nacim, many of the Maghrebi Europeans coming from a working class background that I talked with during my research did not have previous examples of emigration toward global cities such as Montréal among their nuclear family (parents, brothers and sisters), nor among their childhood friends. Very often, they developed the idea of moving abroad at a later stage, for example while attending university.

Nacim's statement that moving abroad was not 'his culture' might appear as paradoxical. After all, the parents (or sometimes grand-parents) of my interlocutors have themselves emigrated to France or to Belgium. Would these previous migrations not inform or contribute to favor the emergence of emigration desires among young Maghrebi Europeans? Instead, the young Maghrebi Europeans that I met during my fieldwork generally perceived their emigration as going against the family expectations. For example Nadia, a French woman of Tunisian background living in Montréal, explained to me during an interview that, when she returned to France for vacations, she was always concerned about showing her family that she was successful in Canada. When I asked her why, she explained to me that her parents, and in particular her mother – who worked as a cleaner – did not understand her desire to leave France for Canada,

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33 In the context of urban France, the term '*grand frère*' goes beyond the description of family ties. The 'big brothers' or *grands frères* refer to a specific types of social actors institutionalized in the 1980s and 1990s through urban policies targeting the poor *banlieues* characterized by socio-economic difficulties and high level of populations from immigrant background (Duret 1996). In its policy and media typical figure, the 'big brother' is a young man who shares a geographical, socio-economic and cultural proximity with young people from the *banlieue*. This proximity was supposed to produced 'exemplary figures' or 'positive leaders' for the disadvantaged youth as well as a function of intermediary between the world of the *banlieue* and the rest of the society, supposedly making social work easier and more efficient in preventing crime, and other urban issues associated with the *banlieue* youth (Stébé 2012).

arguing that she could have a good life in France. Nadia's experience was not exceptional among my interlocutors. Lounès, a French man of Algerian background that I briefly introduced in chapter two, described the misunderstanding that occurred between him and his mother regarding his emigration:

> "Lounès: Our parents did it! They left, they made a life. So I think that, beyond all you can imagine, being a colleague meeting people in Dubaï or you who meet people like me, simply, we are reproducing the schemes (*schémas*) of our parents.
>
> JM: Yes, you think?
>
> Lounès: Positive!
>
> JM: What make you say this? You spoke about this with your parents?
>
> Lounès: Yes. My mother didn't want me to leave! I said to her: 'why did you leave?' She says 'Ah well, I was not happy in Algeria.' Here you are! [imitating the voice of his mother] 'Yes but it is different, we came here [in France], to offer you a good life!'"

Field interview, 25/02/2016 Montréal

The example that Lounès gave is a reminder of the importance of the relational dimension of aspirations, and those related to migration in particular. Aspirations are not necessarily centered on oneself and can involve some significant others. Boccagni (2017) unfolded such relational dimension of aspirations in describing the aspirations of immigrant domestic workers in Italy and the potential effect of intergenerational ties and obligations in the expression of such aspirations. For example, for Boccagni's interlocutors, the initial aspiration to return in the country of origin was sometimes nuanced when the future of their children – sometimes born in Italy – entered into account. This intergenerational dimension of aspirations is also typically visible when first generation immigrants are facing difficult socio-economic conditions and scarce opportunities for upward social mobility in the destination country and project the aspirations to social mobility on the next generation (their children): something that Lounès' account illustrates, with his mother explaining that she came to France to offer him a 'good life'. Lounès' account of his interaction with his mother illustrates the paradoxical status of his emigration aspirations within his family history of migrations. On the one hand, Lounès identified his own international mobility with that of his parents, especially because both of them consisted of escaping a situation of unhappiness. On the other hand, the quote also illustrates how, in a certain sense, Lounès migration aspiration goes against the family project as imagined by his parents. This was a project

where their move to France was perceived not as the initial step in a continuous succession of migrations but as an exceptional move in order to provide a better future for their children in France. In this context, while it would have been easy, at first sight, to draw a form of continuity between my interlocutors' migration aspirations and that of their parents, my data suggests that the aspirations of my interlocutors actually often upset the aspirations that their parents had for them.

The relation between the migration aspiration of the people I met and the aspirations of their parents was sometimes informed by gender dynamics. For example, Asma, a Belgian woman of Moroccan origins whom I met in Brussels described the opinion of her parents regarding the possibility of her brothers and sisters to travel:

> "Asma: There was this idea that a girl does not travel. A boy yes, this is not so much a problem but only for limited time. This was not… We don't leave the house to go and live abroad no way. And so that was my impression at the time. For example, I know that my [older] sister never traveled abroad, even with friends."

Field interview, 23/03/2015

Latter in the interview, Asma, who was studying law when I met her, explained to me that the opinion of her parents about travels and international mobility in general changed and that they were more inclined to accept international mobility as a legitimate thing to do even for their daughters. Asma gave me her interpretation of this evolution:

> "Asma: My parents were very traditional back then. You had to study that was important […] but after you had to get married. That was the next step. And I think that they saw what was happening in many marriages and that was not always very positive and that was not always bringing happiness to their children. So they developed another vision of things. At the end getting married and staying in a cocoon […] it is not always positive so maybe going abroad for a bit could be better."

Field interview, 23/03/2015

Asma's experience illustrates the fact that the international mobility of the children can be judged differently by the parents depending on gender. This gender dimension certainly goes beyond the

question of social judgement as it can also impact the very possibility of people to develop experiences of international mobility and therefore to 'learn' how to move.

A complete analysis of the relation between the migration of my interlocutors and the aspirations of their parents would require data that – because of time limitations – I did not collect during this research (e.g. interviews with the parents). The gender dynamics involved in such relation would also require a more systematic exploration. However, one point that is probably worth noting for the understanding of such relation of disjuncture is how family migration background might influence the way the parents experience the migration of their children. It has been noted for example how, in a context of migration, the presence of significant others, and in particular of family members, was an important element in a process of home-making which was often complicated by the very experience of migration (Boccagni 2016; Allen 2008). Thus, the migration of Maghrebi Europeans to Montréal does not only open new perspectives about their home making practices, it also destabilizes the home making practices of their parents as well as their aspirations for the future.

3.2. Moving as 'a plus': The social valorization of international mobility

In the previous section, I contextualized the emigration of some of my interlocutors within their social milieu of origin. In the following development, I would like to zoom out and briefly describe how certain forms of international mobility were socially valorized and promoted in French and Belgian contexts during my research. This social valorization often echoes my interlocutors' aspiration as it is mainly oriented toward the glorification of the mobility of young, skilled, and often highly educated individuals. Therefore, I would like to emphasize here the importance of places such as universities, secondary and/or tertiary education institutions and job related institutions in the development of emigration projects among the people I met.

3.2.1. The institutional promotion of the international mobility of human capital

> *In early 2017, I participated in a 'Session of general information about international mobility' organized by the city's official office for professional training. This event was only one example of the many training, information sessions or international fairs that I had visited during my field-work. This type of events was – at the time of my research – organized regularly both in France and in Belgium, very often in collaboration with local employment agencies.*

The session was organized in Brussels, in the organization's building situated in a big boulevard of the capital. In the vicinity of the session's location, tall buildings were hosting offices for other institutions. The access to the session's room was not open to all. No money was asked but the participation required an online registration. When I connected to the internet platform to register for the event, I was welcomed with the following paragraph:

> *"You just finished school and you are starting to look for a job? An internship abroad can be a real push (*tremplin*) toward employment and certainly the acquisition of an experience rich in competences. Discover the possibilities: doing internships, volunteering or [civil service]…*
>
> *And participate to our information session to learn more!"*[34]

The participants were also asked to bring with them an ID document as well as the invitation that they received by email before the event. I was among the first participant to arrive at the place where the session was organized. We were asked to wait in front of a room which was closed when I arrived. A representative of the organization came and got us inside the room which seemed to be a sort of documentation center where tables, chairs and a projection equipment had been prepared for the session.

There were around twenty of us participating in the session, with most of us being young adults between 25 and 35 years old. There were slightly more women than men among the participants. The session was directed by a representative of the city's office. It mainly consisted of the presentation and description of a number of international mobility programs available in Belgium, and in the Brussels region in particular. The representative of the organization briefly described the different programs with the support of power-point slides that were also distributed in printed form to the participants. Most of the time, the description of the program was quite basic and the facilitator directed the participants to relevant websites for more information.

Over the course of the session, I noticed that the vocabulary of 'migration' was never used to describe the mobility of Belgian citizens abroad; words like 'migrants', 'migration', 'emigrants' or 'immigrants' for example were absent from the presentation. Instead, the

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34 http://www.dorifor.be/formation/14-mars-seance-d-information-generale-sur-la-mobilite-internationale-7214.html Last access: 20/01/2019

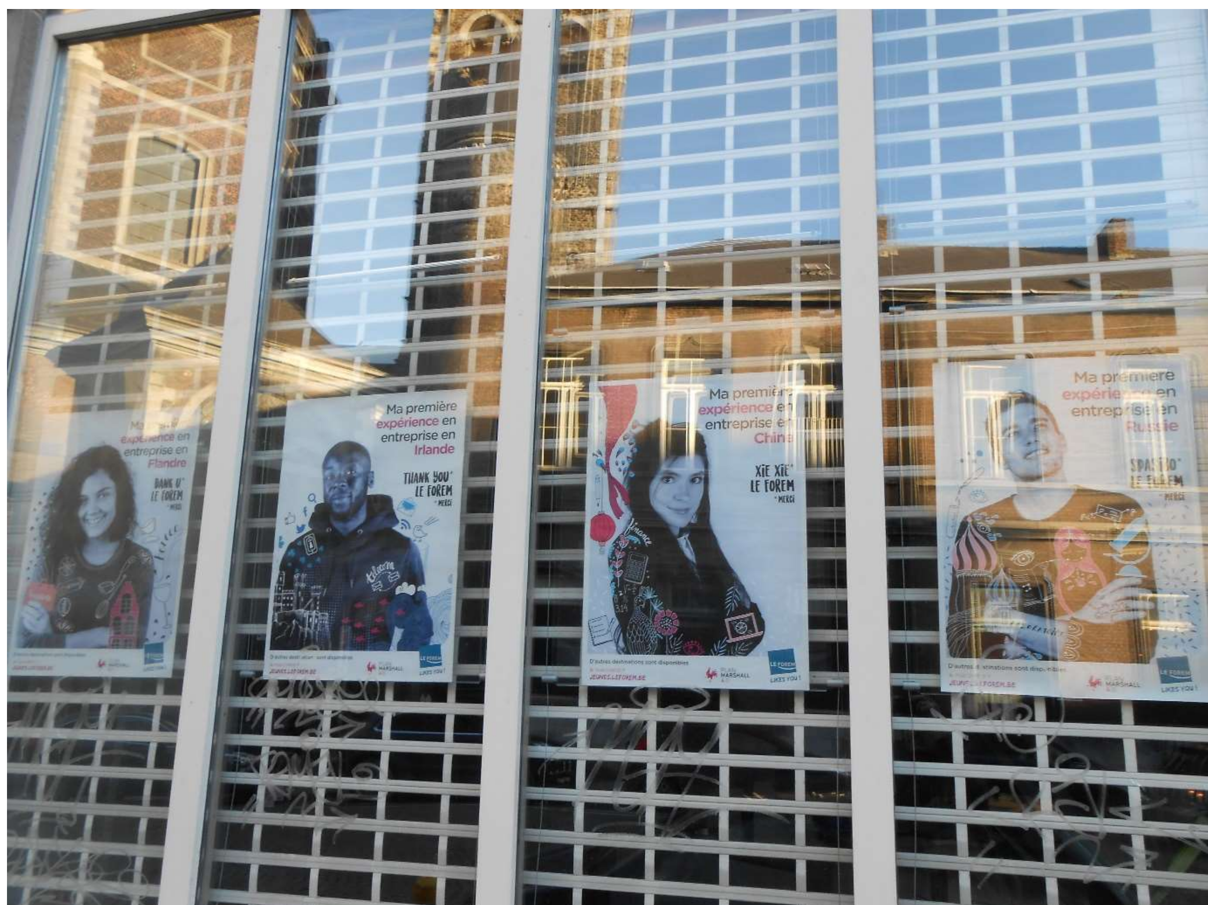
*representative of the city's office used words like 'international mobility' (*mobilité internationale*), 'experience abroad' (*expérience à l'étranger*) or 'expats' (*expatriés*) to mention the experience of the mobility of Belgians. The vocabulary of migration was only used once during the presentation, when the facilitator described mobility programs focused on volunteering and development cooperation. These programs "can assist in helping migrants, or refugees" the representative explained.*

*All the programs that were described during the session were temporary, and the representative of the city's office regularly mentioned during the presentation the return to Belgium as the necessary horizon of these mobility programs. At the beginning of the session, during the introduction of a slide titled 'Why an experience abroad?' the facilitator of the session explained to us the competitive advantages that moving abroad could provide, in particular on the Brussels job market: "when you will come back, [your experience abroad] will be a plus." The representative insisted on the advantage that such an experience could provide in Brussels that she described as a "very international city." She shared with me an example of what could be (or should be) an experience abroad. The facilitator asked us to imagine the case of a hairdresser who went to London "because there, things are moving" (*parce que là-bas, ça bouge*). "When he would come back" the facilitator explained, this hairdresser would be able to modify the organization of his work according to the novelty he discovered in London. This mobility, it was explained, will become 'profitable' by allowing him to 'innovate' back in Brussels. The representative continued by insisting on the necessity to start a mobility project by the following question: "What is the country which will bring me the most regarding my objectives?"*

*During the session, the facilitator also warned us about what she considered as a 'risk' present in some specific programs. These programs, she explained, regroup the beneficiary by nationality which tend to push people to speak their native language and therefore make them miss the opportunity of a linguistic immersion. "This is the risk when we leave with other people. How will you really experience your mobility…" According to the facilitator, staying with a group of co-nationals and running the 'risk' of 'speaking French' might prevent the movers to "really experience mobility" (*vivre vraiment la mobilité*).*

The short description above provides an example of valorization of migration (framed as 'international mobility') produced by a public institution. This session took place in Belgium, yet similar programs also existed in France and were promoted in a comparable way (See for example Santelli 2013). I encountered this type of promotion of international mobility frequently

during my research in France and in Belgium. In the example above, moving abroad is depicted as a positive and desirable experience. This process of social valorization of international mobility typically avoided – as in the session described above – any explicit reference to the vocabulary of migration, which created a strong social distinction between – on the one hand – the mobility of French and Belgian citizens presented as a desirable and positive individual experience and, on the other, the dominant representation of the migrants as a poor, unproductive and dangerous mass coming from the global South. In this context, the international mobility that is actively promoted by some institutions in France and in Belgium is regularly presented as an individual experience oriented toward the realization of individual aspirations, as it is illustrated by the advice given by the representative of Brussels' office during the session described above: "[Ask yourself] what is the country which will bring me the most regarding my objectives?" International mobility was frequently presented as a factor of individual socio-economic success and of professional progression. This was illustrated by the fact, that the promotion of international mobility by French and Belgian institutions regularly took the format of the portrait or of an individual testimony as – for example – in the case of this series of posters from the public employment agency of the Walloon region displayed in a street of Liège:



Front window of a Forem office, Liège, January 2019

Of course, the valorization of international mobility as a desirable option for French and Belgians, promoted by institutions like employment agencies, was structured around a very specific understanding of 'good mobility.' A first element of this understanding is the fact that good international mobility is necessarily temporary. Indeed, as illustrated in the session described above, the question of the return is a central element of this valorization of international mobility. A second element, closely related to the first one is the fact that this valorization of international mobility is strongly connected with a logic of maximization of 'human capital'. For example, in a note of international politics for the years 2014 to 2019, Wallonia-Brussels International (or WBI) – the public organization in charge of the international relations of the Brussels-Walloon Federation in Belgium – presented the international mobility programs that it supported as a mean to "guarantee a better development and a real cosmopolitanism in Wallonia and in Brussels **by offering to young people, in particular to those with less opportunities, an international experience**, often followed by the learning of a foreign language, which also boosts their competences and their perspectives in terms of professional insertion" (WBI, n.d., 33, bold in original). These experiences abroad were then described as "a school for tolerance as well as a learning of autonomy and interaction in a context of diversity" (WBI, n.d., 33, my translation from French). These elements as well as the types of representation illustrated by the picture above suggest that dimensions of race and class intersect in a specific way within such programs. Indeed, as the quote from WBI shows, many mobility programs are explicitly oriented toward young people of working class backgrounds and experiencing socio-professional difficulties, among whom young people of Maghrebi origins are over-represented. In France, programs of international mobility have been developed in certain 'Sensitive Urban Areas' ('Zone Urbaines Sensibles' or ZUS) where young people of Maghrebi origins are over-represented among the population (Santelli 2013). These programs are more or less explicitly aimed at populations with immigrant origins experiencing socio-economic difficulties in order to make them more 'competitive' on the job market.

As the examples above show, this institutional cultivation of mobility disposition was largely oriented toward the production of workers and citizens attuned with globalizing markets. It echoes Larner's observation about the diaspora programs of 'middling' developed countries of the global North (Larner 2007). These programs, Larner argues, are often built on "neo-liberal understandings of self-actualizing individuals and globalizing markets" (Larner 2007, 334). It is interesting to underline how the thematic of contact with other cultures is framed, both in the session described and in the WBI quotes above. Rather than a democratic competence of conviviality acquired locally and collectively, 'tolerance' toward diversity is presented as a 'skill'

as well as a competitive asset in the job market to be acquired individually and abroad. In the session described above for example, the valorization of the ability to deal with other cultures in a context of diversity – sometimes defined as cosmopolitanism – is clearly presented as a socio-professional advantage in Brussels that is depicted by the facilitator as 'a very international city'. But, as Salazar (2015, 54) demonstrated by focusing on the cosmopolitan competences of tourist guides, "mobility alone is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for cosmopolitanism." In this example, the facilitator seems to forget that her public, supposedly living in the city, may already know that Brussels is a very international city, just as the WBI document seems to forget that it is very possible that young people with less opportunity may already be very well attuned to and comfortable in contexts of diversity that are indeed a reality in most Belgian cities (Martiniello 2011). These apparent paradoxes illustrate a specific understanding of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism as a "strategic form of utilizing culture for economic purposes" (Mitchell, n.d., 399). In the same way, the mobility that is encouraged by French and Belgian institutions is largely focused on the same economic purposes. Through international mobility, it is hoped that people will strengthen their capacity to integrate into a globalizing economy through the acquisition of specific skills, thus providing the sending societies with better 'human capital' able to adapt to the requirements of such globalized economy.

3.2.2. The positive depiction of the 'expat'

State institutions are not the only places where international mobility is depicted as a positive and desirable thing to do. In chapter two, I mentioned the many channels (including social media, radio and TV broadcasts and magazines) through which a positive image of migration (and in particular migration toward Canada) is produced and shared. The Belgian radio-broadcast *Belgians from the Other Side of the World* (*Les Belges du Bout du Monde*) – through its extensive interviews with Belgian people living abroad – is a perfect example of such glorification of Belgian expats and international mobility in general. These interviews – always conducted in a cordial and optimistic tone – almost exclusively focus on the positive side of emigration. Interviewees typically share entertaining anecdotes about local lifestyle and celebrate contact with different cultures and societies. In the same way, the program usually provides a very positive depiction of the interviewees projects abroad, being the creation of a small business or association, or involvement in development activities in the global South.

This positive and appealing depiction of the 'expat' was also quite common in the press (especially magazines). Here again, the mobility of European citizens is framed in terms of 'expatriation' and

not in terms of 'migration' as it is illustrated in the following reproduction of the cover of the French weekly newspaper *Courrier International*:

Cover of the magazine *Courrier International*, n°1334, May-June 2016.

Just as on this cover of *Courrier International*, Belgian and French citizens abroad are most of the time depicted through the representation of individuals. Within the sample of magazines that I collected during my research, most of the individual figures appearing in the pictures were smiling, or at least expressing some form of positive attitude. This is illustrated by the covers reproduced above as well as by the cover from another French magazine – *l'Express* – for a special issue focusing on migration to Canada:

Cover from the magazine *l'Express* n°37, June-July-August 2016.

The presentation of positive bodily attitudes such as the smiling faces of the two characters above was very common in the way emigrants or expats were depicted in French and Belgian media during my research. While the mobility programs in section 3.2.1. were largely oriented toward a public of young people – including the descendants of immigrants coming from formerly colonized countries – the pictures above provide a rather different representation of the mobile European. The image of the expat is the image of a white person and their mobility; yet while explicitly linked with a professional career in the first cover, it is not presented as a way to balance a supposed lack of competences as in section 3.2.1. Such representations of the expat thus provide us with yet another mode of racialization of European migrants which tends to equate the positive description of expatriation with whiteness and relatively privileged socio-economic situations.

Both the institutional promotion of certain forms of international mobility presented in the first section and the positive imagery of expats presented here illustrate a process of positive representation of international mobility that operates in France and in Belgium. This does not

mean that the emigration of French and Belgian citizens is systematically glorified. Indeed, as shown in the introduction, some articles published in mainstream newspapers critically addressed the emigration of young citizens sometimes interpreted as a counterproductive strategy of exit. But it certainly illustrates the fact that international mobility was mainly framed – within the French and the Belgian context – as something desirable, positive and to be encouraged. But a disposition does not only involve a positive representation of certain futures. It also requires a normative statement about certain aspirations. In other words, it requires the social recognition that what you aspire to is the right thing to do.

3.2.3. When moving abroad becomes normative

> "Asma: And I also think that it is because we were educated like that in a way. We have the impression that in order to be complete, to… Yeah, to be complete (*intègre*)… Well, I don't know if complete is the right word… You have to go abroad, you have to make new experiences. Experiences that we couldn't have here and we… For example, you have a university professor, he will give you his resume, you'll always find 'did his study in Oxford', 'did his study wherever.' So there is also this idea that… We have the impression that if we go abroad… You can go and come back but… You'll have more prestige. You will be more prestigious on the market. That's my impression."

Field interview, 23/03/2015, Brussels

The quote above came from a collective interview with the members of a Muslim student association in Brussels that I described in chapter two. Asma was a Belgian woman in her mid-20s. Her parents arrived in Belgium from Morocco during the 70s. Her father was a fishmonger and her mother a housekeeper. She lived in Brussels, and at the time of the interview, she was doing a Master in Law in the same city. While in 2016 Asma did not have any precise idea if she would or could move abroad in a near future, she was seriously considering international mobility as a possibility. She was particularly interested in Canada, a destination that she heard about through different channels, including the Brussels employment agency Actiris.

Asma's quote was an answer to a question from my colleague Jaafar Alloul, asking the students present during the collective interview if they were considering moving abroad. An interesting element in Asma's answer was that international mobility was not presented as an exceptional thing but rather as something that – she felt – was more and more normalized, at least in her current socio-educative milieu, the university. More than normalized, Asma felt that international

mobility was actually a key element of a successful academic career as far as she could tell from the profile of her professors.

Asma's statement that international mobility brings a competitive advantage on the job market – a competitive advantage that she described as 'prestige' – seemed to be shared by many of the other students present for the collective discussion. Moving abroad was frequently perceived as something good for one's professional career, even sometimes as a crucial step to undertake. For example, Haroun, another participant to the discussion, mentioned his project to go to London:

> "Haroun: What I imagine for the future is not working in Belgium, sincerely. I imagine myself much more in England. For many reasons. Also, as Selim said, for my career because I want to work in finance. And clearly, England is much more attractive than Belgium. It is something known around the world etcetera and… Well *la city* [pronounced in English] it is a dream plain and simple. So it is one element. It is for my career."
>
> Field interview, 23/03/2015, Brussels

Asma's and Haroun's considerations about moving abroad illustrate the fact that for some of the people I met during my research, moving abroad was not only an exit strategy to escape a situation of stuckedness at home but also a rather normal and sometimes important move to take in terms of professional career. For Asma and for Haroun, moving abroad was not only perceived as something normal in the sense of banal or ordinary but also as something normative (Kandel and Massey 2002), in the sense that transnational mobility was seen as an important factor for the access of prestigious socio-professional positions in the future. Using Asma's words, one needs to consider moving abroad in order to become 'complete' (*complet*) and to be able to look for desirable positions.

As the example of Asma and Haroun suggest, higher education and in particular universities are environment where migratory dispositions are likely to develop, and aspirations to international mobility are valorized. The contact with international students coming from abroad was also frequently mentioned by the people I met as a factor that contributed to the emergence of their emigration projects. University and higher education institutions in France and in Belgium also

offer many opportunities of international mobility through specific programs (such as ERASMUS for the EU) or through bilateral agreements with non-European universities.[35]

In a 2013 conference paper, Jorgen Carling (2013) proposes to explore the logic of migration aspirations by locating such aspirations on a continuum between means and end. Carling then refers to the two extremes of this continuum, one in which migration is intrinsically valued (migration is the end) and one in which migration is a 'means to an end', the end being, very often, upward social mobility or access to a better life. In the second case, he argues, migration has an "instrumental function" (Carling 2013, 5) and the emergence of migration projects and desires needs to be addressed as "the combination of (1) broader aspirations for change or advancement of some sort and (2) recognition of migration as a possible means to fulfilling these aspirations" (Carling 2013, 5). The case of young Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal allows us to see how these two dimensions (migration as a means and migration as an end) coexist and are combined into migration aspirations. Indeed, in the first chapter, I have emphasized the fact that moving abroad is also very much framed as a way to pursue aspirations that are difficult to fulfill in the French and Belgian context, making migration more like 'a mean to an end' to use Carling's expression. At the same time however, interlocutors' accounts suggest that migration is also perceived as something positive in itself, especially in a context where international mobility is generally positively perceived as a way to gain professional and cultural skills that can be valued on the job market. International mobility then is regularly perceived as intrinsically good.

This suggests that the international mobility projects of young Maghrebi Europeans leaving Europe to Montréal are often experienced in a dual way. On the one hand, they are experienced as alternative strategies to exit situations of socio-economic and symbolic stuckedness. On the other hand, they are also experienced as something positive, in line with dominant discourses valuing international mobility as a way to improve one's 'human capital' in the context of a globalized economy.

35 For example according to its website, the Free University of Brussels (ULB) had - for the academic year 2017-2018 – exchange partnership with 130 universities outside the EU.

3.3. The development of migratory dispositions and the accumulation of mobility capital

The development of migratory dispositions is not only a matter of positive recognition of international mobility. In other words, it is not because international mobility – at least specific forms of international mobility – is positively sanctioned in society that people will automatically consider it as a possibility, or that it will enter a person's horizon of expectation (Graw and Schielke 2012b). Indeed, moving requires access to resources (such as transportation infrastructure) as well as specific competences (such as being able to purchase a flight ticket or to complete the right administrative procedure to get a visa in time). These resources and competences also need to be appropriated by the agents, which means that they need to be recognized as valuable in the process of creating new possibilities (in our case international mobility). These observations led authors to conceptualize the ability to move (sometimes framed as *motility*) as a form of capital (Lévy 2000; Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004a; Allemand 2004), building on Bourdieu's theorization of economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986).

As a specific form of capital, motility is linked with other forms of capital. For example, possessing cultural capital (such as knowing a foreign language) and/or economic capital certainly favors one's capacity to be internationally mobile. However, these configurations are not exclusive. For example, a Mexican migrant working in a Canadian farm, with little economic capital, might demonstrate more competences in being mobile that many more well-off workers in Canada, France or Belgium. The capacity to be mobile can also be exchanged – under certain conditions – with other forms of capital such as economic capital (if moving abroad allows access better jobs for example), cultural capital (learning a new language, attending prestigious universities) or social capital (e.g. building transnational networks of friends) (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004a).

As with any form of capital, the ability to be mobile is unequally distributed across society. Some people have routine access to international travel as well as a solid network of family and friends abroad which might facilitate their inclination to consider moving as a 'normal' thing to do. Others with limited access to such resources might consider the same movement as something out of their reach, or even not consider it at all. In the following section, I focus on the conditions (i.e. the specific configuration of resources and skills) within which the migration of my interlocutors was realized.

3.3.1. Access to international mobility: Experiencing the privileges attached to the Belgian and French passports

During the different interviews that I did throughout my research, I noticed that moving to Montréal was rarely the first international move of my interlocutors. Indeed, many of the young Maghrebi Europeans that I met both in Europe and in Montréal were relatively familiar with international mobility, in particular through intra-European tourism, before going to Canada for a more extended period of time. Sometimes, my interlocutors often stayed in Canada for a short period as a tourist before coming back on a more long term basis. In a number of cases, these previous forms of international mobility were presented by my interlocutors as important elements in the development of their emigration project. This is illustrated in an interview with Bahija:

> "JM: And then, why Canada? Why Montréal?
>
> Bahija: Why Montréal? I came here when I was nineteen. I loved to travel. Honestly, I… From my nineteen years old to my 24 years old, I travelled a lot. I did Czech Republic, I did Central Africa, I did the United States East coast, I did Canada East Coast all the way to Toronto, I did part of Ontario, but I liked to hitchhike, not too expensive. The 'ready to go' back in the day with Neckermann [Bahija is laughing].[36] I assure you, it was fun because my passport was always good since I had the Belgian citizenship because I had it eventually, through naturalization.
>
> JM: OK, yes, yes.
>
> Bahija: I made the most of it. I made the most of it because at last I could travel! Which I couldn't do with a Moroccan passport which was very complex, and it enclosed us. It [the fact to have only a Moroccan passport] forces us to stay where we are and… It is very difficult to ask for a visa for the United States, it is difficult to ask for a visa for Czech Republic or everywhere else. Especially in the countries of the Commonwealth. So [acquiring a Belgian passport] has been an amazing freedom, an amazing discovery, and I had so much fun with my friends."
>
> Field interview, 03/05/2016, Montréal

36 Neckermann is a travel company active in Belgium and in the Netherlands.

Bahija is a woman of Moroccan origin in her 50s. She was born and raised in Belgium. Her father worked in the coal mines in Belgium and her mother stayed at home to take care of Bahija and her six brothers and sisters. Bahija's profile is a bit different from the profile of the rest of my interlocutors. First, she was older than most of the people that I met in Montréal. She arrived in Québec in 1998 much before any of the other Belgians and French I met there. She had a technical degree obtained in a secondary school and she had a small food business when I met her in Montréal. Later in the interview, Bahija explained to me the importance of what she called the 'taste for travels' (*goût du voyage*), as well as her previous visit to Québec, in her decision to move in Montréal in the 1990s.

> "Bahija: So it is the taste for travel (*goût du voyage*) and then when I arrived here in Montréal, well you certainly felt it, it is how welcoming people are here. They look you in the eyes. They don't care how you are dressed, they don't look down at you, they don't look at you with arrogance. You see what I mean? They are really humble. I noticed that here, if you are rich or poor, you don't see any difference. There is no such thing as the little bourgeoisie or the great bourgeoisie. Everybody is at the same level. Unless you are homeless or native or Haitian, here you see a little difference but not so important."

Field interview, 03/05/2016, Montréal

Just like Bahija, many of the Maghrebi Europeans that I met in Montréal mentioned this 'taste for travel' as an important factor in their decision to leave Europe and move to Montréal. However, because Bahija obtained Belgian citizenship relatively late (she was nineteen years old), her account brings forward an element that was generally overlooked by the rest of my interlocutors in Montréal: the fact that this very 'taste for travel' is made possible because of the relatively privileged status of the Belgian and French passports. Such passports allow their holders to access specific "legal geographies" (Basaran 2011) characterized by a relatively easy international mobility.

Arton Capital – a financial advisory firm that present itself as a provider of "investors programs for residence and citizenship"[37] to individuals and organizations – runs a website (www.passportindex.org) that compares national passports on the basis of the visa-free movements that they allow. The website proposes a ranking of the passports depending of their 'power' (i.e. the amount of free movement that these passports allow), dividing them between a

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37 https://www.artoncapital.com/arton-capital/ Last access: 03/06/2020

number of ranks (95 ranks in the 2019 edition of the ranking).[38] In January 2019, French and Belgian passports were ranked at the third and fourth rank respectively, well above, say, the Tunisian passport (which – at the 64th rank – is the best ranked Maghrebi passport). Within the scope of my research, being a French or Belgian citizen has several advantages when it comes to travel to Montréal. First, French and Belgian citizens do not need to apply for a visa to visit Canada. This is quite important because, in many cases, my interlocutors' projects of emigration to Montréal were developed after a first stay in Montréal as a tourist. In a few cases, these first stays were also the occasion to create networks in Montréal and even to look for employment opportunities in anticipation of a longer stay in the future. Second, France and Belgium also developed many bilateral programs with Canada and the Québec region, allowing certain people to access privileged mobility programs. At the time of my research, the most significant example of such multilateral programs is certainly the Working Holiday Program (WHP or *Programme Vacances Travail* – PVT in French).[39] The PVT is a mobility program built on bilateral agreements. The French-Canadian agreement was signed in 2003 and the Belgian-Canadian agreement in 2005. The PVT allows young Belgians and French between eighteen and thirty years old (between eighteen and 35 for French citizens) to apply for a temporary visa (at the time of the research, the duration of the visa was one year for Belgians and two years for French people) attached to a work permit of the same duration. The original idea of such program was to encourage young people to go abroad and discover new cultures while being able to work to fund their touristic trip. If this original idea is still present in the official texts implementing the program,[40] many of the people I met in Montréal actually used this type of program as the first step of a more durable emigration to Québec.[41] Yet, the PVT is not free from requirements, and the number of visas delivered annually is limited. In 2016, 750 visas were available for Belgian applicants and 6400 for French applicants. Moreover, among other requirements, the applicants must demonstrate

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38 See: https://www.passportindex.org/byRank.php Last access: 22/01/2019

39 Please note that thereafter, I refer to the working holiday visa status by using the French acronym PVT. I do this because it is the acronym that was always used by my interlocutors in Europe and Montreal.

40 See for example the law of 17 October 2006 confirming the agreement between Belgium and Canada regarding the Working Holiday Program, or the Decree of 2 March 2004 officializing the agreement between France and Canada about youth exchanges (JORF n°54, 4 March 4, 2004 page 4335).

41 The time and scope limitations of my research did not allow me to look further into the history of Working Holidays Programs. However, the existing literature suggests that one of the precursors of such programs was the 1975 agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom. This agreement was initially designed as a way to allow young people to gain cultural experience abroad. However, as authors suggest, this initially cultural increasingly mutated into forms of work migration (Reilly 2015; Jarvis and Peel 2013).

that they possess the equivalent of 2,500 Canadian dollars in order to be able to provide for themselves during the first months of their stay. The applicants must also subscribe to a health insurance policy covering their stay in Canada. These different requirements certainly constituted obstacles for certain persons; however, many of my interlocutors developed strategies to mitigate their effect. A popular one was to ask family and acquaintances to transfer money into the applicant bank account in order to reach the 2.500 dollars requirement. Once the certificate from the bank was communicated to the Canadian authority, the applicant would immediately return the money to the contributors. As with other temporary programs accessible to French and Belgian citizens, this does not mean that the PVT is easily accessible. Indeed, one of the important obstacles that candidates encounter when applying for such PVT visas (especially in France) was the huge number of candidates which was well above the number of visa delivered, making access to the PVT very uncertain. However, because of its absence of requirements in terms of level of education, the PVT still constituted a relatively easy process when compared to the requirements that applicants from less privileged countries needed to fulfill in order to be allowed to enter the Canadian territory.

Bahija's experience of the Belgian passport as well as the preferential mobility programs that are accessible to French and Belgian citizens illustrate the relatively easy access (when compared to the access granted to the nationals of other countries) to international mobility opportunities that my interlocutors enjoyed as European citizens. It also illustrates how the passport system is such a critical infrastructure of transnational mobility (Korpela 2016).

This access was not only an anecdotal factor when it came to the development of migratory dispositions. For many of the people I met in Montréal, being able to come to Québec as a tourist before a more permanent move allowed them to better plan their stay by building local networks among the French and Belgian community or by exploring the job market opportunities before applying for a more permanent status once back in Europe.

3.3.2. Learning how to move: The progressive accumulation of mobility capital

Becoming inclined to move abroad does not only require access to mobility opportunities, advantageous status, visa exemption and/or privileged exchange programs. It also requires skills, competences and knowledge. This is knowledge that, as I argued in the first section of this chapter, was not always available to my interlocutors from the beginning. In the following paragraphs, I would like to address the process of accumulation of such skills, competences and knowledge allowing young Maghrebi Europeans, often coming from working class or lower

middle class background, to develop a migratory disposition. Through the description of this process, I argue that my interlocutors' production of migratory dispositions – i.e. the subjective (but structurally constrained) development of the idea that moving abroad might be a valuable possibility – is embedded in broader range spatial mobilities. In order to do so, I built on the case of Rachid, a French man in his 30s, born from Algerian parents who moved in Québec in 2012.

> *I met Rachid in Montréal in February 2016, after an association specialized in the integration of immigrants in the Québec region gave me his contact. At the time of our first encounter, Rachid was not living in Montréal but in a small city north of Québec city. When I met him, he was in Montréal only for a few days. He had come to renew his Algerian passport, something that he neglected for many years but that he finally decided to do after the death of his father, realizing that he would like to keep a link with the country of origin of his parents. We met close to the Algerian consulate. It was February and it was snowing. Rachid wanted to go to his car, as he wanted to change the leather shoes that he brought for his appointment in the consulate for more comfortable snow boots. On our way to the car, we passed in front of the office of a real-estate company. Immediately, Rachid pointed the building: "You see? This is a company that is specialized in renting apartment to migrants!" He explained to me that the apartments were a bit more expensive but that the contracts were shorter and 'that this avoided the need to buy furniture. As Rachid explained to me, he used this kind of real estate company during his first stay in Montréal. It was a very important thing for him as he wanted to stay 'flexible' and to be able to move depending on what he would find in terms of jobs. He told me that staying flexible, and being able to travel 'light', was something that he learned during previous migration experiences.*
>
> *Rachid was born in Tourcoing, a city in northern France, close to the Belgian border. He grew up in a working class neighborhood of this industrial city, famous for its textile production. During our interview, Rachid insisted on saying that, even if his neighborhood was dominated by a working class population, it was constituted by small family houses and therefore was distinct from the nearby* cité *which was characterized more by the predominance of public housing buildings. Most of his friends and acquaintances in the neighborhood were from immigrant backgrounds and Rachid described the environment as 'multicultural'. Rachid had four brothers and sisters. His father – who passed away only a few years before the interview – was a blue collar worker from Algeria who came to Tourcoing because of the job opportunities in the textile industry and also worked as a truck driver. His mother, also Algerian, worked at home. After the first part of his secondary education, Rachid moved from the local school to a more middle class secondary school*

where he came into contact with what he called a more 'mainstream population'. Unlike most of his friends from school, he was not oriented toward vocational training but followed a scientific curriculum. After secondary school, he obtained a university degree in mechanics.

At one point in the interview, I asked Rachid how moving abroad came to mind. Rachid explained to me that he had long been fascinated by traveling and iconic landmarks that he discovered while reading magazines at home. He talked to me about how he saw pictures of the Eiffel tower, the Statue of Liberty, and other well-known touristic places that – as a child – he promised himself to visit one day. After this introduction, I was surprised when Rachid started to describe to me what he identified as the beginning of his story of migration: a three month stay in the French city of Amiens:

> *"Rachid: [My taste for travels] really began with… My first trip outside in fact, it was during my internship, during my formation in mechanics. I did my internship in Amiens.*
>
> *JM: OK, OK.*
>
> *Rachid: [Switching to an ironic tone] Ouaouh! That's something!*
>
> *JM: So you lived here for a few months?*
>
> *Rachid: For three months.*
>
> *JM: Three months.*
>
> *Rachid: An internship yes.*
>
> *JM: OK. In a small apartment?*
>
> *Rachid: Yes, no, in a university residence. Nine square meters. That I rented for three months. And ouaouh! And yet, Amiens has nothing very… But it was new! I had my own place to live instead of living with my parents, I was independent you know.*
>
> *JM: You had your room.*
>
> *Rachid: I think I felt in love more with the lifestyle than with the city itself.*
>
> *JM: … Than the environment yes.*
>
> *Rachid: Yes, and after that, I enjoyed a lot leaving my house, I said to myself yeah, I will go further, I will go in more interesting places. And I said to myself, ah, why not*

Bordeaux! […] At this time, I also wanted to go abroad but it didn't work out... In fact, it was difficult to do the papers, I did it too late."

Field interview, 06/02/2016, Montréal

After this first experience outside of his city of origin, Rachid chose to go to Bordeaux where he studied business analysis for one year. Here again, he recalled the experience with great enthusiasm:

"Rachid: It was my first contact with another environment. You know, you are going far away, because Bordeaux is not so close you know. You have to take the train for four hours. The TGV! And you arrive, it is like... Like another country but you keep talking French [Rachid laughs]!"

Field interview, 06/02/2016, Montréal

Amiens and Bordeaux might appear as trivial destinations, not so far from Rachid's home town (Amiens is more or less two hours away from Tourcoing and – as Rachid told me – going to Bordeaux only requires a four hours trip by train), and difficult to compare with the experience of crossing the Atlantic to reach Canada. It was nevertheless – as illustrated in the quotes above – by describing these mobilities that Rachid tried to explain to me how he came to move to Québec. Moreover, as trivial as it may appear, moving to Amiens and then Bordeaux already made him an exception among his brothers and sisters who – as he explained to me – chose to stay in the region where they grew up, with the exception of one of his brothers, working as a security agent, who went in Paris before coming back in Tourcoing.

After these first experiences in France, Rachid decided to 'get serious' and to try to move abroad. His first idea was to move to England where he was hoping to learn English. This first try, however, did not last long. Rachid recalled with a laugh that he only had 500 euros in his pocket for this first experience abroad. With few competences in English and with only a hotel room booked for a few days, he did not manage to find a job. One of the problem that Rachid recalled during our discussion was the fact that he did not prepare a CV to distribute to the bars and restaurants he was prospecting. After three days, Rachid was forced to come back to France and to start looking for a job while living at his parents' house. During a year, Rachid occupied small and unsatisfying jobs as a salesman. After a year Rachid decided to try to move abroad again. This time he told me, 'it was more serious.' Rachid had saved more money (around 3000 euros). Most important, following his first experience in London he

decided to do what he called 'a small risk analysis' before his departure. He rapidly realized that 3000 euros were not enough to move to London and to find a job so he decided to reorient his project toward Ireland which – at that time – seemed to offer professional opportunities. Rachid's preparation was not only material (savings) and organizational (risk analysis), it was also a mental preparation, a shift of perspective:

> *"JM: OK yes, yes… You prepared a CV beforehand this time?*
>
> *Rachid: Yes, yes! This time, I was better prepared. I had my CV. I rented a room, something I didn't do in London. […] I left with another mentality, [saying to myself] that it would be tough. I was prepared."*

Field interview, 06/02/2016, Montréal

In Ireland, Rachid worked in the customer service departments of several big IT companies. He also met his future partner, Ola, a woman working in the same company with whom he then had a child. After several years in Ireland, the couple decided to try to go to Canada, a destination that Rachid learned about by hearing Moroccan colleagues describing their plan to make enough money in Ireland to make the move to Canada. Here again, Rachid and his partner tidily planned their next move. Rachid first applied for, and was successful in obtaining, a permanent worker visa. He left first for Montréal where he attended several integration courses given by local associations as well as a six month training program in mechanic design, a course that – he hoped – would complement his French diploma and help him to find a job. During this period, he also started the administrative procedure which would allow his partner and their child to come to Canada. After their arrival, Rachid rapidly found a job as an industrial designer in a factory, North of Québec city where he was still living when I met him in 2016.

Rachids' story is illustrative of many of the migration histories that I collected during my interactions with French and Belgians in Montréal. For example, it illustrates the importance of preliminary mobility in the development of migratory disposition; international mobility but also intra-national mobility (in the case of Rachid, from Tourcoing to Amiens and Bordeaux). For many of the young Maghrebi Europeans I met, these experiences of mobility were not only spatial but also social (from a working class neighborhood to a middle class city center).

Rachids' account also raises the question of what Hage (2005, 469) calls the "significant movement". Indeed, for both Clarisse and Rachid, the migration to Montréal – once put in

perspective with other types of mobility – lost a part of the exceptionality that was postulated *a priori* within the formulation of my research project. For both Rachid and Clarisse, moving to Montréal was part of a broader trajectory of complex mobility within which their transatlantic migration was not – for them – the only significant movement. For Clarisse, one could argue that entering university and leaving behind the rural and lower middle class environment in which she grew up was a much more significant experience for her than her experience in Montréal.

Finally, the case of Rachid also illustrates how the development of migratory dispositions among my interlocutors was very often linked with the accumulation of knowledge and skills that allowed them to realize a move to Montréal. Learning about migratory administrative processes, knowing how much money one might need depending on the destination, anticipating the research of a job, and knowing how to rent an apartment, were some of such skills that were important for the international mobility of my interlocutors. These represent, in a way, the practical dimension of migration aspirations that are acquired through a progressive learning process. As my data suggests, individually expressed aspirations are deeply related with socially acquired dispositions. Describing the relations between aspirations and migratory dispositions allows us shed light on how international mobility is experienced by socially situated individuals. In this context, expressing migration aspirations can either be experienced as something evident (*qui va de soi*) or as something that set people apart from their social context of origin. This also raises questions related to academic discussions about the development of a 'culture of migration'. Kandel and Massey (2002) elaborate the concept of a culture of migration by comparing the emergence of emigration aspirations of young Mexican students with pre-existing migrations practices within these youngsters' community (i.e. in their family, or in their extended community). Building on quantitative data, these authors argue – among other things – that family involvement in migration to the US was a strong predictor of the expression of emigration aspirations to the same destination by respondents. Other authors have then produced more qualitative accounts of such cultures of migration and how they impact people's aspirations in specific communities (Ali 2007). By looking at how young Maghrebi Europeans progressively acquire migratory dispositions, my research contributes to the debate by illustrating how the social valorization of migration and international mobility as an acceptable strategy might vary within interlocutors' various social networks. If international mobility might very well be celebrated in some social contexts such as the context of the university, it can also be resisted or simply not considered in other contexts (such as the family or the group of friends). Therefore, my data offers an insight on how young Maghrebi French and Belgians experienced their migration aspirations in different contexts. These experiences I argued are not necessarily univocal. Instead, the experience of my interlocutors was often characterized by a form of tension

between the social valorization of international mobility of the young educated workers that they were and the relative rupture that their migration aspirations constituted with the aspirations of their parents.

3.4. Conclusion

Moving abroad is not only about personal motivation. To start with, the very idea that going abroad is an option (or at least a desirable one) is not necessarily evident in all social contexts. Moving also requires specific types of mobility capital and skills to be able to convert an aspiration into actual migration. Through a discussion about the acquisition and accumulation of migratory dispositions, I described the ways in which my interlocutors retraced the emergence of their migration aspirations. The description of this emergence raises the question of the relation between the aspirations of young Maghrebi Europeans and the experience of migration to Europe of their parents or grand-parents. One way to connect the two migration experiences would have been to find a positive relation between my interlocutors' aspiration and the aspirations of their parents for them. However, my data suggests that very often, the migration aspirations of the people I met were actually in contradiction with the future that their parents imagined for them (i.e. to stay and thrive in France or in Belgium). Another way to connect the emigration practices of young Maghrebi Europeans with the migration of their parents would have been to unfold the production and reproduction of a 'migration habitus' across the generations of my interlocutors and their parents. By habitus, Bourdieu (1990, 52) refers to a "system of structured, structuring dispositions […] which is constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions." This would imply intra-familial socialization toward specific types of dispositions based on the migration experience of the parents (or grand-parents for that matter), with these dispositions then informing the emergence of emigration aspirations and practices among young Maghrebi Europeans. The data from my fieldwork suggests that the emigration aspirations were rarely elaborated within the circle of the nuclear family. As the cases of Clarisse and Rachid illustrate, the migratory dispositions acquired by my interlocutors were very often acquired outside. However, as suggested in section 2.1., the extended family network including uncles, aunts and cousins from the country of origin of the parents played a role in the emergence of emigration aspirations for some of the people I met. In the same way, some interlocutors found punctual support and resources from extended family members present in Montréal when they arrived. A full exploration of this question would be of interest and would need to involve complementary fieldwork with my interlocutors' families at home as well as a deeper analyses of interlocutors extended family networks both in Europe and in Canada.

Outside of their family circle and social milieu of origin many interlocutors also recognized the social valorization of international mobility, especially for young educated professionals, that was sometimes experienced as a form of injunction. Indeed, my interlocutors' desire to move abroad largely resonated with the social valorization of the international mobility of young, educated people. In France and in Belgium, this international mobility is frequently associated with values such as cultural openness and entrepreneurial dynamism. International mobility is also encouraged by institutions, especially for students and people in the early stages of their professional career. Moving abroad is presented as a way to increase 'human capital' and as a competitive asset in the competition for jobs. By navigating these different social milieus and their related views on international mobility, many interlocutors experienced their migratory project as becoming an exception, especially regarding family and friends at home.

Becoming an exception does not only translate in terms of how people value their family and friends' considerations of aspirations to move abroad. It also concerns the way migratory dispositions are acquired. Accumulating such mobility capital often involved numerous previous national and international mobility practices during which interlocutors acquired knowledge and skills that they would be able to use when moving to Canada. This learning process involving specific forms of socialization, often involving many back and forth movements and energy in order to accumulate the necessary economic, cultural and social capital. Unlike privileged, elite forms of migration which suppose "routine access to international travel and experience through family connections and schooling" (Favell, Feldblum, and Smith 2007, 17) the migration practices of the Maghrebi Europeans I met were closer to what Favell, Feldblum and Smith (2007) called middle-class "spiralists" who are engaging in international mobility to improve opportunities of social mobility that are scarce in Europe. For these 'spiralists', the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to move to Montréal was not the result of smooth social reproduction but was rather largely acquired outside the social context of origin.

Chapter 4. Channeling aspirations: Navigating the complex selection process of Québec[42]

In the first part of the thesis, I made the observation that the aspiration to self-realization is quite central in the emergence of emigration projects among young Maghrebi French and Belgians. This aspiration to self-realization is associated with several elements such as the possibility of accessing a certain level of socio-economic stability and well-being, or the desire to live in a society which would be indifferent to ethnic and/or religious forms of diversity. The central argument of the first part of the thesis was that in Europe, aspirations expressed by young Maghrebi Europeans were very much in conflict with the local regime of hope distribution. This situation, experienced as a sense of stuckedness, resulted in the projection of Maghrebi-Europeans' hopes into new, alternative geographies of opportunity where Canada for example is perceived as a desirable destination for a better life.

In the second part of the thesis, and more specifically in the third chapter, I started to engage with the migration process itself and with the transformation of emigration projects into actual mobility. By doing so, I started to address what Carling and Collins point to as the relation "between subjects and their potential transformation through migration" (Carling and Collins 2018, 917). Moving, it is argued, does not only engage aspirations but also certain sets of dispositions, inclinations and ways of being. Such dispositions both allow (or facilitate) international mobility and are acquired (and/or accumulated) throughout mobility experiences. In the specific case of Maghrebi European youngsters, often coming from a working class background, I argued that the acquisition of such dispositions or – put another way – the identification of international mobility as entering the field of possibilities, constitutes in itself a form of transformation; an experience of social mobility or, say, of symbolic mobility (Hage and Papadopoulos 2004). The previous chapter also touched upon the fact that not all forms of international mobility are equally sanctioned and valorized within French and Belgian societies which means that emigrants' aspirations and dispositions unfold within complex sets of power

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42 Parts of this chapter have been published in the following: Mandin, J. (2020), "Pathways of integration of young French of Maghrebi background in Montreal", in, Åkesson L. and Suter B. (ed.), *Contemporary European Emigration Situating Integration in New Destinations*, London and New-York, Routledge.

relations or "regimes of mobility" (Schiller and Salazar 2013, 189). Within these 'regimes', constant struggles happen between a variety of actors (Nation States, International organizations, business associations, big companies, NGOs) in order to shape, redefine, erase, or create categories of differences between 'good' and 'bad' migration, 'desirable' and 'dangerous' migrants, 'expats' and 'economic migrants', and so on (Schiller and Salazar 2013). As argued in chapter three, from the point of view of French and Belgian institutions, with which young would-be migrants were frequently in contact, a good international mobility is a temporary one, focused on the accumulation of dispositions transferable to a globalized market economy. In this sense, becoming a mobile subject involves a double process of 'self-making' and 'being made' (Mescoli 2014). At the same time, such regimes of mobility, embedded in a variety of regulations, laws, selection programs, and administrative practices, also filter migration aspirations by making the international mobility of some easy and that of others more difficult. In this sense, mobility regimes also constitute regimes of hope distribution.

In the present chapter, I address the second question of my second set of research questions: *to what extent and how are these aspirations transformed, channeled, and sorted during the migration process?* I explore the role of migration related institutions in this process of filtering by focusing on the way in which certain institutions shape, encourage and/or discourage the aspirations and expectations of Maghrebi Europeans planning to move to Montréal. I switch the focus from the aspiration of the migrants (what they hope to achieve through migration) to the aspirations of different institutions organizing migration between Europe and Québec. More specifically, it looks at how my interlocutors' aspirations are transformed, reshaped – in a nutshell channeled – throughout the process of migration. By doing so, the chapter addresses the question of the aspiration to self-realization differently. The question here is not any more: what is the meaning of self-realization to aspiring emigrants? But rather: what type of self-realization is promoted and produced during the migration process? The chapter very much continues with the analysis of the unequal distribution of societal hopes that was addressed in the previous chapters. Only this time, it addresses this unequal distribution as it is materialized during the migration process, hence, at a transnational level.

In order to address this channeling process that encourages some people to move while discourage others to do so, I temporarily switch the empirical focus from the lived experiences of the Maghrebi European emigrants to what has recently been described as "infrastructural politics" (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019). This concept refers to a growing literature proposing an approach of migrations (Xiang and Lindquist 2014; Korpela 2016), urban diversity (Blommaert 2014), and migrants' arrival (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) through the

analysis of infrastructures. While being applied to different scales and to analyze different phenomena, the concept of infrastructure broadly refers to complex configurations of institutions (such as national states, city councils, big companies or migrants associations), networks (involving of course migrants but also employers, activists or neighbors) and places (e.g. shops, churches, or schools), that contribute, in one way or another, to shape migrants' possibility (or the lack of it) of moving, the possibility of developing local and transnational relationships and the possibility of developing forms of stability (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019, 1). From these premises, migration infrastructure includes but is not limited to the analysis of state-market relationships in recruiting migrant labor forces which has been theorized under the concept of migration industry (Lindquist 2010). If the state and companies recruiting migrants are undeniably important actors, and that market driven objectives are also undeniably an important logic of operation within migration infrastructure, they also interact with (and/or compete against) other actors (e.g. migrants' associations or migrants' networks) and other logics of operation. For the present chapter, I start from the broad definition of migration infrastructure given by Xiang and Lindquist (2014, 124) as: "the systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility". Phrased differently, migration infrastructure represents the configuration of actors that contribute to shape the structure of opportunities within which migrants are evolving.

The term 'politics' within 'infrastructural politics' refers to one of the principal effects of these infrastructures, which is to create 'channels' favoring the migration of some and making the migration of others more difficult. For Meeus, Van Heur and Arnaut (2019), these channeling and sorting practices operate across three main political dimensions: politics of directionality, politics of temporality and politics of subjectivity. The first of these refers to the socio-spatial configuration (national or transnational for example) within which migration is understood and interpreted. The second refers to the specific temporalities within which migrants are perceived and categorized (e,g, temporary or permanent). The third refers to the production of categories (e.g. refugee, economic migrant or expatriate) that assign migrants to specific identities and constitutes them as objects of governance (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019). Of course, these different politics are highly contested fields in which migrants have a space to endorse, negotiate or resist the direction, temporality and subjectivities that are assigned to them by regulations and institutions.

I describe how the Europe-Québec infrastructural politics of migration illustrate a specific regime of hope distribution where some aspiring migrants receive more hope than other depending on

their socio-economic profile and of their conformity with the requirement of an increasingly globalized labor market.

In the first part of this chapter, I provide an overview of the characteristics of the migration infrastructure regulating international mobility between Europe and Québec. I give an overview of the different actors involved in such an infrastructure as well as the evolution of the infrastructural politics of migration. I particularly focus on the forms of immigrant channeling and sorting that are produced through these infrastructures and how the opportunity to move to the Québec region are (unequally) distributed.

In the second part of the chapter, I continue my exploration of these processes of channeling by describing the work of Québec authorities on the aspiration of immigration candidates. Through the description of discourses and practices encountered during my own journey between Europe and Montréal, I unfold how some aspirations are promoted while other are actually discouraged.

In the third part of the chapter, I go back to the experience of French and Belgians to see how these regulations, discourses and practices are experienced by aspiring migrants in Europe. I then describe two types of experience and the types of subjectivities that are produced during the migration process.

4.1. Québec and Montréal immigration policies: Toward a flexible, economy-driven immigration

4.1.1. Describing a complex migration infrastructure

> *In May 2015, I participated in a two-day event organized in Paris, called the 'Québec Days' (*Journées Québec*). The event had been organized by the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris every year since 2008 in different European cities: Paris (2008-2015), Lyon (2008, 2011), Toulouse (2008, 2011), Brussels (2012-2014) and Barcelona (2012). The Paris event that I attended was organized with the collaboration of the international branch of the French public employment agency.*
>
> *The general idea behind the Québec Days was to allow representatives of Québec companies as well as representatives of different regions of the Québec province to meet potential*

workers directly in Europe, to interview them and – sometimes – to hire them directly from abroad.

I was invited to the Québec Days as a researcher after making contact with one of the workers at the Québec immigration bureau in Paris. Unlike other events organized by the Québec immigration bureau in Paris, the Québec Days were not open to everyone. In order to participate one needed to apply by providing information about one's professional profile. A selection was then made by the French employment agency to identify candidates that fit the profile researched by the employers present to the event. According to a worker of Pôle Emploi, present during the event, her organization received about 6000 applications and pre-selected 3000 of them. A second round of selection was made by the Québec employers themselves, and reduced the numbers of selected people to more or less 1000 persons who received an invitation to participate in the event. But here again, another type of selection occurred with the invitations. The candidates who most directly fit the profile researched by the employers for particular positions were invited for face-to-face interviews organized during the mornings. The rest of the selected candidates, who did not fit the profile of any specific job offers but whose profile was nevertheless considered as interesting by the employers were invited to join the event during the afternoons, when people were free to circulate at the event's premises and to discuss more informally with the representatives of companies and regions.

On the morning of the event's first day, I arrived at the location communicated to the participants. The place had been kept secret by the organizers, and had been communicated to the invited participants only a few days before the event in order to force the candidates to go through the selection process and to discourage non-selected candidates from coming anyway, as a worker from the Québec Immigration Bureau openly explained to the participants of an information session I attended earlier in my research. When I arrived at the location that had been communicated to me, I discovered a big hotel resort situated on a large Parisian Boulevard. The building was large and rather modern looking. I needed however to the location twice as the event appeared to be invisible from the street. Indeed, no posters or any other information regarding the Québec Days were displayed on the frontage of the hotel resort and the participants had to pass through the doors and enter the hotel lobby to find the first information regarding the event.

The interior of the hotel resort appeared vast and modern. It included facilities for conferences and congress such as the Québec Days, which was organized in a lower level of

the building. To access the event, I had to follow the rather discreet signs advertising the Québec Days and to take an escalator. At the end of the escalator I had – just as the other participants – to present my invitation as well as an identity document to a security guard. I was then oriented toward a table were members of the Québec Days' staff gave me a map of the different kiosks present at the event and invited me to attend to a short introduction of the event projected in an auditorium situated at the same floor.

The organization of the Québec Days, the selection of the participants and the very material setting of the event constituted many instances of 'sorting out' practices both through direct selection practices (the selection of the participants) and through less direct ones (the fact that the event was organized in Paris, thus inducing non-negligible costs for non-Parisian candidates). It is interesting to note that such sorting out practices actually take place well before any migratory movement, thus illustrating a form of externalization of the selection process. This form of externalization is a reminder that as Casas-Cortes et al. (2015, 73) have argued "the definition of the border increasingly refers not to the territorial limit of the state but to the management practices directed at 'where the migrant is.'" Another point lies in the very nature of the 'management practices' displayed during the Québec Days. After all, participating in the Québec Day was not at all mandatory to obtain an immigration permit, nor was participating in the event a guarantee of obtaining such a permit. Indeed, most of the people I met in Montréal probably never went to the Québec Days. Even if in a certain number of cases participating in the event could result in the signing of a contract and thus to a much easier administrative process, the selection and channeling operating during the Québec Days was not exactly an externalization of border control practices (Guiraudon and Joppke 2001; Haince 2010). It appeared closer to what Carling and Collins describe as practices of "aspiration management" (Carling and Collins 2018, 917). While not necessarily providing a direct opportunity to move to Québec, the event – through the selection of its participants – was nevertheless participating in channeling the types of migrants Québec authorities desired while discouraging others to attend. In the same way, the material setting of the event (a nice hotel resort situated in a Parisian boulevard) was particularly indicative of the types of candidates (highly skilled professionals) that Québec authorities were trying to attract.

The whole event being organized around the goal of creating contacts between Québec companies and potential workers, immigration to Québec was virtually exclusively presented through the perspective of a labor market relation during the Québec Days.

*Before entering the main room where all the kiosks of the Québec days were located, I entered the auditorium and saw a short presentation, a succession of PowerPoint slides narrated by the pre-recorded voices of a worker from the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris and of a worker from the French public employment agency. Among other information, the slide presentation reminded the audience of the goals of the Québec immigration policy. "Québec", it was stated, "has an active immigration policy and is looking for skilled workers to meet the needs of the job market, support its demographic growth and contribute to the vitality of the French language."[43] The pre-recorded voice also explained that "the Québec Days event aims at meeting the immediate needs of [Québec] employers in the economic sectors most in need." Advice was also given regarding how to behave with the employers from Québec. For example, the pre-recorded voice insisted on the need for the participant to show their motivation regarding geographic mobility but to avoid a 'tourist' like behavior by, for example, not insisting too much on a celebration of Québec culture for example. It also explained that the candidate should focus their discussion with the employers on the 'three Ks' (*les trois S*): Knowledge (*savoir*), Know-How (*savoir faire*), and Self-management Knowledge (*savoir être*).*

This short presentation at the beginning of the event illustrated a central element of the Québec immigration policy: the centrality of the economic imperatives in the process of selection of immigrants. In the description above, immigration is presented as an employee/employer relation and the participants are encouraged to act as potential employees rather that potential immigrants.

Entering the vast, congress type room adjacent to the auditorium, one could find – displayed on the walls of the entrance's narrow corridor – a list of the employers present during the Québec Days as well as a list of the job positions offered by these employers. Before entering the main room, many participants then took some minutes to go through the list of professions highlighted during the Québec Days. In 2015, when I attended the Québec Days, the sectors of the economy that were predominant in terms of number of employers and in terms of job offers were: the communication and information technology industry, the machining industry and the video games industry. Moving further inside the main room, I discovered numerous kiosks run by representatives of different types of organizations. Most of the kiosks, occupying the entire left section as well as the center of the room, were run by

43 The quotes are my translation from French. The original expression used to refer to the 'French language' is '*le fait français*' which could be translated literally as : 'the French fact'.

the representatives of private companies looking for potential workers. Private companies are clearly the more represented actors during the event. Close to the entrance of the room, three kiosks were occupied by workers from the Québec and the French employment agencies and from the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris who provided the participants with general information about the different immigration procedures as well as about the job market in Québec. Nearby, a big kiosk was dedicated to the recruitment of healthcare professionals for the Québec health and social services. On the right side of the room, four kiosks were dedicated to the promotion of specific cities and/or regional area of Québec which were in 2015: Montréal, Sherbrook, Québec city and Drummondville. In those kiosks, representatives were busy promoting and advertising their city and/or region as the perfect destination for the participants of the Québec Days. One of the kiosks for example was run by Montréal International, a public-private non-profit organization the mandate of which – according to the mission statement published on their website – was to attract "direct foreign investment, international organizations, entrepreneurs, talented workers and international students to the [Montréal] region."[44] During my time at the Québec Days, I spoke with Michel, one of the organization's workers, a smiling and elegantly dressed man in his forties. After briefly presenting myself as a student interested in migration between Europe and Montréal, he started to praise the quality of life in Montréal and in particular the relatively short working day allowing – according to him – a good balance between personal and professional life. A balance that – still according to him – might be more difficult to find in France. In a more general way, the representatives of the regions present during the Québec Days tend to communicate very specific representations of Québec cities and regions to the participants. In the many booklets, leaflets and information distributed to these kiosks, Québec in general (and Montréal, Québec city and Drummondville in particular) are depicted as places characterized by a comfortable lifestyle, short working days, space and time for leisure and family life, a healthy safe and green environment and – in a systematic way – easy access to estate ownership.

In the same part of the room, I was also surprised to find kiosks occupied by private companies which were not looking for workers but which were promoting specific products and services to the immigration candidates. Among these companies, one of the most important banks in Québec distributed leaflets to the participants, explaining to the immigration candidates how to open an account in Canada. Among other information, the

44 Quote from Montreal International website: https://www.montrealinternational.com/en/about/ Last access: 18/06/2019

leaflets explained the procedure to open an account directly from France before emigrating. It also gave the contact of the French representation of the bank in France. Another kiosk close to the bank was occupied by a real estate company promoting its services to the participants.

The diversity of actors present during the Québec Days illustrates the diversity of actors involved in the Europe-Québec migration infrastructure. This diversity also incorporated private actors which offers services to the aspiring migrants. This suggests that migrants are not only perceived as workers. They are also perceived as potential consumers and also as potential future citizens for Québec cities. Of course, such cities largely depict a particular type of citizen during the event: young, family oriented, skilled, dynamic, with sufficient capital to buy a house and time to enjoy leisure activities.

Progressively, participants started coming into the main room for the morning's interviews with the employers. Some of them coming from outside Paris arrived with their suitcases and dropped them at the reception before entering the room. Among the participants, I met a majority of French peoples but also Tunisians, Algerians and Congolese who were studying in France and looking for better job opportunities in Canada. Most of the people present seemed to be between thirty and 35 years old. As the worker from the French employment agency explained to me during the event, age was indeed an important criteria in the Québec immigration policy as well as in the recruitment policy of the employers. "After forty years old" the worker explained to me "[immigrating to Québec] is harder."

As a researcher, my presence at the Québec Days had no real implication regarding the possibility to go to Québec, as I was able to benefit from the privileged contacts that my university had with the Canadian embassy in Brussels to obtain documents facilitating my movements between Europe and Québec. But for most of the participants present to the Québec Days, this was not the case and the event actually represented a potentially decisive opportunity to become able (or rather authorized) to move to Québec. In this context, many participants appeared quite anxious about their meeting with the employers and spent a lot of energy making a good impression on the employers. Most of the selected participants were carefully dressed-up, typically with rather formal and professional looking suits. Many carried with them briefcases or document carriers with their curriculum to present to the employers. Throughout the day, the participants would line-up – sometimes for a long time – and wait to have a discussion with one or several of the Québec company representatives before visiting the other kiosks and trying to figure out the Québec immigration rules.

Line in front of employers' kiosks during the Québec Days, picture by the author, May 2015

The whole event was very much organized to sort people out and to select candidates that were most fitting with the Québec employers' need. Most of this selection and sorting out was – as mentioned above – realized before the event in itself; Firstly, this occurred with the already mentioned selection process through which the candidates fitting within the research criteria of the employers were chosen over those who did not fit with these criteria. Secondly, candidates were sorted through the distinction operated between the participants invited to the individual interviews of the morning and those invited to the more informal interviews of the afternoon. But the categorization and selection process did not end here and during the Québec Days, this selection dynamic assumed more subtle and micro-sorting practices. At one point of the first day, I had the occasion to have a second discussion with Michel whom I introduced above. Earlier in the day, Michel explained to me that he was looking for what he labelled has 'strategic talents' (talents stratégiques) – a term that was frequently used on the Montréal International website and in publications. At first, the definition of what Michel meant by 'strategic talents' was unclear to me but during our second discussion, I asked Michel if he met some interesting people during the day. He answered with great enthusiasm that he just met a young couple that he described as "super motivated and super dynamic." Michel highlighted the smiling attitude of the couple and added that "employers like it." He also emphasized the professional background of the couple and explained to me that the man was an IT specialist and that the woman was a nurse. "They will make good money" Michel concluded. The importance that Michel attached to the behavior of these two immigration candidates, to their smiling and positive attitude, echoed

the recommendation communicated to the participants by the Power Point presentation introducing the event.

Michel's attitude toward the couple illustrate the very subtle filtering process that was in place during an event such as the Québec days. In a way, Michel's valorization of the couple's professional profile as well as their general attitude echoes the Québec institutional policy of the attraction of young, skilled workers.

The Québec Days event was just one example of the programs and events that the Québec authorities developed in order to promote immigration. The account of my presence at the event in 2015 illustrates different elements that are explored further in the following paragraphs.

The specific setup of the event – and in particular the type of organizations that were represented and the selection of the participants – allows us to grasp the diversity of institutions constituting the Europe-Québec migration infrastructure as well as their interconnected practices and politics. In the case of the Québec Days, these institutions include of course the Québec authorities for whom immigration is a way to address demographic, economic and cultural issues, but also private companies for whom immigrants are perceived as a potential workforce and as future consumers, representatives of regions and urban areas who try to attract specific immigrants to insure their dynamism and finally French employment agencies, who actively contributed to the selection of the participants to the Québec Days.

The event also illustrates how these interlinked logics contribute to the production of the 'sorting' and 'channeling' practices identified by Meeus, Van Heur and Arnaut (2019). These practices that operate at different levels: at a more macro level with the immigration laws and regulations, at a more meso level with the unequal distribution of the opportunity to move (the fact of being or not being allowed to participate in the Québec Days, for example) but also at a very micro level as illustrated by Michel's comments about who is to be considered an 'interesting' candidate.

The various processes of channeling and sorting of these infrastructural politics tends to assign identities of what authors have labeled 'good' or 'perfect immigrants' (Haince 2014), the immigration of whom is promoted and actively favored. But it also tends to produce categories of 'good migration', i.e. to favor forms and practices of migration (e.g. temporary vs permanent) over others.

The institutional channeling and sorting practices – in other words, the unequal distribution of migration opportunities – produce social distinctions and boundaries between "deserving" and "undeserving" migrants (Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005, 520). Aspiring migrants – as I argue in the last part of this chapter and in part three – are 'being-made' by these institutional categorizations but are also 'self-making' in the sense that they have room to negotiate their position within the migration infrastructure.

More generally, the Québec Days also illustrate a form of regime of hope distribution that operate no longer at the local and national level but at a more transnational level, validating the aspirations of some and allowing them to move and resisting the aspirations and projects of others.

4.1.2. Selecting the 'good migrants': Infrastructural politics of attraction of skilled, French speaking workers

During my research, I attended many events like the Québec Days described above. In particular, I attended some of the information sessions regularly organized by the Québec immigration bureau in cities like Paris and Brussels. Just like during the introduction to the Québec Days, the aims of the Québec immigration policy were systematically presented to the participants with a three points statement. Québec, it was stated, is looking for immigrants to strengthen the economic dynamism of Québec, strengthen its demographic growth and to contribute to the vitality of the French language in the Province. The balance between these different objectives however are regularly changing and have evolved through time. In other words, the infrastructural politics of "directionality", "temporality", and "subjectivity" (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) mentioned earlier, have changed over time in relation to the power balance and the institutional priorities within the migration infrastructure.

Since 1978, the Canadian province of Québec obtained the right to define its own criteria in the selection of immigrants, a prerogative that was previously limited to the Federal government. The acquisition of such power was instrumental in Québec's nationalist agenda to secure and expend its cultural and linguistic distinctiveness from the Anglophone Canada by favoring the selection of French speaking immigrants. From 1978 onward, the selection policy of Québec fluctuated between two main imperatives: on the one hand, the protection of Québec cultural distinctiveness through the selection of French speaking immigrants, and on the other hand, the expansion of the Québec economy through the selection of skilled workers (Houle 2014). Québec developed various immigration programs. The programs that were mostly used by the people I met in

Montréal can be roughly divided into two categories. The first was the permanent worker program (*programme régulier des travailleurs qualifiés*). 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 points limits. The second category regroups a multitude of temporary immigration status including for example: student visas, international mobility programs or temporary worker visas.

A first way to assess the recent evolution of the Québec politics of migration is to look at the evolution of the Québec permanent worker program and its point system. Or, more precisely, to see how the balance between the different criteria included in the point system evaluation changed over time. This is what Houle (2014) did by analyzing the evolution of the Québec immigration criteria from the 1970s to 2011. As Houle demonstrates, Québec's fight to acquire the power to shape its own immigration policy was largely informed by the idea of protecting the province's cultural and linguistic distinctiveness against the Canadian multicultural policy that – according to many Quebecers – reduces the French speaking majority of Québec to the status of a minority ethnic culture. In this context, the first selection grids implemented by the Québec authorities in 1978 gave much importance to two criteria: the language skills of the applicant (ten points for knowledge of the French language and two points for knowledge of the English language) and "adaptability" (23 points) that was supposed to evaluate the applicant's motivation, knowledge of Québec society and his overall capacity to adjust to it. As Houle explains, the criteria of adaptability, because of its broad margin of interpretation, was largely used by Québec immigration officers to select applicants from francophone countries who had otherwise weak applications (Houle 2014, 126). In the 1978 grid, when taken together the French language skills and adaptability criteria represented 33 points, which represented 33% of the total points that could be collected by a candidate migrating alone[45] and 66% of the fifty points threshold required to be selected.[46] [47] In 1980, the importance of French language skills was increased. Combining French language skills and adaptability now represented 38 points out of the fifty points threshold (i.e. 76%) required to receive the Québec selection certificate. Both the point system of 1978 and 1980 then made it relatively easy for a candidate coming from a francophone country to be selected, whatever his level of education or its professional skills. Additional points

45 Bonus points could be attributed for children and spouse.
46 Bonus points could be attributed for children and spouse.
47 It is important however to note that even in 1978, language or adaptability were not exclusionary criteria, which means that an applicant with no knowledge of the French language or with no pointed granted under the adaptability criteria could still be selected under other criteria such as training, employment or age for example.

necessary to reach the fifty points threshold could indeed be collected through the age criteria (ten points up to 35 years old), or if the candidate knew a friend residing in Québec (two or five points).

In 1995 and 1996, the Québec government conducted different reforms of the immigration system. First, the regulation regarding the criteria of selection and the regulation regarding the number of points allocated under each criteria were separated, authorizing the Québec authorities to modify more quickly the points ratio in order to be more in tune with labor market demands (Houle 2014, 132). Second, a distinction was established between the selection of workers and the selection of what Houle labels as economic immigrants of the "business class" (entrepreneurs, investors and self-employed) for whom language and cultural criteria became nearly irrelevant in the selection process (Houle 2014, 132). Third, the workers, selection grid was changed, giving much more importance to the skills of the candidates. Language and adaptability were still rewarded by an important number of points (about 35% of the points that could be accumulated), but it became very difficult for unskilled migrants to be selected – a trend that became even clearer with a new modification of the selection grid in 2001 (Houle 2014). Indeed, the 1995 selection grid introduced a new criteria: the "employability and professional mobility criterion" (Houle 2014, 132). This new criterion consisted of a cut-off score calculated on the candidate's training, professional experience, age, language skills (in French and English) and previous stays in Québec.[48] It is designed as a way to assess the immigrant potential to integrate to the Québec economy. Another criteria introduced in the 1995 selection grid is the "financial autonomy capability" the goal of which was to insure that the immigration candidate had the financial means to cover the costs of his first months in Québec. This criteria is not secondary as it became one that actually conditioned the eligibility of the whole application. In other words, a candidate failing to prove his financial autonomy would see his application automatically rejected.[49]

In 2006, a new evolution of the point system suggested a step forward in the selection of skilled workers fitting the needs of the Québec economy. The points allocated to the training of the

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48 In the case of an immigrant moving with his family, the characteristics of the spouse are also taken into account.

49 The amount of money that an immigration candidate has to put together to satisfy to the financial autonomy criterion is substantial. It is calculated to cover the cost of three months of life in Québec. In 2019, the estimated amount for one person was 3.188 $. For a couple: 4.676 $. For a couple with one child: 5.238 $, and so on. See: http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/immigrer-installer/travailleurs-permanents/conditions-requises/lexique.html#autonomie Last access: 01/07/2019.

immigration candidates were greatly increased (from nineteen in 2001 to 29 in 2006). More importantly, the field of training is taken into account into the allocation of those points (Laflamme et al. 2011, 17–18). An immigrant trained in a field with high demand in Québec collected more points than an immigrant trained in a less sought-after field. At the same time, the points allocated due to French language ability and adaptability were reduced (Houle 2014, 134). At the time of my research, such trends were still very much true as illustrated by the selection grid in force in 2016:

Overview of the selection grid for the permanent worker program – November 2016

1: Training (Max-30pts)
- Education level (max-14pts/cutoff score-2pts)
- Areas of training (max-16pts)

2: Professional experience (Max-8pts)

3: Age (Max-16pts)

4: Language proficiency (Max-22pts)
- French (max-16pts)
- English (max-6pts)

5: Stay and Family in Quebec (Max-8pts)
- Stay in Quebec (max-5pts)
- Family in Quebec (max-3pts)

6: Characteristics of the accompanying spouse or de facto spouse (Max-17pts)
- Education level (max-4pts)
- Areas of training (max-4pts)
- Professional experience (max-0pts)
- Age (max-3pts)
- Language proficiency in French (max-6pts)

7: Validated employment offer (Max-10pts)

8: Children (Max-8pts)

9: Financial self-sufficiency (Max-1pts/cutoff score-1pts)

10: Adaptability (Max-0pts)

Total points-120

Passing score (without spouse)-49pts
- Cutoff score for employability (factor 1 to 7 except 6): 42pts

Passing score (with spouse)-57pts
- Cutoff score for employability (factor 1 to 7): 50pts

Source: Regulation respecting the weighting applicable to the selection of foreign nationals, Editeur Officiel du Québec, 1 November 2016.

The development of these selection grids seems to suggest an evolution of the institutional politics of subjectivity, in the sense that the very definition of what is categorized as a good immigrant changed from the figure of a culturally compatible individual (illustrated by the predominance of the language and adaptability criteria before 1995) to the figure of a worker able to contribute to Québec economy (illustrated by the rising importance of the training and employability criteria). The centrality of market driven logics within the infrastructural politics of migration was explicitly stated in the objective fixed by the Québec government in terms of immigration. For example, the 2017 Québec Immigration Plan mentions the augmentation of the share of 'economic immigration' (i.e. the immigration of workers as opposed to family reunion and asylum) as one of the principal objectives for the years 2017 to 2019 (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion 2017).

The increasing centrality of job market logic in the selection of immigrants since the 1990s echoes what Haince (2010, 268) – while looking at the evolution of the Canadian immigration policies – describes as a "commodification of immigration" characterized on the one hand by the conception of immigration as a "marketing product" and, on the other hand, by a conception of the immigrant as a "commodity" whose competences and aptitudes are used to answer to the needs of the market. The "good immigrant" then becomes valued more for his "human capital" and its potential contribution to the National or Provincial economy (Haince 2010, 268 and sq.).

The permanent worker program and its point based selection system was not the only way to obtain a residence permit in the Québec region. Indeed, another element of the evolution of the Québec policy regarding immigration was the increasing importance of temporary residence programs (i.e. as temporary worker or student) as a first step toward permanent residence – an orientation that was slightly different from the previous policy which focused more heavily on the recruitment of permanent workers through the point system. This evolution materialized in Québec with the implementation of the *Programme de l'Expérience Québécoise* (Program for the Québec Experience – or PEQ) in 2010. This program was designed as a fast track access to permanent residence for young people who studied in Québec and for certain categories of temporary workers who – as long as they fitted within the criteria of the program – could obtain a permanent residence permit without going through the point system selection. From the perspective of Québec authorities, this focus on temporary programs had the advantage of privileging a much more flexible workforce. Indeed, while the permanent worker program often required long periods of time for the candidate to go through the whole process, temporary visas are quicker to obtain. They provide a more flexible workforce whose skills can be selected "just in time" and "to the point" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 138) in regards to the needs of the region

economy. In this way, the new focus of Québec authorities on temporary programs as a first step for permanent residence is coherent with a broader tendency of western countries to try to adapt their immigration policies with the "new flexibility and interpenetration of labor markets and economic systems" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 138).

Another central rationale behind such a policy – which was also implemented at the federal level – is that recruiting permanent residents among certain categories of temporary workers allowed the selection of people who are already integrated in Québec society and in particular in its job market (Haince 2010). At the same time, such a policy also tended to partially exempt public authority from the responsibility of the integration of newcomers by transferring the responsibility of integration on to the shoulders of the immigrants themselves and on to the shoulders of the market, thus reducing the concept of integration to the idea of integration into the job market. This new focus on the temporary residence program also enhanced the role of employers as decisive actors in the migration infrastructure, suggesting an evolution toward an 'employer-driven migration', conceptualized by Valiani (2013) to describe the Canadian immigration policy at the federal level. The importance of employers in the selection of immigrant materialized during the Québec Days events described above.

Behind these developments of the infrastructural politics of migration transpires the institutional demarcation between deserving and the undeserving immigrant, a demarcation sanctioned by the unequal distribution of the possibility to emigrate in favor of the individuals identified as potential assets for Québec society. The 'good immigrant' has to be able to rapidly answer the needs of the Québec economy while retaining a certain level of flexibility provided by temporary residence programs and, finally, support the costs and responsibility of its own integration into Québec society. During my research, one of the figures which was presented as the perfect example of such 'good immigrant' was that of the international student. In an article published online on 4 October 2016, the newspaper *Metro* quoted the Minister for Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion Kathleen Weil, commenting on a 1.6 million dollar plan by the Québec government to retain international students and temporary workers in the Province:

> "They are young, they are brilliant, and they have a degree from a Québec institution in their pocket. They are top candidates for emigrating to Québec. They are familiar with Québec society, they speak French and often other languages, and their integration is well underway already. We want them to choose Québec."

Kathleen Weil, quoted in the newspaper *Metro*, 04/10/2016, my translation from French[50]

The minister's account to the choice of the Québec authorities to invest in retaining international students in the province give us a good illustration of the institutional definition of the perfect immigrant: a young, highly skilled, French speaking worker, ready to be employed and virtually costless in terms of integration.

The evolution toward this specific figure of the good immigrant takes place in a more general movement of neoliberal restructuring of the Canadian society described by Simmons (1998). This economic restructuring, initiated in the 1990s, was characterized by a huge cut off in public spending as well as efforts to develop an internationally competitive economy (Simmons 1998, 58–60). In Québec this restructuring was characterized by a large redirection of immigration policies toward the objective of developing the knowledge economy (Houle 2014).

The increasing importance given to temporary residence permits and to employers also illustrates the Québec desire for 'just-in-time' and 'to-the-point' migration that is pursued by many migration policies around the world (Xiang 2008; Mezzadra and Neilson 2012). Immigration is ideally supposed to perfectly fit the need of the economy at any time, which then requires flexible forms of migration (flexible from the point of view of the employers) provided by temporary visas and the perfect correspondence between the employers needs and the migrant skills allowed by the increasing involvement of the aforementioned employers in the process of selection.

The gradual redefinition of immigrants as commodity (Haince 2014) by Canadian and Québec authorities intersected with specific processes of racialization of such immigrants, involving a specific articulation of dimensions such as gender, class and race that, I would argue, contrasted with how Maghrebi Europeans were racialized in France and in Belgium. The pictures below show the representation of immigrants that I encountered during my fieldwork, in particular during events organized by the Québec or Canadian authorities. It is important to state that they do not constitute a statistically representative account of the way immigrants are portrayed within the massive documentation (leaflets, posters, etc.) that was produced during such events. Indeed, many documents distributed during an event such as the Québec Days presented

50 https://journalmetro.com/actualites/montreal/1031238/quebec-investit-16m-pour-retenir-les-etudiants-etrangers-a-montreal/ Last access: 01/07/2019

immigrants using the image of a white individual. What I would show here however is that these events also provided a number of positive representations of non-white immigrants.

Advertisement for a post-secondary training program (left) and portraits of immigrants (right). Pictures taken at the *Salon de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration au Québec*, May 2016

Advertisement for the Canadian immigration program '*Entrée express*': picture taken at the Canadian office for visa in Paris, September 2015

In the pictures above, immigrants, and in particular immigrants of Maghrebi or Muslim background, are represented in ways that greatly differ from the way Maghrebi Europeans are

racialized in France and in Belgium. The pictures above depict smiling, professional women wearing Islamic headscarves. The religious markers are neither associated with social problems nor with a supposed inability to integrate into a western society. On the contrary, the Muslim women depicted as skilled professional are largely identified as ‘desired’ immigrants in the posters and are associated with professional success and desirable social positions. The depiction of the ‘good migrant’ here appears to be based less on elements of ethnicity or origin than on the ability to become a (skilled) professional and a good citizen positively contributing to the society. In other words, in the context of commodification of immigrants described by Haince (2014) forms of capital associated with the professional market (such as the cultural capital accumulated through formal education for example) are presented as central in the distribution of hope in Canada.

4.1.3. Montréal as an actor within the infrastructural politics of migration

As shown in the description of the Québec Days event, the Québec province is not the only actor involved in the migration infrastructure between Europe and Québec. Categorizations of the ‘good migrant’ are also very much present at the city level. Montréal is one of the major cities of Canada, situated within the Québec Province. With 1.8 million inhabitants in 2018, it is the second most populous city in Canada after Toronto (2.9 million). Historically, Montréal was also a manufacturing stronghold as well as Canada’s most important city in terms of financial and trade activities. From the end of the Second World War to the 1970s, the city built on the important expansion of the Québec economy (Geloso 2017) to consolidate its status as the economic heart of Canada. In the 1960s Québec’s important expansion of the welfare state resulted in significant progress in terms of health and education of the population. During the 1970s, while industrial activity was still strong in Montréal, well paid and stable jobs were also created in public sectors such as health, education and government, resulting in a rapid expansion of the Francophone middle class in the city (Rose and Twigge-Molecey 2013). From the 1970s onward however, the socio-economic position of Montréal in Canada started to decline. The industrial sector entered into crisis and, in parallel to the rise of Québec nationalism, many English speaking private sectors head-offices and upper middle class Anglophones moved to cities such as Toronto (Rose and Twigge-Molecey 2013). The effect of these different phenomena is that the predominance of Montréal in terms of population, financial and trade activities started to decline to the profit of other urban centers in Canada (mainly Toronto) and the U.S. Because of this evolution, some authors question the qualification of Montréal as a ‘global city’ in the conceptualization of Sassen (2001), in particular because of the city lost its position as a center of the financial sector and its

relatively low number of extremely high-paying jobs when compared to other cities like Toronto or New York (Rose and Twigge-Molecey 2013).

After a period of economic stagnation and high unemployment, Montréal – as many urban centers of the global North – tried rather successfully to position itself as a hub for advanced technology and the knowledge economy. Central in 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 the city authorities to develop strategies to attract what Montréal International – the organization dedicated to the economic development of Montréal's metropolitan area – calls the 'international talents' or the 'strategic talents'. In its 2017 activity report, Montréal International listed three types of such strategies: 1) the support provided to employers for the organization of overseas recruitment missions, 2) the provision of support and information to skilled foreign workers and companies employing them regarding access to resident permits and 3) the organization of events encouraging international students to stay in Montréal after their study (Montréal International 2018). In order to attract and retain these desired professionals, Montréal is frequently advertised as a vibrant city characterized by a dynamic labor market, a high purchasing power (in particular regarding the housing prices), an exceptional quality of life, an openness toward diversity and multiculturalism, a safe environment, a high quality educational system and the access to a large variety of cultural and leisure activities. This positive representation of the city is frequently displayed during events targeting potential immigrants as illustrated by the following poster decorating a kiosk of Montréal city during the "Québec Immigration and Integration Show" (*Salon de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration au Québec* in French) organized in the city:

Picture taken at the *Salon de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration au Québec*, May 2016

The quote – reading like a testimony that a newcomer would make about the city – displayed on the poster states: "Montréal, It's a 'multi-stopover' flight ticket. You discover new cultures, food, stories from all over the world. I felt at home and I was accepted as I am." Such depictions of Montréal as a diverse, multicultural and cosmopolitan city were common in the events organized by the city for the immigration candidates. On the Montréal International website, one can easily find message celebrating the city's dynamism and lifestyle, such as in the quote below:

> **Seeking a career abroad? Make it happen in Montréal!**
> Greater Montréal is a hub of knowledge, high-tech, culture and joie de vivre. 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.

Montréal International Website, 28/05/2019[51]

51 https://www.montrealinternational.com/en/work/ Last access: 28/05/2019

Those are just two examples of the multitude of pictures, messages, slogan, pamphlets and posters celebrating the dynamism and lifestyle of Montréal that I encountered during immigration events in both Europe and Montréal. This multitude of discourses and representations of the city tends to appeal to a specific range of socially situated aspirations: i.e. the aspirations to professional upward mobility, smooth and cosmopolitan urban based lifestyle, intense cultural and leisure consumption and access to private ownership, among others.

In many ways, this form of intense promotion and advertising is in tune with the famous idea from Florida (2002) that a highly skilled and highly educated creative class is an essential element for the prosperity of a city and that attracting such a creative class demands from regional entities to develop and encourage socio-cultural attraction factors such as an openness toward cultural diversity, attractive and safe environments characterized by a high level of cultural and leisure activities, but also jobs opportunities for skilled workers partners and a quality environment and education for their children (Richardson 2009). This theorization of city prosperity has been highly criticized for the weak conceptualization of the category of the 'creative class', for its presupposition of the positive impact of this class on local economies (Krätke 2010) and for the undervaluation of the negative externalities of such a model (Florida 2017). Nevertheless, such as the case of Montréal above confirms, the attraction of such a creative class (branded as 'international talents' in the Montréal case) is still one of the major immigration policy drivers for both powerful cities and cities (such as Montréal) seeking to gain stronger position (Çaglar and Schiller 2018, 15) within a globalized economy.

4.1.4. Infrastructural politics of migration and the production of non-linear migration patterns

Looking at Europe-Québec migration through the lens of infrastructural politics allows us to grasp the variety of actors that a migrant is likely to encounter during the migration process and who might facilitate (or make more difficult) his international mobility. It also allows us to take into account a variety of logics – sometimes antagonistic, sometimes complementary – that drive the production of immigration policies. In the case of Québec, two of these main logics were the securing of Québec cultural distinctiveness through the protection of the French language and the attraction of a young, skilled and highly educated workforce able to contribute to the Québec economy; the latest arguably gaining more importance in a context of globalized competition (Cerny 1997) and the generalization of neoliberal business oriented public policy agenda, in particular in the field of migration policies (Menz 2009).

In this context, employers (i.e. Québec companies) are important actors in Europe-Québec migration infrastructures as many of the possibilities of entering and/or prolonging a stay in Québec require either a profile that fits with labor market demands or even a job contract. From the perspective of a French or a Belgian immigrant in Montréal, this means that finding an employer is often a critical element to be able to move to or stay in Canada. For example, for a person living in Québec under a working holiday visa status, being eligible for the Program for the Québec Experience (PEQ) required to 1) be employed and 2) to have been employed full time for at least twelve or 24 months before the application. In the same way, prolonging a stay in Québec through a temporary worker visa status required finding an employer ready to undertake the administrative procedures of the temporary worker visa. For many people, the constant (and sometimes anxious) attention to their status was deeply interlinked with the constant attention and anxiety of finding a job allowing to expend a temporary status in the country. I discuss the last point further in the third part of this thesis.

From the perspective of Belgian and French citizens moving to Montréal, the working of the migration infrastructure is also characterized by a form of "dispersed management practices across several states" (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 73). Indeed, events such as the Québec Days and the information sessions organized by the Québec authorities in Europe represent a form of externalization of immigration management. But this dispersed management is also often experienced once in Québec. Indeed, the Québec authorities focus on temporary visas as a first step for permanent residence. This means that for many of my interlocutors, the critical step for a long term stay in Québec actually happens when they already live in Montréal. In the last case, the experience of the border was not externalized (i.e. as the expanse of the border abroad) (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2010) but rather internalized (i.e. as the reproduction of the border within the Canadian space).

Another effect of the structure of migration regulations was that the most common pattern of immigration among my interlocutors was characterized by a succession of temporary statuses (as temporary workers, students, or trainee of working holiday visa holder) sometimes resulting in the securing of a permanent status. This tendency was also illustrated by the fact that the immigration of my interlocutors was rarely a linear process from France to Québec but often involved several back and forth mobility between the first temporary visa and more durable statuses acquired either by applying to the point system selection or by using the fast track programs described above.

4.2. Channeling aspirations: Infrastructural politics and the discourse about the 'good migration'

In the previous section, I have mainly touched upon the infrastructural channeling and sorting practices has they appear at the level of immigration regulations and policies. Of course, such regulations are a central element in the unequal distribution of the possibility to move by categorizing and ranking aspiring migrants according to different criteria. These regulations force those who want to migrate to comply – at least at the administrative level – with identities assigned by migration institutions. I would argue however that the infrastructural politics of Europe-Québec migrations is not only about sorting out who should move or who should have a chance to be selected. It is also about categorizing, ranking and promoting specific aspirations over others. Put differently it is not only about who moves but also about why and how a person should move. We are here coming back to the question of the "transformations [pursued] through migration" mentioned by Carling and Collins (2018, 917). However, in the following section, I do not address relations between the migrants and their potential transformation through migration (which I did in the previous chapter and continue to do in the next ones) but rather the subject's transformations that are promoted and encouraged by the migration institutions.

4.2.1. The infrastructural management of aspirations: Encouraging immigration aspirations

In the recent introduction of a special issue addressing migration aspirations, Carling and Collins (2018, 917) argue that "'aspirations management' is becoming an increasingly important part of international migration governance." Taking the example of Australia, the authors add that this type of management primarily aims to 'squash' migration aspirations by portraying migration and in particular irregular migration as a dangerous and/or counter-productive option. In the case of Québec however, it appears, that this aspiration management does not exactly endeavor to discourage migration aspirations, but rather to encourage some forms of migration while discouraging others. In countries like Belgium and France, this translated into campaigns actually promoting immigration to Québec. During an interview, Rayan, a French man of Moroccan origin living in Montréal since 2003, explained to me how, after a first stay in Montréal during holidays he started – after coming back in Paris where he was born – an application for permanent residence:

"JM: And did you go through specific organizations? How does it work when you want to do this [permanent residence] concretely?

Rayan: Well, at that time, there were advertisement campaigns to get French people to move to Québec. There was an advertising campaign.

JM: This was in France?

Rayan: Yes. Fall of 2002. 'Come live in Québec'. Well OK. There were [posters] in the metro, with four types of pictures: spring, summer, fall and winter. Four pictures of the city. And they gave references so I went on their website and I registered for an information session.

JM: OK so you went to this information meeting? And how was it?

Rayan: Very diversified. A lot of people. Well, let's be clear. The picture of Québec that they presented to us during this meeting was far too pretty!

JM: Yeah? About what for example?

Rayan: Housing, jobs… Really it was misleading advertising. They really depicted Québec excessively well. *Mind you*,[52] they did well because I went and I am not regretting it at all. But I think it is still a bit suspicious the way they depicted Québec versus what we got when we arrived."

Field interview, 28/04/2015, Paris

At the time of our interview, Rayan was holding a degree in communication and was working as a photographer and as an artist in Montréal. The campaigns that he told about in the quote above have been described by Haince (2010) in her ethnography of the Canadian immigration institutions. They took different forms: promotional posters, public relations campaigns in French media, advertisement in newspapers and magazines, and even postcards sent to French people (Haince 2010, 273). According to the author, this dynamic is characteristic of a form of "commodification of immigration" (Haince 2010, 268) in the sense that immigrants are increasingly perceived as 'products' valued according to their human capital and that immigration is increasingly approached by Canadian authorities as a product to be advertised and sold to aspiring immigrants. What I would like to emphasize here is that from the perspective of a French or a Belgian citizen aspiring to move to the Québec province, the French and Belgian

52 In English during the interview.

social space was actually characterized by the circulation of pictures, messages, and advertisement campaigns encouraging the development of migration aspirations. These aspiration management practices however were also carefully focused on certain forms of migration. This is what I address in the following section.

4.2.2. 'It's your project': The discourse about the good migration

In the following paragraphs, I build on the description of my own experience of the information sessions organized by the Québec authorities in different European cities including Paris and Brussels where I attended several of them. The information sessions are one of the initiatives implemented by the Québec province to promote immigration and to attract promising candidates. As with the Québec Days, they were organized by the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris, often in collaboration with French and Belgian public employment agencies. At the time of my research, such information sessions were also organized online. These sessions were actually one of the only regular events where migration candidates could have a chance to ask questions and to obtain information about their own personal situation. Indeed, most of the information regarding Québec's immigration policy was only available online. Candidates could also contact a call center, but the information provided was more about the general procedure and not about the individual situation of the candidates. For these reasons, the information sessions could actually constitute a rather important event for some candidates as it could provide an occasion to receive clarification about the migration programs and to have a professional opinion about their chances to be selected or eligible for the different programs. The information sessions were free and open to anybody but nevertheless required a prior registration online, during which the candidate is asked to fill a small questionnaire about his education level, language skills and professional activity. In the following paragraphs I describe the typical organization of one of these sessions, taking as a starting point my experience during one of them in Brussels, in 2015.

> *In March 2015, I attended one of these information sessions in Brussels. A few days after registering online, I received the invitation to participate with the date, place and hour of the event. At the top of the email, a picture representing a blue sky with a fraction of the fleur de lys (one of the emblems of the Québec flag) with a message reading: "What if your talents had a place in Québec?" In addition to the practical information about the time and place, the email also included a recommendation that the candidate complete an "immigration preliminary evaluation" online. This evaluation was an online form that the immigration candidates could fill before starting an official application. The form was based on the information taken into account for the point selection of permanent workers. Depending of*

the information provided by the candidate, the online questionnaire would give the result of the evaluation with a short message stating that the candidate "seems to meet the Québec selection criterion" or "doesn't seem to meet the Québec selection criteria". In the second case, the evaluation is followed by a message advising against applying to the selection certificate. Immediately after this invitation to fill the immigration preliminary evaluation, the email included a message explaining to the candidate that the maximum number of application for the year (6,500 at the time) had already been received and also that this closed quota did not impact the applications for temporary programs.

The information session took place within the facility of the international branch of the Brussels employment agency. A worker from the employment agency introduced the session, and explained to the audience that the employment agency organizes coaching sessions for the Belgians who want to work in Québec. The worker did not use the 'migration' vocabulary during her short introduction. Instead she addressed the audience by talking about 'expatriation' and 'expatriate' rather than 'migration' and 'migrant'. The vocabulary used to describe the mobility between Belgium and Québec instantly changed when the worker from the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris who hosted the session started to talk. She used 'migration' vocabulary throughout the session, calling 'immigration' the process of moving to Québec.

At the beginning of the session, the Québec official animating the session presented to the participants the three goals of the Québec immigration policy clearly displayed on a PowerPoint slide: "Strengthening economic dynamism; Strengthening demographic growth; Contribute to the vitality of Francophonie." Such a presentation of the Québec immigration policy was systematically done in the different information sessions I attended. During the session, three types of migration programs were addressed: the permanent workers program, the temporary programs for workers and the program of international mobility or working holiday program. Other types of immigration, such as family reunion, for example, were mostly absent from the sessions or treated as a side topic (i.e. the presentation did include some information about the immigration of the skilled worker's partner).

The presentation also included a short presentation of Québec society during which the worker hosting the session described in a very laudatory tone different aspects of the Québec province. The unemployment level was presented as lower than in Belgium. The presentation also included several elements about the province welfare system. Particular attention was given to the description of the Québec regime of maternity and parental leave, and their long

duration when compared to the French and Belgian regime. The Québec representative explained how parental leave was available for both mothers and fathers and that it was 'socially very well received' for men to take such paternity leave. In several presentations that I attended, this presentation of Québec society was associated with a presentation of the Québec working culture. During one of these other sessions in Paris, a PowerPoint slide highlighted the following elements presented as examples of such working culture:

- *Equal opportunities*
- *Softness of hierarchy and direct communication [with the hierarchical superiors]*
- *Participation of the employee*
- *Professional mobility*
- *Respects of working hours and deadlines*

In the sessions that I attended, softness of hierarchical relations was often emphasized as a sign of a relaxed and positive working environment. The respect of the working hours was often linked to the idea that family life was an important value in Québec society and that therefore, Québec workers usually left the workplace early when compared to France or Belgium. In other sessions that I attended, the host would also celebrate professional mobility as a central characteristic of the Québec job market. This high level of mobility however – the host would explain – also meant that an immigrant should expect to be underemployed for a certain period of time before actually catching up with his pre-migration professional situation and, hopefully, experience professional upward mobility.

Unemployment benefits and legal vacation days were also discussed during the information session. This time, the host insisted on the fact that unemployment benefit and vacation days were less generous than in Belgium. In the various information sessions that I attended, this point was systematically addressed. Very often, the Québec representative hosting the session would use a rather ironic tone while emphasizing the 'generous' dimension of the French or Belgian unemployment protection which tended to create a sense that it was the European situation which needed to be viewed as somewhat exaggerated.

Of course, the point here is not to evaluate the accuracy of such a depiction of Québec society. One could easily argue, for example, that the depiction of the work culture provided during the information sessions highly depends of the kind of job one is able to access and that a French or Belgian newcomer working night shifts in a fast food restaurant waiting for better job

opportunities might have a different picture of Québec working environment. However, through this description, the host communicated to the audience a very specific understanding of what potential transformation an immigrant should expect from migration. The systematic reminder of the Québec immigration policy's goals, the focus on worker's immigration programs and the emphasis on the description of Québec working culture tended to present work (i.e. the contribution of the immigrant to the Québec economy) as the most important factor of legitimacy of an immigration project. This element was illustrated during the Q&A organized at the end of the information sessions I attended.

> *During the Q&A of the session of March 2015, I noticed one of the questions from a young woman in her thirties.*
>
>> *The woman explains that she wants to work in the HR sector in Québec because it is her primary occupation. Realizing that Human Resources was not a particularly desired field of competence from the point of view of the Québec Government, she asks the speaker if she should put forward another of her qualifications in order to be selected. The speaker answers that according to her, putting another qualification in the application is not a good option.*
>> *'It would be a pity to go in Québec and do something you don't want!' she says in a reprimanding tone.*
>> *The woman, timidly explains: 'it is just that I want my application accepted…'*
>> *The speaker, still using an intimidating tone, protests: 'We are speaking about your professional integration there!' and continues, explaining that the candidates should clarify their professional project before applying for immigration.*
>
> *Fieldnotes, 12/03/2015, Brussels*

As I described above, at the time of my fieldwork, it was quite difficult for an immigration candidate to be able to discuss with a Québec representative about an individual migration project. This meant that for many candidates, the Q&A of the information session actually represented a critical moment during which one could finally have information, and potentially advice, about their personal difficulty with the migration process. In this small dialogue captured during an information session, the representative of the Québec Immigration Bureau in Paris clearly reasserted the central place that the professional project should have in the immigration project of the candidate. Whatever the reasons that pushed the woman to consider entering Canada as a priority over her choice of career, her project was clearly considered and categorized

as illegitimate. This small example illustrates how some aspirations (for example finding a job or contribute to the Québec economy) connected with migration were valued while others (joining a loved one for example) are less so.

But the speech delivered during the information session was not only about sorting out the good motives to migrate. It was also about the good way to migrate. Indeed, during the session, moving to Québec is regularly referred to as the candidates' 'project'. The candidates were constantly told to make sure that the Québec Province offers the right opportunities for their 'projects.' The speakers often recommended that the candidates did a 'scouting trip' (*voyage de prospection*) as visitors to Québec before applying for an immigration program. These trips – the candidates were told – were supposed to help them to see if they had a chance to realize their aspirations within the Québec society. The migration process was mainly presented as an individual initiative for which the immigrant – and not the receiving society – had to support the costs and risks.

During my fieldwork, institutional actors sometime used an entrepreneurial vocabulary to talk about immigration to Québec. For example, during an integration course I attended to in Montréal, the expression "being the CEO of your professional integration" was used. In May 2016, during the "Québec immigration and integration exposition" organized every year in Montréal, one of the conference programmed during the event was titled "Conducting your job research in project management mode." These are only two small examples of the entrepreneurial vocabulary that infused many of the institutional discourses about immigration at the time of my fieldwork. A good immigration was presented as an immigration carried out according to the market standards: i.e. an individual calculation of the risk/benefits ratio, the responsibility of which had to be carried out by the migrant himself. These observations echo Mezzadra's (2016, 36) remarks about the increasing neo-liberal tendency to describe migration as an investment and migrants as investors. Migration was perceived as the valorization of a 'human capital' in two ways. First by the fact that immigration candidates were mostly perceived and valued according to their ability to successfully contribute to the Québec socio-economic dynamism. Second because a successful immigration was frequently described as the result of an individualistic enterprise of maximization of one's 'human capital'.

Of course, this kind of discourse allowed one to overlook the fact that it was the Québec government which implemented an active immigration policy with the aim of attracting a young and French-speaking workforce. Thus, it also allowed one to overlook the social responsibility of Québec society in terms of integration of its immigrants, for example.

4.3. The production of deserving subjects

4.3.1. “I fucked up”: Didier and the experience of being categorized as undeserving

In January 2017, after my first stay in Montréal, I came to Paris just like several of my French contacts in Montréal who came back to France for the new year festivities. Knowing about my short visit to the French capital, Nacim, one of my main interlocutors in Montréal whom I already introduced in Chapter 3, suggested that I come to a supper that he organized with a number of friends in a restaurant of Bagneux, a city of the southern banlieue of Paris. Being aware of my research topic Nacim frequently helped me attend social events, and gave me contacts for interviews both in Montréal and in Paris. When we were together with a group of people, he systematically asked our interlocutors their reasons for coming to Montréal, knowing that it was one of the central question in my research. I met Nacim regularly during and after the time of my fieldwork and during our meetings, he often brought back this question of ‘why did I go to Montréal’. In January 2017, Nacim had already spent some time in Montréal, first as a working holiday visa holder in 2010, and then – after a short period in France – with a worker visa thanks to a job he obtained during one of the Québec Days events described above. As I already mentioned in Chapter three, Nacim – whose profile as a young French speaking IT worker was typically among the profiles that the Québec employers were interested in at the time of my research – experienced moving to Montréal as a smooth process. Of course, in 2010, Nacim fit within the requirements to obtain a working holiday visa, and the number of candidates for such a visa was still reasonable, leaving a good chance to obtain it. For Nacim, everything went smoothly, making the administrative procedure quasi-invisible. As he explained himself, the moment when he felt the ‘reality’ of the migration procedure was actually not a moment of the administrative process, it was when he bought his fly ticket to Montréal.

Nacim’s supper was organized in a small restaurant specialized in grilled meat and serving Halal food. The friends that Nacim invited were all part of the network that he built during his stay in Montréal. Our small groups counted to men and two women plus Nacim and me: Mehdi, a programmer born and raised in Marseille who had permanent residence in Canada but was currently living in France; Brigitte, a woman working in communication and coming from the Paris banlieue, whose sister was currently living in Montréal; Alma, also from the Paris banlieue, who had been in Montréal for one year and who was waiting for her permanent residence to be accepted to return in Canada; and Henri, a sport trainer from another Paris banlieue who lived in Australia and in Canada for several years. Around the

table, all the members of our small group were in their thirties. In many ways, we also fit the profile of the good migrant according to the Québec immigration policy, either because of our skills and educational profile (Nacim, Mehdi, Brigitte and I completed tertiary education – either in university or in technical institutes – and IT workers and programmers were often jobs in demand in Montréal) or because of our previous temporary stay and professional experience in Canada could be used to facilitate the obtaining of a permanent residence(as it was the case for Alma and Henri).

During the supper, discussion came and went about various topics. We briefly discussed the news concerning a stand up show in which a particularly stereotypical representation of French-Asian populations sparked a media debate about anti-Asian racism in France. We also spoke about Brigitte's trouble to find and buy a decent apartment in the close periphery of Paris. We also exchanged a lot about our international experiences – and in particular the Canadian experience. At one point of our supper, one of the restaurant's waiters, a man in his thirties with a long beard, came to our little group and asked us "excuse me, are you talking about Canada?" He added that moving to Canada was his big dream. Nacim suggested he join our group in order to continue the discussion. The waiter, Didier, explained to us that he himself converted to Islam and that his project to go to Canada mainly had to do with the hostility that he experienced in France. Didier extensively described how his wife – a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf – was insulted in a supermarket a few days ago because of her religion. Mentioning the hostile rhetoric of the (at the time) French prime minister Manuel Valls, Didier was convinced that things "will go from bad to worse." This everyday experience of hostility – according to Didier, contrasts with what he experienced in Montréal during holidays that he spent there with his family. "[In Canada]" he explained with a very enthusiast tone "people consider you for what you are, not for what you could be." Continuing the conversation, Henri and Nacim discussed with Didier the better way to access a Canadian permanent residence permit. At one point, Henri and Didier discussed about the immigration possibilities for entrepreneurs. I then joined the conversation, asking Didier if he was planning to open a business in Canada. Didier answered: "Not really, but you see, for me, the first question is how to get there. After that, we'll see." Pointing at our group he told me that from what he heard he understood that we were all holding a diploma. "And I, in my case" he continued with a bit of disappointment "I fucked up [at school]". Not holding a diploma did not really help Didier's confidence in his ability to find a job and work hard he explained. But, as he put it: "The problem is that this is problematic for [the permanent residence] evaluation."

This short account of my discussion with Nacim, his friends and Didier illustrates two specific types of experiences when it comes to be confronted to Québec immigration regulations. On the one hand, Nacim's experience was characterized by the smoothness and almost painlessness nature of the procedure; in other words, by the porosity of the border. On the other hand, for Didier, whose profile did not fit with either the requirements of the working holiday visa nor with the requirement of the permanent worker program, the Canadian border became much more impermeable. Put differently the account above illustrates the infrastructural politics of sorting deserving and undeserving or good and bad immigrants produce very different experiences of the border (Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005, 520).

More interestingly for this chapter, one of the elements that transpires from the description above is how these institutional sorting practices between deserving candidates and undeserving candidates – or between good candidates and the others – is experienced and processed by the candidates themselves. In other words, how it produces different subjectivities. In the account above, Didier's experience of the Québec regulations led him to reassess his own past in a very specific way: "I fucked up." It is very important to note however that the negative subjectivity produced by Didier's encounter with Québec regulation did not consume his desires to move or his aspiration to find a better place for his family to live. Neither did it destroy any form of positive self-representation as Didier also expressed his confidence in his ability to work hard and build a good life if he was given the chance to enter Canada. This echoes the idea expressed by Scheel, De Genova, Garelli, Tazzioli, Grappi and Peano (2015, 85) that: "the multiplicity of subjective desires, hopes and aspirations that animate the projects migrants pursue with their migrations […] is always in excess of their regulation by governmental regimes."

4.3.2. Being selected as a form of recognition

A few days after my participation in one of the information sessions given in Brussels, I met Anas, a French man of Algerian background coming from a small city close to Marseille who also attended the session. During our discussion, I asked him his general impression about the session. "They [Québec authority] seem quite open." He said. This answer surprised me. During the session, my impression was exactly the opposite as I was struggling, trying to write down all the different rules and conditions attached to every immigration program. I felt that the so called 'open' immigration policy of Québec actually involves a lot of discouraging requirements. But for Anas, the requirements apparently did not appear so constraining. In fact, during our discussion, he explained to me that for him the most important thing was to assess the different opportunities

given by Québec in terms of wages and quality of life. Migration in itself was perceived as a secondary concern.

Of course, Anas fit the profile of 'good migrant' as defined by Québec immigration policy. He was young and had a tertiary degree in IT. He worked as an IT specialist, a skill in high demand in Montréal at the time of my research. Anas also conditioned his migration to the professional opportunities that he perceived in Montréal. In other words, he fit with the Québec definition of the good migrant and of good migration. The interesting point is that for Anas, migration was perceived as something easy, almost natural. For some of the people I met, the selection process was even experienced as an empowering course of events, as in the case of Rayan, a French man of Moroccan background who moved to Montréal in 2003 and whom I introduced above:

> "Rayan: You have what they call a selection certificate! You have a selection certificate and there, Québec, Canada want… Good people… […]
> So your immigration to Québec, you experience it in a very positive and empowering way you know…[53] I don't know the term in French sorry it comes out like that. It boosts your ego, you say: 'That's it, someone wanted me! I am a good person!'
>
> JM: I am desired…
>
> Rayan: I am desired yes, and it is very different from France (Rayan laughs) where they make you understand that you are out of place, because you are a bloody Arab, because they question your presence in the public space like they did just in front of my house telling me: 'Well you cannot live in the neighborhood because… Because that's it…'"
>
> Field interview, 28/04/2015, Paris

Rayan placed this 'empowering' experience at the opposite of his experience of discrimination in France, in particular when interacting with the police. Of course, the empowering dimension of Rayan's migration was possible only because, unlike a lot of other migration candidates, Rayan fit within the selection criteria discriminating between the desired immigrants and the unwanted ones. This example illustrates how the administrative procedures as well as the discourses developed in Québec institutions, shape migrants' subjectivity by validating (or not) their aspirations, their projection of their future in Québec.

53 Pronounced in English during the interview.

The cases of Didier and Rayan illustrate the performative dimension of the different channeling and sorting practices described above (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 84). Indeed, depending on their experience of the immigration regulations, Didier and Rayan developed different types of emotional responses. Didier, realizing that he actually did not fit within the requirement to be selected by the Québec authorities communicated to me a sense of guilt and shame regarding his low level of education. Conversely, Rayan's experience of the selection process was an experience of – as he put it – "empowerment." The comparison that Rayan drew with his situation in France also suggested that his selection for immigration was experienced a form of recognition; a form of recognition that he struggled to access in his country of birth, France.

Interestingly, neither Rayan nor Didier criticized or protested against the nature of the selection process, or against the criteria chosen to identify a 'good migrant'. This might not be very surprising for Rayan as he passed the selection. But for Didier, I was surprised by the fact that he turned the responsibility of his difficulty to move on to himself rather than on to the policy and selection process of Québec. Everything happened as if the selection process, while striking such deep feelings in both cases, was considered as fair. The point system actually provided clarity and an impression of objectivity that deeply contrasted with the everyday experience of racial and religious discrimination experienced in France.

Criticizing the Québec immigration policy was something that not many of my Maghrebi European interlocutors would do during our discussions. This suggests another dimension of the externalization/internalization of the aspiration management practices that I have touched upon in the chapter. Indeed, the cases of Rayan and Didier also suggest a form of internalization of such aspiration management practices by the migrants themselves.

Both cases illustrate how institutions, through the work of complex regulations, discourses and practices, shape the aspirations of Europeans who develop emigration projects. Indeed, the aspirations of the would-be emigrant – what they intend to realize through migration – are constantly tested, valued and/or discouraged during the migration process.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked at the development of migration aspirations not from the perspective of Maghrebi Europeans movers (as I did in chapter one, two and three) but from the perspective of the institutions regulating the possibility of moving internationally. In other words, I looked at what Carling and Collins (2018, 917) called "aspiration management." These form of management, I argued, take place in a complex migration infrastructure, involving many actors such as Canadian and European governmental institutions, private companies or regional agencies. In terms of aspiration management, I argued that unlike other countries such as Australia, the Québec case is mainly characterized by a form of promotion of migration aspirations in Europe, and Québec authorities are involved in an active policy of recruitment of immigrants in France and in Belgium. This active policy however also involves sorting practices that tends to produce a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' immigrants and 'good' and 'bad' immigrations. The category of the good migrant also potentially includes modes of representation and racialization of immigrants (and in particular Maghrebi and Muslim immigrants) that is partially distinct from the categorizations of the same populations in France and in Belgium, in particular through the representation of Maghrebi and Muslim immigrants through the image of skilled professionals on tracks for upward social mobility. Sorting and channeling practices (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) take place at the level of the immigration regulations and their evolutions but also during interactions with Québec representatives for example. In the chapter, I argued that the regulatory apparatus and the institutional practices tends to favor the profiles and the aspirations that fit with a conceptualization of the good immigrant as a flexible, self-sufficient and French speaking skilled individual. If the balance between the different dimensions of this desired immigrant had changed during the last decades, it seems that Québec authorities increasingly favor aspirations compatible with a neo-liberal understanding of migration as an investment (Mezzadra 2016) and of (skilled) migrants as a resource for local economic competitiveness. Therefore, aspirations that are promoted include elements such as the necessity to be economically active, the necessity for the individual to assume the responsibility and the cost of migration and, ideally, the necessity for the individual to develop and entrepreneurial mind-set.

In the last part of the chapter, I introduced different effects that these sorting and channeling practices had over the self-representation of aspiring Maghrebi European migrants. Through the presentation of two particular cases, I argued that, if institutional practices hardly exhaust the desire and aspirations of would be emigrants, going through the selection process successfully

can produce a sense of empowerment or a sense of positive recognition that contrasts with the sense of material and symbolic stuckedness experienced in Europe.

What this chapter unfolded is how migration infrastructures are characterized by specific regimes of hope distribution that favor the aspirations of some and resist the aspirations of others. How Maghrebi Europeans navigate such regime of hope distribution and manage to carve out pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) within Montréal regime of hope is the focus of the next part of this thesis.

Part 3. From Europe to Montréal: Navigating new regimes of hope distribution[54]

54 This part includes elements that have been published in two papers: Mandin, J. (2020), "Pathways of integration of young French of Maghrebi background in Montreal", in, Åkesson L. and Suter B. (ed.), *Contemporary European Emigration. Situating Integration in New Destinations*, London and New York, Routledge. And: Mandin, J. (2020), "Aspirations and hope distribution in the emigration of Maghrebi Europeans in Montreal", in, *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*

The third part of this thesis initiates the last movement in my exploration of the migrations of Maghrebi Europeans between Europe and Montréal. In the first part, I explored the emergence of migration aspirations among young French and Belgian citizens of Maghrebi background. Aspirations that I have contextualized within socially embedded regimes of hope distributions as well as within the transnational circulation of imaginaries about destinations such as Montréal. These aspirations were, I argued, informed by a sense of lack of desirable futures in Europe and by aspirations of self-realization outside of European dynamics of social categorization and stigmatization of Muslim and Maghrebi minorities. In the second part, I moved to the migration process itself. I approached this as a process of becoming and looked at how, for young Maghrebi Europeans – often highly educated and facing difficulties in converting their cultural capital into actual upward social mobility – moving abroad constituted in itself a form of social mobility involving the acquisition of numerous capacities outside of their social milieu of origin. This process of becoming was also characterized by the centrality of migration infrastructures (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) in sorting and channeling (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) migration aspirations. In this third and last part, I move to a focus on how French and Belgians of Maghrebi background navigate the social context of Montréal. I address the third set of research questions mentioned in the introduction: *how do aspirations and relations with Europe as a desirable place for the future evolve after the migration?* In order to do so, I address the different pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006) carved out by Belgian and French immigrants in Montréal (chapter five). I describe how these pathways of incorporation involved different types of social infrastructures that works as platforms of capital (Bourdieu 1986) conversion for Belgian and French newcomers. I conclude this third part (chapter six) by coming back to my central theme: migration related aspirations. I try to explore how these aspirations evolve once in Montréal and how new aspirations and migration projects are sometimes produced.

In chapter five, I focus on the pathways of incorporation followed by young Maghrebi Europeans arriving in Montréal. I describe how newcomers navigate the city in order to build forms of stability. More specifically, building on the concepts of arrival infrastructures (Meeus, Arnaut, and Van Heur 2019) and of pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006), I explore the complex relations that Maghrebi Europeans develop with French and Maghrebi populations in the city and how they carve out alternative platform of arrival based on class based forms of identification. These alternative arrival infrastructures allow some form of capital conversion for Maghrebi French and Belgians in Montréal.

In chapter six – designed as a dialogue with chapter one – I develop further the evolution of immigrants' aspirations once in Montréal. I describe my interlocutors' experience of Montréal's

regime of hope distribution. Such experience I argue is characterized by a tension between different types of dynamics. First, moving to Montréal very often means accessing a new social context where being European and being of Maghrebi origin does not necessarily have the same (negative) implications that it does in Europe, and therefore opens new possibilities for capital conversion and therefore renewed experience of existential mobility. Second however, the Québec rules in terms of immigration combined with the city's socio-economic dynamic also produce forms of precariousness and instability. Third, the last decades also saw an important evolution of Québec political discourse regarding religious diversity and the presence of Muslim populations, which seems to suggest a form of transnational convergence of anti-Muslim politics. These conflicting dynamics and their effects on the unequal distribution of hope in Montréal produce experiences of existential mobility but also difficulties that forces interlocutors to reassess their initial aspirations, often either by enduring a difficult situation perceived as temporary or by projected their aspiration in yet other destinations.

Chapter 5. Making Montréal home: Pathways of incorporations[55]

In this chapter, I look at the incorporation of young Maghrebi Europeans into the social fabric of Montréal. I describe how young Maghrebi Europeans manage to make Montréal home, or – put differently – to incorporate themselves within the city of Montréal. More specifically, I try to unfold the types of networks that play a salient role in this process. I continue to build on the concept of infrastructure used in chapter four. However, while chapter four was focused on migration infrastructures (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) shaping the international mobility of my interlocutors, this chapter mainly concerns infrastructures of arrival (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019), i.e. infrastructures mainly organized around the arrival and incorporation of migrants in the place of destination, in this case Montréal. While I hold to the broad definition of migration infrastructure presented in chapter four, I tighten up the theoretical focus on the concept of arrival infrastructure defined by Meeus, Van Heur and Arnaut (2019, 1) as "[the] parts of the urban fabric within which newcomers become entangled on arrival, and where their future local and translocal social mobilities are produced as much as negociated."

Since the 2000s, urban studies have developed a growing interest in the infrastructure of cities and their role in social life. While diverse definitions of infrastructures have circulated within this 'infrastructural turn', many of them address the technological organization and the material environment of the city (Burchardt 2015). From this perspective, infrastructures refer to water pipes (Björkman 2015), streets (Hall, King, and Finlay 2017), walls and fences (Knott 2015), and so on. In the following chapter, I retain a broader understanding of infrastructures including established institutions dedicated to the arrival and/or the organization of immigrant communities, but also less formal infrastructures such as neighborhoods or even the networks of sociability that immigrants build in order to stabilize their situation in Montréal. I also include what Xiang and Lindquist (2014) have defined as regulatory infrastructure, which relates to regulations, laws and procedures that condition and/or facilitate mobility. In this chapter, I also

55 This part includes elements that have been published in: Mandin, J. (2020), "Pathways of integration of young French of Maghrebi background in Montreal", in, Åkesson L. and Suter B. (ed.), *Contemporary European Emigration. Situating Integration in New Destinations*, London and New York, Routledge.

address how these complex arrival infrastructure act as platform of capital conversion (Arnaut et al. 2020) where Belgian and French Maghrebi immigrants can convert social and cultural capital into better opportunities for upward social mobility, something that was more difficult to do in Europe.

In order to approach the way Maghrebi Europeans manage to incorporate in Montréal and find forms of stability within the city's social fabric, I draw on the concept of modes and pathways of incorporation as developed by Glick Schiller, Guldbrandsen and Çağlar (2006). Incorporation is defined by the authors as a process 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, Çağlar, and Guldbrandsen 2006, 614). "Modes of incorporation" refers 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 neighborhoods 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 or gender (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. Ultimately, I show how, by carving out a diversity of pathways, young Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal contribute to the changing local arrival infrastructures by creating new types of networks. These networks are not always based on ethnic forms of identification but rather on class-based forms of identification and recognition.

In order to address the incorporation of Maghrebi European in Montréal social fabric this chapter is divided into four parts. The first part is a description of the context of arrival. It addresses first the question of statuses and regulations and how they shape the possibility for European newcomers to build forms of stability in the city. It then moves to the social infrastructure of arrival, namely the complex networks of spaces, people and practices that European and Maghrebi immigrants navigate in the city.

The second part of the chapter address the "social location" (Phillips and Potter 2006, 311) of young Maghrebi Europeans within the Montréal social context and in particular in relation to both the European and the Maghrebi population inhabiting the city.

The third part more directly addresses the question of the pathways of incorporation carved out by Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal. It describes how Maghrebi French and Belgian persons navigate the city and its arrival infrastructures. Or, put differently, how newcomers deal with different types of networks in order to be able to build more durable forms of stability, in particular regarding their residence status. This part illustrates the diversity of different pathways followed by Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal, as well as the segmented dimension of such pathways often characterized by back and forth movement between Europe and Canada.

Finally, the fourth part focuses on the type of networks that are produced in Montréal by some of my Maghrebi European interlocutors. Here, I argue that beyond forms of identification related to ethnicity or national origin, class dimensions are also central in the way Maghrebi European navigate the city and contribute to produce and reproduce original arrival infrastructures.

5.1. Context of arrival: Regulatory and social infrastructure in Montréal

In this first section, I describe some elements of the social context within which young Maghrebi European find themselves when they arrive in Montréal, and that shape to some extent their capacity to convert some forms of capital and to build forms of stability in the city. I put a particular focus on what Xiang and Lindquist label as “regulatory” and “social” infrastructures. The first term relates to “state apparatus and procedures for documentation, licensing, training and other purposes” (Xiang and Lindquist 2014, 124). The notion of social infrastructure has been used in different ways in social sciences and in urban studies. It has been used to describe physical spaces (such as library, parks, sidewalks or schools for example) where “people can assemble” (Klinenberg 2018, 17) and that facilitate sociality and connections within groups (Latham and Layton 2019). Building on Simone’s (2004) proposition to extend the notion of infrastructure to the activities that people develop in a city, McFarlane and Silver (2017) define social infrastructure as “a practice of connecting people and things in socio-material relations that sustain urban life.” For Xiang and Lindquist (2014) social infrastructure is defined as one dimension of the migratory infrastructures that condition migration. It refers to migrants’ networks and their role in facilitating international mobility. Building on these different definitions, I use social infrastructure to refer to “complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons and practices” (Simone 2004, 408). In these complex combinations, I include things such as migrant associations, but also neighborhoods, restaurants and the more or less institutionalized networks of social relations that migrants create when arriving in the city and that help them to build forms of local stability. This rather broad definition allows me to focus

successively on different "layers" or dimensions of the context within which my interlocutors are navigating and to identify different dynamics that impact their possibility to stay and build forms of stability in Montréal.

5.1.1. Regulatory infrastructure: A situation of extended 'temporariness'

I already touched upon the procedures, regulations and administrative practices that contribute to channel and sort out migration candidates. In the following paragraphs, I address how the regulatory infrastructure also impacts the possibility for immigrants to build a stable situation in Montréal. Professional networks are central in the distribution of the possibility to stay. I would like to introduce this part with a description of informal conversations collected during a social event I attended to in Montréal.

> *In June 2016, I decided to go to a concert of IAM, a famous French rap band and one of the highlights of the 2016 Montréal Francopholies music festival. Before the concert, I contacted Nacim, who was also going to the event, and we decided to meet. During the evening, Nacim and I encountered different groups of people, many of whom we already knew. While we were socializing with these different persons, many of the discussions that we had this evening turned around the question of the immigration status and about the various possibilities to secure a stable position in the city.*
>
> *The first examples of such discussions happened just before I met Nacim at the public square where the concert was programmed. The crowd was building up and I saw Charlotte, a French woman from Paris, that I knew. Charlotte was with a group of friends and I decided to join them while I was waiting for Nacim. Progressively, other friends of Charlotte arrived and our group grew to about ten people, most of them between 25 and thirty years old and highly educated. In a very typical way, discussions about immigration statuses emerged as the members of our small group started to talk with each other. Near me, a friend of Charlotte welcomed a newcomers and immediately asked him if he was "on RP" (RP stands for* Résidence Permanente *or Permanent Residence in English). His interlocutor, a young man in his late twenties and wearing trendy clothes, explained that he was still on a 'post-diploma permit'. He added that he had however started the administrative process to obtain the permanent residence permit. Later in the conversation, this young man explained to me that applying for permanent residence did not mean that he wanted to stay in Québec but was rather a way for him to – according to him – "keep all the options open."*

A second example of discussion about immigrant status happened later in the evening. I had finally caught up with Nacim and we left Charlotte's group. After the concert, we joined one of Nacim's acquaintances instead: Hamza, a French IT worker of Tunisian origin who lived and worked in Montréal. As we headed for a fast food restaurant known of by Hamza, he started to question Nacim and I about immigration regulations regarding spouses. Hamza explained to us that he met a woman in France and that they would like to live together in Montréal. They were not married however and Hamza was wondering if and how she could join him in Canada. Because they never lived together in France, she could not be considered as his partner according to the Québec regulations. This would make the obtaining of a residence permit more difficult. Hamza explained that he thought that his girlfriend could come as a visitor for a few months, giving them some time to figure something out. Hamza then asked how they would manage to make her stay more than six months (the amount of time usually authorized for a visitor from France). Hamza answered that they could cross the Canadian-American border and immediately come back (an operation traditionally called 'tour du poteau' *among European immigrants in Montréal) in order to renew the visitor permit. At this point, Nacim strongly advised Hamza against this option, explaining that there was no guarantee that the visitor permit would be renewed and that the border officer could very well prevent her from re-entering Canada. After a few minutes of discussion, Nacim advised Hamza to contact a lawyer specialized in immigration. He mentioned a specific lawyer who was very active in French and Belgian Facebook groups.*

After a 10 minutes' walk, Nacim, Hamza and I arrived to the fast food restaurant we were looking for. It was a Halal restaurant on Rue Sainte Catherine, one of the main avenues of the city. Walking into the restaurant, we found a group of people that Nacim knew. They were men in their thirties, who mostly came from France, although one of them came from Belgium. As far as the conversation went, I understood that most of these men came from cités around several French big cities such as Paris or Lille. Many of them seemed to come from a Maghrebi background. After ordering our meal, we sat down outside the restaurant where the conversation continued. Once again, the question of migration status occupied an important part of the discussions. Nacim and I in particular were talking with Soan, a young man working as a sport trainer in the city. Here again, as was often the case during discussions between French immigrants in Montréal, the question of residence status came up. Soan explained to us that he was worried about his ability to stay in the country. At one

point, Nacim discreetly asked: "you are 'sans papiers' *aren't you?"*[56] *Soan nodded. Nacim then gave him some advice: "do not leave Montréal then!" He explained that Montréal was considered a 'sanctuary city', where the police did not control whether one had a valid residence permit or not. Hamza, joining the conversation, concluded that "you don't want to be checked [by the police] anyway."*

The question of residence status was a central element of the social interactions that I observed in Montréal. When two French or Belgian people were meeting in Montréal, one of the first question that one would typically ask would be something like "are you on RP (for permanent residence)?" or "are you on PVT (for working holiday visa)?" These were two of the many residence statuses that one could have in the city. The omnipresence of such questions during social interactions mirrored the fact that for many of the Maghrebi Europeans I met in Montréal, the question of their status was indeed often a crucial question. This was particularly true in a context in which, as I explained in chapter four, the typical immigration pattern promoted by the Québec institutions included temporary residence statuses as a first step in the obtaining of a more durable status. Migrants were expected to come first as temporary migrants, either as students, as temporary workers or as a beneficiary of an international mobility program and then, if they could demonstrate their value for the Québec economy, apply for a permanent residence permit and ultimately to the Canadian citizenship. In this way, the difficulty that many French and Belgian citizens had to face when they tried to move to Montréal was not so much to enter Québec than to be able to stay. The specific regulatory infrastructure that my interlocutors were experiencing very much illustrated a dynamic of "proliferation of borders" (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). This not only through a phenomena of border "externalization" (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015) but also through a dynamic of border 'internalization' in the sense that the channeling and sorting of immigrants – in terms of who was allowed to stay and who was only allowed for a limited amount of time – was a process that continued within the Canadian national borders.

In Montréal, the regulatory infrastructure operates as a factor of "differential inclusion" (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015, 79). As illustrated in the description above, it produced very different degrees of stability and instability and induced very different types of experiences depending on one's economic, social and cultural capital. At the time of my research, the program that allowed people to transform their temporary residence status into a permanent one was the Québec Experience Program (or PEQ) already introduced in chapter four. There were basically two pathways to

56 '*Sans papier*' (literally 'without paper') is a French expression to designate immigrants who do not hold a valid residence permit.

become eligible to the program. The first one was to study and obtain a diploma in Québec. The second pathway was to have a sufficient working experience in Québec.

At the time of my research the conditions for the latest pathways were, among others: having occupied a full time job during at least twelve months out of the 24 months preceding the application and still being employed in this job at the moment of the application. Many of the people I met were not able to comply with these criteria. For them, staying in Québec then required either to access another temporary status (as a temporary worker for example) or to start an application for permanent residence which, because of the processing time, often involved coming back to Europe for some time. Finally, some of my interlocutors, who did not fit within the selection criteria for the permanent residence, had to stay in the city without a valid residence status.

As illustrated by the description above, these regulations could be experienced in different ways depending on the migrant socio-professional situation in Montréal. For Charlotte's friend for example, graduated from a Montréal University, securing a permanent status in Québec was not perceived *per se* as something particularly stressful and/or crucial. Rather, as he put it himself, as a way to 'keep [his] options open' for the future. For Soan however, who did not comply with the administrative conditions to access permanent residence, things were more difficult and the intent was therefore not so much to 'keep options open' but rather to be able to stay in the absence of legal options.

On an every-day basis, for Soan and other interlocutors met in Montréal, the regulatory infrastructure governing the administrative stabilization of immigrant in Québec produced what De Genova (2002) describes as situations of "deportability' which refers not so much to the experience of deportation itself but rather to "the possibility of deportation, the possibility of being removed from the space of the nation-state." (Genova 2002, 439). Of course, this sense of deportability had an important impact on how people construct forms of stability in Montréal. Staying 'under the radar', far from police control was one aspect of it illustrated by Soan's conversation with Nacim. Another aspect was the actual impossibility of leaving Canada, out of the fear not to be able to enter again.

The situation of Charlottes' friend and of Soan can be seen as two extremes and – in a way – opposed scenarios. However, they share one element that was characteristic of the situation of most of the people I met in Montréal – whatever their aspirations in terms of long term residence: a condition of temporariness. The difference between the two was the possibility of transforming

such temporariness into a more permanent situation. The regulatory infrastructure contributed to the blurring of the normative distinction between migrants as being permanent or temporary. Indeed, the regulatory infrastructure governing the migration between Europe and Montréal very much contributed to make temporariness not the opposite of a permanent status but rather a preliminary stage in the selection of the immigrants. In a certain number of case, this period of temporariness could also persist – especially when people could not access better status – and resulted in forms of what Collins (2012) calls "permanent temporariness" or at least durable temporariness.

5.1.2. Social infrastructure: French, Belgian and Maghrebi infrastructures in Montréal

Migration laws and procedures are certainly an important aspect of arrival infrastructure. Yet, they are not the only element impacting the possibility for a migrant to build forms of stability in a city. When arriving in a city, immigrants typically need job opportunities, sources of information, places of socialization, and so on. Being able to access such resources is very often a condition for accessing more durable legal statuses. In this sense, many parts of the urban fabric can operate as an arrival infrastructure for migrants. Among others, neighborhoods, migrants' associations, churches and so one are places where migrants can access resources to build forms of social stability in the city. In the following paragraphs, I describe what I labeled earlier as social infrastructure. This refers to "complex combinations of objects, spaces, persons and practices" (Simone 2004, 408) including migrants' social network (Xiang and Lindquist 2014) built in the city. Traditionally, the types of arrival networks that have been extensively explored by social sciences are networks that are built on the basis of a shared national and/or cultural origin. In the following I present elements of context relative to the Maghrebi, French and Belgian populations in Montréal and to their impact on the city's social infrastructure.

At the time of my research, both French and Maghrebi populations were well represented in Montréal. According to the city authorities, in 2016, Montréal agglomeration counted 38 170 immigrants from France, 40 135 from Algeria, and 37 365 from Morocco living in the city (Ville de Montréal 2016a)[57] The Tunisian and Belgian populations were smaller, with roughly 12 000 immigrants born in Tunisia and 5700 immigrants born in Belgium living in Montréal area in 2016.[58]

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57 Note that this number does not include people living as temporary resident.
58 Source: Statistic Canada, 2016 census: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/index-fra.cfm Last access: 03/06/2020

French populations have a long history of migration in the Québec province since the establishment of a French colony in the region during the 16th century. During the 19th and the 20th century, Canada and the province of Québec in particular experienced different waves of French immigration that remained relatively modest before the second half of the 20th century (Penisson 1986). The first decades of the 2000s however is characterized by a significant increase of the French population in Montréal. From 2001 to 2016, the French population in the city went from roughly 24 000 to approximately 38 000 (Ville de Montréal 2017). In comparison the presence of immigrants from Maghrebi countries has been more recent. This immigration was encouraged by Québec authorities because of the high level of education of Maghrebi immigration candidates and because of their knowledge of the French language. Some authors asserted that the increase of Maghrebi immigration in Québec was fueled by the increasing closure of Europe – and in particular France – toward migrants (Ferhi 2013). For would-be emigrants in Maghrebi countries, Québec gradually became a desirable alternative destination. From 2001 to 2016, the Algerian population in Montréal tripled, going from roughly 13 000 to 40 000 peoples. In the same time span, the Moroccan population more than doubled, going from 16 000 in 2001 to 37 000 in 2016 (Ville de Montréal 2016a; 2017). At the time of the research, the French, Algerian and Moroccan populations were among top five populations living in Montréal together with Haitians and Italians (Ville de Montréal 2016a).

The various immigrant populations significantly shaped Montréal'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 organization 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 Montréal (Grosmaire 1983). Until 2015, the French State (through the French Office for Immigration and Integration) also had an office in Montréal providing information and administrative support to French immigrants. Comparatively recently, in 2012, the Moroccan government opened a cultural center called '*Dar Al Maghrib*' in Montréal. The center describes its mission as the promotion of Moroccan culture abroad and the facilitation of the integration of Moroccan citizens, while simultaneously providing a link with their country of origin. A similar cultural center called the '*Dar Ettounsi* Cultural Centre' was opened in Montréal in 2000 by the 'Office for Tunisians Abroad' (an organization of the Tunisian government). Many associations and cultural centers have also been created within the Algerian community, but as local initiatives rather than state sponsored projects (Khelfaoui 2006). Belgian associations were also present in Montréal with, for example,

a '*Cercle d'Affaire Belgique-Québec*' ('Belgium-Québec Business Circle') mainly oriented however toward economic activities and entrepreneurship.

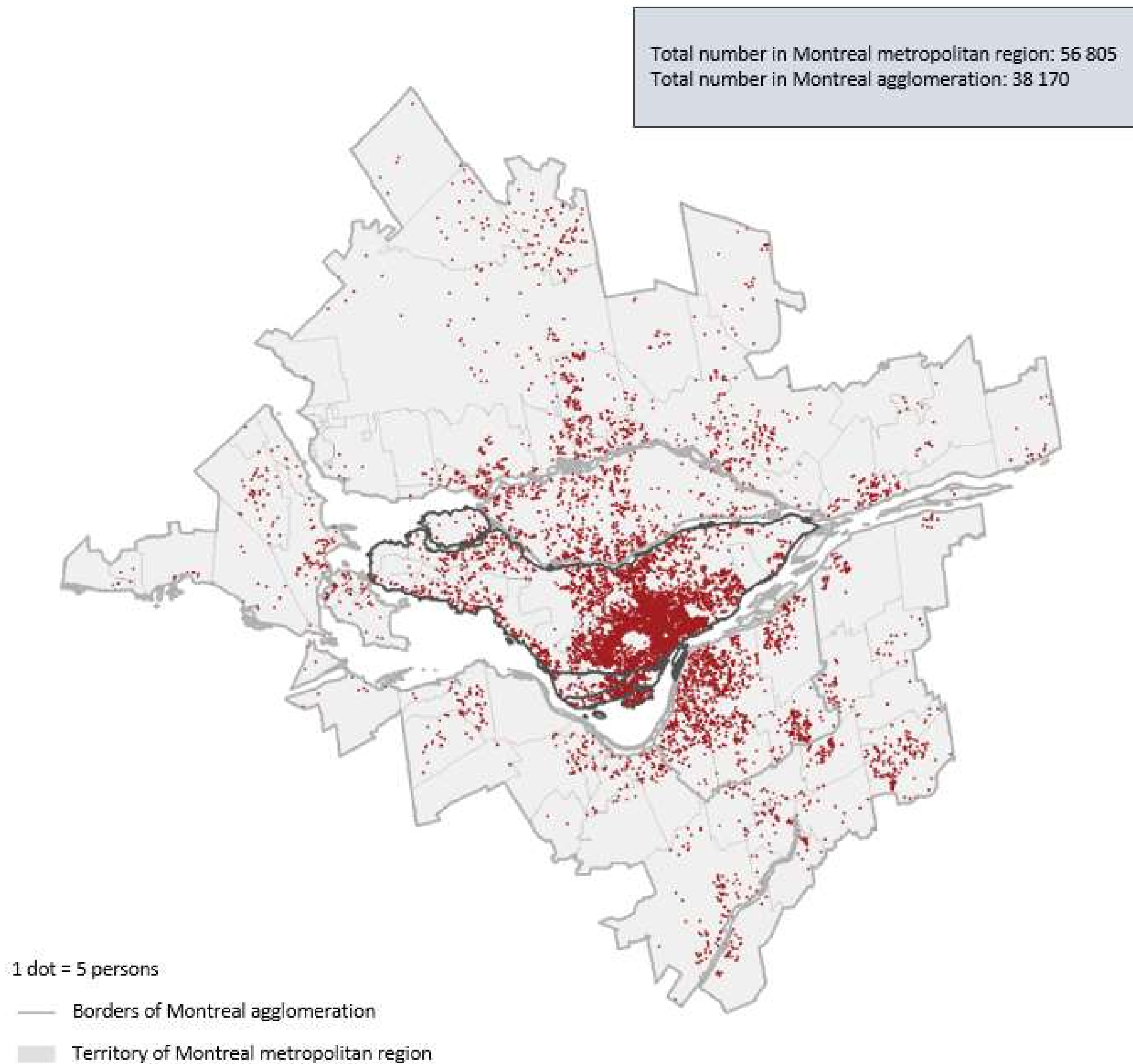
Different communities were also organized online. Many French, Belgians and Maghrebi immigrants used social media to build networks and to gain access to resources such as social contacts, administrative and/or legal information, job opportunities or accommodation. Various platforms were used such as forums, Facebook pages or Meetup groups. Some of these platforms were built on forms of categorization based on the origin of the migrants. For example, at the time of my research Facebook groups such as *Les Maghrebins du Canada* (Maghrebi in Montréal), *Belges à Montréal – Belgen in Montréal* (Belgians in Montréal spelled in French and in Flemish), *Jeunes Français à Montréal* (Young French in Montréal) were active. The title of some other groups included elements suggesting forms of categorization based on immigration status. For example, one of the Facebook groups that was popular at the time of my research was the group called *PVTistes à Montréal* (WHVers in Montréal) which was dedicated to the holders of working holiday visas in the city, thus including both French and Belgian people. This Facebook group was based on a pre-existing forum online called *pvtistes*, where working holiday visa holders could find information and communicate in numerous thematic forums of discussion. Finally, the title of other online groups suggested a form of categorization which included element of class. For example, one of the group that was active when I was in Montréal was called *Les expatriés français à Montréal* (French expatriates in Montréal). These are only a few examples of the many online groups where newcomers could find information, relations and resources to facilitate their incorporation in the city social fabric. It does not represent an exhaustive description of these groups. What I would like to emphasize however is that, as illustrated above, these groups where using different forms of categorization and identification that cannot be limited nor to ethnic forms of identification neither to identification based on the national origin for example.

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

While the French population in the city was in a certain extent spread across the Montréal metropolitan region, it was largely concentrated in the inner city. In 2016, the five districts with the larger French born population were: Le Plateau-Mont-Royal (6730 French people in 2016), Rosemont–La Petite-Patrie (5015), Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (4155), Ville-Marie (3410) and Mercier–Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (2660) (Ville de Montréal 2019). This

concentration in a few districts of the southern and eastern part of Montréal Island was even more pronounced for French newcomers.

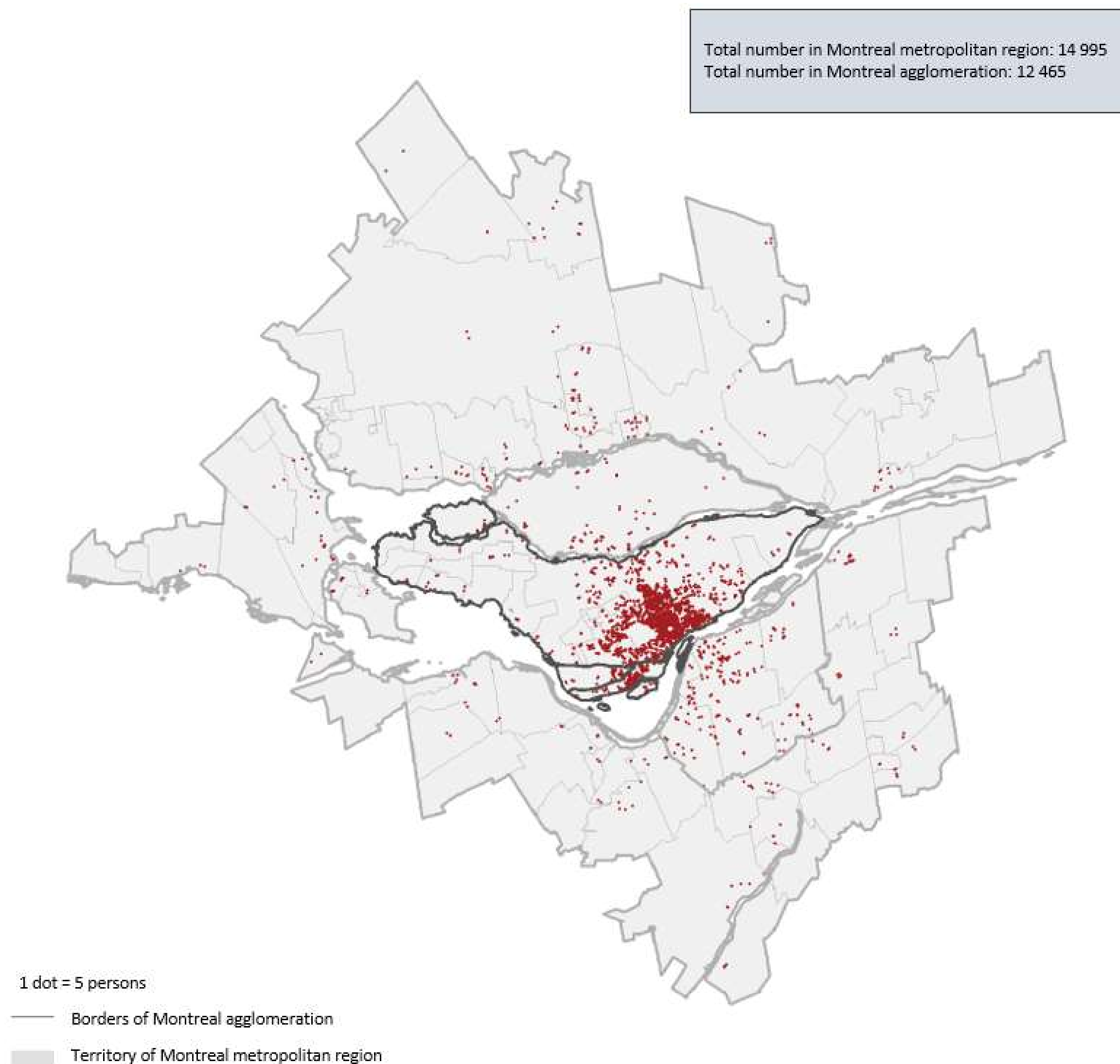
Spatial representation of immigrants born in France in the census metropolitan region of Montréal in 2016



Source: Statistic Canada, 2016 census (Reproduced from: Ville de Montréal 2019, 6) [59]

59 Maps reproduced with the authorization of the city of Montréal, Division de l'intelligence économique Service du développement économique. My translation of title and map legend from French.

Spatial representation of recent immigrants born in France in the census metropolitan region of Montréal in 2016



Source: Statistic Canada, 2016 census (Reproduced from: Ville de Montréal 2019, 8) [60]

The arrival of French skilled and educated professionals had an impact on the urban, cultural and even linguistic or acoustic landscape of the city. It also contributed to shape the social representation of certain district as being 'French' neighborhood. The most emblematic example of such social representation was the *Plateau-Mont-Royal* borough (usually referred to as *Le Plateau*). The concentration of French immigrants in this parts of the inner city resulted in the

60 Maps reproduced with the authorization of the city of Montréal, Division de l'intelligence économique Service du développement économique. My translation of title and map legend from French.

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 this borough – a neighborhood historically inhabited by Italian immigrants and today renowned for its high concentration of economically well-off French people – one could frequently recognize 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 was also identified as one of the most expensive neighborhoods in terms of housing. The high housing prices were routinely attributed to the economic power of the highly-educated French professionals working in the tertiary economy who settled in the area and contributed to driving the housing price upward.

Localization of Le Plateau-Mont-Royal and of Le Petit Maghreb in Montréal

Source: Wikimedia Commons, my modifications

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' ('*Le Petit Maghreb*' in French), a commercial neighborhood of Montréal, 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' originated 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 neighborhood in a context of social valorization of the cosmopolitan global city. Despite these efforts, 'Little Maghreb' continued to be identified as a dangerous place. Unlike *Le Plateau* described earlier, Little Maghreb was 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 Montréal was not available. However, general data seemed to suggest that immigrants from France and immigrants from Maghrebi countries faced unequal conditions in terms of integration in the job market. For example, in Canada, European immigrants suffered 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 (Allali 2010) (Statistics Canada 2018). For the region of Québec, statistics showed that while being comparatively more educated than the average Canadian-born population, immigrants from Morocco and Algeria experienced a much higher unemployment rate and received lower incomes when compared to the rest of the population (Allali 2010).

5.2. The social location of Maghrebi French and Belgians in the European and Maghrebi networks of Montréal

5.2.1. Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal: Searching for a non-existent community

In this section, I briefly introduce the relations of young Maghrebi Europeans with the arrival infrastructures described above, especially with the infrastructures organized around the national origin of the immigrant (i.e. the French, Belgian, and Maghrebi networks in Montréal). I do that by describing my first steps as an ethnographer in Montréal. More specifically, I describe how the exploration of places clearly identified as 'European' or 'Maghrebi' oriented did not provide me with the expected contacts with my focus group. I would argue that the difficulties experienced during my first approach as an ethnographer illustrate the ambiguous position that my interlocutors occupied in Montréal.

After a first period of fieldwork in France and in Belgium with people aspiring to emigrate, I arrived in Montréal in November 2015. I was carrying with me several contacts collected during the first interviews in Europe that I was hoping to meet once in Canada. I was also able to identify some possible interlocutors from various internet social platforms such as Facebook groups and

forums dedicated to immigrant groups living in Montréal. But I felt that these channels were not enough to provide me with a satisfying number of interlocutors. During my first months in the city I had the impression of actually struggling to find people to talked to, people who would fit my research focus as 'French' or 'Belgian' people 'of Maghrebi background.'

A first reason for this 'slow start', was the fact that the category 'French/Belgian of Maghrebi origin' did not always make sense for the people I met during my first weeks in Montréal. Many times I was directed either toward French interlocutors or toward immigrants from Maghrebi countries, but rarely toward my focus group. The short account that follows illustrates the type of discrepancy between the category I tried to use on the field and the every-day categorizations in effect in Montréal.

> *In November 2015, during my first weeks of fieldwork in Montréal, I went to a coffee bar located in the Plateau in order to buy seats for the show of a French-Algerian stand-up comedian living in Montréal. One of the co-owners of the coffee bar was Tunisian. When I arrived at the place, and after having asked for the tickets, I decided to present myself to one of the waiters, a Tunisian man in his 20s. I also presented my research project and I explained that I was studying French people of Maghrebi origin who moved to Montréal. I asked him if he knew places where I could find some people with this specific profile. The waiter asked me to clarify. He asked me if I was looking for French people or for Maghrebi people. I explained that I was looking for people of Maghrebi origin but who were born in France. My interlocutor looked a bit skeptical. He told me that he did not really see anybody with this profile among his acquaintances. He added that he knew a lot of people who came from Maghrebi countries but that they did not transit through France. At this stage, a client, a young man about twenty years old, stepped into the discussion. He told me that I should go to the Jean-Talon area where, according to him, some shops were run by Maghrebi people who had come from France. The waiter responded saying that some of these shop owners were certainly Maghrebi but did not come from France. The client insisted, "yes! Some of them are a little mixed up!" he told us. He insisted "Some arrived here [in Montréal] after living in France." He concluded by advising me to look in fast food restaurants in the Jean-Talon area.*

Social categorization can be defined as "the ordering of [the] social environment in terms of groupings of persons in a manner which makes sense to the individual. It helps to structure the causal understanding of the social environment and thus it helps as a guide for action" (Tajfel 1978, 61). This short exchange with the bar owner and his client illustrates the gap between my

research categories and the categorization practices used in Montréal. It also illustrates how Montréal's populations were categorized and also associated with different areas of the city. In the quote above, the waiter draws a clear distinction between two categories: French people and Maghrebi people. During my research, these two categories generally implied specific representations, French people being generally associated with whiteness. In the same way, these categorization practices also implied social representation associating "French" and "Maghrebi" populations with different areas of Montréal. The French population being regularly associated with the trendy and quite expensive area of *Le Plateau* and the Maghrebi population being regularly associated with the more popular area of *Jean-Talon*. Within these modes of categorization, the association between an element of European citizenship (French) with an element of non-European (or perceived as such) ethnicity (Maghrebi) was not necessarily understood.

The second reason for this slow start was the fact that the arrival infrastructures that I first explored did not provide me with a good number of interlocutors to interview. Arriving in Montréal, my first strategy after having reached the first contacts I had, was to explore the places and to go to events that appeared to me to have a clear link with either the French/Belgian community and/or the Maghrebi community. Put differently, I first tried to identify social infrastructures built on the national origin and/or the ethnicity that I considered the most relevant to find interlocutors at the time. I started by visiting regularly the neighborhood called the *Petit Maghreb* ('the Little Maghreb') mentioned in the previous section. I also took contact with the *Union Française*, a well-known French association in Montréal. Later in the research, I made contact with Belgian-oriented associations such as the *Cercle d'Affaire Belgique Québec* (Belgium-Québec Business Circle, or CABQ). I participated in several training sessions for immigrants provided by Montréal based associations and aimed at newcomers. By contacting and visiting such institutions and places, I was actually hoping to find a place where I would just have to 'hang around' (Whyte 1969) to meet and interact with the population I was supposed to study. My first attempts however, could hardly be considered as satisfactory, at least in terms of number of contacts collected during these visits. Despite many hours spent within the Petit Maghreb numerous coffee shops and repeated conversations with owners, waiters and customers, I was not able to meet Maghrebi French and Belgians. Contact with French and Belgian associations and multiple participation in their activities in Montréal did allow me to meet some young French and Belgian citizens of Maghrebi origins living in the city, but only very occasionally, and this despite me attending numerous events organized by these associations (including English courses, social events and business get-togethers). The same outcome came from my participation in the training sessions for immigrant newcomers. In other words, it seemed that only a few Maghrebi French

and Belgian were actually visiting these places which were clearly categorized along ethnic and/national origin forms of identification.

The point that I would like to raise here is that I progressively realized that the people I was looking for in Montréal did not form a community. To be sure, Maghrebi Europeans were incorporated in all sorts of communities, but what I want to say here is that I was not able to find such a thing as a Maghrebi European community in Montréal, that: a community that would have been constituted on the basis of its members being (or being recognized as) European and of Maghrebi origin. This first remark may appear very banal. Another interesting element however was that this slow start also taught me that rather than a predominant pathway of incorporation (through for example, the frequenting of French or Maghrebi oriented networks) French and Belgian citizens of Maghrebi origins followed a broad range of different pathways to carve out forms of stability in the city. Finally, I realized that among this diversity of pathways, many of them were actually carved out away from European and Maghrebi arrival infrastructures. Some of these pathways indeed involved French or Maghrebi oriented arrival infrastructures but also a great variety of social infrastructures not related with the country of origin. Very often indeed, I realized that some dimensions such as class where much more relevant to understand the pathways of incorporation followed by my interlocutors in Montréal. This is what I want to address in the following developments.

5.2.2. Origin, class, citizenship and the social location of Maghrebi Europeans within Europeans and Maghrebi populations in Montréal

In the previous sections, I have illustrated how it was difficult for me to find sufficient contacts while visiting French and Maghrebi arrival infrastructures in the city. This does not mean that I did not find any Maghrebi Europeans in such places, but rather that many of my interlocutors were carving out pathways of incorporation outside of these arrival infrastructures.

An important element to take into account in this dynamic is the way French and Belgian people of Maghrebi origin were actually recognized and socially categorized within such arrival infrastructures. A useful concept here is that of social location, understood as a “person’s position within the power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors” (Pessar and Mahler 2001, 6 cited in: Phillips and Potter 2006, 311). The idea here is to see how specific social dimensions (in the present case: origin, citizenship and class) impacts the location of young Maghrebi Europeans within Montréal

social context of arrival. In the following paragraphs, I focus on the social location of young Maghrebi Europeans in relation with the European and the Maghrebi population in Montréal.

Regarding relations with the French and Belgian populations, young Maghrebi Europeans often experienced paradoxical situations. On the one hand, indeed, leaving Europe was often the occasion to be finally recognized as French, especially when interacting with non-European people. On the other hand however, forms of social categorization based on ethnicity were often reproduced abroad within European networks. This was illustrated by a conversation I had in December 2015 with the staff of one of the French association of Montréal. Among my interlocutors, Adèle – a Franco-Beninese woman and Issam – a French man of Tunisian origin with a university degree in communication –told me about how they were identified as French when interacting with Quebecers.

> "Adèle: Oh it's funny because here I find a contrast between Canadians and… Between Quebecers and French people. Here, when a Quebecer asks me where I come from and I answer 'France', it stops here. A French person, when he asks this question and I answer 'France'…
>
> Issam: [completing Adèle sentence] 'Yes, but from which origin?'
>
> Adèle: … There is always this question: 'yes but really, where do you come from?' Yes, this symbolizes the difference between the Québec perception and the French perception."
>
> Field interview, 07/12/2015, Montréal

Shortly after, during the discussion, Issam who grew up in Nice, explained to me that the only times he experienced forms of discrimination in Montréal were during his work in the French association:

> "Issam: You know, I was really angry here at the [association]. The first time [since I moved to Canada] that I was really victim of discrimination was here, in these offices.
> […]
>
> Issam: OK, the first time, I was on the phone. A woman told me: 'can I talk with someone French.' I said: 'well I am French Madame.' And her: 'no but really want to talk with a French person.' I told her: 'well listen, I speak French, I am French.' And this person literally refused to talk to me.
> […]

Issam: And the second person was one of our members who insisted a lot for me to tell him were I was coming from. My name was not common for him well… OK. You also have old people, who just want to talk, or old school, well, when I tell them 'I am French,' [they ask] 'No but from where?' 'From Marseille', 'no, no but where do you come from? Your origins?'

Adèle: Yes…

Issam: Well I have origins but for me, in a professional setting, it doesn't concern you and… I have nothing to…

JM: Yes, you have nothing to…

Issam: It's just that it is strange, we are in [this French association] and most of the people when they came… Well Claire [an ex-member of the staff] is black, Adèle is Métis, I am Métis, they come: 'hello, am I at [the French association]?' So there is this type of awkwardness to… [Issam laughs] 'Really? There is no white people in this office?'"

Field interview, 07/12/2015, Montréal

Issam's experience of not being recognized as French when interacting with French immigrants in Montréal was shared by many of my interlocutors in the city. This type of situation did not only occur in immigrant associations but also – regularly – in the workplace, especially in companies where the number of French employees was important, such as the Québec branches of French companies. In chapter one, I briefly described how, for young people aspiring to emigrate, the European context of departure was saturated by forms of racial categorization that largely prevented them being recognized as part of the French and/or Belgian community, despite their own intimate identification as French or Belgian. The accounts of Adèle and Issam illustrate the fact that this form of racial categorization was very much alive within European networks in Montréal, thus reproducing modes of racialization within French immigrant communities.

For my interlocutors, interacting with Maghrebi immigrants in Montréal was not necessarily easier. Forms of social distinction also operated not so much on the basis of ethnicity but rather on the basis of class. During a barbecue organized by one of my contacts in Montréal, Brahim, an IT worker born and raised in Alger, shared with me his impression about France and its Maghrebi population:

"Brahim explains [regarding his emigration to Canada] that he wanted to avoid France at any cost. When I ask him why, he talks about his vacations in France and how he was

denied access to night clubs. He regrets the discrimination that he had to face. He also talks about 'social housing' and explains that he wanted to avoid living in such an environment, one that he negatively associates with rap music and crime (such as burned cars).

[Later in the evening, Brahim joins me and continues to talk to me about France and its Maghrebi population.]

Brahim mentions his relations with his cousins in France. He describes them – with a touch of contempt – as '*beurette*', as '*ouaich*'[61] and as 'rebels'. At this moment, he shows me a group of French guests talking not far from us and mostly composed of young Maghrebi French coming from the Parisian periphery. With a touch of irony in his voice, he tells me: "you see, if you want to see the *rebeu* clan, it's over there!" Brahim continues the discussion and criticize the religiosity of his French cousins and their complaints about the difficulty of practicing their religion in France. He also strongly criticizes the population of the banlieue and the criminality that he associates with it. From his point of view, he explains, this kind of behavior is not acceptable as France offers plenty of opportunities in terms of jobs and education. If he was living in a *banlieue* he explains, he would do anything to move and to put his children in a good school."

Fieldnotes, 30/04/2016, Montréal

Brahim's description of the Maghrebi population in France illustrates forms of social distinction that I regularly encountered in Montréal and that were characterized – as in the quote above – by the categorization of young Maghrebi Europeans as '*beurs*' or '*rebeux*'. In France, the word r*ebeu* is frequently used to designate the children of Maghrebi immigrants. It is a reversal (verlan) of the word *beur* which is itself a reversal and a contraction of the word *arabe* (Arab). Categories such as *beur* (or its feminine *beurette*) or *rebeu* do not only refer to the ethnicity or the cultural origin of a person. They also carry specific representations in terms of class and are usually associated with the stereotypical figure of the young thug from the French *banlieue* and with images of urban criminality as illustrated by the quote from Brahim.

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61 *Ouaich* is a slang word for 'yes.' In France, it is frequently associated with the working class youth of the *banlieue*. The expression '*ouaich*' or '*ouaich-ouaich*' is sometimes used directly to designate a young person (often working class and of migrant origin) living in the *banlieue*.

Brahim's devalorization of the figure of the *rebeu* needs to be contextualized within the complex and paradoxical distribution of powers and privileges within Québec society. Indeed, when compared to immigrants coming from Maghrebi countries, my French and Belgian interlocutors holding French and Belgian passports were relatively privileged, at least in terms of access to visas and residence statuses. As described in the previous chapters, French and Belgian citizens have access to several international mobility programs for Canada as well as visa exemptions (e.g. for entering Canada as a visitor) that do not exist for Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian citizens. At the time of my fieldwork, French citizens and French speaking Belgian citizens were also exempted from the additional university registration fees normally applied for international students, which represent a substantial difference with Maghrebi immigrants.[62] Exemption was also available for citizens coming from Maghrebi countries, but only for a fixed quota of students. This relatively privileged position of Maghrebi French and Belgians over Maghrebi immigrants, due to citizenship and passport, was very often in contradiction to the class position of my interlocutors. For example, due to the active selection policy of the Québec government, the Maghrebi population in the region was characterized by a high level of education (Ferhi 2013). This was a level of education that, according to the available statistics, seems to be comparable with that of the French immigrants in Québec (Benzacour 2014). Put differently, in their relation with Maghrebi populations in Montréal, young Maghrebi French and Belgians often found themselves in a paradoxical situation of being at the same time relatively privileged as holder of a European passports but also contested in their status of 'good immigrants' by Maghrebi newcomers, often highly educated and coming from a middle class background. In many ways, the distinction between *beurs* and Maghrebi immigrants in Montréal echoes the complex relations between the children of Maghrebi immigrants and most recent Maghrebi immigration in France where different types of credentials (for example citizenship vs. diplomas) are regularly used to contest and/or claim the legitimacy of one population or the other (Schiff 2015). In France, the categorization of the French children of Maghrebi immigrants as *rebeu* was often echoed by the categorization of the Maghrebi immigrants as '*blédards*'. The term *blédard* usually designated a person born in a Maghrebi country and who either still live in their country of birth or who immigrated to France. In contrast with the category *rebeu*, it designated a person coming from the country of origin. The term *rebeu* also carried a negative dimension associated with a stereotypical idea of ruralness regardless of the actual (rural of urban) origin of the person categorized as such (Schiff 2015). During an interview, Leila – who I introduced in section 1.2. -

62 See for example the website of the University of Montreal https://registraire.umontreal.ca/droits-de-scolarite/couts/ Last access: 21/11/2019

and I were discussing the relations between Maghrebi French and Maghrebi people in Montréal when I asked her about her use of the word *beur*:

> "Leila: So someone who studied in Algeria, it is someone who… He is doing well you see. So [in Montréal] it not the same immigration at all. Then, these are people… I think it is interesting for your research, they are people who don't even want to consider [going to] France. They don't even think about it! Because they see the youngsters from the *banlieue*, they see… They tell themselves that they don't want [to go in France].
>
> JM: OK. You spoke about it with your friends [here in Montréal]?
>
> Leila: A lot of them don't like the *beurs*, because they see that the mentalities are not the same, this is for sure. But me, they tell that I am different so it is OK. But the Arab from the *cités*…
>
> JM: OK, it is a thing that…
>
> Leila: People from [Maghreb] don't like that.
>
> JM: People told me about this, '*les beurs*.' So it is a term that you found [in Montréal] too? People use it with you sometimes?
>
> Leila: *Beur*?
>
> JM: Yes *beur*.
>
> Leila [laughing]: Only the *blédards* use this. If we speak about *beurs*, we should speak about *blédards*. This is the people from the *bled* who have this image of the *beur*."
>
> Field interview, 22/03/2016, Montréal

The quote illustrates how, in Montréal, the social distinction between *beurs* and *blédards* happened in a specific configuration of social hierarchies characterized by a relatively high class background of the Maghrebi population when compared with the working class origin of many of my Maghrebi European interlocutors. In this context, if I frequently heard the terms *beur* and *rebeu* used as a way to carry negative representations of Maghrebi French, the term *blédard* was used in a rather limited way and often removed from its symbolic violence given the asymmetrical class relations that regularly existed between my interlocutors and Maghrebi immigrants in Montréal.

For many of my interlocutors, especially those coming from a working class family, Maghrebi populations and networks in Montréal were often perceived as coming from a very different (higher) class background. During a discussion, with Abbas (a French man of Algerian origin) and Hana (a Belgian woman of Moroccan origin) who were living together in Montréal, Hana described to me the difference that she perceived between the Maghrebi European population living in the city and the immigrants coming from Maghrebi countries:

> "Hana: It is not the same migration. It is… I know because I have a cousin here. Not a close relative though…
>
> JM: OK. He comes from Morocco right?
>
> Hana: Yes from Morocco. I am telling you, his father, it is money, money, money. He is a scientist who travels the world and his children studied abroad and he had like six children. Sometimes, three were studying in France at the same time! You know. Look, my parents, they did not pay for my study! I paid all by myself! My travels: by myself. OK sometimes they helped me a little… They even helped a lot but they didn't pay for all of it. You see, it is not the same reality. When they are wealthy, they are wealthy."

Field interview, 08/02/2016, Montréal

Hana's father was a streetcar driver and her mother worked in a fish shop. She grew up in Brussels and obtained a university degree in specialized education. Abbas' father was a mechanic in a car factory and his mother worked for the city council and was also involved in local politics. He grew up in Aubervilliers, a city of the northern suburbs of Paris and obtained a technical degree in management. They were both self-employed when I met them in Montréal. The idea expressed by Hana that the Maghrebi and the Maghrebi European populations in Montréal were 'not the same', or were not sharing the 'same reality', regularly emerged in the interviews I made in Montréal. Hana's account of her relations (or rather lack of) with Maghrebi immigrants coming from higher classes echoes Fortin's (2002) observation about the social ties of French and Maghrebi immigrants in Montréal. Ties that – according to Fortin – are strongly intra-class.

In Montréal, Maghrebi Europeans appeared as if they were in a situation of inbetweenness, navigating different types of hierarchies of class, race and immigrant status. The question that I address in the following paragraphs regards the way my interlocutors dealt with such a specific social context in Montréal.

5.3. Navigating Montréal society: Carving out forms of stability through a diversity of pathways of incorporation

In the first section of this chapter, I gave some elements of the regulatory and social infrastructures that young Maghrebi Europeans had to deal with when arriving in Montréal. In the second section, I explored further the specific social location that my interlocutors occupied in the city, in particular regarding the European and the Maghrebi populations. In this third section, I explore the different pathways that my interlocutors carved out in order to build forms of stability in Montréal. More specifically, I focus on the interaction between the regulatory dimension (i.e. the access – or not – to a stable administrative status) and the social dimension (i.e. what are the types of social infrastructures that are involved in the building of such forms of stability?). I do so by presenting three cases of pathways of incorporation selected from my corpus of data. The three cases were not chosen to provide a statistically representative picture of the different pathways of incorporation that I encountered during my research. They rather illustrate the diversity of such pathways as well as the diversity of "infrastructuring practices" (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019) involved. In this context, these cases have been selected as examples of different ways in which various types of capital are converted into modes of incorporation. They are also example of how different dimensions of socio-professional status, ethnicity and class are involved in the building of forms of regulatory and social stability.

5.3.1. Building forms of stability through a diversity of pathways of incorporation: Karim, Zineb and Ilian

Karim: Educational capital and the centrality of professional and nationality based infrastructures in the process of incorporation

> *Karim was 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 Master degree in political 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 results 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 Montréal for five years. He first arrived in Montréal 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 Montréal by one year through the Working Holiday program. He began temporary work for a French association in Montréal. Through his work and through the networks of French working holiday visa 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 Montréal, 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 Québec 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 Montréal. Indeed, Karim frequently described to me the hard work he put into his different jobs and the recognition he progressively gained in his field. Also, he proudly described to me the evolution of his professional income 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 Montréal, his professional experience also allowed him to get fast-tracked for obtaining permanent resident permit.

Karim's professional activity also appeared 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 Montréal came 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 Montréal even if – as he put it himself during one of our conversation – the temporary stay of many French people in Montréal 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 Québec administration's criteria, as described in the first part of this chapter, Karim was an 'ideal' migrant. He was a French speaker, he had a Master's degree from a French university, and he was young. Furthermore, his previous experience as a temporary trainee and worker in Montréal fitted in with the current orientation of Québec immigration policy favoring temporary work contracts as a first step to access permanent

residence. Karim also internalized 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.

Karim's incorporation in Montréal was built on a variety of social infrastructures including a French association, a soccer team but also on the informal networks that he built in his workplace. The case of Karim illustrates the importance of transferable and convertible educational and professional capital to build forms of social and regulatory stability in Montréal. In this case, Karim was able to convert this capital into forms of stability through both French oriented infrastructures (which allowed him to find his first temporary job) and his successive working places. The account above also illustrates the importance of the working environment as social arrival infrastructure, a point that has been described by other authors (Fortin 2002). Indeed, an important part of Karim's network of social relations was built through the relations he made in his job.

Zineb: Segmented migrations and social incorporation outside of the French and Maghrebi social networks

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 such as a 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 did not explain further the reasons that pushed her to leave, she was attracted to Montréal because of the relative accessibility of residence permits in Québec and also because of the French-speaking dimension of Montréal 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 eighteen months, she engaged in a second Master's degree and worked for a while in an IT company in France. She finally arrived in Montréal in 2012 with a permanent residence permit.

Unlike Karim, however, Zineb's professional integration was not exactly easy. Indeed, her first work in Montréal 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 Montréal. 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. Zineb experienced discomfort in these jobs as 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 Montréal among the French community, Zineb explained to me that she tried to avoid such networks. All too often she felt that she was reduced to identities that she did not consider relevant for her:

> *"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."*
>
> *Field interview, 15/03/2016, Montréal*

It is interesting to note that Zineb's effort to escape ethnic categorizations also translates into placing some distance between herself and both the French and the Maghrebi population in

Montréal. Zineb mainly built her social network in Montréal by interacting with other international immigrants who had come from different countries.

Just like Karim, Zineb arrived in Montréal with cultural capital (her university degree) that was highly valued in Canada. Despite that however, her pathway of incorporation appears to be a lot less linear than Karim's pathway; much more 'segmented' in a way. The case of Zineb indeed illustrates the difficulty that newcomers could experience in the conversion of their cultural capital into a stable socio-economic position in Montréal. One of the typical requirements for this transferability was for example to be ready to accept to work at a lower level as compared with one could accept given his level of qualification. As the case of Zineb shows, one of the conversion strategies that was sometimes used by my interlocutors was to follow additional training in Canada. This of course required resources such as economic capital and time, things which were not available to all of my interlocutors.

Zineb's pathway was also characterized by her avoidance of French and Maghrebi networks in the city and by her effort to build informal social infrastructures outside of these networks.

Ilian: Conversion of social and cultural capital through class-based arrival infrastructures

> *Unlike Karim and Zineb, Ilian was not settled long-term in Montréal. I met him first in Paris. He lived in Charenton, a district of the southeastern suburbs of Paris. At that time, he was just returning from Montréal where he had stayed for a few months and was actively trying to get back to Québec. 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 Montréal 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, he 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 Montréal 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 Montréal, 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."*

Field interview, 29/06/2016, 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 Montréal 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 Montréal, 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 neighborhoods 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 Montréal.*

In many ways, the case of Ilian appeared as relatively different from the cases of Karim in Zineb. One dimension of this difference is that, contrary to the latest, Ilian's cultural capital was less valued in the Montréal societal context of immigration. Indeed, without a tertiary degree, it was difficult for him to convert his capital into forms of stability through the classic regulatory infrastructures, mainly because he did not fit the Québec criteria of the good immigrant. A central element however, was how Ilian managed to convert some of his social and cultural capital through alternative arrival infrastructures, namely: networks of social and professional relations built around urban class forms of identification and recognition. I further develop this point in the last section of this chapter.

5.3.2. Incorporation in Montréal as a form of sedimentation

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 Montréal. The first element relates to the temporal dimension of such integration. Indeed, due to the specific structuring of immigration possibilities in Québec, as described in the first section of this chapter, many of the people I met in Montréal who had 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). 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. The example of Zineb was quite illustrative here. Before moving to Montréal with a permanent residence visa, she lived in Toronto as a working holiday visa holder and then returned to France for eighteen months.

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 Montréal were temporarily going back to France with the firm idea to return to Québec, 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 Montréal. In a more general sense, rather than a clear desire to settle in Montréal, 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 […].”
>
> Field interview, 15/03/2016, Montréal

The process of integration in Montréal was characterized by 1) a non-linear aspect to migration, 2) the sometimes unclear perspective of the future and 3) 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 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 locality, 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 migration infrastructures, play an important role in deciding who can access certain networks and who cannot. In the case of French and Belgian citizens with the right professional skills and education, this process of sedimentation is supported, while for people who do not exactly fit with the Québec figure of the ‘good’ migrant (like Ilian for example) the available opportunities for durable settlement can be much harder to reach.

Looking at the different pathways developed by young French and Belgian people of Maghrebi origin also showed the diversity of social infrastructures playing a role in their incorporation in Montréal and allowing them to convert different forms of capital. The workplace, French associations, sport group, informal groups of friends and acquaintances and a restaurant were some of these social infrastructures. These social infrastructures were not only organized around ethnic and/or national forms of identification. Karim built an important part of his integration in Montréal using French-oriented social infrastructures that allowed him to initiate a successful professional integration in the city mainly through the conversion of his cultural capital (diploma) and his social capital (social network) into upward professional mobility. Zineb, on the other hand, actively tried to avoid both French-oriented and Maghrebi-oriented places and networks because of her discomfort with the constant categorization as ‘Muslim’ or ‘Maghrebi’ that she faced in such networks. Instead, her incorporation in Montréal was built on informal social

infrastructure connecting her with other immigrants from different countries. Ilian's pathway of integration goes beyond the traditional division between communities such as 'French' and 'Maghrebi.' The social relationships that Ilian engaged with in Montréal were not based on ethnicity *per se,* but rather on a form of urban belonging strongly connected with class characteristics. The identification of Ilian with a specific urban context (the 94 and the Parisian *cités*) allowed him to navigate social infrastructures in Montréal and to access resources (such as a place to live and a job) to facilitate his stay in the city. The case of Ilian illustrates how alternative forms of cultural capital (his familiarity with the references and codes of the French cité and especially his cité of origin) allowed people to access networks and resources in the city. During my fieldwork, Ilian was not the only person I met who relied on such social infrastructures based on urban and class-based forms of identification. To a certain extent, the existence of such a social infrastructure in Montréal 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 interlocutors explained to me during a discussion, in Montréal one can easily find both the upper middle class of Paris and the "bad boys in sweatpants and sports shoes [from the *cités*]".

5.4. Remaking Frenchness: Urban culture and class as a basis for infrastructuring practices

In the previous sections, I have mainly described how Maghrebi European moving to Montréal dealt with existing regulatory and social infrastructures to progressively incorporate into the city social fabric. I have emphasized the diversity of pathways carved out in order to achieve such incorporation and the diversity of networks (professional, nationality based and class based for example) involved in these pathways. However, migrating somewhere is not only about dealing with fixed and pre-existing social contexts. Migrations also involve a creative dimension and the production of new networks of sociability, of new arrival infrastructures. That is what I want to address in the last part of this chapter. I would like to focus more on the "infrastructuring practices" (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019, 2) of my Maghrebi Europeans interlocutors in Montréal. During my research, I encountered different networks within which Maghrebi Europeans were involved. Two were particularly important for my research. One was organized around a number of coffee shops and restaurants of the trendy neighborhood *Le Plateau* in Montréal. This network was largely multicultural and included Maghrebi Europeans, people from Maghreb and many other people of diverse origins. The people I met in this network were often highly educated and shared the cultural and consumption practices of the local francophone

middle class. Another network of social relations was organized around people coming mainly from French *cités* and sharing many references to the French urban working class. In both networks, the element of class appeared as rather central in the way people were interacting. In the following sections, I mainly focus on the description of the second network. Therefore, the last part of this chapter does not provide a complete overview of all the networks I explored. However, it gives a good description of the way different forms of cultural capital (in this case the cultural capital associated with the *cité*) were used in the production of new arrival infrastructures.

5.4.1. From the *cité* to Montréal: Building up informal transnational migration infrastructures

Ilian's example described just above illustrates how the identification with the French urban working class youth actually provided some of my interlocutors with access to specific social networks of solidarity, enhancing their social capital and their chances to build forms of stability in the city. These social networks very much constituted – at the time of my presence in Montréal – arrival infrastructures in the making in the sense that they worked as "platforms of arrival and take-off" (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019, 2) for many of the interlocutors I met in Montréal while still being relatively weakly institutionalized. Abbas, a French man of Algerian origin who grew up in Aubervilliers, a city in the northern suburbs of Paris, and whom I introduced in section 5.2.2., explained to me his relations with his friends and acquaintances in France since he arrived in Montréal:

> "Abbas: They are identifying me with Québec and Montréal.
>
> JM: Yes OK. But they often call you? You told me that people were calling you [when they were coming in Montréal] but does this happen two or three times or every month to tell you 'Oh, I'm coming in Montréal'?
>
> Abbas: Honestly, this year, at least five or ten times.
>
> JM: OK yes. And who calls you? Friends?
>
> Abbas: It's Facebook messages. For example, Mira last time sent me someone… her brother who is an entrepreneur and who wanted to do something in Québec. The other day who was it..
>
> […]

Abbas: It was the OFQJ [French-Québec Office for Youth – ed.]. We work a lot with the OFQJ. [imitating the OFQJ interlocutor] 'Oh, we have a young man who comes from the 93'… It was Fouad, that's how we met. [Coming back imitating the OFQJ worker] 'Well, he is in Montréal, could you help him or orient him, he is a good young fellow, dynamic' and so one and so forth. It all about 'Hey look, I want to emigrate in Canada, what should I do to come here?'"

Field interview, 08/02/2016, Montréal

Abbas arrived in Montréal in 2007 after growing up in a working class *cité* in Aubervilliers. He met his wife, Hana – a Belgian woman of Moroccan origin – in Montréal. Together, they founded an association which, among other projects, developed youth exchanges with France. Aside from their activity as an association, the quote above illustrates how Abbas was involved in informal networks of social relations that kept him in touch with his acquaintances from his *cité* of origin in France. Living in Montréal, he also provided support, information and advice to would-be emigrants at home and to newcomers coming from his *cité* of origin in Montréal.

During my research in Montréal, I met many of my interlocutors through such informal networks of social relations. Indeed, in contrast with formal events organized by Europeans and/or Maghrebi immigrant organizations, the events where I met most Maghrebi European people were often informal social events such as the parties regularly organized by Nacim who I presented in chapter three and who also grew up the Parisian region. Within the group of acquaintances that Nacim built in Montréal, many people are – like himself – French people with a Maghrebi background. As Nacim explained to me many times, his group of friends is also characterized by a relatively high turnover of members depending on their capacity or will to stay in Montréal. Some of them were living in Montréal for several years, whilst others had just arrived in the city. This informal and constantly changing network of social relations was also characterized by the occasional exchange of solidarity practices including – for example – housing a newcomer for several days, giving information, tips and advice, or simply providing encouragement or emotional support when needed. In this sense, the group built around Nacim echoes what Boost and Oosterlynck (2019, 158) call a "soft arrival infrastructure" that they define as "the local and extra-local social networks that affect migrants' experiences at their place of arrival, by providing them with emotional, informational and instrumental support in both every day and crisis situations." While many of the members of this group of acquaintances were French people and had a Maghrebi background, it is interesting to note that rather than cultural origins, the mode of identification that was stronger within the group was based on urban class elements such as the belonging to a *cité*. Of course, the 'soft' infrastructure, organized around a common identification

with the French *cités*, was not the only platform of arrival that I encountered in Montréal. The element of class however was often a central dimension in these infrastructure practices.

The type of arrival infrastructure that I just described was largely informal. During my fieldwork however, I also encountered other places that worked as arrival infrastructures, and that also relied heavily on forms of identification with the French urban working class of the *cité*. These places were several fast-food restaurants similar to the restaurant that employed Ilian during his time in Montréal. These places were typically run by French immigrants living in the city for a long time and who often came from working class urban areas. During my research in Montréal, I regularly went to such restaurants where I met several of my Maghrebi French interlocutors. For some of them, including Ilian, the restaurant was a strategic place in the sense that it provided him with a job during his stay in Montréal and to access networks of social relations with whom he could identify. Finally, as potential employers, these restaurants were also potential facilitators in the obtaining of a worker visa. These restaurants also constituted an arrival infrastructure in the sense that they sometimes worked as platform of conversion of social and cultural capital (in the case of Ilian, the social and cultural capital associated with the French *cité*) into economic and mobility capital (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004b).

5.4.2. Redefining Frenchness? Branding the culture of the *cité* in Montréal

What did the immigration of young Maghrebi European do to Montréal? As we saw with the previous description of pathways of incorporation and infrastructuring practices, migration and incorporation is not only about adapting to a static social context. It is also about creating something new: new networks of solidarity, new types of social networks and new strategies of incorporation. In the last section of this chapter, I would like to address how the infrastructuring practices described above also went together with a renegotiation of the characteristics associated with 'Frenchness' and French culture in Montréal. I do that by briefly describing two examples from my fieldwork: the examples of the fast food restaurants mentioned in the previous developments and a party event organized while I was in Montréal.

I have already described how some informal (like the networks of social relations) and more formal (such as the fast food restaurants) were used by some of my Maghrebi European interlocutors as platform of conversion of social and cultural capital into forms of stability. These forms of infrastructuring practices also contributed to produce a renegotiation of Frenchness in Montréal by building on the cultural capital associated with the French urban working class, including the French working class of the *cités*.

A good example of this dynamic of renegotiation of Frenchness were the fast food restaurants I mentioned above. During my fieldwork, I counted several of these restaurants in Montréal, located in different parts of the city. The example below is a restaurant located in a part of the Jean-Talon neighborhood and named the Päname. The following quote came from the presentation of the restaurant displayed on the website of Yellow Pages Canada, where the restaurant is referenced:

> **"The diverse flavours of Paris come to Montréal**
>
> For those looking for a great range of reasonably priced flavours that can satisfy even the largest of appetites, **Päname Sandwicherie** is the perfect choice. Introducing a unique concept to the area, **Päname**'s fresh, healthy approach to the diverse street food of Paris also represents its multicultural influences.
>
> Explaining the name of the restaurant, Hakim, one of **Päname**'s three enthusiastic owners, describes how the soccer-playing youths of the Paris suburbs often speak in *verlan*, a coded language invented so as not to give away their secrets. **Päname**, appropriately, is the special term used for Paris.
>
> So why this particular name? According to Hakim, the nod to Parisian suburban culture reflects the backgrounds of the three partners as well as the origins of all of **Päname**'s mouth-watering recipes."[63]

As mentioned in the quote above, the name of the restaurant, created in 2014 by two young men who came from the Parisian *banlieue*, is a direct reference to Paris. More specifically, it is a reference to the *verlan*, a language based on the inversion of syllables that was popular among young, working class and often immigrant origin French people from the Paris popular neighborhood and *cité*. The Päname was not the only example of such restaurant. Situated on Sainte Catherine street – one of Montréal's main streets, busy with big shopping stores and restaurant franchises – the fast food restaurant *Le Parisien* also displayed an explicit reference to the French capital in his name. Created by a French man coming from the periphery of Paris who studied in Montréal, it displayed similar references to the working class culture of the capital city. The logo of the restaurant, presenting a stylized version of the Eiffel tour drawn within a circle, is

63 http://www.yellowpages.ca/bio/Quebec/Montreal/Paname-Sandwicherie/100837932.html
Last access: 03/06/2020

a direct reference to the Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) soccer team. On the restaurant's menu, the different sandwiches were named after emblematic neighborhoods of Paris. The menu included references to internationally renowned sites such as *Le Louvre*, *La Tour Eiffel* or *Notre Dame*. It also included names of much more working class and immigrant neighborhoods such as *La Goutte d'Or* or *La Chapelle*. One of the sandwich was named *La Banlieue*.

Menu of the restaurant *Le Parisien* June 2016, Montréal

Similar references to the French, working class urban youth – from which many of my European Maghrebi interlocutors came from – were displayed during a party event organized in a bar on Saint-Laurent street. I learned about the event through online social media when a French woman from Paris whom I met in Montréal shared the announcement of the event with me. A few days later, one of my main interlocutors in Montréal, Nacim, told me about the event and invited me to come with him. The place was located in a trendy neighborhood of Montréal well known by many city middle class inhabitants and characterized by a high concentration of coffee shops, bars, restaurants and night clubs. Here again, cultural references to the French urban working class youth of the *cité* were explicit as illustrated by the banner of the event published on social media:

Source: Published on Facebook, last visit 21/06/2017

The sport shoes and the training pants worn by the two models in the picture are representative of the streetwear typically associated with the population of the French working class *cités*. The name of the event "*Nike Ta Mère*" (literally 'Nike Your Mother')[64] is a double reference to the famous brand of sportswear typically associated with the tastes of the population mentioned above and to the name of a famous French rap band NTM. When Nacim and I arrived at the event, we discovered a lounge bar where a DJ played famous French rap music as well as tunes typically associated with the *banlieue*.

The examples mentioned above were just two examples of re-negotiation of how French culture was represented in the city of Montréal. Indeed, beyond the presence of traditional French bakeries and restaurants, part of French culture was also celebrated through events explicitly referring to this urban culture of the *cité*.

64 In French popular language '*nique*' means 'fuck'.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the question of the integration of French and Belgian immigrants of Maghrebi origin in the social fabric of Montréal. I addressed this question in relation to specific dimensions of the city arrival infrastructure: the regulatory context producing forms of extended temporariness and the immigration context characterized by the presence of both an important French population and an important Maghrebi population in the city. Within this context I argued that my Maghrebi European interlocutors were not forming a community *per se*. Their relation with both the European and the Maghrebi population in Montréal was characterized by a form of ambiguous position. Indeed, while facing forms of discrimination from the French population, my interlocutors also very often experienced a form of class categorization when interacting with members of the Maghrebi community.

Hence, when it comes to the incorporation of Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal, I showed that this incorporation was pursued through a great diversity of pathways involving equally diverse attitudes toward French and Maghrebi populations in the city. More fundamentally, this broad diversity also reflects the different forms of capital (economic, social and cultural) that are possessed by newcomers and the different modes of conversion that are put in place – through specific arrival infrastructures – to build local forms of regulatory and social stability. This process of conversion, which appear quite straightforward for people possessing the right sets of skills and qualifications, might involve more creative strategies for people with less valued forms of capital.

This diversity in pathways of incorporation encountered in Montréal also involves a diversity of infrastructuring practices, building on alternative forms of social and cultural capital such as those associated with the French urban working class. By bringing up these elements, the chapter gave further attention to migrants' agency in navigating and eventually shaping arrival infrastructures. This is not of course to deny the crucial importance of national and international institutions in shaping people's incorporation in the place of destination. However, it suggests forms of "autonomy" (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013) or "excess" (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; Mezzadra 2016) in migration that are a core component of the conceptualization of arrival infrastructures (Meeus, Van Heur, and Arnaut 2019). The ideas of autonomy and excess of migration refer to the "persistent turbulence, autonomy and stubbornness of migration, its ungovernable moments of freedom and excess" (Mezzadra 2016, 36). The several cases described in this chapter echo Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013, 184) suggestion to "see migration not simply as a response to political and economic necessities, but as a constituent force in the

formation of polity and social life." Of course, national regulations and local context remain a central element in the distribution of the opportunity for the migrants to build form of stability in the city of arrival. However, has illustrated by the different elements presented in this chapter, European Maghrebi arriving in Montréal also represent a constituent force in the production of Montréal urban society.

Chapter 6. Stuck again in Montréal? Perception of the future between new hopes and the limits of Canadian openness[65]

In chapter one, I addressed how combinations of class, origin and religion markers contributed – in the French and Belgium context – to the development of a bleak perspective for the future, encouraging people to project their aspirations for upward social mobility abroad. In dialogue with this first chapter, I now describe how these dimensions of class, origin and religion are combined in the context of Montréal and how (and to what extent) this combination produces new configurations of hope (Hage 2003) and therefore new aspirations. I address the nexus between Maghrebi European migrants' aspirations and Montréal's regime of hope distribution. In continuity with the rest of the thesis, I explore this nexus from a bottom up perspective: i.e. starting from my interlocutors' account of their own migration.

The chapter draws on the concepts of hope, aspirations, existential mobility and stuckedness that have been extensively described in the previous chapters. It addresses my third set of research questions: *how do aspirations and relations with Europe as a desirable place for the future evolve after the migration?* This question can be rephrased as follows: to what extent did the experience of Montréal contribute to the development of new representations of what the future "might and should look like" (Boccagni 2017)? To what extent did Maghrebi Europeans living in Montréal experienced new forms of stuckedness? What are the new aspirations developed in Montréal?

The first section provides elements of context regarding the main debates about multiculturalism and religious diversity in Québec. The second section focuses on my interlocutors' experience of Montréal and its specific regime of hope distribution, in particular in regards to the official discourses about multiculturalism. It is argued that the re-articulation of dimensions of class, origin and religion in the Montréal context contribute to open new representations of the future among immigrants in the city. These new representations of the future produced a renewed

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65 This chapter includes elements that have been published in the following article: Mandin, Jérémy (2020) "Aspirations and hope distribution in the emigration of Maghrebi Europeans in Montreal" in *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.

"*experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility" (Hage 2003, 13 emphasis by author) that was often felt as liberating.

The third section is aimed at nuancing the optimistic representations of the previous section. Indeed, it focuses on the difficulties encountered in the city. More specifically, it shows how the relation between the Québec immigration regime (described in chapters four and five) and local economic dynamics, combined with a growing societal anxiety toward cultural and religious diversity in the Québec province, make Maghrebi Europeans reassess their pre-departure aspirations. I argue however, that this reassessment is not experienced as a renewed form of existential stuckedness per se but rather as a temporary (yet stretched) state that my interlocutors hope to overcome.

The fourth section addresses the question of the new aspirations produced in such context. More specifically, it focuses on the development of ongoing migration aspirations by European migrants who transform the deception of their pre-departure aspirations by imagining new future migrations in places perceived as more prosper and more open to diversity than Montréal.

6.1. Canadian multiculturalism, Québec interculturalism: Elements of context

In the first part of the thesis, I noted how the representation of Canada as a model of societal openness, especially in terms of management of ethnic and religious diversity was an important element in the emergence of emigration aspirations among my Maghrebi European interlocutors. In the following paragraphs, I would like to provide elements of the debate about multiculturalism in my fieldsite at the time of my research. My goal here is not to provide an extensive discussion about the concept of multiculturalism and interculturalism but rather to give a sense of the context within which my interlocutors found themselves into when arriving in Montréal. This context was characterized by tensions between institutional discourses about cultural and religious diversity and an increasing attention on Muslim minorities.

Since the 1970s, Canada has developed an active policy concerning multiculturalism. In 1971, the Canadian Prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau announced in a discourse to the House of Commons his intention to commence a 'politics of multiculturalism' in the country. This declaration of intent happened in the context of debate about the bicultural and binational dimension of Canada and political claims to recognize Québec and French Canadian cultural distinctiveness. Trudeau's politics of multiculturalism was largely seen as an alternative to this

binational claims (Rocher and White 2014). Indeed, it involved the recognition of cultural pluralism as an essential part of the Canadian identity (something that French speaking Canadians were claiming) but this recognition – rather than being limited to two main groups – was extended to all of the cultural minorities constituting the Canadian population. These politics had four main goals: to help cultural communities keep and develop their identity, strengthen their participation in Canadian society, enhance the exchanges between cultural communities and help newcomers to learn at least one of the two official language of Canada (Rocher and White 2014). In 1982, the principle of multiculturalism was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which was itself entrenched in the Constitution of Canada. In 1988, the Canadian government adopted the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, a law re-asserting cultural diversity as a central element of the Canadian society. Authors have noted that throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, the Canadian liberal- and individual-centered definition of multiculturalism had largely infused the dominant discourses about Canadian identity (Winter 2011). This relative openness to the idea of a culturally diverse and pluralist society also contributed to positive attitudes of public opinion toward immigration both in Québec and in the rest of Canada (Reitz 2011).

At the provincial level, the Québec government did not implement a policy equivalent to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. In the Québec context, the Canadian understanding of multiculturalism – because it tends to consider all cultural groups as equal – was often perceived as an element undermining the province's claim for its cultural and linguistic distinctiveness to be recognized. Instead of embracing the Canadian definition of multiculturalism and its related policies, the Québec authorities developed their own mode of government of cultural diversity labeled as 'interculturalism'. In the public debate, interculturalism was often presented as totally different from the Canadian notion of multiculturalism. It was also regularly presented as a model situated in between a French assimilationist model and a Canadian multiculturalist one. Authors have noted that Canadian multiculturalism and Québec interculturalism shared a pluralist understanding of the society but were still characterized by differences (Rocher and White 2014, 13). The difference between the two models, Taylor (2012, 416) argues, initially laid "less in the concrete policies than in the stories" they were telling. While the Canadian discourse about multiculturalism tended to consider all cultural groups as part of the Canadian identity, Québec interculturalism was built on a majority/minority paradigm (Bouchard 2011, 405 and sq.). Indeed, if the culture of minority groups had to be protected, the culture of the majority (i.e. the culture of the French speaking Quebecer) remained the point of convergence – the horizon – for building Québec society.

In this context of socio-political accommodation of cultural and religious diversity however, increasing tensions have emerged, especially regarding the situation of Islam and Muslim minorities in Canada (Biles, Tolley, and Ibrahim 2005, 27). In Québec, during the second half of the 2000s, many debates emerged regarding the legal concept of 'reasonable accommodation' that was supposed to ensure that public and private institutions adapt to the diversity of their workforce. As Jamil (2014) argued, the discussion about reasonable accommodation was rapidly focused on the question of cultural and religious diversity. A number of controversies around exemplary cases emerged – not always involving Muslims – contributing to the creation of a consultation commission in 2007 headed by a sociologist, and a philosopher of multiculturalism: Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. Public consultations were organized. According to some authors, these consultations contributed to focusing the debates on identity and to facilitate the expression of racist and xenophobic comments, which could have paved the way for policies targeting religious and immigrant minorities (Jamil 2014; Mahrouse 2010). Another important political sequence that was very often mentioned during my research was the heated debate about the project of a 'Charter of Québec Values', introduced by the governing *Parti Québécois* in 2013. This document included a proposition to restrict the right of public sector employees to wear religious symbols. Rapidly, the debate focused on the case of Muslims and in particular on the case of the Islamic veil. The effect of this debate was widely discussed during my time in Montréal in 2016 and 2017. Even if the Charter project was abandoned in 2014 after the victory of the Québec Liberal Party at the Québec general elections, the memory of the heated debates that it produced was still very much present in my interlocutors' minds.

Authors such as Jamil (2014) have noticed how racialized minorities and in particular Muslim minorities in Québec were caught in a 'triangular relationship' of national majority (of white Anglophone Canadians), national minority (of white francophone Quebecers) and racialized minorities (both in Canada and in Québec). According to Jamil (2004), who focused on English Pakistani Muslims living in Montréal, elements such as the centrality of language in the identity of Québec's majority and the increasing scrutiny over Canadian Muslim minorities were central in the way her Pakistani interlocutors perceived their situation in the context of Montréal. Maghrebi Europeans occupied a slightly different position within Québec minority/majority relations. Indeed, as francophone people often actively selected for their linguistic skills, they shared one of the prominent markers of the Québec identity. In the following sections, I address more precisely how my interlocutors experienced Montréal's context and to what extent this experience was perceived as an opening of new horizons for the future or rather as new forms of stuckedness.

6.2. Experiencing Montréal regime of hope distribution: A sense of new possible futures

In the first chapter, I described how the emigration aspirations of young European Maghrebi was informed by a sense of existential stuckedness (Hage 2009), characterized by two main dimensions: firstly, a socio-economic dimension with an increasing difficulty in achieving forms of professional and financial stability and second, a socio-cultural dimension with a persisting experience of being categorized as 'other' in their own society. Moving to Canada and Montréal in particular was often perceived as a promise for upward social mobility and fulfillment. In the following developments I address the other side of the story by focusing on my interlocutors' experience of Montréal and its regime of hope distribution. From these experiences, I argue that if – for many young Maghrebi Europeans – Montréal's social context allows a renewed "experience of the possibility for upward social mobility" (Hage 2003, 13) the concrete effects of such 'possibility' often remained to be verified. The main argument that I develop here is that if the Montréal context is often experienced as more open to cultural and religious diversity and therefore easier to navigate for European Maghrebi, everyday interactions also suggest the existence of socio-economic difficulties as well as the existence of forms of anti-Muslim discrimination. This type of ambiguous dynamic suggests the existence of a gap between public discourses about diversity and the reality of every-day interactions in the Québec context. It also suggests the importance of regimes of hope distribution that operate not as a national or local level but at a more transnational or global level.

6.2.1. Out of the dangerous class: The 'normalization' of everyday life in Montréal

> "Tayeb: The day I arrived [in Montréal], I understood that I was not an Arab, that I was an individual who was – among other things – Arab but who had a multitude of other identities.
>
> JM: And what made you think that? Do you have an anecdote that comes to your mind? A small thing?
>
> Tayeb: The fact of not being constantly brought back to jokes about my origins. Also the fact that… When you go out for a party, to not constantly need three girls around you or to know the bouncer to be able to enter. You know, everyday life things. Even the fact to walk without feeling suspicion around you."

Field interview, 16/01/2016, Montréal

This is how Tayeb, who I presented before, described to me his experience of every-day life in Montréal. In the quote, he referred to two aspects of this experience. The first aspect was his feeling of being recognized as an individual with multiple identities and not only through ethnic labels like in Europe. The second aspect was a sense of relief from the social scrutiny that Maghrebi Muslim populations had to face in Belgium. Tayeb's reference to the absence of suspicion that he experienced in Montréal's streets echoed a typical example given by Maghrebi French and Belgians to describe the differences between their life in Montréal and their life in Europe: the relation with the police. This point was raised by Noham, a French man of Algerian background during a discussion:

> "JM: I don't know, do you have any examples from your daily life that came back to your mind about what is different? That you experienced, say, in the northern districts (quartiers nord) of Marseille and that you don't experience here?
>
> Noham: Well you know, I don't want to sound *cliché* but… I don't know if there is a link with immigration but it is certain that racism is practically non-existent here. It is really non-existent. I would say, first, that I have never been arrested [by the police] here. Never! It's been seven years that I am in Montréal, seven years that I am in Canada, nobody ever arrested me. In Marseille, when I was coming out of my training session, with my bag on me, I was arrested [by the police]. I assure you, it is not a cliché eh!"

Field interview, 03/04/2017, Montréal

Noham grew up in the northern suburb of Marseille. His parents came to France from Algeria. His father was a factory worker and his mother, a social worker. Noham came to Canada as a student. He held a degree in IT and at the time of my interview with him, he was working as an IT manager in a non-profit organization. It was Noham that proposed the place of our meeting: a famous and trendy coffee shop situated in Le Plateau, a neighborhood famous for its high representation of middle class French population and for its trendy bars, restaurants and food shops. In the immediate surrounding of the place in which we met, one finds organic grocery stores, bookshops and a music store selling vinyl records. Noham explained to me that he liked going out in this part of the city, even if he lives in another, cheaper, one. For him, as for many of the Maghrebi European men I met in Montréal, difficult relations with the police were a common experience in his city of origin. Indeed, in France, studies have shown that young, working class men of foreign background – are more frequently arrested for control check than the rest of the population (Défenseur des droits 2017; Fassin 2011). Besides the often humiliating and violent dimension of

this experience, the control checks operate as a way for institutions to – using the words of one of my interlocutors – "question [my interlocutors] presence in the public space."

Tayeb's and Noham's positive experience about Montréal need to be understood within the social dynamics of the city and in relation to their situation in it. Both of them are 'desired immigrants' according to the standards of the city institutions and of the Québec government. They are French speakers, they are young and they completed a university degree. At the time of the research, they both had relatively stable and well payed jobs. In other words, they perfectly fit with the profile of the French speaking, skilled professional that Québec authorities were looking for to secure a competitive position in a global economy (Houle 2014).

Nadir's and Noham's accounts also illustrate different dynamics in the racialization of Maghrebi-Muslim minorities in Europe and in Canada. In Western Europe, ethno-racial divisions are largely centered on a "national/postcolonial foreigner division" (Wacquant, 2014, 1695) informed by the colonial history of countries such as France. Both in France and in Belgium, as mentioned in section 1.3.2., class is an important dimension of the racialization of Maghrebi minorities and one that is allegedly inherited from the recruitment of Maghrebi workers after World War II. Following widespread labor migration in the 1950 and 1960s, French and Belgian Maghrebi were strongly identified as working class and associated with "poverty, crimes, delinquency and social exclusion" (Galonnier, 2015, 578). While several studies tell us that these associations are very much present in the essentializing categorization of certain neighborhoods of Montreal (Manaï, 2015), the absence of historical colonial relations and the active selection of immigrants by Canadian and Quebec authorities resulted in Maghrebi populations being much more easily associated with middle or upper classes in a context where the Arab population in Canada remains highly educated (Eid, 2007, 17) and where immigration is largely perceived as an economic asset for the country (Reitz 2011) and more easily associated with middle class or upper class categories than in Europe.

In terms of urban residential and social practices, Noham lived in a neighborhood with a certain level of social diversity and Tayeb lived in a more middle-class area of the city. Like many middle class and more upper class inhabitants of the city, both of them were used to spending their free time in the trendy places of Montréal. In other words, they were not identified as part of a 'problematic group' by the city authorities and the structure of their everyday lives usually kept them away from districts that were considered as dangerous or requiring specific control from the authorities, such as Montréal Nord (González Castillo and Goyette 2015) or the Little Maghreb (Manaï 2015). This suggests that rather than the result of the absence of police profiling in

Montréal (racial profiling by police that actually occurs in some parts of the city), this is the new position of Tayed and Noham characterized by a comfortable lifestyle keeping them away from heavily controlled parts of the city that inform their new experience with the police.

In many ways, Tayeb's and Noham's experience – largely informed by the different dynamics of racialization in France, Belgium and in Montréal – were lived as forms of upward social mobility. More specifically, it was experienced as if they were finally able to enter the social status that they were aspiring to and that their level of education and professional skills were theoretically allowing them to enter in France or in Belgium. A major condition of this experience was the fact that – unlike in Europe – their Maghrebi origin was not so directly associated with a working class belonging, as was still largely the case in their country of origin. In this sense, Montréal's regime of hope distribution allowed them to convert their cultural (and in particular educational) capital into upward social mobility, something that the stigma associated with Maghrebi origins in Europe largely prevented them to do. This is what I try to address in the next sub-section.

6.2.2. The perception of Canadian multiculturalism and the production of new hopes

When I asked my interlocutors about the differences between their country of origin and Montréal, I often received a specific type of anecdote in response. An example of such an anecdote was given by Lounès, a French man of Algerian background that I introduced in section 3.1.2.. In the quote below, he described to me a conversation that he had with a Quebecker while waiting in a line in a bank.

> "Lounès: If you go to a bank, the financial adviser can wear a headscarf, nobody cares! In 2012 when I came here for the bank, I was waiting in a line to go to the counter and here, I asked a Quebecker who was waiting in front of me: 'sir, just a small question, don't take it personally, what do you think of this woman at the counter with her headscarf?' […] [The Quebecker] answers to me: 'everybody can do what they want here, it doesn't bother anyone.' He says 'Does she bother anyone, this woman?' He says to me: 'these are debates from France, we'll leave it to you [*on vous laisse ça chez vous*]!' Then I say: 'ah thank you sir, I really appreciate this, your answer makes me happy!'"

Field interview, 25/02/2016, Montréal

A popular variant of this anecdote involved not a financial adviser but a custom officer of Montréal airport wearing an Islamic veil. In conversations, many people described their amazement and

the sense of relief upon seeing that a figure of State authority could wear a religious piece of clothing, a situation that would be inconceivable in France or Belgium.

For many Maghrebi French and Belgians, moving to Montréal was experienced as an opening to new possibilities that were perceived as impossible to achieve in Europe because of the pervasive racism and discrimination practices described in the first part of the thesis. This sense of new possibilities was illustrated by the frequent reference during interviews to public figures of the elite coming from minority groups. At the time of my research – which coincided with the accession of Justin Trudeau to the role of Prime Minister of Canada – a figure that was frequently used by my French and Belgian interlocutors to illustrate the openness of Canada to cultural and religious diversity was Harjit Singh Sajjan, a former Canadian military and police officer born in India and who wears a dastaar (the sikh turban). The visibility of such an elite figure was often central in forging a representation of Canada as a place of hope for my Maghrebi European interlocutors. It is interesting here to note that very often, interlocutors did not always draw a distinction between the Canadian context and the Québec context.

During my research, I was surprised to note that some of my interlocutors continued to describe Montréal as a city full of opportunities for people from ethnic and/or religious minorities even when their own migration was not characterized by any real upward social mobility. Many persons that I met were indeed still occupying low skilled jobs or temporary contracts, a situation that they had fled in Europe. What I would like to argue here is that, as Lounès account illustrates, the Canadian discourse about multiculturalism – whatever the effects of such discourses in day to day systemic power relations – contributed to the maintenance of the idea of a possible upward social mobility for many of my Maghrebi European interlocutors.

In one of his books, Hage (2003) argued that one of the ways that capitalist society distributes hope is by maintaining what he calls an "*experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility" (Hage 2003, 13 emphasis by author) and this is despite the fact that class reproduction is one of the defining feature of capitalism. Stories about successful people who experienced upward social mobility the author argues, produce a situation where "most people will live their lives believing in the possibility of upward social mobility without actually experiencing it." (Hage 2003, 14). I would argue that the ideological discourse about diversity in Canada and Québec allowed many of my interlocutors to experience such a possibility of upward social mobility even if – as I show in the following section, every day experiences also suggest renewed experiences of discrimination.

6.3. Stuck again in Montréal? Socio-economic stagnation and transatlantic convergence of anti-Muslim discourses

In the previous section, I have mainly described the positive experiences that French and Belgian emigrants of Maghrebi origins had within the context of Montréal's regime of hope distribution and how the re-articulation of class, origin and religion within the city also produced new hopes for upward mobility. However – and as mentioned above – what I noticed during my fieldwork was these new hopes were not always translated into real upward social mobility. What I want to discuss now is precisely how, despite the dynamics described above, Montréal's regime of hope distribution is also characterized by forms of socio-economic precarity as well as anti-Muslim discourses in particular in the Québec province that affect Maghrebi Europeans in the city.

6.3.1. Enduring prolonged transition and socio-professional precariousness in Montréal: The case of Nahïl

> *"Here [in Montréal], now I will tell you the truth, I am struggling (*je galère*)." This was what Nahïl, a 37 year old French man of Moroccan origin told me during one of our discussion in Montréal. I was first surprised by this confession. First, his use of the term 'struggling' (galère in French) echoed the vocabulary that I encountered with would be emigrants in Europe. Second, the first time I met Nahïl a few days before at a concert, we had extensively talked about France, Canada and his reasons to move in Montréal. As with many of the Maghrebi Europeans I met in the city, he had mentioned the public hostility toward Muslims as one of his first reason to leave France. "Every time I turn the TV on, I feel insulted" he had told me. He had also extensively mentioned some of his projects in the city, in particular in relation to culture and entertainment. At first sight, Nahïl was apparently enjoying Montréal and was apparently being quite optimistic for the future. When I met him two days later for an interview in a park however, our discussion took a slightly different tone and Nahïl explained to me that his perspectives for the future were perhaps more uncertain that what appeared at our first meeting.*
>
> *Nahïl was born in the northern districts of Marseille, in a working class neighborhood. His father worked in a shoe factory and his mother worked as a cleaning worker. Nahïl did not complete secondary school in France. After an attempt to join the army, he started to work in many temporary and low paid jobs. Despite his lack of school degree, he passed several state certifications, for example as a sport trainer and as a youth worker. As I already mentioned in the previous chapters, Nahïl did not really have the profile of the desired immigrant according to the criteria of the Québec authorities.*

When I met Nahïl in 2017, he was in Montréal for four years. He entered Canada, together with his girlfriend, with a working holiday visa. After this first status, he was able to stay and work thanks to the temporary working permit of his girlfriend. However, after some time, they broke up and Nahïl was then forced to find another way to secure his status in the country. Due to a temporary loophole in the Canadian regulation, he was able to apply for and obtain a second Working Holiday Visa with two years' validity. When we met in 2017, he had one year left on his visa and was preoccupied with how to be able to renew his residence permit. He started an application for a permanent residence permit but because of his lack of education titles, he did not really hope to be selected. At the time of our interview, his plan was to go back to university and to complete training which would allow him to apply for a post-diploma visa. However, when we met, he had not yet identified the type of training he was interested in and did not know either if he had the money to finance it.

At the professional level, Nahïl's situation in Montréal was quite different from the upward career that Québec immigration services typically advertised to of would-be emigrants in Europe (see chapter four). Instead, Nahïl's professional career in the city was characterized by a succession of temporary, precarious and badly paid jobs. He worked for some time in a recycling company where he entered as a line worker and ended directing a small team of employees. But due to a conflicts with some fellow workers and the hard working conditions, he quit his job. At the time of the interview, Nahïl was working part time in a printing company but he heard that the company would close soon and he was busy researching new jobs opportunities, in particular in the hotel maintenance business.

When asked about his precarious job situation and his aspirations for the future, Nahïl regularly answered by describing it as a two sided situation as in the quote below:

> *"Nahïl: I did many temporary jobs but it was by choice… First I worked in telecoms as I told you. That was mainly my choice because I have ambitions in the artistic field and I like to have my afternoons and the end of the day free for…*
>
> *JM: OK.*
>
> *Nahïl: Yes, to do some networking, do some volunteering, all these things.*
> *[…] But I am not exactly the happiest guy in what I do. I would need to work more you see.*

JM: OK, OK?

Nahïl: It's just that I am in a transitory situation [entre-deux] you see.

JM: Yes OK, you…

Nahïl: … I have just enough to pay my bills and all but it is not a choice like 'oh I am happy to make my twenty hours!' I could use forty hours."

Field interview, 14/06/2017, Montréal

Nahïl's account of his precarious socio-economic situation included different elements. On the one hand indeed, he presented his situation as a form of choice that would allow him to have some time aside to develop his true 'ambitions' in Montréal. On the other hand however, Nahïl also stressed the difficult aspects of it, especially in terms of material conditions of existence. But Nahïl's account also included a third element: the idea that his situation was 'transitory' or as he put it in French, '*entre-deux'.* Despite the objective lack of socio-economic upward mobility, Nahïl was still able to experience a form of existential mobility (the feeling of going somewhere) (Hage 2009), with the conviction that his current situation was – after all – only temporary. In this sense Nahil's experience was not exactly an experience of existential stuckedness.

The type of professional trajectory experience illustrated by Nahïl's case was not uncommon among the Maghrebi French and Belgians I met in Montréal. As mentioned in the presentation of the sample in the introduction, among the forty people I interviewed in Montréal the majority (24) were working and expressed satisfaction with their professional situation. It is important to remember that work is an important factor for being allowed to stay in Québec and to secure durable status. However, situations of unemployment (eight people) were also regularly present among my interlocutors. I also encountered some people who – while being employed – expressed frustration regarding their jobs, often feeling under-employed either because of part-time or badly paid contracts or because of a gap between their qualifications and their professional position. For many of my interlocutors who were experiencing frustration with their professional situation in Montréal, such a precarious situation was perceived as a temporary situation. For some of my interlocutors in Montréal, going through short term jobs with low wages was indeed a temporary situation, especially for those possessing the right set of university titles and professional skills. However, for some people with less resources in terms of degrees and/or professional experience, such as Nahïl, this transitory situation often seemed to last longer than expected, often colliding with the necessity to renew the residence status in Canada. The situation

of a persisting transitory situation illustrated by the case of Nahïl was shared by some of the people I met in Montréal, producing a situation of socio-economic uncertainty that was actually pretty close to those I encountered during my field work in Europe.

6.3.2. The limits of openness: The transatlantic convergence of anti-Muslim discourses

While most of the French and Belgians encountered during my research would typically agree on the fact that being of Maghrebi and Muslim origin was easier to live with in Montréal as compared to Europe, many of my interlocutors also experienced forms of discrimination based on their origin. Hosni, a Belgian actor of Tunisian background who arrived in Montréal in the early 2000s, explained to me during an interview the difficulties he frequently had to face to get a role that was not associated with his Arab origins in Québec.

> "Hosni: OK and here you are thinking 'Why don't they call me [for a job]?' […] I have worked as a waiter, I worked as a seller, I have been a delivery man. You see, it is not only taking something. For sure, if I write a book which win the Nobel prize, I will become a super Quebecer. Denis Laferrière is a Quebecer but the taxi driver is Algerian. You see what I mean?
>
> JM: Yes OK.
>
> Hosni: I am Belgo-Tunisian, I am not a Quebecer
>
> JM: OK, OK, they made you feel that way?
>
> Hosni: Well I mean if I cannot play something else than an Arab even if when I am in Tunis, everybody is talking to me in French, I mean… I don't know how they see, apart from my name, that I am Arab."
>
> Field interview, 26/11/2015, Montréal

Hosni grew up in Antwerp. He started to attend university to study civil engineering but finally quit to start taking acting lessons. Hosni's experience of being categorized as an Arab and to be limited to specific roles heavily impacted his professional life in Québec. After being repeatedly refused for certain roles, Hosni decided to use a Europeanized version of his first name to apply to roles of European characters:

> "Hosni: Well, to come back to your question, here for two or three years, my name was H. [a French sounding version of his first-name].

JM: OK.

Hosni: But just for cinema and TV, for the castings. In my life, I continue to [use my real name] and I also perform in the theatre.

JM: OK.

Hosni: Now, I have a career that… Well, I am working a bit more. Well, during these two or three years, they made me play… They made me play Belgians, even without castings. Leading roles. A lot, because they don't have a lot [of Belgians]."

Field interview, 26/11/2015, Montréal

Hosni's account of his experience of discrimination, as well as his strategy to make his first name sound 'French' to access roles that were not limited to Arab characters, echoed forms of discrimination that were experienced in Europe by many of my interlocutors. Hosni's account also illustrated the complex articulation of different categorizations: as Arab, as Belgian and as Quebecer. For Hosni, the problem that he faced as an actor was not so much to be denied roles as a Quebecer but rather to be denied roles of European characters and – in this sense – to be systematically identified as Arab rather than as European. During our discussion, Hosni used an expression to summarize this experience: "personally I forget that I am a first generation immigrant because I feel like a second generation immigrant. But I reset the counts to zero when I came here" (Hosni, 26/11/2015, Montréal). For Hosni, becoming a 'first generation immigrant' did not only refer to him having migrated to Québec, it also referred to the fact that, in Québec (and more specifically in his professional field) his Belgian background (the fact of being 'second generation' in Belgium) was in a way obscured by him being overwhelmingly identified and categorized as an Arab.

During my research many of my French and Belgian interlocutors also recognized an evolution in the public attention toward Islam. An increasing public anxiety about Islam and Muslim minorities in Québec was often experienced during everyday life. Redouane is a French man of Algerian origins who grew up in Hérouville, in the periphery of Caen. Holding a Master degree in social sciences, he was living in Montréal with his family and was working in an NGO involved in international cooperation. He described the islamophobic remarks that he sometimes faced in the city.

"Redouane: Look for example, the other day, when Trudeau had been elected, I brought my daughter to school and there is a father who passes near me. Well, he was talking alone

so I don't know if he actually talked to me but it is nevertheless strange that he speaks this way when he is close to me. He passes by and says to me: 'anyway it is terrorists who voted for liberals.' You see.

JM: OK, yes.

Redouane: No but he tells this to me because it is the Arabs, the terrorists, well you see. So… And well it is the kind of stuff… Stupid stuff you see. And it can happen to you. My wife told me… just imagine this, there is a four years old girl… It is a friend of her who told her this. A little four year old girl who is here at school in Québec eh. And children are telling to her 'It is your fault! It is because of people like you what happened in France [The terrorist attacks in Paris]' Four years old!"

Field interview, 01/12/2015, Montréal

Redouane's account illustrated the fact that despite the representation of Canada and Québec as places of openness toward cultural and religious diversity that circulated in Europe, Islamophobia was very much a reality in Montréal. In an article focused on the concept of Islamophobia, Amiraux and Desrochers (2013) demonstrated that despite being born in the French colonial context, Islamophobia – defined as "a matrix of racialization of Muslim populations" (Valérie Amiraux and Desrochers 2013, 7 my translation) – went largely global and is today largely transversal to western societies including France and Québec. The authors also noted the importance of events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in the propagation of Islamophobia by forging an association between Islam and terrorism (Valérie Amiraux and Desrochers 2013, 4). Redouane's account indeed illustrated the impact of terrorist attacks such as the attack in Paris in November 2015 in the everyday life of Muslim Europeans living in Montréal. It is interesting to note however, that despite this form of convergence resulting from recent geopolitical events, the racialization of Maghrebi Muslim populations in Montréal nevertheless included some differences when compared to the situation in France. One of the main differences – also rooted in the French colonial and post-colonial history – was the importance of class in the racialization of Maghrebi Muslim minorities in France. Indeed, Maghrebi Muslim minorities has been traditionally associated with poverty, crime and social exclusion (Galonnier 2015). Despite the new centrality of the association between Islam and terrorism in the European debates, the importance of class nevertheless remained an element of difference with the Canadian context.

For some of my interlocutors, the experience of Islamophobia in Montréal was interpreted as a form of transnational circulation of European debates in Montréal. Sana, who I already presented in chapter one, perceived an evolution of the political context in Québec:

> "Sana: Yes, it evolved, and most of all, it evolved very fast. I can't believe how we suddenly… You know I made a joke once saying: I took the plane for Paris and I felt as if I was coming back… You know, as if I was in a province and that I was coming back to the metropole! You know, I really had the impression that Québec was just becoming a French province again.
>
> JM: OK, yes, yes.
>
> Sana: The debates were so similar. It really annoys me. I find it upsetting to have lost a form of quality of life. And a lot of people talk… And I am not speaking only of Muslims. I have a lot of colleagues around me who… Who describe a sort of… You know, of deterioration of… You know… In fact, of the possibility of debate or I don't know. In any case, there is a sort of liberation of many racist things."
>
> Field interview, 08/07/2015, Skype interview

Sana's account of what she identifies as a convergence of French and Québec public discourses on Islam was a reference to recent developments in the Québec debates about Islam and Muslim minorities that I briefly described in section 6.1. For Sana as for some other interlocutors, this experience of converging tensions about Islam was really felt as something annoying or even worrying as it was sometimes perceived as if the debates that they were fleeing in Europe were actually catching up with them in Montréal.

Very concrete images and representations travelled between France and Québec as illustrated by the picture below:

Source: Parti indepedentiste poster. Picture taken by the author in May 2017.

I took the picture above in 2017 near the Beaubien Metro station in Montréal. The poster, read: "Choose your Québec. Canadian multiculturalism, no thanks!" The poster was actually an electoral poster for a small far-right and independent group called "Parti independentiste", which was competing in the 2017 provincial by-elections in one of Montréal's district. The poster was a transposition of a poster created by the Front National, the French dominant far-right formation, and used during French regional elections in 2015. The picture opposing a woman, face visible, to a woman wearing an Islamic piece of cloth masking her face was copied from the Front National poster with only a few details altered. This kind of public disclosure of a discourse openly hostile to Muslim minorities was rather exceptional during my presence in Montréal but the poster was noticed by some of my Maghrebi European interlocutors in the city and was also discussed in the local press.

The case of this poster illustrates a more general circulation of discourses on cultural and religious diversity within a global French speaking space. In many ways, the French conception about laïcité largely made its way into the recent Québec political debate (Germain 2016) as illustrated by the conversations about the project of "Charter of Québec Values" or the recent adoption of the Québec "law on the *laïcité* of the State" (*loi sur la laïcité de l'Etat*) which bans the wearing of religious symbols for public workers in positions of authority. This circulation also happened the other way around. For example, the Québec debate about 'reasonable accommodations' received also found its way in the Francophone Belgian debates (Fadil 2013).

For Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal, the transnational convergence of modes of racialization of Muslim populations was also directly experienced during migration. This was particularly noticeable when crossing borders and more specifically the American border, which was very close to Montréal and that many of my interlocutors crossed regularly, either for leisure or to renew a visa. During a discussion, Fouad, the young French man of Algerian origin that I presented in the first chapter described to me his experience of the American border:

> "We start talking about Fouad's recent trip in New-York where he was for the new year. He explains to me that he went by bus and he tells me about his border crossing. […] 'I was the only one on the bus to be controlled for so long' he tells me.
>
> The border officer, he explains to me, started to ask him many questions about the reason of his visit in the US and about the reason of his stay in Canada. Fouad explains to me that he tried to answer as calmly as possible to the officer who kept asking him the same question. After some time, Fouad explains, the custom officer told him that he did not believe him and that he thought he wanted to stay in the US. He asked Fouad if he had any luggage. Fouad answered positively and – while the rest of the passengers already went back inside the bus, Fouad had to take all his luggage in front of the other passengers. 'It was super humiliating' he explains. 'Everybody was looking at me like: here we are, he is a terrorist.'
>
> Fouad tells that he was then escorted to a room where people from other buses were also waiting for further control. He was the only one in his bus to be controlled and he noticed that all the other persons were Arabs. […]

> After another round of questions led by two border officers, Fouad was finally allowed to go back to his bus. Fouad describes to me how awkward he felt when he entered the bus. 'the other passengers were looking at me as if I was a terrorist'. […]"
>
> Fieldnotes, 14/01/2016, Montréal

In the previous chapters of this thesis, I have mainly addressed regimes of hope distribution starting from the configuration of hope distribution working either at the national and/or at a more local level. The transnational convergence of representations and practices hostile toward Muslim populations suggested that certain configuration of hope distribution – in this case, the hope distributed to people identified as Muslim – seem to operate at a more transnational or global level.

6.4. Ongoing aspirations: assessing social mobility in Montréal and developing new aspirations

In the previous two sections, I focused on my interlocutors' experience of Montréal. I have argued that – among the broad range of individual trajectories – these experiences were characterized by a tension between different types of dynamics. On the one hand, Montréal's regime of hope distribution seemed to provide space for a renewed "*experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility" (Hage 2003) and thus for a sense of existential mobility. On the other hand the local socio-economic dynamics as well as the evolving discourses about religious and ethnic diversity often produced situations where the initial aspirations of my interlocutors actually appeared as difficult to realize. The question I would like to address in this section is the following: how did European Maghrebi immigrants deal with these experiences of socio-professional stagnation and persisting discrimination? How was it interpreted by my interlocutors? And what types of new aspirations are developed in the process? I question the nexus of migration/social mobility by addressing the new aspirations and hopes developed by my interlocutors in the city.

Even if virtually every interlocutor I met during my research told me about the dynamics that I described in the previous section, it is clear that such dynamics had a very different impact on them depending on their professional situation, their personal religious practice, and so on. What I want to say here is that this last section focuses more specifically on the group of my interlocutors that had experienced the more difficulties in Montréal. I tend to let aside the more 'successful' among my interlocutors, or those who did not perceive their presence in the city to

be threatened because a lack of socio-economic stability nor because of an increasing experience of discrimination.

6.4.1. Who is stuck? Assessing mobility and immobility in a context of migration

The first question that I want to address here is how the forms of socio-economic stagnation as well as the precariousness in terms of residence status were interpreted by young Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal. As I described before, moving abroad was often perceived as a way to achieve aspirations of upward social mobility. Then: what happened when such upward social mobility was not fully realized, at least in material terms? Or, put differently, what happened when "immigrants' everyday life was not an 'amplifier of aspirations'" (Boccagni 2017, 15) but rather tended to go against those previous aspirations? While in the first part of this thesis, I focused on aspirations as views of the future (Boccagni 2017), I now address my interlocutors' views of their present time in Montréal.

A first element that I noticed during my fieldwork in Montréal was that very few of the French and Belgian people I met considered their choice to move to Canada as a bad choice, even when they were experiencing difficulties in finding a proper job and to achieve a relatively stable residence status in the country. In the following developments, I argue that even in cases where initial aspirations were not met in Montréal, European emigrants often cultivated positive representations of their own migration through a process of social distinction between those who moved and those who stayed at home. One of my interlocutors, Ismaël, was a good example of such dynamics.

> *Ismaël was a French man in his 30s. He grew up in a working class district of Perpignan, a middle size city in Southern France. His father, born from Algerian parents, worked in food distribution and his mother, born in Algeria, worked as a cleaning worker. He did not finish secondary school in France and did not hold any degree that were considered of value in Québec. When I met him in 2016, Ismaël had already done some back and forth travels between France and Canada. He arrived in Montréal with a working holiday visa. In Montréal, he worked in a shop in the city center. For Ismaël, this job constituted a real upward social mobility given his lack of diploma and the long unemployment periods he had to face in France. However, after some time in Montréal, he experienced a serious injury and – while recovering – was unable to renew his status and overstayed his visa. He was forced to go back in France. Lacking the degrees and the professional skills valued by the Québec immigration authorities, he was unable to apply for permanent residence. After some time,*

he decided to go back to Montréal as a visitor. When I met him in 2016 he had not managed to find a regular job and had already overstayed his tourist visa. During one of our conversations, he explained to me how he tried to deal with the situation:

> *"Ismaël: [I try] to get by as many French and many immigrants get by. Trying to work, without stealing, and that's all. You'll see, as I noticed, you say to yourself when you emigrate to a country and when you overstay the legal deadline OK… Even if you work you are illegal, OK. But all things considered, you do more good than bad. You contribute more to society than not. Is it better to stay in France…*
>
> *JM: … And do nothing …*
>
> *Ismaël: … And being taken care of [assisté], or [is it better to stay in Montréal] trying to make do… Even if it is difficult?"*
>
> *Field interview, 11/05/2016, Montréal*

Ismaël's situation in Montréal was very precarious., and when we met in 2016 he was busy trying to figure out how to stabilize his situation. Because he overstayed his visa, he was living with a sense of deportability (Genova 2002). Because of his lack of official status in the country, he was unable to find a proper job and was forced to rely on unregistered jobs. When we met, Ismaël was seriously considering acquiring a forged social security number in order to be able to work. As for some of my interlocutors, the objective material situation of Ismaël was therefore hardly better than his situation in France.

The quote above illustrates that – despite a very difficult time in Montréal – Ismaël still considered his situation in Canada to be better than what he had to face in France. A central element of the quote is that Ismaël did not really assess his situation from a purely materialist and individualist viewpoint. The distinction that was significant for Ismaël was not really between a bad or better economic situation but rather between being a productive part of society in Montréal (even through unregistered work) and being *assité* or taken care of in France.

Ismaël's quote also suggested that, even in the absence of objective socio-economic upward mobility, immigrants also elaborated forms of social distinction between those – like them – who moved abroad and those who stayed in France or in Belgium. One such distinction that I encountered during my fieldwork was between my interlocutors and those of their friends that were staying at home. A specific expression was sometimes used to draw this distinction between those who moved and those who stayed at home: *tenir le mur* (literally 'supporting the wall'). It

could be translated in English as 'hanging out', the French expression being however much more pejorative than its English translation. While hanging out can refer to relaxed and pleasant practices, *tenir le mur* was typically used to refer to spending time doing no productive activity and was largely identified with those involved considered to have attitudes such as 'losers' or 'good for nothing'. It was most often used as a reference to the young men from the *banlieues*, who did not work and spent their day in the streets in front of their home. From this perspective, the expression carried a sense of both spatial and social immobility. References to friends and/or relatives who stayed at home was often used by my interlocutors to assess and evaluate their own situation in Montréal. For example, during our discussion, Ismaël mentioned how he felt about coming back to France:

> "Ismaël: You're not getting anywhere [in France]! As I told you, I go back home, I find the same guy that I left in the same neighborhood, he is still at the same place!
>
> JM: You are not getting anywhere [in France] yes… That's what you said.
>
> Ismaël: Yes man! Personally I don't want that! I don't want that!"
>
> Field interview, 11/05/2016, Montréal

Later during the same interview, Ismaël told me about the difficult time he had while interacting with acquaintances at home, the same acquaintances who were regularly criticizing his choice to go to Canada rather than to stay in France:

> "Ismaël: Well, they gonna tell you that you are doing worse here [in Canada]. They gonna tell you that you left and that you put yourself in trouble making do like that whereas [in France], you have everything you need […] Honestly, most of my friends [in France] don't have a passport! They have the right to do it, they pay sixty euros, seventy euros and they have it. No one has it! That speaks about their mentality.
>
> JM: OK so for them, moving is not in their plans, right?
>
> Ismaël: No, no! Even moving forward is not […] These guys, when they are struggling [in France, they say]: 'ah shit we don't have a choice! We don't have a choice man. What do you want us to do?'"
>
> Field interview, 11/05/2016, Montréal

Ismaël's account of his relations with his acquaintances in France illustrated a distinction between two ways to deal with existential stuckedness (Hage 2009) in France. Indeed, in the

quotes above, Ismaël did not so much dispute the fact that he was in Montréal experiencing difficulties, at least in terms of socio-economic mobility, that were comparable with the difficulties of his acquaintances in France. What Ismaël pointed out however, was the different reactions to these difficulties. More specifically, he criticized the lack of initiative of his friends rather than the lack of opportunities in France. The figure of the young man 'hanging out' in France, doing nothing and going nowhere was here used in a negative sense, bringing with it – by contrast – more social legitimacy to Ismaël's pathway.

To some extent, what Ismael's case illustrates here is how – for many of my interlocutors in Montréal – migrating (moving physically) was regularly considered as a positive thing, even in absence of upward social mobility in Canada. As in Ismaël case, moving abroad was largely considered as preferable to "waiting out" (Hage 2009, 97) in France or in Belgium. In this perspective, migration – even without socio-economic upward mobility – was still experienced as a form of existential mobility in the sense that many of my interlocutors were able to renew with a sense of agency. Then, this experience was different from the existential stuckedness experienced in Europe. Consequently, many interlocutors also attributed a normative value to the expression of migration aspirations. While expressing migration aspirations was positively valued as a sign that one was actually willing to do something, to 'leave his comfort zone' as some of my interlocutors – using a corporate vocabulary – sometimes put it. In contrast, for those who stayed in Europe, the apparent absence of expression of aspirations was largely interpreted as a sign of lack of will, defeatism or laziness. This illustrates how aspirations and their expression not only works as the expression of choices but also as assertion of identity and more specifically as assertion of 'virtuous' identity (Frye 2012).

6.4.2. The production of new emigration aspirations and the exclusion of return as an option

In the second chapter of this thesis, I described how Maghrebi Europeans aspiring to emigrate imagined specific geographies of opportunities. I have argued that, when confronted by a situation of existential stuckedness in Europe, hope was projected abroad. Places such as Canada, the U.S. or the United Arab Emirates, were perceived as places of promising futures and therefore identified as desirable destinations for aspiring migrants. In this chapter, I have argued that, despite opening new spaces for upward social mobility, moving to Montréal also went together with a form of relativisation – and sometime disillusion – toward previous expectations. The questions I want to address now are the following: what happen to aspirations in this context? Are these aspirations put on hold? Or are they projected somewhere else? Is returning to Europe considered as a valid strategy for the future?

Many Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal would explain to me the difficult aspects of living in the city, especially regarding their effort to keep contact with their family at home because of the time difference and the distance. As described in the previous developments, they would also share with me the difficulty they found in achieving upward social mobility as well as their experience of raising tensions around cultural and religious diversity in Québec. In this context, not all of the Maghrebi Europeans I met in Montréal were imagining their life to be in Québec in the future. As already mentioned in chapter five for most of my interlocutors, aspirations for the future often remained very open ended, depending – of course – of the degree of agency that those interlocutors were able to exercise over their own situation. During many discussions, it appeared that Montréal was not always perceived as a final destination and that other migration aspirations were developed. For example, in an informal conversation I had with Hamza whom I introduced in chapter five, he explained to me the projects he had for his future:

> "I ask Hamza about his plans for the future, especially regarding his apartment. He explains to me that he likes the neighborhood but that he doesn't plan to stay forever in Montréal. I ask him about his plans and he tells me that he is waiting to obtain his permanent residence and then plans to go to another country. I remember that, earlier during the evening, he had mentioned Dubaï as a place he would like to go to. He explains that he is waiting for permanent residence in order to have a 'parachute' and that he is planning to multiply those 'parachutes' during his future travels. When I ask him what he means by that, he choose another analogy: rock climbing. 'You know, it is like this thing in rock climbing… An anchor point.' He adds that like in rock climbing, statuses such as permanent residence are the equivalent of anchor points as they allow you 'not to fall all the way down' if his projects do not work."

Fieldnotes, 14/05/2016, Montréal

As for many of my interlocutors in Montréal, Hamza did not consider Montréal as his final destination and was rather expressing aspirations for further migrations. Another central element of Hamza's quote laid in the 'rock climbing' analogy that suggested a specific directionality in terms of migration aspirations. The trajectory described by Hamza was not a circular migration aiming at returning in Europe but rather a form of ongoing migration toward new destinations, with going back to Europe being described as a form of failure ('falling down'). Like Hamza, few people I met were considering returning to their home country as a desirable option. The specific historical context of my fieldwork was central here. Indeed, I started my fieldwork in Montréal in November 2015. Memories of the terrorist attack against the offices of

French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* were still very strong among my interlocutors and were followed by other terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. In this context, the saturation of the French and Belgian media space by anti-Muslim discourses that I described in the first chapter was very strong. For many of my contacts in Montréal, this was strongly experienced during vacations back to Europe and it led a lot of them to consider that going back to France or to Belgium could not be an option.

As I described in the second section of this last chapter, when I was in Montréal, Maghrebi Europeans were regularly confronted by anti-Muslim discourses that they were hoping to avoid when coming to the city. This dynamic however – rather than discouraging Maghrebi Europeans to aspire to the "indifference to difference" (Fernando 2014) – produced instead a relocation of this aspiration to yet other destinations. When I was in Montréal one of the destinations commonly envisioned by French and Belgian immigrants of Maghrebi origins was the city of Toronto which was perceived as providing both better economic opportunities and a more open politics regarding cultural and religious diversity. In a way, many of the hopes that were – from Europe – projected on Montréal were relocated to Toronto once my interlocutors arrived in the Québec province.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I questioned – in dialogue with chapter one – how the initial aspiration of Maghrebi Europeans coming to Montréal evolved when confronted with the actual experience of living in the city. I argued that, in many ways, Montréal's regime of hope distribution allowed my interlocutors to reconnect with an experience of the possibility of upward social mobility (Hage 2003), made possible by the re-articulation of dimensions of class, origin, religion an immigrant status in the city societal context. This re-articulation operated in different ways. As French and Belgians for example, my interlocutors enjoyed a relatively privileged immigrant status when compared to – for example – immigrants coming from Maghrebi countries. Another central element of this re-articulation is the renegotiation of class and class position in the context of Montréal. While in France and in Belgium, the enduring practices of discrimination and the modes or racialization of Maghrebi minorities through the figures of the turbulent youngsters from the *cité*, the perspective of upward class mobility (not only in terms of professional success but also in terms of symbolic recognition) seemed very unlikely, the relative disconnection between Maghrebi identity and working class identity in the context of Montréal allowed the opening of new possible futures for my interlocutors. This re-articulation, associated with partially distinct

modes of racialization of Maghrebi minorities in Montréal, far from working only at an abstract level, allowed in some cases the experience of upward social mobility that were very difficult to access in Europe.

I also argued however that, depending on the specific situations of my interlocutors, the Montréal context was also characterized by many disillusions regarding the initial aspirations of my interlocutors. Indeed, while many people I met were employed or working in Montréal, a significant part also experienced situation of unemployment or underemployment and were struggling with persisting socio-economic instability and also with forms of discrimination and hostile discourses aiming at Arab and Muslim minorities in the Québec province. This suggests that, beyond regimes of hope distribution that operate at the local and/or national level, some regimes operate at a more transnational or global level as it was illustrated by the transnational experience of discrimination against Muslim peoples informed by convergent modes of racialization of Muslim minorities in Western countries.

In this context, it was possible to argue that, as other authors have suggested (Boccagni 2017; Vigh 2009) migration often came with forms of disillusionment regarding initial aspirations. However, the case of Maghrebi Europeans in Montréal suggests that, rather than a reduction or a nuancing of previous aspirations, migrants could also engage in further displacement of hope in yet other destinations, producing chains of ongoing migration aspirations toward places envisioned as always more prosperous and more open to diversity. The question that remains open for the future is to what extent such chained migration aspiration are indeed only possible for specific populations of migrants disposing of specific types of capital and to what extent specific ideological discourses about (neo-liberal) upward social mobility, progress and migrations also contribute to make such strategies desirable.

Conclusion

This thesis is a sustained attempt to make an original contribution to the debate about the transnational practices of Europeans of Maghrebi origins. In pursuing this goal, I try to go beyond the spatial framework within which these transnational practices are usually questioned: The European country of birth and the country of origin of the parents. The case of Maghrebi Europeans engaged in different stages of migration to the city of Montreal demonstrates that the transnational imagination and mobility practices of the descendants of immigrants in France and in Belgium largely goes beyond 'country of origin'. Indeed, from the perspective of the persons I met, Maghrebi countries are not necessarily seen as desirable destinations. Instead, the desirable places identified by Maghrebi European interlocutors illustrated the centrality of urban hubs of the global economy in how they imagined the world and its global hierarchies. This included places such as London, Dubaï, Montréal, New-York or Miami. Rather than a 'return' to a supposedly more familiar cultural environment, the imagined geographies presented in this thesis instantiate migration practices largely driven by the hope for upward socio-economic mobility. It also suggests the centrality of the capitalist market and the values associated with it (the reward of hard work, the supposedly easier access to opportunity for economic success and a relative blindness to markers, such as origins, not directly related to professional skills) in the identification of desirable destinations.

One of the main findings of my research is that the emigration practices of Maghrebi Europeans to Montreal also escapes the classical focus on the dual dynamic of uprooting (from the country of origin of the parents) and integration (in Europe). Indeed, if we consider integration as a long term and often quasi invisible process of socialization, made of a progressive accumulation of small changes in a transition from a situation of "alterity" to a situation of "identity" (Sayad 1994, 8), then the Maghrebi Europeans who I met on their journey to Montréal are perfectly 'integrated'. Beyond the fact that they strongly identify themselves as French or Belgians and that they recognize France and Belgium as their country, many of them were also engaged in a form of upward social mobility characterized by the centrality of education in providing opportunities for this form of mobility (Beaud 2018). This is not to say that this was a trajectory shared by all the persons I met and – as I show in this thesis – the opportunity to move and to stay abroad was also highly dependent on interlocutors' education certifications. However, the biographic accounts of the people I met illustrate their attachment to their country of birth with which they share cultural references as well as the importance they attributed to their insertion as active citizens. Examples of this active citizenship were things like pursuing higher education or trying to integrate into the job market. They avoided 'doing nothing' as much as possible because they did not wish to fall into the stigmatized category of the '*cas soc*'. As one interlocutor puts it, they "played by the rules." The migration practices of the Maghrebi French and Belgians I met can

hardly be analyzed as a supposed 'lack' of integration. On the contrary, it is their active participation in the institutions of their country (notably schools) that largely provides them with the symbolic (as desired migrants from the point of view of the Québec authorities), cultural (degrees, for example) and mobility capital (such as their French or Belgian passport) that facilitate international mobility. From the point of view of their motivation, leaving Europe was less informed by a lack of identification with France or Belgium. Instead, they were motivated by the realization that, despite their best effort, the socially accepted pathways toward upward social mobility did not deliver. The conjunction of the structural shrinking of effective opportunities for upward mobility and the everyday experience of the racialization of Maghrebi minorities was central in the development of a sense of existential stuckedness (Hage 2009) at home. It was accompanied by the aspiration for a more fulfilling life outside of Europe (Arnaut et al. 2020).

My thesis also contributes to an understanding of the lifeworld that informs the emigration desires of Maghrebi Europeans. It engages with forms of "global awareness from below" (Vigh 2009, 93) largely produced by the transnational circulation of imaginaries about foreign destinations. These understandings of the world allow us to 'decenter' from the traditional understanding of western European countries as desirable destinations for migrants due to their supposedly higher degree of modernity and societal advancement. On the contrary, interlocutors' views of the world largely associate Europe, and in particular France and Belgium, with experiences of stagnation, crisis and decline.

Beyond the empirical contributions concerning migration practices of young Maghrebi Europeans, this thesis also offers a number of conceptual and analytical contributions that can be fruitful in the current debates about migration in general. More specifically, the thesis engaged with the concept of aspiration which had recently gained renewed attention in the social sciences (de Haas 2011; Carling 2013; Bal and Willems 2014; Carling and Collins 2017; Boccagni 2017). The application of aspiration to the study of migration has new analytical potential. First, because it focuses on the representation of the future cultivated by the migrants, the notion of aspiration provides a useful analytical lens for understanding how people make sense of the world, their situation within it as well as the possibilities that are open to them before or after migration (Bal and Willems 2015). In other words, it provides a way to explore how people effectively experience migration at a very personal and intimate level. Second, the focus on aspiration also allows us to bring the underexplored pre-departure stage of migration into the analysis. This stage is underexplored in the literature about migration (Mescoli 2014). More specifically, the focus on aspiration allows for the interrogation of the relevance of migration in a given context even when people do not actually migrate (Carling 2013). Focusing on migration aspirations

opens an analytical field that seriously considers the many ways in which (the possibility of) migration impacts people's lives, their daily practices and the ways they arrange their lives around such a possibility (by postponing their integration on the job market for example).

The migration literature generally considers aspirations to be socially and culturally embedded views of the future (Bal and Willems 2014) that, according to Boccagni (2017, 3), constitute a "valuable research field on the interaction between structure and agency." This thesis contributes to a better understanding of what is "social" in migration aspirations. More specifically, it contributes to the debate about aspirations by providing a number of precise conceptual propositions that allow us to situate the subjective representation of the future within broader social dynamics. In other words, this thesis makes propositions that help to strengthen our definition of aspirations and more specifically migration aspirations, as a social phenomenon. Throughout the preceding chapters, I develop three conceptual propositions that help us to understand and analyze aspiration as a social phenomenon. I have approached aspirations as representations of the future contextualized in systems of unequal distribution of hope, as a socially and culturally grounded behavior and as an object of governance.

The first step into the exploration of the social dimension of aspirations is to look at the interlocutors' relation to the future. This does not necessarily mean what they were aspiring to, but what they were expecting based on their experience of the past and present. The collection of such views about the future drew the contour of what I called a "regime of hope distribution". The latter draws attention to the fact that opportunities for fulfilling futures are unequally distributed across the members of the society. At the theoretical level, the concept of regime of hope distribution helps us to contextualize the expression of aspirations within a broader economy of distribution of opportunities for desirable futures. This concept contributes to the broader debate about the aspirations of migrants and their evolution through time. It allows for the comparison of different societal contexts on the basis of the different dimensions of social personhood (class, race, gender, nationality, religion or else) that are significant in this distribution of hope and therefore in the way aspiring migrants perceive the future 'here' and 'there'. In the case of Maghrebi Europeans moving to Montréal, I show how the perception of possible opportunities for the future in Montréal vary in relation to the different ways Maghrebi minorities are racialized in Europe and in Québec. More particularly, I found that the relation to class was quite strong in the experience of the people I met. Of course, this comparative dimension opened by the concept of regime of hope distribution must not obscure the fact that the unequal distribution of hope always operates at different levels, either more local (a city for example) or more global, as suggested in chapter 6. Finally, a multi-scalar concept of regime of hope distribution allows us to

add an analytical layer to the exploration of migration aspiration. It helps us understand to what extent these aspirations are expressed as a form of internalization of the regime of hope distribution or rather as an expression of resistance. In the case of Maghrebi Europeans leaving for Montréal, the answer is nuanced. On the one hand, emigration projects are clearly expressed as exit strategies in response to a lack of hope. On the other hand, moving abroad is also something that is increasingly accepted by young people transitioning from education to the professional life as a normal pathway to becoming more competitive workers and therefore to access more opportunities for fulfilling futures.

A second theoretical contribution of this thesis is the analysis of migration aspirations in relation to the accumulation of a set of dispositions, thus linking the concept of aspiration with the Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. This development allows us to question the relationship between the expression of aspirations and specific processes of socialization. It opens an interesting analytical field in the identification of the type of institution (nuclear or extended family, school, job market, etc.) that is central in the transmission of migratory disposition to any given population. It also allows us to trace the filiation (or the absence of it) of migration aspiration with specific institutions, such as the nuclear family. As an example, for the Maghrebi Europeans whom I met during my research, the transmission of migratory dispositions involved different types of institutions. While the emigration projects of the people I met were often elaborated outside of the nuclear family, broader networks of extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins) sometimes played a role in the emergence of migration aspirations. My research findings also show the importance of institutions such as schools, universities and (maybe more surprisingly) employment agencies as places where people become accustomed to the idea of moving abroad. Rather than a smooth process of social reproduction, the accumulation of knowledge and skills supporting the development of migratory disposition largely happened outside of the interlocutors' social milieu of origin. This meant that they were often the "exceptions" among their family and friends in Europe. Looking at aspirations in relation to the concept of disposition has great analytical potential, especially when it comes to study of the migration of populations with a previous background of migration. It allows us to question how, and to what extent, migration practices are informed by previous practices of migration or if they are informed by entirely different dynamics. This also opens the way for further research, involving, for example, interviews with the parents or grandparents of Maghrebi Europeans engaged in emigration practices outside Europe. A limit of this theoretical proposition is that it could provide a rather deterministic framework to addressing the emergence of emigration aspirations and could overshadow the agency of actors in the expression of specific aspirations. This is why it is important to keep a broad approach in terms of the places and institutions where

the socialization surrounding forms of international mobility and the transmission of migratory disposition can happen.

The third contribution of this thesis to the debate on aspiration regards the exploration of forms of aspiration management (Carling and Collins 2018) and the mobilization of the concept of migratory infrastructure. Looking at the emergence of migration aspiration, my thesis shows the importance of institutional actors such as immigration agencies, employment agencies and private companies (to name a few) in encouraging some people to move while trying to discourage others. These institutional actors are very active in trying to produce migration aspirations in Europe among persons identified as potential 'good migrants'. They use numerous tools such as information sessions, advertisement campaigns and recruitment events. In describing how these actions were actually oriented toward producing specific types of migration aspiration, this thesis calls for aspiration to be considered as an object of governance. This opens an interesting analytical field because it allows us to study, not only how aspiration emerges and evolves during migration, but also how and in what direction these aspirations are 'channeled' and 'sorted' by a diversity of institutional actors throughout the migration process. All migration aspirations are not equally valued. While borders are relatively porous for highly skilled professionals looking for professional experience, the aspirations of people trying to move without the right set of skills or academic credentials may face more resistance. Looking at migration aspiration as an object of governance also contributes to the general discussion about migration policies and regulation and help us to unpack the sometimes very subtle channeling practices that occur at different stages of the migration process. This suggests that practices of controlling migration flows do not only involve the enforcement of borders and the passing of restrictive regulation, but also involve the very subjectivity of migrants themselves.

As this thesis describes, the actors and institutions engaged in the production of migration aspiration were quite diverse and were operating based on different logic. Quebec authorities were organizing special events and information sessions in Europe to encourage potential immigrants to apply for immigration. Their goal was to recruit skilled, French-speaking workers who would stay and become citizens. Belgian and French employment agencies were also encouraging people to move abroad but with different aims. Their encouraged people to move temporarily in order to learn new skills. Upon their return, with these new skills in their repertoire, Belgium and France would benefit from these return migrants' experience and become more competitive in the global economy. Private companies (in collaboration with Quebec authorities) were recruiting a skilled workforce from Europe, a type of skilled worker that was lacking in Quebec. Private immigration lawyers were offering their services to aspiring migrants to help them to deal with the sometimes complex administrative procedures. These are

only some of the actors who were involved in trying to encourage migration projects in Europe but, as described, they all had different objectives. This observation led me to add the notion of migratory infrastructure to my conceptual toolbox. This addition allowed me to analyze the diversity of actors and institutions and their (sometimes) conflicting logics of operation that constitute the field within which migrants navigate. This thesis foregrounds the work of Quebec authorities in producing specific types of aspirations among young Maghrebi Europeans. For future research, a promising perspective could be to analyze more systematically the forms of international mobility that are promoted by other actors, such as European employment agencies, especially in the framework of programs that specifically target young people living in popular neighborhoods.

In this dissertation, migration-related aspirations have been approached from different angles, each with their own specific theoretical dynamic. I have successively approached aspirations as representations of the future contextualized in systems of unequal distribution of hope, as a socially and culturally grounded behavior and as an object of governance and management. However, especially in chapter 6, the thesis also emphasizes the creativity that Maghrebi Europeans mustered when they arrived in Montréal and how they to carved out pathways of incorporation and forms of stability in the city, even in adverse conditions. Forms of cultural capital (such as the capacity to mobilize cultural reference to the French working class '*banlieues*') can contribute to the production of new types of arrival infrastructure that allow people to build opportunities for desirable futures in the city. From this perspective, aspirations also need to be understood as a form of agency. Looking at how migrants think about their future allows the researcher in migration studies to approach forms of "autonomy" (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013) or "excess" (Mezzadra 2016) of migration. Indeed, without denying the impact of structural dynamics and governmental practices in the shaping and channeling of migrants' aspirations, future oriented views– at least partially – exceed such dynamics and governmental practices, opening the field for original mobility practices and the production of new arrival infrastructures that break through (or transform) societal expectations.

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Appendix: table of key participants introduced in the thesis

Pseudonym and age*	Country of origin	Migratory situation at the time of the research	Previous experience of migration (excl. short term tourism)	Social networks in Canada before first arrival	Sections quoted
Abbas: C	France	Living in Montréal (no information about the status)	Yes - Canada	No	5.2.2. ; 5.4.1.
Adèle: A	France	Living in Montréal (international training program)	No	No	5.2.2.
Ahmed: C	Belgium	Living in Belgium.	No	Yes - Friend	1.3.2. ; 1.4. ; 1.5.2.
Alia: C	France	Living in France.	Yes - Morocco	No	1.3.1 ; 2.1.
Alma: D	France	Living in France. Applying for Permanent residence in Canada	Yes - Canada	No	2.3.3. ; 4.3.1.
Anas: C	France	Living in Belgium.	Yes - Belgium	No	4.3.2.
Asma: A	Belgium	Living in Belgium	No	No	3.1.2 ; 3.2.3.
Bahija: E	Belgium	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No	3.3.1.
Brahim: C	Algeria	Living in Montréal (no information about the status).	No information	No information	5.2.2.
Charlotte: B	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	No information	No information	5.1.1.
Clarisse: B	France	Living in Montréal (international student)	No	No	3.1.1. ; 3.3.2.
Didier: C	France	Living in France.	No	No	4.3.1. ; 4.3.2.
Fouad: B	France	Living in France	Yes – Ireland; Canada	No	1.1.; 1.3.2. ; 1.4. ; 2.1. ; 2.2.3. ; 6.3.2.
Hamza: B	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	No	No	5.1.1. ; 6.4.2.
Hana: C	Belgium	Living in Montréal (no information about the status).	Yes - Canada	No	5.2.2. ; 5.4.1.
Haroun: A	Belgium	Living in Belgium	No information	No information	2.2.2. ; 3.2.3.
Hosni: E	Belgium	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No	6.3.2.
Ilian: A	France	Living in France.	Yes - Canada	No	2.2.1. ; 2.3.1. ; 2.3.3. ; 5.3.1. ; 5.3.2. ; 5.4.1.
Ismaël: C	France	Living in Montréal (visitor)	No	No	6.4.1.

Issam: B	France	Living in Montréal (no information about the status)	No information	No information	5.2.2.
Jalil: C	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	No	Yes – extended family	2.1.
Jamila: A	Belgium	Living in Belgium	No	No	1.4. ; 1.5.1.
Karim: C	France	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes – England; Japan; Canada	No	5.3.1. ; 5.3.2.
Leila: C	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	Yes - Senegal	Yes – extended family	1.2. ; 1.4. ; 5.2.2.
Lounès: C	France	Living in Montréal. (permanent residence)	Yes – Australia; Canada	No	2.2.1. ; 3.1.2. ; 6.2.2.
Nacim: C	France	Living in Montréal (temporary worker visa)	Yes - Canada	No	0.4.2 ; 3.1.2. ; 4.3.1. ; 5.1.1. ; 5.4.1. ; 5.4.2.
Nahïl: D	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	No	No	6.3.1.
Noham: B	France	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	No	No	6.2.1.
Rachid: C	France	Living in a small city of the Quebec Province (permanent residence).	Yes - Ireland	No	3.3.2.
Rayan: D	France	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes – Morocco; Canada	No	4.2.1. ; 4.3.2.
Redouane: D	France	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No	6.3.2.
Sana: C	Tunisia	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No information	1.5.1. ; 2.2.2 ; 6.3.2.
Selim: A	Belgium	Living in Belgium	No information	No information	2.2.3.
Soan: B	France	Living in Montréal (no information about the status)	No information	No information	5.1.1.
Sonia: D	France	Living in Montréal (Working Holiday Visa)	Yes - Canada	No	0.4.3. ; 1.2. ; 1.4.
Tayeb: C	Belgium	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	No	No	1.3.2. ; 1.4. ; 2.2.2. ; 6.2.1.
Wassim: A	France	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No	2.3.4.
Yanis: A	Belgium	Living in Belgium	No	Yes – extended family	2.3.2.
Zineb: C	Belgium	Living in Montréal (permanent residence)	Yes - Canada	No information	5.3.1.; 5.3.2.

*Age code:
A = 20-24 years old
B = 25-29
C = 30-34
D = 35-39
E = 40+

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