MULTICULTURAL COMMON SPACES AND THE NEGOTIATION OF BELONGING: THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF QUEBEC AND THE INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS

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Abstract

This paper uses the conceptual framework of multicultural common spaces to explore the integration processes of immigrants into the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ). These multicultural common spaces seek to simultaneously promote and secure two related goals: to increase the overall collective vitality of English-speaking communities and allow the Anglophone population to be a bridge for newcomers seeking to fully integrate into Quebec's French culture and society. We argue that the institutional base of the ESCQ, along with personnel and community leaders, enable Anglophones to offer a multicultural common space for a diversity of newcomers to build a sense of attachment and belonging to Quebec. Our ethnographic study highlights the processes whereby immigrants negotiate their sense of identity and belonging within the multicultural common space of the ESCQ.

Résumé

Cet article utilise le cadre conceptuel des espaces communs multiculturels pour explorer les processus d'intégration des immigrants dans les communautés d'expression anglaise du Québec (CEAQ). Ces espaces communs multiculturels visent à favoriser et réaliser simultanément deux objectifs interreliés : augmenter la vitalité collective des communautés d'expression anglaise dans leur ensemble et permettre à la population anglophone d'être un pont pour les nouveaux arrivants qui cherchent à s'intégrer dans la culture et la société francophones du Québec. Nous soutenons que la base institutionnelle des CEAQ, avec les leaders individuels et communautaires, permet aux Anglophones d'offrir un espace commun multiculturel aux nouveaux arrivants de divers horizons afin que ces derniers puissent bâtir un sentiment d'attachement et d'appartenance au Québec. Notre étude ethnographique met en lumière les processus par lesquels les immigrants négocient leur sentiment d'identité et d'appartenance à l'intérieur de l'espace commun multiculturel offert par les CEAQ.

Introduction

The English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ) have maintained their historical presence for more than two centuries, allowing them to contribute meaningfully to the shaping of modern Quebec society. The ESCQ are an inclusive community of communities composed of diverse linguistic, ethno-cultural and religious groups scattered throughout the province. Beginning in the 1970s a number of state-sponsored integration and assimilationist policies, such as the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101), led to the demographic decline of the ESCQ and the erosion of much of their institutional base thereby reducing the status of the Anglophone population to a linguistic minority (Corbeil, Chavez and Pereira, 2010; Jedwab, 2004). After forty years and the exodus of half of its population, the English-speakers that remain must look to the integration of immigrants as a source of renewal for their communities. Today, as a linguistic minority living in a French majority, the ESCQ are more bilingual and strive to maintain their own network of formal and informal institutions along with community organizations and grassroots groups, although this network varies in size depending on whether one lives in urban Montréal or in the rural parts of Quebec. Many immigrants coming to the province share the same minority status as the ESCQ and it is these mutual experiences of marginalization that help newcomers identify closely with the English-speaking population and its institutions. In this paper, we argue that the institutional base of the ESCQ, along with personnel and community leaders, enable Anglophones to offer a multicultural common space for a diversity of newcomers to develop feelings of attachment and belonging. The incorporation of immigrants into the ESCQ achieves two goals: it increases the overall collective vitality of their communities and allows the Anglophone population to be a bridge for newcomers seeking to fully integrate into Quebec's French culture and society.

We begin by outlining the conceptual framework of a multicultural common space drawing from the scholarly literature on immigration, identity and belonging. We then offer a profile of the ESCQ which includes situating their minority status and highlights of the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of English-speaking communities followed by an exploration of the institutional support mechanisms for this population. As well, we explore what factors and dynamics influence immigrants' sense of identity and belonging as they negotiate, influence and create new social space within the ESCQ. It is crucial to understand and maintain sensitivity toward important nuances in the language and concepts we readily employ when speaking of and conceptualizing immigrants, such as "integration."

At the micro level of our analysis, we provide some preliminary content from our ethnography projects with the experiences newcomers face arriving in Quebec. The ethnographic knowledge was generated from our semi-structured interviews with participants from two different geographical areas of the province. Sherbrooke is an urban area surrounded by rural communities while Montréal and its suburbs are considered to be Quebec's major metropolitan region. Participants were found through the authors' professional contacts with the ESCQ community organizations and their directors and staff. We are particularly interested in discovering how immigrants build a biography in a new place and form attachments in social spaces. Questions we explore include: who do they rely on for support; what organizations do they seek out to help in the integration process; and, what kinds of cultural capital do they accumulate to construct a sense of belonging. We conclude with some propositions for further work on the multicultural common spaces among the ESCQ and their ability to act as a bridge to immigrant integration.

The Production of Multicultural
Common Spaces and the Context of Choice
Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991) contends that space is socially produced by people and their modes of production. The process of producing a social space is the outcome of a three-part dialectic between everyday practices and perceptions (*le perçu*), representations of space (*le conçu*) and the spatial imaginary of the time (*le vécu*) (Lefebvre, 1991). He argues that socially constructed spaces are made productive through social relations and practices located in a specific place and time. For Lefebvre, social spaces are characterized by their multiple, contradictory and conflictual nature. Ultimately, the production of space is highly contested and about power and dominance (Lefebvre, 1991).

The case of Quebec illustrates that it has been able to produce a social space in which the French language is spoken by the majority. As French is subject to assimilative pressures from the English national and continental majority, Quebec has formally legislated the use of French as the sole language of the public face of the province. Bill 22, adopted by the Liberal Government in 1974, made French the official language of Quebec while Bill 101, passed in 1977 by the Parti Québécois government, ensured French to be the language of communication in the domains of the courts, civil administration, business, labor relations, the workplace, education and throughout the physical landscape. Since the passing of Bill 101, the Anglophone minority has been steadfastly vigilant as it has worked to protect its

historically acquired rights. According to Weinstock (2011), "given the context of French in Canada and North America, it is easy to see why French-speaking Quebecers intent upon making French a chief pillar would *want* to make French mandatory by enshrining it in an official language law such as Bill 101." [original emphasis]

At the same time, Quebec is committed to cultural pluralism through its own immigration system. Quebec's Ministry of Immigration selects newcomers based on the socio-economic needs of the province and the state allows certain legal accommodations for ethno-cultural groups based on the recognition that they constitute socio-political entities within the province's public institutions (Iacovino and Sevigny, 2011). Newcomers integrate into a "context of choice" (Weinstock, 2011) where they are provided with the means to learn and speak French (through education), allowed certain accommodations in public institutions and, in the private realm, given the choice to maintain ethno-cultural identities. The private sphere can contain various places for cultural identity production and religious observances, including the home, community organizations, places of worship or private schools. The cumulative effect is what Kymlicka (1995) calls "societal cultures" in which members of a society are given a full range of choices across a full range of fields of human endeavor, that individuals are capable of choosing one thing over another. This social production of space is, as Lefebvre (1991) notes, produced through the interactions of various social actors in their negotiations and is often conflict-ridden and contentious. In the case of Quebec the production of social space is the outcome of the relations between the French majority and the linguistic, ethno-cultural minorities.[1]

For the purpose of our research, we observe that multicultural common spaces have been produced as locations in time and place where individuals from various ethno-cultural and religious groups and other Canadians can meet, interact and develop a shared sense of belonging (Dib, Donaldson and Turcotte, 2008). These multicultural common spaces then are an integral part of the "context of choice" for immigrants coming to Quebec. Some will gravitate toward and choose those spaces designed to integrate immediately into the French majority population. These spaces contain government recognized settlement service provisions. Other newcomers seek out the English communities as a more secure space to build a feeling of welcome. Thus, the ESCQ's institutions and organizations (informal or not recognized by the government of Quebec) serve as common spaces where newcomers are provided with reassurance as they begin to participate in the processes of "identity work" necessary to building a sense of belonging in their new homeland. This identity

work can be enhanced or impeded by many factors such as gender, small or large numbers, hyper-visibility as an ethno-cultural minority or marginalization in the labour force (Creese, 2011). By providing multicultural common spaces, the ESCQ are able to bridge the social distance between newcomers and the wider social context, with the goal of full integration and shared citizenship among all Quebecers. In addition to this, as Urtnowski, O'Donnell, Shragge, Robineau and Forgues (2012) observe, diverse linguistic and ethno-cultural minority groups within the province share common concerns of social justice, demographic challenges and employment equity.

While it is imperative to be cognizant of the phenomena and dynamics of integration and belonging, it is equally important to ask how do immigrants develop feelings of attachment in their everyday encounters with the ESCQ? How do they negotiate new social space and use/participate in institutions of the ESCQ? In order to situate our investigation of these multicultural common spaces at the local level, we employ Appadurai's (1996) concepts of "locality" and "neighbourhood." Discovering how individuals form a sense of attachment and belonging to a particular locale, neighbourhood or community, can be aided through our understanding of "situated communities." An individual's locality is embodied in the social relations and social contexts in which she/he interacts with others, where sites of identity and belonging are enacted. Often in local neighbourhoods individuals from various ethno-cultural and religious groups as well as newcomers and other Canadians meet and come together and develop a shared sense of belonging. Appadurai delineates "locality" as primarily relational and contextual because individuals at the local level, within their neighbourhoods, are empowered to act socially as they go about their daily interactions in their ordinary lives. He posits that neighbourhoods have a very personal feeling that take on meaning when people exchange ideas through communication.

Appadurai's work on the nature of locality and situated community sets up an interesting point of departure for analyzing the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity that is establishing itself as the norm in large multicultural centers like Montréal. Our world is continuously globalizing and made up of individuals with multiple identities who speak two, three, four languages in their daily lives. People must negotiate the relation between both the global context and their local contexts in everyday life. Globalization is partly about the convergence of cultures, decreasing space between countries and people that used to be more separated by borders and space. If we are to understand institutional and socio-structural realities in a society,

we must begin by understanding how social practices are engaged at the local, grassroots level of community involvement.

In contemporary Quebec, we see emerging cultures and integration as a fluid, evolving process of communal exchanges and interpersonal interactions in spaces, such as neighbourhoods (Hebert *et al*, 2008). The intersectional nature of belonging represents divergent cultures that are hybrid and multifaceted.

The English-Speaking Communities of Quebec:
Connecting Multicultural Common Spaces
Changing demographic characteristics in the ESCQ limit the relevance of existing theories that concentrate on "community" for language minorities. Measuring community as "locality" in a globalizing world has become increasingly difficult as societies become more heterogeneous and social cohesion is more fragmented (Appadurai,1996; Lash and Urry, 1994). In Quebec, the "Anglophone community" is currently undergoing a process of redefinition (Stevenson, 1999; Urtnowski *et al*, 2012) characterized by diverse mobilities due to outmigration factors, an aging population, and increased immigration and bilingualism. Strong communal ties no longer provide the basis of community "collective identity" rooted in a common language, culture and historical experience (Bourhis (ed.), 2008; Scowen, 1991). The population is more diffuse and multicultural as notions of belonging cut across linguistic and ethnic lines of identity and inclusion (Jedwab, 2004). This trend opens up a space for ethnographic inquiry that explores how we can *reconceptualize* "community" considering the evolving makeup and composition of the English-speaking community in Montréal.

At the same time, the wider Quebec context poses particular challenges for its linguistic minorities. The traditional *two solitudes* (MacLellan, 1945) cultural theory constructs a longstanding *us-them* relationship. Today, successive legislative and administrative measures protect the distinct French language and culture. Protecting these serves as the rationale for an *intercultural* civic model and the societal project of *francization* that ensures the primacy of the French language and culture in civic society (Juteau, 2002; McAndrew and Janssens, 2004). These policies impose French on language minorities in the public space, despite the fact that English is also widely used in Montréal. The needs of minorities, such as providing essential English-language services to members of the ESCQ, are secondary to the objectives of the Francophone majority (Jedwab, 2007).

Community organizations provide many essential English-language services to the ESCQ. They serve as sites of mobilization

and association for coordinated efforts to advance the legitimacy of using the English language in public life (Caldwell, 1994; Jedwab, 2007). As such, they are key sites of investigation into the evolving nature and workings of English-speaking "community." By viewing the community as a resource, we can create new genres for sharing the sources of knowledge among diverse community actors in the school as well as in community organizations. Many Anglophone community organizations reflect this trend toward increased diversity as these organizations include the participation of bilingual and other ethnocultural groups around the interests they share (COCo, 2012). Within education, newcomers and their children bring with them different kinds of cultural knowledge from which students and teachers can benefit greatly.

Understanding *who* exactly still identifies with the ESCQ is crucial to determining how such diversity affects representation and governance within its institutions and community organizations (Jedwab, 2010). Given the increasing level of diversity and multiple identities, we must problematize what it means to be part of an "Anglophone community" in Quebec. Many community organizations of the ESCQ adapt differently, opting for a *rapprochement* with the broader Francophone community (Oakes and Warren, 2007; QCGN, 2012). The ESCQ possess social and economic capital useful in facilitating newcomer integration, "bridging" immigrants to the Francophone community (Vatz Laaroussi and Liboy, 2010). Linguistic and cultural identity become more fluid and plural, no longer confined to rigid and mutually exclusive categories.

The ESCQ largely define themselves through their particular way of interacting with the dominant Francophone community, not being incorporated or subsumed within it and not wanting to dominate it. Rather, English-speakers have developed a *rapprochement* (Oakes *et al.*, 2007; QCGN, 2012) with the wider collective and these "strategic ambiguities" (Burke, 1955) can serve as a site of awareness and investigation to understand more clearly how belonging is negotiated and fostered in Quebec. The case of Quebec is particular in that complex socio-political antagonisms are situated against these interactions in the "glocal spaces" (Hébert, Wilkinson, Ahmad and Temitop, 2008) of Montréal's diverse neighbourhoods.

In recent years, especially since the Charter of the French Language in 1976, the English-speaking population has witnessed a massive outmigration among its communities. Today, the ESCQ represent 13% of the province's population. Almost a third (32%) of the English-speaking population is composed of immigrants (Corbeil *et al*,

2010). In this way, the ESCQ rely heavily on global migrants for their demographic renewal.[2]

Ethno-cultural diversity has always been a feature of the ESCQ with British, Scottish, Irish, Jewish (76% of the Jewish community of Quebec are English-speaking) and others who have long ago made Quebec their home. Eighty-five percent of Quebec's Sikhs and 6% of Muslims belong to the ESCQ (Quebec Community Groups Network, 2013). A more recent trend is the rising proportion of visible minorities among the English-speaking immigrant population. Blacks of various origins, Arabs, West Asians, South Asians and Koreans make up this group (Corbeil *et al*, 2010). According to the National Household Survey of 2011, 52.3% of Quebec's foreign born population was able to converse in English and French while 25.9% only knew French and 17.4% only knew English (Statistics Canada, NHS 2014).

Given these numbers there is no one way to define the culture, ethnicity or religion of the English-speaking population. The ESCQ have always been composed of a diverse array of identities with different historical, ethno-cultural and mobility patterns. However, these communities do share two aspects of belonging: the English-language as a common vehicle for communication and their minority status. The institutional base of the ESCQ works as a multicultural, and often multilingual, common space which functions as the setting for the maintenance of inter-ethno cultural and religious relations and the fostering of a collective sense of belonging and integration across diversity and language.

As we have previously examined (Pichette and Gosselin, 2013), the institutional and organizational support and control of the ESCQ differ depending on demographic and geographic factors. Overall, the ESCQ have strong institutional support and control in education, health and social services, community organizations and a variety of cultural and media outlets; however, in areas of employment and economic development few programs exist to offer services in English (Jedwab and Maynard, 2008, in Pichette and Gosselin, 2013). The ESCQ's institutional base can be divided into needs-based institutions such as schools, hospitals, social services and economic development corporations as well as interest-based organizations like drama and language arts. Although no official inventory of services offered to immigrants currently exists,[3] many of the ESCQ institutions and organizations do aid newcomers who feel more at ease communicating in English rather than French. In the urban areas of the province, such as Montréal where the ESCQ institutional and organization support and control are the strongest and where many newcomers seek residence, integration services exist for newcomers. Organizations

such as the Centre for Community Organizations (COCo) and the Immigrant Workers Centre in Montréal help with the processes of settlement, service referrals and support networks for employment. In the Sherbrooke area, which has a high concentration of refugees (many speak English as their second language), churches and schools help with integration needs and the English School Board offers free English-language conversation classes to newcomers.[4]

The institutions and organizations of the ESCQ connect English-speaking Quebecers with immigrants from diverse backgrounds and languages in one common space. This common space offers formal and informal services and provides both material and less quantifiable forms of support. These organizations and their offerings provide a place for immigrants to work at developing a personal sense of belonging as well as participate in the processes of community building. These processes that operate at the individual and collective levels exist within the framework of Quebec's interculturalism. As a world view and accompanying set of policies, interculturalism places the primacy of the French language and culture above all other languages and cultures in the province (Ghosh, 2004). Given the minority status of the English-speaking community, full integration of newcomers can only happen at the majority level. The ESCQ do, however, play a role in acting as a bridge or gateway to the wider French community for immigrants. The ESCQ institutions and organizations can, and do, provide the supports for building multiple and simultaneous spaces of belonging because of their multilingual and multicultural nature. This pathway from ESCQ to the larger French culture and society can ease some of the burdens of migration for those newcomers with a better grasp of English than French and ultimately mean their full retention in Quebec or dispersal to another destination in Canada.

Narratives of Belonging
In 2011, Sherbrooke welcomed approximately 1000 newcomers from 54 different countries. The following two narratives delineate the settlement experiences of women who came to the Sherbrooke area in 2005 and 2011 respectively. Participant #1, originally from Mexico, lives with her three children and was, at the time of the interview, separated from her *Québécois* husband. Participant #2 and her family came from Columbia only one month before the interview took place and was living in Sherbrooke with her two children and husband. Both subjects used the settlement services of the Service d'aide aux Néo-Canadiens (SANC). This organization receives funding from the provincial government to help with the integration of newcomers to

the region. As participant #1 recounts, she immediately sought out the services of SANC for help with communication:

> The first thing I needed upon arrival in Quebec was help with French. I speak English a little and understand but everyone only wanted to talk to me in French at the bank, at the store so I needed someone to come along with me and translate.

When asked if she worked outside the home in remunerated work she explained:

> Not right now because I have to learn more French. Once I learn French I would like to teach young children in school.

Participant #2 was also eager to find employment once she had learned French:

> I cannot work now even though I was studying to be a pediatrician in my country. I must learn more French. But I know the textbooks are in English so why can't I study in English?

It appears that both women are more comfortable with navigating the complexities of their integration process in English. This is normal as English is the global language so most countries of origin for newcomers would have knowledge, and use, of English for education and everyday socio-economic practices.

When asked if they would stay in the Sherbrooke area and why, the two participants both cited the city as an immigrant-friendly area where they saw a future for themselves and, especially, their children. Both imagined their attachment to place as being through the second generation and seemed to be located in both Francophone and Anglophone communities. Participant #1 said:

> I like this area, people have been kind to us and make us feel at home here. I see a future for my children because of the education system, especially the English schools in the area like Champlain (College) and Bishop's University. They will get a good education because of this.

For participant #2, her sense of belonging and locality appears to include a co-existence of languages, religions and cultures:

> *It's so nice, my children play with friends from all over the world here (Sherbrooke), I have access to English and French churches, community organizations, I want to know about the English university (Bishop's) and if I can continue my studies there. I want to stay here because I can give my children choices to grow up in.*

The two participants appear to navigate their sense of belonging by situating their identity production in both the Francophone and Anglophone worlds. They straddle both realities but use the English-

speaking community infrastructure as a bridge to achieve their ultimate goal which is integration into Quebec society. For the participants in this study, the English-speaking community infrastructure includes needs-based organizations like schools, service organizations as well as interest-based groups such as churches and cultural groups. This narrative data collected in the Sherbrooke region reveals how newcomers use their locality as a multicultural common space to build a sense of belonging that incorporates both Francophone and Anglophone communities.

To explore how immigrants can belong to, participate in and contribute to their communities within the ESCQ, we now look at two recent immigrants and their experience in Montréal. We interviewed two Muslim women and discussed the challenges they face with belonging in Quebec and the attachments they have to the English-speaking institutions they currently work in. This preliminary research data suggests that Muslim women, as a vulnerable minority, desire to integrate into Quebec society but experience more difficulty for various reasons than other immigrants.[5] The two Muslim women's prospects for participation and integration have been limited by the social discourse in the wider Quebec community on the proposed Charter Affirming the Values of State Secularism (Charter of State Secularism), Bill 60.[6] These interviews provide valuable insight into their feelings of belonging and the "limits of integration" in the current social and political context. Although multicultural common spaces in the ESCQ offer a space for identity formation, the politics of identity currently impede this particular minority group's efforts at integration into Quebec society. The following sentiments focus on certain facets of the lives of the two Muslim women as they articulate a space for belonging in their local contexts and the realities they face while attempting to feel "integrated" in and contribute to society.

For participant #3**,** a Moroccan-born Muslim who immigrated to Quebec in 2011, the process of integration has been tenuous at best. She is trilingual, speaking fluent French, Arabic and English. Now a permanent resident in Quebec, she speaks about her feelings of belonging to the social space in Montréal. Initially, she was very optimistic and excited about the prospect of belonging to a society that embraced notions of diversity in which multiple cultures live together in peace, respecting one another's individual values and ways of life but her recent experiences finding work demonstrate the difficulties of integration:

> I applied for the STM (Société de transport de *Montréal)* and they asked me to come for the interview. I could see they were impressed with my abilities...then asked me to take the blood tests and I thought I would

start on July 20, 2013. I received a call from management soon after I had completed the requirements for the position. They said, "You can try next year because we found someone else for this position"... I am really good in finance and I wanted to continue in this field. I am a Muslim and a woman, that's the reality here. So I had to think about changing careers. I know I can find a job easily in Morocco with my hijab and my qualifications.

Beginning with the introduction of the proposed Charter of State Secularism in August of 2013, and lasting until the defeat of the Parti Québécois in 2014, the social climate in Quebec became increasingly hostile toward immigrants and Muslim women in particular (Scott, 2013). Muslim women's social interactions and daily life were increasingly characterized by discrimination and fear on the part of fellow citizens. This is a visceral experience for her and touches the very heart of her identity. She still identifies with her homeland as a Muslim and has not felt able to fully embrace her Quebec or Canadian identity.

Her experiences have not, however, been uniformly bad. She has found a more welcoming and accommodating reception from the Anglophone community in the borough of Notre-Dame-de-Grace (NDG) where she currently lives. NDG is exemplary of how the Anglophone community is being transformed into a multicultural community whose members feel at home in multiple cultural contexts and languages. Here, almost 30% of the population are immigrants (Urtnowski *et al*, 2012). In this neighbourhood, she works as an educator at Big Step Daycare center, a social space that has helped her feel included, to which she can contribute and participate, and in which she can grow as she builds her new identity in Quebec.

The multicultural common space within the daycare center allows members to come together, collaborate and share a common goal, that of caring for the children. She has been working there since October 2013. In an Anglo milieu, she has found the parents, staff and fellow educators to be the most accepting and open, and this has helped her connect with the broader NDG community. Her initial feeling of acceptance occurred during her interview with the director of the daycare. The director asked, "What can you do for the children?" This simple question gave her the agency to connect with this local community borough and feel a sense of belonging based entirely on her merit and not on her cultural/religious background. Attachment to locality has become an "inclusive" space where ethnically and religiously diverse people come together. This local context is the most significant space of belonging she has experienced in Quebec up to now.

Participant #4 relates a very different experience as an international student currently working on her Ph.D. at Concordia University. She is an Anglophone Danish Muslim woman who arrived in Quebec in 2011 and wants to obtain permanent residency. She wears the traditional Islamic dress consisting of a full hijab (the entire modest dress of a Muslim woman). She describes her personal pathway as a Muslim woman, an academic, a Danish citizen and the contribution she is currently making to Quebec society. She relates that the local affiliations that Muslims are involved in everyday are often overlooked by the wider community. Regarding integration, she asks, "How can I integrate into something that I already belong to (or feel that I belong to)?"

Abstract notions like "Muslim community" in Montréal manifest themselves differently in the lives of young Muslim women who express their identities in a multitude of ways depending on the social situation they find themselves in at any given moment. Participant #4 describes Concordia University as a more inclusive space in which she feels valued and appreciated for her efforts and contributions to Quebec society. She has a prayer room at the university, her network of friends and associations usually offer positive interactions, and she has friends both inside and outside her faith (Muslim and non-Muslim affiliations). She lives in a predominantly English-speaking milieu where she participates in and attends social events in English. Through her daily social interactions, she now sees community as a place where the agency involved in carving out individual identities is made up of layered experiences, the university representing a multicultural space of belonging where networks are created. Here, Muslim students in particular feel uninhibited to participate in and interact with the wider community through this institutional base:

> Young people are resilient, the majority are English and being part of Concordia, as an inclusive institution,the Muslims here feel good inclusion, there's a library, a prayer space--one of the best in Montreal, an MSA office... they have resources to feel comfortable in this very secular environment. They belong here and I feel there is no taboo telling my colleagues, "I am going to go pray, I'll be right back". I feel this across the board [in each social interaction] I think maybe this helps them keep their resilience, at least in their everyday life they are included there is this inclusion they don't feel weird, there is a space for them. So when they do go out to the rest of society and listen to the media [for example], they can be highly critical without it phasing them in their everyday life.

The identities of both these women and the lives they lead in Montréal are very different. Although both are Muslim women, they

experience their social realities in vastly different ways. Participant #3 relates that her strongest attachments remain with her Muslim/Moroccan community in NDG. This connection safeguards her integrity and spirit while offering support in the face of current adversity, whereas participant #4 has a network of friends and support within the more inclusive university environment. Interestingly, both participants relate that Anglo-Quebecers seem to be more open and accepting towards immigrants than the Francophone community.

Until the electoral defeat of the Parti Qu*ébé*cois in 2014, the Charter of State Secularism did, however, have a marked impact on the realities of the two respondents. Unfortunately, both related that if Bill 60 were to pass and the ban on religious dress were to become law, they would depart. Participant #4 describes:

> Having a voice is different. I don't know if they do [Muslim women]. The frustration of your voice not being heard is because you are a minority... And if you are Anglophone you are a minority within a minority and if you are an ethnically visible minority that is worse: they feel it on a triple level: you are English and also visible as well because you choose to wear the hijab or your skin colour is a little darker than others. I think it is complex, I hate saying that but it really is.

Conclusion: ESCQ as a Bridge to Immigrants

An initial conclusion of this research is that immigrants wish to participate. They want to belong to the ESCQ in a variety of ways and forms, with many already having contributed to the ESCQ's vitality. Depending on the level of "integration" or "incorporation," which influences to what extent immigrants feel that they belong to and identify with the ESCQ, they will naturally desire to have a positive impact on a community to which they are essentially contributing and to organizations that provide support and represent their interests.

As we argue, *multicultural common spaces* represent a useful unit of analysis in understanding the production of new social spaces. Immigrants interact on a day-to-day level with Anglophones and other members of the ESCQ as they go about their new lives, settling in various ways. They become involved in communities and neighbourhoods at the local/micro-level, and rely on services from the ESCQ in this process. Communities offer a site for exploration because they have the potential for local, diverse forms of engagement through their practices and communal interactions. This research seeks to understand the relationships built among Francophones, Anglophones and Allophones that makeup an increasingly large portion of the English-speaking community sector in institutions and grassroots organizations located in diverse Montréal neighborhoods

as well as in the Sherbrooke area. By highlighting locality-based relationships, we can examine the conflicts and tensions through material issues at the local level.

Furthermore, this preliminary investigation demonstrates that the ESCQ can continue to play a critical role in acting as a bridge between immigrants and the wider Francophone population at the State-level. Our presupposition is that immigrants and newcomers adapt to the wider Quebec context by first anchoring/bridging their sense of belonging to the English-speaking community context. The theoretical framework used in this paper comprises an approach to reconceptualizing community by analyzing the English-speaking organizations and institutions that respond to the needs of newcomers and immigrants.

Further Research Linking "Integration" with "Citizenship"

We suggest that further research is needed to link notions of belonging with "integration" and "citizenship." We need a deeper understanding of how the ESCQ and their organizations apply local meanings to referencing their constituents according to political language such as "integration" within the context of the ESCQ, immigration and the Quebec majority. As our work progresses, we will situate these insights on immigrant integration into the broader socio-political discourses of the Francophone majority. We will show the conflictual relations or tensions around the common notions and expectations of how immigrants must "integrate," how they must do it and on whose terms, in order to become legitimate and acceptable "citizens." As was highlighted by the two Montréal-based participants in our study, this discourse is reductionist and exclusionary. By reducing integration to a fixed, monolithic identity, it essentializes who can be deemed legitimate in Quebec's national imaginary. Next, we will explore how newcomers develop their locality into a sense of belonging through the ESCQ's bridge work and how notions of citizenship play into the politics of identity.

ENDNOTES

1   The dominant French population often sees itself besieged by the enemies within (Anglos and immigrants). For example the Parti Québécois government proposed in 2013 a Charter Affirming the Values of State Secularism, Bill 60, to outlaw the display of religious symbols in public, and Bill 14 to strengthen provisions of the French language charter. The current Liberal Government has expressed more openness to bilingualism and has promised to produce its own version of a values charter in the near future.

2   Among the Francophone population, immigrants represent 7.6% of the majority group.

3   See Pichette and Gosselin, 2013. This work is part of the Institutional Vitality Research Project (IVRP) contracted by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN). The IVRP includes an inventory of ESCQ institutions and organizations as well as their activities. In addition, interviews with executive directors of different organizations were conducted. The article by Pichette and Gosselin (2013) provides an analysis of the findings by the IVRP using an institutional vitality model from the literature on group vitality indicators. See especially Bourhis and Landry (2008).

4   Cheryl Gosselin's (2010). Author's personal conversation with a volunteer at the English School Board's Adult Learning Centre in Sherbrooke, QC.

5   This preliminary research data represents our initial findings and is part of a larger pool of interviews currently being conducted by the authors. We anticipate the findings from our expanded study to be consistent with this finding.

6   Although the defeat of the Parti Qu*ébé*cois brought about the end of their form of the Charter of Quebec values and although the centrality of this topic in the social discourse declined after the electoral victory of the Quebec Liberal Party in 2014, issues of religion and secularism nonetheless remain important within the current social discourse in Quebec. The Charter Affirming the Values of State Secularism is also called the Charter of Quebec Values, in French: *Charte de la laïcité* or *Charte des valeurs québécoises*.

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