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Francophone Immigrants Leaving Montreal to Settle in Toronto: What Happened and What is Happening?

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FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANTS LEAVING MONTREAL TO SETTLE IN TORONTO:
WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT IS HAPPENING?

by

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A Major Research Paper
Presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

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ABSTRACT

This Major Research Paper aims at understanding what the settlement experiences and push factors are that contribute to out-migration of Francophone immigrants from Montreal to Toronto. Through a social inclusion framework, and relying on both primary data from key informants and a literature review, this Major Research Paper specifically argues that some Francophone immigrants leave Montreal for Toronto because they perceive that there are systemic barriers to their integration in Quebec, mainly in the labour market, and they believe that the city of Toronto is more open to immigrants and also offers better employment opportunities.

Key words:

Montreal; Toronto; Francophone immigrant; inter-provincial migration; labour market integration.

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Chapter1: Introduction

This major research paper is about Francophone immigrants who leave Montreal to settle in Toronto. It seeks to understand the factors that play a role in pushing Francophone immigrants to leave a city where their mother tongue is spoken, to settle in an Anglophone city. This research tries to understand better their experience of settlement in Montreal and to a lesser degree in Toronto. Out-migration from Quebec has been highlighted as an issue to address (DeVoretz and Pivnenko, 2007). It is especially concerning since the net loss of immigrants that Montreal is experiencing is among those with post-secondary education (Hou and Bourne, 2004). Surprisingly there is not a lot of academic research on the subject. This paper aims to fill that gap.

This major research paper is divided as follows: first, the theoretical framework used in this study will be highlighted, namely social inclusion. Second, the methodology utilised will be laid out. Then a literature review will be presented and provide an overview of the principal issues at stake. Next, data from primary sources, namely Francophone immigrants who left Montreal and settled in Toronto, will be shown. Finally a discussion section will wrap-up the findings and will suggest some policy recommendations.

This major research paper specifically argues that some Francophone immigrants leave Montreal for Toronto because they perceive that there are systemic barriers to their integration, mainly into the labour market, and they believe Toronto offers better employment opportunities. This paper will give a voice to Francophone immigrants who have gone through the process of double

settlement, in Montreal and in Toronto, and will therefore shed some light on the motives and challenges faced. That knowledge will be helpful to develop appropriate policies to improve the odds of smoother economic integration of immigrants into Quebec society, especially visible minorities.

“Inclusion requires ‘freedom from shame’. It is thus not just the avoidance of unsatisfactory conditions but the attitude to the conditions”
(Sen 1983, as cited in ROEHER Institute, 2003, p.15)

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

To guide this analysis, social inclusion concepts will be used as a theoretical framework. This is particularly appropriate for this major research paper since social inclusion promotes a comprehensive vision of inclusion. In the last few years, many scholars¹ used social inclusion as a theoretical framework, and the concept has increasingly gained credibility in the field of immigration in Canada.

Social inclusion as a concept emerged in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s as an answer to growing issues in welfare programs (Guildford, 2000). France was the first country to adopt social inclusion policies and, soon after, other European countries followed (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). During the 1980s, the European Community (EC) used a social inclusion framework in order to create social policies that would be accepted by all its member states (Guildford, 2000).

Notwithstanding its use over the years, it is rather difficult to reach consensus on a definition of social inclusion, as it is a flexible concept created through political and ideological convictions (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). However, Freiler (2002, as cited in ROEHER Institute, 2003)

¹ In addition to the scholars cited in this section, see Sen, 2000; Li, 2003; Caidi and Allard, 2005.

wrote a definition that conveys how the concept is viewed in this major research paper:

Social inclusion is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth (p. 15).

According to Omidvar and Richmond (2003, p.1), social inclusion “involves the basic notions of belonging, acceptance and recognition,” and for the immigrant population it means the ability to participate fully in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of their country of settlement. In addition, social inclusion is a multidimensional concept that involves social, cultural and political aspects (Mitchell and Shillington, 2002; Papillon, 2002; Omidvar and Richmond, 2003).

Social inclusion is more than denouncing and fighting poverty and other economic measures like employment rates, even though for many immigrants one of the first steps to integration into a new society is economic inclusion, and finding employment is the key to achieving that. Access to the labour market is only part of the integration process and does not guarantee in and of itself social integration (Mitchell and Shillington, 2002; ROEHER Institute, 2003). As Papillon (2002) puts it, integration is a complex process:

For immigrants, inclusion is more a process than a fixed moment. Starting in early stages of settlement, inclusion in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the city is an ongoing challenge. In many ways, the challenge is also transmitted to subsequent generations that seek to strike a balance between their Canadian roots and their parents’ origin (p.4).

When using social inclusion concepts, exclusion should also be taken into consideration, since it is the polar opposite (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). Groups and individuals who are excluded because of their race or for any other reasons are not able to participate fully in society.

Exclusion concepts help to understand the situation many people live in and also help to evaluate and comprehend how it happens and how it is sustained (Guildford, 2000). Saloojee (2003) goes even further and states that social inclusion has to address discrimination, racism and social exclusion to resonate. For instance, discrimination in the labour force is an issue for too many immigrants in Canada (Mitchell and Shillington, 2002) and is an important dimension of inclusion to address. Specifically, Saloojee (2003) states that “accommodating differences and eliminating barriers to equality of opportunity are the hallmarks of social inclusion” (p.10).

Exclusion is concerned with the impact of marginalization, while social inclusion focuses on understanding what is actually working to overcome exclusion (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). Social inclusion is contrary to discrimination; it is a complete vision that goes beyond the elimination of barriers, to advance unity through activism and change, so it is both a course of action and result (Saloojee, 2003).

A valuable aspect of social inclusion is that it not only helps us to understand economic and social exclusion, but it also helps to tackle the processes in which exclusion arises (Guildford, 2000). Another interesting facet of social inclusion is that it is not only relevant for policy-making, but it is actually one of the goals. In particular, it is a progressive approach to social policy questions in Canada (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). Social inclusion as a concept has been developed to push policy-thinking farther than what has been done thus far (Guildford, 2000; Omidvar and Richmond, 2003; ROEHER Institute, 2003). However, Guildford (2000)

stresses the importance of having strong political leadership in order to bring about effective advancement of social and economic inclusion policies. In a liberal country like Canada, the public discourse tends to highlight that everybody is equal, therefore that all have a fair access to opportunities. However, many groups are voicing their concerns that, in reality, they are systematically excluded and consequently cannot fully participate in the Canadian society (ROEHER Institute, 2003).

Omidvar and Richmond (2003) highlight five goals that social inclusion should promote for policy making: 1) developing a long-term vision for policy-making; 2) addressing the needs of at-risk and excluded communities; 3) bringing together stakeholders from different backgrounds and interests to explore solutions; 4) dealing with discrimination in any shape or form; and 5) making sure that policy recommendations are based on fact. On the other hand, according to the ROEHER Institute (2003), social inclusion should also include an attitudinal (public awareness) dimension in its analysis, because inclusion cannot be achieved without a change in attitude in the population, a dimension that is unfortunately neglected in the literature.

Even if there are no theoretical frameworks that are in themselves able to capture perfectly immigrants' integration challenges, in this research project social inclusion nonetheless offers an all-encompassing framework that is most helpful in understanding what might trigger Francophone immigrants to leave Quebec. Not only does it provide the necessary tools for an analysis of the different issues related to integration, but it also focuses on solutions via policy-making.

Finally, social inclusion is valuable to find new perspectives on newcomers' settlement challenges, especially integration into the labour market. As Omidvar and Richmond (2003) point out, there is no point in recruiting the best immigrants in the world if they cannot find a suitable environment to thrive in Canada.

Chapter 3: Description of Methods

This major research project is a qualitative study using a literature review and case studies with key informant interviews. The literature review is an important component of this research, as it will serve as a basis of knowledge for understanding the experiences as told by the key informants. To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies involving primary data focusing on inter-provincial migration from Quebec to Ontario. In that context, conducting interviews was essential to add valuable input and richness to the study. Personal stories provided by key informants will enable a linkage between the information provided in the literature review, that outlines the context in which immigrants evolve in Quebec, and the real experiences of immigrants who went through the settlement process in Montreal and then decided to move to Toronto. This method allows us to go beyond the clues and assumptions provided in the literature review to pinpoint specific motives from the life experience of immigrants.

The methodology did not aim at achieving a representative sampling, but rather to capture the settlement experience of individuals. The goal was to identify challenges and shed some light on the settlement experience of some Francophone immigrants in Montreal and, to a lesser extent, in Toronto. More specifically, our goal was to bring into focus the constraints those key informants experienced in Montreal, what motivated them to move to Toronto, and what their settlement experience in Toronto has been thus far.

3.1 Participants

To gather primary data, six Francophone immigrants were interviewed. There were four women and two men, all in their thirties except for one participant who was in her early forties. Five key informants were immigrants from the economic class, specifically three were skilled workers personally evaluated according to the Quebec point system, and two were dependants of principal applicants. One key informant was a refugee claimant legally allowed to work in Canada. Two key informants immigrated during their teenage years with their parents and, as a consequence, were not the primary decision makers in the immigration process. All the other key informants landed in Montreal with the intention to settle in that city, but later decided to move to Toronto.

Five participants in the study had university level degrees, and one had some university education without graduating but is holding a professional college diploma. They studied in a variety of fields: business related programs, engineering, social work, and communications. They obtained their university degrees in their home countries or in a third country, with the exception of the two participants who immigrated during adolescence, who were educated in Quebec. In Montreal, all have been actively looking for work but two participants were not able to access employment. In Toronto, only one key informant had not find employment. Their countries of origin are: Haiti (3), Cameroon (2), and Ivory Cost (1). Three of them are landed immigrants, two are Canadian citizens, and at the time of interview one was a refugee claimant. With the exception of the two key informants who immigrated to Canada with their parents, all had been living in Montreal between 3 months and 1 year during 2006 - 2007 before moving in

Toronto. At the time of the interview they had been living in Toronto between 3 months and 1 year except for one participant who had moved to Toronto 20 years ago.

The primary research question for this major research paper is why a Francophone immigrant would leave Montreal to settle in Toronto. What was important for that study was to find key informants who in addition to being Francophone immigrant, were highly educated, legally allowed to work in Canada, and who had have been looking for work in Quebec. Therefore in that case, the sampling is fulfilling those needs. In addition, what makes this sample particularly interesting is that they are all visible minorities and this is reflecting the current reality of immigration in Quebec and in Ontario. Immigration from traditional source country like France from instance, only represented 7.8% of the total immigration in Quebec from 2002 to 2005 (Institut de la statistique du Quebec, 2007a). Also, the continent from which Quebec received the most immigrants in 2006 was Africa with 13,325 people in 2006 (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2007b). Not to mentioned that Haiti has been a source country of immigrants in Quebec since the 1960s (Madibbo, 2005). Visible minorities are also very present in the Toronto CMA. According to the 2001 census, out of a total population of 4,467,960, 1,712,535 were visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2005). Finally the key informant who arrived 20 years ago in Toronto is relevant for two reasons. First, her experience was very similar to the other immigrants and, secondly, because of the nature of her work, she is very knowledgeable about the situation of Francophones in Toronto, especially regarding the labour market, so her input was valuable.

3.2 Process

The interviews were conducted in French by the author (see attached Questionnaire, appendix B), and lasted 35 to 45 minutes. A semi-structured interview guide was used allowing key informants flexibility on the scale of information they were willing to share. Interviews consisted of 20 questions and were mostly focused on the immigrants' perceptions of their settlement in Montreal and on their settlement experience so far in Toronto. Specific attention was given to employment, as it is a very important aspect of settlement for most immigrants (Godin, 2005).

Recruiting key informants was more difficult than anticipated. Advertising flyers, written in French, were posted in three organisations that serve the Francophone community in Toronto: Le Centre médical du Centre Francophone de Toronto; Le Centre de ressources en emploi Francophone du Collège Boréal; and, L'Institut de leadership des femmes de l'Ontario. In addition, the counsellors working in Le Centre de ressources en emploi Francophone du Collège Boréal distributed flyers advertising the research to some of their clients whom they thought met the profile and might be interested. All of the potential key informants who phoned to participate in this research were the ones who had been handed advertising flyers from the counsellors. Snowball sampling was encouraged, but none of the participants knew other people who had the necessary profile for this study. All participants were given 20 dollars in compensation for their time.

3.3 Limitations

Since all key informants left Montreal to settle in Toronto, their settlement experience is likely to have been negative in some respect, thus an emphasis on the negative sides of being an immigrant in Montreal might appear. This has to be recognized while reading the research.

Although there are a limited number of key informants in this study, it might be presumptuous to come to the conclusion that out-migration of Francophone immigrants from Quebec is a very rare phenomenon. Between 1996 and 2001, 39,680 Francophones left Quebec for another Canadian province, out of which 23,665 went to Ontario (Canadian Heritage, 2006). Those numbers include the population in general, but we can assume that a proportion of those individuals are immigrants. Also, while he acknowledges that unilingual Francophone immigrants are less prone to leave Quebec, Edmonston, (2000) explains that since 1976 a constant outflow of immigrants has taken place from Quebec mostly to settle in Ontario.

Chapter 4: Review of Existing Literature

In this literature review, I will concentrate on Quebec immigration philosophy, policies and challenges. A good general overview of the Quebec immigration debate and issues is necessary as a basis for this research, as some of the issues discussed are probably linked to the motives that push some immigrants to migrate a second time to another Canadian city.

4.1 Basic Information about Immigration in Quebec

Quebec faces different challenges with immigration compared to the rest of Canada. This does not mean that other Canadian provinces do not encounter issues, but the French language in Quebec adds some complexity to the equation. Because of its linguistic minority status in North America, Quebec has the extra challenge of wanting to protect its specific culture, hence the interest of Quebec to identify itself strongly in terms of the French language (Piché, 2002).

Quebec also experiences a low birth rate and immigration is seen as a special tool to improve the situation (DeVoretz and Pivnenko, 2007; Termote and Ledent, 1999). Since 2000, the number of births in Quebec has slightly increased and in 2005 reached a 1.5 fertility rate; however the province is still below the replacement level fertility (2.1) since 1970 (Institut de la statistique, 2006). In addition, Quebec experiences a serious difficulty in retaining its immigrants, and out-migration is higher than in-migration (Symons, 2002; Edmonston, 2002; DeVoretz and Pivnenko, 2007). It is specifically English-speaking immigrants that are likely to leave Quebec, twice as likely as those who speak French only (DeVoretz and Pivnenko, 2007). When immigrants leave for another Canadian province, they are likely to settle in Ontario (Edmonston, 2002).

4.1.1 Canada-Quebec Accord

To promote and protect its own interests, in 1991 Quebec negotiated the Canada-Quebec Accord, which gave the province full responsibility for the selection and settlement of immigrants received on its territory (Symons, 2002). Quebec has the right to select all immigrants from the economic class and refugees from outside the country, while Canada, in addition to compensating financially for costs related to settlement, and to cultural and linguistic integration, remains responsible for family reunification and refugee claims within Canada (Symons, 2002).

As a result, Quebec has its own goals and immigration philosophy. Specifically, the Quebec government highlighted five goals in the Quebec Immigration Action Plan 2004-2007 (Government of Quebec, 2004):

1. Immigration to Quebec should correspond to the needs of the province and respect its values:

The selection of immigrants needs to be closely related to the needs of the Quebec labour market.

2. Long-term employment for immigrants:

Provide adequate services to help immigrants achieve that goal.

3. French language learning:

Facilitate, accelerate and increase usage of French language classes.

4. Fighting racism and xenophobia:

Take steps to highlight the contribution of ethnic community in the social, economic and cultural development of Quebec.

5. Increasing immigration outside Montreal:

Promote immigration as a development tool in cities outside Montreal.

According to the *Plan d'immigration du Québec pour l'année 2007* (Government of Quebec, 2006a), Quebec wanted to select between 43,400 and 46,800 new immigrants in 2007. They estimated that at least 58% of these immigrants would be able to speak French at the moment of their admission. According to these goals, this could add up to about 62,500 new immigrants to the province of Quebec for 2007, including immigrants selected by Canada.

4.1.2 Who migrates to Quebec and who are the “good” immigrants?

From 2001 to 2005, immigrants were from Asia (31.9%), Africa (29.2%), Europe (23.4%) and the Americas (17%) (Government of Quebec, 2006b). According to the *Plan d'immigration du Québec pour l'année 2007* (Government of Quebec, 2006a), Quebec wants to attract young individuals and families ready for the labour market. The government wish that at least 50% of immigrants who enter Quebec have French as their first language or be able to speak French. Since a large portion of immigrants come from non-Francophone countries, one can assume that this wish already poses a challenge for Quebec.

4.1.3 L'interculturalisme instead of multiculturalism

In the '80s the Quebec government developed its own immigration and ethnic diversity integration model, which is assimilationist with respect to language, but multicultural in other respects (Piché, 2002). According to the Government of Quebec²: “Interculturalism in Quebec is based on pluralism and openness to diversity as well as the multiplicity of affiliations that are brought from them, in addition to the recognition of social, political, cultural and economic

² Note : The translation of all comments was done by me.

wealth, gained through diversity and pluralism for the Quebec society ”³ (2007a, ¶2). However, many criticize such a vision, stating that it is politically motivated, rather difficult to put into practice, and even close to cultural homogenization (Salée, 2007). Unfortunately, many authors point out that, in reality, ethnic minorities face a lot of discrimination in Quebec, especially while looking for employment (Piché, 2002; Fortin, 2002; Symons, 2002). The concept of interculturalism, hence, looks appealing in theory, and even sends to the world an image of openness; nevertheless it is questionable to say that it translates into the daily life of immigrants (Salée, 2007).

4.2 Points of Contention

4.2.1 The French language in Quebec

According to demographer Marc Termote (1999) from the University of Montreal, the French language is strongly declining on the island of Montreal, and this trend is not slowing down because most immigrants (88%) settle in Montreal and about half of them are not French-speaking. Notwithstanding whether the decline of French is a perceived or a real threat, it certainly has a real impact on the nature of Quebec immigration policies. The Government of Quebec (2006c) makes it clear that knowing French is an essential part of integration in the province and explains that in order to integrate into Quebec society, immigrants who are not fluent in French have to make an effort to learn it, and French courses are offered by the Quebec

³ “L’interculturel au Québec repose sur une ouverture au pluralisme et à la diversité et à la multiplicité des appartenances qui en découle, de même qu’à la reconnaissance de la richesse sociale, politique, culturelle et économique que ce pluralisme et cette diversité représentent pour la société québécoise ”.

government to help them. In the same vein, children of immigrant families are also required to attend school in French (Piché 2002). The government has made French the common public language by introducing in “1974 the Language Act that officially recognized French as the common language of all Quebecers” (Government of Quebec, 2006d, ¶2). Ultimately, the greatest immigration challenge for Quebec remains the difficulty in recruiting Francophone immigrants (Symons, 2002). It is also important to note that being able to speak French is not a guarantee of inclusion, since according to Fortin (2002), many French-speaking Europeans dissociate themselves from the Québécois accent and/or find themselves discriminated against because of their own accent. On the other hand, immigrants perceive that having a local accent eases their search for employment (Oueslati, Labelle and Antonius, 2006).

4.2.2 Who is a Québécois?

Immigrants in Quebec come from an increasing number of source countries. This diverse mosaic is making “Who is a Québécois?” a more challenging question to answer. Bringing members of ethnic communities in an inclusive definition is apparently a genuine desire, but so far it seems difficult to achieve for the government and Quebec intellectuals (Symons, 2002; Piché, 2002). This issue is also closely related to the level of success achieved in making immigrants feel that they truly belong in the Quebec society by increasing the acceptance and respect toward new Québécois from the native born. Those elements are certainly important for the integration of immigrants into Quebec society and the creation of a branch called *Quebec Intercultural* within the Ministry of Immigration and cultural communities can be viewed as an evidence of the seriousness of the Quebec government to address the issue.

4.2.3 High concentration of immigrants in Montreal

The Quebec government wants to decentralize immigration but has difficulties doing so since 88% of immigrants to Quebec settle in Montreal (Symons, 2002). Ethnic minorities are thus highly concentrated in Montreal and the rest of the province is almost exclusively old-stock Québécois⁴ (Piché, 2002). However, Laarousi (2005) points out that immigration into smaller cities is not an answer to economic integration as she notes that most projects initiated by the Quebec government to promote or even to settle refugees or immigrants into small and medium sized towns ended up as failures.

4.3 Immigrant Integration Challenges: Economic Integration

A variety of research about immigrant economic integration and discrimination in the Quebec labour market will be discussed in this section. Depending on the method used, conclusions can be similar, but there is also some disparity in the findings. However, discrimination and difficulties in integrating the labour market are almost always discussed. A study undertaken by Piché, Renaud and Gingras (2002) examined how long immigrants, who arrived in Montreal in 1989, took to access employment, and the duration of their period of employment. The findings of this study are worth discussing in more details. In general, they found that insertion into the labour market is faster for men, individuals below 40, those with previous work experience, and for the independent immigrant class as opposed to the refugee class. As surprising as it might seem, knowing one of the official languages did not make a noticeable positive difference but, as the authors pointed out, language might have an impact in the long run for employment of better quality. Specifically, they found that 765 out of the 1,000 immigrants interviewed found at least

⁴ Québécois born in Quebec of French origins.

one job during the first three years of observation, on average after 15.5 weeks. However, according to Salée (2007), that study does not convey a real image of the difficulties immigrants have to overcome. Integration of new immigrants into the Quebec labour market may appear fairly rapid but this data does not address the quality of the work found nor the level of satisfaction regarding the employment found.

Another picture is drawn in an impressive statistical analysis done by CAMO-Personnes immigrantes (2005) and provides additional insight on economic integration in Quebec. It mainly uses data from the 2001 census, and provides four additional findings: recent immigrants, both men and women born outside Canada—often visible minorities—and who are often highly educated, face a much higher unemployment rate compared to the population of Canadian origin with the same education; men and women born outside Canada with university level education achieve employment less frequently than Canadian-born individuals at a similar level of credentials; men and women born outside Canada earn less compared to Canadian-born individuals with the same relative education and in the same kind of job; usually, men and women born outside Canada work in lower level positions, and especially in the manufacturing sector, where wages are low and in positions where they are over-qualified. They also point out that, in the manufacturing sector, individuals with university education are twice as likely to be born outside Canada (for example 51.8% of Algerians in that study, had at least a bachelor degree).

Renaud and Cayn (2006) found that the best predictors of a fast access to employment are the level of education and a previous stay in Quebec. They also found that regarding proficiency of

language, the knowledge of English in addition to French hastens insertion into the labour market. The immigrant's country of origin also plays a role in securing a first job; immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, Oceania and North Africa take longer to find employment. In addition, immigrants of those regions (except from North Africa) experienced prolonged difficulties integrating into the labour market and this cannot be simply explained away as an adaptation period. We can then assume, according to the authors, that there is systemic discrimination in the Quebec labour market. National origin was also discussed in a previous research by Piché, Renaud and Gingras (2002) in which they also found that, depending on the national origin of immigrants, the success and rapidity in finding initial employment vary drastically. They found that immigrants from Western Europe and North America secured employment much faster than other immigrants, and their period of employment was the longest. In that study, immigrants in the worst situations were from Sub-Saharan Africa, with almost 38% of them without employment after three years, and those who did find employment took longer to do so (23 weeks on average). The authors continue by explaining that Haitians are a notable exception among immigrants from developing countries since half of them find a position within eight weeks. It may be noted that this group has been in Montreal for more than 30 years, and this might help the search for work as support systems and help from the community are available. Interestingly, the study also demonstrates that the level of education offsets the effect of the nation of origin for Africans only, as this is not the case for migrants from the Middle East, North Africa, South America, Haiti, and other Caribbean countries.

Women and refugees are also particularly affected with higher unemployment rates. In a literature review, Pierre (2005) explores barriers and discrimination for immigrant women in

Quebec and highlights that, notwithstanding their profile, they encounter discrimination in various shapes and forms, and that it particularly affects this group in gaining employment in Quebec. Another exploratory study about immigrant women in Quebec undertaken by CAMO-Personnes immigrantes (2003), draws a very dark picture of the situation. Three findings are of particular interest in the study. First, immigrant women are highly concentrated in very low-paying jobs on average (50% of them are working in very low-paying sectors with 24% of them specifically in low-paying manufacturing jobs). Second, they are under-represented in the civil service, a fact that cannot be linked to a lack of education but perhaps a lack of recognition of credentials. Third, their average income is significantly below that of immigrant men.

Refugees are also another group facing acute difficulty with respect to economic integration. Renaud, Piché and Godin (2003) examined the socio-economic settlement of refugees in Montreal. Refugees in general have a harder time than independent immigrants in finding work and, to be more precise, this particular study found that refugee claimants are disadvantaged over landed refugees. Renaud, Piché and Godin (2003) note that, when examining integration into the labour market for that group, one must keep in mind that those individuals rarely planned their immigration, which therefore might make their economic insertion more difficult due to the lack of an immigration plan.

Racism as a factor of exclusion is also pointed out in Oueslati, Labelle and Antonius (2006), which concentrates on the Arabic speaking community in Montreal. The research shows that all participants experienced racism in the workplace and/or in their search for work. The authors explore perceptions and experiences of racism in school and work settings by first and second

generation Muslims and Christians from 18 to 35 years of age. It is important to note that the study was carried out after September 11, 2001. The authors explain that among visible minorities, Arabic-speakers have the highest unemployment rate, 14%, followed by 11.5% for Africans (not from North Africa). They note that the Arabic-speaking community has a very high percentage of low-income earners, higher than the Haitian community, and are very negatively impacted in terms of access to well-paying jobs. Labelle, Salée and Frenette (2001) describe a similar situation regarding discrimination and the difficulties in accessing employment within the Haitian and Jamaican community in Montreal. Piché, Renaud and Gingras (2002) also identify racism as a possible element that comes into play for immigrants from Asia (except Vietnam) and North Africa in their greater difficulty to penetrate the labour market.

Hostility is discussed in a study from Montreuil, Bourhis and Vanbeselaere (2004), which indicates that the more Quebec Francophones feel threatened in their cultural identity, the more they endorse assimilation, segregation and exclusion practices toward immigrants. However, the study shows that their animosity was not of an equal degree for every group of immigrants; it was stronger toward Muslims. It must be noted that the sample for that study consisted of university students and is by no means representative. In a research studying the settlement of immigrants from France and North Africa, Fortin (2002) paints a less negative picture of racism toward Arabic-speakers. For instance in this study, some North African key informants stated they had experienced a feeling of openness by others, that they feel that Muslims have the right to live freely in Montreal, that they like the city's cosmopolitanism nature and tranquility, and that they have a feeling of being accepted. The amount of time that the key informants spent in Canada might be a factor of a more positive vision of their experience, as some were in Montreal

for 6 years, and up to 30 years; therefore it might have given them enough time to establish themselves, and at the time of their arrival it may have been easier to penetrate the labour market because of a healthier economy. Also, interviews for that research were conducted between 1999 and 2001, probably before September 11, as it is not mentioned anywhere in the text, which can also be a contributor to the less negative picture.

Ethnic minorities are more susceptible to be discriminated against (Bourhis, Montreuil and Helly, 2005), but it is interesting to note that discrimination is also felt by Caucasian Francophone immigrants of European descent (Fortin, 2002). Discrimination in the labour market may take many forms, for instance, key informants in a study by Oueslati, Labelle and Antonius (2006) mentioned that stereotypes are often expressed through jokes, mostly by colleagues, and to a lesser extent by superiors. They also mentioned that discrimination toward immigrants manifests itself in terms of difficulties in accessing work, which often result in temporary work, underpaid employment and tasks below their level of skills as well as difficulties getting promoted. However, the participants also described some positive experiences like openness and curiosity expressed by some colleagues, and accommodations for religious practices in the workplace.

Of course, racial inequality is not only a Quebec issue, but a Canadian concern. Reviewing literature about racial inequalities in Canada and also using EDS data, Reitz and Banerjee (2007) came to the conclusion that, overall, there is a wider inequality among the population with a racial minority background and also that this population faces slower social integration compared to immigrants of European descent. For the time being, immigrants who live in Quebec have a

lower employment rate than other immigrants in the country, and it is also in that province that the situation is the worst for new immigrants, with an unemployment rate of 59.3% (Statistics Canada, 2007).

The Quebec government is implementing a series of initiatives to fight the problem of economic insertion. For instance, in 2007, with respect to the difficulty of immigrants to access regulated profession, the government tabled a report describing the situation and laid out some possible solutions (Government of Quebec, 2007c). Also in the government's Strategic Plan of 2005-2008, preventing discrimination and interracial tensions is an important goal. However, the effects of those initiatives are yet to be known. In the literature consulted, many authors criticised the application of different equity laws especially the *Act respecting equal access to employment in the public service*⁵ since immigrants are really under-represented in the government jobs (Helly, 1997; Pierre, 2005; Bourhis, Montreuil and Helly, 2005; Oueslati, Labelle, and Antonius, 2006)

4.4 Conclusion

Because of Quebec's very low birth rate, immigration is seen by many as a necessity for the province to maintain its demographic weight in Canada. That being said, as necessary as it may be, it does not come without difficulties when it comes to actually integrating immigrants into the Quebec society. It seems that recruiting compatible immigrants and, more importantly, retaining them poses problems for Quebec. In terms of social integration, time will tell if the

⁵ Loi sur l'égalité en emploi dans des organismes publics

interculturalism approach will win the heart of the Québécois *de souche*⁶ and *d'adoption*⁷.

Meanwhile, discrimination and other integration problems prevail and push some immigrants to seek better opportunities elsewhere in Canada.

⁶ Québécois born in Québec of French origins.

⁷ Québécois of immigrant background.

Chapter 5: Results

The literature review certainly identifies numerous problems and challenges faced by some immigrants to Quebec. These issues might be indicative of some of the reasons why immigrants decide to leave Quebec to seek better opportunities in Toronto. The challenges faced by immigrants when trying to integrate the labour market were one of the recurrent themes in the literature review, and it was also mentioned very often during the interviews with key informants. In this chapter, the data collected from six Francophone immigrants regarding their settlement experience will be presented. The story that they have shared about their experience of immigrating to Montreal will be outlined and then information about their migrating to Toronto will be discussed. Interview quotations have been translated into English within the main text, and the original French quotations are in the footnotes. The names of all key informants have been changed to preserve their anonymity.

5.1 Montreal

5.1.1 The decision to immigrate to Montreal

Key participants were not asked during the interviews what motivated them to leave their home country since it is not related to the focus of this research, but they were asked why they decided to apply for immigration specifically to the province of Quebec. Two key informants had migrated with their parents when they were teenagers, so obviously in those cases they were not the decision-makers in the migration process, but the four other key informants said they chose

Quebec because it allowed them to live in a Francophone environment. The French language was for them the most important factor of attraction. As one woman said: “I chose Montreal because French is spoken there, I thought it would be easier for me to live there.”⁸ Another important point mentioned is that it was easier and faster to immigrate to Quebec in terms of the immigration administrative process. As one woman from Cameroon mentioned: “I chose Quebec because it was easier since it is a Francophone place, it takes less time to be processed [immigration procedures].”⁹ Another describes a similar situation: “For me it was easier to have permanent residency in Quebec, I speak French, I have a university degree, and I was working in Haiti.”¹⁰

In addition to that, some were influenced by friends and relatives who were already in Montreal or were in the process of emigrating. A woman from Haiti said: “I was somewhat motivated by my friends who were filing the immigration forms. They gave me the Internet web site address. I told myself, if somebody is trying, why not me? So I took a chance.”¹¹ For another woman, it was a childhood dream: “It was my childhood dream, it was not a strategic choice but a dream really. My mother was working with French Canadians, I was telling myself that one day I would go to Quebec.”¹²

⁸ “J’ai choisi Montréal parce qu’on parle français, je pensais que j’allais pouvoir mieux vivre à Montréal.”

⁹ J’ai choisi le Québec parce que c’était plus facile puisque c’est une zone francophone, plus facile car ça prend moins de temps pour aboutir

¹⁰ Pour moi c’était facile d’avoir la résidence au Québec; je parle français, j’ai un diplôme universitaire et je travaillais en Haïti.”

¹¹ “J’ai été un peu motivée par mes amis qui remplissaient la forme, ils m’ont donné le site Internet. Je me suis dit quelqu’un essayait, alors pourquoi pas moi. Alors j’ai tenté ma chance.”

¹² “C’était un rêve d’enfance, ce n’était pas un choix stratégique mais vraiment un rêve. Ma mère travaillait avec des Canadiens-Français. Dans ma tête, je me disais qu’un jour j’irais au Québec.”

5.1.2 Settling in Montreal

In general, the settlement experience of the key informants in Montreal was not up to their expectations. Only two key informants said they had a good overall experience in Montreal. One man from Ivory Coast said he was charmed by the city and its people, and he liked the fact that it was easy to communicate with them. Another man from Haiti explained that he loves Montreal because there are lots of Haitians in Montreal, and so it is easy to connect with the community. However, he also mentioned that people from his community were not represented enough in the Quebec labour market, for example in the government and in the police force. He added:

“Our parents and friends in the community are telling us that Quebec is a nice country but economically and for work, it is better to go to the United States or to an Anglophone city where it is more dynamic and there are better salaries and better jobs.” (Adan, engineer)¹³

Overall, the other four participants had a disappointing experience in Montreal. As it will be discussed next, the city was not able to fulfill their basic expectations, especially regarding integration into the labour market.

¹³ “Nos parents et amis dans la communauté nous le disent, le Québec c’est un beau pays mais, économiquement et pour l’emploi, c’est mieux d’aller au États-Unis ou dans une ville anglophone. Ça bouge plus vite, il y a des meilleurs salaires et des meilleurs emplois.” (Adan, ingénieur)

The experience of looking for employment was particularly disheartening for the immigrants interviewed. All key informants were actively looking for a job, meaning that they were at least looking for job postings and sending résumés. They were all very motivated, and were putting a lot of effort in trying to find their place in the Quebec labour market. A key informant said: “I wanted to work right away, I started looking for a job right away, I had many interviews.”¹⁴ Another added: “We do what we have to do, we can have all the will in the world but it does not meet our expectations.”¹⁵ All of them had more than one job interview, and only two key informants did not find a position in Montreal. However, even if four of them were able to work in Montreal, none of them found a position that matched their credentials and/or work experience.

Only Stéphane, a social worker from the Ivory Coast, felt his skills were recognised despite the fact that he was unsuccessful in finding employment in Montreal: “I was under the impression that my skills were recognized. When I was talking about my professional experience, right away they recognised that I was effectively a community worker, they were convinced; it was working at that level.”¹⁶ The five other key informants felt that their credentials were not recognised, even the two participants who had Quebec education. One of them, Isabelle, who came to Montreal from Haiti when she was a teenager, said: “When you are a visible minority in

¹⁴ “Je voulais travailler tout de suite, j’ai tout de suite commencé à chercher du boulot, j’ai fait pas mal d’interviews.”

¹⁵ “On fait tout ce qu’il faut, on y met toute la volonté du monde mais ça ne répond pas du tout à nos attentes.”

¹⁶ “J’avais l’impression que mes compétence étaient reconnues. Lorsque je présentais le tableau de mes expériences professionnelles, ils se rendaient tout de suite compte qu’effectivement, je suis un travailleur communautaire... ils en étaient convaincus, ça passait à ce niveau-là.”

Quebec, it is not easy to find a job.”¹⁷ Adan, also educated in Quebec, arrived in Montreal even younger. He explained: “After my Masters [in engineering] I sent a lot of résumés and I never got an answer back. Montreal is zero for work. I was just able to find menial jobs.”¹⁸

All participants in the study have had a bad experience when looking for employment in Montreal. They could not secure a position according to their expectations, and felt there were too many barriers to overcome in order to integrate the labour market. Sandrine, a bachelor of business management, explained:

“I was selected by the Quebec government. They told me : ‘We accepted you because you have the profile we are looking for and it is a very good profile. You are educated, and you have the right skills, you should be able to find work, and it should go well.’ But I arrived in Montreal, and I did not find a job right away, it was pretty hard. When you get to Quebec it is difficult; we did not come here to end up doing nothing. We are not refugees, we did not flee; it is a decision that we made. And we were accepted because of our skills!”¹⁹

¹⁷ “Quand tu es une minorité visible au Québec, ce n’est pas facile de percer le marché de l’emploi.”

¹⁸ “Après ma maîtrise [en génie], j’ai envoyé des tonnes de CV et j’ai jamais reçu de nouvelles. À Montréal, c’est zéro pour le travail. J’ai juste réussi à trouver des jobines.”

¹⁹ “J’ai été sélectionnée par le gouvernement québécois. Ils m’ont dit : « On vous a prise parce que vous avez le profil recherché et c’est un très bon profil. Vous avez fait des études et vous avez les compétences recherchées; vous devriez donc être en mesure de vous trouver un travail et ça devrait bien se passer. » Mais arrivée à Montréal, je n’ai pas trouvé de travail immédiatement. C’était assez dur. Arrivée au Québec, ça se corse, on n’est pas venus là pour rester à rien faire. Nous ne sommes pas des réfugiés, on n’a pas fui, c’est une décision qu’on a prise. Et on a été accepté à cause de nos compétences!”

Another one explains:

“Why would the people from immigration want people to emigrate if they can’t welcome them correctly? If it is positions in factories that you are leaving for them [immigrants], then why don’t you take people without degrees in their home countries? ” (Angeline, bachelor of business management) ²⁰

While in Montreal, key informants lost confidence in their ability to find employment that would be satisfactory for them. After engaging in work search activities that were the best they felt they could attain, they all came to the conclusion that they would not be able to achieve their professional goals there. Many of them were discouraged and either felt misled by immigration authorities or by employers or simply thought that there was no space for them in the Montreal labour market conjuncture.

Canadian education and Canadian work experience, or the lack thereof, are other topics that emerged during the interviews. The four key informants trained abroad were told by employers, and also by friends or relatives, that getting additional education in Quebec would be helpful in their work search. A woman explained: “Also I have been told, in some cases, that it would be helpful to do a university certificate or to go back to school. It is not easy to find a good job only

²⁰ “Pourquoi les gens de l’immigration veulent faire émigrer des gens alors qu’ils ne sont pas capables de les recevoir correctement? Si c’est les postes dans les manufactures que vous laissez pour eux [immigrants], pourquoi vous ne prenez pas des gens qui n’ont pas de diplôme chez eux? ” (Angeline, bachelière en administration des affaires)

with the credentials assessment.”²¹ Three of them were also specifically told that they needed to get Canadian work experience in order to find a good quality job later on. The Canadian experience seemed to matter even when looking for a survival job, as a woman explained: “I was not looking for a position related to my education but mostly for a survival job to have enough money, but we need experience in Canada.”²²

Knowing an employee in a company was seen as an asset, not only to finding a job, but also getting an interview. Two key informants mentioned that having personal connections made a big difference in searching for a job in Quebec. One said that, in his opinion, finding a job was a lot easier when someone has connections within a company. Another one, talking about her experience of looking for a job, said:

“What I have understood, is that in order to be hired somewhere, you need to know someone. The job that I found, and the interviews that I had in factories and other companies, I got them because I knew someone who recommended me.” (Estelle from Cameroon, bachelor of telecommunications)²³

While looking for work, the need to be bilingual was a big surprise for some key informants.

Two key informants were specifically asked if they spoke English fluently. They explained that

²¹ “On m’a aussi dit, dans quelques cas, que ce serait bien de faire un certificat ou de retourner à l’école. C’est pas facile de trouver un bon boulot avec seulement les équivalences.”

²² “Je ne cherchais pas un travail relié à mes études mais un travail pour avoir les moyens [financiers], mais il faut avoir de l’expérience sur place, l’expérience canadienne.”

²³ “Ce que j’ai constaté, c’est que, pour qu’on te prenne quelque part, il faut que tu connaisses quelqu’un. L’emploi que j’ai trouvé et les entrevues que j’ai passées dans les manufactures et les sociétés, c’est parce que je connaissais quelqu’un qui m’avait recommandée.” (Estelle du Cameroun, bachelière en télécommunication)

even if they were looking for positions beneath their capabilities, they were told they needed to speak English fluently.

“I went to meet a women for a job interview [in a employment agency]. She questioned me about what I was doing in Haiti. I explained everything. She wanted to know which languages I spoke, I told her French. She told me that in order to find a job [in Montreal], I needed to speak English fluently. If I was not able to speak English, then I needed to work in a factory. I was really surprised.” (Angeline from Haiti, looking for a job in an office)²⁴

Another woman had a similar experience:

“Well, it is not easy because I arrived in Montreal and I realized that Montreal is even more bilingual than Toronto. You need to be fluent to find a job somewhere. This is the difficulty I have encountered. In interviews I was told that I was speaking French very well but that unfortunately I was kind of blocked in English. They told me to get ready [learn English] and to come back.” (Estelle, Cameroon)²⁵

While they were looking for employment, several key informants asked for help from community and governmental organisations. In fact, all key informants with foreign credentials

²⁴ “J’ai été rencontrer une dame pour une entrevue [dans une agence de placement]. Elle m’a questionnée à savoir ce que je faisais en Haïti. Je lui ai tout expliqué. Elle voulait savoir quelles langues je parle, je lui ai dit le français. Elle m’a dit que pour trouver un emploi ici [à Montréal], je devais parler anglais, couramment l’anglais. Dans le cas contraire tu dois aller dans les manufactures. J’ai été réellement choquée.” (Angeline, Haïti, à la recherche d’un emploi dans un bureau)

²⁵ “Ce n’est pas facile parce que je suis arrivée à Montréal et j’ai constaté que Montréal est encore plus bilingue que Toronto, alors il faut être parfaitement bilingue pour trouver un emploi quelque part. C’est ça la difficulté que j’ai rencontrée. En entrevue on me disait, vous parlez très bien français mais malheureusement vous êtes un peu bloquée en anglais. Allez vous préparer [améliorer votre anglais] et puis revenez.” (Estelle, Cameroun)

sought advice from community organisations in the hope that it would ease their search.

However, only one was very satisfied with the services she received and explained: “They wanted to see me, they were ready to help me and to guide me...it was good for me.”²⁶ While the others did receive aid that was in some way helpful, they expressed some frustration about the lack of efficiency and explained that it did not meet their expectations. Sandrine was really unhappy with the services she received:

“We are under the impression that we are all put together in the same basket. We are all sent there together... but everybody does not have the same expectations, we do not have the same education, it is really inefficient. Me, I want to know what is the equivalent of my position in Canada!”²⁷

Therefore, it seems that some organisations that specialise in helping immigrants finding work in Montreal do not meet the needs of some newcomers. Some key informants would have needed extra help, especially personalized guidance relating to their own specific circumstances.

Notwithstanding the difficulties key informants encountered, racism and discrimination was not identified as a major problem for the two male key informants. They were in fact adamant that racism was not a problem in Montreal. When asked if he felt discriminated against in his work search, Stéphane said: “Not really and I would even say not at all. Like I already said, I am an

²⁶ “Ils voulaient me recevoir, ils étaient prêts à m’aider et à me guider...c’était bien pour moi.”

²⁷ “On a l’impression en fait d’être tous mis ensemble dans le même panier. On nous envoie là, tous ensemble... mais tout le monde n’a pas les mêmes attentes, on n’a pas la même éducation, c’est vraiment inefficace. Moi, je veux savoir quelle est l’équivalence de mon poste au Canada!”

activist and those things are obvious right away.”²⁸ Adan said: “Of course there are people who do not like people, but we will not begin to generalize for the whole city of Montreal... I think that in Montreal they are far from being racist!”²⁹ However, that opinion was not shared by their female counterparts who were either sure of the opposite or at least thought that discrimination in Quebec was an issue in the labour market. A woman from Haiti explains: “I had a very bad experience in Montreal. For me the people in Montreal are far too racist.”³⁰ Another one said: “When I was looking for work in Montreal, I definitely felt discrimination. I have a Quebec last name; when I went for interviews, it was a shock for them [when they realized she was Black].”³¹ Another participant also noted: “When you live somewhere where there are no Blacks in interesting positions, it tells you that there is no room for you. It sends you a message, even if it's not true.”³²

It is interesting to learn about what the relatives and friends of the key informants had told them prior to their migration. All key informants either had a family member settled in Montreal or had friends who had previously immigrated to Montreal. During the interview, I asked the four immigrants who came to Montreal as adults if they were in contact with these friends or family prior to immigration. Three of them explained that they were talking with them about life in

²⁸ “Pas vraiment et disons pas du tout. Comme je l’ai dit, je suis activiste, alors ce sont des choses qui me sautent aux yeux tout de suite.”

²⁹ “C’est sûr qu’il y a des gens qui n’aiment pas les gens, mais on ne va pas commencer à généraliser tout Montréal... moi je pense qu’à Montréal ils sont loin d’être racistes!”

³⁰ “J’ai vécu une très mauvaise expérience à Montréal. Pour moi les gens de Montréal sont beaucoup trop racistes.”

³¹ “Quand je cherchais du travail à Montréal, je sentais définitivement la discrimination. J’ai un nom de famille québécois. Quand j’arrivais aux entrevues, c’était un choc pour eux.”

³² “Quand tu vis quelque part où il n’y pas de Noirs dans des postes intéressants, ça te dit qu’il n’y a pas de place pour moi. Ça t’envoie un message, même si c’est pas vrai.”

Montreal before coming. One of them said that he received a real picture of the situation he would probably face when coming in Montreal:

“What they told me was realistic. They did not sell me castles in the air! They told me how they started and what were the current positions. But I think that they were more patient than I because they wanted to stay in a Francophone environment.” (Stéphane, Ivory Coast)³³

Another participant explained that even though she had a chance to discuss with her Montreal relatives and friends, she was under the impression that they embellished their quality of life and put an emphasis on the positive sides of Montreal to make sure she would come. But she also acknowledged that they just might have had different expectations:

“For them, life [in Montreal] was a lot easier [than life in Haiti], we can’t deny it, and it is real. But for me, it is different, I don’t see things the same way...I wanted to have a career in the insurance industry...But them, they can try many things, they are more open than I.” (Angeline, Haiti)³⁴

One of the key informants was very emotional when she explained that she had been in contact frequently with her friends in Montreal for many years prior to coming in Canada, but she was surprised when she arrived:

³³ “Leurs propos étaient réalistes. Ils ne m’ont pas vendu de châteaux en Espagne! Ils m’ont dit comment ils ont commencé et quelles étaient leurs positions actuelles. Mais je crois qu’eux, ils se sont armés de plus de patience et ils voulaient rester dans un univers francophone.” (Stéphane, Côte d’Ivoire)

³⁴ “Pour eux, la vie [à Montréal] était beaucoup plus facile, on ne peut pas le nier, c’est réel. Mais pour moi, c’est différent, je ne vois pas les choses de la même façon...Pour moi, c’était faire carrière dans les assurances... Mais eux, ils peuvent toucher à tout, ils sont plus ouverts que moi.” (Angeline, Haïti)

“What I have been told over the phone and the reality are two different things. I have been told that it was really easy. However, when I arrived, I saw some people I know, who studied in Montreal and are engineers, not working in their field but working in security or McDonald’s. I told them: ‘But, what have you been telling me?’ It was a disappointment!” (Estelle, Cameroon)³⁵

5.1.3 The decision to leave

During the interviews, key informants were asked to talk about what ultimately pushed them to leave Montreal for Toronto. The answers were very similar as all key informants left Montreal because of a real or perceived impossibility of finding a position that matched their credentials. They all tried to find a job matching their credentials in Montreal, but their efforts were fruitless. What Montreal had to offer was not meeting their expectations and they believed there was no hope for a successful future in that city. During the interview, when asked what motivated them specifically to leave Montreal, Angeline mentioned that she had a very bad experience in Montreal. For her, people were simply too racist: “I told myself, it is a place [Montreal] that I have to leave, I am going to see somewhere else.”³⁶ Adan explained that he left Montreal strictly for economic reasons. In his opinion he needed to leave Quebec to get the most out of his education in engineering. Sandrine decided to leave Montreal after many attempts to get some attention from the human resources department where she was working. After a while, she came

³⁵ “Ce qu’on vous dit au téléphone et la réalité, c’est deux choses différentes. On m’a dit c’est vraiment facile. Mais je suis arrivée sur place et je vois certaines personnes que je connais qui ont étudié à Montréal, qui sont ingénieurs, et qui ne travaillent pas dans leur domaine, ils font de la sécurité ou ils travaillent dans les MC Do. Mais, moi, je leur ai dit : ‘Mais qu’est-ce que vous m’avez raconté?’ J’ai été déçue!” (Estelle, Cameroun)

³⁶ “Je me suis dit, c’est un pays [Montréal] que je dois laisser, je vais voir ailleurs.”

to the conclusion that the company she was working for would not give her a position in her field and that she would probably stay in a dead-end job if she did not quit. Isabelle explained she did not think she and her husband would be given a chance to succeed in Montreal, and mentioned: “In Quebec, there is a lot of competition [for jobs] and discrimination. This is why we left, my husband and I.”³⁷ After explaining he did not want to receive welfare, Stéphane said:

“After 3 months of intensively searching for work, I still did not find work... Even if I had many interviews...I was discouraged. It is the frustration of not being able to find a job that motivated me to leave Montreal. I told myself, I will go elsewhere.”³⁸

In addition to frustrations regarding the labour market, Estelle was also motivated to learn English, and felt that it would be easier in an Anglophone environment.

Overall, there is a sense of pessimism about Montreal. Almost all participants in the study were very pessimistic in how they saw Montreal, particularly in terms of their chances to succeed there. Adan explained: “I think that there are not a lot of jobs in Montreal. I don’t think it is only a question of discrimination against immigrants, economically in Montreal, there are not enough jobs, not enough quality jobs.”³⁹ Another participant who has a lot of friends and family

³⁷ “Au Québec, il y a beaucoup de compétition [pour les emplois] et de la discrimination. C’est pour ça qu’on a fui, mon mari et moi.”

³⁸ “Après 3 mois de recherche intensive, je n’avais toujours pas d’emploi... même si j’avais passé plusieurs entrevues... J’étais vraiment découragé. C’est la frustration de ne pas trouver un emploi qui m’a motivé à quitter Montréal. Je me suis dit, je vais aller voir ailleurs.”

³⁹ “Je pense qu’à Montréal il n’y a pas beaucoup d’emploi. Je ne pense pas que c’est seulement une question de discrimination auprès des immigrants, mais économiquement à Montréal, il n’y a pas assez d’emploi, pas assez d’emplois de qualité.”

in Montreal said: “In Montreal, if you have a diploma, it is manual work that you do.”⁴⁰

Sandrine explains that she was not the only one to think she would not be able to make it in

Montreal:

“In Quebec, there is a lot of defeatism from immigrants. I have been told ‘you will never be able to find a job in your field’ [business management]. They [Montreal’s immigrants] are discouraged and it is contagious. People tell me ‘You will not make it, anyway it is not possible in Quebec, work is in Ontario.’”⁴¹

5.1.4 What would they recommend?

When asked what in their opinion needs to be changed to integrate immigrants better into Quebec society, different answers emerged. The need to recognize foreign education was the most popular theme brought up by key informants to better integrate immigrants into the Quebec society. One woman said: “They must allow people to work and accept their credentials, they

⁴⁰ “À Montréal, quand tu as un diplôme, c’est du travail manuel que tu fais.”

⁴¹ “Au Québec, il y a beaucoup de défaitisme de la part des personnes immigrantes. On m’a dit: ‘Tu ne pourras jamais travailler dans ton domaine [administration des affaires]’. Ils [les immigrants à Montréal] sont découragés et c’est contagieux... Les gens me disent : ‘Tu ne vas jamais y arriver, de toute façon ce n’est pas possible au Québec, le travail est en Ontario’”

have to stop torturing them with going back to school.”⁴² Another woman added with irritation:

“We should not be obliged to go back to school to work in our field...I should be able to get a job at the bottom, at least to have the possibility to demonstrate my skills! If I am going to work on a farm, I would have been better off not going to school and stay with my grandmother! That is killing me!” (Sandrine, Cameron)⁴³

The lack of clear information by immigration officials about what they would face once in Quebec, specifically regarding recognition of foreign credentials and integration into the labour force, was mentioned by half of the participants. Exasperated, Angeline explains:

“They [Quebec immigration officials working abroad] need to talk honestly about what they [immigrants] might get themselves into. And explain that on site, there will be a credentials evaluation. I spent four years in university. When I came to Montreal, I was told that it is the equivalent of one year of trade school. What does this mean? People need to be prepared for that shock.”⁴⁴

One participant said that more should be done by the government to integrate immigrants already in Quebec and, talking especially about the Haitian community, he said: “The government did

⁴² “Il faut qu’ils acceptent de faire travailler les gens avec leurs équivalences, qu’ils arrêtent de les torturer avec « allez à l’école ».”

⁴³ “On devrait pas être obligés de retourner à l’école pour travailler dans son domaine... qu’on me donne un travail dans mon domaine au bas de l’échelle... mais au moins j’ai la possibilité de démontrer de quoi je suis capable! Si je vais travailler aux champs, j’aurais été aussi bien de ne pas aller à l’école et de rester avec ma grand-mère. C’est ça qui me tue!” (Sandrine, Cameroun)

⁴⁴ “Ils [le personnel des bureaux d’Immigration-Québec à l’étranger] doivent parler franchement à quoi ils [les immigrants] doivent s’attendre. Expliquer que sur place, il y aura une évaluation de diplôme. Moi, j’ai passé quatre ans à l’université. Quand je suis arrivée à Montréal, on m’a dit que ça équivalait à 1 an d’école professionnelle. Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire? On doit préparer la personne à ce choc.”

not put a lot of effort into integrating us.”⁴⁵ Another participant noted that in Quebec there was a heavy and complicated bureaucratic system:

“The Quebec system is heavy...in the sense that one is under the impression that there are too many barriers in front of you...I felt like there were too many doors that were closing because of each time I needed to go backward.” (Stephane, Ivory Coast)⁴⁶

One woman thought that diversity and antiracism training should be given to employers in Quebec: “They should be trained to work with diverse cultures. People who are hiring need to be convinced. It is basic. We should really start working with employers”.⁴⁷

When asked what they would say to a prospective immigrant interested in settling in Montreal, it was surprising how drastic all key informants were about that topic. With a lot of spontaneity, none of them would recommend to a prospective immigrant to settle in Montreal, but rather Toronto. However, one nuanced that stance and added that if the person is looking for a job in a factory or general labour, then they could go to Montreal. One man added that he would tell prospective immigrants that immigrating is a long process of adaptation, and it is never easy, wherever you are. He continued by saying that he might, in fact, not have been patient enough: “Maybe I did not give myself enough time [3 months] and enough patience, maybe in the end I

⁴⁵ “Le gouvernement n’a pas fait beaucoup d’efforts pour nous intégrer.”

⁴⁶ “Le système au Québec est lourd... en termes que tu as l’impression qu’il y a trop de barrières qui se dressent devant toi... j’ai eu l’impression qu’il y avait des portes qui se fermaient parce que, chaque fois, je devais revenir en arrière.” (Stéphane, Côte d’Ivoire)

⁴⁷ “Il faudrait les éduquer à travailler avec diverses cultures. Il faudrait convaincre les personnes qui ont le pouvoir d’engager. C’est la base. Il faudrait vraiment commencer à travailler avec les employeurs.”

would have found something in Montreal because I was focused on that [looking for a job].”⁴⁸

Another woman said: “I would tell them everything, especially the negative things, so the person would not be able to say: ‘If I had known’ because if I had known, I wouldn’t have come.”⁴⁹

5.2 Toronto

After discussing their situation and their opinions regarding their settlement experience in Montreal, the informants were asked to concentrate on their experience of settlement in Toronto. All key informants were in a very different state of mind about their experience in Toronto. They were a lot happier with their situation, and more optimistic about their future prospects.

5.2.1 Settling in Toronto

When key informants left Montreal, they all chose to come to Toronto directly. The rationale behind choosing Toronto as a destination of choice was a perceived openness to immigrants, particularly visible minorities. All key informants thought they would have a better chance at succeeding in the labour market in Toronto: “I told myself, I will try the Anglophone territory

⁴⁸ “Peut-être que je ne me suis pas donné assez de temps [3 mois], assez de patience, sinon peut-être qu’au bout du compte, j’aurais trouvé quelque chose à Montréal, parce que je me focalisais là-dessus [recherché d’emploi].”

⁴⁹ “Je leur dirais tout, les négativités surtout, car la personne ne pourra pas dire ‘si j’avais su’ car si moi j’avais su, je ne serais pas venue.”

[speaking of Toronto] because it is more open minded [to immigrants].”⁵⁰ While everybody knew someone in Montreal before they immigrated, only half of them had friends or relatives in Toronto, and even for them it was not a primary motivator. Two of the key informants visited Toronto before settling there, and it motivated them even further to move: “In Toronto I saw Blacks working in important positions, I told myself: ‘There are more opportunities, why not try to go there?’”⁵¹

The general settlement experience in Toronto was good for all key informants. Even though only half of the key informants knew someone in Toronto prior to their move, all of them said their settling experience went well or very well. A very important theme that was recurrent throughout all the interviews was a feeling of belonging in Toronto. That feeling seems to be closely linked to the fact that Toronto is multicultural. They mentioned they were feeling at ease or that they were feeling at home. For instance, Angeline said: “When I arrived in Toronto, I did not feel at home right away but I was feeling a lot more at ease than in Montreal, and now [after 8 months] I feel even more at ease.”⁵² Another important point brought up in the interviews was the tangible mosaic of Toronto. The key informants highlighted that diversity is visible in Toronto: “Here in Toronto, there are many different people, many colours...It is a lot better!”⁵³

⁵⁰ “Je me suis dit, je vais aller tâter le terrain anglophone [parlant de Toronto], puisque là-bas, c’est plus ouvert.”

⁵¹ “À Toronto, je voyais des Noirs à des postes importants. Je me suis dit : ‘Il y a plus d’opportunités, alors pourquoi pas aller là-bas?’”

⁵² “Quand je suis arrivée à Toronto je ne me sentais pas encore chez moi mais je me sentais beaucoup plus à l’aise qu’à Montréal et maintenant [après 8 mois à Toronto], je me sens encore plus à l’aise.”

⁵³ “Ici, à Toronto, il y a toutes sortes de gens, toutes sortes de couleurs... c’est beaucoup mieux!”

Another one adds: “You see cultural diversity in the city, here you tell yourself: ‘They are like me’. It makes you more at ease.”⁵⁴

Many participants explained that because they see a lot of immigrants working, it makes them believe that it is possible for them to succeed. That idea was recurrent in Isabelle’s interview: “Toronto is a diverse city. We know we can make it even if we start small.”⁵⁵ Adan was also convinced that Toronto offered him opportunities that he would have never had in Montreal, and said that this fact alone really offset the extra cost of living in Toronto. One of the women said, convincingly: “I am happy [to be in Toronto], I tell my friends who stayed in Montreal: ‘Toronto is good’. In Montreal, people say that Toronto is expensive. It is true that rent is higher, but if you have a good job, when you calculate, I think it is about the same thing.”⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that none of the participants had a lot to say about the negative aspects of Toronto. In fact, the only negative aspect that was mentioned by some was the challenge of learning English, but for none of them it was an important barrier to their integration.

Their experience in looking for employment was rather different from the one they had in Montreal. At the time of their interview, only one person had not found work in Toronto, as she was studying English full time. Out of the five other key informants, three found employment in their field and were very satisfied, and two found employment for which they were over-

⁵⁴ “Tu vois dans la ville toute la diversité culturelle, ici tu te dis : ‘Ils sont comme moi.’ Ça te met plus à l’aise.”

⁵⁵ “Toronto est une ville diversifiée. On peut commencer petit mais on sait qu’on va y arriver.”

⁵⁶ “Je suis contente [d’être à Toronto]; je dis à mes amis qui sont restés à Montréal : ‘Toronto est bien.’ Les gens disent à Montréal que Toronto est cher. C’est vrai que le logement est plus cher, mais si vous avez un bon travail, quand je fais le calcul, je pense que c’est presque la même chose!”

qualified, but had better work conditions than in the jobs they were holding in Montreal. One participant commented on the speed in which she found a job when she arrived in Toronto: “One week and it was solved! I found a position in a factory; then I went to a call-centre. Right now I’m in customer services.”⁵⁷ Then she added: “I am satisfied, it is not sales. I can work peacefully and my employers do not put pressure on me. I work in French and my bosses are Anglophones.”⁵⁸ Adan, an engineer with a Master’s degree from a Quebec University, was able to find a position even before coming to Toronto. He is extremely positive about the labour market in Toronto: “Even before I arrived in Toronto I had a position secured...related to my education, and at that time I was not bilingual. When you are bilingual, there are even too many jobs available. You pick and chose!”⁵⁹ He later added, still talking about the labour market in Toronto: “It is completely different than Montreal, it’s dynamite, it is another planet!”⁶⁰ One participant stated that she felt her résumé has value in Toronto: “I feel that my résumé is worth something here. When I send my résumé, even when they ask for a bilingual candidate, they call me. Every application I filled out in Toronto, they called me.”⁶¹

Another participant successfully found a contract position in his field, but explained that it was not easy to find:

⁵⁷ “Une semaine et c’était réglé! J’ai trouvé dans une manufacture et puis après je suis allée dans un call-centre, présentement je fais du service à la clientèle”,

⁵⁸ “Je suis satisfaite, ce n’est pas de la vente. Je peux travailler tranquille et mes employeurs ne me mettent pas de pression. Je travaille en français et mes employeurs sont anglophones.”

⁵⁹ “Avant même de venir à Toronto, j’avais un emploi... relié à ma formation et, à ce moment, je n’étais pas bilingue. Quand tu es bilingue, il y a même trop d’emplois. Tu fais le choix!”

⁶⁰ “C’est complètement différent de Montréal, c’est de la dynamite, c’est une autre planète!”

⁶¹ “Je vois ici que mon CV vaut quelque chose, car quand j’envoie mon CV, même quand ils demandent « bilingue », ils m’appellent. Toutes les demandes que j’ai fait ici à Toronto, on m’a appelé.”

“I applied for many jobs. Sometimes they were calling me, sometimes they were not...until the day I was introduced to a woman from Burundi who knew someone who was looking for a research assistant. I did the interview in English, it was very stressful but they hired me!”⁶²

Isabelle, in Toronto for many years, explained that her work search went well in Toronto. She was always able to work, however, not without sacrifices. She pointed out that she had to start at the bottom of the ladder and that in order to find the position she is currently holding, she had to go back to school:

“Hope is there even when we start at the bottom of the ladder. There is the possibility to climb because there are many immigrants and people are more open. This does not mean that there is no discrimination in Toronto...You must be flexible and accept an entry-level position. If you don’t want to do this, it will not go well, you will not learn the language and you will not gain Canadian experience.”⁶³

When the participants were asked if, in their opinion, speaking French had an impact on their work search in Toronto, all of them thought it had a positive impact. One woman said: “If you

⁶² “J’ai postulé à plusieurs emplois. Il y en avait qui m’appelaient, d’autres ne m’appelaient pas...jusqu’au jour où j’ai été présenté à une Burundaise qui connaissait quelqu’un qui cherchait un assistant de recherche. J’ai fait l’entrevue en anglais C’était très stressant, mais ils m’ont engagé!”

⁶³ “L’espoir est là, même quand on débute au bas de l’échelle. Il y a la possibilité de monter car il y a plus de personnes immigrantes et les gens sont plus ouverts. Cela ne veut pas dire qu’il n’y a pas de discrimination à Toronto...Il faut être flexible et prendre un poste *entry-level* [de débutant]. Si tu ne veux pas faire ça, ça n’ira pas bien et tu n’apprendras pas la langue et tu n’auras pas l’expérience canadienne.”

are bilingual, you are welcome.”⁶⁴ Another participant stated: “For the contract that I just finished, it was a very positive aspect. I have been told it was an asset and I should mention it on the first page of my résumé.”⁶⁵

When the key informants arrived in Toronto, none of them considered themselves as bilingual. According to their own self-assessment, five participants were beginners, and only one participant was at an intermediate level of English. Nonetheless, the transition into an Anglophone environment was not disconcerting. Two key participants were able to work in an Anglophone environment right away or shortly after their arrival. For Adan, who was at the intermediate level, working in English went well. But for Stéphane, who got his position in part because he was fluent in French, and was not as good in English, the experience was more challenging:

“With colleagues, I often felt that I was getting behind because we were using e-mail to interact... It was difficult for me to respond, so I had to ask them what they meant.

Sometimes I was under the impression that they thought I was asking too many things. It was frustrating.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ “Si vous êtes bilingue, vous êtes la bienvenue.”

⁶⁵ “Pour le contrat que je viens de terminer, ça été un aspect très positif... On m’a dit : ‘C’est un atout, tu devrais le mentionner en première page de ton CV.’”

⁶⁶ “Avec les collègues, je sentais souvent que j’étais en retard parce que les échanges se faisaient souvent par e-mails... J’avais du mal à répondre alors je devais leur demander ce qu’ils voulaient dire. Parfois, j’avais l’impression qu’ils trouvaient que je demandais trop de choses. C’était frustrant.”

He also felt that his lack of fluency was a handicap during interviews: “This was the problem in all interviews I have done [lack of English skills]. It is not that I am unable to do the job...but selling my skills and my experience was sometimes a problem for me.”⁶⁷ Although she believes it will get easier soon, another participant acknowledged the fact that she needs to improve her English skills and added: “If you are not bilingual [meaning if you don’t speak English], it is difficult to integrate yourself.”⁶⁸ Another woman said: “To integrate yourself, what is difficult is the language. However even if you are not bilingual there are work opportunities.”⁶⁹ Angeline was positive and said: “I don’t know why, but even if your English is not really good, people understand, they listen, this is what is essential.”⁷⁰ She later mentioned that even though she would have been more at ease working in her mother tongue in Montreal, she will stay in Toronto: “As soon as I will be able to speak English fluently, I will settle here in Toronto, because if I am bilingual it will be a lot easier for me.”⁷¹

5.2.2 Would they recommend Toronto to a prospective immigrant?

Key informants were a lot more enthusiastic about recommending Toronto as a city of settlement than they were for Montreal. All of them would advocate for Toronto without hesitation. Even if they don’t speak English well, five participants would still recommend to prospective

⁶⁷ “C’est ça [le manque de connaissance en anglais] le problème dans tous les entretiens que j’ai faits. Pas que je ne suis pas capable de faire le boulot...Mais vendre mes compétences, mes expériences, c’était parfois un problème pour moi.”

⁶⁸ “Si tu n’es pas bilingue [ne pas parler en anglais], c’est difficile de t’intégrer.”

⁶⁹ “L’aspect difficile dans l’intégration, c’est la langue... mais, même pas bilingue, j’ai eu des opportunités de travail.”

⁷⁰ “Je ne sais pas pourquoi mais même si ton anglais n’est pas fameux, on te comprend, on t’écoute, c’est ça l’essentiel.”

⁷¹ “Dès que je finirai par parler couramment anglais, je resterai ici à Toronto, car si je suis bilingue, ce sera beaucoup plus facile pour moi.”

immigrants to settle directly in Toronto because of better long term work opportunities for immigrants. Adan said:

“I would tell them to come to Toronto even if they are not bilingual...and I would refer them to organisations which help people find work; there are so many programs for immigrants, so many programs. The Ontario government really does a good job.”⁷²

Another participant explains:

“Toronto is good, I encourage [people] to come. It is easier to integrate here than in Montreal. The first problem for immigrants when they arrive on site is to find something to do [find work]. In Montreal after one, two or three months, if you don’t have the position at the factory, it is a problem. Here in Toronto, it is different...They give you work as long as you understand English a little bit.”⁷³

The only restriction one of the participants had was that immigrants need to be willing to start at the bottom if they are not fluent in English. Isabelle, who came to Toronto 20 years ago said:

“If you already have a good job in your field where you are, and you want to come to Toronto, you have to accept starting over to get where you want to be, because of the language. But if you have the language skills, you can easily break through.”⁷⁴

⁷² “Je leur dit de venir à Toronto même s’ils ne sont pas bilingues... Je les réfère dans les centres d’aide à l’emploi. Il y a tant de programmes pour les immigrants, tellement de programmes. Le gouvernement ontarien fait vraiment une bonne job.”

⁷³ “Toronto est bien, j’encourage [les gens] à venir. C’est plus facile de s’intégrer ici qu’à Montréal. Le premier problème de l’immigrant quand il arrive sur place, c’est de trouver quelque chose à faire [trouver du travail]. À Montréal après un, deux ou trois mois, si la job à la manufacture vous ne l’avez pas, c’est un problème. Ici, à Toronto, c’est différent...on vous donne le travail pourvu que vous compreniez un peu [l’anglais].” (Estelle)

⁷⁴ “Si tu as déjà un bon travail dans ton domaine là où tu es, et que tu veux venir à Toronto, il faut accepter de recommencer pour arriver là où tu veux arriver, à cause de la langue. Mais si tu as la langue, tu peux facilement percer”. (Isabelle)

All key informants were positive about their life so far in Toronto. All of them had very encouraging remarks about what they were experiencing in term of employment prospects, but also about their general quality of life. One important theme that was very strong and felt very meaningful during the interview was the feeling of belonging. For the participants, it seemed to be related to a sense of comfort in the city and also to an optimistic vision of their future.

5.3 Comparison of Experience and Where They See Themselves in the Future

In this last section, information will be provided about what was the more meaningful for key informants when comparing their experience of settlement in both cities. Also their intentions in terms of where they see themselves in the future will be presented.

When key informants were asked what was the most significant aspect for them, when looking back at their personal experience of settlement between Montreal and Toronto, there was a common topic shared by all. The important factor that was recurrent in the interviews was how good they felt and still feel in Toronto as visible minorities. One of the key informants explained: “Toronto is multicultural, there are many more opportunities for visible minorities.”⁷⁵ The fact that they are able to see many immigrants in their daily activities, but most importantly the fact that they see visible minorities working in different kinds of employment is very encouraging for other visible minorities. Speaking of Toronto, Adan explained:

⁷⁵ “Toronto est multiculturelle, il y a beaucoup plus d’opportunités pour les minorités visibles.”

“You take the bus and you see the driver with a Turban, it is glaring obviously at you! The cashier is different; the mosaic is different. Already you see that there is openness, there are many different people everywhere... You arrive here and it glares at you, you are enchanted, it is welcoming. That diversity is missing in Montreal.”⁷⁶

Every participant had the feeling they would be able to succeed in Toronto. They were not experiencing the same feeling in Montreal, as they were not able to see a positive future.

Angeline explained: “Settling in Toronto was the best thing for me to do. Settling in Toronto, is the BEST thing I did since I arrived in Canada.”⁷⁷ However, Adan mentioned nostalgically:

“Montreal is my favourite city, it is the city that welcomed my father and this is where I studied and where I have friends; it is my second Haiti. I live in Toronto purely for economic reasons, it is Montreal that I love.”⁷⁸

All the participants wish to remain in Toronto, but ultimately, would they go back to Montreal? Most key informant were also open to the possibility of going back in Montreal, and would even be happy to do so mostly because they like the culture in Montreal and also because they would be able to live in French. However, they would go back only if they had a position they deem

⁷⁶ “Tu prends le bus, tu vois le chauffeur avec un turban, ça te saute aux yeux! La caissière est différente, la mosaïque est différente. Déjà, tu vois qu’il y a une ouverture, il y a plein de gens différents partout... T’arrives, ça saute à l’œil, tu es enchanté, c’est accueillant. À Montréal, cette diversité manque.”

⁷⁷ “M’installer à Toronto était la meilleure chose à faire, pour moi. M’installer à Toronto, c’est LA meilleure chose que j’ai faite depuis que je suis au Canada.”

⁷⁸ “Montréal c’est ma ville préférée au Canada. C’est la ville qui a accueilli mon père et c’est où j’ai étudié et où j’ai des amis; c’est ma deuxième Haïti. J’habite à Toronto pour de pures raisons économiques; c’est Montréal que j’aime.”

appropriate and related to their education. Adan said: “If I get a call tomorrow and I am told I have a job in Montreal, I am going.”⁷⁹ Stéphane explained:

“If I wanted to go back to Montreal, I would do it, I would immediately jump in with both feet on a train or a plane to go back to Montreal, because now I know the system.

Even if it is not exactly the same thing in Toronto and in Montreal, the base would guide me.”⁸⁰

Angeline mentioned: “If I find something good in Montreal I will go back. But I need to feel that I belong in my community, I need to feel good. I can face many difficulties but racism really annoys me.”⁸¹ Finally, two women were firm, and said they would not go back.

All key informants saw themselves in Toronto in the long run, and most of them would reconsider Montreal if they were offered a good job, but would they go back to their country of origin? All three Haitian participants were emotional when they answered that question. They all said they wanted to go back one day. In tears, Isabelle said: “Ho! Yes. Now the situation is not easy there but I would like to go back one day.”⁸² Adan felt he had to use his education to contribute to the development of his native country and added: “I want to live my life in Haiti.”⁸³

The three participants from the African continent were not interested in going back to live in their native country, but wanted to travel there to visit.

⁷⁹ “Si quelqu’un m’appelle demain et me dit qu’il y a un emploi à Montréal, j’y vais.”

⁸⁰ “Si je voulais retourner à Montréal, je le ferais, je bondirais tout de suite de pieds joints dans un train ou dans un avion pour retourner à Montréal parce que maintenant je connais le système. Même si ce n’est pas exactement la même chose à Toronto qu’à Montréal, la base m’aiderait à m’orienter.”

⁸¹ “Si je trouve quelque chose de bien à Montréal, je retournerai. Mais je dois me sentir dans ma communauté, je dois me sentir bien. Je peux rencontrer toutes sortes de difficultés, mais le racisme, ça m’ennuie.”

⁸² “Ah! Oui! Maintenant la situation n’est pas facile là-bas, mais j’aimerais retourner un jour.”

⁸³ “Je veux faire ma vie en Haïti!”

The stories of the six key informants have a lot of similarities. It is clear that low satisfaction with employment and mostly little or no hope for a better situation in the future pushed them out of Montreal. On the whole, however, there is a contradiction with what was experienced in Montreal and what the overall experience is so far in Toronto. According to the participants, Toronto seems to be a better place for immigrants in general. On the other hand, it might be considered a little early for such a positive conclusion on the part of the key informants since at the time of the interviews, only three key informants had found a position matching the level of their skills, including the key informant who has been in Toronto for twenty years. Nevertheless, it was clear throughout the interviews that Toronto offered them a sense of being at home, in a city that has a rich mosaic and seems to welcome them in their difference.

Chapter 6: Discussion/implications

Looking back on the literature review and the results gleaned from key informants, we observe a bitter situation for immigrants. The participants in this research felt that they were facing too many barriers to gain employment that they deemed appropriate for them. The problems they experienced related to systemic discrimination, difficulty accessing work, underpaid employment and difficulties in being promoted are all well documented (Labelle, Salée and Frenette, 2001; Piché, 2002; Fortin, 2002; Symons, 2002; Renaud and Cayn, 2006; Oueslati, Labelle and Antonius, 2006). It is especially ironic that newcomers, who have been accepted in Canada on the premise of their education, are facing difficulties in having that same education recognized by employers (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). In this research, none of the three key informants accepted in Canada as economic immigrants were able to find work in their field in Quebec, and even the two participants with Quebec education who arrived during adolescence did not.

According to the key informants, the future is brighter in Ontario. But is the situation really better in Toronto for Francophone visible minorities? Unfortunately, a study by Madibbo (2005) reveals a situation that is not better. She explains that a significant number of Black Francophones in Ontario are either unemployed or underemployed, and states: “education does not guarantee the smooth transition of Black immigrants into the work force” (p.18). It seems then, that is not only an issue in Quebec, but probably a national one.

This is why policy makers need to concentrate their effort on creating the right environment for

newcomers to thrive, as Omidvar and Richmond, (2003) state:

The notion of social inclusion provides an important starting point as an alternative to the currently-dominant concept of focusing immigration policy exclusively on the recruitment of ‘the best and the brightest’, of continually raising the bar for admissions to Canada while secundarizing and ignoring the barriers of social exclusion experienced by those who have already begun the settlement journey within our country (p.13).

To tackle this issue, there is a need for political will, as well as a need to convince not only employers, but also the population in general that immigrants have a lot to offer to Canadians and Quebecers. It definitively has to go beyond theoretical and governmental goals as stated for example in government immigration plans. It needs to be implemented in practical and efficient ways, for instance within programs to educate employers not only to the issue of racism and discrimination, but also to give accurate information about the skills immigrants have to offer.

Policy makers should pay attention to the fact that many immigrants decide to leave Quebec shortly after arrival. Therefore fast, individual intervention and support to integrate into the labour market should be appropriate to maximize their ability to find a position according to their credentials. Otherwise, some will leave Quebec, like the key informants in this study. Some will do so even if they have to learn English, because they have a sense that they will be included in Toronto, that they will feel at home i.e. “a place where we feel a sense of balance between what we give and what we get” (ROERER institute, 2003, p.15). *L’interculturalisme*, the Quebec version of multiculturalism, does not appear as a panacea for inclusion. As as good a wish as it may be, one has to doubt its applicability (Salée, 2007).

Even if the majority of key informants said they did not feel racism in Montreal, when considering their difficulty in finding work and what the literature says about the challenges faced by visible minorities, we can certainly suspect that racism is playing a role in their difficulties. Institutional racism might be difficult to pinpoint as it manifests itself in many shapes and forms, and might be developing knowingly or inadvertently through policies and practices that advantage or disadvantage people of different ethnicities (Henry, 1994, p.24). One wonders where immigrants have the power to build a better chance for inclusion if, like in the case of Quebec, even education and knowledge of French is no guarantee for visible minorities to succeed (Labelle, Salée and Frenette, 2001; Piché, Renaud and Gingras, 2002; Oueslati, Labelle and Antonius, 2006). The ethnic background of a person might be socially constructed but it is still immutable; one person can have all the willingness of the world but if there is no room for them to succeed in the Quebec society, it is irrelevant. As Omidvar and Richmond (2003) explain:

Tackling discrimination in all its forms, with respect to newcomer settlement, means nothing more nor less than the necessity of an anti-racist perspective in dealing with the social exclusion of immigrants and refugees, the majority of whom are visible minorities (p.14).

The government of Quebec needs to go beyond stating that prevention of discrimination and racism is an important goal (Government of Quebec, 2004). This principle needs to be enforced with political will and in an efficient way, as a team effort between the government, employers, population awareness and the NGO sector.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this major research paper I have shown that some Francophone immigrants do not feel they have a future in Montreal. For many of them, inclusion into Quebec society, specifically the labour force, was not seen as feasible in the near future or even in the long run. They might like the city for its language and culture, but they did not feel that they were given a fair chance to succeed in the labour market. However, they did believe that Toronto offered them a lot more, not only in terms of employment possibilities, but also in terms of a feeling of being accepted as a visible minority.

The findings from both primary data and the literature review reveal an absence of a “feeling of belonging, acceptance and recognition” in Montreal, which are the essence of social inclusion as described by Omidvar and Richmond (2003, p.1). For the immigrants interviewed, who left their homeland to seek improved opportunities in Quebec, it becomes an unfulfilled dream of a better life. For the province of Quebec, the consequences are a loss of immigrants who are described as desired immigrants because of their education and their knowledge of French (Government of Quebec, 2006a). It is also a missed opportunity for Quebec to integrate educated citizens and allow them to contribute to the economy and vitality of the province.

Finally, the present major research paper has been developed based on the personal experiences of six participants. Longitudinal study monitoring immigrants leaving Montreal for Toronto would provide more detailed and accurate information about the outcome of their settlement in Toronto. Such a study would be telling if the future in Toronto lays as bright as the participants

in that study anticipated. It would be also most interesting to know how many, if any, would go back to Quebec or to their country of origin. Additional research is also needed to gage the scope of Quebec Francophone immigrants' out-migration.

Appendix A: Consent Agreement

Ryerson University
Consent Agreement

Francophone immigrants who leave Montréal for Toronto: their settlement experience in both cities.

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to be a volunteer it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure that you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigator:

The Principal Investigator on this study is a student in the Master in Immigration and Settlement Program at Ryerson Universities, Julie Hautin, B.Ed, BA Hon. The Professor supervising the research is DR. Marco Fiola.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the settlement experience of francophone immigrants who first settled in Montreal and then moved to Toronto. We are trying to understand what were the challenges of integration into Quebec society and what were the motives of moving to Toronto as well as the settlement experience in Toronto. We are looking to interview between 6 and 10 people who chose Montreal as a first city of settlement when migrating to Canada, but who later decided to move to Toronto.

Description:

We are asking you to participate in an interview that will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The interview will take place at the Ryerson University library or at another appropriate location if it is more convenient for you. The interview will be tape recorded in order to ease transcription, although if you prefer to have the tape turned off at any point we will do so. In that case, the interviewer will take notes of what you have to say. Tapes will be retained until the end of November 2007 or until transcription is completed and verified, whichever comes first. The transcriptions will be destroyed no later than June 2008. No personal information about you will be written on the transcription except your country of origin, and the date you arrived in Montreal.

Experimental Procedures:

None of the questions or procedures used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

Risk or Discomforts:

There is minimal risk or discomfort associated with this study. If being interviewed is not familiar for you, the processes may make you feel a bit nervous, but our intention is to learn from your experience, and not to make a judgement on your comments. We will make every attempt to minimize any sources of discomfort. Another potential risk is that the experiences you are sharing would bring unpleasant memories, if that would make you feel uncomfortable; you may discontinue participation, either temporarily or permanently.

Benefits:

The potential benefits are the creation of new policies that would in the future facilitate francophone immigrant integration. We cannot guarantee, however, that you will personally receive any benefits from participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

As noted above, you will not be personally identified. Any identifying information on the tape will be removed when transcription occurs. The tapes themselves will be destroyed no later than the end of November 2007 after transcriptions have been completed and verified. Transcripts will be securely retained by the Principal Investigator and will be destroyed no later than June 2008. The investigator of the study will do the transcriptions of the tapes and no one else will have access to the audiotapes.

Compensation:

20.00\$ will be given as compensation for time and travelling.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits. At any point in the study you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

Consent for audio taping of the interview:

As noted above, the interview will be audio taped to facilitate transcription. Consent for audio taping may be considered as separate from consent to take part in the interview. If our consent includes audio taping, please indicate by signing your initials here:_____.

As noted previously, you may also request that audio taping to be stopped at any point during the interview, either until the end of the interview or occasionally during the interview.

Use of results:

The findings of this study may be used for publication, conference presentations and/or instructional purposes.

Your access to results:

A copy of the research paper will be made available to you at the end of the study. Please add your email address at the end of this consent form if you wish to receive a copy.

Questions:

If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research you may contact the Principal Investigator, Julie Hautin, by email at jhautin@ryerson.ca.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study you may contact the Ryerson Research Ethics Board c/o the Office of Research Services at Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2K3, 416 979-5042.

Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and that you have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (Please Print)

Email (optional) for copy of report

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator or Interviewer

Date

Appendix B: Interview Questions (original French version)

1. *Qu'est-ce qui vous a motivé à immigrer à Montréal?*
2. *En général, comment s'est passé votre intégration à Montréal?*
 - I. (Si la personne ne mentionne que des points positifs ou que des points négatifs) Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés? Est-ce qu'il y a eu des aspects faciles?
 - II. Connaissiez-vous des personnes immigrantes vivant à Montréal avant de vous y installer?
 - 1.-Si oui, est-ce que ces personnes vous avaient parlé de leur expérience d'immigrant?
 - 2.-Maintenant que vous avez vous aussi expérimenté la vie au Canada, jugez-vous que ces propos étaient réalistes?
 - III. Parliez-vous anglais à votre arrivée à Montréal? Si oui, assez pour travailler dans cette langue? (si oui, ne pas poser la question #3-III)
 - IV. Avez-vous utilisé des ressources gouvernementales et/ou communautaires destinées à aider les personnes immigrantes? Si oui, comment s'est passée votre expérience?
 - V. Comment votre recherche d'emploi s'est-elle déroulée?
 1. Si vous avez travaillé à Montréal, pouvez-vous me parler de votre expérience?
 2. Avez-vous ressenti du racisme/de la discrimination?
 3. Aviez-vous l'impression que vos compétences étaient reconnues?
 4. Est-ce que vous avez réussi à trouver un emploi qui correspond à vos compétences?
 - VI. Qu'est-ce qui a motivé votre départ de Montréal pour Toronto?
 - VII. Si vous pouviez faire des recommandations à une personne immigrante qui désire s'installer à Montréal, que lui diriez-vous?
 - VIII. Si vous aviez des changements à apporter au système d'accueil et d'intégration des immigrants au Québec, quels seraient-ils?
3. *Comment s'est passé votre intégration à Toronto? OU Comment se passe votre intégration à Toronto?*
 - I. (Si la personne ne mentionne que des points positifs ou points négatifs) Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés? Est-ce qu'il y a eu des aspects faciles?
 - II. Connaissiez-vous des personnes immigrantes à Toronto avant de vous y installer? Si oui, comment vous avaient-elles décrit leur expérience à Toronto?
 - III. À votre arrivée à Toronto, parliez-vous suffisamment anglais pour fonctionner dans les activités quotidiennes? Parliez-vous suffisamment anglais pour travailler dans cette langue?
 - IV. Est-ce que vous connaissez les ressources disponibles en français à Toronto (aide à l'établissement/emploi/santé ou autres)? Les avez-vous déjà utilisées? Si oui, comment évaluez-vous la qualité des services que vous avez reçus?
 - V. D'après-vous, quel sorte d'impact le fait de parler français a eu sur votre recherche d'emploi à Toronto?
 - VI. Est-ce que vous avez réussi à trouver un emploi?

Si oui :

Comment évaluez-vous cet emploi?

Est-ce que l'emploi correspond à vos compétences?

Pouvez-vous le comparer avec le ou les emplois que vous avez occupés à Montréal?

VII. Si vous pouviez faire des recommandations à une personne immigrante francophone qui désire s'installer à Toronto, que lui diriez-vous?

4. *Si vous comparez votre expérience d'intégration à Montréal et à Toronto, qu'est-ce qui est significatif pour vous?*
5. *Est-ce que vous retourneriez à Montréal?*
6. *Est-ce que vous retourneriez dans votre pays d'origine?*

Appendix C: Advertising Flyer

**Vous êtes une personne immigrante francophone vivant à Toronto?
Vous avez ultérieurement habité Montréal?**

Nous aimerions vous rencontrer!

À quel sujet?

Dans le cadre d'une étude comparative sur l'intégration des personnes immigrantes francophones dans les villes de Montréal et de Toronto.

Pourquoi?

Il s'agit d'un projet de recherche pour l'obtention du grade de maîtrise pour le programme *Immigration and Settlement Studies* à l'Université Ryerson.

Procédures?

Une entrevue (entre 45 minutes et 1 heure) dans laquelle vous partageriez votre expérience d'intégration à Montréal et à Toronto.

À quel endroit?

À l'Université Ryerson, 350 Victoria St.

Si vous êtes intéressé, envoyez un courriel à :

jhautin@ryerson.ca

****COMPENSATION DE 20\$ ****

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