Identity and Sense of Belonging in Second-Generation Immigrants of Montréal

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis presents a multilayered qualitative analysis of the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation immigrants in Montréal. Through a methodology consisting of individual interviews and focus groups, this research explores the everyday experiences of second-generation immigrants as they navigate various social relationships and negotiate colliding cultural environments. The conceptualization of second-generation immigration poses as an interesting theoretical issue for the understanding of different experiences of migration. Analyses of intergenerational relationships suggest that family members greatly influence second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging through multiple processes of socialization. Furthermore, within the context of this province, language is revealed as a meaningful feature of these individuals' lives, as they navigate several language policies and different facets of the Québécois society. Lastly, the communities surrounding second-generation immigrants are immensely informative as to the construction and the evolution of sense of belonging. As second-generation immigrants recall being asked "Where are you from?", the strategies they mobilize to cultivate inclusion into different communities are telling about the discrimination that they experience. Second-generation immigrants show that they strongly connect to the Montrealer identity and sense of belonging, attachments that are stimulated by the presence of ethnic and cultural diversity in the city. Through the above-mentioned concepts, this thesis shows that identity and sense of belonging are hybrid, fluid and multiple, as they are continuously constructed and evolving alongside everyday interactions.

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Lastly, dear reader, I hope you can learn from this research as well, and reflect on the experiences my participants shared. My greatest wish is that, in this Western society, we strive to understand each other more, so that we can cultivate respect, openness and empathy.

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Introduction

In 2011, Statistics Canada shared that approximately 5 702 700 individuals living in Canada were born from at least one immigrant parent, accounting for 17.4% of the country's total population (Statistics Canada 2021). Of this group, 54.8% had both parents born outside Canada (Statistics Canada 2021). Together, Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver account for almost half the total number of second-generation immigrants in the country, even if these three cities only make up a third of the whole Canadian population (Statistics Canada 2021). In November 2023, with more recent information, Statistics Canada published its 2021 Population Census results. According to their data, second-generation immigrants make up 17.6% of the country's population (Statistics Canada 2021). Relatedly, the second-generation immigrant community has transformed the country on multiple levels; economic, social, political, linguistic, etc, which justifies the increasing amount of research on this section of the population. Studying the integration of young second-generation immigrants has proven to be a subject of interest, particularly as this group is considered a critical segment of key metropolitan populations (Crul, Schneider and Lelie 2012, p.11), such as Montréal. As such, several research projects have been conducted in the city, mostly concentrating on precise topics, for example on language, identity, ethnicity, discrimination, sense of belonging, or integration. However, the reality of Montréal's cultural and social life asks for further research that connects several of these concepts together: few studies have attempted to do so. In order to share a more complete portrait of a second-generation immigrant's experience in Montréal, this thesis presents a multilayered research on identity, sense of belonging, intergenerationality, language and community.

To guide this project, I have followed one principal research question: **How do second-generation immigrant young adults construct their identity and sense of belonging when growing up in a culturally diverse environment such as Montréal?** This question underlines the leading notions that have guided this research: the community of second-generation immigrants, specifically young adults, the location of Montréal, and the concepts of identity and sense of belonging. This introductory chapter will examine more precisely why I conducted this project in Montréal, how I have defined and navigated the concepts of identity and sense of belonging, while the conceptualization of second-generation immigration will be discussed in the following chapter.

Returning to the statistics mentioned in the first paragraph, one may easily agree that Montréal is a culturally diverse city. For any anthropologist drawn towards cultural studies, language, immigration and ethnicity, Montréal quickly becomes a clear choice for locating projects of this nature. Consequently, numerous social science researchers have taken interest in the impacts of cultural diversity in Montréal on the immigrant population, especially investigating the high potential for various ethnic, national and linguistic attachments. This is particularly significant when thinking about second-generation immigrants, knowing that they grew up in this Canadian-Québécois-Montrealer environment, alongside their family's cultural backgrounds. For instance, research has shown that one's sense of belonging is highly influenced by the creation of "multiple affiliations to culture and nationality" (Magalhaes 2013, p.25), which reinforces the meaningful context of this urban setting. Patricia Lamarre further emphasizes the ethnographic significance of the city as she writes: "Montréal is not just an *arrière-plan* [original emphasis], it is also the object of the study" (Lamarre 2013, p.43).

Additionally, situating this project in Montréal was the first step in criticizing previous work that positioned second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging "in between" two cultures. The complexity of the city's position within Québec and Canada, layered with my participants' familial histories, inevitably discredits any belief that second-generation immigrants may only bond to one or two cultures at a time. Hence, I questioned my participants on their sense of belonging with the following inquiries: Can you tell me about how you perceive your sense of belonging? Do you feel like you belong somewhere geographically speaking? How do you feel about your attachment to the different cultures and communities that surround you? Such questions are critical when attempting to understand the place that second-generation immigrants hold in Montréal, and how they experience the city through culturally diverse interactions.

However, why explore such concepts if similar research has been done in Montréal? As mentioned above, I believe this project has the advantage of connecting meaningful notions that are often analyzed separately. Indeed, when reading through the literature, I frequently found myself reading about intergenerationality, for instance, in psychology-oriented work, because little has been done to associate this concept to second-generation immigration. Furthermore, when exploring the literature on community, I realized it was often focused on diaspora and first-generation immigrants, while not enough attention has been given to the presence of various social groups in the lives of young adults of the second-generation. Moreover, I was able to thread language into many of my analyses, because in the context of Montréal, and also Québec, this topic is of very significant value! Hence, this thesis takes separate anthropological notions and binds them together in one multilayered research, through the everyday experiences of second-generation immigrants. As a result, my project promotes a better understanding of these young adults' reality living in Montréal. This is especially important for readers who are further removed

from the city, and who may have heard very little about what it is like to live in this province as a second-generation immigrant. I believe this may bring further social awareness, tolerance and respect for unknown others, which is extremely significant in our current international context, where misunderstanding, discrimination and conflict have increased in many parts of the world.

In this line of thought, my approach to this thesis has been twofold. Firstly, my interest in this topic sprung out of my desire to understand a life-experience different than mine. I wondered how individuals who had grown up with a diversity of national, ethnic and cultural ties within their family would build a sense of self, identity and sense of belonging. Since I come from a white Québécois family, and had never truly been in contact with other cultures before traveling and going to Montréal, I was curious to explore the similarities and differences that could emerge between myself and other young adults of the same age with distinctive backgrounds. Secondly, this growing interest fell in line with my desire to advocate for the acceptance and recognition of different lifestyles than the normalized Canadian or Québécois experience. I believe that listening to other people's stories can help us understand each other better. This project was thus built in order to give second-generation immigrants a chance to express themselves and share their experience. Moreover, much like Dagenais and Lamarre's research on multilingual youth (2005), "this project did not aim at producing generalizable results, rather, its objective was to provide a detailed, close-up description of participants' accounts of their daily experiences and their particular contexts" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.8). Employing such a framework engenders a deeper exploration of each participants' stories, and opens more space for each of them to express their thoughts. Indeed, in an effort to let my participants speak for themselves, I have substantially integrated their comments and opinions throughout the chapters. Readers will come across multiple citations taken from the interviews and focus groups I conducted with the participants

during my fieldwork. For instance, some of them share their answers and reactions when they are confronted by the "Where are you from?" question. Resulting analyses facilitate my understanding of the construction of their identity and sense of belonging, which fulfills the primary objective of this research.

Then, it is important that I present and explain how I utilized the concepts of identity and sense of belonging. To begin, identity is a critical tool in this study, because it leads one to uncover the diversity of "social contexts" in which young adults grow, thus underlining the web of potential attachments they may create (Lamphere 2016, p.206). Even more, the construction and development of identity itself emphasizes the idea that individuals "constantly negotiate their place and position" (Schneider et al. 2012, p.286). This idea of continuously navigating various social settings and interactions is central in the context of this research and greatly influences how my participants understand their own identity. Therefore, I characterize the notion of identity as hybrid, multiple, diverse and fluid. As researchers Nicole Gallant (2008), and Faith G. Nibbs and Caroline B. Brettell (2016) have mentioned in their work, which have highly influenced mine, such features of identity allow us to move past the belief that second-generation immigrants may only express bicultural attachments. Accordingly, I have approached the notion of sense of belonging in a similar manner: it is possible "to belong to many different communities" (Howell 2002, p.85). Furthermore, sense of belonging constitutes a significant marker of how one understands and expresses one's "'life world'" (Schneider et al. 2012, p.287). If we are to understand how second-generation immigrants perceive their position in Canada, Québec or Montréal, it is then vital to seek out how, where and when they form various attachment to the communities that surround them. Therefore, this thesis presents the different experiences my participants shared growing up, when constructing belonging various to friend groups, schoolmates, or even national entities.

To continue, this thesis is divided in five chapters. Following this Introduction is the Methodology, where I describe how I conducted this research, some limitations I encountered during the fieldwork and further practical aspects important to the context of this project. Afterwards, the Literature Review chapter illustrates the current state of research on second-generation immigration, along with a review of several essential concepts, such as language, national identity, discrimination and social relationships, that I will discuss throughout this thesis. Then, I move on to the three main chapters. In each of them, I investigate the experiences of four different participants and focus on a particular concept, in the following order: intergenerationality, language and community. Chapter One, examining intergenerationality, explores specific meaningful relationships within a second-generation immigrant's family. This section indeed highlights the generational aspect of migration, and how my participants' identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their family members. Chapter Two considers language in several different angles: its historical and political context in Québec, its relationship with race and discrimination, and the consequences of various language laws in Montréal. Most importantly, this is where participants share their thoughts on the Québécois identity and the French language, which prompts a meaningful discussion on whiteness. Finally, Chapter Three ties together this research by investigating the different communities that revolve around my participants, and how various social interactions have influenced the construction of their identity and sense of belonging. My participants share stories of their exclusion from specific social circles, their reaction to discrimination, and the strategies they mobilize to create belonging and inclusion to specific communities. The concluding chapter circles back to the centrality of Montréal in this research, as I bring around closing remarks on my participants' relationship to the city and summarize the findings of this project.

Lastly, it is critical for me to highlight the participation of the eight second-generation immigrants who were involved in this research. They contributed to the production of anthropological knowledge, shared personal stories and presented various facets of their everyday life in Montréal. In the next section, readers will find a short description of each participant, so that their positionalities are easier to locate in different contexts. Let us remind ourselves that it is a privilege to learn from their experiences. Ultimately, these next chapters will facilitate our understanding of how second-generation immigrants navigate their identity and sense of belonging, in the city of Montréal, through intergenerationality, language and community. However, as my participant Quang best describes it;

"Il y a pas de fin sur les questions d'identité. Pour moi, c'est donner une voix à des gens qui ont été silencieux toute leur vie comme moi." (Quang 2023, Individual interview)

"There is no ending to questions about identity. To me, it's about giving a voice to people who have been silent their entire life like me." (Quang 2023, *Translation mine*)

Presentation of the participants

Vanya

Vanya self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through their Russian and Kenyan ancestry. They speak English, French and Russian, and have basic knowledge of Swahili. Vanya was born in the United States and arrived in Montréal at 7 years old.

Mother: Born in Russia (USSR) and moved to Kenya at 4 years old

Father: Born in Russia (USSR)

Divya

Divya self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through her Indian ancestry. She speaks Gujarati, English and French. Divya was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in India

Father: Born in India

Emanuel

Emanuel self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through his Salvadorean ancestry. He speaks Spanish, French and English. Emanuel was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in El Salvador

Father: Born in El Salvador

Amelia

Amelia self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through her Polish ancestry. She speaks Polish, French, English, and has functional knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese. Amelia was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in Poland

Father: Born in Poland

Rosalin

Rosalin self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through her Tamil ancestry. She speaks Tamil, French and English. Rosalin was born in France and arrived in Montréal at 2 years old.

Mother: Born in Sri Lanka

Father: Born in Sri Lanka

Estefanía

Estefanía self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through her Colombian and Guatemalan ancestry. She speaks Spanish, French and English. Estefanía was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in Colombia

Father: Born in Guatemala

Jade

Jade self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through her Vietnamese and Cambodian ancestry. She speaks French, Vietnamese and English. She was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in Vietnam

Father: Born in Cambodia

Quang

Quang self-identifies as a second-generation immigrant through their Vietnamese ancestry. They speak Vietnamese, French and English. Quang was born in Montréal and grew up in the city.

Mother: Born in Vietnam

Father: Born in Vietnam

Methodology

In this Methodology chapter, I describe and explain the various steps of my fieldwork, which was conducted in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal. I was privileged to meet and discuss with eight second-generation immigrants, who participated in individual interviews and focus groups as part of the fieldwork process. In each of the individual interviews, we spoke about their identity, their experience of living in Montréal, their opinions on language, their sense of belonging and many other topics. I encountered a few obstacles entering the field, which I examine below, plus some difficulties regarding the conceptualization of second-generation immigration. After explaining the importance of language and translation in the context of my research, I reflect on the decision of situating my field site in Montréal. However, to begin, I wish to hand these next few lines to one of my participants, Quang, who brilliantly introduces the significance of focus groups in a research project like this one.

"Tout comme ce projet, ce texte que t'écris en ce moment, tout mon travail artistique par rapport à la diaspora, la notion de communauté… Si on veut faire un projet qui prend sujet d'une communauté, il faut être capable de redonner aussi. Pour moi c'est ça être en communauté, c'est être capable de s'échanger et de s'entre-donner (…)" (Quang 2023, Individual interview)

"Like your project, this text that you're writing now, all my artistic work on the diaspora, the notion of community… If we want to build a project that takes a community as its subject, we also have to be able to give back. To me that's what it's like being in a community, it's being capable of sharing and exchanging (…)" (Quang 2023, *Translation mine*)

Perhaps without realizing it, Quang pointed at a very significant methodological approach in our academic discipline. In anthropology, we have learned about the importance of collective knowledge production, especially from Indigenous studies. I recognize how it can deepen a researcher's understanding of their topic of study and how it can help participants reflect on their

own experiences. In this project, I have approached the idea of sharing by conducting focus groups. These group interviews have turned into valuable methodologies in anthropology, especially because they are thought to promote "knowledge mobilisation and exchange" (Banks et al 2013, p.265). Hence, in my research, I considered it was critical that the eight participants had a space to share with each other their opinions, stories and ideas. These focus groups were also an interesting opportunity for participants to reflect on and reiterate details we had spoken about in their individual interviews, which were conducted beforehand. The objective of the focus groups was not to uncover completely new ideas, but really to see how the participants would connect with each other and through which topics.

In the beginning of December 2022, I conducted the first focus group, where four participants contributed to the activity. The group was built based on what I knew about the personalities of each participant, and what they had told me about their experiences and backgrounds. This group was composed of two participants whose parents were born in South Asia, and the two others with parents born in Eastern Europe. I was interested to see if these pairs would relate to each other and how they might compare their experiences. Ultimately, all four of them could relate to understand each others' experiences as second-generation immigrants, no matter where their parents were born. The culturally similar pairs connected with each other only on very specific cultural notions, such as food and family traditions.

The second focus group was conducted two months later, with the last four participants: two whose parents were born in Central and South America, two with parents born in Vietnam and Cambodia. During the focus groups, I mediated the discussion, but I let the participants take control of the topics at hand, once I gave a prompt to engage with. Since the objective was to give them space to share and connect, I wanted to see where they would take the discussion, hence which

themes and opinions would be prevalent. Therefore, I let the conversations from both groups diverge in different directions, the first one being more oriented on identity and sense of belonging, and the second one more on language and experiences of discrimination. Furthermore, the second focus group interview took place at a moment during the fieldwork where I had progressed in the research analysis, and I took advantage of this opportunity to share with the participants what stood out to me thus far. I wanted to hear their opinions on certain ideas and give them a chance to extend their participation before I began writing. This was intentional, as a way to reinforce the involvement of the participants in the knowledge production process.

Yet again, the fundamental goal in creating these two focus groups was for the participants to be able to share with each other on the topics we all had discussed individually. Of course, it was not their first time talking with other second-generation immigrants. However, this instance is different, because it occurred in the context of an academic research, and they were discussing very specific themes, like how speaking French can shape one's Québécois identity, or how their sense of belonging to their parents' country of birth evolved over the years. I wanted to see where the conversation would go when they talked among themselves, without it being more of a "back-and-forth" conversation as within the individual interviews.

Additionally, I was careful about dividing the space as equally as possible between the participants, making sure that they all had a chance to voice their opinions. This was a bit harder to do in the second focus group, as one of the participants had to join via Zoom at the last minute. It was probably more difficult for that participant to effortlessly jump into the conversation as the other three did, because they were not physically present, but we all attempted as much as possible to include them. Moreover, solely audio-recording the focus groups can limit my analysis a little since I am missing the non-verbal reactions participants had towards each other's accounts. For

example, they might strongly approve someone else's comment just by shaking their head. This was more difficult to take note of, therefore it is possible I overlooked some reactions of agreement and/or disagreement that may have supplemented my findings.

Yet, as mentioned earlier, before conducting the focus groups, I interviewed the participants separately. These interviews were open-ended, as I left space for the conversation to move in different directions and I encouraged the participants to share anecdotes to illustrate their opinions. I had prepared a list of approximately 35 to 40 questions, some of which were quite fundamental to the topics of my research, while others served as guidance. Then, I could modify questions on the spot, depending on the conversation at hand. Some of the essential questions I asked all my participants are the following: "Do you know the story of how your parents came to Canada?; Have you ever been asked the question 'Where do you come from'?; Do you feel like your parents and/or grandparents' sense of belonging affects yours?; Do you feel like the languages you speak influence the way you navigate Montréal as a city?; Do you see a difference between calling yourself a Québécois versus calling yourself a Canadian?; How do you feel about the current immigration policies in Québec?" This method allowed me to grasp the interests of each person, as some spoke much more about politics, others about language or their family history. Since I was prepared to explore many different topics, it was simpler to let the conversation flow from the personal interest of the participant and ask relevant questions along the way. Of course, I still made sure to cover the more "fundamental" questions with every participant. A complete list of the individual interview questions and focus group questions can be found in ANNEX II of this thesis.

Ultimately, the open-ended interviews served the purpose of covering different topics at different depths. I was also able to observe how, without my explicit mention, the participants separately pointed at similar concepts being significant in their identity and sense of belonging.

Additionally, since I interviewed eight participants, it was easier to take note of interesting comparisons between their stories. For instance, I noticed how the age at which their parents came to Montréal seemed to influence my participants' sense of belonging. All of their narratives further provided a useful glimpse into the participants' personalities, as I was also planning who I would group together for the focus group sessions.

Thus, before considering specific methodological complications, I wish to address the obstacles I dealt with during the fieldwork process. My principal issue was recruiting participants. At first, I had set out to find ten people, second-generation immigrants, between the ages of 18-28 years old, living in Parc Extension. My supervisor and I believed it was an interesting district to investigate, since many immigrant communities inhabit this space, for many decades already. Before long, I realized that the criterion of Parc Extension was making it a bit difficult to find participants, especially since I knew very little about this district. Then, I decided to modify this criterion and instead look for university students, who had grown up in Montréal. In theory, I assumed this would open up the possibilities much more. However, in setting out to do this research, I had neglected to reflect on how my own social network would affect the search for participants. Putting up posters in universities and contacting associations online was not enough. I had greater results when participants were referred to me from friends or other contacts. Therefore, my own network became really important, since the easiest, and most productive, way to get in touch with potential participants was through other people. As I was looking specifically for participants in the city itself, it was my mistake to overlook the fact that most of the people in my personal network are from the South Shore of Montréal. Hence, not having enough contacts from Montréal made the process more extensive.

It is essential to note that this method may raise ethical concerns for the confidentiality of the participants. Indeed, some of them have been referred to me by acquaintances, who could potentially recognize their stories if they read this thesis. As a result, I let the participants choose if they wanted to use a pseudonym, to help keep as much confidentiality as possible. Some of them did choose a pseudonym, others let me choose one for them, and very few preferred to keep their real name. Participants had different motivations for keeping their real name, for instance because it was important in the construction of their identity or because it was a well-known name in their community and therefore it would be harder for readers to identify them.

All in all, my fieldwork lasted longer than anticipated; first because I rarely had responses or follow ups from the associations I found online; and second because the people referred to me did not always fit the criteria I had set up, most often because they did not grow up in Montréal. Since it took five months to find six participants, I finally decided to only interview eight people in total. Ultimately, I appreciate that having a smaller group of participants allows me to pay closer attention to each of their stories and opinions. Much like Rogers Brubaker, I believe it is helpful to move to "a smaller scale of empirical research", as a way of investigating identity and ethnicity in the everyday (Brubaker 2004, p.2). Plus, all the participants I interviewed have been quite eager and engaged in the process, and I am extremely grateful they accepted to share these details of their life.

Further on, as I met potential participants, I was faced with the fact that conceptualizing second-generation immigration itself is quite complex. Firstly, definitions of this notion are different in the United States and Europe, and secondly, the criteria for defining the concept have become increasingly detailed over time (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.2). For instance, children who migrated before 12 years old could be considered second-generation, as opposed to earlier

definitions that stated more ambiguous descriptions like: "brought from the mother country at an early age" (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.2). Alternatively, recent studies specify the age of 10 years old as the limit to which one may be considered a second-generation immigrant (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.7). Additionally, in the early 2000s, the literature expanded to new concepts such as the 1.5 and 2.5 generation, which both designate sightly different experiences of immigration (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.3). People who were born in another country and who came to the United States as children were placed in the 1.5 generation category (Nibbs and Brettell 2016 and Sykes 2008). Then, children who have one first-generation parent and one non-immigrant parent fell into the 2.5 generation category (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.3). For example, this could be a child born in Canada, with one parent also born in Canada, and the other born in another country. Whether somewhat vague or quite particular, these concepts indeed highlight the complexity of understanding and acknowledging the experience of immigration.

Eventually, these details became critical when I was searching for people, because potential participants and my contacts asked me how I defined the second-generation. Most times, I answered that a second-generation immigrant was someone who was born here, meaning Montréal (because of the context of my research) with parents born in other countries. This way, I opened the doors for people who had parents who immigrated from different countries, and I did not determine any age of migration for the parents, and possibly their children. This answer also specified that I was looking for immigrants with parents from outside Canada, while simultaneously saying that I was not searching for people from a specific part of the world. My response finally indicated that I was favouring participants who were born in Montréal, without being too strict about it at the same time. In fact, out of the eight participants who worked with me, only two of them came to Montréal after they were born: at 2 and 7 years old. However, both

of them were not born in their parents' own countries of birth. All of this proves just how careful I had to be when outlining second-generation immigration, especially as it is the fundamental concept guiding my research, because I gradually understood how multifaceted it was.

Fortunately, the two focus groups were incredibly insightful in addressing the issue of the definition of this concept. Participants in both groups, Divya and Quang, instinctively challenged the necessity for the new labels of 1.5 and 2.5 generation; why is it so meaningful to create these boundaries between different experiences of immigration? Where does this need come from? Quang quite interestingly compared this process of categorization to the many different groups that are clustered under the term LGBTQ, which at full length is 2SLGBTQIA+. I can imagine many people find comfort in discovering various gender and sexual identities that describe their experiences with detail, something they can strongly relate to, all under one term. For instance, the asexuality spectrum includes other related concepts such as demisexuality, grey-a and queerplatonic (Trevor Project, 2021). I presume that one can strongly identify to these subgroups, while also associating oneself to the larger queer community. Quang's comment points to the ever-evolving reality of identity, and the tensions we can observe across different cultural groups. This aims directly at a central objective of this research: to explore how second-generation immigrants can identify themselves as Montrealers, Quebecers, Canadians, and more! Ultimately, immigration, queer labels and many others, as broad or as precise as they might be, can become highly meaningful, personally and socially (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.3). However, after hearing about various stories of second-generation immigrants, I wonder if these detailed labels really make a difference, in this specific context. If each experience of immigration is so different, is it truly useful to create these new categories instead of clustering them under the broader term of second-generation?

After exploring these questions during the focus groups, all the participants agreed that they connected to the second-generation concept the most. No matter their specific experience, being children of first-generation immigrants, and as a result identifying as second-generation immigrants, made the most sense to them. In the first focus group, the participants concluded that since migration is so complex, these categories might help scholars understand the experience a bit more, but for now, it does not seem to make a difference in the identity of immigrants themselves. Other research in the literature falls in agreement with my participants' accounts. For example, going back to the 2.5 generation category, it does not seem like having one non-immigrant parent is critical when looking at the self-identification of second-generation immigrants (Gallant 2010, p.48). Additionally, other studies on immigration sometimes make the choice to combine 1.5 and second-generation immigrants together because their socialization experiences are similar (Bilodeau et al. 2018 and Creese 2019). In fact, because conceptualizing second-generation immigration has been challenging so far, most scholars who explore this topic make certain to clarify their own interpretation of the concept, as variations are common and contextual. Perhaps with time, similar to queer terminology, this process of categorizing different experiences of immigration may eventually complicate the way one identifies to first, second or third-generation. The 1.5 and 2.5 labels highlight more specific aspects of the experience of migration which may become meaningful to immigrants. Resulting from these discussions, and as other literature also employs, I use the term "second-generation" to describe the eight participants, even if some were born in other countries and came here at very young ages (Haayen 2016, p.70). It will be interesting to observe how future research might investigate further the experience of immigration itself through these distinct labels and conceptualizations.

Hence, here are the four official criteria that guided my search for participants: second-generation immigrants, between the ages of 18 and 28 years old, who are currently university students in Montréal, and who grew up in Montréal. Then, it is important to productively situate myself in relation to these criteria and the participants themselves. Through my positionality, I recognize that the criteria described above simultaneously highlight aspects of my self that are different from my participants' identities, and others that underline our similarities. As they are, I am a student in university, between the ages of 18 and 28 years old. Yet again, I was not born in Montréal, and I am not a second-generation immigrant.

Through the recruitment process, I realized it was critical to construct honest and genuine relationships with my participants across our similarities. Consequently, the criteria of the age and the occupation proved to be quite significant. Simply being around the same age and being students helps to engage discussion and relate to each other, as it is more likely that we have similar lifestyles and participate in similar daily activities, such as going to school, studying, working or going out to social gatherings with friends. In this line of thought, having comparable experiences draws me a bit closer to understanding some opinions, values or beliefs that my participants may express. Thus, I hoped that this could create a sense of closeness, and it did ultimately help me find participants and bond with them. Moreover, I could connect with part of their living experience by also growing up and residing in the province: this provides comparable cultural and social capital. Having this specific positionality provides a "more nuanced understanding" of the multifaceted political context of Québec (Riches and Curdt-Christiansen 2010, p.532). All in all, I appreciate that I found various ways to connect with the participants, even if it was harder to find them at first.

Furthermore, another motive incited me to find participants within this precise age range. It is known from identity theory, particularly because of Erikson's work, that one's "youth" is a critical phase of life for the construction of one's identity (Erikson 1968 cited in Gallant 2010, p.39). Even more, the period that is implied when thinking about "youth" seems to expand past the teenage years, as more literature has recognized it recently (Gallant 2010, p.39). It is valuable to specify that I consider youth as it is commonly used and understood in Western societies. Hence, social variables such as marital or economic status do not impact my conceptualization of youth in this context. Thus, 18 to 28 years old appears as an appropriate and quite fascinating age range from which to analyze identity and sense of belonging, since they are forming, evolving and transforming through everyday life. I also believe that the "twenties" are a moment in one's life where individuals begin to look back on their childhood and teenage years retrospectively, which can bring some very interesting reflections on one's identity. Indeed, when analyzing the interviews and focus groups in the following chapters, I attempt to make use of the self-reflexive processes my participants display as they describe the construction and expression of their identity (Yon 2000, p.3).

Nevertheless, I am still an outsider to the experience of living in Montréal as a second-generation immigrant. Thus, what prompted my interest in studying this particular community? Growing up, I had genuine curiosity towards cultures around the world and people living in Canada who were born in other countries. Studying in anthropology sparked different reflections on my own identity and positionality in the world, and I eventually started to compare my own experience to the experience of immigrants, how the construction of their identity might be different from mine. I wondered how they were able to find a sense of belonging, how they expressed their cultural identity. My own positionality became a motivation for me to explore and understand the

experience of cultural diversity, which I feel I cannot comprehend personally. Here, I acknowledge my positionality in comparison to my participants' positionalities; our differences, our similarities, our opinions, our life experiences and our evolution as young adults. Through all of this, I constantly remind myself of the physical, social, cultural, economic and political environments we exist in, so that my reflections are as situated as possible. Still, it is essentially because of my differences with my participants that I am invested in understanding their specific experience as second-generation immigrants.

As is it also part of my positionality, I wanted to share that I can speak, read and write both in French and in English. This means I was able to let the participant choose which language they were more comfortable with for the interviews. Therefore, as it is a topic of interest in my project, and even more so in Québec generally, it is important to mention that I did not conduct all the interviews in the same language. The individual interviews were conducted in both languages, five in French and two in English to be exact. The eighth interview was almost a perfect mix of French and English, or "Franglais", as we like to say here. For instance, here is an excerpt of this particular interview:

> "I love it, (...) parce qu'on vient de différents endroits, we're diverse, like our ethnic identity, sexuality, gender, religion, language pis tout, Montréal devient un endroit où on peut… We connect on different issues, whatever meaningful to us, qui ont pas vraiment rapport avec l'identité ethnique (…)" (Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

Ultimately, I kept my transcription of each interview in its language, or languages, of origin, because the interviews themselves meaningfully embody the entanglements surrounding French and English in Montréal. They denote the back and forth between linguistic capacities, cultural cues and political tensions that people in the city navigate daily. As for the quotes I include

in this thesis, I chose to have them both in French and English. This method has been used in Dagenais and Lamarre's research (2005) on multilingualism and youth, conducted in Vancouver and Montreal, where the authors quoted their participants in both languages. For this project, I wanted to show the language which my participant spoke in, yet in the case it was in French, I decided to translate the quote in English, because this is the language I am writing in. Hence, whenever you come across a longer citation, the first quote will be in its language of origin, and the second one will be my translation of it. It is important for me to demonstrate inclusivity and to illustrate how these two languages can coexist.

As for the focus groups, the first one was conducted in a mix of French and English as well, while the second one was only done in French. In the analysis and writing processes of this project, I further questioned how I should handle translation, particularly when quoting participants, knowing that I am writing in English. Again, challenges and doubts concerning translation are telling about the political context in which we live here in the province of Québec. Even more, I found discussions on language with my second-generation participants very revealing, since they kept reminding me that they themselves face similar challenges with other languages as well, like Vietnamese, Russian or Spanish. Talking with second-generation immigrants about language brings an intersectional perspective to the politics of language. Since the Québec government focuses so much on French and English, one might be bound to only think in terms of these two languages and forget about Montréal and the reality of immigration. Lastly, it is worthwhile to note that I am reading and using articles written in French as well, hence some translation work also occurs in the literary and analytical sections of this thesis.

Now, I wish to discuss my field site in more detail. I have chosen to concentrate on the island of Montréal, because it is generally a space of cultural diversity. As a result, I wanted to

know if second-generation immigrants would feel a strong sense of belonging to the city. Montréal is also a very interesting place to examine, since it can be juxtaposed to Québec and Canada, which each have different cultural, political and social implications. I wondered to which extents the participants would identify to the city, the province and the country. These self-identifications are placed alongside the cultural backgrounds of their parents and their motivations for migrating to Montréal, which brings another layer to the construction of their identity. Hence, this urban context provides a distinct space from which to explore how second-generation immigrants negotiate cultural diversity and sense of belonging. Another motivation for choosing Montréal was that it is physically easier to access, but as mentioned earlier, I did not have much ease actually accessing the second-generation community. Yet, and most importantly, I consider that my field site is anchored in the bodies and minds of my second-generation immigrant participants. Montréal gives context to their lives, but is it really their life experiences, their stories and opinions that center and situate my research, all of which I analyze in the following chapters.

Lastly, I cannot go on without mentioning the Indigenous communities, whose lands here have been stolen, especially as I situated my research in Montréal. Beyond the focus I have chosen for my research project, as someone contributing to the discipline of anthropology, it is important for me to bring forward the presence of Indigenous communities in the city. Additionally, the following acknowledgement helps me recognize my privilege, emphasizing that I am aware of the injustices and aggressions that Indigenous communities have suffered and suffer from, and that I am ready to continue learning. For instance, I realize that Indigenous peoples experience linguistic erasure, especially here in Montréal, where French and English already capture much of the attention in language conflicts. On this point, I consider in my research how the social and political pressure of speaking French can impact immigrant households and how it may influence second-

generation immigrants' uses of different languages. Finally, to write this acknowledgment, I have been inspired by the Concordia Territorial Acknowledgement (2017) and modified it to suit this specific context.

"I would like to acknowledge that I have situated my research in the city of Tiohtià:ke/Montréal, and I have been conducting my studies at Concordia University since January 2018. My research and this academic establishment are located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. As a student, I have been privileged to learn, and continue learning, about the importance of past, present and future relationships with Indigenous communities. As an anthropologist, I recognize and understand the implication of our discipline in the injustices and violence that Indigenous communities have suffered and suffer from. I hope we can collectively work to create positive action and continue to reflect on our relationship to these lands and Indigenous peoples."

Literature Review

In the previous Methodology chapter, I outlined the structure of my fieldwork, how I searched for participants, some obstacles I encountered and the concepts that shaped my research. In this Literature Review chapter, I demonstrate the importance of studying the following topics when considering immigrants of second-generation; identity, sense of belonging, language, relationships and discrimination. Understanding these themes from the point of view of immigrants contributes to our evolution as a society: it enables us to observe various lifestyles, experiences and worldviews. In the following pages, I will present several authors and articles that each discuss second-generation immigration differently. Some pay more attention to intergenerational relationships, or to the construction of nationalism, while others focus on the presence of multilingualism in Canada, for example. All in all, this section attempts to merge different ideas into one coherent theoretical background, that I will utilize to support my analyses in the coming chapters. Throughout this literature review, I will show how identity and sense of belonging thread into each of the different topics presented. Hence, I ask the following question: why is it so valuable to examine the identity of second-generation immigrants? My participant Emanuel's comment helps to answer this interrogation:

"Vu que j'ai grandi avec autant de gens qui sont issus de l'immigration, on se voyait tous un peu comme des immigrants, même si on était nés au Québec. C'est drôle à dire, mais pour moi être Salvadorien c'est vraiment, vraiment important, parce que c'est comme ça qu'on s'identifiait : 'toi, t'es le Salvadorien, toi, t'es le Kosovar' " (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)

"Since I grew up with this many immigrant people around me, we kind of all saw ourselves as immigrants, even if we were born in Québec. It's funny to say, but for me being Salvadorean is really, really important, because that's how we identified ourselves: 'you, you're the Salvadorean, you, you're the Kosovan' " (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Emanuel explains the significance of his immigrant identity growing up, in how he identified himself and his friends according to their national and ethnic background. This shows how deeply fundamental identity can be, in the way one expresses one's own identity and how one perceives others. Now, to explore the implications of what identity means as a concept, I introduce the theoretical work of Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker produced an important body of knowledge on identity, nationalism and ethnicity, which he outlines in his books, such as "Grounds for Difference" (2015), "Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities" (2018) and "Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town" (2018). However, for this literature review, I have chosen to focus on his book "Ethnicity without Groups", in which some chapters were coauthored, that was published in 2004. One of the first observation Brubaker makes regards the uses of identity in everyday life and in academia. He explains how identity can be understood both as a category of practice and as a category of analysis (Brubaker 2004, p.31). Identity, as a category of practice, is mostly utilized by individuals to perceive their self and compare their personality to others' (Brubaker 2004, p.32). Brubaker's argument helps me acknowledge how identity can be a form of agency, for instance through the ways second-generation immigrants self-identify. Emanuel's comment above speaks to this idea, as he sees his Salvadorean identity differentiating him from his other second-generation immigrant friends. The nationality that comes along with this immigrant identity enables Emanuel to "label" himself and the people around him.

Now, identity as a category of analysis feels a bit more complex. It is on this point that Brubaker warns the reader how characterizing identity as "multiple, fragmented, and fluid" may become problematic (Brubaker 2004, p.33). On the one hand, past analyses and theories have been condemned for essentializing identity, which resulted in scholars turning to these mentioned

features of multiplicity to avoid such issues (Brubaker 2004, p.33). On the other hand, Brubaker notes that the use of these words reflects the duality of utilizing a certain "constructivist" language for analysis, while still advancing an essentialist argument (Brubaker 2004, p.33). Brubaker's discourse here is an important reminder that the vocabulary I utilize in this thesis must also effectively represent the arguments I express through my analyses. Accordingly, the meaning of the words I use to describe my participants' identity and sense of belonging must correlate with the conclusions I draw from my research.

In this line of thought, I have been concerned about essentializing my participants to their immigrant identity, without paying enough attention to the rest of their self, to their personality. Not only through the words I use, but through my work in general, I recognize how I might strip down my participants only to the discussions we had together. With reading the literature and understanding the complexity of studying identity, I was able to adapt my fieldwork to address this challenge. In ANNEX I, I have included drawings the participants made during the focus groups. As an ice-breaker exercise, I asked them to draw their identity, without using any labels or words. This was purposely a very abstract and broad prompt, to let their imagination run in different directions and to lead them to reflect on their self. When the exercise was done, I asked the participants to show and explain their drawings to the group, in order to introduce themselves to each other. Ultimately, only three out of the eight participants drew or mentioned something related to their immigrant background when presenting themselves.

Consequently, these drawings can serve as reminders that even if the focus here is on my participants' immigrant identity, there is much more to their identity that I do not discuss in this thesis. This exercise amounts to more than a methodological decision; it emphasizes the importance of the literature review work in the specific context of my research and solidifies my

theoretical framework. In this thesis, I discuss only part of my participants' life, part of their experience, on specific topics and conversations, based on what they shared with me. Even though Brubaker warns us about the pitfalls of characterizing identity as "multiple, fragmented, hybrid and fluid", in this particular context, I believe these qualities are helpful. Recent studies also mention the conceptualization of a "hyphenated identity", an additional notion utilized to represent the multiplicity of one's cultures, ethnicities and nationalities which exist simultaneously (Kustatscher et al. in Punch and Vanderbeck 2018, Creese 2019 and Marino 2020). The use of such concepts aims at reminding the reader that one ultimately aspires to be perceived as a "complex subject", which departs from a fixated approach to identity (Yon 2000, p.25). Thus, in this thesis, I do use adjectives such as multiple, fragmented, hybrid and fluid, to describe and portray the identities of my participants. Several authors and articles I present below also utilize such vocabulary. These words remind me, and hopefully the readers, that my participants are "more" than second-generation immigrants at their core. I know it is a significant aspect of their lives, yet I do not believe it represents all they are. In fact, for Divya, being a second-generation immigrant does not seem to encompass her whole identity:

> "J'ai l'impression que mon origine c'est Indienne ou Canadienne, mais ça a pas pris tant d'importance dans qui je suis en tant que personne, genre 0.5% de comment je m'identifie (…) J'ai l'impression que c'est plus moraux, valeurs, intérêts, et passions (…) Vraiment qui tu es, qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire…" (Divya 2022, Individual interview)

> "I think that my origin is Indian or Canadian, but it doesn't have that much importance in who I am as a person, like 0.5% of how I identify myself (…) I think that it's more about morals, values, interests and passions (…) Really who you are, what you like to do…" (Divya 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Divya expresses how she perceives her own identity by stating the multiple and diverse aspects that encompass it. She understands that her immigrant identity forms part of her

self, yet it does not seem to occupy that much space in her case. This reflection Divya presents resembles Brubaker's "identity as a category of practice", however, more recent literature labels this process as self-identification (Gallant 2010, p.38). To explore this further, I employ Nicole Gallant's research, since her work strongly attends to the issue of essentialization. As a social scientist doing research in Québec, Nicole Gallant addresses self-identification processes in second-generation immigrants in order to enlarge normalized boundaries of national, ethnic and cultural identifications (Gallant 2010, p.39). Divya's perspective supports Gallant's argument: these young adults are an infinite number of characteristics, and those are not solely related to their ethnic or cultural identity. For some of them, being from an immigrant family is a crucial fraction of their self, as we saw earlier with Emanuel, and for others it is not as important, as with Divya. Indeed, Gallant indicates that her research participants expressed their sense of belonging in diverse ways and that the immigrant identity what not strongly present in all of them (Gallant 2010, p.55). This is exactly what I am investigating: *why* some of them have stronger or lower senses of belonging to the cultures that surrounds them. Through my research, I can observe each of their opinions, and here, how Emanuel and Divya have different takes on the importance of their immigrant identity. Thus, presenting this excerpt of Divya's interview works against the process of essentialization and gives a voice to my participant, who is in the best position to tell us about her own experience and identity. This renders self-identification is highly valuable.

Perhaps one may consider that I should have spoken about the exercise of the drawings in the methodological chapter. Yet, because the concern of essentializing my participants appeared when reading the literature, I believe that it is fitting I discuss these issues here. Underlining this connection between my methodological and theoretical sections largely speaks to the position my research holds within the literature I am reviewing. This situates my thesis in the bodies of work

that regard identity and immigration, and it proves that I am working through theoretical obstacles that earlier scholars have highlighted. Exploring Brubaker's ideas in this manner also foreshadows how I intend to analyze the experiences my participants shared with me, in this case, by paying more attention to self-identification processes. Indeed, the theoretical approach I employ here combines Brubaker's category of practice and category of analysis. I concentrate on self-identification processes and I understand identity through a more constructivist lens, characterizing this concept as multiple, hybrid and fluid. Hence, I utilize a "multidimensional" approach that attempts to encompass my participants' "experiences, memories, emotions", reflections, lifestyles and points of view (Marino 2020, p.37).

To continue on the topic of self-identification, I circle back to Nicole Gallant's research, in order to examine how immigrants of second-generation shape and construct their own self-perception. Firstly, Gallant analyzed the way young adults identify themselves through the language they use to describe their everyday life. Several participants in her research talked about themselves in relation to their parents' country of origin, speaking in terms of language, food practices, lifestyles and values (Gallant 2010, p.49). This highlights several cultural aspects I also discussed with my participants and hints to the significance of the relationship with the family. Further on, I indeed investigate intergenerational relationships, because they are crucial when it comes to my participants' experiences: family is an integral part of most migration stories. Secondly, other participants in Gallant's research seemed to rely on ethnic traits to depict their identity, speaking about skin color and ancestry (Gallant 2010, p.50). In the following chapters, certain participants will attest to this account, as some of them do primarily identify themselves according to their ethnicity. All in all, Gallant conceptualizes of individual identity as a construct which assembles all the different types of belongings defined and chosen by individuals

themselves (Gallant 2010, p.40). This underlines the deep connection between identity and sense of belonging, which shows how fitting it is to explore their manifestation simultaneously. Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to the different ways my participants describe their own identity and sense of belonging, and the motives that may influence the construction of both concepts.

Moreover, Gallant notes that the literature on second-generation immigrants tends to portray this community as being in conflict between cultures, frequently emphasizing a bicultural identity (Gallant 2009 and Merz 2018). Indeed, I agree that many related studies assume there are only two cultures a second-generation immigrant can identify with. Yet, we need to consider individuals whose parents were born in two different countries, in addition to the various attachments that one can feel towards Montréal, Québec and Canada. This renders my research incredibly revealing, as the examination of different levels of belonging is central in my discussions with the participants. Research focusing on second-generation immigrants has to move "beyond the immigrant/host dichotomy" (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.4), if we are to present sensible accounts of identity and sense of belonging. Daniel A. Yon uses the expression of "living with multiplace associations" to denote how diverse sense of belonging can be, an expression that definitely applies to the participants in this research (Yon 2000, p.16). The multiplicity, hybridity and temporality of belonging are highly meaningful when analyzing the ways one identifies to the cultures that one is surrounded by.

Immigration and national identity

Many scholars have been interested in exploring immigrants' levels of attachment to various national entities. In this research, I will indeed investigate how second-generation

immigrants construct their identity and sense of belonging regarding different societies that are nationally defined; Canada and Québec specifically. As a starting point, author Jon Horgen Friberg indicates that the construction of a national identity is possible if one can "adopt and internalize a sense of self as belonging to a larger nationally defined social category" (Friberg 2021, p.22). Then, he shows that there is a certain requirement to be acknowledged as part of a group by others as well (Friberg 2021, p.22). Relatedly, it is critical to simultaneously observe if immigrants themselves perceive that there are accepted, or not, into a given society (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.3). There are a number of ideas to be taken from this: first, the connection between national identity and sense of belonging is clear. For one's national identity to form and develop, one must experience an attachment to a certain national entity that is socially defined. However, the second part of Friberg's explanation is crucial as he demonstrates the importance of reciprocity. This indicates that there is a meaningfull difference "between the feeling of being attached and the feeling of being accepted" (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.4) that hints to the construction of immigrants' identity and sense of belonging. Then, what renders someone Canadian, or accepted by other Canadians as a Canadian? The same question applies for the Québécois national identity.

Accordingly, many studies have found that race is one of the first features that second-generation immigrants mention when they express their sense of belonging, or not, to Canada. In Gillian Creese's research, African-Canadians predominantly report that their pursuit of a Canadian identity is rejected by other Canadians based on their blackness. In fact, white non-immigrant Canadians seem to believe that racialized individuals are first-generation immigrants, even if "their presence extends over centuries" (Creese 2019, p.1480). On the contrary, white individuals are accepted as Canadians without question, except if they show specific markers of diversity, such as accents, that might suggest they come from somewhere else (Creese 2019, p.1479). Creese

critically underlines the "dissonance between [the] multicultural rhetoric and lived realities of racism in Canada", as she shares everyday stories of black second-generation immigrants who navigate the rejection of their Canadianness (Creese 2019, p.1479). Clearly, it is essential to explore the notion of race when understanding the national attachments of second-generation immigrants. As a parallel, it is also crucial to observe that, if whiteness seems to be an integral part of the Canadian identity, does the same rule apply for the Québécois identity? Do second-generation immigrants perceive their inclusion differently in Montréal, Québec and Canada? How is their sense of belonging mirrored in the expression of their identity? Friberg notes that discourses in Europe are similar to what we may observe in North America: non-immigrant white people question the attachment of immigrants to their new environment, while immigrant individuals wonder if they will ever feel at home "here" (Friberg 2021, p.22). I believe some of my participants will testify to this idea, especially when considering the exclusion they might feel towards the Québécois culture.

Evidently, the investigation of one's national identity points to important aspects that construct one's sense of belonging. In Montréal, how do second-generation immigrants make sense of Canadian and Québécois identities: are they able to relate to them? Since they are often illustrated as opposing each other, conveying respective cultural and racial characteristics, it would be understandable that connecting with these identities might be challenging. With this also comes the assumption that second-generation immigrants are "stuck" or "torn" between these various attachments. As young adults, are they able to make sense of their identity and sense of belonging in ways that give them more freedom than what we may assume? I questioned my participants on these topics, to understand how they perceived the differences mentioned above. In this regard, a

comment from my participant Emanuel helps to understand how he perceives the context of Montréal:

"(…) j'ai l'impression qu'il y a une culture de l'immigration"
(Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)

"(…) I think there's a culture of immigration" (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Compared to his perception of Québec, Emanuel distinguishes Montréal for having integrated immigration, almost embodying immigration within the city. Apparently, Québec and Canada do not really feel the same way to him, as he notices a stronger sense of belonging to Montréal because of immigrants' inclusion in the city. It is valuable to note that immigration has been an integral part of Montréal's history for numerous decades now. Today, immigration is also the result of diverse policies that influence the demography of the city. These policies are often centered on social, economic and educational aspects, which are used to evaluate the "fit" of immigrants into Québec's francophone population (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.126). The homogeneity of immigrants has also transformed, since before 1975 approximately, waves of immigration to Québec largely originated from countries in Europe (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.126). However, in the late 1970s and onwards, we witnessed greater variation in immigrants' countries of origins (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.126), for instance more migration from "the Global South" (Gingras 2010, p.50). Hence, Canada's immigration strategy further entails the selection of individuals who are susceptible to willingly adjust to "the climate of the country", such as their disposition to learn new languages (Gingras 2010, p.47). In agreement with the statistics presented in the Introduction, Le Gall and Gherghel state that immigrants from outside Canada now stand as a significant section of the province's population (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.126). Such statements support the strong presence of the immigrant communities in Montréal, and

consequently the importance of understanding how national identity and sense of belonging develop in the city. This urban setting provides a great location for such inquiries, especially as linguistic and nationalist concerns are central to Montréal and Québec's history (Magalhaes 2013, p.80). The intersection and juxtaposition of these cultural and social variables seem to layer second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging.

Language

On this last point, I agree that Montréal offers a unique space to investigate language. To understand the significance of this topic, it is essential to know that language has historically been a subject of debate in Montréal and in the province of Québec. Indeed, a significant colonial legacy in Québec is the continuous frictions between Francophones and Anglophones, dating back to territorial conflicts between the French and British powers. Centuries later, approximately in the 1960s, Montréal's population was still divided between a Francophone community primarily composed of migrants from the rural regions, an urban community comprised of Anglophones and a growing immigrant population choosing to learn English instead of French (Kircher 2009, p.19). Unsurprisingly, this discrepancy in numbers, juxtaposed to immigrants' choice to learn English, or "immigrant anglicization" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.8), engendered even more anxiety in Francophones who believed that English was a "threat to the French language and culture" (Kircher 2009, p.18). Eventually, it was even considered that Francophones would also ultimately decide to learn English, since the Francophone Québécois identity had become somewhat "stigmatised" (Kircher 2009, p.22). Such "linguistic insecurity", which as we will observe also translates into perceptions of identity and culture, finally led to the creation of Bill 63, "the so-called 'Act to promote the French language in Quebec'" (Kircher 2009, p.26), and later the well-known Bill 101.

Notably, following the implementation of Bill 101, the "Parti Québécois" of 1978 created a special "state-funded heritage language programme" (*PELO: Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine*) to stimulate the linguistic and cultural diversity in the province (Das 2008, p.232). However, it seems that this project was also put in place to respond to individuals' complaints and resentment towards the impositions of Bill 101 (Das 2008, p.232). More recently, as of June 2022, Bill 96 has passed, enforcing French as "the only official language in Québec […] and the common language of the Québécois nation" (Assemblée Nationale du Québec 2021, p.2). Anthropologically speaking, many political, nationalist and racial notions must be considered from reading this statement. Firstly, exploring the impacts of this Bill enables us to observe the preservation of positions of power, through which institutions continue to promote exclusive ideologies of ownership, membership and authority (Blommaert 2005, p.243). For instance, institutionally stating that French is the only official language in Québec implies subsequent statements: "'this is our language', '[these other languages do not] belong here', '[they do not] speak the language well'" (Blommaert 2005, p.243). Indeed, language may be instrumentalized in order to attribute belonging, and even institutionalized to regulate education and employment (El Samaty 2020). The relation between the recent Bill 96, nationalism, identity and sense of belonging is evident: exclusion and rejection transpire from analyzing the law like so. In this research, I focus on understanding how this plays out in practice, as young adults navigate the city of Montréal and encounter many different languages in conflict with the ideologies advanced by the government.

Secondly, I believe that inquiring about laws on language is meaningful, because it tells us about how multilingual second-generation immigrants perceive the state of various languages in the city. Do they consider that French is dying? What are the various implications of such laws? Indeed, understanding the opinions of second-generation immigrants on these Bills can help us

recognize the consequences engendered upon Montrealers lives. Such positionalities are additionally informative regarding the organization of "future legislature" (Kircher 2009, p.14). For instance, in coming years, many policies and actions will be implemented to change the rules for employment and education around the province, such as compelling employees to work in French (Assemblée Nationale du Québec 2021, p.2). Again, such laws point to the ideologies promoted by the government, and perhaps those do not reflect the vision and the values that second-generation immigrant young adults associate with their identity and their attachment to Québec.

Furthermore, I consider that second-generation immigrants are particularly affected by this Bill, because I believe it can be read as strict, consequential and limiting. My participant Vanya thinks that it "has a very narrow definition of what the French language should be". Does Bill 96 promote the idea that there is only one way we should speak, read and write French? This law certainly seems to advocate for a "particular variety of the language" that the government, and perhaps part of the population, believe should be sustained (Kircher 2009, p.14). Social scientist Jan Blommaert states that most "societies are almost by necessity *multilingual* [original emphasis], in the sense that many varieties, genres, styles, and codes occur, despite self-perceptions of societal monolingualism" (Blommaert 2005, p.243). Then, perhaps advocating for the prioritization of only one language in Montréal is futile. Nonetheless, emphasizing Québécois French in this manner results in the promotion of a particular Québécois identity as well. Significantly exemplified in this context, language indeed cannot be understood only as a tool for interaction, since it is also strongly connected to identity (Edwards 1994 cited in Kircher 2009, p.57). Therefore, do language laws in the city simultaneously promote a very particular, and perhaps exclusive, form of the Québécois identity? The literature actually shows that one can be recognized and identified as a

Québécois from the use of Québécois French, which is understood as "a purified and elite variety of Canadian French" (Das 2008, p.234). Perhaps second-generation immigrants whose accent or speech does not precisely align with this variety of French face challenges regarding their Québécois identity and sense of belonging. By investigating these issues, I attempt to comprehend how language affects the experiences of second-generation immigrants, which hints to their identity and sense of belonging. I will expand on this discussion specifically in Chapter Two, but for now, it seems probable that my participants may indicate various social, cultural and political pressures regarding the learning of French in particular.

As an example of this idea, author Mona Magalhaes reports a participant's dilemma when faced with learning French as a second-generation immigrant in Montréal. This person had to manage their own desires and their parents' wishes, which made it more difficult to situate their ethnicity and national self-identification (Magalhaes 2013, p.83). This account demonstrates the presence of a close relationship between language and self-identification, more precisely through the act of learning a language. I believe my participants can attest to such complications, also knowing that they stand in a distinctive position, since they grew up alongside Bill 101. What are their reflections, now in their twenties, on being obligated to learn French? How has Bill 101 impacted their learning of other languages growing up? The juxtaposition of these Bills can be quite revealing, and further justifies the importance of investigating language in the province of Québec.

The arguments above clearly depict the ways in which "language is implicated in the construction of identities" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.4) and considerably influences one's sense of belonging. It is imperative to analyze the relationship between language, identity and sense of belonging, since it denotes the social and cultural experiences my participants encountered

growing up. For instance, understanding how second-generation young adults acquired diverse linguistic capital hints to their relationship with their family and ethnic group, refers to some of their opinions on linguistic policies in Quebec and denotes their everyday strategies to uphold their sense of belonging. The language uses of second-generation young adults are "processes of social reproduction and contestation", essential to recognize the identity they construct everyday (Han 2014, p.56). Hence, it is critical to examine how these processes occur, especially within this tense atmosphere between French and English, added to the multiplicity of other languages present in the city. Conducting this type of research in Québec is significant, because this province evolves in a particular linguistic context that triggers different legislatures, as opposed what one could observe in other unilingual environments (Lamarre 2008, p.107). Indeed, contrary to other provinces that support proficiency in English when immigrating (Han 2014, p.60), in Québec, French is highly "favoured". Consequently, growing up in this distinct cultural environment creates different notions of linguistic nationalism, which may result in benefits and/or consequences for second-generation immigrants (Han 2014, p.58). Examining their thoughts on the state of language here is central to measure their sense of belonging, how it changes and varies through time and space. Again, depending on their perspectives about language, second-generation immigrants may have varying attachments to Canada, Québec and Montréal. For instance, in other provinces, showing skill in Canadian English is associated with stronger Canadianness (Han 2014, p.60); can this be mirrored here? To analyze this question, my research aims at uncovering what makes the situation different in Québec, with second-generation immigrants.

Moreover, investigating the French language brings forward ongoing debates between Canadian nationalism and Québécois separatism. I believe immigrants play an important role in the future of these conflicts, as they have a unique standpoint from which to experience these

clashing national entities. Understanding second-generation immigrants' attachment to various national identities points us to "the legitimacy of modern nation states" (Friberg 2021, p.24). Here, I agree that second-generation immigrants' understanding of nationality can challenge the larger conceptualizations of Québec and Canada. For example, are second-generation immigrants so strongly tied to Canada as a country that they would disagree with the possibility of Québec separating? How does their experience influence their sense of belonging to Québec? By examining how my participants respond to these questions, I believe it is possible to analyze the correlation between national identity and sense of belonging. In fact, how second-generation young adults express both of these concepts helps to discern the ways in which they imagine and perceive the Montrealer, Québécois and Canadian identities. Even more, we may extrapolate on their perceptions and consider what these identities could look like in the future.

Lastly, it is critical to be reminded that there are many more languages in Montréal than solely French and English. In their research on multilingual youth in Montréal and Vancouver, Dagenais and Lamarre bring attention to the perpetuation of other languages in these metropolitan areas. They argue that second-generation immigrants are encouraged to maintain their parents' mother tongue since it provides advantages when communicating both with their local ethnic community, and "a larger transnational community" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.5). If they can learn their parents' first language, and are able to cultivate that knowledge, second-generation youth may construct further attachments to identities other than Canadian of Québécois. Such cultural capital possibly offers acceptance into "minority language communities" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.5), which may ultimately impact one's sense of belonging to certain groups. Indeed, participants in this research claimed that being fluent in more than one or two languages enabled them to develop their openness and empathy towards others and gives them a general

"advantage" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.11). Most importantly, second-generation youth seem to realize the deep influence that language has on one's identity (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.17). With all this said, research confirms that French is still well spoken by "many racial and ethnic minorities" in the city (Das 2008, p.234). As these young adults continue to evolve in such metropolitan areas, how will their multilingualism impact policies on language? Understanding the connection between language, identity and sense of belonging, will governments develop more inclusive policies that truly represent the multilingual reality of Montréal? Once more, this underlines the importance of analyzing second-generation immigrants' opinions on language and how the laws in the city impact their identity and sense of belonging.

Discrimination

To consider the different factors that may shape second-generation immigrants' sense of belonging, I suggest that looking at discrimination can be revealing. This community can experience exclusion and rejection from various communities, perhaps from white Québécois individuals, making my participants feel like outsiders in the province they grew up in. Then, investigating discrimination is critical, because its impacts can further translate into the construction of one's identity. To begin, the literature indicates that white and non-white immigrants encounter discrimination in different ways, because skin color stands as a marker of diversity, just as it could be the case for names, food or clothing (Marino 2020, p.115). Jon Friberg suggests that non-white immigrants are more likely to face systemic discrimination, without proper resources to assist them, most often when it comes to economic and working spheres (Friberg 2021, p.25). Nonetheless, it does not seem that being a second-generation immigrant prevents one from facing less discrimination than their first-generation immigrant parents (Friberg 2021, p.29).

This information is valuable, because one might assume that second-generation immigrants possess more cultural capital than their parents, especially capital regarding Canada, Québec and Montréal. As a result, they would more easily integrate into society. Even if that can be true, it does not mean that second-generation immigrants experience less discrimination than their parents, it may simply take different forms.

To understand this specific branch of discrimination in more detail, Sophie Hamisultane advances that we must be attentive to silence. She explains how immigrants face considerable exclusion, and often find that they have trouble articulating their distress, which the Covid pandemic has particularly exacerbated for Asian communities (Hamisultane 2020, p.165). This becomes even trickier when we think of "microaggressions", or "microinvalidations", which Hamisultane defines as forms of exclusion which are based in challenging one's belonging to society (Hamisultane 2020, p.170). Second-generation immigrants often experience such forms of discrimination, as their identity is likely to be interrogated. Just by asking the question "Where are you from?", people instantly contest second-generation immigrants' ethnicity and belonging, perhaps assuming that they are first-generation immigrants (Hamisultane 2020, p.170). How does it feel to have strangers evaluate and invalidate one's position in Canada, Québec or Montréal? I insist on the word "invalidate", since participants in Hamisultane's research also demonstrated how they felt like they did not fit in, and how they were imperatively told by others "Non tu n'es pas Canadien [*No you are not Canadian*]" (Hamisultane 2020, p.172). Here, such explicit exclusion is an evident indicator of relations of power (Howell 2002, p.85). Growing up, how do second-generation immigrants navigate these remarks? Research shows that "identity struggles" may surface from these situations; when one's "self-ascription" as Canadian is not reciprocated by other Canadians (Marino 2020, p.123). Ultimately, others' perceptions of one's identity may affect the

attachment immigrants feel towards the place they live in, as mentioned by Friberg earlier (Friberg 2021, p.22). This emphasizes self-identification once more, as the expression of my participants' identity and sense of belonging hints to their everyday experiences in Montréal.

Moreover, when immigrants speak about not fitting in, *who* do they feel they do not fit with? One of Hamisultane's participants expressed how, for her, Québécois are non-racialized white people, who further benefit from the social "invisibility" of their ethnicity (Hamisultane 2020, p.173). This comment is quite interesting, since it advances the questions of who is accepted as Québécois, and who can be perceived as Québécois. Appropriating Nicole Gallant's focus on self-identification, I consider it may be challenging for second-generation immigrants to assert their own Québécois identity, as they exist in a community they are not generally believed to fit into. This can depend on their individual experience as well, since circumstances certainly vary for second-generation immigrants of color, as stated above. Again, I notice how discrimination plays an important role in the construction of one's identity, especially how it can hinder one's belonging to specific social groups.

Furthermore, Hamisultane shows how various sentiments of exclusion can push racialized individuals to turn inwards and connect with people experiencing the same discrimination (Hamisultane 2020, p.175). This may lead to the creation of a small collectivity, bonded through trust, reciprocity and emotional understanding (Hamisultane 2020, p.175). If the creation of such a collectivity is not possible, can second-generation immigrants rely on other communities already present in Montréal? Are any of these communities accessible? If not, perhaps second-generation immigrants turn to friends, or close family members, to share and unpack the discrimination they face. However, if interaction and communication with others is challenging, this may in turn reinforce the silence Hamisultane speaks about. To expand on this concept, author Lily Pham

supports Hamisultane's claim that silence is particularly present in Asian immigrant communities (Pham 2019, p.27). In her work, Pham indicates that we should explore silence since there is also a generational element to its perpetuation. She explains that the first generation of immigrants tend to keep silent about their postwar experience and migration journey, and refrain from sharing details to their family that might cause sadness, pain, or even trauma to both sides (Pham 2019, p.37). Yet, this prevents second-generation immigrants from connecting with their family's history, as they experience "a disorienting lack of knowledge" (Pham 2019, p.37). In this light, silence can also be an indicator of trauma.

All in all, the work of these two authors demonstrates the importance of paying attention to discrimination and silence. Whether discrimination indicates struggles to form one's sense of belonging or silence marks traumatic experiences of exclusion and migration, such stories influence second-generation immigrants' navigation of the communities that surround them. In exploring these topics, I may uncover which social groups become spaces to break the silence Hamisultane speaks about, or also safe spaces to share the silence. Through my analysis in the following chapters, I will be able to identify the various communities present, and/or absent, around second-generation immigrants that influence their sense of belonging, and further forge their identity. In coping with diverse forms of exclusion and silence, I believe sense of community goes hand in hand with sense of belonging.

Social relationships

Speaking of such communities, some studies have explored the role of friendships in the lives of second-generation immigrants. Author Lisa Haayen utilizes this type of relationship as a

tool to understand the identity of these individuals in "broader contexts of social organization" (Haayen 2016, p.65). Working with Mexican immigrant in Dallas, Haayen wonders why her young Latino participants prefer to make Mexican friends. It seems they found it easier this way: a Mexican friend " ‘speaks your language,’ ‘faces the same experiences,’ ‘feels more at ease around your family,’ and ‘just understands your culture better’ " (Haayen 2016, p.72). Recalling the concept of "ethnic homophily", Haayen explains how the literature holds that young people usually make friends with others they encounter regularly, especially in urban settings (Haayen 2016, p.72). Yet, I agree with Haayen; it is surprising that in the context of her research, diversity in friendships is not greater, given the opportunities of befriending youth from diverse ethnic groups (Haayen 2016, p.73). Is this also the case for second-generation young adults in Montréal? One may assume that the cultural diversity in the city helps second-generation immigrants to feel at home in Montréal, difference being a point of connection between people. Nevertheless, it is also possible that diversity does not guarantee one’s sense of belonging, and therefore young people still long to make friends that are ethnically similar to them. Perhaps that is because they project their own identity on their friends’ and appreciate they share Mexico, in this case, as their parents’ country of birth (Haayen 2016, p.73). Consequently, it seems quite important for second-generation immigrants to be able to relate and connect with people from their parents’ culture, aside from their own family.

Furthermore, Haayen underlines the importance of friendships, since they provide a space for young people to understand and explore the evolution of their identity and self (Haayen 2016, p.74). Notably, it seems like friendships are only recently becoming utilized in research as relationships of importance when analyzing meaningful "social questions, such as issues of identity, difference and belonging" (Haayen 2016 and Punch and Vanderbeck 2018). These

reciprocal relationships indeed assist second-generation immigrants in navigating everchanging circumstances and in legitimizing their experiences (Haayen 2016, p.74). This means that having solid friendships on which to rely on can influence one's sense of identity and sense of belonging over time, especially during one's youth. These accounts from Haayen support the significance of having friends with similar life experiences, thus second-generation immigrants may more easily bond with immigrant young adults as well. Lastly, the author indicates how friendships provide ground for agency, especially when it regards developing one's identity in social spheres absent of family members (Haayen 2016, p.78). Observing such types of relationships in this thesis is helpful to comprehend the development of second-generation immigrants' identities, especially because these affiliations are different than the ones with family members and relatives.

Nevertheless, if the role of friendships is central to second-generation immigrants' sense of belonging, it is imperative to reflect on the role that family plays in similar contexts. More and more, various areas of social research seem to combine informants of different ages to investigate intergenerational relationships, instead of keeping children and adults separated (Punch and Vanderbeck 2018, p.17). Indeed, the concept of intergenerationality emerges as a valuable analytical approach to explore processes of cultural "continuity and discontinuity" (Punch and Vanderbeck 2018, p.17). Recent research with second-generation immigrants demonstrates that "the relevance of the family" is an essential feature of individuals' ethnic identity (Marino 2020, p.198). As an example, when studying sense of belonging in second and third-generation immigrants, authors Le Gall and Gherghel were interested in observing the different manifestations and transmissions of cultural heritage (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.123). Focusing on Azorean immigrants in Québec, the authors examine the embodiment and transformation of belonging over time and compare it with the previous immigrant generation. They explain how an emotional

attachment is formed through the presence of the family network, which works to preserve a bond towards other countries (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.124). According to the authors, this process of "cultural intergenerational transmission" constructs a "multiple hybrid identity" (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.124). I believe two aspects are important to consider here: firstly, this highlights the significance of cultural knowledge being transmitted by family members. It builds a unique attachment to the culture, and perhaps the given geographical location. Intergenerational relationships therefore play a meaningful role in the sense of belonging second-generation immigrants construct growing up. Secondly, I observe the use of multiple and hybrid characteristics to describe identity. In this context, these characteristics are meaningful, because they represent the evolution of identity over time, as it transforms depending on the transmission of cultural knowledge, and therefore varies according to one's sense of belonging. Evidently, there are strong ties to be investigated between intergenerational relationships, identity and sense of belonging.

In fact, Le Gall and Gherghel's research emphasizes the significance of family and family history in the construction of identity and sense of belonging, particularly in second-generation immigrants residing in western countries. The authors point out that cultural socialization of Azorean traditions, added to socialization in Québec, develops assets useful in both locations (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.124). The presence of family and relatives can strengthen second-generation immigrants' attachment to Azorean culture and society, while socialization in Canada takes place simultaneously. Such intergenerational "networking is an important means of acquiring a sense of place" (Gingras 2010, p.80) and therefore reinforces the multiplicity and hybridity that we may observe in second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging. Le Gal and Gherghel further mention the concept of the transnational habitus, defined as a "dual position or

orientation" that immigrants possess, which enables them to hold cultural capital from two places (Vertovec 2004 cited in Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.124). This is interesting, as it points to the possibility that second-generation immigrants can emotionally connect to a region they were not born in, simply by the fact that their parents educated them about the culture of that region. Notably, this highlights the parents' positionality, in the sense that their decisions will greatly impact the identity and sense of belonging of their children, for instance through their "investment" in various forms of cultural socialization (Windzio 2018, p.378). Such decisions could be illustrated by looking at first-generation immigrants' choice of relocation, if even having this choice is conceivable in the first place. In her book on the Italian community in Australia, Simone Marino explains that first-generation parents attempted to locate their home strategically, for instance close to a church, as to maintain communal relationships and cultural practices (Marino 2020, p.149). The ensuing construction and transmission of cultural capital may enable children of immigrants to integrate more easily in different social settings, in various places in the world. In this light, a transnational habitus becomes quite a precious attribute for a second-generation immigrant. Utilizing Brubaker's notion of identity as a category of analysis helps to explore further how that transnational habitus is built, and how possessing cultural capital influences one's identity and sense of belonging.

As a last point, I note in the quote above the belief that immigrants may only have a bicultural identity, an account I desire to move away from. On this note, the authors agree that second and third-generation immigrants' identities are far more "fluid and multifaceted" than what earlier research indicated (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.125). Analyzing intergenerational relationships in this manner is crucial because the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of my participants are quite diverse, a feature that is mirrored in their identity and sense of belonging.

Consequently, kinship ties, perhaps even transnational kinship ties, establish and solidify sense of belonging and cultural identity when one grows up. Research shows that family networks provide an essential level of safety and well-being (Merz 2018, p.192). As a result, the presence and/or absence of various familial relationships certainly plays a role in the emotional bonds second-generation immigrants construct growing up. In fact, Le Gall and Gherghel specified how they detected stronger emotional attachment to the Azorean islands and its culture when Azorean immigrants traveled often to see their families and were able to participate in various traditional events (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.128). Evidently, when children interact with other individuals from the same ethnic community, the development of their family's language and social practices is encouraged (Windzio 2018, p.378), hence emotional attachment is more likely to form. Yet, it is critical to be reminded that not all second-generation immigrants have the luxury to travel with their whole family to the parents' countries of origin. For instance, accessibility to travel may depend on plane ticket prices, the state of familial relationships or the security level of the country they are traveling to. My participant Rosalin mentioned how she traveled to Sri Lanka only with her father, when visiting family overseas:

"Comme, *no way* que nous cinq; moi, ma sœur, mon frère et mes parents, on va être capables d'aller au Sri Lanka ensemble en même temps et revenir en même temps, ça va être plus que 10 000$ juste les billets" (Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

"Like, no way that the five of us; me, my sister, my brother and my parents, we'll be able to go to Sri Lanka at the same time and come back at the same time, it's gonna be more than 10 000$ just for the tickets" (Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Rosalin's account demonstrates the obstacles that immigrant families encounter when trying to visit relatives: her brother and sister have not yet been able to travel to Sri Lanka. Hence, the opportunities to go to specific countries may not always be present or safe, which is even more

significant since the Covid pandemic of 2020. What happens to second-generation immigrants' sense of belonging when travel opportunities are scarcer? Then, how do they build different levels of attachment to their parents' countries of origin? In Chapter One, my participants share how some of these obstacles translated into the construction of their identity and sense of belonging: it was at times difficult for some of them to connect with their parents' cultures.

Having established the importance of intergenerational relationships, I turn to Riches and Curdt-Christiansen (2010), who analyzed Chinese and anglophone parents' opinions on multilingualism in Montréal. Their research strengthens the relationship between family, language, identity and sense of belonging. Such work is helpful to recognize the structures and environments that my participants grew up in. Riches and Curdt-Christiansen distinctively observe which choices and morals bring parents to different decisions regarding their children's linguistic education. According to the authors, both Chinese and Anglophone parents strongly believe in the advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism, especially how it could be beneficial for the construction of their children's identities (Riches and Curdt-Christiansen 2010, p.534). In the same way, individuals worry if second-generation immigrants of their community only speak English, as showed in Sonia Das' research in the Tamil diaspora of Montréal (Das 2008, p.239). Interestingly, it is probable that the value put upon linguistic abilities can also be transmitted through generations, meaning that second-generation immigrants would also favour multilingualism. Riches and Curdt-Christiansen additionally found that their participants considered that literacy in the mother tongue was central in constructing identity and sense of belonging in their children (Riches and Curdt-Christiansen 2010, p.538). In fact, parents thought that competency in the mother tongue was "a high priority and a prerequisite" to learning second and/or third languages (Riches and Curdt-Christiansen 2010, p.538). This points to the possibility that, even in the linguistic context of

Québec, learning Chinese, Vietnamese or Spanish will be prioritized within the family, no matter the policies imposed. French and English may always come in second or third place. What are the consequences of such linguistic socialization for second-generation immigrants? What was it like to navigate all these languages, at different levels, every day? Riches and Curdt-Christiansen's study presents an important basis to build upon, as it provides specific context to the politics of language that we encounter in Canada.

This return to the topic of language brings around my concluding remarks on the literature I presented in this chapter. As mentioned, it is no surprise that language appears in many discussions around identity, sense of belonging and immigration, in the specific urban setting of Montréal. This city blends together the long-lasting debates on the status of French and English in Québec, the growing intersection of various languages present in Montréal and the embodied relationship between identity and language. Intergenerational relationships further layer the cultural socialization second-generation immigrants experience, added to the complex national implications of living in Canada. All these concepts influence the construction of my participants' identity and sense of belonging. Brubaker's and Gallant's theoretical work on identity predominantly shape my own approach as I turn towards the analysis of the data I collected during my fieldwork. Their ideas develop my understanding of the different features of identity and emphasize the meaningful processes of self-identification. The existing literature on second-generation immigration is extensive, yet the juxtaposition of the above concepts can elevate our anthropological understanding of this community. Indeed, positioning the fieldwork in Montréal enables me to intersect various, but critical, concepts which all shape one's identity and sense of belonging, such as nationalism, language and ethnicity. Thus, now that I have provided this

theoretical background, I move on to the following chapters, where I dive into the stories of my participants.

Chapter One: Intergenerationality

For this first chapter, I believe intergenerationality is an excellent point of entry into my participants' experiences and it is an effective framework to understand their lives as they have been described to me. My participants remain the center of attention in this thesis: yet, it is important to consider how intergenerational relations shape their lives every day. **In this chapter, I will explore and analyze how intergenerationality influences a second-generation immigrant's identity and sense of belonging.** Firstly, I discuss how intergenerationality was experienced by four of my participants. How did their relationship with their parents influence the development of their identity and sense of belonging? To answer this question, I report excerpts of my participants interviews, where they express how they perceive their relationship with their parents, and stories that attest to their point of view. Secondly, intergenerational relationships lead me to discuss further familial and communal relationships that my participants encounter, and how these impact identity and sense of belonging. What roles do additional peripheral relationships play in the experiences of a second-generation immigrant? Finally, I conclude this chapter by presenting the concepts of community and distance, as they allow me to deepen my analysis of intergenerationality and to introduce the subject of languages. Do second-generation immigrants search for a sense of community outside of their relationship with their parents? What happens when second-generation immigrants do not reside near their extended family? The varied positionalities of my participants tackle such interrogations from different angles, and ultimately underline the weight of intergenerationality.

Throughout the fieldwork process, I was indeed able to learn about my participants' childhood and the various family members in their lives. Whether they have siblings, close

relationships with their grandparents or have never met their cousins, each of their experience is different. Most importantly, I observed how the presence of their parents impacted their lives, which is why I have decided to explore the idea of intergenerationality. Second-generation immigrant participants in other studies, for instance in the Netherlands, also recognize the significance of family and kinship relations in their sense of belonging (Asadu 2018, p.19). After all, my participants are second-generation immigrants because their parents immigrated in the first place. Then, how do I define and use the concept of intergenerationality? How is it relevant to the scope of this research? Firstly, I understand intergenerationality in this thesis as referring to the "intergenerational relationships" between individuals of different generations, such as between children, parents and grandparents (Sánchez and Díaz 2020, p.1). Although in the literature intergenerational relationships may also refer to affiliations that do not imply kinship (Sánchez and Díaz 2020, and Punch and Vanderbeck 2018), in this thesis intergenerationality signifies the nuclear family and extended familial relationships, for example with cousins, aunt and uncles.

Secondly, how is intergenerationality helpful in the context of this thesis? According to research on intergenerational cultural transmission, parents are positioned as the dominant sources of cultural knowledge in socialization processes (Tam 2015, p.1261). Studies on intergenerationality indeed illustrate this notion as a valuable structure of analysis for exploring how culture is transmitted and reproduced, and most important for this chapter, how identity is formed (Punch and Vanderbeck 2018, p.17). Notably, this concept overlaps multiple social notions that are significant to the development of identity, such as religion, class, race and gender (Schroeder 2018, p.282). Furthermore, generational relationships in immigrant families are quite influential, for instance as the parents' choices of "school, residential location, or religious week-end lessons" shape their children's life and experiences (Windzio 2018, p.378). Following such

decisions, studies on intergenerationality and immigration often attempt to understand patterns of integration and acculturation, and observe if individuals of the second-generation preserve knowledge and skills from their parents' cultures (Chuang and Costigan 2018, Merz 2018 and Marino 2020). For example, studies on immigration and postwar settings utilize intergenerationality to understand the "transmission of affects" between parents of the first-generation and their children (Pham 2019, p.35). Moreover, familial relationships often function as a "social safety net" and provide a sense of connection within one's cultural group (Nibbs 2016, p.91). Given this background on intergenerationality and immigration, this chapter turns to the more specific notions of identity and sense of belonging, as I explore how my participants received and integrated cultural knowledge from their families growing up in Montréal.

To begin this discussion, I want to give some space to Estefanía, who spoke considerably about the centrality of her family in her life. Through her experience, we will see how it is first and foremost within their families that my participants create and gain a sense of their identity and their belonging, since family functions as a primary agent of social, cultural and linguistic reproduction (Juteau 1999 cited in Gérin-Lajoie 2010 and El Samaty 2020). Similar to several other immigrant communities in Montréal, Estefanía lived with her extended family her whole life (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.130). Here, she describes her living arrangements growing up:

" (…) we still live in that building, so we've been there forever. My grand parents also live there, my aunt lives in the building next to us… And it's a Latino cooperative, (…) so it's all Latinos that are there. Most of my neighbours have known me since I was a baby. "
(Estefanía 2022, Individual interview)

" (…) on vit encore dans cet immeuble, donc on est là depuis toujours. Mes grands-parents y vivent aussi, ma tante vit dans l'immeuble à côté… Et c'est une coopérative Latino, (…) alors c'est tous des Latinos qui sont là. La majorité de mes voisins me connaissent depuis que je suis bébé. " (Estefanía 2022, *Translation mine*)

Evidently, Estefanía grew up surrounded by her nuclear family and additional relatives, ensuring the presence of a Latino community in her life. Her nuclear family is composed of her two older brothers, her mother who was born in Colombia and her father who was born in Guatemala. Estefanía's grandmothers also live with the family. During her individual interview, Estefanía often mentioned her cousins, aunt and uncles, really cementing the fact that she was socialized encircled by Latino culture, from Colombia and Guatemala. Furthermore, each of these family members embodies different generations of immigrants: first, second and third. Consequently, through her interview, I observed the presence of a strong Latino community in her everyday life.

Interestingly, Estefanía's sense of identity reflects the community she grew up with. She considers "being Latino" to be an umbrella term. What does this mean? Estefanía explained how she often felt torn between the two sides of her family, Colombian and Guatemalan; how she thought she had to choose one over the other. This could be exemplified by both her grandmothers quarrelling over which country Estefanía should visit first, which food her friends would prefer, or which Spanish slang she should be using: Colombian versus Guatemalan. This last tension about language, more precisely accents and slang, strongly marked Estefanía's development as an individual, a detail I will investigate in the third chapter. Thus, the duality of her parents' countries of birth sometimes brought conflict within herself, because she felt forced to "pick a side". Today, she finds comfort in the label of Latina, because it encompasses both nationalities. From Estefanía's perspective, being Latina has multiple meanings: having attachments to both her Colombian and Guatemalan heritage, identifying to Central and South America, and knowing how to shift between different Spanish dialects. Because of the community around her, and her experience growing up, Estefanía developed over time the capacity to "feel Latina in [her] own

way", without feeling obligated to favour one side over the other. The blend of the different Latino heritages found in her family ultimately allowed her to merge together these multiple cultural identities. The duality she faced in her teenage years transformed into a more blended Latina identity and sense of belonging.

Consequently, the multiple and hybrid qualities of the Latina identity here give Estefanía a greater feeling of comfort and stability. This allows her to solidify further her belonging to both her Colombian and Guatemalan heritage, without having to choose one or the other. Indeed, research shows that this is increasingly common for second-generation youth: it is not a question of "which identity" dominates another: multiplicity and hybridity are far more observed today (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.125). Interestingly, even if it was at first the presence of Colombian and Guatemalan family members that initially prompted Estefanía's struggles, it is also these exact intergenerational relationships that helped her understand what being a Latina feels like. Being taught about these Latino cultures growing up certainly assisted her in developing her own sense of self. She even explicitly recognizes it:

"(…) I am very, very grateful that I got to have my grandparents here with me. Without my grandparents and my family, I think I wouldn't have gotten as much of the Latino culture… 'Cause they were making the meals, and the celebrations, always forcing me to speak Spanish with them as well, and them going to trips and coming back with the pictures and the stories. That definitely helped me build my Latino identity. If I would have just been with my parents, I think it would have been a whole different story, for sure (…)"
(Estefanía 2022, Individual interview)

"(…) Je suis vraiment, vraiment reconnaissante du fait que j'ai pu avoir mes grands-parents avec moi ici. Sans mes grands-parents et ma famille, je pense que je n'aurais pas acquis autant de la culture Latine... Parce qu'ils préparaient les repas, les célébrations, me forçaient toujours à parler Espagnol avec eux, ils partaient en voyage et me rapportaient des photos et des histoires. Ça m'a définitivement aidé à construire mon identité Latine. Si j'avais seulement vécu avec mes parents, je pense que ça aurait certainement été une toute différente histoire, c'est sûr (…)" (Estefanía 2022, *Translation mine*)

From this quote, I perceive the weight of intergenerationality and the sense of community in Estefanía's identity and sense of belonging. Not only in their presence, but through their actions, her grandparents helped her grow closer to her Latina identity. Social relationships, more specifically intergenerational relationships, have clearly influenced and developed Estefanía's life course, as we observe such a transition and transformation in her sense of self (Stauber, Walther and Settersen 2022, p.5). Even though she only visited Guatemala recently, and has never been to Colombia (as of writing this chapter), the familial community around Estefanía is strong enough that she can now express her Latina identity with confidence and pride. As proven through her experience, an accessible and "extended family network" enables the "development of an emotional attachment" to the Latino heritage which Estefanía claims belonging to (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.124). The intergenerational relationships she grew up with assisted in the formation of her Latina identity, even after some years of feeling unsure about how to position herself.

However, not every second-generation immigrant has the chance to reside with their nuclear and extended family. The other stories of immigration I heard bear significant differences, where intergenerationality influences identity and sense of belonging in alternative ways. Hence, I turn to my participant Vanya, whose mother grew up in Kenya and whose father grew up in Russia. Living in Montréal since they were 7 years old, Vanya grew up as an only child. Their maternal grandparents, cousins and other relatives live in Kenya for the most part, and only a few relatives from their paternal side are still in Russia. To begin, Vanya explains how their mother somewhat struggled to transmit some of her Kenyan cultural heritage:

"(…) When I was really young, my mom didn't have a sense of community to help me be raised. You know, we often rely on family members, on close friends, but that was not necessarily there for [her] (…)" (Vanya 2022, Individual interview)

"(…) Quand j'étais vraiment jeune, ma mère n'avait pas de communauté qui pouvait l'aider à m'élever. Tu sais, on compte souvent sur des membres de la famille, des amis proches, mais ça, c'était pas nécessairement présent pour [elle] (…)" (Vanya 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Vanya reflects on the difficulties their mother encountered when trying to impart the Kenyan cultural identity on them. Retrospectively, they understand how being in closer contact with the Kenyan culture could have strengthened their identity and sense of belonging during their childhood. Vanya explained how they felt at times envious of their cousins: because they live in Kenya, they can spend time with the family whenever they want and they often enjoy their grandmother's cooking. Thus, it is understandable that it was more difficult for Vanya to connect with the Kenyan heritage their family possessed during their childhood and teenage years.

Yet, Vanya has been able to travel to Kenya fairly often, which has offered a special opportunity to bond with the Kenyan culture. Even if they missed a stronger sense of the Kenyan community here in Montréal, by having the chance to travel, Vanya was able to build a greater relationship with the culture over time. Indeed, this shows that the frequency of communal interactions impacts the expression of one's ethnic identity (Marino 2020, p.212). Thus, travel accessibility appeared as a solution to the absence of sufficient contact with the Kenyan culture, and enabled Vanya to invest in intergenerational relationships overseas. Furthermore, this proves that access to "geographical mobility" influences the transfer of capital (Brannen 2003, p.4), in this case ethnic and cultural capital, which Vanya utilizes to connect with their family and strengthen their Kenyan identity. Today, they keep in contact with their maternal grandmother and their cousins in Kenya through social media, which the literature emphasizes as a valuable and prevalent means for fostering transnational relationships (Lamphere 2016, p.209). Hence, Vanya

continues to cultivate a sense of community through intergenerational relationships, which in turn helps them solidify their identity and sense of belonging to the Kenyan culture.

Next, Vanya described how their father's sentiments towards Russia influenced their view of the country, and further on their own identity and sense of belonging. Their father left Russia as a political refugee, as he felt "frustrated with the place, with the government, with the way that it was working". From my point of view, it was evident that Vanya could sense their fathers' feelings towards Russia; the frustration and even the nostalgia. However, contrary to the Kenyan community, the Russian community in Montréal seemed easier to access, from Vanya's perspective. Their father was able to connect with other Russian immigrants, which he is still in contact with. Interestingly, in this case, I do not believe that access to the Russian community did enough to push Vanya into building a stronger Russian identity and sense of belonging, even though they have a greater understanding and knowledge of the culture. Vanya explains:

> "(…) So, for me, I never felt any ties to Russia as a country, because as a country, it's been painted kind of negatively by [my father]. But the things that do have meaning are the movies, the books, the food. (…)" (Vanya 2022, Individual interview)

> "(…) Donc, pour moi, j'ai jamais senti de liens envers la Russie en tant que pays, parce qu'en tant que pays, ça a été peint plutôt négativement par [mon père]. Mais les choses qui ont de la valeur sont les films, les livres, la nourriture. (…)" (Vanya 2022, *Translation mine*)

From this account, I perceive how Vanya formulated a distinction between the country of Russia and the culture from Russia. Politically and nationally speaking, the discouraging discourse of their father did not inspire Vanya to construct a strong Russian identity and sense of belonging. Growing up, it is then understandable that Vanya might not have wanted to associate themselves further with Russia. Especially since February 2022, when the conflict in Ukraine was exposed internationally, it must be even harder to connect morals and values to the country itself. Thus,

what feels more comfortable and accessible is popular Russian culture. It may be possible to detach the popular culture from the political actions of the country, and therefore it becomes easier to connect with movies, music, books and food. Indeed, perhaps Vanya makes this distinction between the state and the culture. In this case, I consider that Vanya's Russian identity and sense of belonging are mostly constructed around a specific part of the popular culture that they consume personally.

Through our conversation, it became clear how the perspective of Vanya's father influenced the construction of their identity and sense of belonging. This intergenerational relationship transmitted Vanya some discouraging images of Russia as a country. Thus, they prefer to focus on Russian popular culture to be able to create some connections with their Russian heritage. According to the literature, this portrays the "selective attachment" that one may express as one develops a specific type of belonging to culture, which can vary through one's life course (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.123). Through this participant's experience, I observe how intergenerational relationships are vital when transmitting culture, identity and sense of belonging. These relationships shape a second-generation immigrant's imagination of their parents' country of birth. How my participants relate to these nations and cultures is affected by intergenerationality, and to a different extent, by sense of community.

Then, let us look at other participants' intergenerational relationships. Divya grew up in an Indian household, with both her parents and her older brother. Her family is in contact with her grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, who also live in the city of Montréal. During her interview, Divya told me how the Indian culture was strongly pushed upon her, how she felt forced into it. For instance, she felt obliged to make Indian friends, to dress in traditional Indian clothes and to attend celebrations. Divya explains her reaction to being pushed towards the Indian culture:

"(...) Des fois, quand t'es d'une certaine culture et que tes parents essaient de te forcer à connaître cette culture… Plus t'es forcé à le faire, plus t'as envie de le rejeter, et c'est un peu ça qui m'est arrivé. C'est comme, 'Ah, il faut que tu sois avec des amis indiens (…)' et ça a juste fait que j'étais comme 'Non'" (Divya 2022, Individual interview)

"(...) Sometimes, when you're from a certain culture and your parents try to force you to learn about that culture… The more you're forced into it, the more you want to reject it, and that's kind of what happened to me. It was like, 'Ah, you need to be with Indian friends (…)' and it just ended up with me being like 'No'" (Divya 2022, *Translation mine*)

It turns out that growing up with this rather conflicting relationship towards the Indian culture is mirrored in Divya's identity and sense of belonging. She explains how she does not feel a strong attachment to her Indian identity and does not really relate to the culture. When she felt her parents pushing her to engage further in Indian traditions, she only wanted to turn away from them: there was a "conflict of interest" between her and her parents (Asadu 2018, p.35). The intergenerational relationship here, based in the nuclear family, feels to me more tense and at odds. As the parents hoped their child would not lose contact, skill and knowledge in the Indian culture, the second-generation immigrant instead resisted against this "social control" (Windzio 2018, p.377). Since learning about the Indian culture was strongly pushed onto Divya, she disregarded it and, therefore, does not truly feel connected to it. Consequently, the tensions found in this intergenerational relationship are reflected in the relation Divya has with the Indian culture.

The same pattern seems to have occurred when looking at the Indian community surrounding Divya. Again, since she felt forced to attend celebrations and make Indian friends, her reaction was to look away from these parts of the Indian culture that she was socialized into. She did not appreciate going to parties, being forced to dance and wearing traditional clothing. The Indian community around her does not seem to have impacted her identity and sense of belonging like it did for Estefanía, because Divya does not really relate to them. Even if she did spend time

with other family members, she does not connect her identity to her Indian relatives. The sense of community that was offered to her felt forced, so she did not want to connect with it so much. Divya seems to feel the same way about friendships:

> "Des fois mes parents, je pense même jusqu'à ce jour, ils sont comme 'Ah, tu dois te faire des amis indiens'. Mais moi je suis amie avec des gens avec qui j'ai des trucs en commun, qu'ils soient Indiens ou non, ça change rien (…)" (Divya 2022, Individual interview)

> "Sometimes my parents, I think even to this day, they're like 'Ah, you need to make Indian friends'. But I am friends with people I have things in common with, whether they are Indian or not, it doesn't change anything (…)" (Divya 2022, *Translation mine*)

In this excerpt, Divya explains she cultivates relationships with people outside of the Indian community, because this is not a requirement for her. Therefore, the configuration of her social network is ethnically and culturally different from her parents', which seems to be mostly composed of individuals within their own ethnic community (Windzio 2018, p.377). Moreover, where Estefanía's community provided her a solid Latina identity and sense of belonging, Divya almost felt repulsed by how the Indian community was forced upon her, mostly by her parents. Comparing intergenerational relationships in this context provides a strong ground upon which to analyze how second-generation immigrants navigate identity and sense of belonging growing up. This further demonstrates the importance of intergenerational relationships and sense of community through the socialization of a second-generation immigrant. Even if Estefanía and Divya struggled to position themselves in cultural terms growing up, the outcome of their difficulties is quite different. Estefanía developed her Latina identity through the community and the relationships surrounding her. At the same time, Divya was never really able to attach her identity and sense of belonging to the Indian culture. Even if her family had a strong sense of the

Indian culture and was in contact with the larger Indian community in Montréal, as a second-generation immigrant, Divya did not pursue this same attachment.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that Divya does not seem to resent her parents in this way. She understands that, as immigrant parents, they had the desire to share the Indian culture with her, especially because she does not live in India. This is the point of view of many first-generation parents, as they emphasize "the importance of maintaining a social network" within their own ethnic community (Marino 2020, p.147). Tensions arise when second-generation immigrants do not sense the same urgency to connect with people of the same ethnic background (Marino 2020, p.147). Indeed, the circumstances described above explain how Divya's parents' intentions did not play out in the best way, according to her desires. Now in her twenties, she has started to take an interest in Indian culture, and she is doing it at her pace, in her own way. Since she enjoys mythology, Divya explained how she started to educate herself about Indian Gods and Goddesses. I believe this is her way of appreciating the Indian culture on her own terms: even though extensive cultural knowledge was transmitted to her since she was young, Divya decided to cultivate her own values and practices (Brannen 2003, p.3). Perhaps with time, her identity and sense of belonging will develop further as she builds her own relationship with this culture.

Consequently, from Divya's experience, I observe how intergenerationality stresses tensions between first-generation and second-generation immigrants. She is not the only one who spoke about struggling with their relationship with their parents: my participant Quang also did. During their interview, Quang specified how silence best characterized this intergenerational relationship. According to them, this mainly comes from not having mastered their parents' first language sufficiently:

"(…) Mon Vietnamien n'est pas assez fluide, ou parfait, pour avoir des interactions intimes (…) avec ma famille. Donc, ça fait en sorte qu'il y a comme une barrière invisible, où je connais pas vraiment le *background* de comment mes parents sont venus ici, pourquoi et tout ça." (Quang 2023, Individual interview)

"(…) My Vietnamese is not fluid enough, or perfect, for me to have intimate interactions (…) with my family. So, it results in this kind of invisible barrier, where I don't really know the background of how my parents came here, why and all of that." (Quang 2023, *Translation mine*)

In Quang's words, the lack of linguistic competency created this kind of barrier, where they struggled to express themselves clearly to their parents growing up. Learning Vietnamese, French and English simultaneously was certainly difficult, and resulted in Quang's inability to pursue deeper conversations with their parents. Without enough transmission of Vietnamese at home, to develop greater linguistic competencies in the language, Quang would have also needed to enroll in an educational establishment that teaches Vietnamese, to ensure a full and enduring linguistic reproduction (Brubaker 2015, p.10). In turn, as Quang faced some linguistic insecurities when trying to reach out to their parents, it resulted in a more limited exploration of Vietnamese culture (Merz 2018, p.192). Thus, I believe this silence Quang speaks about further developed a distance between them and their parents.

From what they shared, Quang grew up with many unanswered questions in their mind, wondering about Vietnam, their parents' immigration journey and the reasons behind their migration. This is not an isolated experience: other studies on Vietnamese immigrants address the idea of silence, where second-generation immigrants must cope with "unasked questions unanswered" (Pham 2019, p.62). Scholar Lily Thuy Pham shows that this silence stems from the first immigrant generation. She explains that, for immigrant parents, keeping this silence helps them shield themselves from the trauma they experienced and simultaneously safeguards their

children from knowing the suffering their family endured (Pham 2019, p.37). Therefore, the silence Quang talks about is a consequence of their parents attempting not to transmit their own trauma to their child. Interestingly, Quang recognizes this, and wonders about "[about the amount of trauma their parents did not share]" (*Translation mine*). However, an unfortunate outcome Quang mentions is the fact that growing up, they received very little Vietnamese cultural transmission from their parents and they struggled to construct their identity without this background history. In fact, they gained most of their cultural knowledge by searching on the Internet. Other Vietnamese participants in Pham's research likewise expressed uncertainty and incomprehension in attempting to negotiate their identity and everyday life with holes in their family's past (Pham 2019, p.46). I consider that these struggles build a fragmented cultural identity and sense of belonging for Quang. How can one connect and relate with something if one is not properly taught about it? Interestingly, where Divya felt forced to participate in the Indian culture, Quang had to chase the Vietnamese culture on their own. Over time, Quang put the pieces together by themselves, enabling them to construct their Vietnamese identity and feel a stronger sense of belonging.

Therefore, seeing as the relationship with their parents was not a source of cultural transmission, Quang turned to the Vietnamese community in Montréal. From a desire to understand their self and their origins, they decided to escape the silence at home and interact with other Vietnamese immigrants in the city. This seems to be a common reaction, especially for individuals in immigrant families, since the struggle to find comfort in one's own kinship network likely compels one to seek alternative relationships (Merz 2018, p.192). Now, I can only imagine the awkwardness that came when trying to connect with members of the Vietnamese community in Montréal, when one does not feel comfortable and confident enough to communicate in

Vietnamese. Without proper linguistic abilities, it becomes increasingly difficult to connect with others, and to relate to the Vietnamese culture. This account proves just how consequential learning a language is, particularly for immigrants (Han 2014, p.55), as they navigate Western societies. Later on, Quang found an interest in the arts, particularly in photography, which is what eventually brought them closer to Vietnamese immigrants. Taking pictures and participating in different exhibitions led them to meet people, learn about Vietnam, share their experience with others, and finally connect with their own Vietnamese identity. Photography became a tool for communication, when oral communication did not feel comfortable enough. As Quang expresses, taking up photography unlocked multiple opportunities for them:

> "(…) C'est aussi pour moi de pouvoir rencontrer d'autre monde, moi qui a été élevé dans un environnement très seul… Donc, pour moi, être entouré de personnes dans cette communauté-là… Je me sens vraiment comme si j'appartiens à quelque part pour une fois, parler à des Vietnamiens et Vietnamiennes qui sont pas mes parents." (Quang 2023, Individual interview)

> "(…) It's also for me to meet other people, as someone who has been raised in a very lonely environment… So, for me, being around people from this community… I really feel like I belong somewhere for once, speaking to Vietnamese people who are not my parents." (Quang 2023, *Translation mine*)

Hence, photography helped Quang express their Vietnamese identity and sense of belonging, because they could finally connect with Vietnamese immigrants other than their parents. The Vietnamese community of Montréal became a "dynamic social space", where Quang was able to develop their own identity and sense of belonging (Haayen 2016, p.80). They sought a group of other Vietnamese individuals who endured the same struggles as them and built their sense of self through that community (Pham 2019, p.69). At home, the silence from this intergenerational relationship felt like an obstacle to Quang learning more about Vietnam. Today,

I can see how Quang is proud of their artistic work, and I can grasp the personal evolution they experienced in the last couple of years. Even if they had some darker periods during their childhood and teenage years, it feels like Quang is finally taking ownership of their Vietnamese culture. Likewise, research reveals that subsequent generations of Vietnamese immigrants are discovering alternative approaches to negotiate everyday experiences and do so while preserving "space for this contentious history that they may never truly know" (Pham 2019, p.69). This resembles what the literature identifies as "ethnic revival", which is the proud embodiment of one's ethnic and cultural identity, an experience also observed in third-generation immigrants (Marino 2020, p.198). In this case, I noticed how the intergenerational relationship at hand did not assist my participant in understanding their culture and their self. Therefore, Quang had to look elsewhere. As a young adult studying in photography, they were finally able to connect with the Vietnamese community in Montréal and form their identity and sense of belonging. They constructed strong bonds with other Vietnamese people through shared experiences of ethnicity, similar emotional journeys and common history (Hamisultane 2020, p.176).

So far, these stories paint quite different pictures of the roles of intergenerationality in the life of a second-generation immigrant. In Estefanía's case, intergenerational relationships helped her solidify her identity as a Latina, something she struggled with growing up. In Vanya's case, intergenerational relationships shaped and influenced her sense of belonging, in both positive and negative ways. From Divya's and Quang's accounts, I understand how intergenerational relationships with parents can generate some tensions. Divya felt forced to connect with her Indian heritage, while Quang experienced silence when trying to understand the Vietnamese culture. Evidently, the "social environment" within which young adults grow up considerably influences their own awareness of their self (Magalhaes 2013, p.80). More precisely, through these four

excerpts, I demonstrate how first-generation immigrant parents deeply influence the identity and sense of belonging for second-generation immigrant children. My participants, now in their twenties, can reflect on the relationship with their parents, and the challenges that they faced growing up. Most importantly, they acknowledge the reasons why they struggled to situate their identity and sense of belonging, and how they found solutions to these difficulties.

An interesting remark transpires from each of my participants' experience, and circles back to a point I made at the opening of this chapter. Even if I investigate intergenerational relationships, I still position my second-generation immigrant participants at the center of this analysis. Ultimately, I acknowledge their agency in each of these excerpts. Estefanía, even though assisted by her family, resolved her identity crisis by deciding on her own that she preferred labelling herself as a Latina, to avoid feeling pulled in different directions. Vanya, unsure how to connect with their Russian heritage, constructed their identity and sense of belonging through the popular culture they accessed on their own. Divya, after years of feeling pressured to attach her identity and sense of belonging to India, decided to pursue her cultural education herself through Indian mythology. Finally, Quang, who grew up surrounded by silence shadowing their knowledge of Vietnam, picked up photography to bring them closer to other Vietnamese immigrants, which helped them solidify their identity and sense of belonging. Still, I notice how these actions originate from intergenerational relationships: the support, the tensions and even the conflicts.

To continue, I review two concepts that simultaneously thread together these stories, highlighting intergenerationality in the life of a second-generation immigrant. The first concept, somewhat explicitly discussed in this chapter, is community. Through the analyses above, I notice how exploring intergenerational relationships often hints towards the significance of possessing a sense of community. The second concept, presented more implicitly in the experiences my

participants shared, is distance. In this context, I consider that distance can be geographically experienced and emotionally experienced. Distance is geographically experienced, because immigrants in Montréal most likely have family and friends overseas, in other countries that often cannot be accessed easily. Now, from analyzing the qualitative data I have collected here, I think that distance is also emotionally experienced, since cultural and ethnic attachment can range from simple to awkward, comfortable and most often, complex. Hence, I believe examining my participants' experience through community and distance can further support my understanding of intergenerationality, identity and sense of belonging.

Starting with Estefanía's account, I argue that community reduced the possibility of this participant experiencing strong feelings of distance. To begin, I observe geographical distance in her story, because she has kinship ties in Colombia and Guatemala. Yet, I do not believe it is an issue in her case. Even if she had never visited these countries, until she went to Guatemala recently, Estefanía had the chance to grow up with her extended family around her, as explained earlier. Such a "geographic regrouping" ensures a continuous contact with the kinship network and influences second-generation immigrants' socialization (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.131). This intergenerationality offered Estefanía a strong sense of community, particularly regarding her integration into the Latino culture. These multiple intergenerational relationships, together forming a stable and present Latino community, participated into the transmission of cultural and linguistic competencies. I am not certain Estefanía communicated often with family members in Central and South America, and yet, she was still able to connect, over time, with her Latina identity, because of the community she lives with here. Indeed, as Estefanía indicated herself, if she had not grown up with her parents and grandparents, her struggles would have been different. This offers a perspective on intergenerationality that is oriented towards familial "solidarity and cohesion",

which engenders the construction of a deep sense of belonging to the Latino community (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.131). In fact, if it was not for these intergenerational relationships, I think that I would have observed emotionally experienced distance in Estefanía's story.

Consequently, I deduce that her living arrangements had a crucial impact on her identity and sense of belonging. At her doorstep, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandmothers and siblings are present everyday, and they embody the Latino community her family originates from. Her family kept her grounded, solidified her identity and sense of belonging, even if the journey was not linear. Without these people surrounding her, I believe Estefanía would have sensed a certain distance between her and her Latina heritage. This assumption can be supported by the stories of Vanya and Quang, who both struggled to bond with their cultural identities. The cultivation of intergenerational relationships fosters a sense of community, from which Estefanía was eventually able to construct her identity and sense of belonging. Therefore, the presence of strong intergenerational relationships in Estefanía's life prevented her from being emotionally distanced from Colombia and Guatemala. Intergenerationality translates into community, channeling the culture and language that form Estefanía's identity and sense of belonging.

Similar to Estefanía, Vanya's parents are also from two different countries, Kenya and Russia. Firstly, I noticed that the geographically experienced distance with Kenya did have an impact on Vanya's identity and sense of belonging. Since the only Kenyan intergenerational relationship physically present was with their mother, and the Kenyan community was difficult to access, Vanya does not feel like they had enough cultural socialization from this side of their background growing up. In this context, I grasp how community and distance are tied to each other, meaning that distance can separate one from a satisfactory sense of community. For instance, in this case, the absence of community generates emotionally experienced distance, proven by

Vanya's struggles to cultivate an attachment to the Kenyan culture. However, as explained above, Vanya had the chance to travel, somewhat often, to Kenya. This helped them create and maintain a sense of community with other Kenyans, which ultimately reduced the emotionally experienced distance. The preservation of transnational links with the Kenyan family facilitates the perpetuation of the cultural identity for this second-generation immigrant (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.130). The geographical distance nonetheless exists and remains the same. Furthermore, Vanya's frequent communication with family members abroad assists them in perpetuating their identity and sense of belonging, as they preserve intergenerational relationships, other than with their mother.

Through this analysis of community and distance, I remember how Vanya has a deeper, more personal understanding of the connection between these two concepts. They were interested in learning how the other participants dealt with such issues in their lives, and they addressed this during the focus group session. Vanya acknowledged how sense of belonging is intensely affected by community, and explained how it was different for their parents:

"My mom like… didn't really have any friends in Montréal and didn't know anyone, wasn't feeling like part of the Kenyan community, whereas my dad had a bunch of friends, came here with a job, got himself situated, and I think that definitely affects how you engage with the experience of immigration and how that might also be passed on to your children… Because I was definitely more immersed through hanging out with [my father's] friends, going out to dinner parties" (Vanya 2022, Focus group)

"Ma mère comme… n'avait pas vraiment d'amis à Montréal et ne connaissait personne, ne se sentait pas comme faisant partie de la communauté Kenyane, contrairement à mon père qui avait un groupe d'amis, est arrivé ici avec un travail, a réussi à se placer, et je pense que ça affecte définitivement comment tu interagis avec l'expérience de l'immigration et aussi comment ça peut être légué à tes enfants… Parce que j'étais définitivement plus immergé en passant du temps avec [les amis de mon père], sortir et aller souper" (Vanya 2022, *Translation mine*)

Of course, geographical distance is difficult to manage for second-generation immigrants, but it is important to remind ourselves how hard, and perhaps traumatic, it must be for first-generation immigrants. Hence, being able to connect with community is crucial, since it can alleviate some of the emotional distance that results from living far away from one's family. Vanya's comment conveys an excellent point: the sense of community that parents can, or cannot, provide for themselves and their children is significant. Again, I observe how intergenerational relationships transmit sense of community to second-generation immigrants. The Kenyan community in Montréal was not accessible for Vanya and their mother. Therefore, it created emotional distance from Kenya, which as described earlier, translated into difficulties when Vanya tried to connect with the culture.

Now, Vanya does mention above how the Russian community their father was in contact with helped them bond with Russian culture a bit more. Additionally, I do not consider that Vanya appears to be strongly bothered by the geographical distance between them and Russia. What strikes me more is the complex emotional attachment I investigated earlier, principally resulting from their intergenerational relationship with their father. Evidently, there is an emotionally experienced distance, which is amplified when Vanya explains how they struggled to connect with Russia, seeing the country's political position and history. I believe their father's opinions further amplified Vanya's emotional distance from Russia. Predominantly through popular culture is Vanya capable of reducing this emotional distance in order to connect their identity and sense of belonging to Russia. Speaking about music and television shows, they explain: "it does make me feel a sense of closeness, even if it's so far away". I find it revealing how distance is implicit in this comment, however it explains quite clearly how Vanya experiences identity and belonging to Russia. Yet again, the presence of a sense of Russian community in Vanya's life surely assisted in

them developing an interest in connecting with the culture more deeply. Therefore, in Vanya's case, I perceive emotionally experienced distance both for Kenya and Russia, with one that seems fairly resolved today, and with the other that still feels somewhat heavy.

Continuing this analysis with Divya's experience, I consider that the geographically experienced distance from India does not seem to impact her so intensely. However, keeping intergenerational relationships in mind, I argue that the physical distance from India may have compelled Divya's parents to pressure her to strongly connect with the Indian culture. It is understandable that immigrant parents want to preserve and maintain cultural identity and sense of belonging to their country of birth and wish to transmit those to their children. As I have learned from Estefanía and Vanya's accounts, community is a great source of resource cultural and linguistic knowledge transmission, which eventually translates into one's identity and sense of belonging. I assume Divya's parents wanted to benefit from the Indian community in Montréal in this manner, because it is readily accessible and already large enough. They did not run into the same issue as Vanya's mother with the Kenyan community.

Yet, as described above, Divya struggled with feeling pressured to bond with Indian traditions and celebrations. She is not alone in this: the literature indicates that "constraints, obligations and impositions" are often reported by second-generation immigrants who felt compelled by their parents to learn about their culture (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.138). In Divya's case, I believe this resulted in an emotionally experienced distance from the Indian culture, which was mostly voluntary. This is also true when thinking about community: Divya distanced herself on purpose, as a response to the uncomfortable pressure she felt coming from her parents. She was not searching for, or missing, a further sense of community, because she did not appreciate being pressured to do so. This behaviour aligns with research on the same topic: in similar contexts,

second-generation immigrants eventually disassociate from the culture and the community (Le Gall and Gherghel 2016, p.138). Hence, I believe Divya preferred to cultivate a sense of community with the friends she made on her own, outside of the Indian environment of her family. Consequently, it is perhaps the geographical distance experienced by the parents that occasioned an emotional distance, recognizable through Divya's detached Indian identity and sense of belonging. Engaging with distance as such allows me to widen my perspective as an anthropologist, making sure I provide enough space for my participants, so that they can also express when they do not sense ethnocultural attachment and connection (Gallant 2008, p.38). Divya even explicitly mentioned this feeling: "(…) [I still have this distance with my culture]". Finally, Divya slowly started to reduce this emotional distance by educating herself on some aspects of the Indian culture, in her case through mythology. Perhaps she will eventually seek out people from the Indian community in Montréal on her own.

Lastly, looking at the stories Quang shared with me, I perceive how not possessing a solid sense of the Vietnamese community, with their parents or outside of the home, resulted in the manifestation of both the geographically and emotionally experienced distances. At first glance, the geographical distance seems quite present. Quang's maternal family still lives in Vietnam, while their father's family lives in Montréal. Already, accessibility to intergenerational relationships is almost cut in half, which certainly hindered the interaction Quang could have had with known Vietnamese familial figures.

Moreover, it took quite some time to Quang to be able to connect with Vietnam, understand its history, because their parents did not share much of their knowledge and experiences. I consider that the distance I felt within the intergenerational relationship with their parents amplified the longing Quang experienced to reach out to the Vietnamese community in Montréal. Consequently,

the silence that characterizes this intergenerational relationship carries an emotional burden. The linguistic difficulties that Quang faced prevented them from holding meaningful emotional conversations with their parents, further distancing them from their Vietnamese identity and sense of belonging. Indeed, learning a language is extremely crucial in the construction of one's identity, because it influences one's development of the person one wants to be, who one can become, and how one can be acknowledged in this form (Han 2014, p.56). Therefore, Quang grew up with a general lack of understanding of their origins and their self, which in turn reinforced the geographical and emotional distance already present. It is only in the last few years that Quang was able to build various bonds with Vietnamese immigrants outside of their family, finally providing answers to their questions. I further argue that connecting with the Vietnamese community developed Quang's sense of belonging through their national identity. This identity formed because they felt accepted, seen and acknowledged by Vietnamese individuals that represent a "larger nationally defined social category" (Friberg 2021, p.22). This proves how constructing a sense of community was a pivotal development in Quang's journey. All in all, the difficult intergenerational relationship at hand here generated greater distance between Quang and the Vietnamese culture, until they searched for a sense of community outside of their home.

As a last point, I wish to evaluate how the concept of distance can help us recognize the difficulty of learning languages, from the perspectives of second-generation immigrants. From what I understand through my participants' accounts, the task of teaching the language often falls on the parents' shoulders. However, this may be difficult to do alone, especially in cases where the family is not surrounded by people who speak the language, as my participant Vanya underlines. Because of the absence of the Kenyan community in Montréal, Vanya's mother struggled to teach them Swahili on her own, and thus Vanya's competency in Swahili is modest. Understanding the

significance of acquiring linguistic capital, I am not surprised that Vanya experienced some difficulties trying to construct her cultural identity in this specific social context (Han 2014, p.56). Both the distance from Kenya and the Kenyan community here explains why Vanya does not have a complete grasp of the language. Evidently, it is the opposite for Estefanía, since she was able to learn Spanish quite easily. Her parents and her family were always present when she was growing up, and therefore she even learned different Colombian and Guatemalan slang terms! There is practically no distance between Estefanía's family and the Latino cultures they come from, thus acquiring the language was not so difficult.

Now, I already discussed Quang's struggles with learning Vietnamese. They told me how they had to learn Vietnamese, French and English somewhat all at the same time, which made it quite hard to grasp each of the languages correctly. Furthermore, the lack of communication at home did not allow Quang enough space to practice and preserve their knowledge of Vietnamese. They did not have enough vocabulary to express deeper emotional distress, such as depression. They could only speak about sadness to their parents, quite different from depression, which kept the discussion at the surface, only perpetuating the silence. Expanding on this idea, distance is likewise present within the intergenerational relationship itself: between Quang and their parents. Therefore, learning Vietnamese from parents one does not easily bond with can be difficult and uncomfortable. I further believe this created a continuous cycle, where Quang's lower competency in Vietnamese did not motivate them to speak to their parents. Therefore, they did not utilize the language enough to practice and keep learning. Once more, the concept of distance helps me understand the experience of my second-generation immigrant participants, regarding the learning of languages.

Ultimately, these concluding remarks only examine learning languages like Spanish, Swahili or Vietnamese. But let's not forget that in the context of Montréal, immigrants are tasked to learn French and English. Bill 101 is especially meaningful in the lives of my participants, because this law obliged almost all of them to go to elementary and secondary school in French. It is important to continue analyzing these topics using an intersectional approach, paying attention to how multiplicity is embodied not only in identity, but also in languages. How have second-generation immigrants experienced learning of three or four languages growing up in the city? Can they outline specific consequences this has had on their identity and sense of belonging? Hence, after analyzing intergenerational relationships in this first chapter, my second chapter centered on language dives into these questions, and more.

Chapter Two: Language

If the previous chapter has proven how intergenerationality is central to a second-generation immigrant's experience, I uphold that language is also a predominant factor to life in Montréal. Even if French is an official language in Canada, most know that English is much more spoken in the country, something that still brings conflict to this day. Historically speaking, the Référendum of 1995 denotes the value put upon the Québécois identity, which almost pushed the province to separate itself from the rest of Canada. Speaking French, a competence socially associated with the Québécois identity, is at the middle of most past and present debates regarding language in the city. Policies like Bill 101 and Bill 96 point to the ongoing fear some have that people in the province will stop speaking French one day. Through this research, my objective is to explore the Québécois identity through the opinions that my participants hold on the linguistic debates they have grown up with in Montréal. How have second-generation immigrants experienced the ongoing pressure to speak, read and write in French? In what ways did this shape their Québécois identity? What kind of attachment have they formed towards the Québécois culture growing up? **To study these questions, in this chapter, I will explore and analyze how language influences a second-generation immigrant's identity and sense of belonging.**

Before diving into the analysis of these topics, it is helpful to investigate the Référendum of 1995, because it lays out the historical context of Québec's political conflicts, it underlines the unique characterization of the Québécois society compared to the rest of Canada and it facilitates our understanding of Québécois nationalism. In 1995, the Québécois government held a Référendum, where the province's population was asked to vote for or against the separation of Québec from the rest of Canada. This event was the culmination of failed attempts to resolve economic, political and cultural differences between the province and the rest of the country, on

the basis of Québec being a "distinct society" (L. Gall 2015). After a polarizing campaign, the results of the Référendum were nearly split in the middle: 50.58% of the population voted against separation (Élections Québec 2024). Yet, this did not seem to settle the conflict within the Québécois population, nor towards the rest of Canada. Notably, possibilities of subsequent referendums rose time and again in the last twenty-five years, depending on the political party at the head of the province (L. Gall 2015).

Even though Québec's desire for secession was taken seriously by the federal government, for instance through The Calgary Declaration of 1997 which acknowledges Québec's distinctiveness (L. Gall 2015), the discourse surrounding eventual separation still lives today. Noting the political, economic and social differences between the province and the rest of the country, what seems the most prevalent motivation for separation in public discourse remains the singular characteristic of the Québécois society. In fact, studies demonstrate that Québécois individuals have a specific consciousness of their identity and culture, perhaps originating from the colonial struggles between New France and the British forces in the 18th century (Gagnon 2021, p.52). Since these events, the various memories, emblems, stories and morals essential to members of the Québécois community have formed their national identity (Gagnon 2021, p.20), and evidently carry deep-seated meanings. Hence, the accumulation of conflicts, tensions and referendums seem to reinforce the particularity of the Québécois identity on a historical and political level: these events have shaped what it means to be Québécois. Many scholars, such as Clifford Geertz, have indeed explained that ethnic identity and sense of belonging are principally developed through individuals' recollection of a "shared history" (Marino 2020, p.33). The perceived distinctiveness and the strength of the Québécois identity is what drives this community

and their government to refer themselves as the "Québécois nation" (Assemblée Nationale du Québec 2021, p.2).

Understanding the history behind the Québécois identity, it is no surprise to see that Québécois nationalism advocates for the survival of their distinct community: a nationalism formed "through the development of a political French-speaking community" (Gagnon 2021, p.53). Québécois individuals perceive French as the predominant characteristic fortifying their uniqueness, compared to the majority of English speakers in the rest of Canada. Many of my participants also recognize the connection between French and the Québécois identity. For example, Rosalin mentioned the following: "I understand that the French language is (…) a core part of the Québécois identity, the Québécois heritage and everything, it is the maternal language, it is French". This language is of great importance for the province, especially since francophones have long felt as a minority within the country, especially in Montréal, as English was, and perhaps still is, the primary language of business (Kircher 2009, p.30). The Gendron Commission of 1972 reported that French existed as a minority language in the city, which supported the fears of many francophones and politicians (Kircher 2009, p.30). Other populations around the globe, for instance the Hmong community, have been known to emphasize the survival of their language to protect the distinctiveness of their ethnicity and culture (Nibbs 2016, p.92). In this line of thought, with concerns that Québec would be assimilated by the rest of the Canadian anglophone population, "nation-building and linguistic protection" have been at the forefront of political actions for many decades and are still central in the making of a Québécois identity (Gagnon 2021, p.53). Indeed, this form of nationalism is quite strongly based on language, which we may observe through the different laws and policies that the Québécois government puts forward. For instance,

the *Charte de la langue française*, otherwise known as Bill 101, which aims at promoting, protecting and defending French in various domains, begins with this statement:

> "Langue distinctive d'un peuple majoritairement francophone, la langue française permet au peuple québécois d'exprimer son identité." (Charte de la langue française, chapitre C-11)
>
> "Distinct language of a predominantly francophone people, the French language allows the Québécois people to express their identity." (Charte de la langue française, chapitre C-11)
> *Translation mine*

The reciprocal relationship between French and the national Québécois identity is quite explicit. French is defined as the means through which Québécois channel their culture, traditions, history and identity. Therefore, their desire to ensure the longevity of this language is predictable. More recently, Bill 96 was added to Québec's policies as a complementary enforcement of the *Charte de la langue française* in educational and working spaces. With Bill 96, employers are responsible to ensure that there is no necessity for an employee to speak a language other than French to secure or retain a job (Assemblée Nationale du Québec 2021, p.2). Moreover, at the collegial level, this policy gives permission to the *ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* to establish each year the number of students allowed to register in anglophone cegeps, without exceeding an 8.7% increase from the previous year (Assemblée Nationale du Québec 2021, p.35). These are only two of the new policies supplemented by Bill 96, the latter one being a meaningful topic of conversation with my participants during their interviews, as discussed below. Ultimately, Bill 101 and Bill 96 embody what Joshua A. Fishman identifies as "institutional protection", which fortifies a given language through "overt behavioral implementation" (Fishman 1966, p.23). This institutional protection, or language planning, is most often observed in educational establishments, since the Québécois government perceives schools as environments of strategic importance for the "transformation of

language dynamics" in a tense sociopolitical climate (Lamarre 2008, p.105). Undoubtedly, Québécois nationalism is apparent within these laws on language, as the promotion and protection of French advocates simultaneously for the preservation of a distinct Québécois society and identity. It is important to note that being Québécois does not mean that one also supports separatism; people may emphasize the uniqueness of the Québécois identity without wanting to secede from Canada. Even so, the information presented here displays the sociopolitical and ideological context in which my participants grew up, and from where they developed their identity and sense of belonging.

As a last note, I consider it is vital to take note of other groups impacted by these tensions and policies; namely indigenous communities and other provinces in Canada. For instance, one could observe how Canada's multicultural image promotes the inclusion of immigrants, but such ideologies may also be utilized to keep the indigenous and Québécois communities under its governance. Notably, Québécois politicians have emphasized the idea that Canada's multicultural principles may be employed to diminish Québec's nationalism by positioning Québécois culture under "the Canadian mosaic" (McRobert 1999 cited in Gagnon 2021, p.54). It is possible to argue that this form of Canadian nationalism further works to erase the brutalities that indigenous communities have faced since the arrival of colonial forces in North America.

Now, to begin this discussion on language, I introduce my participant Amelia. Her perspective on language is quite an interesting one: she has a great understanding of the connection between language, culture and identity. Amelia speaks Polish, French, English, Spanish and even a little bit of Portuguese. The first three languages, she learned growing up, and the last two she learned from her personal interests and travels. During her individual interview, we were

discussing Bill 96, and the different measures the Québecois government is taking to enhance the use of French in the province. Let's see how she reflects on the situation:

"Je pense que c'est bon pour protéger la langue, quand même. J'aime ça parler beaucoup de langues, alors je comprends que la langue est quand même rattachée à la culture… Alors, si tu perds ça, ben tu perds un peu de culture. Je suis pas contre complètement, mais comme à un certain degré." (Amelia 2022, Individual interview)

"I do think it's good to protect the language. I like to speak a lot of languages, so I understand that language is attached to culture… So, if you lose that, well then you lose a bit of culture too. I am not completely against, but still to a certain degree. " (Amelia 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Amelia explains how she personally recognizes the relationship between language and culture. Her multilingual abilities help her acknowledge how speaking a language shapes and develops one's attachment to a given culture. Indeed, further in our conversation, Amelia even observed how one's personality can change depending on the language one speaks, for instance how in English one might be funnier, and in French one might be more serious. This explains why individuals in Québec feel this urge to fight for French, to make sure people continue to speak it, simply because this language carries so much meaning and value. Moreover, Amelia specifies that not speaking a language can lead to the loss of culture as well. Research on linguistics supports this idea, for instance Don Kulick's work in Gapun comes to mind. Kulick extensively documented language death, and explained that when a language dies, significant knowledge and communal lifestyles are lost as well (Kulick 2019, p.196). As times goes on, individuals grow up unaware of the traditions that built the society they live in (Kulick 2019, p.198). This means language conveys and transmits culture through generations, therefore emphasizing the importance of speaking French: it perpetuates the Québécois culture. In other words, Amelia indicates that she understands the presence of these Bills and the motivations behind their creation.

However, I notice that Amelia nuances the strength of such policies at the end of her comment. Again, she understands why these measures exist, but she seems hesitant as to the degree of their application. Amelia's perspective actually mirrors quite well what most participants shared on this topic. They acknowledge the presence of these laws and recognize their value, culturally, historically and socially speaking. Yet, they speak against the harsh implications and consequences these laws have on the population. In the eyes of second-generation immigrants, the application of these policies is quite intense, and they often contest their use in everyday life. For example, Amelia critiqued this deep-seated focus on French, while there exists so many other languages in Montréal:

"C'est juste cohabiter avec les différentes cultures et les différentes langues. Je pense que ça fait juste des avantages d'avoir de plus en plus de langues et de cultures, que juste essayer de tout bannir et faire une ambiance… comme: 'on vous veut pas', 'parlez juste Français' (…)"
(Amelia 2022, Individual interview)

"It's just about cohabiting with different cultures and languages. I think it just gives you advantages, having more and more languages and cultures, instead of trying to ban everything and create this atmosphere… like: 'we don't want you', 'only speak French' (…)"
(Amelia 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, she argues that language policies might actually harm the linguistic diversity in the city and create an atmosphere of rejection and discrimination. Amelia's argument speaks to the institutional promotion of French and English in Montréal, even though often contested and conflictual, that Francophones and Anglophones benefit from since the 1970s, at the detriment of indigenous and immigrant communities who are "oriented towards linguistic assimilation" (Han 2014, p.55). Even though cultural diversity is present and mostly encouraged in the city, linguistic diversity does seem to follow in the same path and denotes a "linguistic hierarchy" (Haque 2012 cited in Han 2014, p.55). For Amelia, this stands as negative consequences of the Bills, because

she alternatively advocates for a linguistically diverse city. Hence, her comment underlines how these language policies generate exclusivity and restriction. For instance, she further observes that Bill 96 may hinder individuals who desire to perfect their skills in English, by attending anglophone establishments of higher education. This opinion, as reiterated below, is shared by another participant.

Thus, on the one hand, Amelia supports such language policies because they promote French and she understands the significance of language, because it transmits culture and forges identity. Yet, on the other hand, Amelia realizes that Bill 101, and especially Bill 96, harm the multiplicity of languages in Montréal, a consequence she does not approve of. But now, how do Amelia's opinions tie into her identity and sense of belonging? I believe her mitigated point of view is reflected in the way she expresses her identity. During her interview, at times she related to the Québécois culture, because she grew up in it, surrounded by the language obviously, but also the food and the people. Amelia however mentioned that she could sense the disconnection between herself and the Québécois identity, particularly when she compared herself to her Québécois friends at university.

Consequently, I observe a parallel between her opinions on the French language in Montréal, and her identity and sense of belonging to Québec: they are both nuanced. Amelia recognizes different sides of the argument when thinking about linguistic policies, similar to the way she swings in and out of the Québécois identity. She can connect with this identity, just like she acknowledges the importance of promoting French for the Québécois culture. Additionally, she feels greater detachment from the Québécois identity, just like she understands how restricting these political measures about language can be! In fact, I would argue that seeing the negative effects generated by the Bills can at times increase her disconnection from the Québécois culture.

Therefore, Amelia's mitigated point of view on language policies is reflected in the expression of her identity and sense of belonging to Québec. When discussing her positionality, Amelia explained:

"Je suis comme entre les deux (…) Je pense que c'est pour ça que je m'entends bien avec les gens comme moi, on est entre les deux, alors on se comprend."
(Amelia 2022, Individual interview)

"I am like in between the two (…) I think that is why I get along well with people like me, we are in between the two, so we understand each other."
(Amelia 2022, *Translation mine*)

From this excerpt, I perceive the fluidity in her Québecois identity and sense of belonging to Québec. Amelia often feels like "a mix of both", and also at times it can feel like she is "in between the two". Research indicates that when second-generation immigrants express their identity in this manner, it emphasizes the "dynamic result" of multiple senses of belonging (Marino 2020, p.204). This is clear in her comment above, when she expresses that she feels a closer connection to other second-generation immigrants who also share this "in-betweenness", this fluidity within their identity and sense of belonging. In other words, Amelia simultaneously senses connection and disconnection towards the Québécois culture. Both agreeing and disagreeing with the Bills enhances the ambiguity of her identity and sense of belonging. The parallels between Amelia's comments cited above and the way she expressed her own identity additionally emphasize the centrality of language in the cultural and political context of Montréal. This analysis highlights her opinions and the different features that build her identity and sense of belonging.

To continue, I present Emanuel's perspective on language in Québec. As we will see, there is an interesting evolution in his opinions on language, from the time he was a teenager, to his current views today as a young adult. During our discussion, Emanuel retrospectively explained

how the progression of his point of view on the debates about language mirrors the development of his Québécois identity and sense of belonging. Therefore, analyzing his beliefs about the French language reveals the construction of his identity and sense of belonging. Emanuel also possesses a stronger interest in politics than what I have observed in the other participants, which further complicates his perspective, as I discuss later on. Here, he explains his struggles with Bill 101 during his time in elementary and secondary school:

> "Moi, quand j'étais jeune, j'aimais pas la Loi 101, juste à cause du fait que ça nous obligeait. Mais, maintenant que je suis plus vieux, je suis comme: 'J'aurais probablement jamais appris le français aussi bien que je le parle maintenant', et l'anglais… On vit tellement dans un monde anglophone, que tu l'apprends *no matter what*. Alors, je pense que c'était une bonne chose, honnêtement; la Loi 101, *shout out*!" (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)
>
> "Me, when I was younger, I didn't like Bill 101, just because it forced us. But, now that I'm older, I'm like: 'I would probably have never learned French as well as I speak it now', and English… We live in such an anglophone world, that you learn it no matter what. So, I think it was a good thing, honestly; Bill 101, shout out!" (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Firstly, I notice Emanuel's frustration with being forced to attend francophone schools, as is dictated by Bill 101, for second-generation immigrants like him. Yet, he evidently moved past this frustration, as he alternatively explained the ease with which people can learn English today. His insight indicates that it may be more efficient to enforce the learning of French in schools, as English is present everywhere else, particularly through popular western media: music, movies, television series, etc. In the focus group discussion, Emanuel also mentioned the probability that his parents would have sent him to an anglophone establishment, if Bill 101 was not in place. This means that if it were not for this law, his learning of French would have been quite different. Reflecting on his experience, Emanuel seems proud to speak French as well as he can today: he supports Bill 101 and hopes that we continue to respect the French language. In fact, he believes that "[the debate on the French language is clearly legitimate]" (*Translation mine*) and that French

should endure in Québec, even in Canada, which supports the previously mentioned bases of Québécois nationalism. Growing up, Emanuel was able to observe and consider the more positive aspects of speaking French, hence his opinion drastically changed. The evolution of his perspective indeed translates into his identity and sense of belonging:

> "Justement, c'est la même manière que je me sentais pas Québécois quand j'étais jeune, maintenant je me sens plus Québécois. Avant, je m'en foutais du Français, et maintenant, non. Pour moi c'est ça: les deux sont venus en même temps." (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)
>
> "Actually, it's the same way I didn't feel Québécois when I was young, now I feel more Québécois. Before, I didn't care about French, and now, I do. For me, this is it: both came at the same time." (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Thus, Emanuel's care and appreciation for French increased with time, bringing him towards a greater emotional attachment to Québec. I consider that Emanuel's story reinforces and underlines the triangular relationship between language, identity and culture, which Québécois nationalism promotes as distinct. Indeed, his understanding of the unique value of French within the Québécois identity grew as his personal views on French changed. The tangible and symbolic meaning that French carries through the Québécois identity and culture is evident: when Emanuel disapproved of Bill 101, he did not care to connect with this given identity. In fact, creating a stronger connection with French through the years is predominantly what constructed the emotional bond between him and the Québécois culture. This argument is observable through Emanuel's experience and is supported by the literature: language has been proven to be an incredibly powerful indicator of one's belonging to a particular culture (Schneider et al. 2012, p.322). If the interview would have taken place when Emanuel was 12 or 14 years old, I expect his relationship towards the Québécois identity would have been quite different. Thus, within this particular political context, we can observe that Emanuel's life course transition is entangled with

a broader social process: the institutionalization of language (Stauber et al. 2022, p.6). Here, this specific life course transition represents the "crossing of boundaries" between political standpoints (Stauber et al. 2022, p.8), in this case moving from negative opinions on Bill 101 towards more positive ones. More precisely, such a transition within one's life course entails the possibility for transformations, which I demonstrated in this section (Stauber et al. 2022, p.11). Indeed, with the experience he accumulated growing up, Emanuel reflected on his opinions and perspectives, which ultimately transformed the way he identifies to Québec. Taken as a whole, this account helps to underline the evolutionary quality of identity and sense of belonging through time.

Now, it is critical to juxtapose a final layer to Emanuel's perspective of the French language debates in Québec. From his specific experience, I analyzed how he evolved into his Québécois identity. However, this does not guarantee a stable, definite, or ever-present, attachment to the Québécois culture. It is possible that Emanuel may dislike, at times, the way conflicts surrounding French make him feel, and therefore this can further nuance his identity and sense of belonging. For instance, there are additional aspects of language and politics in the province that Emanuel still does not agree with, and these hinder his attachment to Québec. As mentioned above, his stronger interest in politics helps me understand why specific negative perspectives influence him. Something Emanuel spoke about was a precise quantitative statistic detailing the language spoken at home in Québec. He feels some politicians purposely utilize this statistic during their speeches, saying that French is less and less spoken in the homes of people living in Québec, in order to advocate for stricter Bills on the French language. Emanuel disagrees with this argument, because he does not believe it to be a valid measure to determine the state of French. From his standpoint, this is understandable: he speaks Spanish at home with his parents, but it does not mean that he is incapable of speaking French! Patricia Lamarre's analysis of a participant's experience with

multilingualism in Montréal likewise leads her to emphasize the "weakness and even non-pertinence" of measuring "language assimilation or integration" through languages spoken at home (Lamarre 2013, p.48). In this line of thought, Emanuel illustrates the discrimination that transpires when politicians use this particular statistic:

> "C'est des statistiques qui font en sorte de pointer le doigt, encore une fois, (…) sur l'immigration, comme si on faisait du mal au Québec" (Emmanuel 2022, Individual interview)
>
> "Those are statistics that result in pointing the finger, once again, (…) towards immigration, as if we were damaging Québec" (Emmanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Emanuel's positionality as a second-generation immigrant emerges from this argument: I discern how he feels reproached when politicians implicitly turn the blame on immigrants. He underlines the discrimination hidden behind the idea that languages other than French are spoken at home, thus "preventing" the perpetuation of French. This additionally legitimizes Amelia's comment earlier, where she emphasized how the Bills harm the linguistic diversity present in the city. In this case, I believe it is harder for Emanuel to reconcile his second-generation immigrant identity with his Québécois identity, since his positionality brings nuance to his Québécois sense of belonging. Evidently, being criticized for the diminution of French being spoken in Québec does not motivate one to create deeper emotional attachment to the culture. Consequently, even if Emanuel presents strong convictions for Bill 101 and the broader debate on the French language, it does not mean that this always equals a steady, or continuous, Québécois identity and sense of belonging. Political disagreements come in the way of him feeling accepted and included in the Québécois society. Here, I argue that a fragmented identity and sense of belonging best portrays Emanuel's experience with French and the Québécois culture.

Next, I continue with another participant: Rosalin, who grew up in a Tamil Catholic francophone environment, in Montréal. Rosalin's story is very valuable within this analysis of language, because she reiterates the importance of self-identification processes (Gallant 2008). Even though I have examined my participant's experiences and expressions of their own identities and sense of belonging so far, it is critical to share how meaningful these are for the purposes of this research. Presenting their daily experiences and encounters in Montréal truly unfolds my understanding of identity and sense of belonging for second-generation immigrants. Especially for Rosalin, but also my other participants, their experiences are highly significant. She explains it herself: "My sense of belonging, it's so attached to my daily experiences". With this statement, it is imperative that I continue to follow my participants' own reflections on their identity and sense of belonging.

Thus, let me explore Rosalin's stories and encounters, as she grew up in Québec, dealing with the conflicts surrounding the French language. To situate her background, it is important to mention that Rosalin was raised speaking French. Not only because she grew up in Montréal, but since she also lived in France until she was two years old. She moved here afterwards, and both her parents speak the language as well. With the implementation of Bill 101, Rosalin attended elementary and secondary school in French, until cegep, when she decided to enroll in an anglophone establishment. We spoke about her decision of attending cegep in English, as it relates to some of the changes that Bill 96 engenders in establishments of higher learning. This specific Bill has been many years in the making, as there was already talk of implementing further regulations on language in the 2000s, where several politicians demonstrated interest in adapting Bill 101 specifically for cegep establishments (Kircher 2009, p.190). It is in June of 2022 that Bill

96 officially came into effect. During our discussion about this recent language policy, Rosalin explained that:

> "Moi, en tant que francophone, j'ai décidé d'étudier en Anglais juste pour apprendre quelque chose de nouveau *and learn*, *sharpen my English*, *make it better*, *improve my English*. *That's it*, pas parce que je suis comme: '*Ark*, le Français'" (Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)
>
> "Me, as a francophone, I decided to study in English just to acquire something new and learn, sharpen my English, make it better, improve my English. That's it, not because I am like '*Ark*, French" (Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Rosalin emphasizes that she switched to anglophones schools for her own learning, not because she did not like French or wanted to stop speaking it. This is a choice many francophone students make, and other research also showed young adults giving the same justifications as Rosalin for studying in English: improving their skills (Magalhaes 2013, p.84). Moreover, a key part of second-generation youth in Montréal seem to perceive "English-French bilingualism as the most valuable capital to acquire and as securing the most advantages" (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.13). Notably, Ruth Kircher's research conducted in 2007 demonstrates that "84.6% of English-French bilinguals, 95.8% of allophones and even 16.1% of francophones" decided to enroll in anglophone cegeps, a decision the author attributes to young adults' association of English with "economic opportunity and upward social mobility" (Kircher 2009, p.168). Even though the percentages may have changed since then, such statistics in fact legitimize the creation of Bill 96, as young adults seem to prioritize learning in English when they attend higher education establishments. Yet, in Rosalin's opinion, studying in English not such a bad thing. Given our North American context, Rosalin may be right: Kircher admits that the value put upon French as a language, proven to have increased since the implementation of Bill 101, may never exceed the significance that English possesses globally (Kircher 2009, p.191). Hence,

one may argue that one must develop skills in English in order to navigate this reality. Lastly, I observe how Rosalin's comment further highlights the pressure young adults face of perpetuating the French language in Québec: she feels the need to justify her choice of attending an anglophone establishment, as to reassure us she will continue to utilize French elsewhere in her life.

Moreover, as she told me, the atmosphere of conflict around French in the province almost engenders a certain level of taboo and toxicity, where francophones feel they should refrain from speaking English. Like Amelia, Rosalin critiques the restrictions that such language policies imply, in an urban environment that is supposed to be diverse. Notably, Bill 96 makes young adults feel like they have less agency over their academic journey. This policy controls the "educational opportunities" presented to second-generation immigrants who wish to pursue multilingual instruction (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.19). Rosalin likewise considers how the government has the power to influence which school students will attend and which language they have to learn and speak. Bill 101 already focused on elementary and secondary school, but now Bill 96 enters into the education systems of cegeps and universities. Then, is it reasonable to ask second-generation immigrants to prioritize French, when they are also interested in learning other languages like English, or cultivate their knowledge in heritage languages, for example Tamil? It is legitimate that immigrant youth desire to cultivate various languages practices and construct multiple social identities, because it meets the demands that come with living in Québec today (Das 2008, p.242). Once more, this circles back to Amelia's argument earlier: I see how constructive it would be to foster an environment where the diversity of languages can flourish, instead of framing French as the only priority and English as the adversary. This idea is quite critical in our context, as it is shown the majority of immigrants in the province prefer to learn French and English, because both are necessary to life in a modern Québec and in a western society

affected by globalization (Pagé and Lamarre 2010, p.1). Perhaps we might also consider the idea that French may never prevail the way some francophones want it to: wouldn't it be more productive to sustain the current value, use and symbolism of French, instead of aspiring it to surpass the status of English (Kircher 2009, p.191)? Yet again, Rosalin reminds us that we should ultimately try to create more space and further respect the other languages already present in Montréal, emphasizing once more the importance of creating a linguistically inclusive city.

During her interview, Rosalin shared with me how people, white individuals in particular, often assume she does not speak French. She recalls the comment an older white man said to her: "[Thank you, thank you… Thank you for speaking French, because here we are in Québec!]" (*Translation mine*). I notice a significant racial connotation here: it is possible that white individuals assume most people of color do not speak French. As a woman of colour, Rosalin evidently feels offended and frustrated when such assumptions are made, because French is her first language. Indeed, she explains: "everyone assumed that I was anglophone, because I am brown". On the one hand, this proves that white people see Rosalin, and perhaps other second-generation immigrants like her, for her skin colour first and foremost, which they do not associate with the ability of speaking French. As a result, they are surprised to see that she speaks the language. On the other hand, when people of colour are seen speaking another language than French, especially English, they are criticized for not speaking "the language of the Québécois nation". Bill 101 and Bill 96 reinforce such tensions, which frustrates Rosalin, as she recalled several encounters where she spoke in English and others reacted negatively. Speaking about these policies, Rosalin shares:

> "Ce que j'aime pas de ça, c'est *how it affected people to be like so rude to people in general*, tu parles anglais et c'est comme: '*Ark*, tu parles seulement anglais?' Non, je suis francophone, *actually*." (Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

"What I don't like about this is how it affected people to be like so rude to people in general, you speak English and it's like: '*Ark*, you speak only English?' No, I am francophone, actually." (Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

This comment strengthens Rosalin's opinion above, when she explained that the Bills engender at atmosphere of toxicity, and she clearly feels affected by this personally. Other research on migration in Montréal also reports this kind of frustration, for instance many fourth-wave Russian immigrants recall being mocked and corrected when trying to speak French (Gingras 2010, p.110). It seems like there is no way to do the right thing: if Rosalin speaks French, people may make condescending remarks congratulating her for speaking the language, but if she speaks English, she might be criticized for not speaking French. These tensions seem complex to manage, and Rosalin sometimes feels like she does not have the liberty to speak the language she wants without being judged. Thus, she must often reiterate and reassert her positionality, as we see in the excerpt above: "No, I am francophone, actually". Additionally, her experience further hints to the idea that many white people believe immigrants and people of color hinder the longevity and preservation of the French language in Québec. Historically speaking, many immigrants, particularly the Italian community in the 1960s, preferred to learn English when arriving in Canada, because this language was associated with social and economic mobility (Ricci 2009, p.11). As a result, the number of anglophones grew in the city, and eventually formed an ethnically and culturally diverse group, while the francophone community only grew because of the urbanisation of French speakers from the rural areas (Kircher 2009, p.21). More importantly, research indicates that francophones associated this choice of learning English with the perception that immigrants turned their back to the Québécois society and culture (Ricci 2009, p.11). With time, francophones most likely retained this belief and still perceive immigrants and/or people of colour as embodying the denial of a francophone environment. This also illustrates the reasons

behind the construction of the language-based Québécois nationalism described at the beginning of this chapter. I believe this further validates Emanuel's story above, where he indicated how the enactment of the Bills particularly reprimands immigrants, as these laws were formed in a time of tension between francophones and immigrants. Then, it is logical to suggest that such policies may be constructed and structured in such a way that corners immigrants and specifically targets Montréal. Reflecting on Rosalin's experiences like so facilitates my understanding of Québécois institutional language norms, and more importantly the ideologies behind the Bills that further legitimate institutional relations of power (Heller 1995, p.373). Thus, I consider that the implementation of Bill 101 and Bill 96 may be reactions to the increase of immigration that we observe in Québec, especially in Montréal. As a result, these language policies cause discrimination, a consequence that Rosalin evidently faces in her everyday life as a woman of colour and a second-generation immigrant.

Hence, in Rosalin's case, I am not surprised to see the more negative feelings that she carries towards the Bills and the pressures of speaking French in Montréal. This participant's identity and sense of belonging to the Québécois culture is mostly influenced negatively by language policies, because of the more restricting and frustrating experiences she faced growing up and living here. Language and race blend together, in not so positive ways, which restrains Rosalin from feeling more attachment to the Québécois culture. As with Amelia, she perceives the value of the Bills, but in her experience, it is not enough to foster stronger attachment to Québec. Language, here French, is not what enables Rosalin to cultivate a Québecois identity and sense of belonging. In fact, it is critical to mention that Rosalin can identify as Québécoise, but clearly not from speaking French. Indeed, it took her some time to be able to connect with the Québécois culture:

"*Today*, je peux dire: 'Non, moi aussi je suis Québécoise, même si je suis brune et je suis pas née ici'. Mais il y a dix ans, j'aurais dit: 'Non, non, les Québécois c'est juste *the white people that live here*." (Rosalin 2022, Focus group)

"Today, I can say: 'No, I am Québécoise too, even if I am brown and I wasn't born here'. But ten years ago, I would have said: 'No, no, the Québécois are just the white people that live here." (Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Once more, the notion of race enters the discussion, when Rosalin reflects on her Québécois identity and sense of belonging. Analyzing her opinions on language policies enables me to recognize the impacts that race has upon her Québécois identity. The embodiment of race within the French language almost engenders incompatibility for people of color to identify as Québécois. Thinking through an intersectional approach, I notice how the struggles she describes come from more than being a brown woman; they also originate from the fact that she is a second- generation immigrant. Her specific positionality brings twice as many assumptions, feelings of exclusion and discrimination, which are all emphasized by the instances depicted above. Then, how is it that Rosalin was able to create her own Québécois identity and sense of belonging? Her Catholic upbringing and her interactions with people at church is mostly what helped her feel Québécoise. Rosalin has an incredibly strong attachment to her spirituality, which I will discuss further in the next chapter, that enables her to connect to the Québécois culture in alternative ways. Nonetheless, her story proves just how deep and powerful the connection between French and the Québécois identity is, cementing the value of investigating this relationship within my participant's lives.

Finally, my participant Jade's experience relates to Rosalin's story, as they both connect with the Québécois identity outside of language and establish their opinions based on their positionalities as students. However, Jade's opinions against Bill 101 and Bill 96 are further

founded on being a teacher: indeed, Jade studies to be a special education teacher in high school. Through our individual interview and the focus group, I noticed how much of her opinions on the state of French in Québec originated from her journey in the academic system, as a student working to become a teacher. First, Jade says she understands the significance of promoting French in Québec, yet she emphasizes how learning a language can be difficult, especially French:

"Je suis enseignante aussi, puis j'ai encore manqué mon test de Français, juste parce que la langue française est vraiment difficile. Puis, la grammaire, c'est une grammaire qui change. Ça change tout le temps. Contrairement à l'Anglais, je crois pas que ça change autant que le Français (…) Puis, *tsé* la Loi 101, ils s'en foutent un peu, ils l'imposent et je trouve ça vraiment dommage." (Jade 2023, Focus group)

"I am a teacher too, and I still failed my French test, just because the French language is a really difficult language. And, the grammar, it's a grammar that changes. It's always changing. Contrary to English, I don't believe it changes as much as French (…) And, you know, Bill 101, they don't really care, they impose it and I really think it's a shame."
(Jade 2023, *Translation mine*)

From what I see here, I believe Jade feels frustrated that the government does not seem to take into account the fact that learning a language is not something that comes easily for everyone. It is critical to note that, even though Jade insists that French is difficult to learn, we may hypothesize that this has more to do with how this language is perceived and taught in schools. Nonetheless, she maintains that learning a new language is demanding not only for first-generation immigrants, but also people who were born here and who have spoken French their entire lives. Jade says it herself: "[Listen, I was born here, I am 27 years old, I have been here for 27 years, and I am still learning French]" (*Translation mine*). Hence, being forced to learn French and learn *in* French, knowing people may find the language difficult to grasp, can be somewhat discouraging indeed. The Gendron Commission of 1972 discerned just that: coercing individuals into learning French was not their chosen approach (Kircher 2009, p.30). Instead, the report proposed that

immigrants should be prompted into learning French through various social programs, a suggestion that was apparently well-received by anglophones and allophones (Kircher 2009, p.30). However, we know that stricter language policies eventually made their appearance, and lead to the Bills that we know today. I believe Jade would tend to agree with the Gendron Commission's position: it would be best not to force individuals into learning a new language. Yet, Bill 101 does just that. Jade does not approve of the demands of this language policy, as it can impact the success of one's education as well. In fact, she believes it would be best to let students choose which language they are more comfortable with:

> "D'un point de vue 'enseignement', pour que l'enfant puisse bien intégrer sa matière ou bien comprendre la matière, c'est important pour lui de choisir la langue dans laquelle il veut [étudier]." (Jade 2023, Focus group)

> "From a 'teaching' point of view, in order for the child to integrate the material well or to understand the material well, it's important for him to choose the language in which he wants to [study]." (Jade 2023, *Translation mine*)

For Jade, letting students choose for themselves in which language they want to learn is crucial: she shows how Bill 101 can have important consequences on one's academic journey, even through her personal experience as a university student. I want to underline that she does not advocate for other languages over French, she simply highlights the injustices in being obligated to study in French, when that may not be the best approach for many children in Montréal, including second-generation immigrants. On that note, Jade explained that she does not consider that French will disappear or die, which further reinforces her opinion that these policies are too intense and harsh. Consequently, I argue that Jade's more negative perception of language policies diminishes her attachment to the Québécois culture, as she does not agree with the high intensity with which French is promoted in the province. Even if she understands that preserving French is

valuable to a certain extent, she does not agree with the application of the Bills. Jade's perspectives of language negatively impact her Québécois identity and sense of belonging.

In fact, Jade considers that other cultural aspects construct her Québécois identity. She explained how participating in more Québécois-labeled activities, such as going to the sugar shack, helped her bond with the Québécois culture. Being in a relationship with her Québécois-Haitian boyfriend facilitated the construction of a Québécois identity as well. However, the other element that Jade associates with her Québécois identity is the vocabulary she uses in her everyday life:

"Je suis entourée de Québécois, donc à la longue, je prends leur *slang*, je prends le vocabulaire québécois, je sacre, *whatever*. Je sors vraiment de l'école avec un accent québécois."
(Jade 2023, Focus group)

"I am surrounded by Québécois, so over time, I appropriate their slang, I appropriate the Québécois vocabulary, I curse, whatever. I really leave school with a Québécois accent."
(Jade 2023, *Translation mine*)

I believe Jades' comment further reinforces the relationship between language and the Québécois identity, since assessing language practices in this manner points to the construction and manifestation of identity (Magalhaes 2013, p.88). Jade expresses how utilizing French in a way that is specific to Québec helps her to build a Québécois identity and sense of belonging. Speaking Québécois French assists Jade in gathering a specific form of cultural knowledge that transcends her Vietnamese identity. Utilizing these linguistic skills in her everyday life generates "a fluidity of social engagement" (Magalhaes 2013, p.81) and allows her to bond with the culture. She recognizes Québécois slang is particular; it is not like French from France, there is a specific vocabulary and accent, which she has acquired over time. I think it is interesting that a linguistic feature like slang creates an emotional connection for her, as it proves that language really is central to the Québécois identity. Therefore, analyzing language through Jade's experience enables me to

understand her identity and sense of belonging in two different ways. First, there are some smaller aspects of the culture that enable her to connect with a Québécois identity and sense of belonging. One of those is related to language, as the speech she uses embodies the Québécois identity. Nonetheless, these Québécois features do not compensate sufficiently for the more negative opinions she has about policies on the French language. Thus, Jade's Québécois identity and sense of belonging is not strongly present, especially compared to other participants. This can be explained through her perspectives on Bill 101 and her positionality in the educational system.

The four experiences depicted above encompass these participants' opinions on the status of French in Québec and on language policies. I notice that they all face different levels of frustrations when it comes to their personal encounters with Bill 101 and Bill 96. Amelia does not seem so directly affected by these policies, yet she easily perceives the consequences felt by other people around her. She recognizes the motivations behind the implementation of the Bills, though she explains how they feel intense and restricting at times. Her Québécois identity and sense of belonging reflect her mitigated opinions, as her attachment to the culture is hybrid and fluid. Then, Emanuel exposed how his opinions on Bill 101 evolved at the same pace at which he grew closer to his Québécois identity and sense of belonging. Where he was at first frustrated and careless about French, he later developed a stronger recognition of the relationship between the language and the Québécois culture. Even though Emanuel's political awareness brings challenges to the attachment he feels towards Québec, I believe he is one of the participants with the strongest Québécois identity out of the eight I have interviewed.

Furthermore, Rosalin also identifies as Québécoise, yet the journey to embody that identity was hindered by her experiences with the French language in Montréal. Her disagreement with Bill 96 and the discrimination she encountered resulted in feelings of frustration and exclusion.

Growing up a francophone and being challenged on her knowledge of the language did not push Rosalin towards building an emotional bond with the Québécois identity. Finally, Jade brings forward a different perspective, stressing the notion that enforcing French upon the population in Montréal may cause struggles for individuals within the educational system. To me, it is apparent that Jade's Québécois identity and sense of belonging are not strongly present, as her opinions on language negatively shape her attachment to the Québécois culture. In recent years, through cultural aspects such as slang, she started to build a bit of her Québécois identity.

With the experiences my second-generation immigrant participants shared with me, I demonstrated how their opinions on the status of French in Québec influences their Québécois identity and sense of belonging. In most cases, even if they can acknowledge the motivations behind Bill 101 and Bill 96, they disagree with the intensity at which these regulations are implemented. This is coherent with other research that indicates youth in Montréal consider French to be important in the urban local setting, while they emphasize that French-English bilingualism is of a greater significance (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.13). In the eyes of second-generation immigrants, such policies seem to carry more negative consequences than what they are advocated to accomplish. Therefore, it is harder for them to build a Québécois identity and sense of belonging, since their disagreements with the Bills and the pressure that comes with learning French create barriers to connect with the Québécois culture. Indeed, these young adults' sense of belonging is impacted by the more negative experiences they face here (El Samaty 2020). Ultimately, I think this accentuates the deep-seated connection between French, the Québécois identity and Québécois nationalism.

A few concluding remarks are critical to underline before this chapter comes to a close. Firstly, I circle back to Amelia's remark, where she advocates for the development of a

linguistically diverse environment. In doing so, she promotes ideologies of inclusion and acceptance, which I believe would have diminished the frustrations my participants encountered, if such values had been encouraged by the government. Furthermore, some of my participants recognize the impacts that Bill 101 and Bill 96 have on the learning of other languages. Scholar Michel Pagé argues that language policies in Québec promote French without dismissing other languages, but I believe the following accounts counter this belief (Pagé and Lamarre 2010, p.9). For instance, Amelia's mother-in-law, who teaches Polish to young immigrants in Montréal, noticed that less and less second-generation immigrant parents know how to speak Polish, and therefore the transmission of the language to third-generation immigrants children decreases. A growing number of studies investigate this phenomenon for third and subsequent generations of immigrants, where researchers analyze "the magnitude of the intergenerational linguistic shift", a concept that underlines the English monolingualism increase compared to the decrease in the skills of the parents' other mother tongues (Alba et al. 2002, p.472). Jade likewise observes how, within her own family, Vietnamese is spoken less and less by younger children. She explained that there is a noticeable difference between her own knowledge and use of Vietnamese, versus her sister's expertise in the language, her sister only being two years younger. The intense focus on French in Québec undoubtedly risks the loss of other languages in the process. I acknowledge that additional factors may also cause this, such as the stronger presence of English. Nevertheless, reflecting on the experiences of my participants, I tend to agree that it is regrettable to pressure the learning of French at the detriment of other languages. Are we so scared of losing French and the Québécois culture that we are ready to risk losing the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity in Montréal? In this line of thought, authors Diane Dagenais and Patricia Lamarre hold that we should reconsider the structure of language education which currently concentrates on teaching one or two dominant

languages, since in doing so we take for granted the multilingual skills of young immigrant students (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.20). If their suggestion was made into a reality, it could alleviate some of the criticisms Jade emphasized above, since students might enjoy more opportunities for language learning throughout their academic journey.

Then, it seems like there is a constant battle for the survival of all languages. On the one hand, immigrant families, especially first-generation parents, work hard for their first languages to survive the generations, teaching their children to speak Vietnamese, Spanish or Tamil. Indeed, research has shown how immigrant parents believe it is a priority to teach their children the heritage language (Han 2014 and El Samaty 2020), especially knowing that retaining skills in minority languages helps to maintain belonging to the community (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.5). This may take even more importance when parents see the dominant positions that French and English hold in Montréal. My participants have also shown interest and motivation in learning these languages and cultivating such knowledge, to ensure that they can perpetuate the culture and communicate with family members here and abroad. Emanuel and Quang also emphasized the difficulty of keeping up with three or more languages, sometimes feeling like they are not competent enough in neither of them.

Now, on the other hand, there is pressure put upon these young adults to participate to the perpetuation of the French language, so that is stays present, perhaps the priority, and used every day. Even if my participants grasp the significance of cultivating French, they find it even more difficult to manage all these expectations. In the context of Montréal, learning languages and employing them quickly becomes a social, cultural and political puzzle. Given their particular standpoint, my participants highlight the struggles they face within the debates about languages and describe how it challenges the expression of their identity and sense of belonging. With the

example of French, I have established how the way one relates to the Québécois culture can be influenced by their opinions of the language. Then, as second-generation immigrants, my participants also face similar complications with the other languages that surround them. Hence, it is critical to be reminded that their identity and sense of belonging is further impacted by languages other than French.

To continue, as discussed in more detail through Rosalin's experience, it is apparent that there is a supplementary aspect, other than language, that affects a second-generation immigrant's connection to the Québécois identity. This element is race. To investigate this issue further, in the second focus group discussion, I brought forward the following question: Does one need to be white to be Québécois? Reflecting on the subsequent discussion held in the second focus group, I witness the embodiment of Friberg's theoretical contributions (2021) throughout the experiences of second-generation immigrants in Montréal. The author explains that, for national identity to develop, people first need to attach and "internalize" their belonging to that given nation (Friberg 2021, p.22). Bonding with the Québécois identity, even if difficult to achieve, is theoretically possible for my second-generation participants as we have seen above, though easier for some and more challenging for others. Second, individuals "need to be accepted and recognized as part of that same social category by others" (Friberg 2021, p.22). Hence, feeling excluded and pushed away from a social group renders the attachment to the given national identity much more difficult. Before diving into the racial aspect of this statement, I emphasize that the discussion on language in this chapter constitutes an example of how second-generation immigrants may feel excluded from the Québécois culture. I have proven how language and nationalism are tightly connected in the context of Québec: then, it is no surprise that my participants sometimes perceive Bill 101 and Bill 96 as dismissals of their inclusion within the Québécois society.

Nonetheless, it is vital to consider how race ties into the Québécois identity, since it shapes how one is accepted and included within a community, especially in the context given here. When asked the question about the Québécois race, my participants mentioned how they felt like they could never be recognized, considered or perceived as Québécois by other white Québécois. It is not necessarily because they might not want to, but they truly sense how assuming and embodying that identity would not be reciprocated by other white Québécois. For instance, even though Emanuel deeply realizes the influence that the Québécois culture has on his identity and his morals, he is still unable to fully connect:

"J'ai l'impression que je pourrai jamais être Québécois, que le Québec veut pas de moi (…) Je me disais: 'ils vont juste te regarder comme l'immigrant, tu pourras jamais être… comme eux.'" (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)

"I feel like I will never be able to be Québécois, that Québec does not want me (…) I was telling myself: 'They're just going to look at you like the immigrant, you will never be able to be… like them.'" (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

As mentioned by Friberg, the gaze of others truly influences how one constructs one's identity and sense of belonging. Here, Emanuel explicitly shows how he feels at times unwanted, excluded and set apart by Québécois in the province. He evidently senses that he is not wanted within the Québécois community (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.15). He perceives that the immigrant identity he carries will always surpass whatever efforts he makes to emotionally bond with the Québécois culture. Past research on immigrants in Montréal validates this account: Russian immigrants likewise underline the "exclusionary" characteristic brought forward by the nationalist promotion of a unique Québécois identity (Gingras 2010, p.111). Immigrants do not seem to believe they possess the desired characteristics advanced by Québécois nationalist ideologies in order for one to identify as Québécois. Moreover, in Emanuel's account, there is also a striking

distinction of "me versus them", suggesting that the identity of a second-generation immigrant may never really reconcile with the Québécois identity. Even if one can connect with the Québécois culture, participate to its continuation and feel like they belong, it does not seem that immigrants consider themselves accepted by white Québécois as Québécois themselves.

Furthermore, my participant Quang supplements Emanuel's opinion by saying that being white is sort of the "first layer"; it plays a significant role within the Québécois identity. Hence, is whiteness an underlying feature required to be accepted as a Québécois? It seems to be so. Then, it is no surprise that discrimination, frustration and rejection come back often in this chapter and in the ways my participants describe their belonging to the Québécois culture. As Quang further questioned, "[why would I want to belong to a given culture or a given community if they do not see me as one of them?]" (*Translation mine*). Undeniably, this reflection is logical, and supported by the literature: Michael Windzio asks "Why should immigrants invest in host-country social capital if ethnic boundaries tend to exclude them from the host-country networks anyway?" (Windzio 2018, p.378). This explains very well how complex it becomes to identify and belong to Québec, when the response second-generation immigrants receive from white Québécois is disappointing and hurtful, most of the times. Again, it is possible for them to attach to the Québécois culture, yet this is always nuanced by the fact that they do not truly feel included in the community by white Québécois individuals.

To conclude, I reflect on the unique embodiment of the Québécois identity. Can we imagine a Québécois identity that encompasses English, Vietnamese, Spanish and Polish? Can we imagine a Québécois identity that incorporates racially, culturally and ethnically diverse individuals? In this chapter, my participants each shared their opinions on the state of French in Montréal and Québec, how it impacts their lives and how it has shaped their identity and sense of belonging.

Through their daily experiences and their reflections on growing up in the city, they recognize the motivations behind policies that prioritize French. However, they each also explained how the application of these laws, and their consequences, are overwhelming and restricting. All the debates, tensions and issues that surround French as a language in the province, especially in Montréal, elevate many barriers around the way one may identify and construct belonging to the Québécois culture. Still, bonding with the Québécois identity may not solely revolve around the language, since food, social activities and even race influence the way my participants express their belonging to Québec. Yet, the experiences and stories my participants shared establish the centrality of French within the embodiment of this identity. As a final thought, I am interested to see how white Québécois individuals may advocate for more inclusion and acceptance, hoping that future generations of immigrants might not feel as my participants did growing up.

Chapter Three: Community

In the previous chapters, I have shown the influence that intergenerationality and language have on the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation immigrants. Reflecting on these previous analyses, I come to the conclusion that community also significantly impacts the lives of my participants. Even though I analyzed this concept in the second half of Chapter One, it remains a valuable framework of analysis, because it truly exposes the construction and expression of identity and sense of belonging for second-generation immigrants. Thus, in this third chapter, **I will explore and analyze how community influences a second-generation immigrant's identity and sense of belonging.** To do so, I open this chapter by examining the relevant literature on the concept of community and its relationship with sense of belonging. Afterwards, I turn to the infamous question "Where are you from?" that second-generations confront very often and examine their response to this query. Different communities stand on both sides of this question. Whose identity and sense of belonging are being challenged? Which individuals are asking this question? Keeping in mind second-generation immigrants' complex positionality, how do they react to this question? The following paragraphs discuss the various strategies that assist my participants in managing the continuous challenge of their identity and sense of belonging, within their surrounding communities. Particularly, friendships, accents, names and religion help to better understand my participants experiences when it comes to the different communities they aspire to connect with.

To begin, it seems that conceptualizing community in the social sciences is quite challenging: scholars have attempted to define this notion's boundaries for some time, but its elusive nature appears to defy any fixed description (Amit 2002, p.1). Anthropologists such as

Anthony Cohen actually claim that we should lean into the hybridity of this concept and continue to make use of it as an analytical framework (Cohen 2002, p.168). Hence, how do I conceive of community in this context? First, community implies similarity, in the sense that people with common religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, for instance, may gather together through a collective identity (Cohen 2002, p.168). Then, community also distinguishes between people who do not possess similar life-experiences: it dictates different criteria for belonging (Howell 2002, p.85). Through my participants' experiences, I will indeed highlight instances of inclusion and exclusion, and how such circumstances impact second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging.

To continue, the concept of community emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in one's belonging, as individuals assess each other's similarities and differences. Signe Howell explains that members of a community need to collectively accept a common reality and be acknowledged by other members as part of the group (Howell 2002, p.87). In this sense, the meaning of community resembles the one of national identity. Indeed, other studies likewise show that national identity follows this principle: social reciprocity is required if people are to attach themselves to a common national identity and have it be a meaningful notion (Friberg 2021 and Schneider et al. 2012). Consequently, "this mutual acceptance is the result of a negotiated understanding" and seems vital for the construction of a community and a national identity (Howell 2002, p.87). Yet, it is no surprise that these two concepts are related: Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community" (Anderson 2006, p.6). This connection between community and nation is quite significant within the scope of this chapter and will be investigated further, as these concepts impact the way my participants negotiate their identity and sense of belonging every day.

Most importantly, the study of community underlines the importance of understanding sense of belonging: this concept facilitates our analysis of second-generation immigrants' emotional connection to the people around them (Schneider et al. 2012, p.287). Resembling the above conceptualizations of community and national identity, the literature underlines that belonging entails once again a certain level of reciprocity and acknowledgment from the "receiving" community (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.3). Bilodeau et al. even write that "the dynamics of belonging is a two-way process" (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.12). As a result, the notion of belonging is frequently studied alongside the level of integration, acculturation or assimilation of immigrants in Western societies. Such research often focuses on the discrimination these individuals may face, since "experiences of 'othering'" result in more complex senses of belonging (Schneider et al. 2012, p.290). Moreover, it seems that immigrants are held responsible to prove that they are ready to commit and that they work to cultivate strong attachments to given collectives before they are recognized as belonging (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.3). Will second-generation immigrants pursue belonging if they accumulate negative experiences with the communities around them? This is what we will observe in this chapter: my participants distinctively share how they constructed belonging to the different communities around them, and how they reacted to exclusion. Lastly, it is vital to note that some studies challenge the use of the "immigrant" and "host community" expressions that are often used in second-generation literature, because such references inherently contest these individuals' identity and belonging, by implying that they are strangers (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.5). I believe this underlines the continuous difficulties that second-generation immigrant face when trying to be included in various communities.

Thus, how do second-generation immigrants relate to the different communities that surround them? As mentioned above, they may face certain difficulties when trying to belong to

given communities. In this chapter, some participants highlight the discrimination they face as racialized individuals, which prevents their inclusion into various groups. What are the strategies they employ to give themselves a sense of belonging within the heterogenous context that is Montréal, a city of culturally diverse communities? They may turn to religion, a practice that research has proven to positively impact one's "sense of community, safety and comfort" (Hirschman 2004 cited in Joly and Reitz 2018, p.1114). This emphasizes the usefulness of community as a framework of analysis, since it embodies a certain duality: even if community may cause exclusion, one may also find it is a source of inclusion (Howell 2002, p.86). In other words, community illustrates dynamic forms of "social cohesion" and "collective cultural consciousness" (Amit 2002, p.2, 6). Most importantly, research has shown that social cohesion is in jeopardy when individuals perceive they are discriminated against, for instance when exclusion renders immigrants less likely to connect with the Canadian identity (Sykes 2008, p.22). Therefore, we may observe that community sometimes stands as a grounding force, and other times as a polarizing force, which ultimately influences one's identity and sense of belonging.

With this theoretical background in place, I now turn to the "Where are you from?" query, as this interrogation speaks to the juxtaposition of community and nationalism. First, let us unpack the implications and assumptions that the question "Where are you from?" communicates. Throughout our conversations, some of my participants spoke about strangers asking them about their origins on the streets, in the metro, or at parties, which evidently are quite intrusive interactions. In open and public settings, this question initially hints at the racialization of an individual's physical appearance. We may even understand this question as a "discursive form of everyday racism" (Creese 2019, p.1480). This also means that white-passing second-generation immigrants may not be questioned like so in public environments, because they are not racialized

in the same manner as other individuals of color. For instance, my participant Amelia recognizes that "[people who look more like immigrants, they are asked ‘Where are you from’ more frequently… Me, not so much]" (*Translation mine*). In her comment, Amelia underlines the relationship between the immigrant body and racialization, as it is likely people of color are assumed to be immigrants, especially first-generation immigrants. Indeed, being of Polish descent, Amelia acknowledges that she is white-passing, and therefore is not often targeted by this racialization process. Here, it seems that Amelia benefits from a certain degree of "anonymity", since her identity is not challenged in the same way as other racialized second-generation immigrants "whose bodies are marked in terms of difference" (Tonkiss 2003, p.301). Therefore, the question "Where are you from?" emphasizes the idea that individuals perceive people of color "as out of place rather than at home" and generates the contestation of one’s identity and sense of belonging (Creese 2019, p.1476). Even if second-generation immigrants may speak French and English, dress according to Montréal fashion and understand Québécois traditions, they are differentiated through racialization, and asked to report their ancestry to defend their presence (Creese 2019, p.1476). The alienation possibly caused from facing this question may become heavy for second-generation immigrants and mediate the everyday construction of their identity and sense of belonging.

Secondly, integrating the concept of community within the analysis of the question "Where are you from?" enables a deeper understanding of second-generation immigrants’ identity and sense of belonging. For instance, following the racialization concept from above, author Gillian Creese explains that this inquiry characterizes "‘the imagined community’ of Canadians as white" (Creese 2019, p.1477). Reflecting on the discussion my participants opened at the end of Chapter Two, I believe the same can be said about the collective and social imagining of the Québécois

community: it is characterized as white. Research participants speaking on discrimination testify to this notion and explain that non-racialized individuals' ethnicity, especially the Québécois ethnicity, is rendered invisible by whiteness (Hamisultane 2020, p.173). Furthermore, some scholars maintain that the collective Québécois identity is imagined through "the ethnic ancestry of the French-Canadian majority" (Bock-Côté 2007 cited in Pagé and Lamarre 2010, p.10). Consequently, when race is "articulated through codes of nation, culture, and identity", it creates a separation between those who are acknowledged as part of the community, and those who are not (Yon 2000, p.12). Indeed, a relationship of opposition between "alterity and identity" always seems present in diasporic environments, where identity contradicts alterity in a "us versus them" pattern (Signorelli 1989 cited in Marino 2020, p.34). Thus, in this context, both Canadian and Québécois communities, through their white imagined embodiment, reject colored bodies from their reality.

To draw a parallel, it is vital to note that Bill 101 and Bill 96 also impact the perception of the Québécois community, but on a linguistic basis instead. Since these policies emphasize the relationship between French and the Québécois identity, individuals who do not speak French are placed outside of the imagined Québécois community. Indeed, through these Bills, the Québécois government determines who is included or excluded from their "national community" (Gagnon 2021, p.49). Unfortunately, this idea demonstrates that the "language and politics of community are too often tainted by a suspicion of otherness", as there is once again a certain awareness of the people who "should not" belong within a given collective (Tonkiss 2003, p.303). Therefore, someone who does not speak French in Québec, or is not seen speaking French, is more likely to face the "Where are you from?" query. Whether it is through race or language, it is clear that specific characteristics of Canadian and Québécois identities mark the discrimination that individuals face as they navigate such white-imagined communities in their everyday life.

Then, who participates in the perpetuation of these imagined white communities? Who performs the racialization of individuals in public settings, and go as far as interrogating people about their origins? Perhaps we may assume that the question "Where are you from?" mainly originates from white individuals without any recent immigrant background. I note that most of my participants indeed indicate that when they are asked this question, it is often a white person that is standing in front of them. I consider this further reinforces the normalized imagination of Québec and Canada as predominantly white communities, because such interrogators delegitimize the belonging of the individuals they racialize to "their community". Consequently, in Montréal, recognizing "some-body as a stranger" (Ahmed 2000, p.23) contributes to the differentiation of someone who is acknowledged as part of the white Canadian and Québécois imagined communities versus someone who is not acknowledged as part of these communities. And since these two imagined communities are characterized through whiteness, it amplifies the perception of people of color as strangers and outsiders. Then, we circle back to the interrogation of "Where are you from?", because perceiving somebody as a stranger pushes individuals to question one's history. I believe this demonstrates how community deeply influences, and perhaps ascribes, the perception of one's identity and sense of belonging.

With this in mind, I move on to examine my participants' experiences, share their stories, and how they navigate belonging to the communities that surround them. I begin by turning to Emanuel, who explained how his perception of the "Where are you from?" query evolved over the years. Similar to the development of his relationship towards French analyzed in the previous chapter, Emanuel's perception of "Where are you from?" developed as he grew up, because he gradually recognized its racial implications. When he was younger, Emanuel was used to asking

this question to his friends and the people around him, because this is how he understood his position in the world, and how he recognized others around him:

"Quand j'étais jeune, où j'ai grandi, on était vraiment que des, entre-guillemets 'immigrants'. Même si moi je suis né au Québec, je m'étais jamais identifié comme autre chose qu'un immigrant, parce que mon meilleur ami c'est un Bulgare, j'ai un autre ami Vietnamien, beaucoup de nos amis c'est des *Filipinos*… Dans notre *gang* d'amis en fait, notre groupe Facebook, c'est une *joke*, ça s'appelle *World Wide Gang*, parce qu'on a un gars du Zimbabwe, trois ou quatre *Filipinos*, un Bulgare, un Kosovar, un Brésilien… il y a deux Québécois."
(Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)

"When I was young, where I grew up, we were really all, quote on quote 'immigrants'. Even if I was born in Québec, I had never identified as anything else than an immigrant, because my best friend is Bulgarian, I have another Vietnamese friend, a lot of our friends are Filipinos… In our friend group, our Facebook group, it's a joke, it's called the *World Wide Gang*, because we have a guy from Zimbabwe, three or four Filipinos, one Bulgarian, one Kosovan, one Brazilian… there are two Québécois." (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

As Emanuel explained, the community he grew up in was evidently quite diverse and he mostly encountered individuals with immigrant backgrounds. Hence, since most of his friends perceived themselves as immigrants, he identified himself as an immigrant as well, even if he could have chosen to take on a more Québécois or Canadian identity, for instance. This underlines the significance of community in second-generation immigrants' lives, because the way one recognizes the identity of others shapes the way one perceives oneself. Indeed, friendships, in this case, present themselves as social settings in which second-generation immigrants navigate and engage with the different facets of their self (Haayen 2016, p.74). Consequently, friends constitute a meaningful and grounding community for Emanuel. Even if it takes the form of an "inside joke", the label of *World Wide Gang* is revealing, since it speaks to the immigrant identity, and perhaps transnationality, all these young adults share. Together, they belong to a unique community built upon a particular "shared reality" (Howell 2002, p.87). Friendships as meaningful communities

appears in other studies as well: a participant in Daniel A. Yon's research also referred to his friend group as the *United Nations*, which according to the author speaks to the ethnic and cultural diversity that youth appreciate in their social circles (Yon 2000, p.69). I believe this further reinforces the sense of community that Emanuel acquires from this friend group and it validates his own positionality as an immigrant.

Therefore, Emanuel did not initially realize that asking the question "Where are you from?" had a discriminatory inference, because this is honestly how he constructed the community around him and created relationships with people his age. He did not seem conscious of the racialization process that emerged when asking this question, and his friends may not have noticed either. However, later on, after strangers directly interrogated him on his origins, he acknowledged the unpleasant impression he felt from this question. Emanuel grew aware of the racialization process behind the question, and this is especially noticeable through one interaction he shared. Someone asked him where he was from, and Emanuel answered: "Outremont". However, the person disapproved his answer and challenged him further by observing that he had a more tanned skin tone; then Emanuel said he was from El Salvador. Looking back on this conversation, Emanuel explains:

> "Je pense que ce qui me dérange honnêtement… c'est vraiment la manière que les gens [approchent cette question], c'est le malaise qu'il avait avec le fait de dire que j'étais basané. Ça, ça me dérange. Dis-le, j'ai pas l'air d'être Québécois, c'est correct. C'est ça qui vient me déranger, c'est que ça t'intéresse d'apprendre sur moi, mais t'es même pas capable de le dire." (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)
>
> "I think what bothers me honestly… it's really the way people [approach this question], it's the awkwardness he had with saying I am tanned. This, this bothers me. Say it, I don't look like I am *Québécois*, that's fine. That is what bothers me, it's that your interested in learning about me, but you're not even able to say it." (Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

Emanuel's comment is very well-formulated and he speaks to all the issues I emphasized so far. First, he underlines the awkwardness that transpires through this racialization process. Individuals clearly perceive people of color as strangers, and they are curious to know more about their background. At the same time, they know this is quite a personal question and perhaps feel out of place asking it, which may result in this awkward and uncomfortable tension. Nonetheless, they still ask the question. Then, Emanuel openly acknowledges he does not look like he is Québécois, which reinforces Creese's argument above: asking "Where are you from?" perpetuates the construction of a white imagined community, in this case the Québécois community. Emanuel understood by the tone of the question, the second time, that he was being racialized and the person in front of him wanted to know about his, and his parents', ethnic and cultural background. This also implies that it is not enough to behave and speak like a white Québécois, because a racialized individual's skin tone will most likely exclude them from the community (Asadu 2018 and Marino 2020). This is critical, as research underlines how the feeling of being accepted into the community is likely to be very meaningful for second-generation immigrants: one could imagine that living here since birth and having been socialized in this community would result in acceptance (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.6). Yet, Emanuel's experience here proves that racialization hinders this recognition, which causes irritation. This frustration is quite understandable, because the imprecise interrogation of "Where are you from?" initially does not tell him what the other person truly wants to know. His initial answer, responding with the district he lives in, was valid. Since the person then corrected him and asked the question again, explicitly making a comment about his skin tone, Emanuel was somewhat obligated to answer with the country his parents were born in.

After reflecting on this interaction, I was curious to ask Emanuel how he defined and perceived Québécois individuals in general. His response circles back to our discussion about

whiteness within the Québécois community; that it is integral to the identity and the culture. How can one identify with a community and culture if the community itself constantly challenges one's belonging by asking "Where are you from"? Emanuel shared:

"On dirait que dans ma tête il y a deux types de Québécois, dans le sens où: il y a le Québécois issu de l'immigration et il y a le 'Québécois-Québécois'." (Emanuel 2022, Individual interview)

"In my head it feels like there are two types of *Québécois*, in the sense that: there is the immigrant *Québécois* and there is the '*Québécois-Québécois*'."
(Emanuel 2022, *Translation mine*)

This comment is particularly revealing, as it demonstrates the strategy Emanuel uses to connect with the Québécois identity. As mentioned in Chapter Two, he grew closer to the Québécois community growing up, yet he still finds it difficult to completely bond with the culture. We can observe this pattern here too: Emanuel distinguishes between the identity of someone who lives in Québec with an immigrant background, versus someone who lives in Québec but does not have an immigrant background. In reference to this distinction, the literature uses the term "néo-Québécois" or "new Québécois" to identify Québécois who are racially, ethnically and linguistically different than individuals who are socially recognized as Québécois (Das 2008, p.234). Utilizing a similar expression, I believe that by identifying as a "Québécois issu de l'immigration", Emanuel claims attachment to that identity and community. For him to be able to express his Québécois identity and sense of belonging, he must establish that he possesses an immigrant background, and then maintain that he connects with the Québécois culture. This is because the community around him has shown it will never really acknowledge his belonging to the Québécois culture and community, through the "Where are you from?" query. Hence, making this distinction enables Emanuel to claim a certain degree of belonging to the Québécois community, while recognizing other white individuals are the (socially and racially) accepted,

normalized and recognized Québécois. Lastly, through Emanuel's story, I argue that community can, for the same individual, exist as an inclusive or exclusive force at different times in one's life. While he found belonging and friendship with other immigrant youth in an ethnically diverse group, Emanuel felt dismissed by the Québécois community because of his ethnic background and skin tone.

Additionally, it is important to note that a few other participants spoke about Québécois individuals without an immigrant background in the same manner as Emanuel did. Second-generation immigrants recognize a difference there, even if both them and non-immigrant individuals were born in Québec. During the interviews and focus groups sessions, I picked up on the expressions '*Québécois-Québécois*', '*Québécois de souche*' and '*Québécois pure laine*' that my participants utilized to distinguish white Québécois individuals without an immigrant background. Other research also documented young immigrants using a similar repetition as the '*Québécois-Québécois*', to distinguish people based on their race or nationality: White-White, Black-Black, Canadian-Canadian (Yon 2000, Kobayashi and Preston 2014). Indeed, this '*Québécois-Québécois*' repetition is particularly interesting, as it denotes the strength of one's Québécois identity if they do not possess an immigrant background, or at least are not racialized like second-generation immigrants. It implies a comparison, for instance with someone who could be perceived as Québécois-Black: their belonging to the Québécois culture and community most likely will not be recognized in the same way as a '*Québécois-Québécois*'. The '*Québécois de souche*' expression symbolizes the roots of white Québécois ancestry, meaning francophone individuals descending from French settlers who arrived during the colonial period (Lamarre 2008, p.107). The '*Québécois pure laine*' saying implies the purity of one's Québécois identity, or even blood (Marino 2020, p.125), again stressing the idea that one's familial lineage grants, or not,

access to a socially and racially acknowledged Québécois belonging. This analysis of language is quite valuable. Firstly, it demonstrates embodiment of Québec as a white-imagined community, because these expressions perpetuate the conceptualization of Québécois as white individuals who have lived in the province for many generations. Secondly, this shows how the white Québécois culture is normalized, compared to the culture of racialized individuals that seems to stand out against the white Québécois community (Yon 2000, p.77). Thirdly, this analysis connects together language and markers of identity, which in this case emphasize the link between expressions and strict characteristics for belonging (Gagnon 2021, p.55). These expressions help me understand the reciprocity between race, language and belonging, and how my participants experience this relationship in their every day lives.

Then, as noted by the uncomfortable interaction Emanuel shared above, second-generation immigrants undergo a precise racialization process that contests their identity and sense of belonging and forces them to defend their presence here. Do they utilize certain strategies to avoid being asked this question? How do second-generation immigrants attempt to evade racialization from strangers and claim belonging to the different communities around them? To discuss these ideas, I turn to my participants Estefanía and Quang, who both shared the struggles they faced during their teenage years, trying to fit in. Their stories made me realize how this racialization process investigated until now is not only grounded in racialization identified by skin color. Other aspects of one's identity and personality can accentuate one's positionality as second-generation immigrant: for instance, accents and names. Such features render one's immigrant background more easily observable by outsiders and brings once more interrogations and challenges about one's origins.

The "Where are you from?" query does not only surface when one's belonging to the Québécois community is contested, as I have learned from Estefanía's experience. Second-generation immigrants may also worry about rejection from their own immigrant community. Indeed, Estefanía shared her insecurities about fitting in with Latino peers outside of her family, especially whether or not they would acknowledge her belonging to the Latino community. She felt particularly worried about this during her time in high school, where a lot of her classmates were first-generation immigrants from Central and South America. I notice how concerned Estefanía was that first-generation immigrants would ask her "Where are you from?", because she would have to clarify that her origins were not the same as them. From her experience, having to explain that she was a second-generation immigrant meant exclusion from the Latino community:

> "… that was the first time I heard the term, *fake Latino* or *fake Latina*, which is essentially, if you're a Latino that was born here. So, whenever [I] would [answer the question]: 'Oh, where are you from?', [I would] say: 'Oh, my mom is from Colombia, my dad is from Guatemala, *but* I'm born here'. Just the *but*, as if you have something to like explain further: '*but*, I'm born here'. And they would be like: 'Oh, you're a fake Latina, then…' In the sense that, people who immigrated, first-generation immigrants who grew up in the Latin country, they are the, quote unquote, 'the real Latinas'." (Estefanía 2022, Individual interview)

> "… c'était la première fois que j'entendais le terme, *fake Latino* ou *fake Latina*, qui est essentiellement, tu es un Latino qui est né ici. Donc, à chaque fois que [je répondais à la question]: 'Oh, d'où viens-tu?', [je] disais: 'Oh, ma mère vient de la Colombie, mon père vient du Guatemala, *mais* je suis née ici'. Juste le *mais*, comme si tu avais quelque chose de plus à expliquer: '*mais*, je suis née ici'. Et ils étaient comme: 'Oh, tu es une *fake Latina*, alors…' Dans le sens que, les gens qui ont immigré, les immigrants de première génération qui ont grandi dans les pays latins, ils sont les, entre guillemets, 'les vrais Latinos'."
> (Estefanía 2022, *Translation mine*)

Immediately, I notice some parallels between Estefanía's experience and the analysis of the white-imagined Québécois community. Once more, there is this idea that belonging and cultural attachment are only recognized if individuals were born in the country they identify to. This

appeared earlier when I discussed the meanings behind the expressions '*Québécois de souche*' and '*Québécois pure laine*'. Second-generation immigrants are highly aware of the significance that place of birth carries in people's perception of belonging to a community. Consequently, struggles to define one's identity often surface when others' perception of one's identity does not match with one's self-perception of oneself (Marino 2020, p.123). This proves that community, in this case, may stand as a polarizing force for second-generation immigrants. In Estefanía's story, first-generation immigrants seem to be in a position of power, since they are allowed to claim belonging to the Latino community, even when they do not reside there anymore. Their place of birth grants them a direct relationship of attachment to the Latino community and culture. In Emanuel's story, it is non-immigrant white Québécois individuals who are accepted as part of the Québécois community. Hence, it seems that only a specific part of the given population is allowed to claim belonging.

Evidently, Estefanía feared Latino peers would challenge her belonging to the Latino community, and she would be labelled as a "fake Latina". There is evidence of similar expressions used in various migration contexts to discredit immigrant's belonging, such as the "wog" and "dago" terms used towards Italian immigrants in Australia (Marino 2020, p.115). During the second focus group session, my participant Quang likewise recalled the "Việt kiều" phrase employed to denote Vietnamese individuals who were not born in Vietnam. Such expressions can also be associated with the "whitewashed" label that peers from the same ethnic group may use to distinguish each other as first-generation immigrants or second-generation immigrants (Nibbs 2016, p.88). In this context, the "fake Latina" term embodies the differentiation between different generations, and the rejection Estefanía tried to avoid. However, as presented in Chapter One, she strongly expresses and constructs her identity around being a Latina, it is quite meaningful to her.

Thus, it is understandable that the recognition from others outside of her family felt daunting, since she sought acknowledgment from the Latino community. This need for reciprocity is informative because it displays the influence that community has on second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.3). Estefanía shared her strategy to avoid being seen as a "fake Latina":

> "I actually would say that I didn't speak Spanish for the first two years [of high school], 'cause I was so self-conscious of the way that I spoke, I thought: 'they're gonna criticize or judge me by the way I speak Spanish'. I didn't feel like I fit in with them anyways, so I didn't even wanna try." (Estefanía 2022, Individual interview)

> "En fait, je disais que je ne parlais pas Espagnol durant les deux premières années [du secondaire], parce que j'étais tellement complexée par la manière dont je parlais, je me disais: 'ils vont me critiquer ou me juger à cause de la façon dont je parle Espagnol'. Je ne croyais pas que je correspondais bien avec eux de toute façon, donc je ne voulais même pas essayer." (Estefanía 2022, *Translation mine*)

Estefanía realized that a marker of her positionality as a second-generation immigrant was her accent. Therefore, telling her peers she did not speak Spanish prevented her from showing her "accent" in front of them, and subsequently being questioned about her background. In sociolinguistics, this is labeled as "linguistic insecurity", which denotes an individuals' belief that the speech variety they utilize is "somehow inferior, ugly or bad", a feeling possibly enhanced by observing others' "negative attitudes" towards this given speech (Meyerhoff 2006, p.172). Because of this linguistic insecurity, only during her third year of high school did Estefanía tell one of her friends she was fluent in Spanish. Following her thought process, I notice how she compares herself to first-generation immigrants, who learned Spanish in Latin America and who carry the "standard" accent of their country when they speak. In this context, it seems that first-generation immigrants encompass the Latino culture and community. Additionally, Estefanía believes her

accent gives away her positionality as a second-generation immigrant, meaning that she learned Spanish here, not in Colombia or Guatemala, where her parents were born. This explains the anxiety she felt that first-generation Latinos would question her identity and belonging if they heard her speak. Her concern may be justified, because research demonstrates that first-generation immigrants often pick up on linguistic differences as indicators of individuals' origins (Creese 2019, p.1481). Therefore, it logical that Estefanía worried first-generation immigrants would ask her "Where are you from?", and she would feel obligated to explain that she was born in Canada, not in Latin America. As a result, it is clear that Estefanía's sense of belonging was "held back": she was bothered to the point that she did not want to try to fit in with this group (Bilodeau et al. 2018, p.15).

Relatedly, these insecurities pushed Estefanía to develop an acute self-awareness of her speech patterns and her vocabulary when she conversed with Latinos and other school peers. She shared with me how, over time, she was able to modify her speech and her accent, which enabled her to fit in and integrate with the people she interacted with. For instance, with Arab or Moroccan classmates, Estefanía would employ a French accent more similar to France, and with Colombian classmates, she would again switch her accent and use a Spanish vocabulary specific to Colombia. This discussion was quite interesting, and clearly a very significant part of her experience growing up. She says: "I'm always thinking about how I'm gonna speak". As we continued talking, I wondered how this constant shifting and linguistic hyper-vigilance might be connected to her identity and sense of belonging. Estefanía described how she carefully thought about:

> "which accents should I lean towards to, or which expression should I use more… So, a lot of shifting depending with who I am (…) There's definitely a more loose type of identity."
> (Estefanía 2022, Individual interview)

"vers quels accents je devrais me pencher, ou quelles expressions je devrais plus utiliser… Donc, beaucoup de modifications dépendamment d'avec qui je suis (…) Il y a définitivement un type d'identité plus lousse." (Estefanía 2022, *Translation mine*)

Indeed, Estefanía's capacities to switch and shift her speech patterns also translated into her identity, as means to seek belonging into various communities. Here, she uses the adjective "loose" to describe how it feels from her perspective, how she purposely adapts her accent and identity to match the community that surrounds her. Estefanía's extended linguistic abilities enabled her to emulate other people's background: if they were Colombian, Québécois, Cuban or Arab, she would adapt to them. Estefanía's identity and sense of belonging are highly fluid, and ultimately embodied the way she desired to be acknowledged by others (Yon 2000, p.24). Throughout this conversation, Estefanía and I indeed realized how influential this fear of rejection has been on her sense of self. She worked very hard to construct her identity like so, trying to gain belonging to the Latino community, even if she is a Latina second-generation immigrant. Estefanía's strategy, to avoid being asked "Where are you from?", was to utilize linguistic abilities in order to integrate within the Latino community outside of her family.

Retrospectively, Estefanía reflected on the fluid quality of her linguistic abilities and her identity. She appreciates the language shift skills she acquired over time, since it allows her to relate to different kinds of individuals and she does not feel "limited to one scope": she thinks "it's a super power!" This behaviour enables her to find "ways of connecting across difference", to interact and bond with individuals from various backgrounds (Wise 2005, p.177). Yet, she questions the firmness of her identity, because this shifting and switching can feel difficult to manage: "What's my baseline, you know?" Estefanía wonders if she should try to stick to "one identity" instead of constantly shifting between different identities and senses of belonging.

Perhaps she feels a certain pressure to further ground her sense of self, while leaning into this fluidity and hybridity may be an interesting avenue for further personal development. I believe her interrogations reflect a common experience for many second-generation immigrants, as they may feel lost in the array of possible attachments they may pursue, especially in the context of Montréal. Nonetheless, Estefanía's experience portrays the strategy she used to construct belonging to a community she felt rejected from.

Interestingly, accents are not the only feature one may utilize to enforce their belonging to a particular community. This time, I turn to Quang, whose experience reveals the critical meaning of names for second-generation immigrants: this topic emerged a few times during this research, especially during our second focus group session. Studies on immigrants likewise note how names become diversity or ethnicity markers that accentuate one's immigrant background, which may lead to exclusion and discrimination (Marino 2020, Amit and Dolberg 2023). Amit and Dolberg also indicate how the analysis of names enables researchers to explore the construction and evolution of one's identity through the perception of others, which is particularly meaningful in contexts of immigration (Amit and Dolberg 2023, p.2). In this research, my participants realized they all had common and awkward experiences with their names. Some because their name was often mispronounced. Some because they had more western names, and they were believed to be adopted, since their name was not perceived to match with their appearance. All of them related to the uncomfortable first day of school, when teachers call out every student's name in front of the class for attendance. Yet, all these examples are best represented through Quang's story, because I can trace the transformation of their identity and sense of belonging through their name. Let me specify that Quang's journey of navigating their identity and sense of belonging was distinctively revealing, something they have been reflecting on in the last few years. The construction of their

identity and sense of belonging is multi-layered and informed by various events in their life, but in the context of this chapter, I decide to focus on the story of their name. This is following passage is part of what Quang shared on the topic:

> "Ça a peut-être l'air de rien, mais j'ai vécu un bon 23 ans de ma vie à ne pas utiliser mon vrai nom. Je m'appelais Tony avant. Au début, Tony c'était un bouclier, Tony c'est un masque, Tony c'est comme une manière facile de m'appeler. Tony n'a jamais été moi."
> (Quang 2022, Individual interview)

> "It may seem like nothing, but I lived a good 23 years of my life without using my real name. Before, I called myself Tony. Before, Tony was a shield, Tony is a mask. Tony is like an easy way to call me. Tony was never me." (Quang 2022, *Translation mine*)

I believe this excerpt explains quite powerfully Quang's experience and hints to the struggles they faced trying to navigate their identity and sense of belonging. Firstly, by utilizing an alternative, a more Western name, Quang solved the issue of people frequently mispronouncing their name. Secondly, as they describe, Tony embodied another identity that Quang wore as a mask and as a shield, a strategy they used to conceal their identity. Such a process of "re-identification" renders immigrants invisible to non-immigrants in Western societies, an accomplishment that immigrants may wear with pride, because it stands as a proof of their "successful" integration within western communities (Gingras 2010 and Valverde 2012). Other research indeed notes that first names, or choice of first name, may help one measure one's cultural integration into Western societies specifically (Amit and Dolberg 2023, p.2). Reflecting on this experience, Quang clearly recognizes that Tony never was a true representation of their self. Nonetheless, Tony embodies the way Quang wanted to be perceived by others: it demonstrates "the desire for recognition that may precede the ways we name ourselves" (Yon 2000, p.14). Here, the "conscious effort" of hiding results in invisibility (Gingras 2010, p.26): Quang concealed their identity by projecting Tony's

instead. Yet, what are the reasons why Quang decided to push this new name and identity forward instead of their own? I argue that Quang wanted to avoid of being excluded from the Québécois community they were surrounded by, since they were actually often made feel like they did not belong. Quang demonstrates this idea here:

"C'est beaucoup de mettre des maques partout, pour te faire accepter, fallait que tu te caches (…) quand je suis dans ces environnements d'écoles américaines ou canadiennes, c'est que moi aussi je dois cacher mon identité" (Quang 2022, Individual interview)

"It's a lot of putting on masks everywhere, to be accepted, you had to hide (…) when I am in these environments of American or Canadian schools, I have to hide my identity too" (Quang 2022, *Translation mine*)

It seems that, during their time in primary school, secondary school and cegep, Quang attempted to fit in with Québécois classmates and be accepted into their community. Evidently, Quang sensed a disconnection between their own background and the Western community they were surrounded by. Consequently, to avoid being excluded, discriminated against and even bullied, they felt like they had to conceal their Vietnamese identity and put on masks (Tony) to be recognized as belonging. Once more, Tony is not only a fabricated identity to present to others, it is actually a strategy Quang utilized to convince others they belong. As participants in Daniel A. Yon's research noted, one's identity can be described as the "`things you do for other people to see you´", which in Quang's case implies changing one's name (Yon 2000, p.24). Research has shown that using a "local" first name changes locals' perception of immigrants, because "otherness" is expressed differently than when someone has an "ethnic" first name (Amit and Dolberg 2023, p.13). Hence, presenting oneself as Tony is in theory a logical idea: being in contact with Québécois peers increases second-generation immigrants' chances of cultivating applicable cultural knowledge to assist one's integration into the community (Windzio 2018, p.376). Indeed,

adopting a more western behavior should help Quang belong and be acknowledged by others as part of the community, which they did: Quang transformed into a comical adolescent and embodied a completely different person. They also laughed at their own ethnicity, a behaviour that is notably present in other immigrants' stories: to avoid exclusion and shame at school, students internalize the stereotypes thrown at them and "laugh at themselves along with the dominant group" (Marino 2019 and 2020, p.117). Such modifications in Quang's behaviour and identity prove that Tony was formed through alienation, discrimination and the continuous rejection from the Québécois community (Yon 2000, p.85). This personification is on the one hand a response to Quang's perpetual exclusion from the Québécois community, and on the other hand, a strategy to persuade this same group to acknowledge their belonging.

As a result, I claim that personifying Tony was an attempt at further delegitimizing their own Vietnamese identity in order to be accepted into the white Western community Quang was surrounded by every day. Literature on ethnic identity recognizes specific effects that racialized youth may experience when facing the culture of the majority group. For instance, it is probable that second-generation immigrants are increasingly conscious of a "discrepancy" between their own ethnic identity and the ethnic identity of peers from the dominant, often white-western community they are in contact with (Tran and Bifuh-Ambe 2021, p.169). Early on, Quang indeed sensed a difference between them and other Québécois youth, and as any young teen would, they simply wanted to be accepted and recognized as part of the community. Similar to Estefanía, they wanted to avoid being asked "Where are you from?", because that would mean Quang's peers did not include them into their community. Yet, where Estefanía modified her speech patterns to integrate the people she interacted with, Quang decided to change their name in order to render invisible their Vietnamese background. This has been observed in the literature on immigration,

where immigrants attempt to "align themselves", their identity and behaviour, with Western peers to mirror them with the objective of becoming like them (Gingras 2010 and Marino 2020), and possibly achieve belonging to the community.

Therefore, Quang attempted to suppress their Vietnamese identity as much as possible, perhaps hoping that people would forget they are not white. However, can one really succeed in such a challenge? Because, in the end, whiteness is an integral part of Western communities as they exist today. Additionally, studies have shown that Asian immigrants are predominantly perceived as "ethnic", instead of being acknowledged as belonging to the western world (Nibbs 2016, p.90). Even though race was not directly mentioned by Quang in their reflections, I believe it is still relevant here. The "Where are you from?" they wanted to avoid points to the existence of the racialization process that occurred when they interacted with white Québécois classmates, and how they felt rejected. Moreover, erasing one's ethnic identity as such has critical consequences for one's mental health: the "absence of ethnic ties is the basis of loneliness" (Tonkiss 2003, p.306). During their individual interview, Quang indeed observed that living as Tony resulted in amplifying the loneliness they already felt from being a second-generation immigrant in this Western environment, because they felt misunderstood by their peers. This ultimately emphasized the feeling of rejection Quang experienced, because Tony was the dismissal of Quang's cultural and ethnic identity: an "un-Vietnamese life" (Tonkiss 2003, p.306).

The analysis above establishes once again how community, here the predominantly white Québécois community, can induce feelings of exclusion and ethnic discrimination that may compel one to modify one's identity in order to seek belonging. However, in Quang's experience, interacting with the Vietnamese turned their life around. As mentioned in Chapter One, this participant, in later years, reached out beyond of their family to connect with the Vietnamese

culture and learn how to belong to that community. Research indeed suggests that second-generation immigrants tend to seek belonging to their parents' country of birth and culture when they feel dismissed by the dominant group (Asadu 2018, p.32). In developing stronger connections with the Vietnamese community in Montréal, Quang regained ownership of their self and identity, and reclaimed their real name. In this light, community stands as a grounding force. Quang learned about the Vietnamese culture which enabled them to take back their real name and develop their attachment to the Vietnamese community:

> "Mon nom, Quang, veut dire brillant ou lumineuse. Hai, [mon deuxième nom], veut dire océan. Donc, encore une fois, les références de l'eau qui reviennent souvent… C'est ça, je trouvais ça juste vraiment intéressant, la notion de fluidité" (Quang 2022, Individual interview)

> "My name, Quang, means bright or luminous. Hai, [my middle name], means ocean. So, once more, these references about water that come back often… That's it, I just found it really interesting, this notion of fluidity" (Quang 2022, *Translation mine*)

Understanding the symbolic meaning their name carries fosters belonging to the Vietnamese community for Quang, because they are not trying to conceal their identity any longer. The mask they wore does not hold value anymore, since they are not trying to belong with individuals that reject them from their community. Quang indeed strongly connected with the meaning of their name, and they now feel much more attached to the Vietnamese community than they ever did trying to fit in with the Western community they pursued in their teenage years. They indeed shared with me how Vietnamese culture is full of references about water, for instance, the

importance of agriculture for this population. Water also denotes the image of "The Boat People"[1], which one may commonly associate with Vietnamese immigrants[2] (Peché 2016, p.163). Water and fluidity came often to Quang as they learned about the Vietnamese culture, which they eventually started to associate and connect with, especially knowing that their middle name, Hai, means ocean. As they mention in the excerpt above, from the references of water, the concept of fluidity made sense for Quang. Understanding the fluidity within their self enabled them to accept their Vietnamese identity, to open more possibilities for belonging, instead of trying to pursue attachment with individuals that rejected them.

Lastly, I argue that both Estefanía's and Quang's stories highlight how strong the fear of not belonging can be for second-generation immigrants. They realize how others perceive their body, their accent and their name, and grasp the discriminatory implications that follow these observations (Yon 2000, p.70). These two participants changed parts of their selves in order to integrate better with the communities around them. This proves the reciprocal relationship that bonds together identity and sense of belonging. When these two second-generation immigrants worried their belonging to a community was not accepted and recognized, they modified parts of

[1] "The Boat People" is an expression that represents the flow of Asian immigrants who fleeted their countries by boat in the 1970s (Pham 2019, p.18). Usually, this label is associated with Vietnamese immigrants, although it is important to note that Laotian and Khmer refugees also crossed international borders in the same manner. While this expression may sound somewhat derogatory, today many children of these first-generation immigrants are retaking this label and utilizing it to advocate for various Asian communities, to discuss the difficulties their families experienced and the associated generational effects. For instance, @superboatpeople on Instagram is a Québécois-immigrant online community that seeks to document, share and promote their culture and stories through various events.

[2] However, I note Quang's family did not migrate to Canada as part of "The Boat People". Quang's first contacts with the Vietnamese community were harder because of this, since they did not feel they could connect with other Vietnamese, as most of Vietnamese migration histories revolve around being "Boat People".

their identity to show that they were worthy of being acknowledged as belonging. Today, they reflect on these experiences and observe how their identity and sense of belonging evolved over the years.

So far, through the experiences of these three participants, I analyzed different responses and behaviors from second-generation immigrants seeking belonging to, and being rejected from, various communities. Now, I move on to the experience of Rosalin, which supplements these stories very well, because she has a distinctive understanding of her belonging, compared to what I observed from the other participants. Firstly, when I asked Rosalin how she reacted to being asked "Where are you from?", she described how she has a fully prepared sentence that she uses to answer this question. A few other participants who recalled being asked this query shared the same reaction with Rosalin: in one long pre-organized phrase, they explain to the person in front of them their parents' origins, their place of birth and their place of residence. As you will see, this response also hints to second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging:

"[I have a] huge sentence: I am [Tamil] Catholic, born in France. [Tamil] Catholic, that's my ethnic identity and that is also my religious identity. From Northern Sri Lanka, born in France and raised in Montréal… literally, a huge sentence." (Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

"J'ai une énorme phrase: Je suis Tamoul catholique, née en France. Tamoul catholique, c'est mon identité ethnique, et c'est aussi mon identité religieuse. Originaire du Nord du Sri Lanka, née en France et élevée à Montréal… littéralement, une énorme phrase."
(Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Right away, I find it reveals quite well the complex positionality of second-generation immigrants. Rosalin first mentions her ethnic and religious identity, and then reveals the place she was born. Afterwards, she details her origins, disclosing the region where her parents lived, and ends by saying that she was raised in Montréal. I believe this last precision is meaningful, because

Rosalin legitimizes her belonging to Montréal by explaining that even though she was not born in this country, she was still raised here. Responding with this "huge sentence" again points to the vagueness of the "Where are you from?" query, since second-generation immigrants feel obligated to provide this many personal details in order to satisfy the curiosity of the person standing in front of them. Ironically, I worry this may push the interrogator to ask even more questions that second-generation immigrants are not comfortable answering. Quang effectively expressed what this can feel like: this is ultimately a one-sided conversation, where the second-generation immigrant may be left feeling vulnerable and defeated. Indeed, being already prepared with this formulated response hints to the frequency and awkwardness of being asked "Where are you from?", especially knowing the answer may change over time, as my participants proved that their identity and sense of belonging is fluid, hybrid and multiple.

Similar to the experiences of other participants, Rosalin's identity and sense of belonging were often contested. For instance, Rosalin found her Tamil identity challenged by other Tamil individuals, especially when they would try to correct her speech and vocabulary. She felt frustrated, since it left her with the impression that there was only one correct way to be Tamil. This evokes Estefanía's experience above, where I analyzed how language and community impact one's identity and sense of belonging. These are two examples of how community can stand as excluding forces for second-generation immigrants. Relatedly, as mentioned in the previous chapter, bonding with the Québécois community was difficult for Rosalin at first, because she was racialized by white Québécois individuals. Ultimately, we know that Rosalin still claims her Québécois identity, even though race and language were initially barriers to her attachment to the culture. Likewise, her religious identity was often questioned, as she faced individuals that did not accept her Catholic identity because she is brown:

"La fille est comme: 'Non, non, c'est pas possible que tu es Catholique, c'est pas possible que tu es Catholique et que tu es brune.' Après, elle est en train de chercher un autre mot (…) Dans ces moments-là, je suis comme : '*this [girl]*'… Toi qui me dit qui moi je suis?"
(Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

"The girl was like: 'No, no, it's impossible that you are Catholic, it's impossible that you are Catholic and you are brown.' Afterwards, she was trying to search for another word (…) In those moments, I am like: 'this [girl]'… It's you who's telling me who I am?"
(Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Rosalin recalls how this encounter occurred: the other person did not believe her religion identity to be true since she is brown. She further noted how people would assume she is Hindu or Buddhist, because it is often presumed that brown people are Indian, and these are two of the most commonly associated religious affiliations with Indian individuals. Either way, Rosalin is denied her religious identity and belonging by an outsider making a judgment on her race and ethnicity. The racialization process is evident, and further emphasizes that the white imagined community discussed at the beginning of the chapter is not only embodied through the Québécois or Canadian community. Here, Catholicism also seems to carry race, specifically whiteness. Nonetheless, I observe in Rosalin's comment how she immediately refuses to accept what this person is telling her and overturns the interrogation by questioning who has the right to define her this way. I believe this is a very powerful act, since we see Rosalin deciding to claim belonging to the Catholic community she connects to, even though others attempt to contest her inclusion. This also shows that the sense of community she found in religion is incredibly meaningful to her and very grounding, since Rosalin's belonging to Catholicism still stands, no matter how outsiders may try to exclude her from it. She may respond to "Where are you from?" with this long phrase above, but she has a larger comprehension of what sense of belonging means to her. This is rooted in her Catholic upbringing, where she attended a culturally diverse francophone Catholic church very often growing up. Retrospectively, she recognizes how she enjoyed her time in church, how it

taught her values of love, compassion, care and respect. Rosalin reflects on how that spirituality granted her a great sense of community, and now allows her to express the following:

"I just realized that, I belong within myself, and through how I just create relationships with others. So, my sense of belonging, *moi*, I carry it within me. So, wherever I go, I belong, because I am there. It's not really about 'am I accepted or am I wanted in the space?', but how I feel, how I feel personally, within myself in that space, [it's more] spiritual."
(Rosalin 2022, Individual interview)

"J'ai juste réalisé que, je m'appartiens à moi-même, et juste à travers les relations que je crée avec les autres. Donc, mon sentiment d'appartenance, moi, je le transporte à l'intérieur de moi. Donc, peu importe où je vais, j'appartiens, parce que je suis là. C'est pas vraiment une question de 'est-ce que je suis acceptée ou désirée dans cet espace?', mais comment je me sens, comment je me sens personnellement, à l'intérieur de moi-même dans cet espace, c'est plus spirituel."
(Rosalin 2022, *Translation mine*)

Here, Rosalin emphasizes the questions that second-generation immigrants ask themselves, if they are accepted or wanted in a certain space, which underlines the exclusion they often feel towards communities that challenge their belonging. Without explicitly mentioning the racialization process, she recognizes that "Where are you from?" contests one's sense of belonging through discrimination. Rosalin's reaction, and her strategy to navigate this over time, is to establish and engrain her belonging within herself. As she describes, this enables her to belong wherever she goes, wherever she has been, and encompasses her positionality as a whole. This goes against the idea that sense of belonging "is spatially differentiated", as authors Kobayashi and Preston argue when they describe how immigrants may acknowledge different levels of belonging depending on where they are (Kobayashi and Preston 2014, p.237). This is not the case for Rosalin. Her spirituality unlocks her identity and sense of belonging, because she allows herself to create connections with the different places, cultures and communities she comes in contact with. Research on religion and mental health indicates that spiritual practices are beneficial for immigrants since they offer sense of community and reassurance (Hirschman 2004 cited in Joly

and Reitz 2018, p.1114). Indeed, Rosalin says that the relationships she creates with others and the different communities around her further solidify her sense of belonging within herself. Here, the relationships that define her identity refer to the social interactions and networks she cultivates in her everyday life, rather than being centered on place of birth, culture and ethnicity (Yon 2000, p.64). This emphasizes the situatedness of her identity and sense of belonging, how fluid it feels for her. Rosalin indeed powerfully self-defines her identity and sense of belonging, even though outsiders may still attempt to challenge it. Then, whenever her identity or belonging is challenged, Rosalin can always turn towards to this belief, to this confidence she has within herself and know that only she has the power to define herself. I believe this is founded in the values she derived from Catholicism, and the grounded sense of spirituality that this community imparted on her.

As a last point, I note the paradox in Rosalin embracing the fluidity within her identity and sense of belonging, and the comfort and stability this brings her. Even if fluidity and stability may be perceived as opposing concepts, in the realm of identity, they can be related to each other. To this idea, Daniel A. Yon comments on the postmodern model of identity that Stuart Hall conceptualizes, noting that an individual's identity is not seen as chained to culture anymore, at least not as much as it used to (Yon 2000, p.14). In fact, Yon argues that, even though a postmodern identity is formed within an environment of "multiplying lifestyle possibilities", individuals may still successfully reach "security, rootedness, and coherence" (Yon 2000, p.14). Notably, research demonstrates that immigrant and multilingual youth may increasingly express their identity and sense of belonging through a transnational perspective, which defies national, linguistic and cultural boarders (Dagenais and Lamarre 2005, p.18). Therefore, fluidity and hybridity are not barriers to comfort, stability and confidence. I believe Rosalin's experience proves this idea: she embraced the fluidity within her identity and sense of belonging to generate more solidity in her

sense of self. The comfort and confidence she finds in herself come from the fact that she firmly grounds herself within a particular community, in this case her Catholic church (Yon 2000, p.14). This supports the argument that community is highly influential in a second-generation immigrant's identity and sense of belonging.

To summarize, this chapter has outlined the experience of four participants as they encounter the question "Where are you from?", which I demonstrated implies discriminatory judgments and challenges the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation immigrants. Through this inquiry, and subsequent ones, these young adults are made conscious of the way others distinguish their body (Yon 2000, p.70) within the white imagined communities of Québec and Canada, and other peripheral communities. As my participants shared, their reactions and strategies to navigate the "Where are you from?" query differ, yet they all ultimately manage to express their identity in unique ways, no matter the criticism they receive. Indeed, friendships, accents, names and religion embody the "responses to racialization" and the manifestations of their fluid, hybrid and multiple identities and sense of belonging (Creese 2019, p.1482). For Emanuel, the diverse friend group that surrounds him generated greater confidence in his own identity as an immigrant, with which he combines his attachment to the Québécois culture by labeling himself as a "Québécois issu de l'immigration". In Estefanía's case, we see how she modified her accent to claim belonging to the Latino community her first-generation immigrant peers formed in high school, which eventually translated into a fluid and hybrid identity. Then, Quang shared how they strategized to integrate with the white Québécois community utilizing the mask of Tony, until they were able to embrace their Vietnamese identity and express their belonging to the culture. Finally, Rosalin shows us how influential the Catholic community is in her experience, as her spirituality helps her claim belonging within her self. Through these stories, I analyzed the significance of

community in the context of everyday racialization and in turn described its impacts on the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation immigrants.

Conclusion

In this research, I have gathered and analyzed the different ways in which second-generation immigrants build their identity and sense of belonging in the city of Montréal, surrounded by diverse and colliding cultural groups. With the use of meaningful anthropological concepts, such as intergenerationality, language and community, I was able to examine my participants' experiences and understand what influences their identity and sense of belonging. In Chapter One, Estefanía showed how the continuous presence of her family, and most importantly her extended family, helped her develop her Latina identity. On the other hand, Vanya and Quang experienced more difficulty constructing their cultural identity at times because they did not have enough contact with family members or faced absence and silence when it came to learning about their cultural background. Lastly, Divya explained how she felt forced into the Indian culture by her family, which in turn caused her to distance herself from this cultural identity.

Ultimately, this chapter highlighted the deep impact that family has on second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging. Interestingly, one could assume, because of Estefanía's story, that the physical presence of an open and communicative family should lead to second-generation immigrants feeling strong emotional attachment to their parents' culture. However, Divya's experience somewhat contests this idea, as she was in constant contact with her nuclear and extended family; yet in her case the outcome is quite different from the other participants. Following such observations, this chapter concluded with a discussion on the relationship between geographical distance from one's family (for instance when one has to travel by plane to reach one's extended family) and distance that is felt more on the emotional level, such as feeling disconnected from one's cultural identity.

To continue, Chapter Two explored the historical and political contexts of language in the province of Québec, and my participants' everyday navigation of language in Montréal. I presented important information on Bill 101, Bill 96 and the Référendum of 1995, which draw a more comprehensive portrait of some frictions that often arise when debating languages in Montréal. Such tensions are reflected in the way my participants connect with the Québécois identity and the French language. For instance, Ameila advocated for an environment that accepts and promotes the diversity of languages, especially in the city of Montréal, because she recognizes the strong relationship between language, culture and identity. Accordingly, as she speaks many languages and connects with multiple cultures, she described her cultural and Québécois identity as fluid and hybrid. Alternatively, my participant Emanuel described how his Québécois identity evolved because of his growing attachment to the French language. This connection was somewhat hindered by Emanuel's political opinions, as he pointed out how various language laws in the province predominantly target immigrants in Montréal and in turn portrays them as obstacles to the perpetuation of French in Québec.

In this line of thought, Rosalin underlined how second-generation immigrants feel pressured to participate in the preservation of French, which creates a certain taboo when they aspire to learn other languages. This is especially the case for English, since the two languages are constantly framed as competing against each other. Rosalin also emphasized the relationship between race and language, which did affect her attachment to the Québécois identity; it is not constructed through language, but instead through religion and other parts of the culture. Similarly, my participant Jade explained how she experienced the more negative effects of Bill 101 and Bill 96, in her position as a student and teacher. Even though her Québécois identity is not strongly present, she did find alternative ways to create a Québécois sense of belonging, for instance

through the slang she uses in everyday life. Finally, my participants share their thoughts on the relationship between whiteness and the Québécois identity, as some feel like they may never truly be accepted by other white Québécois as Québécois themselves. The current social, and linguistic, context does not seem to support the development second-generation immigrants' sense of belonging to Québec.

Next, Chapter Three tackled the concept of community through multiple angles. I studied the different social groups that surround my participants every day, which lead to the analysis of the construction and evolution of their sense of belonging. Through various moments of inclusion and exclusion, my participants shared their reactions and strategies when they are confronted with the question "Where are you from?". For second-generation immigrants like Emanuel, growing up in an ethnically diverse community fosters inclusion. Indeed, he felt accepted in his social circle because, among his friends, it was common to have an immigrant background. Nevertheless, Emanuel highlighted more challenging moments, for example when a stranger questioned him about his origins without admitting they truly wanted to ask about his ethnicity. Through this discussion, I demonstrated once more that the Canadian and Québécois national identities are principally constructed around whiteness.

Furthermore, as opposed to Emanuel's experience, Estefanía and Quang showed the difficulties they faced when the communities they aspired to be part of did not accept them. On the one hand, Estefanía explained how she was afraid her first-generation Latino classmates would not recognize her as a Latina, therefore she hid the fact that she spoke Spanish so they would not know or question her origins. Further on, when trying to fit in different communities through speech and language, Estefanía developed the ability to switch between different accents, which ultimately resulted in her identity being quite fluid and hybrid. On the other hand, Quang attempted

to transform and mask their identity, notably by changing their name, to fit in with his white Québécois classmates. They felt obligated to erase their race and ethnicity in order to be accepted and recognized by this white-dominant community. Ultimately, Quang decided to embrace their Vietnamese identity, and with time they developed a very strong sense of belonging to the Vietnamese community. Lastly, Rosalin showed the importance of religion in her life. While her belonging to the Catholic church was challenged because of her skin color, Rosalin's connection to religion is ultimately what helped her acquire a sense of belonging within herself. Only she has the power to determine her belonging to different communities, which in turn enables her to define her identity based on her values, her spirituality and the relationships she cultivates with others.

Now, before answering the main research question, I wish to expand a little more on my participants' identity as Montrealers and their sense of belonging to the city. It is meaningful to hold this discussion as a conclusive argument, since it circles back to the Introduction chapter where I demonstrated the significance of Montréal in the context of this project. In fact, after exploring second-generation immigrants' various attachments to their family, the French language, Québec, Canada or other communities, it is essential to share how my participants express their identity and sense of belonging to Montréal. As we may observe, they position their identity and belonging to Montréal in a higher standing than they do with Québec or Canada:

"Eventually, I started to identify myself more as a Montrealer than a Québécois or a Canadian."

(Emanuel 2022, Individual interview, *Translation mine)*

"(…) if I'd have to choose between all three [Montréal, Québec or Canada], I'd say more *Montréalaise* because I find it's more where the melting pot is."

(Estefanía 2022, Individual interview*)*

"I consider myself like what would be a Montrealer, because I think it's easier to cling on to that urban identity"

(Vanya 2022, Individual interview*)*

Especially in the case of Estefanía and Vanya, the diverse and urban character of Montréal facilitates the construction of a Montrealer identity and sense of belonging. Vanya later explained that this was because such metropolitan "urban spaces tend to be composed of immigrants", immigration being an experience that all my participants share with a great number of individuals in the city. In fact, Estefanía emphasized how she could relate, and was used to, the presence of immigrants in Montréal, especially since she grew up in this environment. Relatedly, Rosalin indicated how the city's diversity "enables [immigrants] to form this solidarity that's really through our experiences and our beliefs rather than; 'oh, we are from the same family lineage'". In this diverse metropolitan setting, connection forms through similar life experiences, instead of being founded on national attachments. One's sense of belonging is evidently reinforced upon seeing and meeting this many individuals with an immigrant background.

Thus, I believe Montréal creates belonging within difference. This creates an interesting paradox, since countless people share similar life experiences, yet migration itself results in a very diverse urban environment and the experiences of migration themselves are also quite distinct. Therefore, this balance between similarity and diversity enables second-generation immigrants to feel comfortable in Montréal and construct a solid sense of belonging to the city. Being a Montrealer is what best represents my participants experiences, since that identity encompasses a multiplicity of immigrant stories. Emanuel's friend group illustrates this idea quite well: he found belonging within a community that was founded on "being immigrants". Additionally, Divya

observed that this ethnic and cultural plurality helps immigrants, of any generation, to find other people from their own community and connect with them. This is best emphasized through Quang's experience, as described in previous chapters.

Moreover, adding another layer to this discussion, Vanya emphasized the following: "I think people expect diversity". This implies Montréal is imagined as diverse, while other suburban or rural areas in the province, for instance, are imagined as less diverse, or probably white. Hence, second-generation immigrants may sense a difference in how they are perceived, and in how they perceive themselves, in settings where diversity is expected, versus environments where whiteness may be the norm. This circles back to Amelia's account at the beginning of Chapter Three, where she explained that white-passing second-generation immigrants are not questioned on their origins as much as racialized second-generation immigrants. In their individual interview, Vanya made a similar remark, as they explained that in Montréal "[they] don't really think about [their] multiculturalism, [their] ethnic identity", meaning that they are not frequently confronted to it. Susanne Wessendorf detected a similar trend in Hackney, a borough in London, where individuals eventually stopped interrogating each other about their ethnic differences (Wessendorf 2013, p.411). She calls this "commonplace diversity": differences are noticed, but they are not unfamiliar in such an urban setting and just become a less exciting subject to talk about (Wessendorf 2013, p.411). Therefore, adhering to a Montrealer identity enables second-generation immigrants to overlook their ethnic identity, because diversity seems to be the norm.

Hence, I argue that the race and identity relationship within Montréal is different than the race and identity relationship outside of the city, for instance within the province of Québec. Since whiteness does not take as much space in how we imagine Montréal, as opposed to Québec and the Québécois community, this offers second-generation immigrants an alternative, a safer and

more comfortable way of constructing their identity and sense of belonging. It appears that Québec's supposed interculturalist approach (Gagnon 2021, p.54) does not truly translate in practice, as immigrants' presence in the province still generates continuous resentment (Gingras 2010, p.110). Consequently, I believe the cultural and ethnic diversity present in this city promotes an environment where second-generation immigrants recognize themselves as being Montrealers, rather than alternative national identities (Schneider et al. 2012, p.313), and they easily claim belonging to this local urban space.

Then, let us return to the main research question, which I reiterate here: **How do second-generation immigrant young adults construct their identity and sense of belonging when growing up in a culturally diverse environment such as Montréal?** Evidently, this thesis argues that young second-generation immigrants in Montréal construct their identity and sense of belonging in multiple ways. It is likewise clear that their identity and sense of belonging themselves are multiple, fluid and hybrid. I claim that my participants have developed their identity and sense of belonging through the navigation of everyday experiences, and numerous retrospections on such experiences. Indeed, through a sustained integration of my participants' accounts, which amounts to the self-identification approach established in the literature review, I prove that everyday experiences are an excellent framework of analysis for identity and sense of belonging. Central to second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging is the impact that their family has on their socialization, their education on culture and languages, and their sense of self. Additionally, the context of Montréal raises debates on the subject of language, which influences the expression of my participants' identity and sense of belonging to Québec. External to familial relationships, I also found several communities, particularly of the same age-group, that deeply influence second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging. Furthermore, this

thesis proves my participants' identity and sense of belonging is not bicultural and goes beyond the assumption that second-generation immigrants themselves embody tensions between cultures (Gallant 2008, p.37). Rather, they navigate, negotiate and strategize in order to process the multiple cultural tensions present in their environment. All in all, the stories my participants shared demonstrate that identity and sense of belonging are not fixed, they evolve and transform through one's life experiences.

Unsurprisingly, within the designated parameters of this research, I encountered some challenges and limitations which affected the composition of this thesis. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, a central challenge in conceptualizing this project was understanding how to define second-generation immigration. For individuals to be second-generation immigrants, do they absolutely have to be born in Canada? What if they arrived in Montréal at two or 5 five years old? Such questions were difficult to answer, yet I noticed this was a common issue in research centered on immigration. Various conceptualizations of second-generation immigration emerged over the years, with distinctive age limits between the first and second generation, notably different in North America and Europe, and the appearance of the 1.5 and 2.5 generations (Nibbs and Brettell 2016, p.2-3). With the helps of participants' discussions during the focus group sessions, I was able to make sense of these definitions. Even so, I believe it is critical to expand on this subject, because our understanding of these different immigrant generations has a heavy influence on how we guide and construct anthropological research. After having heard the experiences of my participants, I understand that some details, such as place of birth and place of residence, truly have impacts on their identity and sense of belonging. How individuals of different immigrant generations perceive their own positionality in turn influences how we understand their experience and analyze it anthropologically. Even though, as mentioned previously, Quang and Divya

questioned the need to categorize immigrants in different generations based on their arrival and their ancestry, these features do ultimately make a difference. Estefanía was able to put words on this complex conundrum:

"L'identité est tellement complexe, et quand les gens essaient de trouver cette réponse, ils vont créer plus de catégories pour essayer de trouver cette complexité dans un mot ou un terme, quand en effet, tu peux avoir quelque chose de plus général, et dans la généralité, avoir la complexité et c'est correct aussi. Mais, on dirait que les gens veulent avoir ce terme pour être comme: '*Ah-ha*, c'est ça que je suis', quand on n'est pas seulement une chose de toute façon."
(Estefanía 2023, Focus group)

"Identity is so complex, and when people try to find that answer, they are going to create even more categories to try to find this complexity in one word or one phrase, when indeed, you can have something more general, and in this generality, have complexity and that is acceptable too. But, it seems like people want to have this phrase to be like: '*Ah-ha*, that is what I am', when we are not only one thing anyway." (Estefanía 2023, *Translation mine*)

Here, Estefanía clarifies why defining such concepts is challenging. On the one hand, there is a certain desire to label all the possible identities one may connect with, given their particular and unique experience. In doing so, people can relate to a precise identity, claim it as theirs and feel comfort in knowing that they are seen for their distinctive story. On the other hand, such a process becomes highly complicated, especially when discussing immigration, as the plurality of these experiences seems exponential. Estefanía indicates that it may be possible to gather multiple unique experiences under one more general concept, which people may still relate to. Ultimately, in this research, my participants aligned with the latter: even though they had diverging experiences, they all preferred the second-generation immigrant label.

Hence, the challenge of conceptualizing second-generation immigration brought about a meaningful realization: first, we should attempt to let the concerned individuals define themselves on their own terms. Then, we may investigate beyond the label they choose and listen to their story

to understand their choice better. I believe such an "expansive approach" to second-generation immigration is consequential, since these young adults truly show very diverse experiences and thus express their identities and stories in multiple ways (Nibbs and Brettel 2016, p.3). Hence, what renders this analysis compelling is the method taken to understand my participants' experience; focusing on self-identification in the first place. This is an approach utilized in similar work by other scholars, such as Nicole Gallant (Gallant 2008, p.47). Finally, the realization that arises from this challenge is that perhaps I should have let any individual who identified themselves as second-generation immigrant be part of this study. This may become an interesting avenue for future research: knowing little of the participants' background and only during the fieldwork might the researcher dive further into their experience.

In this line of thought, it is critical to consider additional topics or issues left unexamined in this project, which may be of interest for future research. Firstly, religion comes to mind, especially after analyzing the construction of Rosalin's sense of belonging and her attachment to spirituality. It would be interesting to observe if spiritual attachments have a further grounding force on how second-generation immigrants construct their identity and sense of belonging. It may also be a great opportunity to simply examine the different levels of spirituality that individuals of this generation hold. For instance, utilizing the concept of "religious vitality", in other words the generational perpetuation of religious practices within familial and communal environments (Phalet et al. 2012, p.343), could highlight the influence of spirituality on one's identity and sense of belonging. Most importantly, in a culturally diverse environment such as Montréal, research has shown that the opportunity to preserve certain traditions is conceivable (Joly and Reitz 2018, p.1112), which thus emphasizes the usefulness of pursuing such avenues. Secondly, it would have been possible to focus solely on participants with a precise ethnic background, for instance only

selecting second-generation immigrants with Indian ancestry. However, this did not align with the objective I had set out for my research, since I sought to examine individuals' experiences with ethnicity, culture, identity and sense of belonging in general. I was not concerned with centering the project on one nationality, or using this framework for my analysis. In fact, I believe this strengthens and differentiates my research, since a considerable amount of the literature on second-generation immigrants is concentrated on one ethnic background (Gingras 2010, Phalet et al. 2012, Han 2014, Asadu 2018, El Samaty 2020 and Friberg 2021) or a more specific bicultural comparison between two ethnic groups (Gallant 2008, p.37). Therefore, having participants from multiple ethnic backgrounds enables an analysis of life experiences across such differences, which I believe is essential for a study that tackles diversity as much as this one.

Thirdly, similar to the above argument on ethnicity, gender could have been a central concept in this project. Yet, for the same reasons, it was not my intention to divide the experiences of my participants according to their gender, as I was more concerned with studying other anthropological concepts. Nonetheless, it would be valuable to explore the intersection between immigration and gender. We might ask if gender influences the various communities a second-generation immigrant encounters and tries to integrate. However, I consider a project of this nature should avoid a gender binary framework and instead utilize a queer-minded approach, as recent research for example underlines the absence of trans individuals in this field (Bonifacio 2019, p.2). Indeed, much work on gender and immigration seems to emphasize the navigation of gender roles for cis-men and cis-women immigrants in Western countries. Hence, I consider that future research on gender and second-generation immigrants should take into account the LGBTQ+ umbrella for a more inclusive analysis, similar to Stephanie de Jesus's Master's Thesis (2021) on the identity and sense of belonging of LGBTQ+ second-generation immigrants in the Netherlands.

Lastly, if I was to continue working on this project and examine new research avenues, I would most probably turn towards an approach centered on the "Other-than-human", inspired by Zoe Todd's (2018) "Refracting the State Through Human-Fish Relations" and Lien and Pálsson's (2019) "Ethnography Beyond the Human". In the context of my research, Dr. Arriola, a former professor of mine, suggested that I could examine certain objects immigrant families might own in their homes, as evidence of their stories, experiences and everyday life, and let these other-than-human things speak for themselves. These could take the form of family heirlooms, photo albums, paintings, or even legal documents such as passports. This could give my research a completely new life, especially now that I have built a great foundation upon which I could continue to learn about second-generation immigrants' identity and sense of belonging. In paying more attention to "human and nonhuman relations", Kara Wentworth argues that it can emphasize existing, and perhaps implicit, structures of power because it exposes "less typically represented elements of any scene" (Wentworth 2015). Consequently, investigating object and human relationships in the context of this thesis could stimulate the study of power within the identity and sense of belonging of second-generation immigrants.

To conclude this thesis, I believe it is valuable to combine the findings of this research with more current events. For instance, as of 2023, Concordia University experienced first-hand the impacts of Bill 96. As mentioned, Bill 96 engenders changes for students in cegeps and universities in the province, especially when enrolling in anglophone establishments. This Bill additionally reinforces the government's priority of protecting, defending and promoting the French language in Québec. Consequently, with such intentions in mind, the Québec government decided to increase tuition fees for Canadian and international students who wish to study in anglophone universities in the province, which resulted in tension and disappointment on the part of

Concordia's administrators. According to Graham Carr's statement, Concordia's president, the government intends to redirect funding to francophone universities, with the goal of expanding the promotion of French in Québec (Concordia University, 2023). In turn, Concordia's president mentioned multiple times in subsequent announcements how the university has been working to promote and advocate for the use of French even though Concordia is a primarily anglophone university (Concordia University, 2023). Nonetheless, it seems that the government did not accept the university's proposals, which resulted in Concordia deciding to launch a legal challenge against the government (Concordia University, 2024). It is essential to note that McGill University has taken the same course of action, initiating a court case against the government as they maintain the government's demands "violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms" (McGill University, March 2024).

Since February 2024, and as of September 2024, Concordia University and Graham Carr have not published new information on the situation. The possible outcomes of this legal challenge will have critical consequences on anglophone universities in Montréal, and the students who attend these establishments. The news measures imposed by the government have direct impacts on the languages spoken in Montréal and the promotion of specific cultural identities. The Québécois government clearly chooses to support francophones students living in the province, most likely because they are expected to perpetuate Québécois French and the Québécois culture. However, by so intensely promoting this section of the population, how will others react? Part of this answer is reflected in the legal challenge Concordia and McGill filled against the government. This debate is certainly quite complex, and stands as a meaningful event to incorporate in future research studying the Québécois identity, culture and politics. Will such measures create a certain level of resentment towards the learning of French, because it is forced on these students? How

will students in Montréal be affected by the upsurge of tensions between anglophone and francophone educational establishments? Will the Québécois identity and culture be transformed by such political measures? How will this influence migration in coming years? Perhaps the task of learning French is becoming too heavy, and immigrants will simply avoid Québec and settle in other provinces, because it may be easier to integrate in other anglophone communities. Anyhow, this proves that political and linguistic debates are still at the center of the Québécois culture, political climate and identity, which already produce conflictual viewpoints on the part of second-generation immigrants. Their relationship to the Québécois culture, and other communities in the province, will certainly continue to evolve in coming years, as they finish their studies and go on living in Montréal.

"(…) il y a tellement de complexités dans l'identité de deuxième génération que j'avais jamais pensé jusqu'à maintenant, c'est vraiment *le fun* voir l'expérience des autres aussi, comment on a tous des points similaires et différents. C'est tellement plus complexe que je pensais…"
(Estefanía 2023, Focus group)

"(…) there are so many complexities in the identity of second-generation immigrants that I never thought about until now, it's really fun to see others' experience as well, how we all have similarities and differences. It's so much more complex than I imagined…"
(Estefanía 2023, *Translation mine*)

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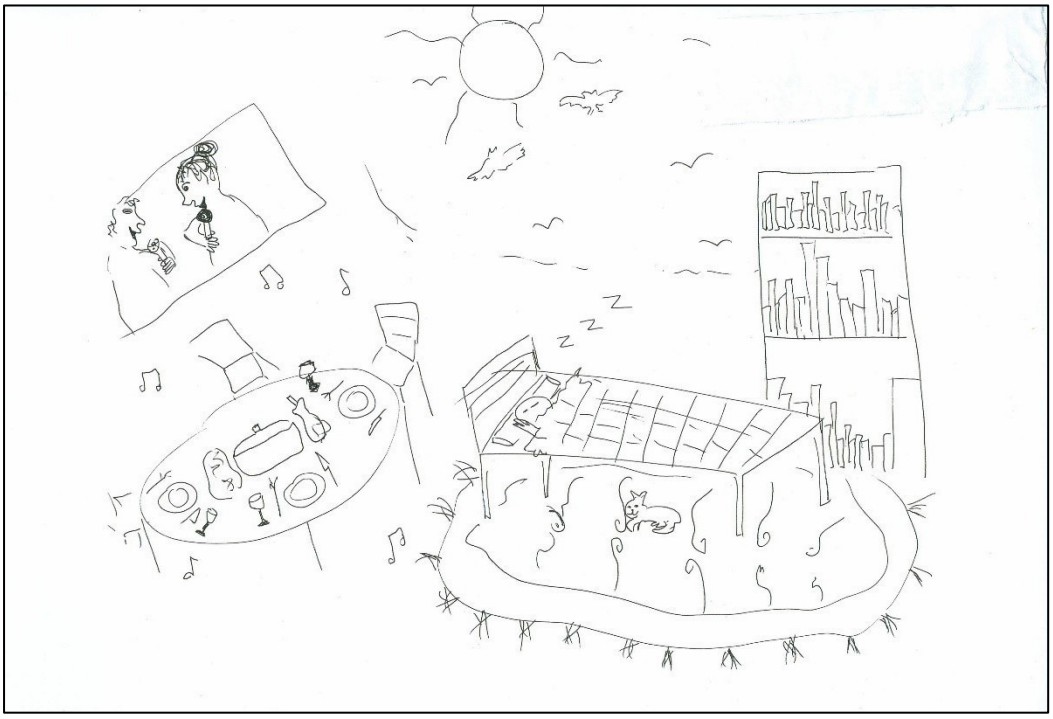
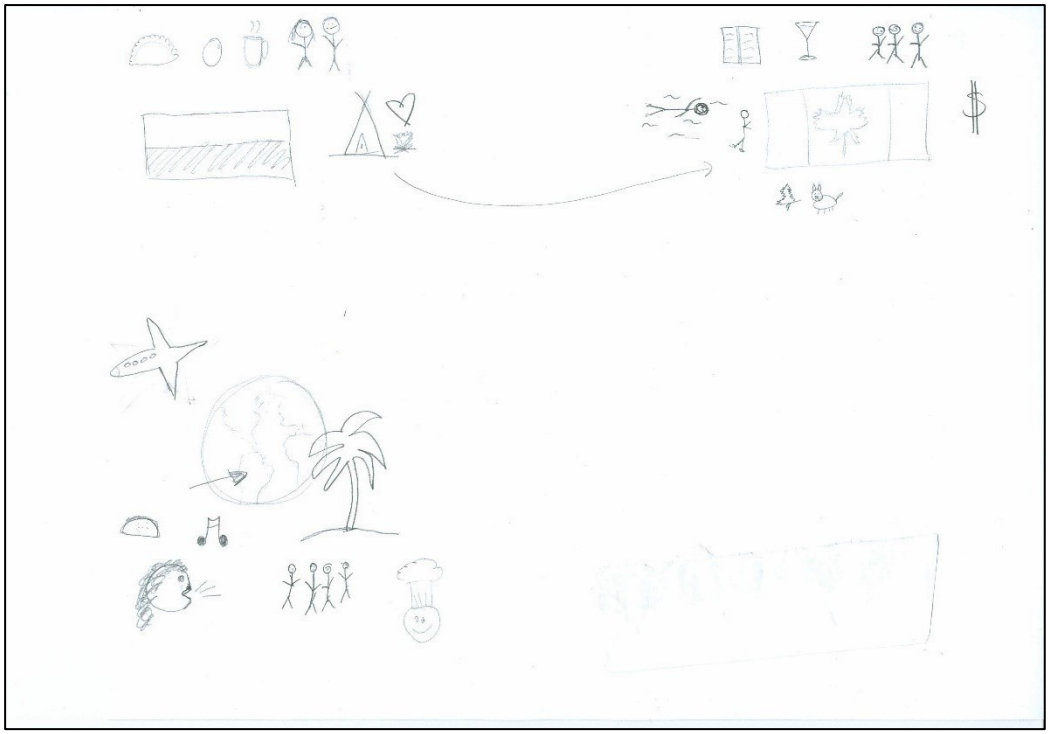
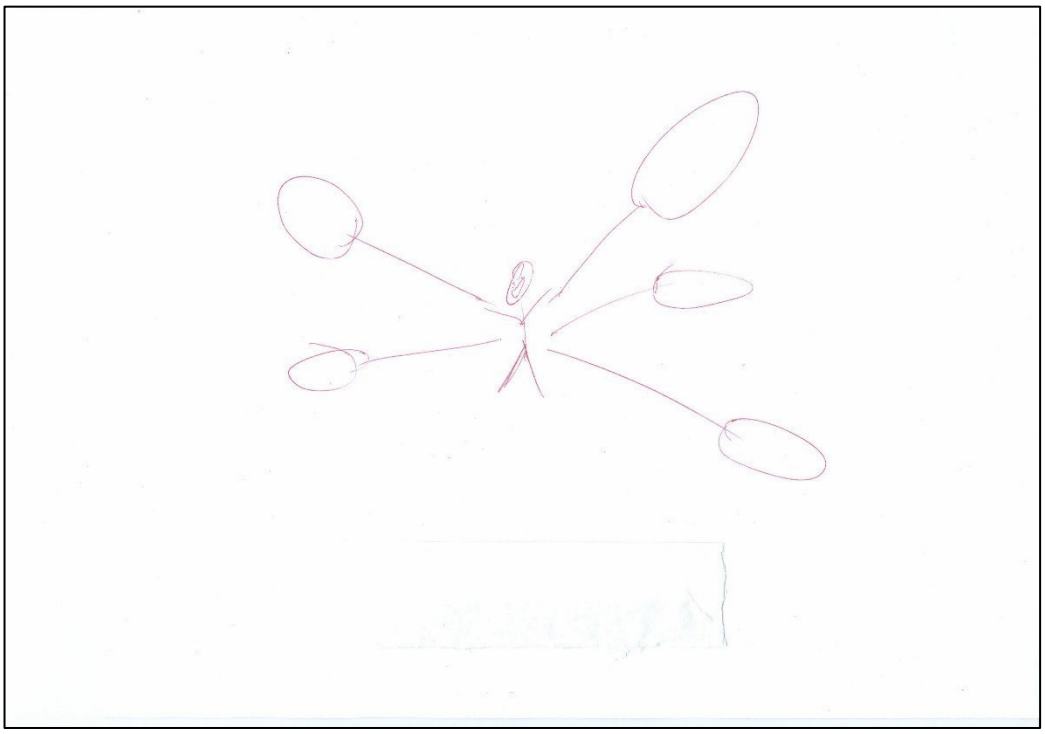
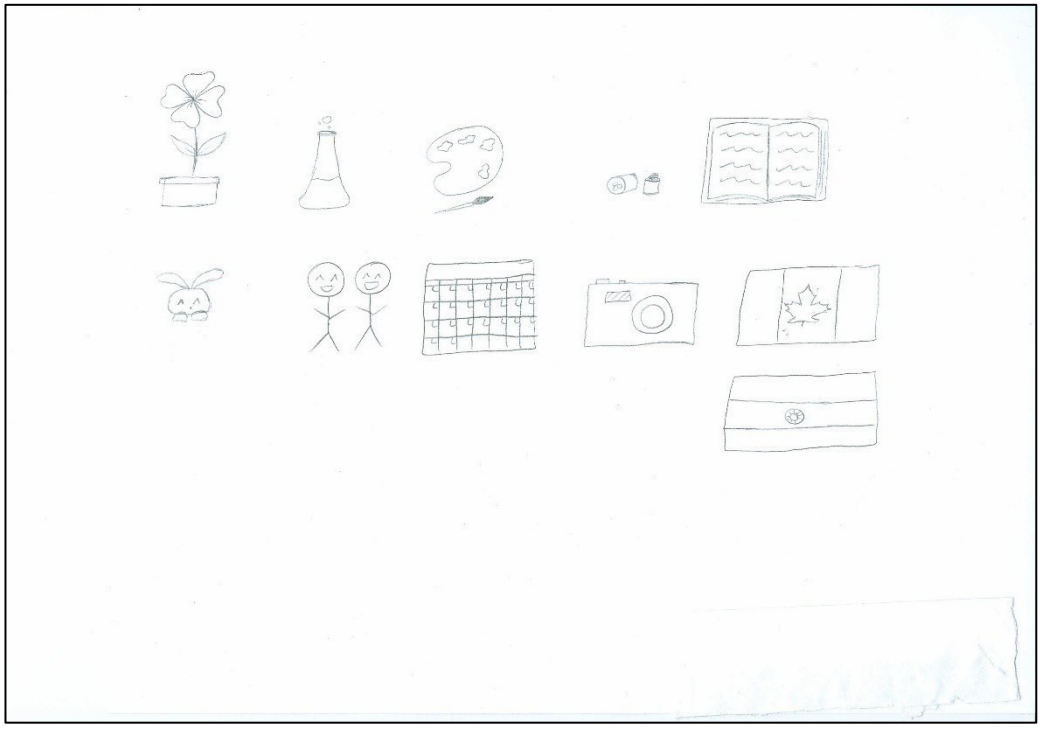
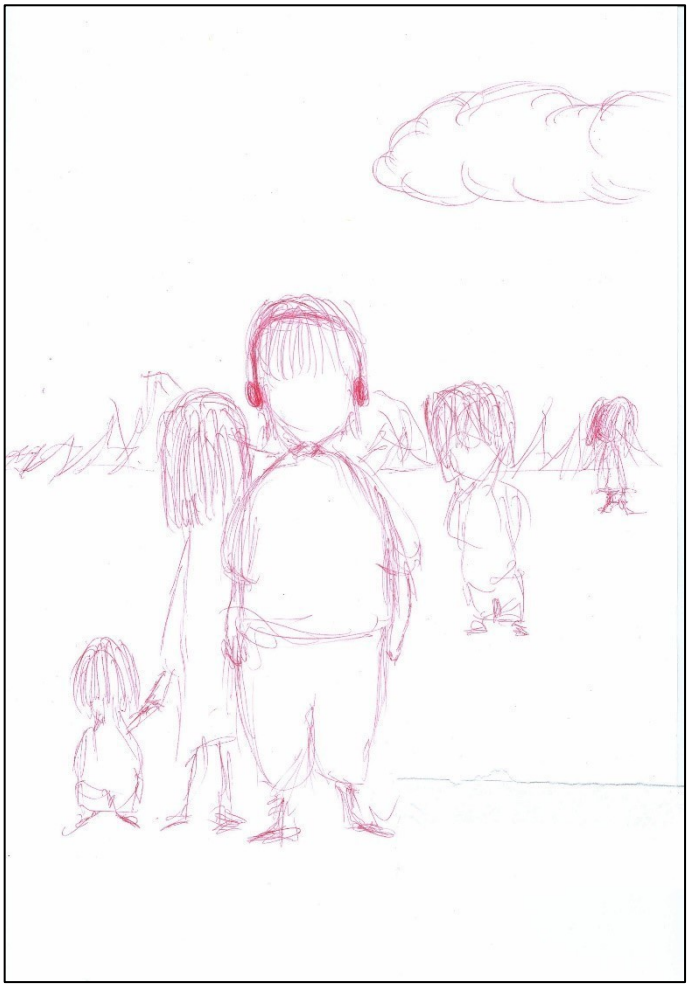
ANNEX I

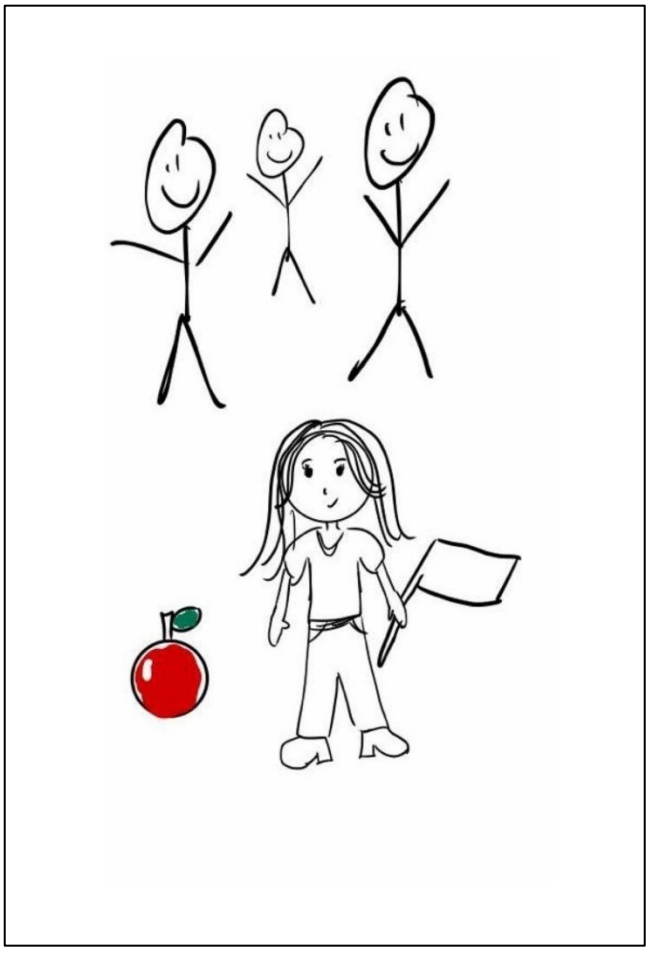


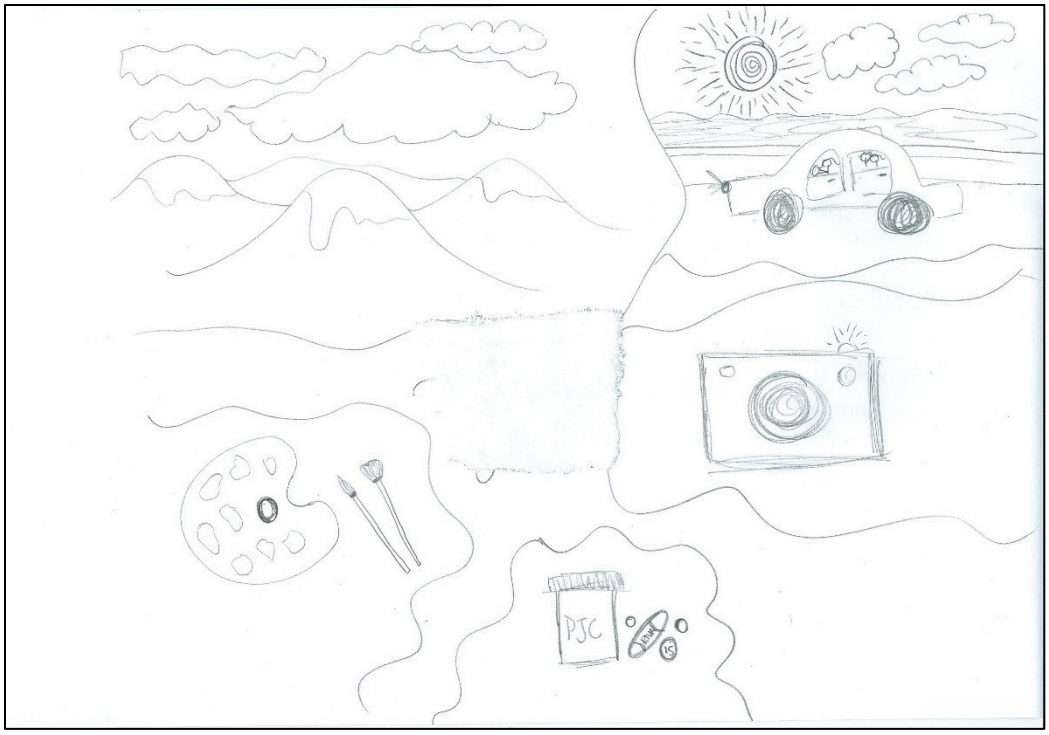








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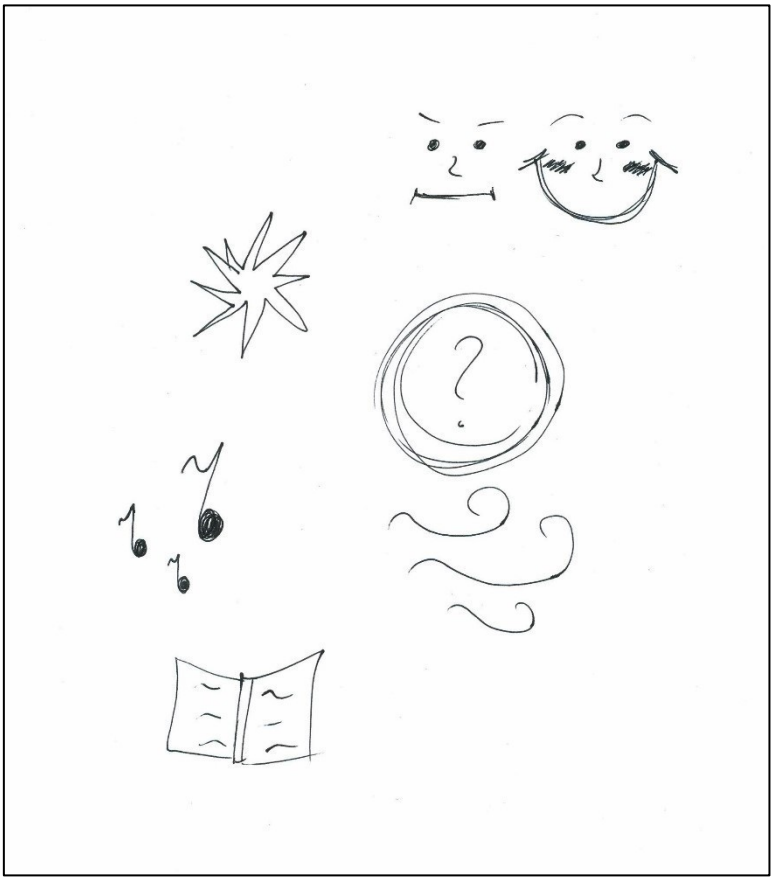

ANNEX II

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS LIST

Introduction

Please begin by telling me your name, age, what university you go to and your program of study.

Main questions

Cultural and Ethnic background

1. Can you tell me where your parents were born and where you were born?
2. Where did your family members grow up?
3. Do you know the story of how your parents came to Canada? Can you explain it to me? Did your family members ever told you why they immigrated to Montreal?
4. How you personally relate/how do you position yourself in relation to this immigration story?
5. Can you tell me about the different social spheres that you navigate in your daily life (sports, school, social, etc)?
6. Have you ever been asked the question "Where do you come from"? If so, how do you answer that question and how do you react when it is asked? If not, do you think there are specific reasons why you are not asked that question like other people might be?

Sense of Belonging and Identity

7. Can you tell me about how you built a sense of identity when you were growing up? What were some fundamental experiences for you?

8. Do you think your experience as a second-generation immigrant is different than that of a first or third generation immigrant? Why?

9. Can you tell me about how you perceive your sense of belonging? Do you feel like you belong somewhere in terms of geography and location?

10. Do you feel like your parents' and/or grandparents' sense of belonging affects yours?

11. Do you feel like you connect and/or relate to your parent's country of origin? How? Why?

12. Have you ever felt like you were "standing in between different cultures?" Do you think that this is a stereotype for second-generation immigrants?

13. Do you feel like you have experienced discrimination and/or racism in your life? If so, can you identify those instances and explain them more to me?

14. I read in the literature that some research shows how second-generation immigrants might benefit from certain advantages in their lives, for example in the education or economic sectors of society (Zhou and Gonzales 2019, p.8). Can you think of some advantages that you could have, from your position as a second-generation immigrant? Alternatively, are there some disadvantages that you can perceive from your experience? Can you compare your experience to the one of your parents, or other immigrants you know?

15. Do you feel a particular attachment to Montréal as a city? Can you describe it to me? How about the province of Québec or Canada? Do you perceive a difference between these attachments?

16. Do you believe that you are still building a sense of belonging? What about your identity?

17. Do you feel like your cultural heritage is an important part of your identity? How so?

Language

18. What languages do you speak and how do you perceive your level of competency in each of them?

19. Do you feel like the languages you speak influence how you navigate Montréal as a city in general?

20. What language do you generally speak when talking with your parents? And grandparents or other family members?

21. What do you think about the duality between Anglophones and Francophones in Montreal? Where do you position yourself in these conflicts?

22. Do you value bilingualism and multilingualism? Why?

23. Have you heard about Bill 96 that passed recently? Did you have time to look into the content of Bill 96? What do you think are the implications and impacts on immigrant communities?

24. In your opinion, what are the pros and cons of Bill 96?

25. Do you feel a certain connection between the language(s) you speak and your own identity?

26. Have you ever experienced yourself conflicts around the topic of language in your life? Can you describe them to me?

Nationalism

27. Do you see a difference between calling yourself a Québécois versus calling yourself a Canadian? Do you relate to both identities? How so?

28. Can you describe your level of attachment to Canada, Québec and Montréal?

29. Do you know about the Quebec Referendum of 1995? If you would have been asked to take a position on the issue of separation, what do you think would have been your answer?

30. Do you feel like second-generation young adults like yourself have a particular perspective regarding nationalism?

31. Do you think Canada is a good place for people to immigrate? Why?

32. Do you think of Canada as a nation? What about Québec, does it feel like a nation too?

33. Have you ever travelled to the country(ies) where your parents were born? If so, can you describe how that experience was? How old were you when you went?

34. Can you describe your level of attachment toward that country?

Political Affiliations

35. Can you tell me about some of your political ideologies? For instance, how do you feel about the current immigration policies in Quebec?

36. Are there political debates you feel more attracted to than others? Can you tell me what they are?

37. Do you feel like the political environment where your parents were born influences your political opinions today?

38. Do you keep up/are interested in following the political debates in your parents' country of origin? Do your parents and/or grandparents pay attention to that as well? Why?

39. Did you vote in the October 2022 elections? If you are comfortable talking about it, who did you vote for and why?

40. Did you see the map after the elections with the whole province in blue (CAQ) and Montréal in red and orange? How does that make you feel?

Conclusion

Are there some questions that you would like to ask the other participants? Some things you would like their opinions on, or things that you might also be asking yourself?

Are there other things you would like to mention or expand on before we finish?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS LIST

Introduction

I prepared an ice breaker activity for the participants.

It was a drawing exercise, which I explained like this:

Without using words, draw your identity. Try to show how you perceive your own identity, how you visualize it, how it feels, how you would describe it to someone else. Go with your gut, draw whatever you feel like drawing.

Once we are done, we will go in circle and show our drawings to each other.

(I did the exercise too).

Main questions

1- After your individual interview was done, is there anything that you reflected more on? Did something we talked about spark more questions for you?

2- Can you share with us some elements of your (parents) culture that you like and are meaningful to you? Are there some things that you don't like as much?

3- From your perspective, how can the immigrant experience be different for people of first, second and third-generation?

4- Can you think about things that you four could connect on, because you are second-generation immigrants?

5- What are some things in life that can invalidate, or validate, your identity and sense of belonging? Have you ever experienced those yourself? Might some of these be specific to the environment of Montréal?

6- Do you feel like your sense of belonging is fluid?

7- In your experience, do you think there are some advantages to being a second-generation immigrant? Can you reflect on how being a second-generation immigrant has impacted your life experience?

8- Have there ever been moments where people have been surprised to hear you speak French? Or English? Can you share this with us?

Feedback questions from analysis process

9- From going back to the individual interviews, I observe that all of you have similar opinions on the state of the French language in Québec. You all seem to understand the reasons why these policies (Bill 96) are in place, but you do not agree with how they are being implemented. Can you discuss further your opinions on this matter? Does your position as second-generation immigrants influence your opinions on this topic?

10- I also noticed that there seems to be a difference in the language used to talk about languages policies. Some people say we need to "defend" or "protect" French, while others say we need to "preserve" French. Can you expand on this? Do you think this means something more? What is your reaction to this?

11- Do you think that, to identify as a Québécois, you have to be white? How do you feel about this? How do you understand the concept of race within your identity and belonging to Québec?

12- Do you see it as your culture or your parents' culture? Or both?

13- How can we think about accessibility, especially regarding the opportunities of visiting your families' countries and interacting with relatives all over the world? What is the reality for you today?

14- In general, it seems easier to belong to the Canadian identity versus the Québecois identity. Why do you think that is?

15- Without my explicit mention, most of you have spoken about accents, in different manners, in your individual interviews. Why do you think accents surface like this when we spoke about language? Is there something meaningful about accents that impacts your experience in Montréal as a second-generation immigrant? Do accents play a particular role in your identity and sense of belonging?

16- From reading articles about second-generation immigration, I realized that it was a difficult concept to define. Even more, I found that researchers created concepts like the 1.5 and 2.5 generations, which can further describe different experience of immigration. Let me explain this to you, and we can discuss it together. How do all these labels make you feel? Do you think it is important to have the 1.5 and 2.5 concepts? To you, what is a second-generation immigrant? To which concept do you relate to the most?

17- Does being born somewhere else and coming to Canada at 5 years old, for example, make a difference? Does the age at which your parents immigrated make a difference? In this context, which factors do you think influence your identity and sense of belonging?

Questions they were curious to ask the other participants

18- Do you have stories to share about food?

19- Do your parents and/or family have a sense of community, particularly with people who were born in the same country as them?

20- Have you been able to find a sense of community for yourself? If so, what does that look like?

21- Are there stereotypes about your ethnicity that you had to live with? How was that for you?

22- Have you ever had trouble dealing with accents/languages in your life? How has this been for you?

23- Is school a strong focus in your family? Did your parents put pressure on you to study certain disciplines or to have good grades?