

The roles of government and non-governmental actors in settlement and integration in Québec

Research Report

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I. Introduction

Immigration to Canada is generally seen as a very positive phenomenon by the country and its people. Indeed, the country is faced with demographic dynamics such as a declining birth rate and an aging population that immigration is helping to counter. Canada has also seen the arrival of new people to its territory as a means of ensuring its economic, social and cultural development. The welcoming and integration of immigrants is therefore a real concern for institutions to ensure that newcomers feel comfortable in Canada and that the society as a whole benefits from their knowledge and skills. Canadian integration is often compared to a two-way street: on the one hand, Canada has resources to offer to immigrants so that they integrate and benefit from their new country, and on the other hand, Canada tries to adapt to these immigrants to learn from their experiences abroad and from their cultures, while simultaneously, ensuring they fully participate in the country's economic, social and civic life.

Many actors have different roles in these processes of welcoming and integrating immigrants to Canada. The federal government is obviously very involved in these areas, but provincial governments, municipalities and various non-governmental organizations are also engaged in the settlement of newcomers. Each province is more or less involved in welcoming and integrating immigrants on its territory, depending on its agreements with the federal government on this issue. Québec is the province that has gained the most control over settlement and integration, particularly as a result of the 1991 Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall Agreement, which is still in effect in 2020. These acquired powers enable Québec to be much more independent in the selection of immigrants arriving on its territory and in facilitating settlement and integration. This report attempts to describe the operation of this sector in the province of Québec in five main sections. The first contextualizes how immigration is influenced by the federal government in order to understand the overall national immigration and settlement system. Second, we look at Québec's positioning in this Canadian context. Third, we examine how Québec's immigrant integration system is structured, and then we dedicate a fourth stage to exploring the interests of the community sector in immigrant integration and the ongoing dialogue between the Québec government and non-profit immigrant-serving organizations. Finally, we outline current key trends that are likely to influence the future dynamics of integration in Québec, within the context of reforms and other new measures being implemented by the provincial government.

II. Methodology

This document was developed to better understand how immigrants are welcomed and settled in the province of Québec. It therefore provides an overview of the various players in settlement and integration and attempts to explain the role of each in this process. We have endeavoured to document and gather relevant information

in order to gain an overall understanding of the organization of immigration in Canada, and that of the integration sector in Québec. We were able to draw on three main types of documents: policy documents and government reports, academic research, and reports and resources from the community sector. The policy documents and reports were derived from the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Integration website and gave us the Québec government's vision concerning immigration and the problems related to the reception and integration of newcomers in the province. The documents from the academic community were mainly collected on the Internet, via the University of York's online library and Google Scholar. Some documents were also sent to us directly by researchers who have worked on the subject or on a related theme. We were also able to obtain documentation from specific immigrant-serving organizations, via their websites and by key informant interviews with their members and participants in the BMRC-IRMU research partnership. The key informant interviews are a crucial component of the research. They deepened our understanding of immigration in the province and provided valuable information about the future dynamics of the sector. The interviews provided information on the concrete application of government measures, on the general context in which the various players are working, and gave us clues as to the future of settlement and integration in response to reforms and new developments in the province's policies regarding immigration and integration.

III. Immigration in Canada

1. Different types of immigration status

There are two main categories of status for newcomers to Canada: permanent status and temporary status. As we will see in the next section that focuses on the services which welcome and integrate immigrants, some statuses allow for more rights and, above all, more assistance than others. It is therefore important to keep in mind the different statuses to appreciate issues of eligibility for reception and integration services.

Permanent residents include economic immigrants who have obtained permanent residence in Québec. Permanent economic immigrants are selected from abroad through various provincial or federal government programs. Some may also obtain permanent resident status after arriving in Canada with temporary status and apply for permanent residence once they are here (so-called two-step immigration).

The permanent resident class also includes refugees in Canada. Again, two types of refugee status can be distinguished, depending on who sponsors individuals or families seeking refugee status in Canada. When the federal government decides to sponsor a refugee or refugee family, it provides them with certain services and assistance necessary for their settlement and successful integration into Canadian

society. A private group may also decide to sponsor a refugee or refugee family to settle in Canada. In this case, the sponsoring group will make a commitment to the government to provide material and financial support to the refugees in its care for one year. The case of private sponsorship was particularly important in late 2015 and in 2016 for the reception of refugees fleeing the war in Syria. The private groups that sponsored families at that time were very often religious groups, such as the Churches of Orient, which might already have known some families in difficulty in Syria and decided to help them come to Canada (Interview 6).

The last situation in which permanent resident status can be obtained is in the case of family reunification. There are several types of family reunification programs for Canada based on the family relationship between the person already residing in Canada and the person wishing to come to Canada. In all cases, it is a form of sponsorship where, in the same spirit as for privately sponsored refugees, the sponsor makes an undertaking to the government to perform a number of functions, including providing material and financial assistance to the person they wish to bring to Canada.

The following table summarizes the number and proportions of each type of permanent immigrant who arrived in Canada in 2017¹:

TABLE 1 : DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS GRANTED PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN CANADA BY STATUS (2017)

Category	Number	Percentage
Economic	159 257	55.6
Family reunification	82 463	28.8
Refugees and other protected persons	41 476	14.5
Others	3 275	1.1
Unspecified	5	0.0
Total	286 476	100.0

The other major category of migrants to Canada are those with **temporary status**, that is, people who are allowed to stay only a few months or a few years in Canada (without being considered tourists).

Among these people with temporary status are international students who come to fill the ranks of Canadian universities. Some of them will then apply for permanent resident status in order to work and settle permanently in Canada. However, as long

¹ 2018 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration

as they remain students their residence is temporary and is valid mainly for the duration of their studies.

Another large category of people with temporary status is temporary workers. This type of status can be divided into two types: an open temporary worker title, which allows the person to work for any employer (but the temporary worker must meet certain specific criteria), or a work permit attached to a given employer. The latter is linked to a job offer and lasts for the duration of the contract. The employer has a series of steps to follow in order to hire a foreign worker and allow him/her to obtain this type of visa. Some federal or provincial government programs facilitate this type of hiring, which has the advantage of blending well with specific needs of the labour market, especially for cheap low skilled work.

The last major category of temporary visas is for refugee claimants on Canadian soil. These claimants arrive in Canada in one way or another and assert their right to claim refugee status in the country. While their claim is being processed (from a few weeks to a few years), they have temporary status as refugee claimants. The aim of their application is to be able to obtain permanent refugee status. Not all receive permanent resident status, some will have their application refused and will be required to leave the country. The number of asylum seekers has risen sharply since Donald Trump made immigration and asylum 'reforms' in the United States in 2017 with several hundred people crossing the border into Québec every week to apply for asylum in Canada. Canadian immigration officers receive these asylum applications and send the applicants to Montreal where they are processed (Interview 6).

2. Immigration governance in Canada

For many years, the issue of immigration to Canada was of little interest to the provinces. The federal government, as a consequence, took charge of all aspects of immigrant selection and allocated immigrants to the various provinces without consulting the provinces very much. However, a series of developments changed this process and gave a greater role to the provinces, thus federalizing the immigration domain.

3. Federalism

In the period between World War II and the 1990s, the only province that had strong views about immigration to its territory was Québec. Several factors helped explain the lack of interest by other provinces in implementing their own measures to settle and integrate immigrants. The first was the fear that the cost would be high and second that public opinion within the province would not be favourable to moving into this area of policy jurisdiction.

This position shifted in the 1990s as the Canadian provinces sought to exercise more power over the issue of immigration and, in particular, over the selection of immigrants destined for each province. The provinces became aware that managing immigration in their territory could be a real economic asset, since newcomers could be selected based on provincial labour market needs. Indeed, these needs can vary greatly from one province to another, and the freedom to be able to adapt the selection of newcomers to the province's own needs is a real economic opportunity for the province. The Canadian immigration and settlement system since this time moved towards a much more federated system where each province has greater leeway in selecting immigrants and in organizing the delivery of settlement and integration services for immigrants in their territory. This change was such that the various provinces are now asserting their authority and challenging federal domination of immigration. The challenge has been led by Québec which has enjoyed an expanded immigration role since the 1970s and signed the Canada-Québec Accord in 1991 which laid out a distinct expansion of powers in this area for Québec. Although not as far reaching as the Québec agreement, each of the other provinces has signed its own agreement with the Government of Canada concerning immigration targets in its jurisdictions. The provinces have delegated some of their responsibilities for settlement and integration to other jurisdictions, such as cities, which will also tend to play a greater role today than in the past. The provinces retain some control over the measures taken by the cities since the latter are subordinate to the provinces. Nevertheless, municipalities can take more of a lead in settling immigrants in their territories.

The majority of agreements between the provinces and the federal government were signed between 2005 and 2010 to formalize an expanded role for these provinces in immigration. Previously, the federal government had control over the selection criteria for all newcomers as well as settlement and integration policies. Community-based organizations, however, have long been engaged in offering settlement and integration services funded by different levels of government. Under the various agreements, the federal government retains some control over the selection of immigrants, (particularly for family reunification and refugees) and gives the provinces more freedom to establish their own selection criteria for economic immigrants through provincial nominee programs.

4. Provincial Nominee Programs

In the transfer of some responsibility for selection of economic immigrants in Canada's provinces and territories other than Québec, "Provincial Nominee Programs" (or PNP) were implemented. These programs establish provincial selection criteria for potential newcomers that are intended to meet the labour market needs and population goals of each provinces. Once the list of criteria is established,

people living abroad and wishing to settle in a given province can apply through the PNPs. Their application is processed first by the province, which verifies whether the person corresponds to the criteria it has established and, if so, the province forwards the application to the federal government, which checks that the candidate is eligible to settle in Canada in terms of security, criminality, health, and other specified criteria. Once the two assessment phases have been successfully completed successfully, the candidate is granted the right to settle in the province and can obtain permanent residence in Canada.

Today, the number of immigrants arriving in Canada through PNP corresponds to about 20% of the total number of immigrants who obtain permanent residence each year (projections indicated that just over 60,000 people were admitted to these programs in 2019, out of the approximately 300,000 people who obtained permanent residence that year). The number is expected to increase. The provinces are comfortable with these programs and are prepared to make greater use of them.

IV. Québec and Immigration

As briefly mentioned in previous sections, Québec does not follow the same immigration trajectory as other Canadian provinces. As early as the 1970s, Québec decided to take greater control and supervision of immigration to its territory. Québec has had an active immigration policy long before the other provinces. As Jacques Robert points out in his article *L'intégration vue du Québec*,

"The possibility of a linguistic reversal plays an important role in the design and adoption of the various language legislations that make, among other things, French schooling the norm for all Québec children, whether native-born or immigrant, with the exception of those belonging to the English-speaking minority. It goes without saying, therefore, that in expanding its capacity to intervene in immigration matters, Québec has made it a key priority to ensure that newcomers settling in its territory integrate into Francophone society"².

In fact, the province has relied heavily on the integration of immigrants to maintain its Francophone society in a North American context dominated by the English language. Immigration works to prevent the Francophone community from becoming a minority in Québec. Acknowledging its linguistic singularity, the province promotes a selection and integration model that is different from neighbouring provinces that are predominantly Anglophone. In total, five agreements with the federal government have been signed by Québec, the first one in 1971 and the last one, the 1991 agreement, which is still in force today. The purpose of each agreement was to give

² Jacques Robert, *L'intégration vue du Québec*, 2005

greater autonomy to the Québec provincial government in the selection, recruitment, settlement and integration of newcomers. All these arrangements and powers were acquired by Québec in the name of protecting the specific linguistic and cultural characteristics of Québec society. Provincial politicians argued persuasively that the province required special status in the field of immigration policy in relation to other provinces.

These agreements clarified the provincial and federal governments' jurisdiction over immigration by allowing Québec greater autonomy within its territory. A detailed overview of the 1991 agreement is needed to understand how immigration in Québec is organized today.

1. 1991 Canada-Québec Accord

Still in effect in 2020, the 1991 Canada- Québec Accord on Immigration and Temporary Admission of the Aliens (also known as the Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall Accord) allows Québec to exercise real autonomy in the selection of a portion of immigrants, but also completely changes the way the settlement and integration of immigrants in Québec works. The agreement offers the most rights to Québec of any province in Canada and goes much further in the freedom of management granted to a province than any other agreement currently in force.

The 1991 Agreement gives Québec the opportunity to be the sole authority responsible for selecting economic immigrants who apply for permanent residence in Québec. Canada therefore undertakes to agree to issue rights of permanent residence to any immigrants who meet the criteria established by Québec, subject as always to non-eligibility (someone with a terrorist background or with health problems may still be refused entry). It is also stipulated in the agreement that Canada cannot admit an immigrant to Québec if he/she does not meet the selection criteria established by Québec. Québec, therefore, has real control over selection of economic immigrants and therefore does not need to put in place programs such as PNPs to recruit the workers it needs.

WITH RESPECT TO REFUGEES, QUÉBEC ALSO HAS THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN SELECTION CRITERIA, WHICH CANADA MUST RESPECT. IN FACT, CANADA MUST ADMIT REFUGEES DESTINED FOR QUÉBEC WHO MEET QUÉBEC'S ADMISSION CRITERIA, WITHOUT HAVING TO AGREE WITH CANADA'S CRITERIA. CANADA MAY ALSO NOT ADMIT A REFUGEE TO QUÉBEC IF HE OR SHE DOES NOT MEET QUÉBEC'S SELECTION CRITERIA, UNLESS THE REFUGEE IS ALREADY IN QUÉBEC.

QUÉBEC IS THEREFORE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SELECTION OF THESE TWO MAJOR CATEGORIES OF IMMIGRANTS WITH PERMANENT RESIDENCE STATUS AND HAS DOMINANT CONTROL OF DIRECT IMMIGRATION TO ITS TERRITORY. ONLY THE FAMILY

REUNIFICATION CLASS IS STILL CANADA'S RESPONSIBILITY, WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IMPOSING THE CRITERIA COMMON TO THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

BASED ON 2017 DATA, QUÉBEC ACCEPTED PER CAPITA SLIGHTLY FEWER IMMIGRANTS THAN THE REST OF CANADA, AS THE FIGURES FROM A REPORT BY THE MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION, DIVERSITY AND INTEGRATION FOR QUÉBEC DEMONSTRATE.

TABLE 2 : DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS WHO OBTAINED PERMANENT RESIDENCE IN QUÉBEC BY STATUS (2017)-

Category	Number	Percentage
Economic	159 257	55.6
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Others	3 275	1.1
Unspecified	5	0.0
Total	286 476	100.0

Québec received just under 19% of immigrants arriving in Canada in 2017, whereas its share of the population of Canada stood at 22.5%.

Beyond the selection of immigrants, this agreement revolutionized the organization of the settlement and integration sector for newcomers to Québec. Indeed, through this agreement, Canada disengaged itself from settlement, integration, specialized integration, and linguistic and cultural services for newcomers with permanent resident status in the province of Québec. All these services are provided by Québec, which takes charge of organizing the entire sector and has complete freedom in implementing policies on these issues. Canada still retains services related to citizenship, since there is no Québec citizenship, only universal Canadian citizenship, and continues to offer economic integration services it has established throughout Canadian territory.

The other distinctive aspect of settlement and integration in Québec's revolves around funding. Canada provides Québec with financial compensation for settlement and integration of immigrants, on very favourable terms. Initially intended to compensate the province for the costs of the settlement and integration services that the federal government provides in the other provinces and that are now the responsibility of the Québec provincial government, the agreement ensures funding increases annually regardless of the number of permanent residents admitted annually. The Government of Québec has total control over this annual funding. Consequently, Québec can set up all settlement and integration programs and

organize the entire sector as it wishes, while receiving substantial financial compensation from the federal government.

2. Québec's role in welcoming immigrants

This agreement between Canada and Québec clearly separated the roles of the two governments with respect to immigration in the province. It also sets out a series of commitments on the part of the Québec government, which are detailed in the various appendices and explain the latter's obligations, particularly with respect to welcoming, settling, and integrating immigrants in Québec.

With respect to the services to be provided by Québec, it is detailed in the appendices of the agreement that the province must ensure that immigrants have access to a "referral service to the competent authorities likely to meet their needs", which corresponds to a first referral service. The provincial government must also "provide an advisory service to accelerate their integration" (1991 Canada-Québec Accord, Annex A). These two types of services relate to the short- and medium-term settlement of immigrants in Québec and are intended to ensure newcomers can find the resources they need as soon as they arrive. The first referral service and advisory service provide immigrants them with referrals to services that they can turn to if they need them and prevent them from feeling left to their own devices once they arrive in Québec.

Québec has an obligation to help newcomers integrate into the Québec labour market, even though, as we saw earlier, the federal government continues to offer some economic integration services. Assistance for labour market integration is accompanied by temporary financial assistance to those most in need. Th financial assistance is designed to ensure that all newcomers will be able to achieve long-term financial self-sufficiency by access to financial support while they search for a job and learn French. Immigrants' primary needs can be covered through the financial assistance to the disadvantaged.

The Government of Québec's other commitment on immigration is the linguistic element. The province is to provide immigrants with the necessary means to learn French and help them become familiar with Québec society. Knowledge of Québec society is based on the notion of the values of Québec society and democratic values that are now taught in part before immigrants arrive on Québec soil.

The measures mentioned in the agreement therefore haves an impact on various Québec government departments since the issues addressed are cross-cutting. The *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion* (MIDI) is obviously the one most concerned with these responsibilities acquired by Québec since is in charge of the entire system of welcome, orientation and integration of newcomers. Other ministries such as the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity and the

Ministry of Education and Higher Education have also been actively involved. These two ministries, together with MIDI, established programmes aimed specifically at immigrants to help them integrate into the labour market (for the Ministry of Labour) and to offer a coherent pedagogy that facilitates francization (for the Ministry of Education)³.

V. The organization of settlement and integration services in Québec

Once they arrive in Canada and Québec, newcomers are able to benefit from various settlement and integration services that are provided by several types of structures depending on the services in question. Among the structures that can be cited as providers of settlement and integration services are community organizations, public institutions, municipalities and other organizations such as religious groups, which offer supports informally to immigrants.

1. Community action in Québec

Autonomous community action began to develop in Québec in the 1960s, when certain recreational and non-profit organizations were formed to meet the needs of some underprivileged citizens. These organizations sought to promote participation and collective action around mutual aid and solidarity while helping to expand Québec's social and economic sphere. The structures have grown in size and have multiplied throughout the province. They play a distinctive role in Québec society since they are not dependent on the state or union groups.

In the 1980s, the government gradually disengaged itself from several sectors, which was conducive to the development of community organizations on many different themes such as education, information, health, work and the environment. These organizations then became more and more important, to the point that the Québec government started calling on them to provide services that it was not providing. In fact, the services provided by these organizations are seen as "less expensive, more flexible and better adapted to the new needs" of immigrants (Interview). The government built a relationship with the community organizations in Québec that enabled many to work in a complementary manner with the government.

Given its social commitment and the promotion of values such as solidarity, some community organizations have become involved in providing services to immigrants. Although involved in these matters for many years, the Québec government does not see organizations as real independent partners, but rather as structures that can complement the services offered by public action. In fact, Stephan Reichhold,

³ Vers une nouvelle politique québécoise en matière d'immigration, de diversité et d'inclusion, 2015

Director of *La Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes* (TCRI), an umbrella organization representing immigrant-serving agencies, reports that

"Considering organizations as autonomous partners rather than service providers in the extension of public action is not yet a given, nor is it fully integrated into government practice. In reality, the community sector provides real integration support to immigrants who want it, with offers that are often much more adapted to what newcomers are looking for than what public institutions offer. Indeed, many of the programs offered by government agencies are too rigid or do not promote individual follow-up and are therefore not necessarily adapted to the needs and expectations of immigrants. From this point of view, community organizations are much more flexible with care regardless of status, which is not the case with public institutions, which sort a lot according to eligibility criteria and by considering the personal situations of the people they help".

The goal of the immigrant-serving organizations is to implement services that will compensate for shortcomings in institutional responses and enable all newcomers to receive appropriate assistance in integrating and defending their rights, regardless of their status.

Although they are quite distinct from the state, community organizations create partnerships with governments, which fund certain organizations offering settlement and integration services. The government can thus choose to withdraw from the provision of direct services for newcomers and can decide to fund organizations whose mission complements its own policy goals. In this way, government funding may help community organizations in their missions and provides them with some financial support. The organizations generally have broader missions than those for which the state mandates them and have therefore found other sources of funding for some of their work. They are also required to work for several government departments at the same time, since they deal with many cross-cutting issues. This is the case, for instance, for organizations that work simultaneously with the *Secrétariat à la condition féminine* and the *Ministère de la Famille du Québec* when they offer help to vulnerable women and children (Interview 5).

Now that we have introduced the community sector, we will look in more detail at the distribution of the supply of settlement and integration services for newcomers to Canada. Who provides what services? In the regions of English-speaking Canada, the settlement and integration sector may appear to be better organized. Indeed, the equivalent community organizations generally provide a wide range of services and receive funding from the federal government and provincial governments. Immigrant-Serving Agencies (ISAs) provide orientation services, job placement assistance, housing assistance, etc. In Québec, no single organization provides all the

integration services that immigrants need. There is a set of complementary organizations, some of which provide language courses, others help with labour market integration, and others provide orientation services for immigrants. It is therefore necessary to separate the types of services in order to understand which organizations provide which service.

2. Orientation

Orientation services are essential for newcomers, who need prompt and current advice about administrative procedures, finding housing, etc. It is therefore one of the first services that people need to ensure that their arrival is as smooth as possible. For most newcomers, it is also usually their first contact with a service provider.

The management of orientation services has varied in recent years. A few years ago, the Government of Québec was responsible for providing this type of service. At that time, officials from the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion were responsible for receiving newcomers, taking stock of their situation and advising them on the organizations that they should contact. This reception and orientation service for newcomers was also done by community organizations, particularly in cases where immigrants were not eligible for government services. Since 2012, Québec has decided to withdraw from direct orientation services and has therefore left it to community organizations to do this work alone (Interview 5).

3. Francization

The francization of newcomers is undoubtedly seen by the Québec government as one of the most important, if not the most important, elements of integration. The preservation of the French language in the province has been one of the major issues that Québec's policies have attempted to address. The provincial government wants to francize immigrants to allow the French language to remain the majority language in Québec and thus ensure its sustainability.

A few years ago, state-run *Centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants* (COFIs) provided francization services for all newcomers. Today, these centres have been abolished and other organizations, such as educational institutions and community organizations, are helping with francization (Interview 4). These structures are overseen by the *Direction Générale de la Francisation*, which is part of the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI). In addition to the institutions linked to the *Direction Générale de la Francisation*, school boards "give French courses to immigrants, some after agreement with the MIDI, others on their

own initiative," since they may have adult education and training activities that include language training.

In order to enable immigrants to learn French more effectively and to save money on the francization component, the government has also introduced measures to francize immigrants before they leave their places of origin for Canada. More than the other provinces, Québec also focuses on selecting French-speaking immigrants who do not need training in the French language. With respect to learning French abroad, Québec relies on partner training networks such as the *Alliances Françaises*, French cultural centres and other French institutes that have a strong presence in foreign countries where Québec recruits. It also set up online French language learning courses so that future immigrants can learn the basics of the language and improve their skills if they already have some knowledge of French. The online French courses are generally free and accessible to all people once they have received confirmation that they have been selected for immigration to Québec.

Elementary and secondary schools also important roles in francization, not for adult immigrants, but for children of newly arrived families. Supports for learning French have been put in place by the schools and make it possible to have courses that are better adapted to the students' level of French. Thus, depending on the means put in place and the children's needs, they can have classes designed to support French-language acquisition arranged with different degrees of integration into regular classes. Students may have all their classes outside regular classes, part of their classes in regular classes and part in support classes, or all their classes in regular classes with support in French in addition to the classes. With respect to eligibility, francization services are available to all immigrants, whether or not they have permanent resident status. The goal of making this service eligible to everyone is to ensure that the French language remains the language most used on a daily basis by residents of Québec.

4. Labour market integration

Labour market integration is a service that is not under the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion but rather under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The services provided by the state depends mainly on the length of time people have been in Québec. The role of *Emploi Québec*, which is a unit of the Ministry of Employment, is to help Québec citizens in their job searches when they are unemployed or wish to take training courses with a view to reskilling. *Emploi Québec* therefore is able to assist some immigrants in their employment goals, but the eligibility conditions are quite strict, since only those who have already worked for more than 12 months are eligible for its services.

Labour market integration issues also affect refugees and persons accompanying economic immigrants, who may or may not have a job offer in hand when they arrive in Canada. Principal applicants who are economic class immigrants may also find themselves without jobs or with a desire to move to a different sector of work and will therefore require labour market integration assistance.

Emploi Québec can set up special programs geared to a target population that become a settlement and integration service for newcomers when they are part of the target population. Some of these programs may even be funded by MIDI in the case of inter-ministerial agreements between MIDI and the Ministry of Employment. These programs generally focus on the general employability of participants with workshops about the structure of the world of work in Québec, training workshops and others concerning resumé-writing and preparation for job interviews.

The bulk of these types of services are offered by community organizations that aim to enable immigrants to access jobs quickly so that they can have an income and become self-sufficient. Professional accreditation and skills recognition remain thorny issues for employment-related services. In general, foreign diplomas and the international work experiences of newcomers are not valued in the labour market in the same way as Québec diplomas and work experiences. Anxious to get a job as soon as possible, newcomers are often not in a position to demand better employment, commensurate with their qualifications, skills, and experience. Many accept the first job that is offered, even if it does not value their knowledge, experience and skills. Given their weak position in the labour market, newcomers have little power to negotiate compared to the power of the employer.

5. Housing assistance

Housing support services vary depending on the vulnerability and age of immigrants. Québec has social housing for which the most disadvantaged are eligible and where people with low incomes find low-cost housing provided through the *Régie du logement du Québec*. With low-cost housing units located throughout Québec, such social housing is crucial for immigrants arriving in Québec territory with few financial resources, for example, many admitted as refugees. Eligibility for social housing units is based mainly on household income. Applicants must have incomes below a certain threshold or demonstrate they are at risk of losing their housing. For newcomers, many social housing units are out of reach. The units are available only to applicants for social housing who have lived in Québec for 12 months in the last two years. Newcomers who have not lived in the territory recently are therefore ineligible for most social housing. There is no government organization to help link newcomers and rental housing in the private market. To access this type of service, immigrants therefore turn to community organizations that will refer them to the appropriate landlords or help them find housing quickly.

For immigrants arriving in Québec with privately sponsored refugee status, housing solutions must be proposed by the sponsor. The sponsor must then act as guarantor for the family he or she is sponsoring and ensure that the family is able to pay its rent properly. In most cases, privately sponsored refugee families already have housing when they arrive in Canada, secured by the sponsoring person or organization prior to their arrival.

6. Health system

Québec's health system revolves around the provincial health insurance card, which allows partial or full reimbursement of care depending on its nature. The card has a central role in the Québec health system since the costs of access to care are extremely high for uninsured patients. All immigrants arriving with permanent resident status have access to a health insurance card, as well as all immigrants with temporary status, with the exception of those seeking asylum on Québec soil. For asylum seekers, the federal government pays for limited health care⁴ while their application for asylum is being processed. If they are granted asylum, applicants receive permanent residence and have access to provincial health insurance. In addition to asylum seekers, people with temporary visas sometimes have only partial access to provincial health insurance and find themselves in precarious situations with regard to medical care. In addition to helping newcomers obtain their health insurance cards that are the key to medical services, some community organizations help people with precarious status, mainly asylum seekers, to access medical care. These organizations may offer partial funding for care and refer people who do not have health insurance to organizations such as *Médecins du Monde* that provide limited and basic care to people with precarious status by relying on volunteer medical staff and donations. Medical staff can also be of great help in seeking out a cooperative specialist who will help people who need more specialized care. The community organizations also campaign actively to improve eligibility for provincial health insurance and extend affordable care to all newcomers regardless of their immigration status. Generally speaking, since there are no public government services for migrants with precarious status, unless they are able to get support from community organizations, they end up paying for the care they need, despite the high costs involved or going without.

7. Role of cities

⁴ Interim Federal Health Program: Summary of coverage

Québec and Canada signed various intergovernmental agreements between 1971 and 1991, as we have seen. Although these agreements redistribute the powers and responsibilities in the area of immigrant integration, none of them provide for the formal transfer of any of these powers to local governments. The settlement and integration of newcomers does, however, concern municipalities, since immigration is an urban phenomenon. The 1991 agreement clearly separated federal and provincial jurisdictions without considering the impact that municipal governments could have on settlement and integration. Nevertheless, between the 1990s and today, local governments have taken on more and more responsibilities by trying to include immigrants in public consultations, promoting the value of immigration and ethnic plurality within municipalities, and in a few instances by offering services to newcomers. Although each city has the same room to manoeuvre under provincial and federal legislation, the various municipalities have not taken ownership of the immigration issue in the same way.

Municipalities have always played a role in the integration of immigrants since the municipal government is closest to immigrants daily lives. Municipalities intervene in several areas such as social housing, transportation, police services, sports clubs, recreation and even health and social services. However, the fact that local governments have any real decision-making power concerning welcoming, settling, and integrating newcomers is fairly new. Some municipalities promote the intercultural nature of Québec's cities. They have put in place a number of measures to make local communities more welcoming to immigrants and to make their cities areas attractive places for newcomers to settle (Interview 3).

The municipalities rely on other organizations to provide services for immigrants. Municipalities provide few services directly. Examples include public transportation services that are contracted to private companies rather than managed directly by the city council and after-school childcare services that are often provided by community organizations rather than municipal departments and employees. In this context, it is not always easy for municipalities that want to be more inclusive to take manage services.

In Québec, the city of Montréal stands out for its efforts to welcome immigrants. Home to nearly 70% of new arrivals in Québec, the city has had to take special measures to ensure the reception, settlement, and integration of immigrants. The city therefore created the *Bureau d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montréal* (BINAM), a specialized office that deals with the issue of immigration in Montreal. BINAM has launched *Montréal, nouveau départ*, a Web site for newcomers that provides a single-entry point to all information and services, as well as contact information for relevant organizations. To facilitate newcomers' integration, the city develops strategies to improve the reception, settlement, and economic and social integration of immigrants and to coordinate integration services in the Montréal metropolis. Other municipal departments such as the Diversity and Social Inclusion

Service, the Ecological Transition and Resilience Office and the Culture Service may also be involved directly and indirectly in the process of immigrant integration.

The City of Montréal has also implemented policies that promote comprehensive action on immigration in the city. These policies include making Montréal a "sanctuary city". All municipal public services are supposed to be accessible to immigrants and undocumented migrants regardless of their status. The City of Montréal has also been granted metropolitan status, which modified its legal framework so that it has more influence on specific economic and social decisions. For example, the municipality has more power to intervene on housing and land use planning as well as services to facilitate the settlement and integration of newcomers, but always within the constraints imposed by the provincial government.

8. Other actors in settlement and integration in Québec

As we have just seen, the federal, provincial and municipal governments were the first to put in place measures to enable the integration of immigrants in Québec. These government agencies, along with community organizations that provide services often funded by one or more levels of government, take care of the so-called "formal" settlement and integration services for immigrants. There are, however, so-called "informal" services that state authorities do not control, but which are just as important to many newcomers. The most telling example of this type of informal service is often provided by religious organizations, that welcome newcomers who are believers into their communities. Religious organizations do not receive public funding, at least from the provincial and federal governments, and are therefore not required to follow their eligibility rules. Religious organizations are an interesting example since they are not concerned about the official immigration status of the people they serve. Like community organizations, they generally advance the values of solidarity and mutual aid and therefore do not concern themselves with the type of visa held by people who come to attend worship ceremonies and other activities. Many refugees also are sponsored by religious groups who take on the responsibility for ensuring that refugees' basic needs are met and attempt to ensure that their integration goes smoothly. However, refugees are not the only ones to benefit from the assistance of religious organizations, since the services offered to sponsored refugees can also be set up for other newcomers in need (Interview 6).

Religious groups thus play a role in social integration and moral support for migrants. Sharing a common culture and/or language is a real factor in the integration for newcomers entering a community. If we take the example of churches, we notice that a multitude of parishes have been formed in Québec, and particularly in Montréal, with diverse and distinct orientations. When an immigrant arrives in the province, he or she will be able to find a religious community similar to the one he or she frequented formerly and will find an environment with which he or she is already familiar. Some of these religious communities will even celebrate worship in a

language other than French or English, which further fosters some newcomers' sense of belonging to a community. Mixing with people who speak their first language, newcomers are likely to begin to forge social ties. They are also able to meet people who have had similar experiences and who may be able to provide them with advice and moral support in difficult times. The social integration of immigrants is one of the aspects over which the state has few levers, unlike religious groups that are often very effective in bringing a community together to support people who share the same cultural background.

These religious groups can also have an impact on the economic integration of immigrants. It is not uncommon to see classified advertisements of various kinds in religious buildings that help some newcomers find temporary work. The community network is also a very important element for the economic integration of newcomers. People who have been settled for some time know a wider range of people and can put the newcomer in touch with people who might help them find work related to the immigrant's skills, qualifications, and experience (Interview 6).

Finally, some religious groups may even help immigrants prior to their departure for Québec, sharing the experiences of their members to inform those planning to settle in the province. One can even find former residents of Québec who are now part of these communities abroad and who help future immigrants prepare to immigrate, by offering basic French courses and introducing Québec society. This assistance can be invaluable because it informs people about what awaits them once they arrive in Québec. Pastors/priests and other religious persons can also write to their Québec counterparts to ensure that immigrants are welcomed in their future parish or religious community. These initiatives smooth the transition between places and reassure immigrants that they will be welcomed in Québec (Interview 6).

VI. Advocating for the interests of the community sector

As we have seen in the previous section, the Community sector is very active in the provision of settlement and integration services, but it does not make policy decisions about these services. Community organizations engage in policy formation by advocating with all levels of government, but especially the provincial government in Québec. There is a history of Québec governments meaningfully consulting with the community sector regarding policy. Through consultation with government officials and direct support of reforms, community organizations help shape policy.

1. TCRI and dialogue with the state

The *Table de Concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes* (TCRI) is an umbrella community organization representing immigrant-serving agencies in Québec. Like other consultation tables in Québec, the TCRI's goal is to bring together organizations in the sector so that they can coordinate and collaborate with each other and have a more powerful voice with all levels of government. The members of the TCRI include more than a hundred community organizations working on the settlement and integration of immigrants, refugees and non-status persons in Québec with diverse mandates. Some are involved in employment assistance, French language training, newcomer orientation, etc. but they all have in common the fact that they work in the interests of immigrants. The TCRI helps structure and bring more coherence among its various member organizations.

As may be the case in other provinces, OCASI in Ontario for example, the role of the TCRI is to represent the community organizations that are members in dealings with government, mainly but not exclusively with the provincial government. The TRCI is mandated to represent member organizations, facilitate dialogue with the Québec government, and centralize the organizations' various demands. The TCRI is the Québec government's major interlocutor on the subject of immigration and newcomer integration (Interview 5). It also facilitates dealings with the media regarding immigration and integration issues.

The TCRI has a pivotal role in the reception, settlement and integration of immigrants since it is regularly consulted by the government when they attempt to implement new programmes or measures. The TCRI is able to intervene to point out inconsistencies and help modify programs under development. It is also responsible for assisting in negotiating contracts between MIDI and the community organizations involved in providing settlement and integration services. For all the member organizations of the TCRI, dialogue with the state takes place through the TCRI. TCRI is responsible for representing its members in the media and in consultations with the MIDI to ensure that their ideas are considered in governments policy

decisions. However, not all immigration-related community organizations are members of TCRI. Organizations outside the round table do not have the same tools to dialogue with the MIDI. Agencies outside the TCRI therefore try to make themselves heard through interventions in the media, by meeting with members of the MIDI, by trying to participate in parliamentary committees and by forging links with political decision-makers in a more informal framework than that of the TCRI. Although these dialogues with political decision-makers generally lack the influence on policy that the TCEI possesses, they are useful for identifying problems with programs and policies (Interview 5).

2. Principles of agency funding

To understand how community organizations providing immigrant settlement and integration services are funded, we must first look at the funding received by the province of Québec from Ottawa. As set out in the 1991 Canada-Québec Accord, the federal government transfers funds to the Québec government each year to compensate for the province for providing the settlement and integration services that the Québec government has taken over from the federal government and that the federal government funds in other provinces. This financial transfer goes into the Québec government's finances and it can then be redistributed among the various Québec government departments involved in immigration so that they can develop their own programs. The Government of Québec is not obliged to use all the money it receives from the federal government solely for immigrants' selection, settlement and integration.

Québec government departments make funding agreements with community organizations for delivery of a specific service. For example, a department gives a specified amount of money in exchange for the francization of a given number of people. The funds enable the organization to provide specific settlement and integration services to newcomers. Organizations that work with the state receive funding from the government, and other community organizations, without contracts with the ministry, do not receive any government funds. For its members, the organizations that are part of the roundtable, TCRI negotiates contracts with the government, so that each organization does not have to negotiate separately (Interview 5).

Many funding programs tend to renew from one year to the next, with or without contract renegotiation, which tends to widen the gap between community organizations receiving government funding and those that do not. Those that are funded will thus be much more financially stable and better organized, since they are virtually guaranteed to receive money every year. Conversely, organizations that do not receive state funding are in a more precarious situation and tend to rely much more on volunteers over paid staff (Interview 8).

When organizations are not funded by contracts with the provincial government, they rely on donations and other private sources to fund their activities. Research money, donations from private individuals, and money donated by unions that advocate for workers' rights may fund an organization that focuses on helping immigrants with skill recognition and with finding employment. This funding tends to be very ad hoc and provides no security or guarantee about future funding. State-sponsored organizations also rely on this type of funding for activities other than those mandated by the state. Many community organizations have missions broader than the ones they are mandated by the state to carry out, and rely on private funding for some of their activities (Interview 8).

In 2019, the TCRI was negotiating with the government for an agreement that will fund an expanded mission for its member organizations. This type of funding is already in place in other sectors such as health where some community organizations receive funding that reflects the contribution that these organizations make to Québec society as well as their specific activities. This funding reflects a recognition by the Government of Québec for the broader contributions of community organizations. Such funding would allow organizations to have a certain autonomy and greater leeway in carrying out their mission since they are less obliged to follow standardized programs in order to receive funding. However, the funding of organizations will be based on a judgment of their contribution by the Québec government. Such judgements by government can be influenced by politics rather than a simple neutral assessment of the societal contribution of organizations. This type of funding already exists for organizations providing settlement and integration services but remains very marginal, which is why TCRI is seeking to enhance its size and scope.

3. The social economy

The notion of social economy has evolved in Québec, and the line between organizations that are part of the social economy and those that are not is quite blurred today. The social economy was first defined as "all collective enterprises that produce goods and services with a social and not purely economic return, and that are organized around five principles: social purpose, management autonomy from the state, democratic functioning, primacy of people, and work over capital and participation, individual and collective responsibility and empowerment"⁵. This therefore includes *mutuels*, cooperatives and non-profit organizations of which community organizations are a part. There was deviation from this definition following the creation of the Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action (SACA) and the *Chantier d'Economie sociale*, which created a divide between social economy

⁵ Martine D'Amours, *Economie sociale au Québec, vers un clivage entre entreprises collective et action communautaire*

enterprises and community organizations. The definition is now more market-oriented, since the social economy is so closely tied to social enterprises, which are located in the market sector and have an entrepreneurial character albeit based on a social purpose. *Mutuels* and cooperatives are also included in this definition of the social economy. This new vision of the social economy contrasts with the definition of the "social economy" found in Anglo American democracies, which combines all non-profit organisations (such as sports clubs, religious groups, associations, immigrant integration organizations, etc.) and non-profit public institutions (such as hospitals and universities) with social economy enterprises.

The definitions highlight several understandings of social economy. The first understanding of social economy is the non-market social economy, which includes community organizations that are solely focused on social development, and which operate largely through the use of voluntary labour. The second corresponds to the market social economy, which includes collective enterprises that create jobs while maintaining a social development mission for its employees or other people. These are generally referred to as social economy enterprises. Finally, the third understanding of social economy is the competitive social economy, which includes co-operatives, particularly those affected by globalization, such as agricultural co-operatives.

TCRI, and community organizations in general, do not feel part of the prevailing notion of social economy in Quebec that emphasizes its links to the economy. Although the organizations are producers of social services with a base of salaried and waged workers, they see themselves more as agents of social development rather than economic development.

4. Future dynamics

Now that we have been able to see how settlement and integration services in Québec are organized and the interactions that can take place between the government and community organizations, we will consider the future dynamics of the sector.

5. New immigration reform

The Auditor General of Québec, a body responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the programs put in place by the various governments, published a report on the year 2017-2018 concerning the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI). This report questioned a number of the policies and programs implemented by the MIDI and proposed improvements to make its programs more effective.

Although not all the recommendations have been followed by the Ministry, this report did raise some major questions about the functioning of the immigrant settlement and integration services. Reforms are being initiated in response to the Auditor General of Québec's report.

The report raises concerns about the francization of immigrants. Francization is the only aspect of integration for which the Québec state has a real dominance in terms of provision. The report mentions concerns about the monitoring of immigrants, particularly with respect to French language training. In fact, as the report notes,

"MIDI does not follow up individually with immigrants who have declared that they do not know French and who have not participated in the Ministry's 'newcomer' courses, which makes it impossible to trace the absences of some of them from French courses. Follow-up of immigrants is also deficient when it comes to ensuring that a person who has taken all the recommended hours of classes has a sufficient level of language to be autonomous in that language."

The report also states that there are no time slots for pedagogical support or "time slots for teacher availability for recuperation", which immigrants could use to work on aspects they may not have understood or to supplement the courses they have already received.

In response to the report, the government attempted to put in place a number of measures to address the Auditor General of Québec's concerns. Reform was beginning to be implemented in 2019. The MIDI will implement a plan for each new immigrant who will be assigned to a government employee upon arrival who will be a contact person. The contact person will be responsible for staying in touch with the immigrant for some period of time to know more about the services used by the newcomer and ensure that each immigrant completes required French courses. The program will also allow each immigrant to have a single person whom they can contact about their questions and concerns. By building a relationship between the contact person and the immigrant, it is hoped that each immigrant will find it easier to raise concerns with someone who will already be familiar with their situation and their familiarity with each other will help the contact knowledgeably advise newcomers (Interview 3).

In 2012, the Government of Québec devolved responsibility for service delivery for many settlement and integration services other than language training to community organizations. In its new reforms, the Government of Québec plans to reassert control over these services by creating new positions within the MIDI. Reception officer "positions should therefore be created to enable newcomers to have a contact person in the Department capable of orienting them as soon as they arrive. This will make it easier for immigrants to find the appropriate community organizations and/or public institutions to meet their needs" (Interviews 4 and 5).

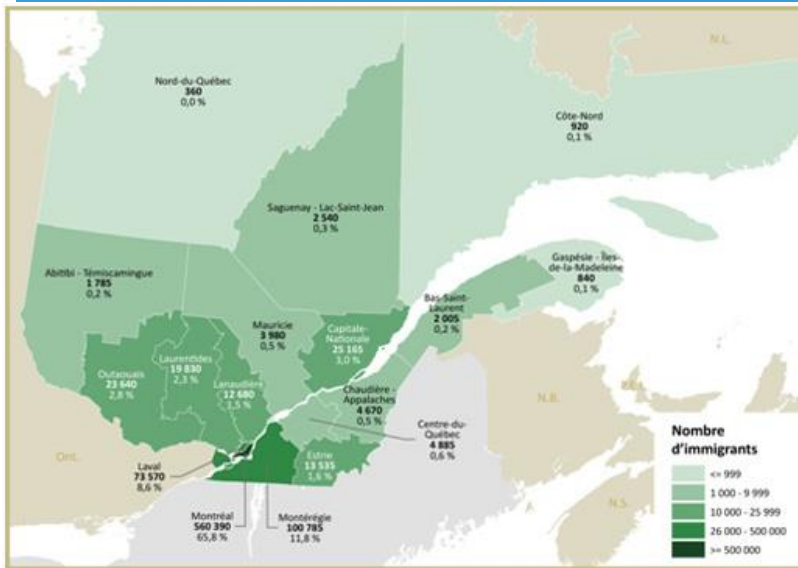
This reform also seeks to make settlement and integration services funded by the Québec government available to all immigrants. An information note sent by the MIDI states that "integration services will no longer be limited to immigrants who have been here for less than 5 years" and will be open to all immigrants who feel they need them, regardless of their year of arrival to Québec. Integration services "will also be accessible to people with temporary worker status, students and the spouses of these people" who represent a large proportion of Québec's migration numbers and who have had few services available until now. The government is thus considering the fact that many immigrants arrive with temporary status as temporary foreign workers and international students before settling permanently in the province and applying for permanent resident status. It is hoped that opening services to more newcomers will create greater cohesion in Québec society and make the province more attractive regardless of the status of the immigrant who wishes to settle there. As a result of this reform, funding for settlement and integration services has been increased for organizations receiving new immigrant clients.

Other measures are also being adopted to facilitate settlement, such as enhancing pre-settlement services for immigrants who are still waiting to immigrate. The Québec government is modernizing its online services, in part through the creation of a redesigned and more accessible website. These services aim to clarify the application steps for those who want to immigrate to Québec, enhance initial contacts between MIDI and future immigrants and provide programming for newcomers to simplify their integration into Québec society even before they leave their places of origin.

6. Regionalization of immigrant settlement in Québec

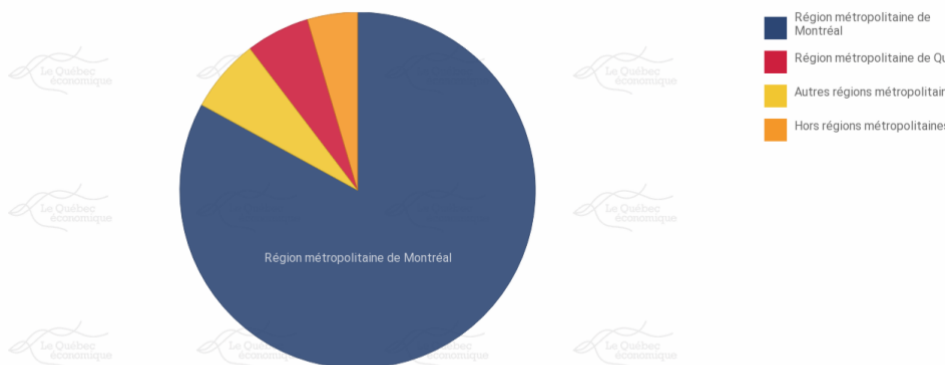
In order to understand the concept of regionalization, we must first look at the origins of the term. Québec is made up of 17 administrative regions, ranging in size from 300 km² (Laval Region) to 720,000km² (Northern Québec Region), which allow for the sub-categorization of certain territories in the province and bring together municipalities within a geographical area. The objective of the regions is to develop a territory according to its specific needs.

In Québec, the Montreal region is by far the destination favoured by newcomers, with 65% of immigrants destined for Québec planning to settle in this administrative region in 2006.



By 2016, the Montréal metropolitan area that includes Laval and other cities close to Montreal received nearly 85% of Québec immigrants. With the concentration of immigrants in the Montréal metropolitan area, a very small part of the Québec territory, immigration may appear to be a Montréal issue rather than a provincial one.

Répartition de l'immigration internationale au Québec, par région de destination, 2015-2016



Mis à jour le 8 novembre 2017
 Permalien : <http://qceco.ca/n/3775>

La région métropolitaine de Montréal, terre d'accueil de près de 85 % de l'immigration internationale

To ensure that immigration to Québec is not a phenomenon centred solely on the Montréal region, the provincial government introduced measures in 1993 to attract more immigrants to the other administrative regions and smaller cities in Québec. Indeed, some regions of Québec suffer from a shortage of labour and population, and the arrival of immigrants in these small communities could be beneficial for both parties: small towns with labour shortages and immigrants who need employment. This phenomenon of encouraging settlement in cities outside the Montreal region is called regionalization. Today, regionalization represents a major policy orientation on the part of the Québec government.

It is also a policy issue taken up by all Canadian provinces, all of whom are impacted by regionally unbalanced settlement patterns. The goal is to ensure all regions benefit from immigration. This is all the more important because the cities that attract many immigrants are already the economic engines of the provinces (Montréal in Québec and Toronto in Ontario, are prime examples) and are developing very well, while many urban and rural localities outside these major economic centres are experiencing slow economic growth and increasing demographic challenges due to aging and sometimes declining populations. The provinces are trying to make regions outside the major economic centres more attractive to immigrants so more of them will settle there permanently.

The economy of these regions is of prime importance, since immigrants will avoid settling in places that do not offer job opportunities or economic stability. In Québec, there is often a mismatch between immigrants' skills, experience and expectations and job opportunities in the regions outside Montréal as noted by Michèle Vatz Laaroussi and Gabriela Bezzi, "the match between immigrants' areas of qualification and the jobs offered is still far from being established"⁶. Measures are being taken by the MIDI, in partnership with the Ministry of Employment, to try to create coherent and attractive employment opportunities in the regions. For the moment, these employment areas remain on the whole rather unsuitable since we often find "mono-industrial" sectors with "precarious job offers, often low-skilled and without the possibility of promotion within the company or the region" rather than a wide range of jobs that offer opportunities for career advancement and high wages. The problem of job diversity in Québec regions is not only a problem for immigrants, the entire population of these regions, and particularly young people, suffer from the lack of diverse job opportunities. In the same spirit, Québec is seeking to promote the reception of international students in the regions in the hope that those who decide to live permanently in Canada will settle close to their places of study and participate in its economic development. However, there is evidence that if job offers are not diverse and unsatisfactory in these regions, students, immigrants and young native-born people will not stay for long.

Another major obstacle to regionalization is the government's limited influence on the places where immigrants settle. For immigrants admitted under the economic class or through family sponsorship, the government of Québec can only provide incentives to settle in a specific region. The government cannot compel economic or family class immigrants to settle in a specific place. Refugees are the only group of newcomers for which the Government of Québec with federal government cooperation can have a direct influence on where they settle initially in the province. Small communities and the provincial government enter into agreements that specify the government of Québec will undertake to send a certain number of refugees to

⁶ Michèle Vatz Laaroussi et Gabriela Bezzi, *La régionalisation de l'immigration au Québec : des défis politiques aux questions éthiques, Nos Diverses Cités*

each region. Québec and the federal government provide various support for immigrants admitted as refugees who settle in regions outside Montréal. For example, community organizations are funded to assist with finding housing, integration into the job market, and school registration among other settlement and integration services. Despite these measures, aimed at promoting the settlement and integration of newcomers in the regions, settlement and integration services are still reduced outside the Montréal region. Combined with the narrow range of job opportunities, limited services discourage immigrants from settling in the regions on a long-term basis.

For the past twenty years or so, the debate on regionalisation has continued within the political arena. Indeed, despite the need to distribute newcomers to benefit the entire province, the results of the measures taken by the government remain weak and are quite controversial. The majority of regionalized immigrants do not settle permanently in communities outside Montréal. We can see that while 80% of newcomers who arrived between 1998 to 2007 were still in Québec in 2009, about 70% of regionalized families left their places of initial settlement within three years of their arrival. These figures show two trends, the first being that immigrants in Québec are fairly satisfied since the vast majority stay in the province for the long term. The second trend is that even if immigrants stay in Québec for a long time after their arrival, a large proportion choose to resettle in a place other than the one to which they were initially sent. The regionalisation of immigrant settlement is not sustained over time. This trend raises important questions about how newcomers are settled and integrated in regions outside Montréal and the availability of job opportunities that will encourage newcomers to stay in the regions.

The debates about the results of the regionalisation policies also raise two additional issues. For the reasons mentioned above, regionalization mainly affects immigrants admitted as refugees. The government has had little success encouraging other immigrants, for example, self-employed immigrants admitted under the economic class, to settle outside the Montréal area. The incentives for regionalization are currently insufficient to attract most newcomers. The other point to note is that current regionalization often results in suburbanization rather than location in regions far from Montréal. After Montréal, the two regions that are attracting the most newcomers are Laval and Montérégie, both of which are close to Montreal. Reception, settlement and integration services in these regions are more extensive than in other regions further away from Québec's largest city. Immigrants can also access additional resources by going to Montréal because of its proximity.

Although regionalization could contribute to the development of rural areas and small communities in Québec, current policies have not yielded satisfactory results at this time. Disparities between the settlement and integration services and job opportunities available in Montréal and those in the rest of the province pose challenges for attracting newcomers to small communities. To settle newcomers outside the region of Montréal requires more consultation and collaboration with newcomers and small localities, so that regionalization is sustainable rather than short-term.

7. Effect of neoliberalism on community organizations

Neo-liberalism is also affecting the community sector in Québec. A key principle of neo-liberalism is to create a market for services by generating competition between organizations. Through competition, private sector logic is imposed on the community sector and the costs of providing services are constrained. The service market is employed to regulate the community sector. The neoliberal competitive funding model, it is argued, works to increase sector efficiency enhancing agency performance.

Neo-liberalism has also led to a greater professionalization of community organizations, a trend already well-established among immigrant-serving agencies in the rest of Canada. Professionalization is brought about by funders' demands that the quality of services be standardized. The process of professionalization is also designed to distance community organizations from their activist origins. The emphasis on the professional side of service can make the services offered by community organizations less spontaneous and may reduce the sense of shared interests between the organization and the people they help. Organizations may become more interested in targeting a population to study its needs and create their target clientele, as is the case for private companies working in the service sector, than being an advocate for the newcomers that they serve.

Professionalization also entails training to ensure that the services offered by community organizations are in line with the funder's requirements. Training can be offered by organisations such as the TCRI and will enable workers to acquire skills in the areas that can improve support to newcomers and enhance efficiency. In Québec, the government has started down the neoliberal path and it has offered additional funding to community organizations for this transformation. As yet, it is early to evaluate the impacts of the neoliberal agenda on settlement and integration services in the province.

VII. Conclusions

Québec, rather than the government of Canada, is the dominant policy actor in the field of immigration, settlement and integration. This situation stems mainly from the 1991 Canada-Québec Accord, which reduced the role of the federal government with respect to immigration in Québec and transferred these powers to the Québec government. From a jurisdictional perspective, there is no doubt that Québec has more powers over immigration and settlement than the other provinces. Conversely, if we consider the how immigrant settlement is organized, many services are provided by community organizations, as they are provided by immigrant-serving agencies in other Canadian provinces. Québec has entered into agreements with community organizations to offer many settlement and integration services with funding from the Québec government. Only francization services continue to be offered directly by the province, often through local school boards and other public agencies. Overall, the organization of settlement and integration services is actually similar in Québec and in other Canadian provinces. Nonetheless, the relationship between community organizations and the Québec government diverges, in a number of respects, from that in other provinces. Contracts are negotiated centrally with government funders, the community organizations have a more activist orientation evident in their advocacy through TCRI, and the more singular service focus of most Québec community organizations compared to the multi-purposed immigrant-serving agencies in other provinces. The TCRI takes a lead role in establishing a meaningful and ongoing dialogue with the Québec government on issues of immigration, settlement and integration.

Although Québec's reliance on community organizations to provide many settlement and integration services is in many ways similar to that in other provinces, it remains a province apart from the rest from a legislative point of view and in terms of the relations between the provincial government and the community sector. Recent dynamics will change the organization and objectives of the community organizations offering settlement and integration services in the province of Québec, and it will be interesting to compare Québec with other Canadian provinces and, as part of the BMRC-IRBU research partnership, to see whether the sector is more resilient in the province of Québec than in Ontario and other Canadian provinces.

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