

Being Portuguese in Montreal: Cultural and Traditional Practices as Markers of the Community's Identity

ABSTRACT: This article aims to present the cultural practices that mark Portuguese identity in the Portuguese community of Montreal. This community, established primarily in the district of Saint-Louis, is an example of an ethnic district where Portuguese traditions thrive, and the Portuguese language serves as a vehicle of communication. Portuguese migrants arrived there in the 1950s and created their own space, while also integrating within the urban linguistic landscape of French or English. The research presented here is based on an ethnography that illustrates how dynamic the community is and how language practices in Portuguese evolved and are used within the group mainly during cultural activities and traditions. In addition, discursive analysis is used to examine elements relating to community members' cultural and linguistic awareness with the process of identity (re)construction. This research shows how the Portuguese language and its representations may help in understanding the complex process of defining the group's identity through cultural and traditional practices.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Practices, Portuguese Migration, Montreal, Language and Identity, Representations and Imaginaries

RESUMO: Este artigo tem como objetivo de mostrar como a comunidade portuguesa em Montreal mantém-se ativa hoje-em-dia. Esta comunidade, instalada no distrito de Saint-Louis, é um exemplo de distrito étnico onde as tradições vivem e a língua portuguesa é um veículo de comunicação. Os migrantes portugueses chegaram desde a década de 1950 e criaram um espaço próprio, mesmo integrando mais com a sociedade francófona ou anglófona dentro da paisagem linguística urbana de Montreal. A pesquisa etnográfica que nos serve como base, permite observar como a comunidade é dinâmica e como as práticas linguísticas em português evoluem dentro do grupo, juntamente com atividades culturais e tradições. Além disso, a análise discursiva fornece alguns elementos que relacionam a consciência cultural e linguística dos membros da comunidade com o

processo de (re)construção da identidade. A pesquisa mostra como a língua portuguesa e as suas representações podem ajudar na compreensão do processo de definição da identidade do grupo através de práticas culturais e tradicionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Práticas culturais, Migração portuguesa, Montreal, Língua e Identidade, Representações e Imaginários

1. Introduction

Montreal, the largest city within the province of Quebec, Canada, has been described as a city where diversity is key to promoting intercultural rapprochement (Gouvernement du Québec *La diversité*). Interculturalism is a neologism in Quebec (Rocher, et. al.) and it contrasts with the multiculturalism that has been promoted since the 1970s by the 1988 Canadian Government – Multiculturalism Act. There is no official definition of interculturalism as there is for multiculturalism, but it was defined at the time of the “Quiet Revolution” in Quebec (Linteau), that started with the raising of awareness of the diverse population that resulted from the waves of immigration in the 1960s. This meant a consideration of how Quebec can be distinguished from other Canadian provinces by its large territory, its historical path, its Francophone identity and culture, its Catholic tradition and the specificity of its political, legal and economic system (Bouchard).

The historical dominance of English in the urban area was underlined by the fact that many Allophone¹ immigrants chose to speak English rather than French. That is why the question of the education of allophone immigrants has been considered one of the major points mentioned by the Commission Gendron² in a report that examined the situation of the French language and linguistic rights in Quebec (Gouvernement du Québec “Loi 22 et Loi 101”). English occupied the position of an international language and the main language for many companies and the business world, in general. It was also the most frequently adopted language at home by Allophones (Gouvernement du Québec *La situation*). The Quebec government then adopted preventive measures to affirm the status of the French language. Bill 101 or « *Charte de la langue française* » (1977)³ marked a milestone in the history of the province of Quebec and its new model of intercultural integration and created a divide between immigrants who arrived in Quebec before and after 1977 (Mc Andrew).

Portuguese migration to Montreal is interesting to observe because it started in the 1950s and it reached its peak during this period of change in Quebec. Montreal is also interesting because it serves as a meeting point between policies: intercultural policy in Quebec and Canadian multiculturalism. Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971, under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. This policy encourages each citizen to preserve their values and their historical and ethnic background, Francophones, Anglophones, First Nations peoples and immigrants. Diversity thus became a strong marker of Canadian identity; it was seen as an asset. Since then, new citizens, immigrants, no longer feel obliged to assimilate and renounce their cultural, linguistic or religious/spiritual heritage; they can choose to naturalize as Canadians while retaining their own values. In this country with two official languages, French and English, cities such as Montreal or Ottawa, which remained bilingual and bicultural (English and French) within the public space, open their doors to ethnic groups which created their own districts, an enclave (McAll).

Saint-Louis is a piece of this multicultural and multilingual puzzle where different unofficial languages found their spaces within the landscape of the city of Montreal. Located near the city center, Saint-Louis represents the heart of the Portuguese community for those Portuguese and Portuguese descendants living in Montreal, around the metropolitan area, and across the province. In 2016, the Canadian Census identified 76,705 people in Montreal of Portuguese ethnic origin (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The Portuguese community first settled in this district in 1953 (Moura and Soares) and founded their own association and a church. The church, *Missão Santa Cruz*, is the engine of Portuguese cultural and associative life in Montreal. Today, the church remains the soul of the community's history and identity.

An ethnographic study conducted between 2011 and 2016 has made it possible to observe daily life within the group, oral practices in Portuguese and in both English and French, and discourses promoted by members on communitarian identity (Scetti "Évolution de la langue portugaise"), questioning whether identity is a real individual process or whether it is truly chosen. Moreover, observations of cultural activities and traditions, such as a *feira do Santo Cristo*, provide an experience of life within the group. Examples will help readers to understand better the experience and the discourses of imaginaries and representations that circulate. All interviews were conducted in 2011. Examples are authentic,

punctuation was added, and some corrections were made to improve readability and understanding of an oral practice of the language. This shows how practices are evolving. The name of the speaker, the generation (1G – first generation with the date of arrival; 2G – second and 3G third generations), profession and level of education (1st level – primary; 2nd level – secondary and University) are placed in parentheses.

2.1. Living the Portuguese Community of Montreal

In Montreal, Saint-Louis is one of the pieces of a multiethnic puzzle. Along Boulevard Saint-Laurent, also called La Main, the city enfolds China Town, the Jewish district of Mile End, Little Italy and Parc-Extension, the Greek neighborhood. Walking along that street, we can feel the history of each community and we can taste and smell aromas from their countries of origins. Languages are living within each group, which makes this trip more interesting and gives it a sense of authenticity.

Saint-Louis is not just a district but a life experience. For the Portuguese, it represents the center of economic life where commercial activities have developed a thriving and complex community business (Robichaud). There, we can find associations, clubs, institutions, professional activities and Portuguese companies based in Montreal.

Portuguese community life in Montreal is important, and according to some members, it is better organized and united than in other Portuguese communities in North America. For instance, Sílvia (2G – 1989, Student, University) underlines: “quando eu vou a Toronto ou nos Estados Unidos é diferente, não é a mesma coisa. Aqui somos todos juntos, uma grande festa.”⁴ She facilitated an understanding of how the Portuguese community, called *comunidade*, is defending and promoting its own identity through the action of local institutions, associations and clubs, in comparison to other communities in North America.

Community members highlight the concentration of Portuguese facilities, businesses and activities, and comment positively on their ability to use Portuguese on a daily basis within the group. For the future of the community, it is important to have friends and contacts living in the group in order to help find a job within the district, to support ethnic businesses and to participate in activities organized by local clubs and associations. The activism of the church, Missão Santa Cruz (MSC), is crucial as Mário (2G – 1967, Services, Cégep) states: “já tínhamos aqui a igreja; também ajudou a integração, com a catequese pronto

e encontrar-se com outros jovens aqui.”⁵ This network helps integration of newcomers within the group.

2.2. The Main Institutions of Montreal’s Portuguese Community

The associative life within the group is animated by four different types of organizations: mutual or benefit, recreational, religious and educational (Da Rosa and Laczko).

Among the mutual or benefit organizations, which are voluntary associations, we find, for example, the Centro de Acção Sócio-Comunitária de Montreal, an organization of Portuguese volunteers who care for the needs of the members of the group, and the Caixa de Economia dos Portugueses, a credit union or cooperative bank founded in 1969, serving many Portuguese and their descendants; after 1983, the bank welcomed non-Portuguese clients. It is now known as Caisse Desjardins Portugaise, part of a prominent financial network of credit unions in Quebec. This illustrates the integration of the Portuguese into mainstream Quebec society.

Recreational organizations, local associations and clubs maintain and continue to promote the spirit of union, festivity, and folklore of the neighborhood. These associations and clubs are located mainly in Saint-Louis, but also in the surrounding areas, for example in Sainte-Thérèse, Laval (off-island suburbs) and Montreal North (a borough of the city of Montreal). The oldest of these is the Associação Portuguesa do Canadá (APC), founded in 1956. It is the first Portuguese association created in Canada and constitutes one of the pillars of the Portuguese community in the city; it is located near another pillar: the church MSC. It is important to recall that APC established the first Portuguese-language newspaper in Canada, *Luso-Canadiano*, in 1958. Following a split within the APC, *Luso-Canadiano* became the voice of another association, Casa dos Portugueses de Montreal, an anti-Salazarist association created in 1961. For that reason, APC launched the newspaper *Voz de Portugal* (<http://www.avozdeportugal.com>) on April 25, 1961, which became the conservative voice of the community and is now the oldest weekly newspaper of the Portuguese community throughout Canada. Due to the lack of interest of some of its members, the Casa dos Portugueses de Montreal ceased its activities in 1963 (Moura and Soares), but was reborn in 1965 under the name of Club Portugal de Montreal (CPM). This club, together with APC, represents one of the main institutions promoting traditional and cultural activities for the communitarian life within the district. Both APC and CPM

feature in their activities the folkloric *rancho* group and focus on transmitting Portuguese cultural heritage to younger generations.

Virgílio (1G 1980 – 1954, Services, 1st level), president of APC, predicts the decline of communitarian and associative life: “não direi a pequeno prazo mas a longo prazo isto, todas as associações vai morrer tudo, já os clubes têm indo a morrer lentamente aqui e agora começam as associações.”⁶ He accuses the younger generations of inactivity in terms of participating in the community’s life. We could observe what he said three years later, in 2014, the date of the second fieldwork visit to the community. APC activities were less productive, and engagement of young descendants is one of the main causes of this decline.

Among recreational associations, we also find Casa dos Açores, an example of a regional cultural association, where people from the Azores meet, especially on Friday evenings, for a typical meal prepared and offered to members of the association.

Of all the types of organizations, religious and educational institutions are regarded as the most powerful ones in terms of cultural promotion within the community. Mainly composed of Catholics, the community initially moved from church to church in order to find mass services in Portuguese. Nevertheless, since 1964, with the foundation of the Missão Santa Cruz (MSC), this institution also found a fixed location where members could participate in religious services (mass, catechism, preparation for sacraments) in Portuguese. Subsequently, various non-Catholic churches with services in Portuguese have been created: Igreja Baptista Portuguesa, Luz para as Nações, Igreja Batista Vida Nova, Assembleia de Deus da Nova União and Igreja Pentecostal Portuguesa, which tend to target predominantly Brazilian and Luso-African communities.

Among educational institutions, the most prominent is the Portuguese language school Escola Santa Cruz created in 1971 within MSC, one of the first in Montreal. This school teaches students from six to twelve years of age. Today, it has merged with the secondary school Lusitana, created in 1975 by Professor José de Barros, which offers more advanced Portuguese language instruction for students from twelve to eighteen years of age. Both schools operate on Saturdays and provide instruction in Portuguese language, culture, history, geography and literature, among other subjects.

2.3. The Missão Santa Cruz’s Mission

The Missão Santa Cruz (MSC), also called Centro Comunitário Santa Cruz or simply Santa Cruz, is the religious center of Catholic life in the community. Since

1984, it has been located a few steps from the APC, at the corner between rue Rachel and Saint-Urbain. This institution represents the point of convergence of Portuguese community life even for the many families who live in the surrounding areas of the city (Teixeira and Da Rosa). In fact, people within the group seldom interchange names, calling MSC simply Santa Cruz or *comunidade*, which shows how MSC is considered the principal entity of the entire community.

MSC has two missions today: first, to transmit the Catholic faith in Portuguese (in fact, Catholic mass services, catechism and introductory seminars on the sacraments, from baptism to marriage, are offered in Portuguese), and, second, to teach and transmit the Portuguese language and culture to young descendants. At the initiative of the church, other groups were created, a folkloric dance group or *ranchinho*, a youth group called Os Jovens, and a prayer group and choir called Nossa Fé. Of all the church's initiatives, the MSC's Portuguese communitarian school, considering both the primary school Escola Santa Cruz and the secondary school Lusitana, represents the institution to promote the Portuguese language and figures as the defender of the prestige of the Portuguese language norm, or standard European Portuguese (EP), together with official Portuguese institutions, i.e., the Consulate, or local radio stations and newspapers. The inscription "a minha pátria é a minha língua,"⁷ paraphrasing the writer Fernando Pessoa, is written on bluish azulejos and welcomes students every Saturday. Esmeralda (2G – 1966, Services, University) remembers how hard it was to go to normal school within the Quebec education system all week long, and even on Saturdays for Portuguese classes at the communitarian school, when she was a child, but she observes how it is beneficial for her son, today, to have the chance to study Portuguese: "Agora a gente obriga os nossos filhos também porque a gente vê o resultado."⁸ For her, this underlines the level of fluency of the Portuguese spoken by her son, at home and within community life.

However, life is not easy for the communitarian school today. In fact, according to the school's own statistics (Eusébio), student enrollment peaked in 1982–83 with nearly 1,000 students, but after the year 2000, enrollment has significantly decreased. On the contrary, Lusitana had its peak attendance in 1993–94, but since then, attendance has been declining as well. In 2018, we counted 300 students total in the two schools. Among pupils of these two schools, we notice a strong presence of children whose parents are from continental Portugal (MSC: 89% of the fathers and 84% of the mothers, Lusitana: 96% of fathers and

91.5% of mothers), mostly from the north and the central regions of Portugal. Few parents are originally from the islands of Madeira and the Azores, despite the major presence of Azoreans in Montreal (Eusébio). In fact, Azoreans are one of the major groups in Montreal, together with *continentais* (Continental Portuguese People). In other Portuguese communities around the country, Azoreans are generally more numerous. Statistics from MSC may demonstrate the dominant position of *continentais* within MSC, and the choice of the formal norm of Portuguese, *norma-padrão* or EP, taught at school and used as the “good” one for many activities. For that reason, other varieties of Portuguese, such as those from Madeira and the Azores suffer from negative stigmatization within the group (Scetti “Variation dialectale du portugais”). In this extract, for example, Elijah (3G – 2000, Student, 1st level), who was eleven years old during the fieldwork visit in 2011, mentioned his paternal grandparents: “as vezes não estou a perceber o que é que ele (grandfather) está a dizer; ele tem um sotaque.”⁹ He assumed impossible to understand his grandfather and that his Portuguese is different from the one taught at school.

MSC was the first institution to teach and promote Portuguese and its norm, its church and school are the heart of the group and the public space where this language is spoken on a daily basis. Life around these institutions maintains a desire for continuity of the *comunidade* toward the future. The church is a place for shared values and for opportunities to build new families. “O último banco da igreja é um lugar de encontro para os jovens da comunidade,”¹⁰ argued the priest José Maria Cardoso. The school, on the other hand, is a place of conviviality and union, where peers with a common family history and the same cultural background can meet. Meanwhile, since the population of the group is aging, the priest created in 1999 the Universidade dos Tempos Livres, also called UTL, which is responsible for educating the oldest members of the community by offering them different courses: French and English language courses (for those who had no time or need to learn them before), and many other kinds of courses in Portuguese, namely, dance classes and music, computing, history, religion and morality, cooking and handicrafts. The activities of UTL for elderly people are well known not only within Saint-Louis, but also among other Montrealers who are interested in Portuguese language and culture and who may enroll in the courses. The interest of non-Portuguese Montrealers in these courses shows how well the group is integrated in Montreal with people from different origins.

3. An Ethnographic Approach to the *comunidade*

The data presented here is based on an ethnographic study realized between 2011 and 2016 in Montreal. It was necessary to live within the community in order to carry out the author's doctoral research in sociolinguistics about the evolution of oral language practices in Portuguese, analyzing its intergenerational transmission. This research was divided into two fieldwork sessions. The first fieldwork visit was undertaken in 2011 (for 7 months) in order to collect data in oral Portuguese. This allowed observation of how oral practices have evolved and identification of seven elements of weakness in the linguistic structure of spoken Portuguese within the community (Scetti, "Évolution de la langue portugaise"). The second fieldwork visit was realized in 2014 (for 4 months) and focused more on observing discourses that circulate among community's members about the Portuguese language and its practices, in relation to ideologies and representations of a collective identity of the group.

This combined analysis, linguistic and discursive, aimed to examine the question of identity among members of the group in relation to language practices. For that reason, identity has been studied in its process of (re)construction, while defining new markers of a collective identity. Results of the Discourse Analysis showed how important it is to speak Portuguese within the group and in activities related to communitarian life. The Portuguese language is perceived as a dominant language in the world market of languages (Calvet) and finds its position as a tool for the future of the members of the group (Scetti, "O português"). Jaime (3G – 1995, Student, 2nd level) wants to focus on the power of the language underlining the international position of Portuguese today, promoted by many institutional and official discourses, such as within the local communitarian school MSC: "A 7a língua mais falada do mundo."¹¹

Moreover, this research showed how the Portuguese language is evolving and how the norm of prestige, the standard European Portuguese (EP), is being questioned. Forms are evolving, and speakers give importance to the use of what they define as the "good" Portuguese, learned at school, instead of the Portuguese used within families, which is considered as "not good" and "dialectal." In this particular context of language contact in a city where two languages are dominant, a process of attrition (see: Scaglione, Scetti "Évolution de la langue portugaise") is observed in oral Portuguese spoken within the community, which shows the importance of contact with the two dominant languages in Montreal: English and French.

Oral Practice Observations, realized daily, permitted an understanding of the use of the three languages in different situations, due to speakers, places and conditions. Different practices, such as Code-Switching, Code-Mixing or different interferences (structural, lexical and phonetic), are considered as phenomena of the context of Language Contact and then analyzed, while questioning language practice as an identity marker. “O meu português é taratata,”¹² explains Florbela (2G – 1970, Education, University), who feels her Portuguese is not “pure”. This practice may be seen as negative and may be seen as a weak point when considering oneself a “real” member of the community and in a projection as a “real Portuguese.” This may refer to an ideology of purity of the language, based on discourses, perceptions and beliefs about a language and its positions, all constructed by members in the interest of a group (Woolard).

Portugueseness is then observed as a main element for the building of a collective identity. Language practices along with cultural awareness, knowledge of the culture and the history of the group and of Portugal, or participation in communitarian life are strong markers of identity that one should fulfill if one wants to be a member of the group, a real “act of identity” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller).

While observing daily life within the *comunidade*, we could see how the Portuguese language is a vehicle of communication mainly between older members of the group, and in which spaces this language is used. This element is important when describing the vitality of the group.

In general, during communitarian activities, Portuguese is the main language. Members of the community speak Portuguese during all other practices, cultural and religious. For this reason, it was of major interest to observe in detail some activities organized by the MSC. This research focused on how activities were organized, in which way group members related to each other and which languages were used. We could observe that the main activities organized by MSC were mainly related to religious life. As an observer of these events, I could describe in detail the vitality of the Portuguese language and its presence spoken and written. Members of the organization committee within MSC speak mainly Portuguese and communication is maintained entirely in Portuguese.

4.1. The vitality of the group

The *comunidade* is known in the city of Montreal for its vitality and liveliness (Scetti, “Langues et migrations”). Throughout the year, especially during the

summer, Montrealers and tourists can attend a succession of events based on religious holidays related to the Catholic tradition. They can participate in processions, shows, dances and eat Portuguese cuisine in the forecourt of the MSC's church. Notable festivals include those of Nossa Senhora do Monte, organized by Madeirans, the Espírito Santo, Senhor Santo Cristo dos Milagres (Santo Cristo), Santo António, São Pedro and São João.

During ethnographic observations, we attended many festivities and parties related to these religious events. Those activities contributed to the discussion of my position as an ethnographer, of the ways to interpret data, and of the position of the ethnographer as neither an insider nor an outsider (Mullings). The Santo Cristo festival provided a good opportunity to observe integration within the community as well as the integration of the group and its neighborhood within the city of Montreal.

4.2. A Long Day within the comunidade: A Festa do Santo Cristo (May 18, 2014)

The celebration of *Senhor Santo Cristo dos Milagres* takes place on the fifth Sunday of Easter in the Roman Catholic calendar.

It is often warm in Montreal at this time and the streets are generally empty on Sundays. Around 4:00 p.m. on this day, a crowd gathers in front of Missão Santa Cruz church and prepares to follow the first procession of the season for the community.

The priest leads the procession. He leaves the church, and everything seems organized and prepared. There is a presenter who announces in Portuguese the departure of each group following along Clark Street to the intersection with Boulevard Saint-Joseph. Each group represents an institution: Escola Santa Cruz, Lusitana and Universidade dos Tempos Livres. Associations and clubs are also present. The different folkloric groups (*ranchos*) perform their main activities during the parade. The Grupo Coral Santa Cruz marches between the different institutions accompanied by the music of three orchestras founded in the community.

There is an eye-catching festival of flags in front of each orchestra. The flags show the identity and belonging of each group. The first to appear is the Filarmónica do Divino Espírito Santo from Laval under the flags of Canada, Portugal and Quebec. Then, in the middle of the procession, the Banda da Nossa Senhora dos Milagres from Montreal enters under the flags of Portugal,

Quebec and the Azores, but surprisingly without the Canadian flag. Finally, to conclude the parade, the Filarmónica Portuguesa de Montreal marches and plays behind its five flag-bearers. The flags appear as follows: Portugal and the Azores Islands on one side, the city of Montreal in the center, and the flags of Quebec and Canada on the other side.

The march is long, many Portuguese and descendants of Portuguese migration come from all over Quebec to attend this popular and religious festival. From Quebec City, some travel more than 250 km to relive the traditions of Portugal. For instance, Joana (2G – from Quebec City) comments: “a gente aqui é muito envolvida na vida da comunidade” and continues, “sinto-me quase em casa, em Portugal.”¹³

The statue of Christ is carried in procession by men wearing a red cloak and followed by barefoot women who sometimes carry large white candles or ropes on their shoulders, recalling the penances suffered by Jesus Christ. The crowd follows behind them in silence. While returning to the church, people rush to the statue, grab the rope in their hands and pray. Men in the crowd are mainly dressed in black suits with dress shoes. Women are well dressed in honor of this first festive Sunday. I feel like I am in Portugal, having the impression of moving in time and space, in another reality. It seems a perfect representation of a procession in a local village in Portugal. The only thing changing is the landscape of the Canadian city, organized in its large and perpendicular streets and boulevards.

According to the priest, it is only the beginning of the summer holidays and religious festivities. One of the functions of the church, as the center of the union of the community, is to put on these events. Santo Cristo has been maintained for decades as a moment of communion. People meet, mostly elderly people, but also young descendants participate, share and realize how significant this event is for the group's life and for the existence of the group in time.

4.3. Discourses on Language and Cultural Awareness

The Santo Cristo event shows how the Portuguese district has become part of Montreal's urban landscape bringing its culture, symbols, cuisine, traditions and language into the public sphere. The *comunidade* plays the role of reference in the discourses of its members. Identity negotiation is interesting to observe in the public sphere. There is a common ideology on a collective ethnic identity, even though this process remains complex to define and dynamic (Norton and Toohey). We can observe a construction of different identities (Moore and Brohy 289),

considering this plural definition as more open and malleable for members to join, that is also why during our interviews we can observe varied nominations such as Portuguese-Canadian, Luso-Canadian or even Luso-Quebecker.

Our research shows how important the Portuguese culture is for members of the group. “Living in a Portuguese way” is important to feel like a “real” Portuguese. It is also important to underline how staying halfway between Portugal and Canada assigned a dual identity that can be the result of a complex and never-ending individual journey through identity representations. *Sílvia* (2G – 1989, Student, University), for example, repeats that: “é metade, não me identifico mesmo como ser portuguesa realmente, sou canadiana de origem portuguesa.”¹⁴ She wants to underline how she adapts to different spaces, situations and territories. The construction, or daily reconstruction, of identity is the result of the negotiation between one self’s choice and the result of an imposition; an attributed identity. In this extract, *Dora* (2G – 1979, Services, University) underlined how she is considered as Canadian when she is on vacation in Portugal, and how she is identified as Portuguese when she meets her husband’s friends and family, in Montreal: “O meu esposo que é canadiano e quando estou com a malta dele, eu sou portuguesa, mas eu sou canadiana porque nasci aqui também e quando vou a Portugal, não sou portuguesa porque sou canadiana.”¹⁵ From this extract, we can assume how the identity negotiation depends on context and situation, as well as on participants to the interaction.

According to our Discourse Analysis, speaking Portuguese is a mark of belonging to the group, like sharing a common family history of migration or finding the same cultural traditions. All of these elements are important in a group to define who is a member and who is not. This involves many questions regarding membership in the group. The choice to speak a language can become an “act of identity” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985) by which speakers express their personal affiliation to the group.

Being Portuguese is not synonymous with living in Portugal or often traveling there. Being Portuguese does not exclude being part of the new context in Montreal, in Quebec and in Canada, as well: “mesmo que a gente se considera português a gente faz parte do Canadá”¹⁶ (*Mário*, 2G – 1967, Services, 2nd level). So, maybe we should redefine new core statements of the common identity within Saint-Louis, in terms of language practice. A linguistic ideology refers here to the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language (Errington).

When analyzing discourses, we see how important it is for a group created from a migration process to maintain the link with the past and origins. Identity as a product of successive socializations (Dubar) must be observed as a process based on a common past, an origin, the contribution of an inheritance, and a contact with different people. The link with Portugal is not severed and different sentiments emerge from these discourses, especially among speakers of the 1st generation (1G), including patriotic *orgulho* (“pride”), feeling fully Portuguese (Lurdes, 1G 1974 – 1951, Services, 1st level) or feeling a deep love for the home country, *até morrer* (“until death”) (Vitor, 1G 1989 – 1952, Services, 2nd level). All of these images are the result of an individual process fueled by collective ideologies: being oneself *eu* (“I”) as a member of a *nós* (“we”). *Eu* and *nós*, in the process of identity negotiation, shape from time to time in each discourse, showing the importance of the plural, collective identity, even if this notion of diasporic identity may be imaginary and ideologic (Rosa and Trivedi).

4.4. Living between Flags

When questioning whether identity is a real individual process or whether it is truly chosen, research seems to indicate that the individual process must continuously deal with adaptation to a mixture of compensations and constraints dictated by the group. Andrée Tabouret-Keller explains, in fact, that the identity of a group is delimited by boundaries that are established between those who belong or do not belong to the group (1997: 316). The individual must then adapt to these collective impositions, being nobody without the others (Kaufmann).

Within the *comunidade*, even if members of the 1st generation (1G) are more closely attached to the image given to the Portuguese flag, as observed during the Santo Cristo event—representing the language, the culture and traditions—new flags (of the city or of the new country) are not strange anymore and represents their integration into the new context. Members of the 2nd generation (2G), also called *geração-ponte* (bridge generation)—descendants of the first Portuguese immigrants in Montreal who did not necessarily live in Portugal—remain closely linked to a common heritage from this country by a set of representations and imaginaries of identity, and it is starting from this generation where all flags may be seen as necessary for identity negotiation. In fact, a common identity is seldom represented and based on ideologies. For example, Dora (2G – 1979, Services, University) explains how Portuguese people are in general: “muito abertos, muito sociáveis, bons viventes, as pessoas que gostam de gozar da vida, de

socializar. Mas somos também pessoas patriarcas, mas do bom sentido, acordamos muita importância à família, tentamos ser uma família unida, temos bons valores. Guardamos a nossa religião que é uma coisa que é muito difícil aqui em Montreal.”¹⁷ This kind of image seldom refers to some aspects related to a common nós (“we”) and emphasizes the link between culture, roots and language. However, this ideal “we” also relates to the strong role of MSC in creating and propagating discourses on images regarding the link between identity and religion. The desire to transmit this knowledge and these feelings to future generations is repeated by some members, in discourses and representations promoted through the MSC’s actions. Descendants of the next generation (3rd and 4th generations), in fact, are influenced more by discourses generated inside the common space, mainly within clubs, associations and institutions. Language practices remain a fundamental value of the group throughout the identity process. For example, Elijah (3G – 2000, Student, 1st level) defines Portuguese as his first language, “his” language, the one he first spoke with his grandparents, highlighting its importance in daily practices at home (grandparents and parents) and at school (friends from a Portuguese background). Language practices, together with music, food and religion, helps in defining the group itself and the group’s identity. According to Esmeralda (2G – 1966, Services, University), it is important to live within the *comunidade* and to keep these traditions and symbols in order to feel Portuguese, sometimes even more Portuguese than people living in Portugal: “eu sinto-me muito portuguesa, toda a gente diz que sou portuguesa de mais até. Acho que até sou mais portuguesa que os portugueses em Portugal porque a gente mora aqui nesta comunidade e a gente guarda aquelas coisas antigas, não sei os costumes. Eu acho que sem a comunidade era muito difícil.”¹⁸ Without the *comunidade* it is difficult, she repeated, underlining the important role of the group and mainly the role of MSC in maintaining this sense of Portugueseness.

5. Conclusion

In a context of migration and integration it is difficult to raise cultural awareness. Considering both the heritage as well as the new culture (receiving for 1G members and home culture for members born in Montreal), the ultimate goal is to integrate into the new context as well as into the communitarian context. The process of integration into intercultural Quebec or multicultural Canada requires constantly negotiating identities during a review of life experiences. When Virgílio (1G 1980 – 1954, Services, 1st level), for instance, says: “eu sou

canadiano e português,”¹⁹ he asserts his definite choice to be both and to show his two flags, if we want to maintain this symbolism. However, he needed to justify his choice and noted how the new context was favorable to him since his arrival and defended how he feels connected to Canada, as a Canadian. Meanwhile, he also needed to justify his attachment to Portugal, saying he wanted to return to Portugal one day, for any choice showing a sustained reason.

Choices of identity and attributions are mixed according to the situation and different spaces. They all can be described as “acts of identity” (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller). These choices and their explanations show that it is possible to be Portuguese, Luso-Canadian or Luso-Quebecker or simply to be Canadian or Quebecker. Different elements are established in the list of identity markers, adapted and set up according to the experience of each speaker. Language remains an important element, both in practices but especially in the representations and imaginaries mobilized through discourses that are built around it. With it, other practices, cultural and traditional, are also considered as markers of the community’s identity.

In conclusion, ethnographic research shows how important it is for the researcher to participate in the “common” life within the *comunidade*. In fact, for members, it can be important to go to school on Saturdays or go to mass on Sundays, and to participate in a religious festival, such as Santo Cristo, but it is also important to participate in folkloric *ranchos* dances, to join an association or a club, to buy bread at a Portuguese bakery or eat in a Portuguese restaurant. The responsibility is everyone’s in order to ensure the maintenance of the district in the future, to recall the history of the group’s migration and to prevent the loss of the Portuguese language in the future.

The description of Santo Cristo celebration demonstrates how important the union of the community can be. Through this religious celebration, many other groups within the *comunidade* are visible, and try to be visible as well, within the community and urban life. Many flags were present during the Santo Cristo celebration, but sometimes those flags were not all included in representation of some of the groups. Each flag was a symbol for all the *comunidade*, regarding a region (Quebec and the Azores), a country (Portugal and Canada) or even the city of Montreal, where the community is included. However, flags do not stand alone. During our observations, flags were waving together, showing an image of plurality, where identity is performed and where exclusivity is replaced by multi-alternativity.

NOTES

1. Allophone – A person who, in a given territory, has for his or her first language another language than the official language or languages
2. Commission Gendron – Commission of Inquiry on the Situation of the French Language and Linguistic Rights in Quebec, founded in 1968.
3. Bill 101 – It is a Fundamental Law which is part of the statute of the French-speaking province of Quebec together with other statutes: Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (1975) to guarantee the cultural rights of citizens and the Declaration on the inter-ethnic and interracial relations (1985).
4. “When I go to Toronto or to the United States it is different, it is not the same thing. Here we are all together, a big party.”
5. “The church existed here already; it also helped for integration, with catechism it gives the possibility to meet other young members.”
6. “I will not say soon but in few years, all these associations will die, clubs have already dying slowly here and now it is the turn of associations.”
7. “My home is my language.”
8. “Now we force our kids (to study Portuguese), because we see the result.”
9. “Sometimes, I do not understand what he says; he has an accent.”
10. “The last pews of the church are considered a good place for glances’ exchange between young members of the community.”
11. “It is the 7th most spoken language in the world.”
12. “My Portuguese is *taratata* (not good).”
13. “People here are very involved in the life of the community. I feel almost at home, in Portugal.”
14. “It’s half-way. I do not really identify myself as a Portuguese. I am Canadian of Portuguese origins.”
15. “My husband is Canadian and when I am with his friends I am Portuguese, but I am Canadian because I was born here. And when I am in Portugal, I am not Portuguese because I am Canadian.”
16. “Even if we are Portuguese, we are part of Canada.”
17. “Very open, very sociable, people who love to live, people who like to enjoy life, to socialize. But we are also patriarchal people but in a good sense, we give a lot of importance to the family, we try to be a united family, we have good values. We keep our religion which is something that is very difficult here in Montreal.”
18. “I really feel Portuguese, everyone says I’m Portuguese even more. I think I’m even more Portuguese than Portuguese people in Portugal because we live here in this community and we keep those old things, I do not know, usages, traditions. I think without the community it would have been very difficult.”
19. I am Canadian and Portuguese.

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