THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN MONTREAL: THE EXAMPLE OF SOUTH ASIANS

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INTRODUCTION

Immigrant integration is a complex process involving time and a large number of civil sociseculare ty actors. It also encompasses many dimensions. Linguistic and economic integration are often at the forefront. Nevertheless, a full integration implies political and social participation. For Kunz (2005), successful immigrant integration depends on social capital. For this author, social capital is defined as: "networks of social relations that provide access to need resources and supports."

Both *bonding* and *bridging* social capital are key factors for integration. The *bonding* social capital, defined as ties that bind similar individuals together, plays an important role in the pre-migration and immigration stages, as well as for settlement. This social capital supports the immigrant by: 1) giving him basic information on the receiving country resources, and 2) helping in meeting basic needs (employment, housing, welcoming community, security, etc.). This social capital helps immigrants to get by, orienting them and permitting a better adaptation to the new environment. *Bonding* social capital helps overcome the *culture shock* associated to migration. The *bridging* and *linking* capitals are also useful for a better integration. They forge links between immigrants and other networks encompassing individuals of different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. These social capital categories favourize the access to more resources and improve civic and political participation. Social capital is produced by individuals as well as groups. The latter is called *collective social capital* in the literature. It is more of a "political," social capital category.

Our research objective was to understand the creation of the collective capital by the Montreal South Asian associative network. In this paper, we will explore how the collective social capital helps South Asian immigrant integration. We will begin with a short section on the methodology. Then we will present their associative network and explore with some case studies how it helps integration. We will conclude with a discussion on South Asian NGO's role in immigrant integration.

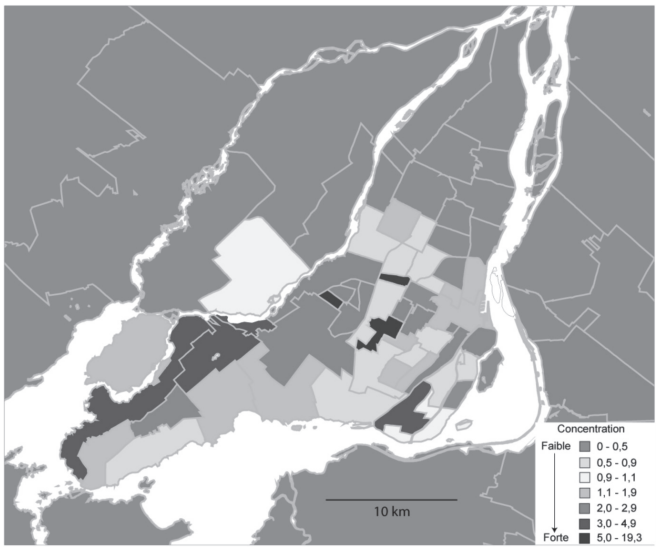
METHODOLOGY

My interest for the South Asians is grounded in my work experience at the city of Montreal. This immigrant group, composed mostly of Indian immigrants, was chosen because it has greatly contributed to the city's socio-demographic and cultural transformation in the past fifty years and it is still not well-researched in Quebec. In 2006-2007, I conducted 39 semi-structured interviews with first and second generation community leaders. These South Asian leaders were quite representative of the group diversity and gender ratio in Montreal. The recruitment strategy involved key informants, community members, and public civil servants who worked with this group.

THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

Their community network has developed gradually with little governmental support. Cities like Montreal and Dollard-des-Ormeaux have been helpful to their community development. South Asian associations received support in different ways: financial supports through various social programs, free or low cost offices for their NGO's, etc. Some leaders claim that the South Asian community is not well understood and discriminated against: "We are not White. We were never truly accepted. One of the important problems is the lack of understanding of the so-called Host society. In fact it is racism. It became worst after September 11th." The 2006 census indicates three concentration areas of the South Asian visible minority in the center of the island of Montreal: Parc-Extension, de la Savane and Norgate (Figure 1). Visible minority refers to the visible minority group to which the respondent belongs. The *Employment Equity Act* defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or

non-white in colour" (Statistics Canada, 2007). Those areas are economically deprived. They are regarded as "ethnic enclaves." Nevertheless, some important temples and small associations are located in middle class Montreal boroughs and cities as LaSalle, Dollard-des Ormeaux and Brossard.



Source: Statistique Canada, census 2006 **2.** Credit: Nathalie Vachon, INRS

The South Asian associative network has diversified itself. In 2007, forty-seven (47) associations were identified in the Montreal metropolitan area. The community structuralization took place in the fifties. Nowadays, the South Asian network has achieved a good institutional completeness. Those associations give some services (orientation, document translation, language courses, etc.) and collaborate with the governmental agencies responsible for the immigrant settlement services. They organize social and recreational activities. We have divided the segments of the network in nine categories, according to their orientation and their types of activities (Table 1).

The first in importance is the religious one (30% of the whole). It is composed by a diversity of institutions: *mandirs*, *gurdwara* and Islamic associations. The second category is the national or regional one (20% of the whole). The countries represented are: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, which are the four major South Asian immigrant countries of origin. The others are sectoral (ex.: business, culture, social, etc.). We observed a diversity of members from various countries in the social category. This sector represents the most important category of the South Asian network (60%). Forty per cent of the network is religious or ethnic. The ties that are created by this network are multiple. On the one hand, this network is characterized by *bonding* links. Those links help the South Asian immigrants associations in finding basic resources for their members. They are as well supportive in meeting first needs and contribute in defending immigrants' social and civil rights, helping South Asian integration. The *bonding* links favour the South Asian "post-migratory identity" which is, according to some authors, more political than ethnic.

Table 1: South Asian Associative Categories in Montreal – 2007

CATEGORY	ASSOCIATION NAME
1) Business	Quebec-India Business Council, Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce
2) Communication	Asia Canada Leader Multicultural Newspaper, India vision, Images du Bangladesh, Hindus Post inc., Nouvelles asiatiques canadiennes, Pragati, Bharat Times,
3) Culture	Kala Bharati Foundation, Nrithyala Foundation, Société de culture hindoue, Société de musique Bharatya, Société Durkai Amman Koyil, Kathakali Opus IX
4) Education	Hindi Quebec Association, Centre d'études et de ressources de l'Asie du Sud
5) Social	Club de l'âge d'or du peuple d'origine indienne, Himalaya Seniors du Quebec, Bharat Bhavan Foundation, Canadian Sikh Council
6) Sport	Cricket Club
7) Region	Association Thamilar Olli, Association mondiale tamoule, Association Eelam du Québec, Association goanaise du Québec, Pakistan Association of Quebec inc., Association des Pakistanais Khybec du Québec, Société pakistanaise-canadienne du Québec, International Society of Bangladesh
8) Religion	Association Gurudawara Guru Nanak Darbar, Association internationale pour la conscience de Krisna Canada, Association islamique Shiane Haidery inc., Association zoroastrienne, Centre de yoga Iyengar, Hindu Mission of Canada inc., Mission Saiva du Québec, Maison de Dieu Québec (Gurudawara Sahib Quebec, inc)., Shree Ramji Temple Mandhata, Hindu Temple hindou of Quebec, Temple Ramgi, Gurbani Sagar (Montreal-Sri Guru Ravidass Temple)
9) Women	South Asian Women Community Center, Cercle des femmes d'origine indienne

Source: Répertoire ethnoculturel de Montréal 2007 et enquête terrain

On the other hand, the analysis of South Asian associations links indicates that most of them have some regular and frequent ties with other networks (Table 2). Their network produces as well *bridging* and *linking* collective capital linking some individuals to the civil society and enabling them to find more resources as well as improving their social and political participations.

Table 2: Strengths of South Asian Organizations Links with other Networks – Montreal 2007

ORGANIZATION	LINKS STRENGHT			
	NONE	WEAK	MEDIUM	STRONG
South Asian Alliance of Quebec			X	
Quebec Goan Association			X	
National Association of Canadians of Indian Origins in India				X
India-Canada Association		X		
South Asian Women Community Center				X
Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce		X		
Cercle des femmes d'origine indienne		X		
Club de l'âge d'or du peuple d'origine indienne			X	
Quebec-India Business Council				X
Canadian Sikh Council			X	
Bharat Bhavan Foundation				X
Kala Bharati Foundation				X
Nrithyala Foundation	X			
Bharat Times Journal			X	
Himalaya Seniors du Québec			X	
Maison de Dieu Québec (Gurudawara Sahib Quebec, inc).			X	
Hindu Mission of Canada			X	
India-Canada Organization			X	
International Society of Bangladesh			X	
Hindu Mandir Dollard-des Ormeaux		X	X	

Source: Anna Maria Fiore Field work 2007

SOME CASE STUDIES

We will present in this section five examples of associations that have produced collective social capital to explore how they have been helpful in immigrant integration. We have selected those associations because they have many Indian members, they have existed for years and have produced three types of collective social capital (*bonding*, *bridging* and *linking*) (Table 3).

The *Kala Bharati Foundation (KBF)* has a diverse membership (Indian, Bangladeshi, French Canadian and other origins). In the 1990s, a municipal cultural program helped them to reach a larger public. They organized activities mixing Indian and Quebec modern dance traditions. Furthermore, educative projects were done with various schools. The association developed *bridging* ties with the Canada Arts Council and the Quebec Dance Association. This NGO has produced *bonding* and *bridging* social capital. For a short period, with government support, the *bridging* ties were improved. With the disappearance of those governmental programs, the NGO's actions and projects were undermined. Today the *bridging* activities have a limited impact despite members' commitment. Further cuts affecting the federal government programs have had negative impacts on KBF.

Table 3: Case studies

ORGANIZATION NAME	FOUNDATION DATE	ACTIVITIES
Kala Bharati Foundation	1981	Cultural (neoclassical Indian dance)
Bharat Bhavan Foundation	1984	Social and recreational
South Asian Women Community Center	1981	Woman center
Canadian Sikh Council	2001	Social and civil right
Quebec-India Business Council	2004	Business

The *Bharat Bhavan Foundation* (BBF) favoured the integration of the most vulnerable immigrants. The organization produced *bonding* ties between members of various national and religious groups. In the 1990s, their charter was modified to include the local community's social, educative and economic development. It democratized its structure and increased women's participation. One woman was the president of the association and another one was coordinator of a section in 2007. Many projects improving the *bridging* capacity of the organization with other networks (cities, provincial and federal governments) were developed. Later on, the Quebec government's support decreased. The activities of this center are today largely self-supported. The association's *bridging* activities are less frequent and valorized and the *bonding* activities have gained importance.

The *South Asian Women Community Center* (SAWCC) has gone through a long process to gain recognition and support. It survived many years with the support of South Asian volunteer women and the city of Montreal. This NGO's originality rests in its specific feminist approach. It first faced marginalization, even from its own community. Their feminist vision was antagonistic towards some South Asian associations who criticized it sometimes strongly because "it breaks the family." Also, their feminist perspective was different from the mainstream feminist NGO's in Quebec. For example, men, generally relatives (sons, husbands) may become member

of the SAWCC, although they are not admitted on the board of directors. Consequently, it was not recognized as a women's center and didn't receive financial support from Quebec. After its participation to the World March of Women in 1995 it finally integrated the mainstream feminist associative network. It now belongs to the *Regroupement des centres de femmes du Québec*. Since then, it has been supported by the Quebec government and has been able to improve its services and activities. It has gained recognition among civil society as well as within the South Asian community. From a *bonding* type of NGO it has evolved to a more *bridging* category.

The *Canadian Sikh Council* (CSC) is another relatively new organization. This NGO was created to sensitize the civil society about Sikhism, and stand against discrimination, particularly discrimination based on religion and race. It has been active in various issues linked to the Sikh community and immigrant integration. This NGO is self-supported by the members. It has some contacts with the Quebec government, the city of Montreal and other institutions regarding various issues. It has collaborated with Canadian universities to implement courses on Sikhism. It cooperates with governmental and non-governmental agencies to assist immigrants and refugees. It helps Montreal school boards to inform parents about youths' and students' integration. For CSC, education is crucial to improve public awareness regarding Sikh Quebecers, but the lack of resources (due to a small community and lack of governmental help) is an obstacle to building some regular activities to improve *bridging* ties with the civil society.

The *Quebec-India Business Council* (QIBC) was founded by former members of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC). Initially the "secessionists" wanted to break the links with ICCC because this federative organization was Toronto based. It promotes the business interests of its members as well as helps trade relations between India and Quebec. This association includes South Asian members as well as Quebecers. It's a self-support association. QIBC has some important sponsors, such as Desjardins, CAE, and Air Canada. It organizes different networking activities (luncheon seminars, cocktails, etc.). It also has a student grant program. It was part of the Quebec government seed mission in India in 2005. The QIBC activities are clearly oriented toward *bridging* ties.

CONCLUSION

The South Asian community is one of the most heterogeneous ethnic groups in Montreal. Languages, nationalities, religions, gender, class and casts are some of the factors that may be claimed as obstacles to solidarity, cooperation and integration. Our research has documented the completeness of their associative network. This network is almost self-supported. From the data we collected, we find evidence as well of the existence of an important *bridging* and *linking* collective social capital which helps integration to the new society. Some South Asian associations have regular ties with civil society. Nevertheless, some organizations are still not well recognized and supported. For some of them the governmental support has decreased with the reorientation of diversity management policies of both federal and provincial governments. This brings us to the question of whether the South Asian network can solve all the integration problems. The answer is complex. The South Asian is the most segregated group of the Montreal metropolitan area. This trend is even higher for the third generation (Apparico, Rivet & Leloup, 2006). The South Asian isolation index has increased in recent years (Hou & Picot, 2004). Furthermore, South Asians are concentrated in poor "ethnic enclaves" of Montreal. South Asians have in average a lower income than the whole Quebec population. The unemployment rate is also higher than the Quebec population (15% to 7%) (Quebec MICC, 2010). Linguistic integration is also a sensitive issue. If a major part of the group knows English (87%), only about half know French (48.2%). Furthermore, the proportion of persons who know neither French nor English (8%) indicates the necessity of special support measures. Finally, data indicate a high proportion of departure from the province, especially for the Indian immigrant economic category (Quebec MICC, 2011).

But when we took a closer look at the data, we observed some positive integration indicators. A modest suburbanization of some Canadian-born South Asians in higher socioeconomic areas illustrates an upward mobility. The proportion of persons over 15 years old who have a university degree is also higher when compared to the Quebec population. Ultimately, those indicators suggest that the classical integration assimilation model does not apply to South Asians in Quebec. Rather, it appears that the segmented integration model (Safi 2008) involving various economic integration and cultural acculturation degrees illustrates better the Quebec South Asian case. The South Asian *bonding* associative social capital remains the major resource for them while *bridging* collective social capital has been declining. It appears that NGO's collective capital "cannot replace other forms of capital to produce unrealistic social and economic outcomes beyond the material limits of its contextual boundaries" (Li, 2004, p. 187). Is the South Asian example appearing to sum up a "new trend" in immigrant integration silently questioning the Quebec political agenda regarding social equity?

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LE RÔLE DES ONG DANS L'INTÉGRATION DES IMMIGRANTS À MONTRÉAL: L'EXEMPLE DES SUD-ASIATIQUES

L'intégration des immigrants est complexe, demande du temps et comprend plusieurs dimensions: linguistique, économique, sociale et politique. Il s'agit d'un processus individuel et collectif dans lequel à la fois l'acteur et la société civile ont une part importante. Pour Kunz, l'intégration des immigrants dépend du capital social. Nous explorons ici à travers l'exemple des Sud-Asiatiques comment le capital social collectif peut soutenir l'intégration des immigrants. Nous utilisons les catégories du capital social (*bonding*, *bridging* et *linking*) développées par Putnam et Woolcook pour qualifier l'influence du capital social associatif sur leur intégration.

Cette recherche exploratoire est basée sur l'analyse de 39 entrevues réalisées en 2006-2007 auprès des leaders de première et de deuxième génération de ce groupe. Cette analyse nous a permis de dresser un portrait du réseau associatif sud-asiatique et de qualifier le capital social collectif produit par ses organisations. À la lumière de l'analyse de quelques indicateurs courants d'intégration tels que la ségrégation, l'indice d'isolement, le revenu, le taux de chômage, la connaissance du français et la présence des immigrants, nous discuterons du rôle du capital social collectif immigrant sur l'intégration.

Cet article comprend trois sections. La première porte sur la méthodologie. La seconde sur le réseau associatif sud-asiatique à Montréal. La troisième présente quelques études de cas représentatives de la diversité des organisations de ce groupe. L'analyse de ces organisations nous permet d'explorer dans le temps comment le capital social collectif a contribué à l'intégration des immigrants. En conclusion nous discutons des limites et des contraintes du capital social immigrant sur l'intégration.

Le réseau associatif sud-asiatique s'est développé depuis les années 1950 à Montréal avec peu de support gouvernemental. Il est peu connu et reconnu par la société civile. Néanmoins, en dépit des ressources limitées de la communauté, le réseau a atteint un bon niveau de complétude institutionnelle. Nous avons recensé 47 associations sud-asiatiques au Québec localisées dans la région de Montréal, surtout au centre, à l'Ouest de l'île et dans les banlieues Sud et Nord. Nous avons classé les organisations sud-asiatiques en neuf catégories: affaires, communication, culture, éducation, femmes, social, sport, région, religion. Si les deux catégories les plus importantes sur le plan numérique sont celles de la religion et des régions (40 %) – entre autres, en raison de la grande diversité nationale et religieuse de ce groupe – le réseau associatif est majoritairement composé d'organisations sectorielles (60 %) qui regroupent des personnes de cultures et de nationalités diverses.

Ces associations réalisent de nombreuses activités éducatives, économiques, sociales, culturelles et religieuses. Certaines de ces organisations donnent également des services importants favorisant une meilleure intégration des immigrants: orientation, information, interprétariat, traduction de documents, accompagnement dans les démarches administratives diverses liées à l'établissement, cours de langue, etc. Celles-ci jouent également un rôle de passerelle entre les immigrants et les organismes d'établissement subventionnés par le gouvernement du Québec puisqu'elles sont en mesure d'offrir de l'interprétariat dans plusieurs langues et dialectes sud-asiatiques peu connus au Canada. Les liens créés par les associations sud-asiatiques sont multiples. Le réseau sud-asiatique forge des liens entre les membres de ce groupe soit un capital social *bonding*. De plus, la majorité des organisations sud-asiatiques produit des liens avec d'autres réseaux (*bridging* et *linking*).

Nous avons présenté les études de cas de cinq organisations dont les domaines d'activités touchent à des enjeux importants d'intégration pour ce groupe sur le plan culturel, social, des droits de la personne et économique. L'analyse diachronique des activités de ces organisations permet d'explorer l'influence de divers facteurs sur l'orientation des liens créés par les associations comme le financement gouvernemental. Cette analyse met en lumière la production de plusieurs types de capital social par les organisations ainsi que le rôle important que le soutien étatique peut jouer dans la création de liens entre les associations immigrantes et d'autres réseaux. Elle révèle que la décroissance du soutien financier pour certaines associations dans les années 1990 a eu des répercussions sur l'impact des activités. De plus, les obstacles rencontrés par certaines organisations pour être pleinement reconnues par la société civile limitent et retardent leur potentiel d'intervention dans le domaine de l'intégration.

L'examen de certains indicateurs statistiques sur la situation des Sud-Asiatiques au Québec nous permet de mieux saisir certaines dimensions de l'intégration de ces immigrants qui ne semble pas correspondre au modèle d'assimilation classique. D'une part, certains indicateurs révèlent que ce groupe est l'un des plus ségrégués et isolés de Montréal même pour les personnes de troisième génération. Les Sud-Asiatiques ont également des revenus plus bas et un taux de chômage plus élevé que l'ensemble de la population québécoise. De plus, l'intégration linguistique de ce groupe est également une question controversée puisqu'une part importante de leur population ne connaît pas le français. En outre, la présence des Sud-Asiatiques au Québec est plus faible que celle d'autres groupes d'immigrants. Par contre, une analyse plus approfondie des données statistiques indique que certains immigrants et immigrantes réussissent beaucoup mieux à s'intégrer. Une suburbanisation modeste dans des quartiers de classe moyenne est documentée. La proportion de personnes âgées de plus de 15 ans détenant des diplômes universitaires est aussi plus élevée que celle observée pour l'ensemble de la population du Québec. De plus, la présence d'hommes et de femmes dans des secteurs professionnels comme les affaires, les finances, l'administration, les sciences et l'enseignement est également observée. Il apparaît donc que le modèle d'intégration des Sud-Asiatiques serait davantage un modèle segmenté impliquant des niveaux d'intégration économique et sociale différenciées. L'exemple des Sud-Asiatiques semble questionner l'importance du capital social collectif des immigrants dans leur intégration ainsi que les pratiques et les politiques de la société civile dans ce domaine.