

# Social integration, social exclusion and stigma management among American expatriates in Montréal

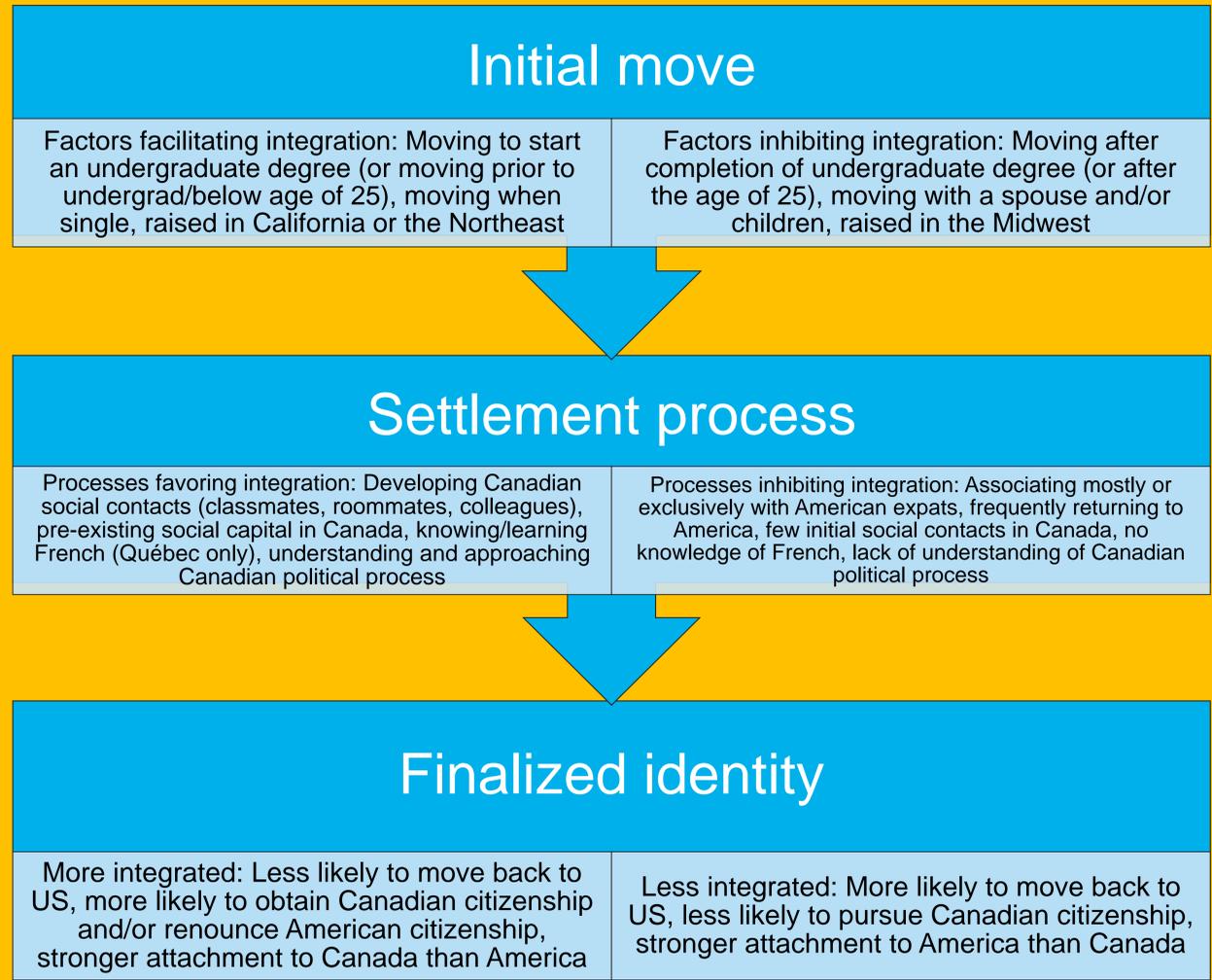
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## Abstract

The experience of living abroad as an expatriate can variously impact processes of identity formation, stigmatization, and social integration. In this study, 16 American expatriates living in Montréal were interviewed, in order to record their views on such subjects as America, Canada, their nationality, their social networks, and their political experiences. The resulting transcripts were qualitatively analyzed to determine the extent to which American expatriates feel excluded from Canadian society, how they manage stigma (if encountered), and how they perceive their home country and current country of residence. A wide range of responses were noted, from high exclusion and low integration to high integration and low exclusion.

## Methods and Results



### Expat views on Canada/Canadians

- “I like the fact that, Canada is seen on the world stage as [...] like the grandparent, you know? In a family situation, all the fun, without all the responsibility, kind of? [...] Canada's seen as being a kinder, a softer, a more helpful version of the States.” – Debra, 57, from Massachusetts
- “My intuition would be that, Canadians are more conservative. But I'm not talking about it in the way that the word conservative is being used politically today, because I think that would be very, very inaccurate. But there's an older sense of conservative, where [...] you know the, kind of respect for institutions, and also social conventions. And that is, kind of the old world-y quality of it.” – Max, 77, from New Jersey

### Expat views on America/Americans

- “I'm very proud of what America is. [...] the whole idea of, you know the freedom and liberty and the ability for anyone to chase the American Dream, I mean, that's magic, and that's what has made America so great, and, and so, you know, I've always been very proud of being part of that.” – Eddie, 66, from Massachusetts
- “I mean the laws are changing, and they will continue to change in a direction that I'm regretful about in the United States, but, I think that it's not just the laws that are changing but really, the vibe, that the greater population has felt like, oh the things they can say now or the things that they can do [...] they're more free to say all those ugly, hateful things, right, and so, being here, like I'm less worried about people saying those ugly, hateful things.” – Rosemary, 51, from California

### Exclusion experiences and stigma management

- “[...] there may be a bit of a glass ceiling, sort of phenomenon [...] in terms of promotions and getting certain jobs, I have a feeling that Canadians don't like Americans of my particular type to be in any kind of formal position of authority [...] it's occurred to me as a hypothesis that, when I'm dealing with Canadians one-on-one, maybe two, maybe in a group of three- it's perfectly, you know, people, individuals, dealing with each other. But if it's a group of four, five, then, I'm an American.” – Steve, 71, from Illinois
- “[...] but particularly in Quebec people tend to grow up with their friends, then they go to school, and they go to CEGEP, and they go to university together. So, for people who are arriving here from outside, it's a bit hard to break into social circle 'cause you- it's like, "Well we've always- we've been together for decades, and you're- you've arrived just recently [...]“ –Norbert, 27, from California

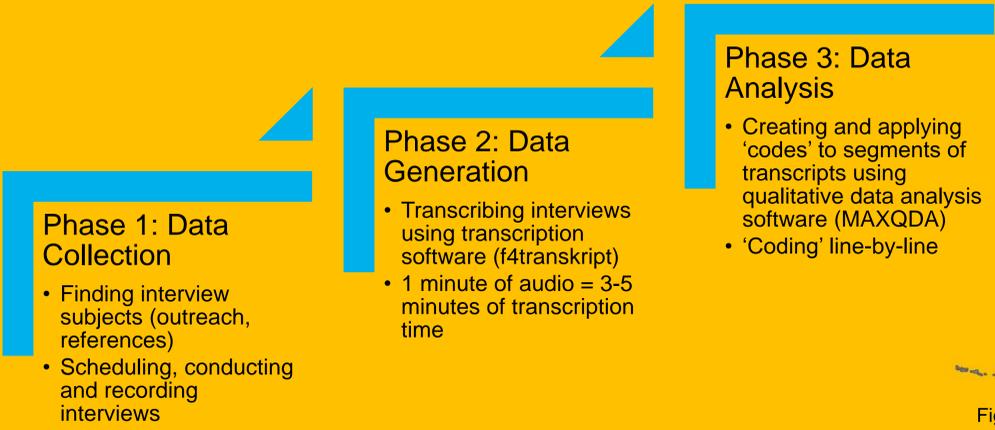


Figure 1: Distribution of interview subjects by origin in United States

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