2 Historical Overview

Canada is a prime example of migration. From the first European settlers in the 16th and 17th centuries to the mass-immigration waves after the *Confederation* in 1867 (Troper 2018), Canada established as a multi-ethnic nation (Simmons 2010: 2). While immigration closed down during both Great Wars and the 1930s depression, a high level of immigration regained its strength after World War II. Since the late 1980s, most immigrants are coming from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Troper 2018). The earliest Jamaicans to arrive in Canada were small numbers of West Indian slaves imported into Nova Scotia and New France. The Maroons of Jamaica were the first large group to enter British North America in 1796. These runaway slaves, who occasionally raided plantations and revolted against the British colonial regime, e.g., by freeing other slaves or occupying the island's interior areas, soon created self-reliant communities (Zips 2011). Two wars with the Maroons, the second in 1795, made the British realize they could not win nor control these 'rebels' on the island. After several unsuccessful attempts to enslave the Maroons, the British governor signed a peace treaty with them and deported some into exile to Halifax (Labelle et al. 2019). However, due to their rebellious spirit and complaints about the Canadian climate, they soon voyaged onwards to Sierra Leone in 1800. Apart from the Maroons, no other early contacts between people from the West Indies and Canada were reported at that time. From 1800 until 1920 only a few Jamaicans, most of them men, came and worked as labourers in the Sydney and Cape Breton mines. This ended suddenly with the change of immigration laws set by the Canadian government (ibid.). The new policy refused to allow non-whites into the country (Sherlock/Bennett 1998). As a result, immigration from Jamaica and other Caribbean countries halted.

After World War II, Canada had a great need for cheap labourers, which resulted in the *National Act* of 1948 (Walker 2013). Many overseas workers from the British Commonwealth colonies, including Jamaicans, came to Canada to seek a better economic life. By 1960, Canada introduced its 'point system' under which each applicant was awarded points for their language, job and educational skills (Troper 2018). During this time, 21,500 immigrants from the Caribbean of which 33 percent were categorized under the 'ethnic origin' Black were granted a landed

immigrant status (Labelle et al. 2019). The growth of immigration from 1945 to 1960 corresponded not only with post-war economic expansion but also with the *West Indian Domestic Scheme* (1955–60) which was established solely for the immigration of women from Jamaica and Barbados as domestic workers (ibid.). Women dominated Jamaican immigration to North America in the post-1965 era; twice as many young and single females than males left Jamaica for domestic service and factory work (Foner 1985; Brown 1997). Many Jamaican women established themselves in occupations such as nursing, caretaking, domestic help, and teaching. Jamaican dominance in these occupations in part evolved around pre-established networks that created so-called 'ethnic niches' (Foner 2005; Vickerman 1999, 2001). In addition, their presence corresponded with increasing numbers of North American women who began entering the workforce outside of the home in the 1970s. Therefore, the creation of jobs in childcare and domestic work flourished. Milton Vickerman (1999: 71) observes, "Once women had secured jobs as domestics, they would set about seeking other work in the same field so that in some cases a single individual would juggle two or three jobs at the same time". Women in such demanding occupations often left behind their partners, spouses, and children in Jamaica and had to rely on the help of their stay-behind family members (mostly aunts or grandmothers) who –in their absence– took on child-rearing responsibilities. In exchange, the remittance sending resulted as a socio-economic practice and created the first active "transnational households" (Soto 1987; Thomas-Hope 1988). This study will highlight these historically grown aspects of reciprocity and responsibility in border-crossing family connections as well as the importance of family constellations and expectations for the course of migration. For example, negotiations about return migration oftentimes involve several members of such a transnational household (see Olivier-Mensah/Scholl-Schneider 2016).

After the exclusion of the race-based discrimination from the Canadian *Immigration Act* in 1944, the number of Jamaicans migrating to Canada increased (Walker 2013). Since that period, Canada has sought more and more migrants from the Caribbean islands due to the gradual decrease of European immigration. In the following years, Canada began to depend predominantly on 'cheap labour' from the global South. For comprehensibility and completeness, it is relevant for this study to discuss specific historical contexts in Jamaica and in Canada's Francophone province Quebec. The following three sub-chapters help to understand how current situations came about and under what socio-cultural circumstances many Jamaican migrants live in Montreal today.

2.1 The Historical Context of Jamaica

Jamaica is the third-largest island of the Greater Antilles and with 2.9 million inhabitants; it is the third most populated Anglophone country in the Americas after the United States and Canada. Jamaica is a culturally diverse country with most of its residents being of African descent. The indigenous Taino (Arawak-speaking people) were eliminated by warfare and diseases brought through the transatlantic slave trade under Spanish conquest and British colonial rule. Over 300 years of slavery –from 1502 until 1807– established prevailing uneven, post-colonial power relations based on skin colour and social class (Bush 1981). The forced displacement of African people to Jamaica is the basis of a colonial history of exploitation, suppression, and uprooting. The historically difficult stand of Jamaican women in slave society ascribed, through the ideology of white supremacy, ethnocentric bias, colourism and inferiority into the minds of people (ibid.). Throughout the time of slavery and with the introduction of capitalism as well as class-based colourism, certain hierarchical power relations continue to control and influence access to economic, social as well as political resources (Bush 1981; Miles 1989). Since the island's independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, a noticeable number of Chinese, Indian and European immigrants have come to Jamaica while at the same time an extensive diaspora emerged around the globe. Jamaica's national theme "Out of Many, One People" highlights this issue of unity in difference and evokes a modern way to "recognize the different parts and histories of ourselves, to construct these points of identification, those positionalities we call in retrospect our 'cultural identities'" (Hall 1990: 234).

Jamaica has a long history as a migration hub. The present-day persistent growing emigration rates to North America are a result of the ongoing search for a better future and increased standard of living, which, due to a marginalized economy and poor career options, has not changed yet. The Jamaican government used to interpret the migratory transference of its people to North America as "brain gain" (Hunger 2002: 1). Acknowledging the fact that less and less people return to Jamaica before their retirement, this alleged gain turned out to be a fallacy. Especially in the health sector, but also in other sectors of the economy, Jamaica lacks young and well-trained staff as they often emigrate directly after their education. Jamaica has struggled for decades with low growth and high public debt. Over the last 30 years, real per capita GDP increased at an average of just one percent per year, making Jamaica one of the slowest growing so-called 'developing' countries in the world (The World Bank 2015). The unemployment rate in the country is nearly eight percent (Statistical Institute of Jamaica 2019), with youth unemployment being specifically high (20.2 percent). As Beine stated already in 2008, "as far as small states are concerned, three out of every four skilled Caribbean live outside their country of origin" (Beine et al. 2008: 4). Docquier and Marfouk (2005) claim that Jamaica is

the third-highest source country of skilled emigrants with a rate of about 85 percent, exposing Jamaica as a factory of "social capital" (Bourdieu 1983). Furthermore, the *Canadian International Development Agency* (CIDA) provides billions of monetary assistance each year to the *Caribbean Community* (CARICOM) countries, including Jamaica (Government of Canada n. d.).

2.2 The Historical Context of Quebec

The province of Quebec is constituted by a distinct historical condition. Especially, national identity constructions, which are firmly related to heritage and French-language policies, are root causes of integration difficulties of immigrants (not only from Jamaica). In this context, people who identify as being authentic Québécois strive to make the province their 'own' nation, encapsulated and separated from the rest of Canada. Historically, the origin of this insular mentality founded in the beginning of the 15th century when the 'original' Canadian nation was formed in New France. Jacques Cartier and the French colonists brought along their language, cultural values, Catholicism, and social hierarchy (Allaire 2013). Many wars over land ownership and fur trade monopolies between the French and British settlers followed until British troops occupied New France and Montreal capitulated in 1760 (Couture 2018). After the establishment of British North America, New France was made a colony of the British Empire and was led by a military government. The main aim of the people of the former New France region was to conserve and protect their language and traditional cultural values from British influences. Because of the Indian rebellion under Pontiac, the British government changed its policy towards the French. In the *Quebec Act* of 1774, London guaranteed the French majority protection of their mother tongue and religious denomination. However, the former French-Catholic majority was now a minority (Couture 2018). In the year 1791, 30 years after their defeat, and due to a sharp increase of the British population, the Franco-Americans regained territory with the division of the province of Quebec. However, language disputes further prevailed in their newly established, albeit limited autonomy. Through the *Confederation* in 1867, Canada established as a nation in which Quebec became a province significantly deprived of its former size (ibid.).

Fast forward to the 1950s and the radical changes leading up to the *Quiet Revolution*, the emphasis on traditional cultural values and a French-nationalistic ascent were again relevant. In the course of the *Quiet Revolution*, several political groups, which began to break away from the narrow, provincial context, became pertinent. They acted as a regional arm of major political movements. The *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) was responsible for more than two hundred bombings and robberies between 1963 and 1970, of which the victims were mostly English-speaking

Quebecers (Morton 2012: 505f.). The new upsurge of violence addressed amongst other things, the difficult working and living conditions of French speakers and their minority role in a society that they claimed to be their historical heritage. These aspects were connected to the idea of gaining freedom from the overarching power of Anglophone institutions. Consequently, this process was infused with complex and multi-layered upheavals from the historical past. The turmoil culminated in the so-called *October crisis* (ibid.). More fruitful were the enterprises of the *Parti Québécois* led by René Lévesque who believed in political dialogue. In 1974, the party managed to mandate that French was the sole official language. As a broader goal, they pursued independence. In 1976, they formed the provincial government and a year later, the use of English was pushed back through the release of a French language Charta. Nevertheless, the Quebecer party did not succeed in dissociating from Canada because in the referendum of 1980, nearly 60 percent of voters decided against independence (Morton 2012: 505f.). To date, Quebec has still not ratified the 1982 constitutional law, although Ottawa tried to negotiate acquiescence. In the *Meech Lake Accord* and the *Charlottetown Accord*, Quebec was recognized as a "distinctive society", but these constitutional revisions failed in 1989 and 1992 due to Anglo-Canadian resistance (Couture 2018). In 1994, again the *Parti Québécois* won the election and initiated a second independence referendum in 1995. With a paper-thin majority, Quebecers decided to remain in Canada (ibid.). The wish to conserve and protect Quebec's national identity, French language, and related cultural traditions exists until today with at times fanatical as well as romanticized proliferations. Quebec has historically tried to reject an adaptation of an urbanized and westernized lifestyle that societies across Canada celebrate.

Concerning immigration, the former laws that were constitutionalized (1867) as a shared jurisdiction changed in the time after the *Quiet Revolution*. Quebec created its own *Ministry of Immigration* (1968) to ensure the prevention of English language transformation and to promote the idea of an 'intercultural' society model that values Quebec's 'distinct identity' (Labelle/Salée 2001). During this period, French philosophers, Marxists and Black intellectuals visited or lived in Montreal and had a tremendous impact on socio-cultural, anti-colonial and political rethinking in the province. While the *Congress of Black Writers* in 1968 and the *Sir George Williams Affair* in 1969 played a huge part in the Black Power movement's engagement with racial politics (Austin 2013), the influential "Autobiographie précoce d'un "terroriste" Québécois" from Pierre Vallières (1968) claimed that French Quebecers' were the "Nègres Blancs de Amériques", which established a questionable viewpoint in the evolving debate about race. Even though Black politics, especially the Black left, helped greatly to define the socio-political momentum in Montreal's 1960s, the dominating viewpoint and understanding of who was influential in making history in Quebec are blurred in favour of a white perception (Austin 2013). Therefore, negative socio-economic as well as political implications for Black people in

contemporary Montreal remain unsolved. Above all, Black people are continually being denied their historical existence in the province (Williams 1997: 39). Unfortunately, Quebec still holds onto a historically articulated 'othering' (cf. Spivak 1985) and a self-spun 'master narrative' (cf. Geertz 2003) of being a nation of French-speaking, white, European settlers.

2.3 The Historical Significance of Jamaican Women in Montreal

During the mid-1950s, female Caribbean immigrants were employed in Canada under a unique one-year program, after which they could apply for permanent residency. Beginning in 1955, the Canadian government admitted 100 Jamaican and Barbadian domestic workers annually. These young, educated female workers were, in contrast to their male counterparts, able to support and sponsor other relatives' immigration endeavours to Canada (Winks 1997). Large numbers of Jamaican households have one or more family members living abroad, and many people benefit from migratory networks established in Canada (and elsewhere). In 2001, 91 percent of the entire Caribbean-Canadian population lived in the major urban centres of Ontario and Quebec (NHS 2016). The largest population of Canadians of Caribbean origin are Jamaicans, followed by Haitians, people from Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas (Statistics Canada 2019). Due to their French language background, Haitians make up the largest Caribbean immigrant group in the province of Quebec. Over the past 40 years, female migration to Montreal has built strong relational ties between the women and the city. Quebec is still in a process of a political and economic opening of immigration, for example, with the recent introduction of an *Express Entry* visa (2015) for skilled nurses and healthcare labourers, intentionally attracting women from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. However, ongoing difficulties with migrants' access to equal job opportunities and full access to societal life prevail (Grenier/Nadeau 2011). Since the 1990s, Quebec has had an immigration agreement with Canada, which gives the province the right to select immigrants according to their labour market needs and demographic growth. In 2019, Quebec altered the name of its *Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion* to *Ministry of Immigration, Francisation an Integration* signing of the over 50 years-old inclusive vision of ex-Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand. Categories of integration and inclusion varied greatly over the years, always depending on the governments in power. Recently, however, Quebec has been increasingly divided on the immigration issue. Premier Francois Legault's current majority government passed new and controversial laws, Bill 9 and Bill 21 (2019), which for example allowed the administration to cancel nearly 16,000 immigration applications (family members not included). Among other things, the Bill 21 for

example sets a new framework for a "Quebec value test" that immigrants need to pass in order to become permanent residents who respect the 'laicity' of the state.

The markers of difference between cultural 'others' and 'native' Quebecers prevail. Immigrants in Montreal fare worse than in other parts of Canada because Quebec's immigration policies still put too much weight on the acquisition of French language skills. Problems with work-related language discrimination are omnipresent and hinder a positive and comprehensive integration of newcomers. Thus, Québécois conservative tendencies that are strongly language based stand in the way of a working 'intercultural' society model. Contemporary political debates surrounding the sovereignty status of the province as well as related, often nationalistic, political reforms account for a picture, which leaves Quebec's future state open and ambiguous. Discussions whether nationalist tendencies are rather ethnic, linguistic or territorial signify a continuing process of the province's search to define its socio-cultural identity as a people. This ongoing process has significant implications for policymakers in Jamaica as well as in Canada, who are looking to maximize the profit and minimize the cost of migration along with mandating suitable immigration policies. Currently, Quebec's government still holds on to a notion of culture that identifies ethnic groups as insular societies. However, for Quebec, the benefit of successful integration of young and skilled immigrants would be very high. The province is one of the most rapidly ageing populations in Canada (Grenier/Nadeau 2011: 20), and a sharp decline in birth rates is changing Quebec's demographic substance unwaveringly (Labelle 2015). Already in 2014, an article in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner* (2014) reported a higher demand for nurses in the province reflecting one of the main reasons for the increase of Jamaican female immigration to Quebec. Well-educated Jamaican nurses are willing to fill the gap in geriatric and domestic care work, which is of great relevance for the provincial health sector. Since Quebec's ageing population needs more caretakers than ever before, Caribbean women are invited on attractive work programs. In addition to work opportunities, family reunification programs are other vital factors shaping an individual's decision to migrate to Quebec. The ongoing process of Jamaican immigration to Canada, and especially to Quebec, is a reflection of specific shifts in both international and national contexts and highlights the historical importance of emigration to the society of the island.

In Montreal, my anthropological encounters with women, who are personally or through a close relative, connected to this history of emigration and familial chain migration was significant. The Jamaican community is highly segregated and different groups account for a heterogenic picture of the local diaspora. There are older, established institutions that are trying to revitalize their former influential character as well as newer community-based projects. Many art and musical events help to keep Montreal on the map as a place of Afro-Caribbean creativity, especially with events like *Carifiesta*. Over the past 40 years, the first generation,

early immigrants are slowly losing their impact because significant institutions and neighbourhoods have shifted, e.g., in terms of gentrification. Many of the second generation Jamaicans, who live in Montreal through familial chain migration, are also involved with the communal activities in the traditional institutions of their ancestors. Nevertheless, this generation is ageing and with the prospect of their upcoming pensions ahead, many are seeking new ways of accommodating themselves, either by moving to other Anglophone cities or by returning to their Jamaican homeland. The third generation immigrant children, who were born in Montreal, are creating their own social spaces, mainly outside of traditional institutions. With no exception to other 'urban youths', many live highly mobile lifestyles. At first sight, Montreal as a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic city seems to be more individualized and less exclusionary than the rest of Quebec, the ethnographic results of this study, however, draw a picture of ongoing structural and systemic issues such as language-based discrimination in daily life activities. In addition, many interlocutors report racialization to be a significant aspect of their aspiration to leave the city and the province of Quebec altogether.