**Who Belongs in Quebec?**

**National Identity, Immigrants’ Social Identities, and the Linguistic Future of Quebec**

**Ruth Kircher (Liverpool Hope University)**

Quebec is Canada’s only province with a French-speaking majority. French in Quebec faces the challenge of English not only due to its status as the global lingua franca, but also due to its role as the language of upward mobility in the rest of Canada and in North America at large. Most immigrants to Quebec concentrate in the province’s urban centre, Montreal. Therefore, while the rest of Quebec is quite homogeneously French-speaking, Montreal is home not only to a significant English-speaking community but also to newcomers who are speakers of a vast variety of mother tongues. As a consequence of its diversity, Montreal holds a special status in Quebec. It is generally assumed that this is where the linguistic future of the province will be determined – primarily by the immigrants, who constitute a growing percentage share of the population, and whose language choices will be crucial.

Language choices are, at least partly, determined by language attitudes. However, there is a paucity of research into the language attitudes held by Montreal’s immigrants. The only known previous study was conducted in 2007, a time where the Quebec government was strongly propagating a civic – rather than an ethnic – national identity. The findings of this study indicated that overall, immigrants shared the same attitudinal trends as non-immigrants – most likely as a result of their shared, civic identity. However, in recent years, a shift seems to have taken place to a much more ethnic conception of national identity in Quebec. This paper aims to find out whether this shift in national identity has affected the immigrants’ sense of belonging in the province, and whether this sense of belonging – in turn – has affected their language attitudes.

The paper presents the findings of a recent study of Montreal immigrants’ social identities – with a focus on whether they identify as Montrealers, Quebecers, or Canadians – and their attitudes towards French compared to English. The paper will present qualitative as well as quantitative questionnaire data elicited from over 200 participants of different genders, different ages, and different mother tongues. The data allow for the comparison of the social identities and language attitudes held by first- and second-generation immigrants to those held by non-immigrants. The findings provide an insight into the changing dynamics in a complex multilingual community in which language attitudes appear to be intrinsically connected with social identities, and have crucial implications for the linguistic future.