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REVIEW ARTICLE

Francophone Canadian, franco-mobile, Tamil? Unfolding identity[1]

Reviewed by Anne-Christel Zeiter

Annette Boudreau. *À l'ombre de la langue légitime. L'Acadie dans la francophonie*. Paris: Classiques Garnier. 2016. 297 pp. Pb (9782812459757) €29.00.

Sonia N. Das. *Linguistic Rivalries. Tamil Migrants and Anglo-Franco Conflicts*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2016. 296 pp. Pb (9780190461782) £29.99.

Monica Heller, Lindsay A. Bell, Michelle Daveluy, Mireille McLaughlin and Hubert Noël. *Sustaining the Nation. The Making and Moving of Language and Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2016. 288 pp. Pb (9780199947218) £32.99, Hb (9780199947195) £82.

During the last 20 years or so, the relationship between individual or collective identities and language has become a legitimate field of investigation in the social sciences. In this context, many types of research have given an insight into how identities – considered social constructions intertwined with ethnic-, class-, gender-, religious-, . . . -oriented considerations and symbolically mediated through language – regulate the social order according to political, economic, and symbolic issues (De Fina 2013). French Canadian studies on this topic have been particularly productive, and most sociolinguists today know that the Canadian social and linguistic constellation is far more complicated than the Anglo-French duality often represented by the situation in the province of Québec.

Three monographs published in 2016 promote a good understanding of what it means for individuals and collectivities in the Canadian social and economic contexts to have a linguistic identity assigned. In her book *À l'ombre de la langue légitime – L'Acadie dans la francophonie*, Annette Boudreau questions such an assignment of a linguistic identity: What is a legitimate language? Who is a legitimate French speaker? And how is that speaker constructed? Monica Heller, Lindsay A. Bell, Michelle Daveluy, Mireille McLaughlin and Hubert Noël, the authors of the collective monograph *Sustaining the Nation*, focus on language as a production aimed at sustaining the idea of a political, economic, and symbolic Canadian nation. They claim that the identity 'French Canadian' assigned to working-class Canadians generates the idea of a francophone *ethnoclass* that allows creating 'social differences on cultural (including linguistic) grounds, which then help justify relations of power' (Heller et al. 2016: 25). Finally, Sonia N. Das'

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Linguistic Rivalries – Tamil Migrants and Anglo-Franco Conflicts is concerned with the ways in which the Tamil communities in Montréal respond to the limiting categorizations produced by the state and the Québécois public. She shows how the transmission of heritage languages in schools may help to challenge social stratification grounded in the colonial and post-colonial periods, both in Canada and in South Asia. In other words, the author investigates language as a way to partly reverse the usual post-colonial inequalities experienced by people belonging to what the Canadian state calls 'visible minorities.'

Given their shared concern in exploring minorities' language practices and resources within Canadian multilingualism, these three books shed light on the dynamics of power that cross individuals' and communities' social and economic trajectories. They aim at understanding how these paths challenge a nationalist perspective of francophone (im)mobility, and of a mythical essentialized concept of language that is instrumentalized to maintain social, economic, and symbolic hierarchies. Moreover, since the publications rely on various, albeit coherent, historical periods and social perspectives, they provide a careful and illuminating socio-historical contextualization of the ambiguous relation of French Canada with other francophones (Boudreau), of the complex colonial background (Das), and of the economically tense setting (Heller et al.) that shapes the Canadian linguistic situation. If the goals of the monographs are similar, their orientations differ, since they adopt various perspectives on domination and linguistic resources, based on divergent, yet complementary, priorities.

This review article aims at presenting these three publications first through their shared conceptual frameworks and methodologies, and second through a closer examination of how each book articulates the current globalized context to language policies. This discussion will lead us to question the notions of 'nation' and 'elites,' the first being somewhat unclear to non-Canadian readers, and the second representing a key issue in the social sciences. The third part of the article will then clarify the complementarity of the three books and the distinctions they make between different forces at play when identities are at stake.

1. EXAMINING MINORITIES AMONG MINORITIES: DOING ETHNOGRAPHY ON CANADIAN LANGUAGES

Coming back to the progress of sociolinguistics during the last decades, Boudreau mentions the creation of a research group in the 1990s, under the leadership of Monica Heller, which may be the starting point of the theoretical background that unites these three publications (and many others in critical sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology). The challenge, she explains, was not to describe linguistic practices but to understand who speaks about Frenchness, how, why, and under what circumstances, and to understand the links between discourses and the ways in which a group or a community is structured and organized over time. The goal was – and is – to identify how social categorizations are tied to language, and how exclusion and inclusion are played out (Boudreau 2016: 146). This remains the central issue of the three books, underlying Das' linguistic and anthropological background, and also serving as Boudreau's central inspiration.

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Considering the current globalized economy as networks and interdependencies operating at a global and local scale with political, economic, linguistic, legal, and cultural consequences (Vigouroux and Mufwene 2014), the three monographs attempt to understand complex local issues through different types of ethnography. Boudreau inscribes Canadian French speakers' attitudes towards French within issues of legitimacy and, mobilizing Bourdieu's framework, argues that profit or prejudice linked to linguistic practices is a complicated issue and must be addressed as such. The author investigates the Acadian context, as an insider born in Acadie and a sociolinguist, and examines how francophone speakers from the periphery can claim legitimacy while being doubly minorized by anglophones and other francophone groups. *À l'ombre de la langue légitime*, therefore, relates to domination mechanisms connected to the feeling, shared by many francophone speakers from Canada or other peripheral parts of the Francophonie – or better said out of France – that their language practices are often depicted as poor or not as sophisticated as the imagined standard spoken in Europe. Relying on ethnographies conducted in various field sites in Acadie, Boudreau also investigates her own milieu, as an Acadian woman and researcher confronting France (where she studied) and its academic context. This inside-out investigation of an educated milieu allows her to understand the discomfort resulting from a conscious social distance between those who control the production of a legitimate language and speech, and those who do not.

Focusing on the conditions of the new political economy, Heller et al. conduct a broad ethnography aimed at investigating the various mobilities of Canadian francophones across anglophone Canada, as well as their (non-)participation in institutional events intended to sustain the 'francophone nation.' Considering that '[w]omen and men travel for work and bring with them aspirations and practices which at times complement, at times contradict the institutional imagination of francophone communities' (Heller et al. 2016: 157), Heller et al. explore the diversity and mobilities of 'franco-mobiles' (Daveluy 2008). The hypernym refers to 'Francophones who are engaged in constant labor mobility, involving labor which renders their Frenchness salient in a variety of ways, not all of them direct and not all of them coherent and consistent' (Heller et al. 2016: 37). It articulates the tensions existing between them and the construction and sustaining of the francophone 'nation,' a notion specific to the Canadian context that will be discussed later in this article. The authors show how this population is caught between increasingly precarious labor positions due to the current neoliberal industrialization and the modernizing nationalist discourses aimed at maintaining francophone identities. Examining the pathways of francophone working-class workers through modern forms of industrialization in Canada, they discuss how the category 'francophone' in Canadian political economy may be understood as an 'ethnoclass, that is, a category that legitimizes class relations on cultural grounds' (Heller et al. 2016: 26). Since this category is intimately connected to the history of Canada as a producer of primary resources, the authors explain, it involves labor mobility, a phenomenon almost erased from official accounts of the francophone nation as linked to a territory.

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Along the same lines, Das shows how the Indian and Sri Lankan communities in Montréal construct a belief – unique among the Tamil diaspora – of a fundamental difference between their respective heritage languages. This sociolinguistic distinction appears to be anchored in the colonial and post-colonial Anglo-Franco rivalry in South Asia, as well as in the present city of Montréal. Following Irvine and Gal's (2000) identification of three semiotic mechanisms (rhematization, fractal recursivity, and erasure) driving all processes of sociolinguistic differentiation, Das combines the ethnographic and archival analysis of both elite and non-elite discourses of global modernities. She adds:

> the ethnographic and historical investigation of how interlocutors make sense and act upon what they perceive as the inevitable *directionality* of ethnolinguistic identification and language shift, the material *durability* of linguistic and other semiotic resources, and the auditory and perceptual *discreteness* of phonological and grammatical forms, in ways that authenticate global scale-building projects. (Das 2016: 21)

Considering the linguistic landscape as an instance of this, Das points out that '[n]o business, temple, church, or school in Québec survives for long unless its leaders pay tribute to the province's nationalist movement and, more importantly, do so in writing' (Das 2016: 174). Also, the author describes how heritage language schools vary in their pedagogical goals, as French-speaking Sri Lankans follow a curriculum aimed at preserving 'literary Tamil,' elaborated in conjunction with the Québécois government, while English-speaking Indians teach a modernized 'colloquial Tamil.' This distinction not only allows them to render explicit that they do not belong to the same ethnolinguistic community, but also to reflect differences of 'caste, class, regional origin, religion, and political ideology' that they consider relevant. On a socioeconomic level, she adds, 'the manner in which Anglo-Franco rivalries have engendered new linguistic rivalries [in the Tamil communities] between businesses, temples and churches, and residential neighborhoods is indeed unique' (Das 2016: 174).

In fine, the three monographs problematize the implication of the researcher in different ways. As previously said, Boudreau is at the same time the observer and at the core of her work, since she cannot resist reflecting language issues in Acadie in her own experience, practices, and milieu. She problematizes her implication in this research as a way of understanding how her 'dominant' position as a university professor in sociolinguistics potentially reproduces inequalities. Taking into account the mechanisms of exclusion through language, she notes that acquiring linguistic and symbolic capital is linked to different factors (family, class, education, etc.), but that the conditions of language production are often erased and naturalized, since they are attached to a habitus constructed along one's trajectory. This erasure and naturalization, she says, make former *dominated* new *dominants* that may forget the (linguistic) efforts they had to accomplish to move up the social ladder (Boudreau 2016: 64).

Das also belongs to a similar, albeit slightly different, community to the one she observes. 'As a child born of a French Canadian mother and Indian father in

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Montréal in 1977,' she explains her belonging to a bilingual family, in the sense that 'members of [her] family speak different languages with one another,' depending on their kinship roles (Das 2016: 8–9). Das and her family migrated to the United States in 1980, where she went to school in English. She explains that she cannot speak Bengali because her parents 'believed that children should not learn more than two languages' and confesses that her mother educated her as a linguistic purist in French, a situation that still makes her feel 'pangs of guilt' when she code-mixes. Thereby, even as she seems to have experienced the same kind of linguistic dispossession as the one Boudreau describes, Das never experienced the milieu she observes, namely the linguistic practices of many 'youth of the post-1977 generation' in Montréal.

Heller et al. define themselves in relation to the franco-mobiles they trace through Canada. The majority of informants in *Sustaining the Nation* come from the 'peripheral rural or working-class urban areas' most affected by the contemporary economic changes and are economically condemned to labor mobilities. Nevertheless, even as two of the authors are said to belong to Acadian families, Heller et al. seem to observe these franco-mobiles from outside. Their connections with family, friends, or informants in Acadie are mainly presented as facilitating access and comprehension of the field sites, without discussing the fact that the authors experience another kind of mobility, namely the one mentioned in the book as the privilege of educated white-collar workers. In other words, *Sustaining the Nation* consistently relies on the notion of 'elites' to explain the construction of the francophone ethnoclass, but its authors do not position themselves within this dynamic, and *in fine* do not clearly define it.

2. GLOBALIZATION AND LANGUAGE POLICIES: FROM POLITICAL CONSTRUCTIONS TO PRACTICES

To make explicit what the French Canadian experiment as linguistic dispossession, Boudreau (2016: 265) discusses the social distance felt between those who control the production of the legitimate language and those who do not and fall within social and geographical margins. Francophones, she says, depend on a globalized economic context that fosters different types of mobility according to their education and socioeconomic resources, which transform and modify their perception of their language(s). As a result, language repertoires and practices evolve in such a way that vernaculars and standard varieties may become valued to connect local and international markets (Boudreau 2016: 148). Heller et al. point out that globalization, through the deindustrialization of areas such as New Brunswick, profoundly impacts rural and peripheral urban communities traditionally considered representative of the French Canadian identity. Along the same lines as Boudreau, they detail how this identity becomes commodified to replace former industries, how Anglo-French bilingualism enables white-collar workers' mobility to urban centers, and they note what may be called economically compulsory working-class mobility. According to the authors, the current political and economic context causes a social reversal: On the one hand, the preservation of

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French Canadian rights and identity allows a touristic market of authentic linguistic and cultural 'goods' and experiences. On the other hand, the federal state keeps on investing into primary resource extraction and industrial transformation, making it a necessity for workers to move back and forth between central and eastern Canada and the Canadian northwest. This latter economic model provides the means to sustain the collective French Canadian identity, but at the same time, it scatters francophone working-class men throughout Canada. In this situation, Anglo-French bilingualism appears in the two books as a valuable capital for educated people who benefit from mobility to access white-collar jobs, while mobility renders working-class individuals somewhat 'more bilingual,' although this expansion of their repertoire does not empower them. This linguistic fracture between an educated middle-class and a non-educated working-class may thus represent a definition of 'elites' in Heller et al.'s and Boudreau's books.

Das mentions similar links between language policies and globalization. 'From the perspective of the Canadian government,' she explains, 'heritage language industries add value to federal and provincial economies by branding Toronto, Montréal, and Ottawa as cosmopolitan cities attractive to foreign business investors and highly skilled and semi-skilled immigrants' (Das 2016: 6). In practice, Indian Tamils who come to Canada for professional or educational purposes enroll their children in private English-medium schools that teach colloquial Tamil as a heritage language, when Sri Lankan refugees' children go to French-medium public schools, where they learn literary Tamil as a heritage language. Also, diasporas in Montréal benefit from different advantages according to their choice to immerse entirely in French *or* English, and hence to claim loyalty towards French- or English-speaking communities. However, this way of profiting from the Anglo-Franco rivalry to promote a differentiation between Indians and Sri Lankans through the colloquial or literary Tamil taught in heritage language schools brings out a misguided belief among Tamil children, since such a distinction has no correspondence in the Tamil diaspora outside Montréal. Finally, Das (2016: 57) highlights 'the shortcomings of language policies' in Montréal, showing that 'the government-sponsored standardization of Québécois French and the legislation of French language use in public space have exacerbated inequalities between monolingual (often French-speaking) non-elites and bilingual elites.' The inequalities discussed by Das are consistent with what Heller et al. explain about the different professional opportunities for educated and non-educated people, or with what Boudreau describes concerning the production of the legitimate language. Das adds that, even though Montreal's language policy has leveled some social stratification among the Tamil diaspora, it 'has neither dispelled fears among Québécois nationalists that Canadian multiculturalism is eroding Québec's cultural and linguistic authenticity, nor convinced ethnic and racial minorities that Québécois nationalism and interculturalism are genuinely inclusive.'

Such situations disrupt an essential link between linguistic policies and practices. Traditionally considered as an assimilation threat to francophone identity, individual multilingualism becomes valued, thus widening already existing social inequalities. Boudreau (2016: 34) recalls that, until the 1960s, monolingual

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anglophones *de facto* dominated francophones, English being the language of most Anglo-French interactions. Besides, even as French Canadians living in cities like Moncton (NB) can socialize in French, most of them participate in English-speaking activities and become bilingual, which adds value to other forms of capital. Boudreau points out that traces of this language contact make Acadian French a noticeable variety (Gadet 2017), with a mixed variety called *chiac*. The changing perception of this differentiation from the legitimate norm (be it Québécois or European French) may be conceived of as positively or negatively distinctive depending on the context. Even as the author underlines the positive effect of the globalized diversity – since traditionally stigmatized practices can now be considered authentic and thus gain prestige and symbolic value – she warns against a thoughtless promotion of diversity, considering that it may prevent speakers with inadequate repertoires from becoming socially mobile (Boudreau 2016: 197). Considering differences in the individual repertoire not only according to varieties of French or monolingualism versus multilingualism but also according to how the speakers build and can mobilize various enunciative possibilities, this remark may be linked with the notions of *elaborated* and *restricted code*, 'code' being here understood as 'repertoire.' According to Bernstein,

> It is possible to locate the two codes more precisely by considering the orientation of the family role system, the mode of social control, and the resultant verbal feedback. (...) Very broadly, then, children socialized within middle-class and associated strata can be expected to possess both an elaborated and a restricted code while children socialized within some sections of the working-class strata, particularly the lower working-class, can be expected to be limited to a restricted code. As a child progresses through a school it becomes critical for him to possess, or at least to be oriented toward, an elaborated code if he is to succeed. (Bernstein 1964: 66–67)

Heller et al. precisely investigate the situation of franco-minorities that do not possess valuable forms of economic and symbolic capital. The francophone working-class members from rural and urban peripheral areas seem to have limited access to the valued multilingual market, especially men with little education. Such a distinction between women and men, between those who are well-educated and those who are poorly educated, between those who are multilingual and those who are monolingual, reproduces social inequalities, especially since schooling pushes 'good students' who manage to build an *elaborated code* towards an urban white-collar career, and 'bad students' limited to a *restricted code* towards industrial and extracting labor and its associated forms of mobility (Heller et al. 2016: 124). Therefore, even as francophone Canadians living outside of the country's only official francophone province of Québec have struggled to gain rights and resources drawing on nationalist notions of rootedness, many poorly educated franco-minorities live with a high degree of mobility which partly challenges the federal and provincial efforts to sustain the 'francophone nation.'

Das investigates Indian and Sri Lankan children's and youths' trajectories of mobility, language learning, and social identification according to their linguistic

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abilities with similar results, even though the pathways are different. She shows that youth use their code-switching abilities 'as a device to affirm [their] claim to membership and the solidarity of the group in contrast to outsiders' (Woolard 1988: 69). Heller et al. (2016: 5) may describe this as the contestation by an immigrant group of social policy based on a colonialist conception of Canada as composed of two 'nations' only, namely the French and the English, a conception that erases what also makes Canada today – the First Nations and the so-called 'visible minorities,' i.e. immigrants like the Tamil communities. This post-colonial social policy allows the construction of categories such as francophone (and anglophone, First Nation, or immigrant) 'ethnoclass,' hence flattening the complexity of identities. On the one hand, according to Das, the ones who access an elaborated multilingual code 'navigate Montréal's Anglo-Franco rivalries' (Das 2016: 93) and are diversely acknowledged on the linguistic market: Sri Lankan youth who speak 'in unaccented style of Québécois French' are recognized as 'belonging to Montréal's ethnically diverse Francophonie. Yet Indian children who attend English-medium schools and learn standard Québécois French remain essentially anglophones in the public's eye' (Das 2016: 4). On the other hand, code-switching may turn into devalued 'out-group crossing' (Rampton 1995) depending on the context, since language socialization does not escape discourses of social and ethnic belonging (Roberts 1999).

The three books, thus, cast light on various mismatches between the Canadian linguistic policies, the current globalized economic context, and various speakers' social practices and resources. For instance, the linguistic insecurity that Boudreau describes is partly linked to the fact that the province of Québec succeeded in constituting itself as the only legitimate French Canada, preventing non-Québécois French Canadian minorities from gaining the same legitimacy. Besides, federal funds allocated to the preservation of the French Canadian identity and community *in fine* provide jobs for people working in institutions sustaining French Canadians, instead of helping franco-mobiles to root new French-speaking minorities in the north-west, or more prosaically to efficiently sustain their stay in English-speaking territories. Indeed, as Heller et al. (2016: 162) clarify, workers who experiment with this kind of mobility are not willing to take root in an English bastion but to work and go back 'home,' where their family remains and sustains the 'roots' notwithstanding the economic necessity of the 'routes.' The development of globalized industrialization thus allows investment in the preservation of fixed communities idealized as French-speaking regarding rights to education and socioeconomic mobility, in addition to making these efforts useless, since the main stakeholders do not necessarily care about sustaining the French nation. Besides, as Boudreau points out, internal barriers within the institutions aimed at preserving French themselves contribute to the reproduction of inequalities through processes of social selection which, according to Heller et al. (2016: 131), 'devalue working-class linguistic and cultural capital.'

The concept of 'nation' used in the three books is referring not to its common modern meaning of 'state' but to a linguistically and culturally united people. Thanks to Das' and Heller et al.'s dense contextualizations of Canada today, we

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have a better understanding of what an 'ethnoclass' is, and of the claims made about the recognition of immigrants' and francophones' legitimate identities in all three monographs. However, since none of the books explicitly mentions any 'anglophone nation' – as none clearly defines 'elites' – it remains somehow confusing to identify who exercises the powerful forces that provoke such claims in reaction.

3. FRANCOPHONES, FRANCO-MOBILES, FRANCO-MINORITIES?

The articulation of the three publications discussed in this article presents a broad vision of what it may mean to be a French Canadian today or, on the contrary, of what it may mean not to be an anglophone Canadian. From a critical sociolinguistic and anthropological perspective, these studies rely on trajectories to understand the complexity and the contradictions of notions such as francophone identity and community. Thus, being a French Canadian means to be caught in tensions between practices and emphasis on identities different from the state categorizations (Das) or from political or economic interests (Heller). However, even though they all address the situation of French-speaking minorities, the monographs obviously refer to different social and linguistic categories under the hypernym 'francophone.'

Boudreau focuses on the discursive construction of the francophone speaker operating in a minoritized social group, be it the Acadian French-speaking community or the scientific community of sociolinguists, and she investigates the role of the language in inclusion/exclusion processes regarding distinctiveness and distinction (Boudreau 2016: 18). Heller et al. concentrate on speakers from the same franco-minority as Boudreau's, but who come from the working-class as opposed to the middle-class and the elites. These people – in particular, men – are said to have weak language skills in French compared to the valued standard of school and to have no education in English, since the working-class franco-minorities from peripheral urban and rural areas do not benefit from a socialization that gives them the possibility of building a multilingual repertoire that could be valued on the current globalized market. Das explores the same idea when describing the situation of Tamil speakers in Montréal in connection to their origins. Those who transmit colloquial Tamil in their heritage language schools, she explains, are middle-class or elite Indians who usually come to Canada to study and occupy liberal professions (doctors, engineers, lawyers, and so on), and mostly send their children to English-medium private schools. Those who transmit literary Tamil to their children are Sri Lankan refugees from lower castes and socioeconomic levels. Their children go to French-medium public schools. Thus, according to the Canadian way of categorizing the population, these communities must be defined as anglophone or francophone. However, also considered allophones with respect to English or French, they benefit from funds designed to sustain their heritage languages and cultures, even though, the author explains, the distinction elaborated in Montréal between literary and colloquial Tamil is a myth. On the one hand, it allows the Tamil communities to establish more nuanced social distinctions (castes, class, religions, origins, and so on) than the ones proposed by

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the state; on the other hand, the English-speaking community of Montréal counts the Indian Tamils among its ranks, as does the French-speaking community with the Sri Lankans.

A close reading of the three books, thereby, contributes to the understanding that the experience of being a francophone Canadian differs according to socioeconomic and geographical origins, and is not necessarily consistent with being categorized as a member of the francophone ethnoclass. Thereby, the goal of the publications is not to establish categories but to understand social processes, not to condemn inequalities but to identify how these processes shape and are shaped by a linguistic stratification particularly visible in Canada, and to show how this stratification enhances social and economic inequalities. However, reading the three books suggests that the common category 'francophone' is implicitly constructed in opposition to other social classes, especially the 'elite,' the educated Canadians, or the anglophones, in other words to diverse categories that are poorly described or defined, which is sometimes confusing.

As already mentioned, Boudreau points to the 'dominants' as the producers of legitimate discourse, that is, to a category of intellectuals that may, or may not, belong to the same social class as the speaker. She exemplifies this position through some journalistic or intellectual discourses that stigmatize Acadian French, but she mainly focuses on post-1960 discourses from writers and artists that challenge hegemonic linguistic and cultural modes in French Canada, making it somewhat unclear if such intellectuals have to be considered 'elites' or not. Das broadly identifies at least two levels within 'elites.' On the one hand, she mentions Tamil community leaders, provincial political stakeholders, and economic leaders to focus on how communities and individuals among them instrumentalize language policies and state funds in a particular way to benefit from a system that structures their everyday life. On the other hand, she makes a difference between 'monolingual (often French-speaking) non-elites and bilingual elites' (Das 2016: 57), which appears as a somehow quick amalgamation of the linguistic issues and the political and economic concerns that she aims to describe. Finally, Heller et al. point to the broad categorization of francophones designed to make them an 'ethnoclass' to 'legitimize class relations on cultural grounds.' This notion comes from political economy and is mobilized to explain the mobility of French Canadians outside Québec and the inadequacy between language policies, practices, and resources. 'More precisely,' the authors add, 'the ethnoclass system at play in Canada is intimately connected to its history as a producer of primary resources' (Heller et al. 2016: 28). Besides, the authors of *Sustaining the Nation* connect the notion of 'ethnoclass' with the one of 'nation.' They argue that 'nations, and the ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic principles of social organization they create, are not natural or universal (. . .) but rather, discursive products of mercantile and industrial capitalism' (Heller et al. 2016: 25). The discursive production that makes francophone Canadians an ethnoclass seems to come from other ethnoclasses, since the authors mention the 'anglophone control of capital (. . .), the traditionalist francophone elite running francophone institutions, and the often-tense compromises of an English-dominated state, sometimes attempting to suppress

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francophone zones of power, sometimes accepting their persistence' (Heller et al. 2016: 89). However, Heller et al. underline differences between modernizing elites for whom authenticity is 'the sign of nationhood and the marker of rural backwardness' and the 'post-national, cosmopolitan elite' that now considers authenticity 'the avant-garde,' and sees 'new opportunities in the value increasingly accorded to multilingualism in the globalized new economy' (Heller et al. 2016: 249). Even though the authors mention the complexity of the dynamics underlying the French Canadian nation, aiming at juxtaposing 'the various mobilities and moorings of an ethnoclass and its elite' to explain the difficulty of sustaining the idea of a rooted nation, repeated references to 'elites' are again confusing, especially to readers coming from other national and linguistic contexts. Indeed, one may broadly question this notion. Are elites legitimated – and by whom? – according to power, wealth, education, or reputation? Do they share a sense of connivance, collusion, or complicity to form ruling classes? How do they become 'elites,' and which forces sustain their reproduction and renewal? Of course, the books discussed here pursue other goals than defining Canadian elites, and one cannot blame the authors for not focusing on this question. But one may call, in line with Aguiar (2012: 4), for further research on the topic:

> Who but academics are better placed to penetrate the sanctuaries of elites and their frequent unilateral decision making practices with important consequences for the rest of us? It behooves social scientists and qualitative researchers in particular to take on the task and responsibility of penetrating the fortress walls of elite exclusivity to explore and expose who, how, and why decisions are made, how the decisions are legitimated to benefit the few at the cost of the many, and show that even when 'studying down' one should not ignore the role of elites in managing and controlling social processes and phenomena with broad socioeconomic implications and consequences at the local and global scale.

4. SPLITTING IDENTITY: IDENTIFICATION, SOCIAL IMAGE, AND SOCIALIZATION

The perspectives presented here clearly show that the francophone minority in Canada, like everywhere else, must be defined with regards to the majority that defines it, be it the anglophone Canadian majority, economic and symbolic elites, or various institutional stakeholders. Scrutinizing the different levels shaped by the notion of 'identity' in the three publications may nevertheless help to eschew the reader's impression – somewhat instilled by a focus on ambiguous elite discourses and positions – that the concerns fall within activist denunciation or relativist disillusion. Indeed, the three publications aim at showing that identities constructed as 'francophone' or 'anglophone' are linked to political and economic interests, and thereby conceal the complexity of social constructions. Boudreau, Das, and Heller et al. focus on three forces defining the French Canadian identity that might be characterized as, according to Avanza and

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Laferté (2005), (1) *external identification*, which refers to legal and administrative categorizations, (2) production of *social images*, in other words, the production of a commodifiable identity mainly presented in the books discussed here as 'French authenticity,' and (3) *socialization*, in reference to the many social practices linked to the francophone identity in Canada. As the three publications consistently present these forces as linked to each other, it may be useful to distinguish how these definitions of 'identity' allow Boudreau, Heller et al., and Das to investigate specific issues of the Canadian linguistic dynamics.

The concept of *identification* (Noiriel 1993) refers to legal and administrative categorizing designed at controlling populations through the establishment of entitlements: A citizen, Avanza and Laferté explain, can vote, when a foreigner cannot. The three publications firstly mention Canadian censuses as a way to categorize people. According to Heller et al. (2016: 5), who mainly focus on this first force, this federal process is sustained by the francophone elites to 'shape them into the right form for the state,' even though the 'conditions make achieving that difficult.' Categorization, or *identification*, allows distinguishing between anglophones, francophones, and allophones for political and economic reasons, among them the opportunity to establish the allocation of federal or provincial funds to various communities through francophone institutions or heritage language schools. Das shows, in this sense, how the Tamil linguistic landscape complies with the double bind of belonging to the Indian or Sri Lankan community, and to the francophone or anglophone Montréal. Therefore, *identification* qualifies any social action in which identity-based categorization acts on an individual from outside, from a social institution, according to specific codes (Avanza and Laferté 2005: 142). In some ways, such identification appears in what Boudreau explains about her experience in France, where her language skills are invariably categorized as 'different,' and often corrected to approach the 'Franco-French' standard. Finally, the concept of *identification* describes not so much a state as a process, which sheds light on how categorization socially organizes any context and, thereby, on how the negotiation of identifying practices is constant, as described by Das regarding the way Tamil Sri Lankan youth navigate Montreal's linguistic and social context.

The second force corresponds to what Avanza and Laferté (2005) call, after Chamboredon et al. (1985), the production of a *social image* to investigate how the social production of discourse and symbols attached to groups and territories follow marketing or political rationales. The three publications mention the commodification (Heller 2003) of cultural and linguistic 'goods' in a similar way to what Chamboredon et al. (1985) describe concerning Provence in France, namely the discursive construction of an authentic territory and population to wipe out any trace of industrial and urban existence and therefore fulfill the tourists' expectations. Heller et al. point out that the commodification of linguistic and cultural authenticity erases the reality of the franco-mobiles' labor mobility. In other words, francophone elites produce a social image of authenticity and rootedness through institutional discourses and representations and, broadly said,

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commodify it (1) politically to sustain the francophone nation regarding linguistic policies, and (2) economically to open up new tourist markets (Heller et al. 2016: 89). Such commodification of stereotyped social images, however, fails to convey the concerns of franco-minorities, especially the working-class, since they serve the globalized economy that causes the very mobility that challenges this social image. For her part, Boudreau somehow contributes to the spreading of the *social image* of the Acadian French, since *À l'ombre de la langue légitime* looks into the negotiation of the franco-minorities' social image that they have towards themselves. Also, it reaches the academic community that nowadays recognizes not only French Canadian sociolinguistics but also varieties of French that were little known by European researchers.

Focusing on the articulation of these two first forces, identification and social image, Heller et al. make it particularly clear how the working-class francophones outside the province of Québec are pressured into labor mobility through their external categorization as a 'francophone ethnoclass.' The concept of 'ethnoclass' tends to compact extensive historical and geographic means under the vague notion of 'cultural (including linguistic) grounds.' However, the authors explain the ambivalence of such an abstract distinction between francophones and anglophones by showing that it recovers at the same time what, following Avanza and Laferté, one may call *external identification*, i.e. a categorization justified by cultural and linguistic belonging, and what we may define as *social image*, i.e. the branding of goods and symbolic values related to these affiliations.

This helps us understand the complementary and ambivalent forces that foster tensions between identifying practices (*identification*), discursive productions of commodified cultural goods (*social image*), and the very *socialization* of individuals and communities, a force that Avanza and Laferté (2005) may broadly understand as the individual's participation in any social groups that form society. According to them, analyzing *socialization* implies investigating practices to understand how far individuals adopt, refuse, or accept the assigned *identifications* and *social images*. As said previously, Boudreau investigates the numerous and often contradictory belongings that intersect with her language(s) – among other symbolic resources – professional activities, and private life. Heller et al. also depict the ambivalent positioning of franco-mobiles on the move, between their homeland, language, and culture, and the institutional discourse designed to sustain a Frenchness that they are supposed to embody, although they struggle to identify with it. However, the notion of socialization helps to question a different phenomenon described in the book, such as the quality of the education provided in the French-speaking schools in the rural and urban peripheral areas mentioned: If students really have no other language skills in English than '*yes* pis *no* pis *toaster*' (Heller et al. 2016: 106) at the end of their curriculum, does it mean that these schools are less effective than the ones in anglophone Canada or in cities like Moncton or Montréal, and why? Such issues concern socialization and may be worth mentioning to make the situation more transparent.

Lastly, *Linguistic Rivalries* probably is the book that best describes the multiplicity and complexity of identity in the most precise ways. Indeed, relying on archives, linguistic landscaping, and individual narratives, Das very precisely distinguishes

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how the Tamil communities connect various experiences of *socialization* to produce different and distinctive *social images* designed to contest what they consider improper *identifications* led by the general Québécois public. On a more transnational and international level, the two Tamil communities also identify themselves in a way that Avanza and Laferté may consider auto-identifying. 'Although Indians and Sri Lankans may publicly appear as "rivals" in Montréal,' Das points out, 'their pursuit of prosperity collectively boasts of a global modernity that rivals all other "civilizations" in both primordiality *and* cosmopolitanism' (Das 2016: 175). Indeed, relying on external *identification*, they produce their own *social image* to construct 'alternative "regimes of value" (Myers 2004)' according to the sociolinguistic division of labor (Das 2016: 7) and to rebuild new *belonging* to the homeland:

> Indian Tamil immigrants can showcase their 'cosmopolitan' languages to enhance their upward mobility, and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, disposed of their ancestral homes by a war and tsunami in Jaffna, can draw on the resources of their 'primordialist' language to rebuild their homeland in the diaspora and, from there, launch a 'global' critique of racism, war, and environmental devastation. (Das 2016: 21)

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The three publications presented and discussed here together explore the individuals' many socialization paths, the multiple identifying institutions, and the diversity and sometimes contradictory social images produced by numerous social groups and by the speakers themselves. They allow a better understanding of how far such processes reduce individuals' relations to groups, languages, and territories to stereotyped links not really in touch with their actual socialization practices. They also help to overcome the idea that French in Canada may survive or develop only on an emotional basis. As Boudreau (2016: 139) points out, speakers must have opportunities to use their language in various and frequent situations in order to expand it. Indeed, as Hymes (1984: 40) underlines, language is what those who possess it can do with it and what they have been able to do with it on any occasion and for different reasons, which explains that differences in language skills and control are not accidental: They are intrinsic to the language itself, as it exists for its users. In other terms, the existence of French in Canada, or in other francophone minority communities, depends on the socialization opportunities of its speakers, which rely on the often-contestable modalities of the identifying practices (Duchêne and Humbert 2018) and the production of social images (Heller 2011).

NOTE

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