Accessing newcomer services in suburban Montréal: a pilot study

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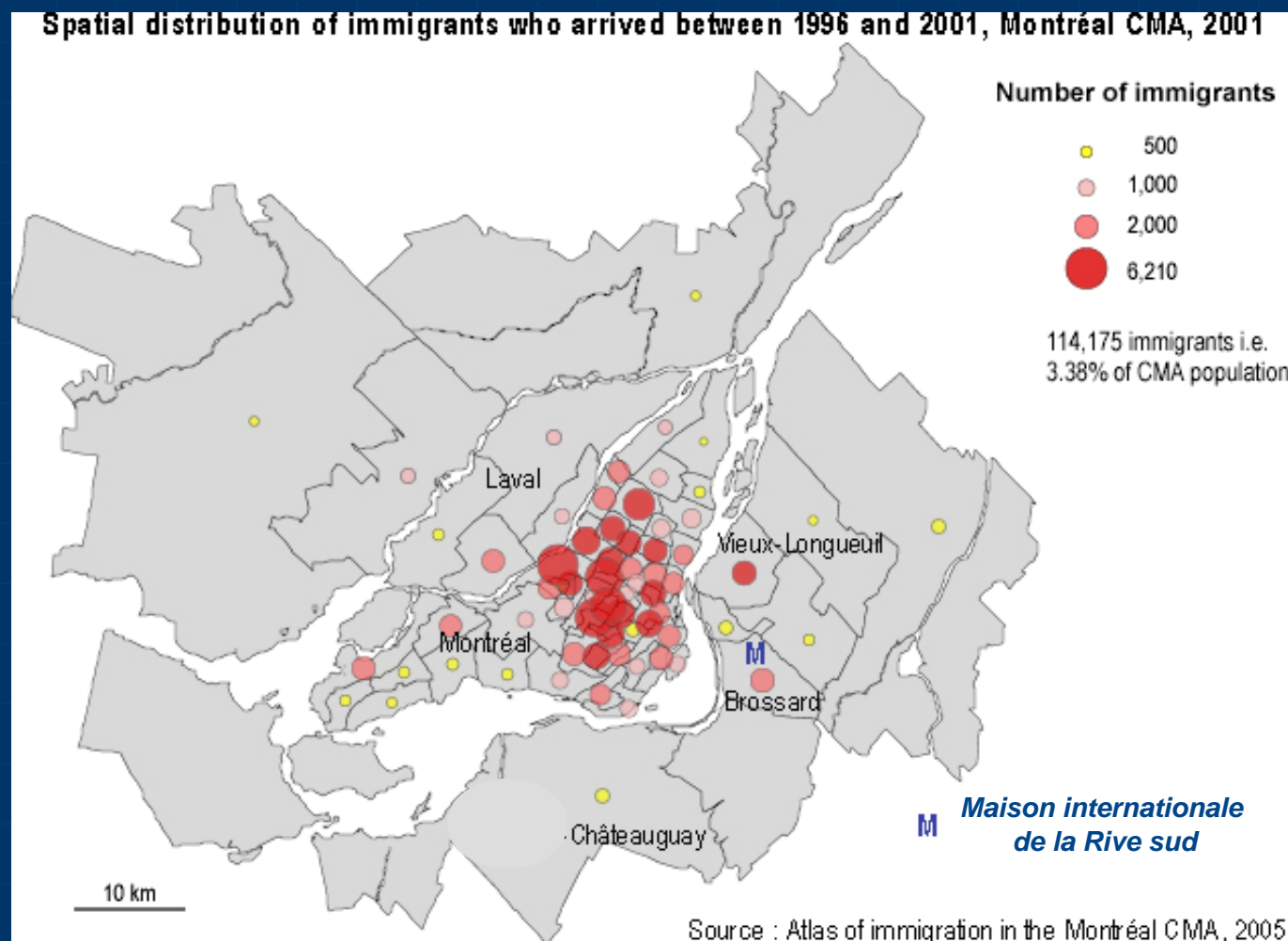
presentation to Workshop *"Newcomer access to settlement services: an interdisciplinary approach"*
10th International Metropolis Conference, Toronto, 17-21 Oct. 2005

Objectives & context

- Does geographic proximity affect new immigrants' access to settlement services?

  literature (e.g. Apparicio & Séguin, forthcoming) :

  - proximity as enabling condition facilitating consumption of certain goods/services, esp. for those with no car
  - mediating factors: information, choice/motivation etc

- Case study: survey of settlement organization clients in medium/low density suburban zone of Montréal

  - complements larger Toronto-based research of Lo et al. – same questionnaire

The case study agency in geographical context: distribution of recent immigrants in Montréal region

Spatial distribution of immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 2001, Montréal CMA, 2001

Number of immigrants

- 500
- 1,000
- 2,000
- 6,210

114,175 immigrants i.e. 3.38% of CMA population

Laval

Vieux-Longueuil

Montréal

M

Brossard

Maison internationale de la Rive sud

M

Châteauguay

10 km

Source : Atlas of immigration in the Montréal CMA, 2005

Methodology

1. Pilot survey (Apr. 2005) to clients of *La Maison internationale de la Rive Sud (MIRS)*
   - 65 written questionnaires completed in various languages during part-time French classes (difft. levels)
2. "Objective" measurement of spatial dimensions of accessibility of clients to the MIRS using basic GIS techniques
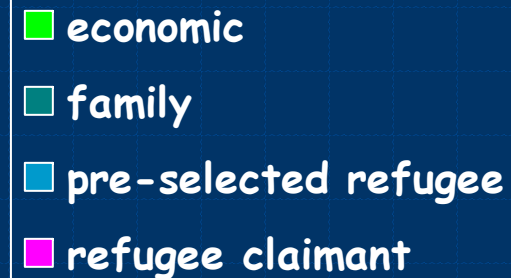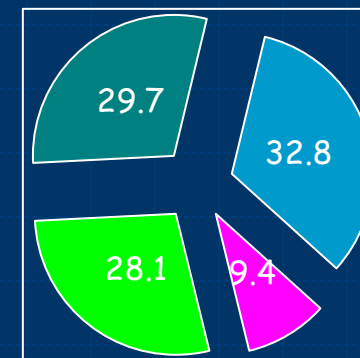
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Immigration data

Year of immigration

Immigration class (%)

economic

family

pre-selected refugee

refugee claimant
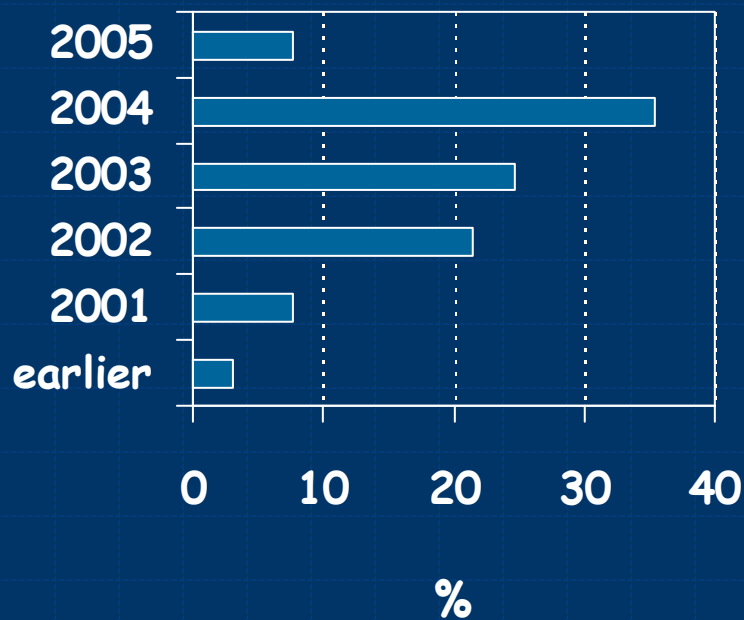
Region of birth (%)

W. & C. Asia, Middle East*	49.2
S Asia	3.1
S.E. Asia	1.5
E. Asia	6.2
N. Africa	4.6
C. & S. America	18.4
Caribbean & Bermuda	1.5
E. Europe	15.4
Total (N = 65)	100

* predominantly Afghanistan

Languages spoken well or quite well

Non-official language(s) only	61.5%
Non-official language(s) + English	18.5%
Non-official language(s) + French	13.8%
Non-official language(s) + English + French	6.2%
Total (N = 65)	100%

Demography

Age and gender
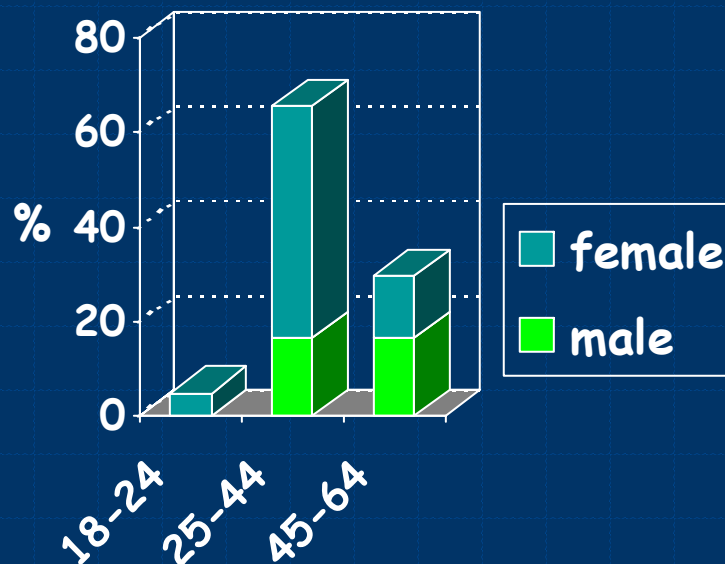
Household type (%)	
2 parent family + children only	79.4
2-parent family + children + others	3.2
Single parent family	3.2
Couple, no children	6.2
Sharing with other adults	4.8
Living alone / other arr.	3.2
Total (N = 63)	100

Factors leading respondents to use services at the MIRS

How they heard about MIRS (%)

Family member	24.1
Friend	21.7
Neighbour/acquaintance	3.6
Referral: another immigrant settlement agency	31.3
Referral: professional/govt worker	4.8
Read about the MIRS	8.4
Passing by the MIRS offices	6.0
Total (N = 83 [> 1 response allowed])	100

Importance of various factors in choice to use MIRS services (%)

	Very important	Quite important	Unimp-ortant	Total
MIRS has a good reputation	77.0	18.0	4.9	100 (N=61)
Its location is convenient	72.6	17.7	9.6	100 (N=62)
Employees who speak my language	58.1	14.5	27.4	100 (N=62)

◈ Is there another agency nearer your home offering equivalent services?

No: 63.5%   Don't know: 30.2%   Yes: 6.3%
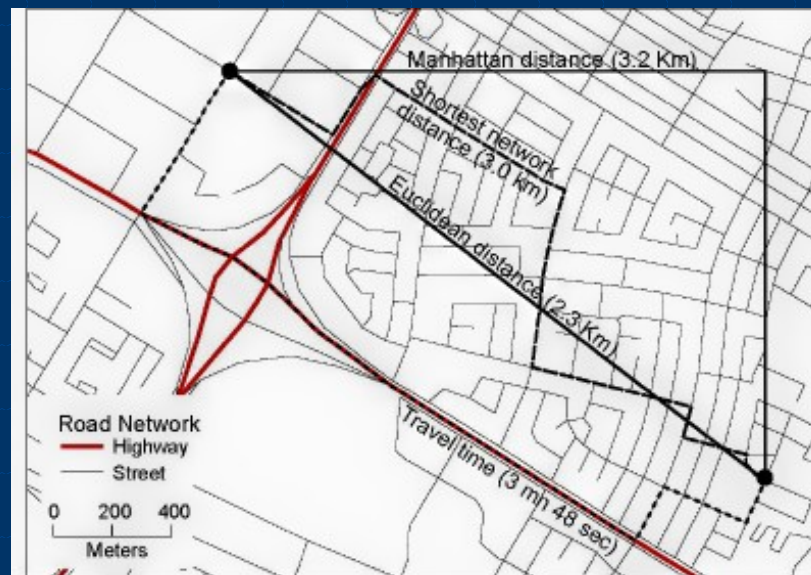
ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

GIS methodology

- Questionnaires geo-coded by 6-character postal code of residence
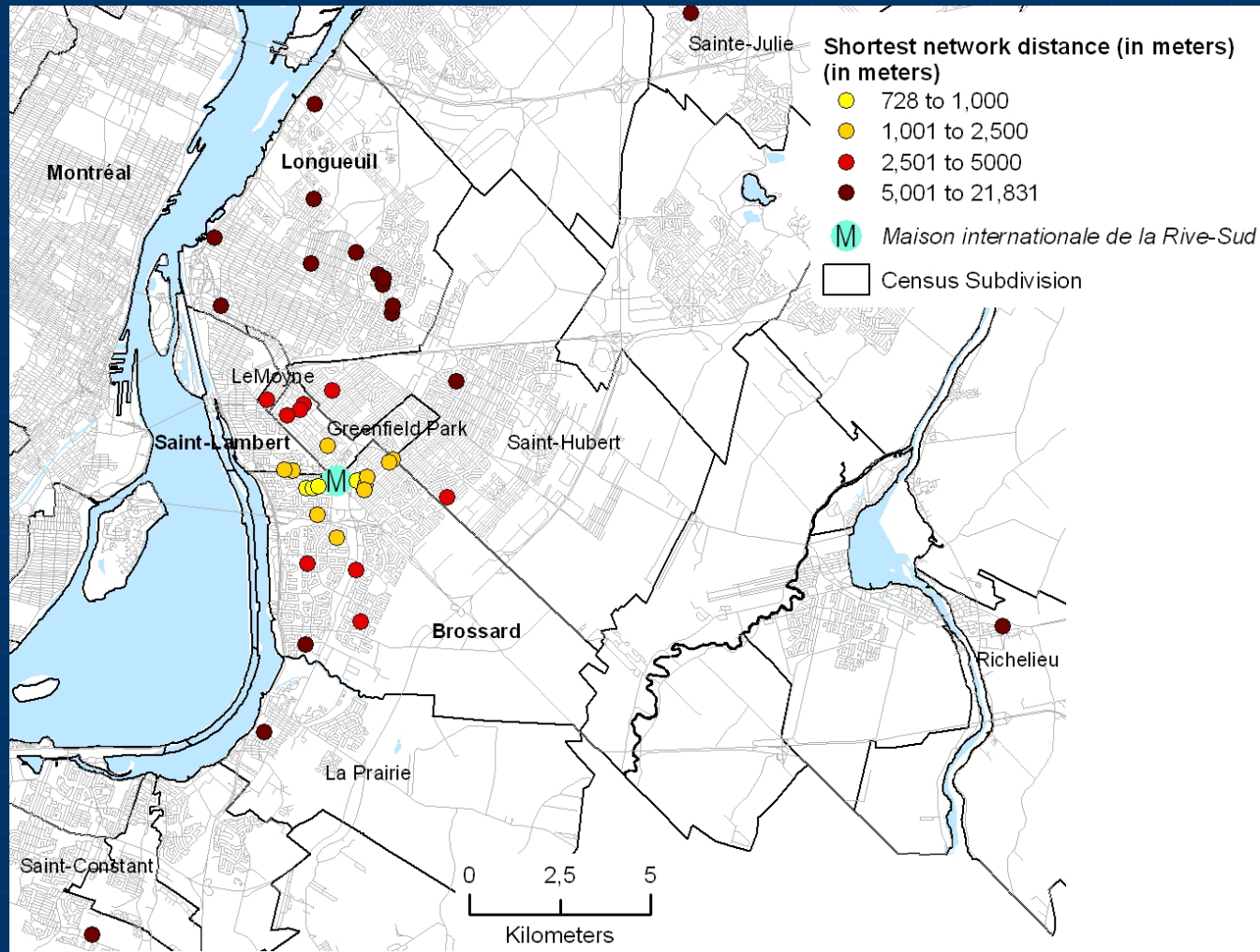- 2 accessibility measures computed:
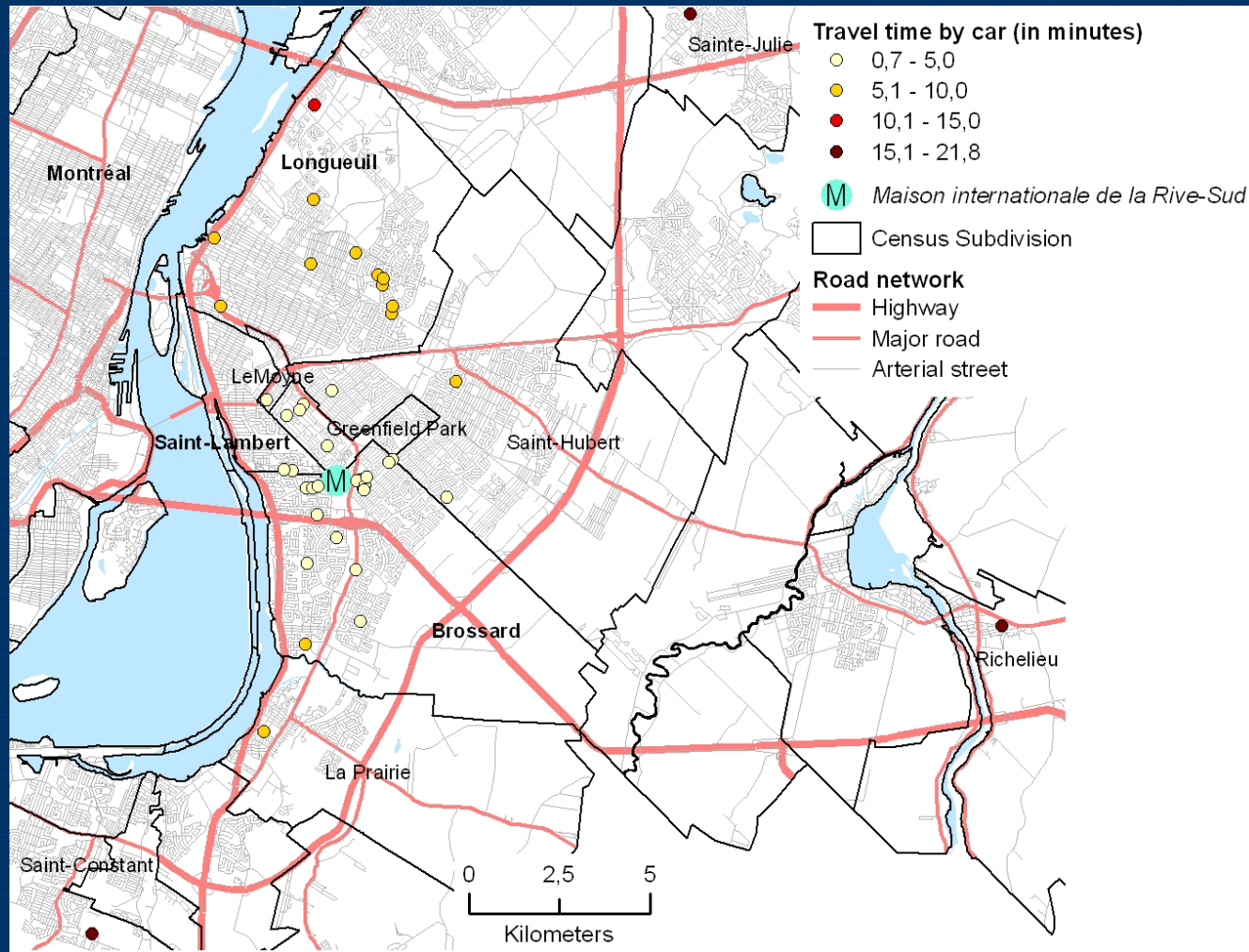 - shortest network distance
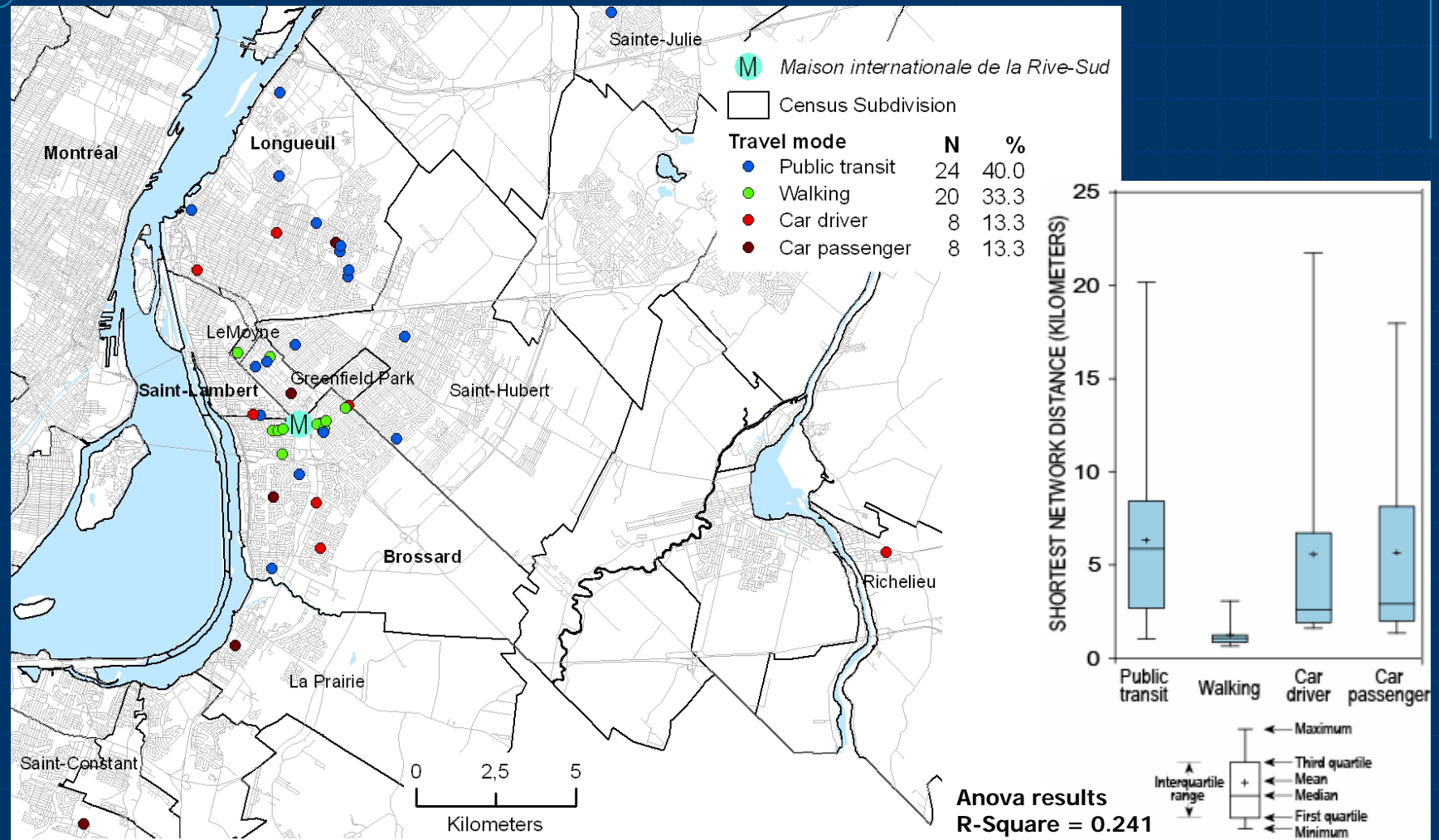 - travel time by car

types of distance

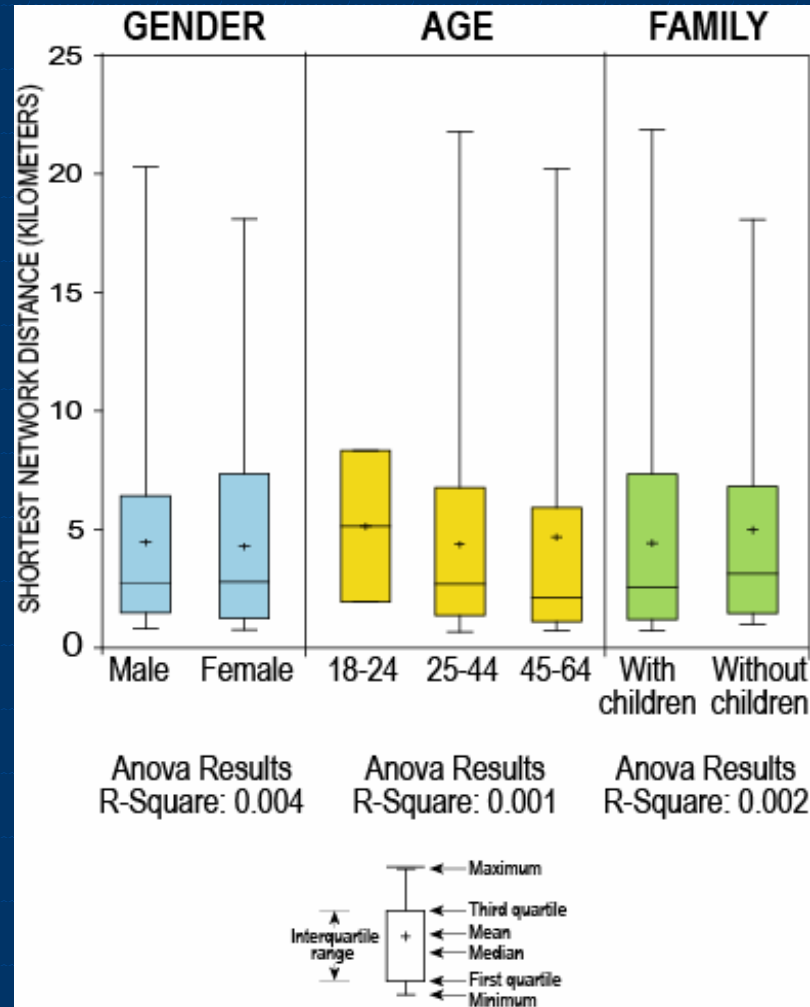# Network distance of respondents from MIRS

Hypothetical car travel time of respondents from MIRS

Relation between respondents' travel mode and network distance from MIRS

Respondents' network distance from MIRS not significantly related to gender, age or family type

Ease of travel to MIRS by travel mode

		EASE OF TRAVEL TO MIRS		TOTAL
		easy	difficult (quite/very)	
Public transit	N	15	20	25
	row %	60	40	100
	column %	*30.5*	*62.5*	*38.5*
Walking	N	20	1	21
	row %	95.2	4.8	100
	column %	*40.8*	*6.3*	*32.3*
Car	N	14	5	19
	row %	73.7	26.3	100
	column %	*28.6*	*31.3*	*29.2*
Total	N	49	16	65
	row %	75.4	24.6	100
	column %	*100*	*100*	*100*

Reasons for difficulties in travel to MIRS

Ease of travel to MIRS	N	%
Easy	49	75.4
Difficult (quite/very)	16	24.5
Must take two buses	9	13.8
Other reason*	7	10.8

* All the "other" reasons had to do with distance and/or travel time

Relation between ease of travel and network distance from MIRS
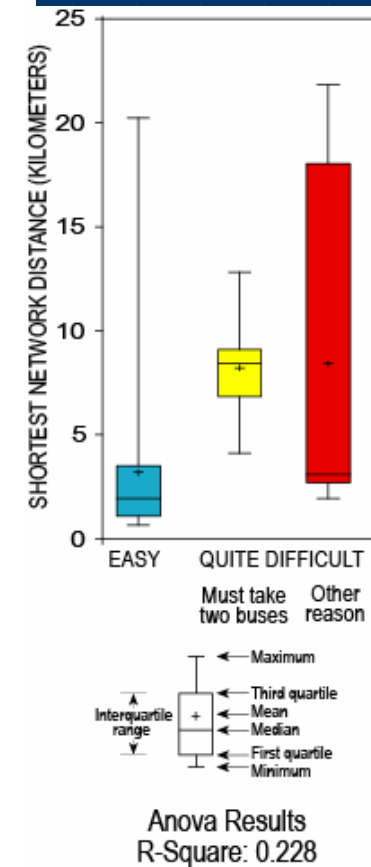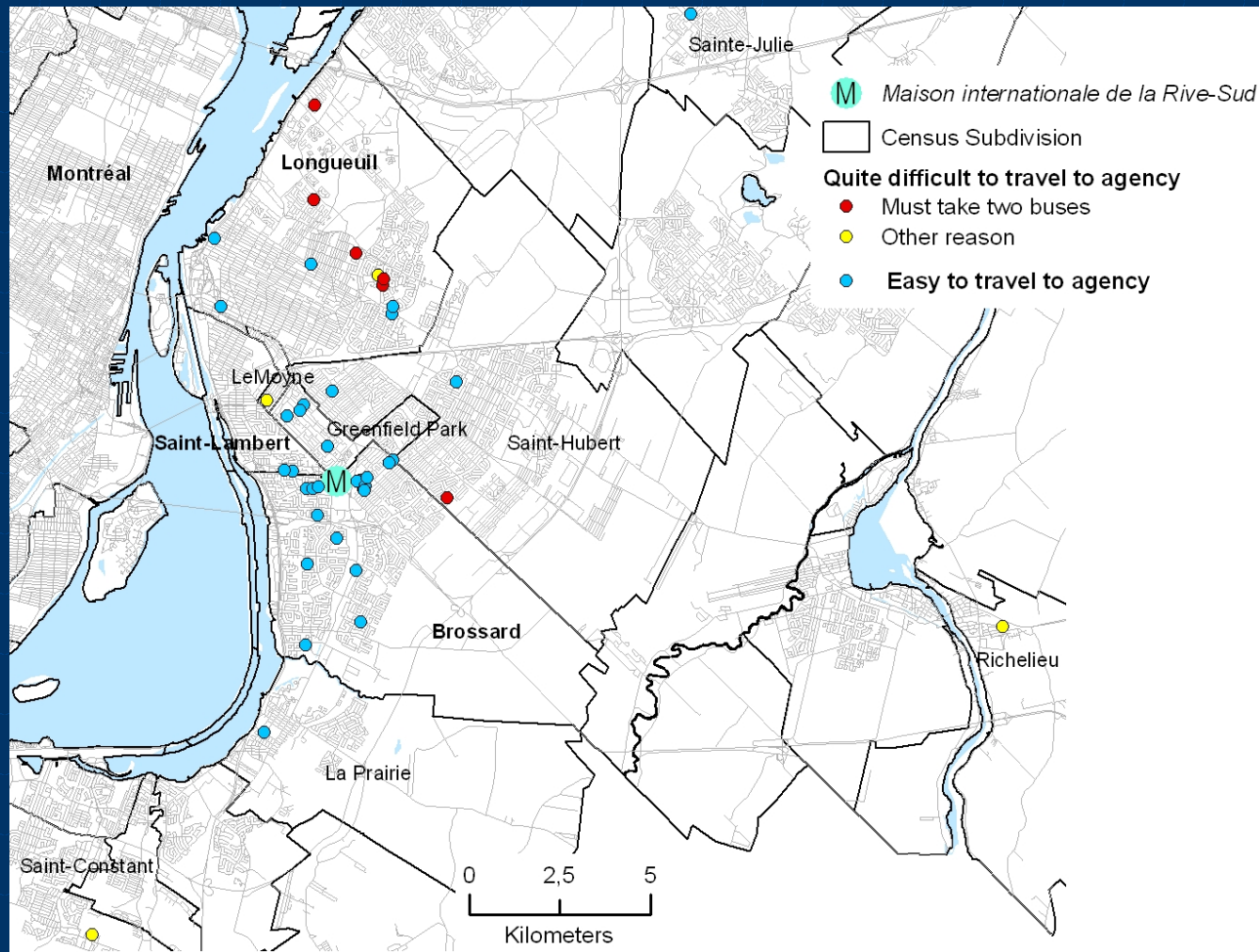
Conclusion

◈ That only 26% reported accessibility difficulties should not be taken at face value

  ▪ sampling frame: frequent, motivated users

    ◆ arrangements already made to facilitate travel

    ◆ less inclined to perceive/report obstacles?

  ▪ are *non*-users deterred by accessibility issues?

◈ incentives to settle newcomers in suburbs need to consider poor inter-suburb public transit connectivity

  ▪ policy to "territorialize" settlement services may further complicate access

Acknowledgments

- ◆ Fieldwork access and assistance:
  - M. Noureddine Belhocine, director, Maison internationale de la Rive Sud (MIRS)
  - Mme Nesrin Neda, coordinator of language classes and other training, MIRS
  - French teachers, MIRS
- ◆ Funding:
  - GEOIDE
  - Immigration et métropoles, volet 2