The Fragmented or Cosmopolitan Metropolis? A Neighbourhood Story of Immigration in Montreal

Introduction

Immigration and the metropolis have been linked with one another for a long time, and still are in our ways of thinking about the contemporary city. No-one has better explored this link--even though his work contains no statistics on immigration flows--than the Berlin sociologist Georg Simmel, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century. The urban phenomenon itself was not even really one of his preoccupations: he always contented himself with defining the metropolis simply by its contrast to the small town. But many of his essays, particularly *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1950 [1903]) and *The Stranger* (1950 [1908]) are still essential reading in the social sciences today. A century later, *La Métropole des Individus (The Metropolis of Individuals)*, the latest book by one of the best urban sociologists writing in French (Bourdin, 2005), opens by revisiting Simmel, whose writing inspires this eminently modern reflection: 'the metropolis is simultaneously a social organisation, an everyday individual experience and a codified set of ways of living and thinking' (Bourdin 2005: 22, my translation). The typical cultural form of the metropolis is cosmopolitanism; an exposure to a mix of many kinds of cultural and social frames of reference, thanks to which the individual has the simultaneous experience of both proximity and distance. It is easy to understand why, for Simmel, the figure of the Stranger perfectly embodied this tension. The Chicago School of sociology continued to investigate urban trajectories in spaces of modernity, especially immigrants' trajectories, by means of both micro and large-scale social surveys. In the Chicago of Robert Park and his colleagues, social disorder was never the end of the story, even in the most marginal places, but rather one step further along in the construction of a new social world.

Immigration and the metropolis have also inspired another tradition of thought that is now widespread, particularly in the work of the Los Angeles School, namely, the idea of the fragmented city. The metropolises that scholars describe as paradigmatic because they seem to represent the fate of the contemporary city better than any others are, above all, immigrant cities. For instance, Straughan and Hondagneu-Sotelo's paper on Los Angeles is entitled 'From Immigrants in the City to the Immigrant City' (2002), while Nijman considers today's paradigmatic city to be Miami which, with its majority of foreign-born inhabitants, is a major hub for transnational communities (Nijman, 2000). Such papers take a global snapshot of the city in order to describe its social divisions. These are then interpreted as evidence of social rupture, betraying a strong nostalgia for a lost social cohesion that probably never existed. This vision has also crossed the Atlantic, making waves in France particularly among the 'organic intellectuals' of urban politics like Jacques Donzelot (1999). There it has served, paradoxically, to erase any reference to ethnicity in public policy. For instance:

> At the moment, the great urban question is whether the city has the political capacity to hold society together. The underclass living in the residual spaces of the industrial city scare off members of the elite into urban developments for 'people like us', who let themselves go far beyond functional urban planning, increasingly carving out a society of their own. (Donzelot 1999: 88, my translation)

In France as in the United States, urban segregation and its extreme expression in gated communities are seen to embody all the evils of the fragmented city.

These different narratives of the metropolis are anchored in specific urban and social experiences but are also informed by what could be called transnational conversations.

Canadian cities had a relatively low profile in these conversations until the establishment of the Metropolis network,[1] funded by the Canadian government, which has from the outset linked the question of the metropolis to that of immigration (for which Canada had already earned a sound reputation thanks to its early adoption of the multicultural model). It is not clear, however, that its approach takes the notion of the metropolis very seriously, since the paramount concern was the successful incorporation of immigrants, which set the tone of research agendas very early on. And yet immigration has substantially transformed Canada's largest cities: it is above all an urban phenomenon and has contributed significantly to redefining urban studies. Canada is a vast country, stretching from one ocean to the other (as the national motto points out), and its metropolises have each in their own way been in the grip of the shift in the economy from east to west, such that they represent very different versions of the experience of immigration. To a large degree, the fortunes of these metropolitan centres have mirrored the fortunes and intensity of Canadian trade with their associated regions. Thus, when Europe dominated the world, Montreal topped the Canadian urban hierarchy. With the ascendance of the United States, Toronto overtook Montreal in both demographic and economic terms. The more recent rise of the Asian economies has contributed to economic growth in Vancouver (Hiebert et al., 2006). Due to these distinct fates, the specific characteristics of these three metropolises have not only shaped different stories of immigration, but also different traditions of integrating it into research agendas. They each constitute, therefore, a unique laboratory in which to examine the relationship between immigration and the metropolis.

I would like to show that in Montreal's case, the narrative of this relationship is a story of immigrant neighbourhoods; in essence, the relationship has therefore crystallised at the meso scale (between micro and macro). To paraphrase David Hulchanski (Hulchanski 2007: 1), it might seem odd to talk about a city of neighbourhoods when it is obvious that all cities contain neighbourhoods. But I use neighbourhood here in a very specific way: it is to be understood as a territory of collective urban life, as distinct from merely the immediate surroundings of a place of residence (*voisinage* in French). Such a relatively large territory cannot be accurately captured by statistics at the census tract level. This is one of the reasons why the literature on neighbourhood effects is often so confusing: a neighbourhood consists not only of neighbours as such but also of local services and institutions, public spaces and so on. It is not however necessarily recognised as a formal district or borough. Thus, since the amalgamation or merger of all 28 municipalities of the island of Montreal in 2002 (and the subsequent de-merger of 15 of them), almost every one of the 17 boroughs that make up the new City of Montreal is larger than what we might call a sociological neighbourhood. Many boroughs' territories cover two or three such neighbourhoods. In light of the role that neighbourhoods have historically played in the development of Montreal, I argue that this is the appropriate scale at which to analyse the urban realities of immigration. And as we shall see, even though they also frequent Montreal's still-vibrant city centre, successive waves of immigrants have helped make the neighbourhood a solid and durable cornerstone in the construction of the cosmopolitan city.

That said, this vision of the relationship between immigration and the metropolis embodies the particular position of Montreal; informed both by French and Anglo-American research and political traditions, historically pulled between two linguistic communities and located in the heart of a political space polarised by a project of national independence. Indeed, in Montreal, we can find evidence supporting both takes on the metropolis described above--individual cosmopolitan experience versus the fragmented city--but these contrasting visions are radically reshaped by the specifics of Montreal. It should also be noted that what

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[1] http://www.metropolis.net. Accessed 03/06/08.

happens in these matters owes very little to intercultural policies as such and a great deal to the daily experience of Montrealers. The story of immigration in Montreal has many chapters in which the overarching narrative is cosmopolitan in character, but recent developments seem to have triggered a twist in the tale towards the vision of the fragmented city.

1. A forgotten first chapter?

Without wanting to devote too much space to the birth and early development of the metropolis of Montréal, we still need to start at the beginning. In our present troubled times, religious pluralism seems to make the immigration question much more complex than it was before Quebecers (rather recently) discovered and adhered to what the French call *laïcité*, i.e., a dominant secular culture and the separation of church and state. But the founding narrative of the metropolis seems to have been completely forgotten. The city began with a missionary project that propelled a handful of French devotees landing on the island in 1642 to 'convert the savages'. A few years later, the Society of the Priests of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice sent four missionaries to create the ideal Catholic society by building a Christian city on the island. The Sulpicians' seminary, first built in 1685 and much modified since, still houses real live Sulpicians in the shadow of the Notre-Dame Basilica, in what is now called Old Montreal.

Another of Montreal's early distinguishing features was its cadastre, its way of dividing land, which continues to differentiate Lower from Upper Canada (the territory of Lower Canada included much of what is today the province of Quebec). In Montreal, the division of land gave an unusual contour to neighbourhood life: originally designed to give everyone equal access to the Saint Lawrence River, it created a series of *côtes* or portions of land divided into plots and bisected along their length by a road. These territorial units structured inhabitants' daily lives, as one of the first historians of urban form, Jean-Claude Marsan, points out:

> the *côte* designated the rows of farmland drawn perpendicularly, or almost so, to the river shores […]. The côte, or range is thus an alignment of farmland settled by colonists living side by side on narrow but long individual strips, facing a road or a river, or both. The côte, or range, constituted in fact the basic territorial unit responsible for social cohesion. Its spatial delineation tended to arouse the colonist's feeling of identification with a definite territory and of belonging to a specific human community. (Marsan 1981: 34)

These territories often coincided with parishes and, later, with suburbs. They played--and still play--a major role in the history of Montreal. This urban form was perpetuated by the immigrants who developed 'ethnic villages' at the turn of the twentieth century, as we shall see. Throughout the French regime, Montreal remained a (very) small city, albeit one from which were launched expeditions that swept across a good part of the continent. It did not really expand until after the British Conquest of 1759. A second narrative then emerged--that of Montreal as the major metropolis of Canada.

2. A metropolis with a mosaic of neighbourhoods (but not very cosmopolitan)

This chapter of the tale, dating from the prosperous Victorian period to the turn of the twentieth century, is well-known and has left traces all over the city, from the financial district in Old Montréal to the grand bourgeois villas on the city's eponymous 'mountain'. But I want to turn instead to the meso scale of Montreal's urban landscape, which appeared from the outset to be very segmented along ethnic lines. It was not really a dual city, since anglophones did not constitute a homogeneous group: among them were Scots, Irish and

some Americans as well as the English, and each group differed from the others in religious and cultural traditions and socio-economic status. This explains why separate networks of cultural, charitable and economic organisations were set up to manage each community's reproduction. More importantly for the argument I am making here, the groups settled in their own neighbourhoods. If these districts' borders were not always clear (particularly in the south-west of the city where the Irish working class rubbed shoulders with some of the French-Canadian working class), their churches--typically the most important urban institutional landmarks of the time--left no doubt as to the distinct cultural identity of each area. As a result, the metropolis began to look like a mosaic, and while linguistic clashes and religious rivalries already marked Montréal's political life, we can assume, following many historians and geographers, that the segmentation of urban life nonetheless enabled conflicts to be contained. Urban space was thus already a useful resource for peaceful coexistence. As Claire McNicoll has ably demonstrated, when spatial segregation is in fact an aggregation responding to a logic of 'cultural comfort'(McNicoll, 1993: 277), it can facilitate the harmonious coexistence of different groups very well.

This model of 'integration by segmentation' was followed by immigrants arriving from other parts of the world from the turn of the twentieth century onwards. But unlike the many North American cities that had already been radically altered by immigration, relatively few immigrants from countries other than the British Isles had made Montréal their home since the British conquest of 1759. Less than 5% of Montréal's population were immigrants in 1901, which led the historian Paul-André Linteau to suggest that Montréal was hardly a cosmopolitan city (Linteau 1982). However, a few pockets of immigrants were in the process of laying the foundations of a new geography of immigration that would literally and figuratively colour the culture of the city.

3. The founding neighbourhoods of the future

Around the turn of the century, Jews, Cantonese Chinese and African-Americans settled in different districts in Montreal and began to stake out what are still today their 'founding neighbourhoods', to use a term from a seminal paper by the Belgian sociologist Jean Remy (Remy 1990: 180). This concept is relevant not only for describing immigrant settlement in Montreal, but also for understanding the processes and spaces that construct the cosmopolitan city. Remy discusses these with reference to cities in the Mediterranean basin between the late Middle Ages and the end of the nineteenth century; showing that the cosmopolitan city is built on a combination of homogeneous neighbourhoods and central places. City life does not thrive thanks to imposed norms of integration, but rather on social interactions between different groups. These are based on the translation of codes of behaviour from one vocabulary to another in those interstitial spaces--spaces that are neither mine nor yours-- where communication and exchange can freely take place. It is also clear that for Remy, the comfort of being among people from the same cultural background--the comfort of being able to take one's distance from city life--, is as important as intercultural exchanges in public places for the overall cosmopolitan dynamic. A founding neighbourhood--the birthplace of a given immigrant community--can grow and continue to be a place of reference for the community even if their residential trajectories take them elsewhere. It operates as a compromise between home country and host country, but typically becomes a distinctive urban form in its own right and even an attractive destination for others in the contemporary city.

A good example is no doubt Montreal's Chinatown, located at the bottom of the traditional immigrant 'corridor' of Boulevard Saint-Laurent (which was long perceived as dividing the francophone east from the anglophone west). The Cantonese who somehow managed to settle there at the end of the nineteenth century (often unbeknownst to the

Canadian government, which would have liked to see them go back home after they had built the railways) organised their community around an ethnic niche--the laundry trade--and other services for downtown workers such as stores and restaurants (Helly 1987). What came to be known as Chinatown was thus not only a residential space (and indeed is less and less so). Later and quite different East-Asian migratory flows, including the rich Hong Kong Chinese who arrived at the end of the 1970s, settled in the suburb of Brossard on the South Shore partly because of its proximity to the vibrant commercial district of Chinatown--just a bridge away, over the Saint Lawrence River. Hong Kong families readily frequented Chinatown's businesses and community organisations. Over the past three decades, the district has undergone a turbulent but spectacular development taking the form of an excess of 'Chinese' symbols (gateways, temples, public squares, etc.) (Cha 2004). The city's symbolic appreciation of Chinatown perhaps compensates for the poor reception given not only to the original Chinese community, but also to the suburban shopping mall built by Hong Kong immigrants in the 1980s. Old Chinatown is clearly a founding neighbourhood, crystallising the centrality of East and even South-East Asian immigration in Montreal. It has also become a destination for tourists as well as for local consumers.

A rather different example of a founding neighbourhood is illustrated by Little Burgundy (Petite-Bourgogne). African-Americans who, like the Chinese, arrived in Montreal in the wake of the expansion of the North American railway system, settled in Little Burgundy in the south-west of the city, not far from the city centre. They established their own churches and a community centre in this working-class neighbourhood where clashes between French-Canadians and the Irish were commonplace. The Negro Community Centre, founded in 1927, was for a long time a major institution for all the residents of the neighbourhood. A major urban renewal project shook the district at the end of the 1960s, replacing a great number of dwellings with new low-rent social housing--one of the biggest concentrations of social housing in Montréal, totalling 40% of the local residential stock. In the 1980s, the Quebec government changed its housing allocation policy to exclude low-waged employees and thereby attracted many very low-income members of Montreal's Jamaican community who had been living elsewhere to Little Burgundy's social housing units. This wiped out any semblance of social heterogeneity in public housing and resulted in a significant concentration of low-income black residents in a poor environment where drug trafficking had already begun to take root. Haitian immigrants later came to swell this contingent of black social housing tenants, but they did not share the same culture, language or religion as the black communities already living there. Petite-Bourgogne soon became stigmatised for its poverty, violence and interracial tension. Some black groups then dissociated themselves from the image of the founding neighbourhood; especially leaders who by then were living in other places. Conflict erupted over how to deal with the neighbourhood's most symbolic public places, and no agreement could be reached on the renovation and rehabilitation of the erstwhile Negro Community Centre. It is recognised today that this tiny neighbourhood made a huge contribution to Montreal culture; for instance as the birthplace of several world-renowned jazz musicians who remain deeply attached to their local roots. But the story of Little Burgundy shows that founding neighbourhoods can also be contested places, inciting negotiation and sometimes conflict.

4. The golden age of 'little homelands'
The mid-twentieth century brought significant waves of primarily European immigration to Montreal, launching its cosmopolitan turn. As in Toronto, the urban landscape was enriched by 'ethnic villages' that would mark Montreal's culture and give it a cosmopolitan flavour, both figuratively and literally. First the Italians (from the beginning of the century), then the Greeks and Portuguese followed the immigrant corridor to live in districts that would be

associated with them for a long time to come: the Italians settled near Jean-Talon Market in Petite-Patrie (also known as Little Italy) before going on to colonise areas such as the then-suburb of Saint-Leonard; the Greeks settled in Mile End and Parc-Extension, and the Portuguese in Saint-Louis (one of the old Jewish and working-class francophone districts near boulevard Saint-Laurent). These immigrants, often from rural backgrounds with little education, not only quickly made a place for themselves in the city but also changed the architectural and culinary landscape of Montreal. The Italians produced their own version of the Montreal 'duplex' (row or terraced housing made up of two apartments one on top of the other), the Greeks made their mark in the restaurant business (as did the Italians) and the Portuguese played a decisive role in the reconquest of central neighbourhoods. Despite arriving with little and earning low wages, the Portuguese still managed to buy and renovate old housing stock that native Montrealers had regarded until then with a certain disdain as dilapidated slum housing. Painting façades in bright colours, they took over part of a district that was to become one of the hippest of the metropolis--and even North America--the Plateau Mont-Royal.[2]

This Montreal of 'little homelands' inspired the author, Claude Jasmin, to publish a novel entitled, *La petite patrie* (*The Little Homeland* in English) in 1972, and the phrase was taken up in a campaign slogan for municipal elections in the 1970s: '*Le Montréal des petites patries*'. Moreover, Quebecers began to realise that immigrants were one of the keys to their cultural survival. The language question was never far away: for many immigrants, economic success was associated with English. Quebecers began to realise that in the name of a narrow-minded Catholicism, they had pushed several categories of immigrants into the arms of anglophones by refusing them access to Catholic schools; most of which were francophone. The famous Bill 101 (1977), which made it compulsory for immigrants to send their children to school in French; the creation of the Ministry for Immigration and Cultural Communities; and the subsequent agreements made with the federal government to allow Quebec responsibility for selecting and integrating its immigrants would transform relations between Quebec and its immigrant communities. However, it would not be the last time that immigrants were used as a political pawn in the strategic games played out for and against Quebec's independence.

Once the battle for French had been won (or so it was thought), Montrealers jumped into the joys of cosmopolitanism, in its hedonistic variety, and not least its gastronomic one. The famous world exhibition Expo 67 had of course already given them a foretaste of what the wider world could bring. But continued immigration made a deep and lasting impression on Montrealers' lifestyles, particularly in the central districts where high concentrations of immigrants offered partial protection against the demographic decline caused by the exodus to the fast-developing suburbs.

5. From ethnic villages to multiethnic neighbourhoods

The 1980s and 1990s saw another transformation of the Montreal landscape. Canada's immigration policy was overhauled: it opened up to Third World countries in the wake of the Geneva conventions, adopted a 'points system' to attract immigrants based on their human capital, de-racialised family reunification policies and repeatedly raised the target numbers of immigrants that Canada and Quebec aimed to attract. These changes significantly altered the characteristics of Canada's immigrants. Henceforth, they came from more urban areas in a greater variety of countries and were better educated than their predecessors (and the Canadian born). Montreal hit record levels of diversity with respect to the countries of origin

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[2] The Plateau featured in a list of the fifteen hippest neighbourhoods in North America in an article in the US magazine, *UTNE Reader* (November-December 1997 issue).

of its immigrant population, although in quantity it attracted far fewer immigrants than Toronto or even Vancouver. This diversification of immigrants' countries of origin was reflected in the fabric of the city even at the very local level, and brought about a new type of immigrant neighbourhood where diversity won out over the predominance of one or two ethnic groups. Former ethnic villages became markedly multiethnic neighbourhoods: for instance, the old Greek neighbourhood of Parc-Extension welcomed large numbers of immigrants from South Asia, as well as Haitians, Latin Americans and people from various African countries. Furthermore, immigrants settled for the first time in neighbourhoods situated farther and farther from the city centre and even in some suburbs. Thus, the figure of the multiethnic neighbourhood came to represent the city, over and above the question of location (at the periphery or the centre of the city) and socio-economic disparities (Germain, Richard and Rose 2012).

The new face of multiethnic Montreal gave rise, however, to a number of concerns, since at the time various race-related incidents were erupting in Europe and in North America. Ministers and civil servants responsible for immigration in Quebec especially wanted to know how, in light of the concentration of immigration in certain districts, integration could be achieved and how the new arrivals could create viable community social dynamics. In the early 1990s, my colleagues and I received a mandate to conduct a large-scale survey of the most multiethnic neighbourhoods of the metropolis, to examine the ways in which residents negotiated coexistence and shared urban public spaces. The results of this extensive study of community life and modes of interethnic cohabitation in seven neighbourhoods, were, on the whole, quite encouraging (Germain 2002). Public sociability was certainly detached but calm, immigrants were very involved in community dynamics, and the most multiethnic neighbourhoods seemed to have the least interethnic tension. In short, Montreal was changing without really becoming fragmented. The return of economic growth in the middle of the 1990s, a relatively affordable housing market and new culinary traditions brought by new immigrants did more to bring about mutual appeasement than any official integration policies. A sort of soft cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitanism by default was on the rise; a bottom up shared representation which can be tailored to suit every resident in one way or another, probably thanks to the spread of a particular kind of metropolitan mentality among many Montrealers (Germain and Radice 2006).

We found the seeds of at least a discourse of cosmopolitanism in neighbourhoods such as Mile End, where anglophone students and other francophone and European 'marginal gentrifiers' came to share the same public spaces in this neighbourhood in the middle of the immigrant corridor (Rose 1995: 89). While adjacent Petit-Plateau became the heartland of a francophone cultural avant-garde inspired by the Quiet Revolution, Mile End remained an in-between space, a little haven of peace in a city often troubled by linguistic and political tensions, where a number of extremely diverse groups found themselves embracing the cosmopolitan by default, and multiple belonging that doubles as attachment to the district. Indeed, the City of Montréal as a whole has from time to time promoted the idea of cosmopolitanism, especially under the leadership of former Mayor Pierre Bourque (1994-2001) who was also one of the artisans of the monumental symbolic marking of Chinatown, thanks to the links he forged with China while he was the head of Montreal's Botanical Gardens during the 1980s where he founded the Chinese Garden.

However, on occasion, the idea of cosmopolitanism has also triggered resistance that seems to echo the criticisms made by anti-Semitic nationalists such as Maurice Barrès in France during the Dreyfus Affair at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1892, Barrès resuscitated the word nationalism in an article on the opposition between enthusiasts of foreign literature and advocates of national literature entitled, 'The quarrel between nationalists and cosmopolitans', in which he denounced the superficiality and rootlessness of

the international elite (Winock 1997). The parallel might appear surprising or even shocking, but it nevertheless underlines the discomfort prompted by this notion in the context of a minority society such as Quebec, embroiled in debates about national sovereignty. Daniel Latouche's book criticising multiethnic Montreal's 'cosmopolitanism of the bazaar' (Latouche 1990: 100) testifies to this discomfort. A considerable part of Franco-Québécois society appears to be hypersensitive to the perceived threat of an ode to diversity in which Québécois identity would not first and foremost be defined in terms of belonging to a common French-Canadian culture (Latouche 1990). Nonetheless, multiethnic Montreal at the end of the twentieth century presented few of the characteristics of fragmented societies: indeed, at the heart of its various neighbourhoods, everyday life was informed by a pragmatic soothing of differences. Downtown was also animated by a vibrant public sociability in which, it appeared, immigrants participated fully (although few studies have documented this). However, other changes were afoot on which the shock and aftershocks of September 2001 would cast a harsh light.

6. Us and Them
At the turn of the twenty-first century, the territories of immigration became more fluid (Germain and Poirier 2007). Neighbourhoods that were formerly bastions of francophones of European descent began to be settled by new immigrants: Ahuntsic-Bordeaux-Cartierville in the northern part of the island and, to a lesser extent, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve in the east end and Centre-Sud just east of downtown. Numbers of recent immigrants also rose in the West Island, traditionally home to more long-established anglophones, and in the old middle-class suburb of Saint-Laurent, as well as in typical immigrant neighbourhoods such as Côte-des-Neiges. North Africans from the Maghreb countries make up an increasing proportion of recent immigrants, mainly because their knowledge of French and high levels of education facilitate their integration and mean they are ranked highly under Québec's immigration policy. Immigrants from North Africa (Algeria, Marroco, Tunisia), for example, are remarkably dispersed in their choice of place of residence; a pattern without precedent among earlier immigrant groups, even if there is a place called *Petit Maghreb* (a small segment of a commercial street in Saint-Michel (Manaï 2015).

In fact, there are no longer any areas on the island of Montréal with fewer than 15% of residents born outside Canada (conversely, immigrants rarely count for more than 50% of any given borough's population. According to Dan Hiebert figures from the National Household Survey show that only 1.8 per cent of visible minorities are to be found in minority-group enclaves (enclaves dominated by a single ethnic minority group) and 4.3 per cent in mixed minority enclaves (enclaves where there are a mix of minorities from different ethnic groups) (Hiebert 2015: 14). On the island of Montreal, there is therefore less and less evidence of 'two Montreals': one multiethnic and the other rather homogeneous. However, dispersion of immigration to the outer suburbs (that is, off the island) is still limited; at least in contrast to Toronto and Vancouver where most new immigrants have been settling in the suburbs for some time now (Texeira, Li and Kobayashi 2011). In Montreal, the outer suburbs represent more than a third of the metropolitan region and count for a great deal in terms of political representation. In 2015, almost 60 per cent of immigrants admitted to Quebec between 2004 and 2013 lived on the island of Montreal (MIDI 2015).

Seen from the outer suburbs or from the administrative capital, Quebec City, the island of Montreal increasingly seems like a foreign landscape. Policies for the 'regionalisation' of immigration (dispersion away from the metropolis) have had little success, and while the elites of the regions in decline are crying out for immigrants, discomfort toward the Other and sometimes xenophobia can still be a sizeable problem there (and even in the capital). Seen from within, Montreal seems to be going through hard times

but for very different reasons. As mentioned earlier, the city has undergone major municipal reform, beginning with a forced merger of all the island's municipalities and ending in the de-merger of 15 of them. The new City of Montreal has since suffered implosion due to an extreme decentralisation of municipal functions to the boroughs (Germain and Alain 2006). These shake-ups are seen by many as the bitter failure of an attempt to build a strong megalopolis on the Toronto model (Boudreau 2000). At the very least, they have sapped municipal councillors' and administrators' energies. While in Toronto and Vancouver, diversity was, until recently, seen as a motor for development and was at the heart of municipal discourse until we saw some 'diversity fatigue' (Siemiaticki 2010: 23); in Montreal it does not anymore have a structural role (Germain and Alain 2009)--and is sometimes seen as a problem (Fourot 2009). The media have fuelled debate on the supposed crumbling of social cohesion and weakening of Québécois identity; loudly echoed in phone-ins and letters to the editor (Potvin, Tremblay, Audet and Martin 2008). At the heart of this new urban tale, which betrays an implicit discomfort with the metropolis, there is of course the question of religion and its place in 'public space'; an ubiquitous but ambivalent expression that sorely confuses concrete urban public place with metaphorical civic or political space (Germain et al. 2008).

7. The Other turning up in unexpected places
At the beginning of the millennium--before and after September 2001--I led a research team investigating the municipal management of diversity in Montreal, concentrating in particular on controversies over the zoning of places of worship (Germain and Gagnon 2003) and on policies relating to diversity in sports and leisure facilities, especially swimming pools (Poirier et al. 2006). We found that municipal actors--leaders and employees alike--were often caught off guard by matters of religion (and of ethnocultural diversity more broadly), and that they often responded to them in a totally ad hoc fashion. It was as if no-one had anticipated that the steady increase in volume and diversity of immigrants might lead to requests for new places of worship or changes in municipal services. Our survey on swimming pools showed that ethnoreligious groups did not, in fact, make a great many special requests, and that responses to them were made pragmatically depending on the availability of resources. Requests regarding places of worship were more often the object of resistance in municipal agencies--often for the very prosaic reason that they are exempt from municipal taxes. However, such controversies were very much contained at the local level. Our study demonstrated the capacity of citizens to engage with each other in 'social transactions' that led to practical 'compromises of coexistence' (Germain and Gagnon, 2003 : 300). Local residents and representatives of religious groups generally managed to situate their dialogue beyond or outside the matter of religion as such, focusing instead on the concrete conditions for cohabitation on which compromise was possible (for instance, devising new parking regulations, or reducing noise from religious ceremonies by installing air-conditioning so that windows could stay closed).

The international situation was, of course, bound to have a knock-on effect on the way that Montrealers, whatever their origin, experience diversity in their day-to-day lives and perceive their relationship to the Other. This experience has become both micro-local and global for most Montrealers. On the one hand, immigration has spread over almost the whole of the island and is inscribed into the everyday landscape of proximity --on public transport, in the neighbourhood, in the city centre or in shops and businesses. This helps create a certain kind of cosmopolitan urbanity, since such proximity necessarily involves getting used to social and cultural distance. Still, each particular district in Montreal offers a different experience of diversity, since each multiethnic neighbourhood has its own composition of people and places. There are now a thousand and one scenarios in the multiethnic urban

landscape that must all be apprehended at a micro-local scale (for which we have been tempted to coin the term 'nano-urbanology'. Like Hiebert and Vertovec, who recently built a research agenda on urban markets (Hiebert and Vertovec 2015), the new super-diversity must be explored at the street level. Crucially, this diversity is in Montreal not experienced as fragmentation, since in spite of their socioeconomic contrasts, the city's spaces are not compartmentalised and it is relatively easy to move from one to another without feeling like an intruder. The debate about ethnic enclaves that has been raging in Toronto, where at least thirteen ethnic communities of over 100 000 people have enough critical mass to form relatively homogenous spatial concentrations, has no equivalent in Montreal, where ethnic groups are smaller and origins more diverse. Several scholars have shown that Montreal has no ghettos, and although it does have more zones of poverty, these are populated by both immigrants and non-immigrants (Apparicio et al. 2007).

On the other hand, in complete contrast to this close contact with ethnocultural diversity, debates about the place of religion in public space--meant here in its abstract sense--have opened up a new distance between 'Us' and 'Them' (the precise characteristics of who is included in the Them and the Us being both indeterminate and variable…). Unlike in Europe, early conflicts were not with Muslim communities but with the long-established Hasidim (in relation to the expansion of synagogues and construction of eruvim) and Sikhs (about whether a boy could wear his kirpan at school). It is as if people fear that these minority religious practices threaten the hard-won emancipation of Quebecers from their recent religious past. The kinds of friction over cultural matters that for a long time were felt only at a very local level began to resonate throughout the whole of Quebec. This malaise seemed to come to a head in January 2007, when Hérouxville, a tiny rural municipality that practically no immigrant had ever called home, adopted a town charter for the benefit of potential new arrivals which spelled out the values of the majority and listed unacceptable behaviour (such as stoning women…). Tension regarding cultural identity had spread far beyond the borders of the metropolis.

8. The Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation

During 2006 and 2007, a series of controversies--including the Hérouxville town charter--hit the headlines and inflamed public opinion (not without the connivance of the opposition political parties). The controversies all related to some degree to the reasonable accommodation granted to ethnoreligious minorities in public space, or more precisely public institutions. They touched on a variety of (what were presented as) demands: to create places of worship or to carry a kirpan in educational establishments; to frost the windows of a gym opposite a Hasidic synagogue; to abolish the Catholic prayer sessions that open some city council meetings; to provide separate services for men and women (at swimming pools, in personal home care, in prenatal classes, in driving licence exams, etc.); to offer pork-free menus in a school and a sugar shack;[3] to wear a hijab in sports tournaments; and to vote without removing the veil (niqab). Of the twenty-odd cases that came up during this period, some were revealed to be either entirely framed or greatly distorted by the media, while others concerned friendly arrangements in private organisations rather than reasonable accommodation in the strict sense of the term. Reasonable accommodation refers in fact to a judicial process that seeks to prevent certain kinds of discrimination (specifically, the 13 kinds listed in Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms) that can result from the general application of a norm, rule or law. The process therefore exists to protect minority rights from institutionalised discrimination and is oriented by specific guidelines: the

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[3] A sugar shack is a place in a maple grove where maple syrup is made. During 'sugaring off' season, some of the bigger sugar shacks also operate as restaurants. Like many traditional Québécois meals, the typical sugar shack menu is rather heavy on the pork (in the form of bacon, crackling, pork pâté, etc.).

discrimination in question must be recognised by the Charter; the accommodation reached at must be 'reasonable' in that it does not entail excessive constraints for the organisation concerned; both parties must try in good faith to reach a compromise; and so on. Many of the cases that hit the headlines had not gone through this process but were simply adjustments reached by private arrangement.

The controversies and the way they were reported caused increasing confusion and misunderstanding. They were also exploited by political parties to advance their own agendas. The events were perceived and presented as threatening the deepest values of Québécois society, especially equality of the sexes. Faced with this turmoil, in February 2007, the minority Parti libéral government announced that it would set up a Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, headed up by two well-known intellectuals, Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. The Commission's mandate as conceived by the co-chairs was very broad: they sought to describe current practices of accommodation, to understand the reasons for the social crisis, and to evaluate the Quebec model of integrating immigrants. To achieve these goals, they accepted written briefs from any individual or organisation who wished to submit one and toured the province, holding over twenty citizens' forums between September and December 2007. At first, the Commission's vast scope, combined with the lack of clear guidelines for the citizens' forums, seemed only to inflame passions further. However, thanks in part to intervention by academics, the media--in a surprising moment of reflexivity--suddenly seemed to realize that sensationalism was hardly helping matters. Subsequent reporting on the Commission gave air-time to the more measured and positive contributions to the debate; followed by a lull in the media until the final report was submitted in May 2008. The co-chairs' conclusions have not pleased everyone, but did calm things down for a while. Broadly speaking, having made a relatively optimistic diagnosis--'There is no crisis' (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008 : 83)--, they recommend arrangements between citizens rather than political or legislative acts, the institutionalisation of the intercultural model that already prevails in practice in Quebec, and a mixed bag of other measures, none of which seem overly onerous.

Two striking points must be underlined. Firstly, the pragmatism of the people who actually have to deal with requests for accommodation in public institutions (especially in the education and health sectors) is impressive. Most of the public workers who spoke before the Commission are learning to manage diversity and do not want a heavy framework imposed on the process. In light of this, the co-chairs are right to say that there is no crisis of reasonable accommodation. Secondly, there is a great gap between, on the one hand, the multiple real-life practices of accommodation and adjustment that enable relatively harmonious coexistence between cultural groups and, on the other hand, public discourse on that coexistence and its impact on issues of identity. The co-chairs clearly show that the emotions stirred up by the so-called crisis are out of all proportion to the daily realities of living together. It is also a pity that apart from saying that Montreal has no ghettos, the report makes no mention of the urban, spatialised dimensions of everyday intercultural coexistence (Leloup and Radice 2008). In fact, this gap evokes the old dilemmas of a metropolis always searching for itself, torn between openness to the whole world and loyalty to Quebec (Germain and Rose 2000).

In contrast, the faith that the co-chairs put in the intercultural model seems somewhat naïve. If this model--a cross between Canadian multiculturalism and French-style republican integration--, is as efficient and successful as they claim, how did the reasonable accommodation debate manage to throw Quebec society into chaos for so many months? In fact, the story does not end there! In September 2013, the Parti québécois minority government, in power for barely a year, unleashed a veritable tsunami by making *laïcité* the cornerstone of its election platform; hoping thereby to convince voters to give it a majority

mandate. Its proposed Quebec Charter of Values, which aimed to ensure State religious neutrality, included a measure prohibiting the wearing of visible religious symbols in public services; a measure which targeted hijab- or niqab- wearing Muslim women especially. This electoral campaign tore the electorate in two, and was the subject of acrimonious debates even within families. It also provoked the anger of all mayors on the island of Montreal who, in contrast to their colleagues in Quebec's regions, stated they would refuse to apply the Charter in their jurisdictions were the Parti québécois to win. To general surprise, the proposal resulted in a resounding victory for the opposition party (the Parti libéral) in the 2014 provincial elections.

At around the same time, my research team and I were completing a study of interethnic cohabitation in four middle-class neighbourhoods—that is, of the very class which had been targeted by certain political parties as particularly sensitive to debates around identity. Consequently, according to polls, Laval--a middle-class suburb to the north of the island of Montreal--is where the highest proportion of those who consider immigration to be a potential threat to Québécois culture is found (Bilodeau and Turgeon 2014). Our surveys revealed a peaceful cohabiting in public spaces; residents rarely citing cultural diversity to describe the major demographic changes which were nevertheless a feature of where they lived (Germain, Jean and Richard 2015).

By way of conclusion…
The cosmopolitan city and the fragmented city represent two different visions of the metropolis. Evidence for both can be seen simultaneously in today's Montreal, but at two very different registers: the former in urban life and the latter in social and political debate. At each register, diversity neither has the same meaning nor provokes the same effect. To explain this mismatch, we might propose the following hypothesis: the principal protagonists at each register are perhaps not the same actors. Thus, young people and immigrants are as omnipresent in the various public places of Montreal's everyday life (indeed, complaints are often made to municipal services about the supposed over-use of public parks by recent immigrant families) as they are absent from forums of social and political debate. Moreover, several social and political leaders seem to seek to exploit these first few cracks of fragmentation in the urban fabric for their own ends (with the help of the media). Although the potential for socioeconomic fragmentation is hardly anodyne, it is not yet clearly inscribed on the urban landscape: many neighbourhoods still maintain considerable social and ethnic heterogeneity. The barriers that recent immigrants face in accessing the job market, in spite of their high qualifications, constitute a real problem which although it contributes to inequality has not (yet?) created an urban fracture. Fragmentation instead seems to be incited by cultural and, especially, religious factors that are resonating specifically in spaces of representation and sociopolitical discourse in a society that, at least within the baby-boom generation, continues to see itself as a minority.

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