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IMMIGRANTS AND CITIES: DOES NEIGHBORHOOD MATTER?

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INTRODUCTION

The concentration of immigrants in large urban areas is a significant factor contributing to the transformation of cities. But do the urban traits of these cities have anything to do with the ways in which immigrants are received and with their integration process (whatever the meaning ascribed to this term)? Do the characteristics of the urban fabric, the social dynamics of neighborhoods, and the geographical distribution of immigrants (and of ethnic groups more generally) have a role to play in the integration process, and if so, what is this role? Is it possible to isolate specifically urban factors contributing to immigrant trajectories? Or is it these immigrant trajectories that contribute to neighbourhoods dynamics? Furthermore, is it not because urban integration takes place before social integration that neighborhood life is so important?

Montréal represents an interesting case study to discuss these issues, as its immigrant neighborhoods are very diversified in terms of population profiles as well as urban form and social dynamics. In this paper, we will focus more specifically on one type of neighborhood, which is becoming increasingly widespread in Montréal: the multiethnic neighborhood.

We will begin by revisiting some classic texts on residential segregation, which will allow us to consider what is referred to in France as "politiques de peuplement". We will then turn to several research projects to explore the reality of multiethnic neighborhoods. Finally, we will complete our tour of the metropolis by examining the important challenges facing Montréal.

PRELIMINARIES

The topic of this paper is the urban integration of immigrants--how they make their place in the city--but also members of what is referred to as cultural communities [1]. An immigrant is defined as a person born outside Canada who has been granted the right to establish in Canada (whether or not he/she has

[1] This expression was used by the Government of Québec fron 1981 to 1996 to designate any group of persons with an origin other than French, British or Arboriginal and regardless of place of birth. Today the ministry no longer uses this term but it is still in use in the public opinion.

acquired the Canadian citizenship later on). But the reality of immigration is sometimes wider and sometimes more specific. The provincial ministry responsible for immigration, the Ministère des Relations avec les Citoyens et de l'Immigration (MRCI), has programs and services for immigrants covering the first three (and soon five) years in Canada, after which immigrants are taken to function as any other Quebecois, namely in terms of access to public services. It is well known that in reality, integration is a much longer process that takes place sometimes over more than one generation.

The *management of cultural diversity* is becoming a popular concept to express the growing concern on the part of public authorities (governments and municipalities) to promote harmonious relations between groups of various national (or ethnic) origins. Especially at the local scale, the management of cultural diversity is unquestionably becoming an important issue. If higher levels of government officially admit immigrants and refugees to Canada, it is mostly up to local communities (including municipalities) to receive immigrants and to manage the resulting diversity. Local actors are increasingly realizing the true meaning of the expression "urban citizenship". Immigration is, more than ever, an urban affair, both because of its demographic reality (concentration of immigrants in cities) and of the increasing awareness of local actors concerning the challenges posed by this reality and by the tendency for governments to decentralize their programs or at least the management of these programs.

Immigration is an urban phenomenon, and this is especially true in a province where almost nine out of ten landed immigrants are settled in the Montréal metropolitan area (population 3 400 000), and where 40% of these immigrants live in the City of Montréal (population 1 000 000). In 1996 the 586 405 immigrants enumerated in Montréal represented 18% of the total population in the whole metropolitan area; but in the City of Montréal immigrants accounted for almost one quarter of all residents. These proportions are somewhat modest when compared to those of the two other largest Canadian metropolitan areas: 35% of Greater Vancouver residents are immigrants and 42% of Toronto's total population was born outside Canada.

The immigrant presence is nonetheless significant. More than half of urban neighborhoods in Montréal and two thirds of the island's suburbs have a proportion of immigrants of more than 20% and, in several census tracts, over one quarter of the total population has resided in Canada for less than five years. Nevertheless, at the metropolitan area level, a strong contrast appears between

the cosmopolitan island of Montréal and its adjacent suburbs on the one hand, and the relative homogeneity of more peripheral suburbs where middle-class, French-Canadian origin families predominate, on the other hand.

Finally, if Montréal has long been multicultural (English, Scots, Irish, and Americans have historically lived side by side with French-Canadians), it was neither really perceived as cosmopolitan nor as important in terms of immigration as in other North-American cities at the end of the nineteenth century. Before the immigrant waves of the early decades of the twentieth century, 98% of the city's population was of either French or British origin. Until the 1970s, the vast majority of immigrants came from European countries. Lately, the portrait of immigration in Montréal has become significantly more varied so that today, no specific ethnic group seems to dominate the city's ethnic landscape. I personally consider this ethnocultural diversity an asset, as I will argue later on in this paper.

ABOUT THE CONCEPTS OF SEGREGATION AND GHETTO

Research on the residential trajectories of immigrants has long been dominated by the paradigms emanating from the Chicago School and factorial ecology, a method used to study residential location. For researchers working in this perspective, a high degree of ethnic segregation was associated to a low degree of integration to the host society. As a group underwent integration, it became increasingly dispersed throughout the city and was ultimately 'absorbed' into the "ethnically neutral" suburbs. This paradigm has often been criticized. Firstly, for its terminological confusion (what was demonstrated was less a process of relegation than a situation characterized by the residential concentration of ethnic households). Secondly, because this reality is much more complex (some ethnic groups remain geographically concentrated even after achieving a certain level of socio-economic success). And thirdly, because of the ambiguous nature of the integration concept: (for example, economic integration can coincide with a low degree of cultural integration) and especially the difficulty in expressing this concept methodologically (even for its seemingly most straightforward dimension, the linguistic dimension) (MAICC and CEETUM, 1994). In Montréal, an additional difficulty was the historical linguistic and ethno-religious duality, which produced a sharply segmented ethnic landscape (a mosaic of neighborhoods) even before successive immigrant waves could contribute to its emerging diversity. If the degree of integration to Québec society

was to be measured on the basis of residential concentration, the French Canadian majority and the British-origin minority would not be considered very integrated within their own society (McNicoll, 1993)! Researchers in Québec still cannot explain to their colleagues from other provinces why the systematic differentiation between English-Canadian and French-Canadian territories have earned Montréal the title of the most segregated of the three largest Canadian metropolitan areas. This being said, the existence of an historical double majority in Montréal is not unrelated to what I refer to as an integration model based on segmentation exhibited by several immigrant groups. These groups appear to have "squeezed in" between the French- and English-speaking populations and adopted a residential model based on aggregation according to ethnic, linguistic, and religious characteristics, mirroring the model forged by the French- and English-Canadian groups. Today, most immigrant groups from Latin American countries display a certain degree of spatial dispersion, but the same cannot be said of other groups of Asian and European origin (Italians, Greeks, Portuguese, Jews, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitians, etc.). These groups are also the most "segregated" in the Toronto metropolitan area (Ray, 1998).

Until the 1980s, immigrants tended to live in or close to English-speaking neighborhoods, and most groups progressively moved north along St-Laurent boulevard, which in the mind of Montrealers divides the city into a predominantly English-speaking west end and a predominantly French-speaking east end. In the past years, some groups such as Haitians, Vietnamese, and some Latin-Americans have joined the Italians already settled in the east end of the city. This is reflected in the geography of allophone households, which is a lot less polarized today than it was twenty years ago.

This pleases government officials at the MRCI who have always frowned upon the fact that immigrants tend to settle near other minorities instead of closer to the French-speaking majority and seem to remain amongst themselves even after several years of settlement. Nevertheless, many researchers have questioned the systematic association between immigrant non-integration and spatial concentration and have favoured exploring the multiple roles played by residential aggregation and ethnic enclaves (community dynamics and self-help, ethnic sub-economies, etc.). Luckily, government officials have little means to impose their convictions! Only a few immigrant categories (namely refugee groups) have deliberately been assigned to specific neighborhoods, most of the other immigrants choosing their residential location with the help of family,

friendship, national or even religious networks, often according to the availability of affordable housing.

Why do we fear residential segregation if this process does not involve relegation of a group to a specific territory but rather the residential concentration of an ethnic group? In the case of Montréal, this fear feeds on two implicit references: first, the image of black ghettos in the United States. The past decades have witnessed an increase in the proportion of groups considered as visible minorities in the population census, but if some racism does occur in Montréal, as in other large Canadian cities, the situation of visible minorities is completely different from the one prevailing in the United States, for reasons at the very least historical. The extensive debate concerning spatial segregation and the exclusion of Afro-Americans (Massey and Denton, 1993) cannot be directly transposed to Montréal.

The image of the ghetto is also often conjured when considering the relation between immigration and poverty. For instance, Professor Galster, among others, has written that ethnic neighborhoods have a negative impact on people's life chances (Galster et al., 1999). For five US metropolitan areas, Galster found a strong correlation over time between the residential proximity of same-origin immigrants, low employment rate, and high poverty.

The underlying « exposure » theory (in which the exposure to white non-Hispanic neighbors would allow for better life chances and economic progress) is, in my view, a contemporary version of old social mix theories. Urban sociologists since Herbert Gans have called attention to the shortcomings of social mix utopias and to the inherent paternalism of arguments put forth to promote the exposure of lower-class residents to better ways of life through contact with middle-class individuals. The physical proximity of populations from different socio-economic and/or cultural backgrounds can in fact lead to a reinforcement of social distance, which cancels out the benefits of this exposure to social difference if this proximity is not deliberately chosen (Dansereau et al., 1997). Several studies suggest that residents' attitudes vary widely according to whether a neighborhood is chosen or imposed (De Rudder, 1991). Residential allocation does not promote a sense of belonging, which often requires a certain sense of control over one's environment.

This idea calls upon the dilemmas associated with what is referred to in France as "politiques de peuplement", whose negative effects have been demonstrated by French researchers (Simon, 1999). In fact, Tantier and Toubon

(1999) find that fighting ethnic residential concentration often reinforces this same process.

Generally speaking, the image of the ghetto frequently used in public opinion has no relevance in Montréal neither from a racial nor from an economic point of view.

On the one hand, in Montréal as in the rest of Canada, no systematic correlation can be found between immigration and poverty. There are poor neighborhoods with and without immigrants (Ley and Smith, 1998) [2]. On the other hand, Séguin has showed that the underclass theory finds no support in our city, as the social fabric of Montréal's neighborhoods is considerably more diversified than that of American cities. Central cities are not necessarily poverty-ridden areas, quite the contrary (Séguin, 1998; Ley, 1993). One could argue that the centralization of the management of the social safety net has allowed the poor to have access to the same level of support wherever they live, a fact often forgotten by those praising the merits of decentralization and local power (Séguin and Germain, 2000).

In sum, in the growing body of literature on the impact of neighborhoods on people's life chances (be they immigrant, poor, children, or be they associated with other socially fragile categories), the neighborhood concept is often used as a "black box" (Germain and Gagnon, 1999). It is in fact very difficult to identify exactly which neighborhood attributes have an impact on the studied population and how this impact is produced. Nor can quantitative research determine what pertains to specifically social characteristics and what points to the local environment as a whole. There seems to be some confusion concerning spatial scales if we are to consider the different dimensions associated with the concept of neighborhood. For example, the census tract seems a somewhat inappropriate unit for evaluating the enclave hypothesis or social network theories. Economic niches forged by immigrants are not defined at such a small spatial scale, but are rather based on a larger territory referred to in French as « le quartier ». In the same way, community associations (which supply a variety of services to immigrant populations) as well as places of worship are often important components of support networks and tend to operate at the wider neighborhood

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[2] In Montréal, until the 1980s, immigrants presented a higher degree of economic achievement than non-immigrant French-Canadians (Gagné, 1989); but this situation is changing with more recent immigrant fluxes.

level (Morin and Rochefort, 1998). Furthermore, these networks are often more dynamic in disadvantaged neighborhoods, whether immigrant or not.

It is also important to consider the multiple dimensions associated with the neighborhood, which have different meanings and affect residents in different ways, as we shall see. In addition, meanings associated with the neighborhood can vary greatly from one individual to another. In fact, the same territory can generate contradictory effects in different populations. For example, some residents may feel that the neighborhood is only a transitory space in their social trajectory, whereas for others the neighborhood can represent a space in which they are captive.

Analyses of ethnic residential concentration is still a widespread research method, although recently other types of research, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, exploring ethnic residential aggregation as well as residential strategies, are gaining in popularity. What types of resources are mobilized and how do immigrants deal with advantages and constraints to make their place in the city? How are the housing market and real estate professionals involved? What is the role of family networks on these trajectories? Do immigrants call upon voluntary associations and community networks to find a place to live? What importance is given to the neighborhood, and how does it compare with the importance given to it by non-immigrants? How do immigrants make use of their mobility assets (knowledge of public transport network, possession of an automobile, etc.) in their urban integration strategies?

In this way, the urban integration of immigrants should be considered as a diachronic process involving a number of actors and networks. If segregation is to have a part in this type of analysis, it should be more in terms of identifying factors contributing to the exclusion of certain persons or groups from specific residential areas or types of housing (for example through racial discrimination) than to describe the residential concentration of an ethnic group within a given territory.

NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE: IMMIGRATION IN CONTEXT

I would now like to move away from a causal approach seeking to link the spatial concentration of immigrants and various modes of social integration to adopt a more ethnographic perspective focussing on the multiple types of urban

integration strategies of immigrants and ethnic groups without disassociating them from the host society. Indeed, many research projects seem to "lack context" in the sense that they fail to consider the host society and its increasing transformation through immigration.

Geographical Portrait

The neighborhood scale seems appropriate for this exercise, despite the shortcuts often used to bypass the difficult task of defining this territorial unit. The neighborhood can certainly be nothing else than an administrative division, without any meaning for social actors and residents (Grafmeyer, 1994). With reason, other researchers have questioned the role of the neighborhood in the organisation of everyday life (Remy and Voyé, 1992; Ascher, 1995). Wellman and Leighton (1979) have also shown that contemporary social networks are less dependant on physical proximity as communities are less place-minded today than in the past. But there seems to be as many forces pulling in the direction of the spatial emancipation of social ties as there are in the direction of the re-territorialisation of social life at the neighborhood level. Moreover, for reasons both historical and related to urban form, Montréal has been able, to a certain extent, to preserve its tradition of neighborhood life. This being said, we will see that neighborhood life is somewhat of a "kaleidoscopic" reality, as a great variety of neighborhoods can be found in Montréal; this is also true of immigrant neighborhoods.

Because of the exceptional geographic concentration in Montréal of international migrants in the province of Québec, the urban integration of immigrants and of cultural communities more broadly is becoming a particularly important issue. The frequency of both positive and conflictual intercultural contact results in the fact that the experience of sharing both physical and symbolic common spaces becomes one of the central aspects of the co-existence of populations of diverse ethnocultural origins. The immigrant presence, however, also contributes to particular urban population dynamics. In a metropolis faced with the consequences of urban sprawl, what would have become of the neighborhoods surrounding the city centre had they not been appropriated by immigrant populations? Portuguese immigrants in the 1960s were the first to rehabilitate and enhance the Plateau Mont-Royal's vernacular architecture, built forms which had been overlooked by many native-born Canadians until then. Today, the Plateau area is one of the city's trendiest and

most sought-after neighborhoods. It is interesting to note that the 1986 census revealed that in the metropolitan area, the percentage of homeowners was higher among immigrant households (51,7%) than among native-born households (43%) (Mongeau and Séguin, 1993). Since immigrant households have a stronger tendency than non-immigrants do to settle in the city centre, they have therefore contributed to maintaining the vitality of the city centre as a residential milieu (Ray and Moore, 1991).

European immigration prior to the 1970s was largely concentrated in the central areas of island of Montréal but today, newcomers settle in a variety of areas. The areas adjacent to the city centre definitely continue to act as major reception areas, but other transition areas are developing in surrounding sectors. A little farther from the city centre, the Côte-des-Neiges neighborhood is now one of the main immigrant settlement areas. It is not, however, the only such place; many of the island's suburbs (Ville Saint-Laurent, for instance) and even some off-island suburbs now act as primary settlement neighborhoods. It should be noted that some of these suburban areas, such as Brossard or Dollard-des-Ormeaux, could be described as affluent and strongly contrast in terms of social standing with some of the neighborhoods in the central or eastern sections of the island. The municipality of Brossard illustrates what Li has dubbed an ethnoburb, that is an ethnic residential suburb that also functions as a community hub and a place for business in the new global economy (Li, 1994). This deconcentration of immigration is, however, a recent reality when compared to Toronto, where the majority of immigrants live in the suburbs (some very dense and with many high rises). Conversely, there are relatively fewer Canadians of British or French origin in Montréal's city centre than in Toronto's.

The integration of newcomers often occurs in an environment where the non-immigrant population or the « Quebecois pure laine » population is not the majority. In Parc Extension, a very densely-populated neighborhood, nearly 85% of the population is of an ethnic background other than French or British .

This overview of Montréal's immigrant geography should be completed with some information concerning the housing market.

Generally speaking, the metropolitan area's housing market can be described as relatively fluid; the vacancy rate and the small percentage of privately-owned housing (26,5% in 1991) in the city centre partially explains this fluidity. Subsidized rental housing projects (HLM) represent barely 2% of the total housing stock in the metropolitan area and their relative dispersion throughout

the city has certainly helped avoid the residential concentration of disadvantaged populations in one segment of the housing market. There is one exception: the Petite-Bourgogne neighborhood, which I will discuss later on. In addition, housing costs, lower in Montréal than in Toronto or Vancouver, also contribute to the accessibility of housing. Montréal therefore appears to be a city where the residential integration of newcomers is relatively easy, at least in theory!

Cohabiting in multiethnic neighborhoods

Residential segregation analyses have projected the image of a city where a variety of « little homelands » exist side by side, each neighborhood dominated by a given ethnic group. Although the city's ethnocultural geography has always been singularly more complex than this image lets on, careful observation of the social fabric reveals more of a social mix; the diversification of national origins resulting from recent immigration waves is in the process of substituting a cosmopolitan image (more precisely of a pluricultural city) to the « little homelands » image. Close observation of the various ways in which urban space is described (for example in popular litterature) reveals a plurality of cultural references.

Many neighborhoods formerly associated with one or two specific ethnic groups have become what I call multiethnic neighborhoods. Thus, the Parc Extension neighborhood, whose population was two thirds Greek 25 years ago, is now home to South Asians, Haitians, and Latin Americans, among others. One elementary school in this area, once almost exclusively Greek, now teaches children who speak some 20 languages other than French or English at home. The Mile-End, one of Montréal's oldest cosmopolitan neighborhoods, is even more so today because its immigrant population is not only of European descent but includes Latin Americans, Asians (from the South and East), and Arabs. Cosmopolitanism has become this neighborhood's trademark and also attracts households of gentrificators of non-immigrant backgrounds.

These trends can also be observed in other Canadian or American cities (Alba *et al.,* 1995). Recently, Hiebert (2000) has described the challenge of cosmopolitanism in several « transnational neighborhoods » in Vancouver. There have always been multiethnic neighborhoods, often located in the heart of central cities, but this phenomenon is spreading and now presents itself in multiple forms.

How is this multiethnicity experienced? This is what the MRCI and the City of Montréal asked us to investigate in 1992, at a time when immigration rates where very high (Germain *et al.*, 1995).

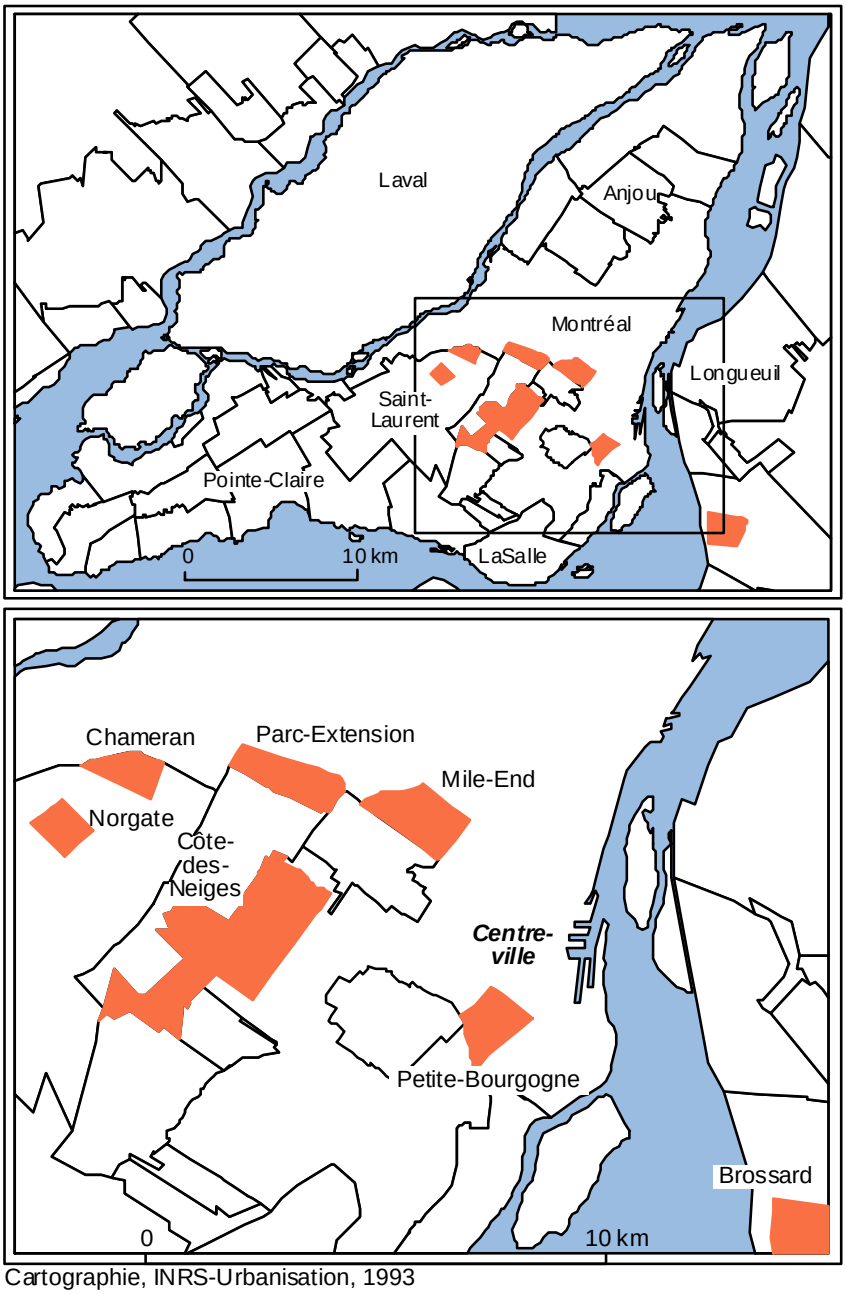
We tried to portray interethnic cohabitation by conducting a large survey combining the analysis of urban features, community life (including the participation of ethnic groups in community dynamics), and systematic observation of key public places (parks, commercial streets, subway stations, shopping centres, etc).

Seven neighborhoods (with populations varying from 8 000 to 45 000) were selected among the most multiethnic in the metropolitan region: see Figure 1. Together, they represent the variety of social and urban settings characterizing Montréal: central, dense, and lively neighborhoods, some disadvantaged, some socially contrasted with a high proportion of tenants, and affluent suburbs with single-family homeowners or dense, older suburbs with a high proportion of average to low-status tenants.

Each of these seven neighborhoods has its own dynamics. All of them are highly multiethnic even if most of these neighborhoods present only one or a few statistically dominant ethnic groups. The following vignettes allow us to grasp their diversity:

1. Mile-End, the oldest immigrant neighborhood, is both a transition area and a primary settlement area. It also attracts many non-immigrant gentrificators. Its trademark is its cosmopolitan image, a representation shared by many of its residents.
2. La Petite-Bourgogne, a former working-class neighborhood adjacent to the city centre and highly contrasted in terms of socio-economic backgrounds: 40% of its housing stock is HLM, an exceptional proportion for Montréal. The management of this social housing stock has always been problematic in social and racial terms. Many of these social housing units are located right next to areas dominated by townhouses and condominiums destined for the middle-class. The cohabitation between these populations is difficult, but community networks are extremely dense and active, a fact that contributes to containing some of the problems plaguing the community. Part of the Black anglophone community (established in Petite-Bourgogne since the turn of the twentieth century) is striving to make it into a founding

Figure 1
Geographical location of the seven neighborhoods



Cartographie, INRS-Urbanisation, 1993

neighborhood for the Black community, but other residents are not happy with this.

3. Côte-des-Neiges (north) was home to several highly organized communities (Jews and Blacks) before becoming a reception area for immigrants from all parts of the world. A poor and densely populated neighborhood adjacent to the Université de Montréal campus, Côte-des-Neiges, as Little Burgundy, must defend itself against the negative images painted by the media. Schoolteachers bus the kids to the country outside the metropolitan area once a year so that they have the opportunity to meet "members of the host society", as one teacher puts it.
4. Parc Extension: even poorer and more densely populated than Côte-des-Neiges, former founding neighborhood for Montréal's Greek community, this neighborhood greets immigrants from all parts of the world. Immigrant households tend to have large families. The allophone population is considerable. Parc Extension is a lively neighborhood with a traditional urban tissue of row housing with dwelling stocked on two or three levels and its community network is very active.
5. Chameran: middle-class neighborhood located in the municipality of Saint-Laurent. Sizeable Middle-Eastern immigrant community (especially Lebanese) wishing to make Chameran their founding neighborhood in spite of the community's internal divisions. French-speaking "native" Québec families feel somewhat "invaded" and do not appreciate this strong expression of the Lebanese community's presence.
6. Norgate: very poor neighborhood in Ville Saint-Laurent, having received many of the "Boat-People" refugees and greeting many large families since, especially Asian. This neighborhood contrasts with other sectors of the suburban municipality, whose image is based on its middle-class status and flourishing industrial sector.
7. Brossard: rich suburb on Montréal's South shore. South- and East-Asian immigrants dwell in bungalows in no way different from other (non-immigrant) homes in this low-density, typically North-American neighborhood. The only public place is the shopping centre. A recent

controversy has pitted Chinese investors against the municipality's mayor, concerned by the too mono-ethnic character of a commercial centre. An ethnoburb example.

These are very different neighborhoods, but they are linked by common experiences. For instance, the affirmation of some communities over others tends to be an irritant. But shouldn't this also be considered as a sign of positive appropriation? Who makes up the "host society" at such a micro-local scale? How does community affirmation evolve with the years?

Our study also highlights the changes that are transforming the community life of these neighborhoods. Montréal has a solid tradition of community dynamics, and ethnic groups have played an important role in this respect. For a number of years, joint actions initiated in part by the City of Montréal are in the process of redefining the ways so-called ethnic organisations operate, often in association with local public institutions involved in the fields of health care, social services, education, and employment. Such changes are not entirely painless, and this is particularly striking when they affect well-established ethnic leadership and end up imposing very formal management structures in organizations used to more informal operating styles. Recent years have witnessed the accelerated institutionalisation of community action: governments and municipalities are decentralizing the management of their programs and inviting NGOs to become partners in their administration. At the same time, governments have drastically reduced their support to mono-ethnic associations, encouraging their transformation into multiethnic associations. The impact of these measures is not yet clear, but many wonder if the situation will not consolidate a widening gap between major community associations (largely non-immigrant membership) which go along with the idea of neighborhood in terms of formal structures, and a plethora of small, sometimes isolated and precarious ethnic community groups. The neighborhood is becoming the reference territory for public programs, but it does not always fit well with the more metropolitan-based networks of many associations.

Another aspect of this study deals with sociability in public places. Parks, public places, shopping malls and commercial streets are often important to immigrants and one study on the subject showed that cultural communities use public parks more than native-born Quebecois (Samson et al., 1981). Our study found evidence of a peaceful but distant cohabitation, which characterizes the

co-presence of strangers of diverse ethnocultural origins even in very dense public places. But it also reveals the ethnic-, generational-, and gender-based segmentation that marks social interaction. Cases of over-appropriation of space at the expense of other ethnic categories are fairly rare, and overall the great diversity of ethnocultural origins coming into contact in such places seems to become part of the landscape for the users of these spaces. But there are other places in these neighborhoods which are more dominated by specific ethnic groups, such as cafés. Both kinds of spaces are important for interethnic cohabitation: public life is a combination of places more exclusive in use and others better suited for at-large public sociability. Public life and public space are extremely important in order to tame differences. In peripheral suburbs, the only public places are located in shopping malls. It is for this reason that so much attention is being paid to ethnic malls in cities such as Toronto or Vancouver. These are usually the first places where cultural differences become an issue.

Does the multiethnicity of neighborhoods interfere with or, on the contrary, facilitate the urban integration of immigrant populations? This question is especially relevant when youth are concerned and raises the issue of socialisation conditions. Many stakeholders fear that the under-representation of the francophone group in a number of multiethnic neighborhoods is linked to the slow integration of minorities and undermines the process leading to immigrants' adoption of French as their everyday language. As a result, some are tempted to turn to policies promoting the dispersion of minorities across urban areas in order to foster increased contact with populations whose mother tongue is French. This temptation is understandable but raises numerous problems.

Firstly, control over one's living conditions - including location - is important for the appropriation process leading to a sense of belonging, as was already mentioned. The Montréal case effectively illustrates the advantages of a context where the housing stock is relatively accessible.

Secondly, the “so-called” excessive geographical concentration of immigrants in Montréal can be attributed to both immigrants' residential strategies and the fact that the rental stock is concentrated in the City of Montréal, and to the continuing exodus of francophone families to the suburbs. Moreover, immigrants now form the majority in HLMs for large families because non-immigrants no longer have large families.

Thirdly, the more heavily multiethnic areas are sometimes those where a basic cosmopolitan attitude can most easily develop, often more as a result of

accommodation than as an authentic openness to "Others". Two surveys on the subject of intercultural contact suggest a significant correlation between frequency of contact and relative degree of tolerance (Joly, 1996; Joly and Dorval, 1993).

Multiethnicity does not eliminate intercultural tensions but tends to depolarize them and leads to a form of urbanity, defined as the capacity to communicate at a distance. In our survey, many people told us that in a multiethnic context without any clear majority, pacific cohabitation was the result of a common sense of minority status. People felt comfortable because everyone is part of a minority. In this perpective, the image of the mosaic promotes a shared representation of the neighborhood. But it also explains why the affirmation of one ethnic identity as dominant over others in symbolic space is most often rejected.

As I have said before, the great diversity of ethnic origins, even at the neighborhood level, is an asset for Montréal in that it facilitates the cohabitation of a variety of groups in the context of a multicultural city. In many of the neighborhoods we have studied, the majority of problems experienced are linked to the presence of a dominant community (whether immigrant or not). It then follows that the problem is not diversity in itself, but rather the assertion of one community's presence in a mosaic context characterized by respect for an established *modus vivendi*. Another important conclusion is that there exists a wide variety of situations, a fact that calls into question traditional forms of management for public programs.

THREE CHALLENGES

Building on this, I will conclude by raising three important challenges facing Montréal in the years to come.

The main challenge for the Montréal metropolitan area will be to manage the cohabitation of a cosmopolitan island within a more homogeneous suburban region. With the upcoming creation of a new metropolitan structure (la Commission métropolitaine de Montréal), this question might gain in attention.

Another challenge will be to manage the contrast between the metropolitan area and the rest of the province, since immigrants are extremely concentrated in the Montréal metropolitan region. As mentioned before,

immigrant families form a majority in family-oriented HLMs; but this situation is specific to Montréal. The daily tasks of social housing officers in the Montréal area have almost nothing in common with those of other HLM managers in the rest of province. Provincial government officials responsible for social housing refuse to support intercultural programs because they cannot be applied equally across the province. Nevertheless, in social housing as in other domains, public programs can no longer be applied equally across Québec.

At a more local level, the third challenge will consist in adopting a cultural management perspective. It will become increasingly difficult to apply uniform rules and norms in a highly fragmented urban landscape. Montréal's multiethnic reality is, after all, relatively recent. It is still largely perceived as an immigrant reality. But a republican perspective cannot prevent the rise of particular cultural demands. How will the generally well organized and established immigrant communities cohabit with more recently arrived communities, often less numerous and with little community organization? Will the former consider themselves as part of the host society in respect to the latter? Having been somewhat excluded from public service, ethnic communities will want to make up for lost opportunities. Since the most recent municipal election in 1998, 15 out of 51 elected councillors belong to a minority group, and this evolution is certainly being noticed. Moreover, many municipal services departments are faced with issues pertaining to the increasing number of particular cultural demands, as well as the unexpected consequences of decentralization, which has conferred the management of many community facilities to local organizations (mostly NGOs). These NGOs are sometimes managed by persons who do not reflect the neighborhood's multiethnic character. But can multiethnicity be accurately "represented"? Do NGOs work on the basis of representation, or do they feed on solidarity based on ties of identity and belonging?

Montréal is a relatively good example of the harmonious management of differences in multicultural context. But its integration model based on segmentation, which historically has promoted the relatively smooth urban integration of immigrants, is increasingly called into question by a political discourse based on republican-style ideals of citizenship, very different from the model historically forged by Montrealers. The harder positions of groups representing the host society and those emanating from ethnic groups lead us to foresee a less "comfortable" situation. These differences are experienced

especially at the local, or even micro-local, scale. The multiple arenas of urban life will become crucial in the working out of these differences.

Québec willingly describes itself as a plural society; but I think that few people realize what this entails for the years to come.

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