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The spatial puzzle of mobilizing for car alternatives in the Montreal city-region

Abstract

Scholars have recently advocated going beyond a fetishism for one spatiality to consider a diversity of socio-spatial relations in the study of political mobilization. The objective of this article is to propose an operationalization of the four spatialities framework (networks, scale, place and territory) and use it on the investigation of the mobilization for car alternatives in the Montreal city-region. Our approach is to start with the spatiality and structure of the network, to then identify brokers and focus on them for the detailed analysis of scale, territory and place. The article sheds light on the particular assets which the use of each spatiality, and their combination, offers for mobilization in the city-regional context. The findings also illustrate how city-regionalism is experienced by civic actors building coalitions to defend specific causes.

Keywords : spatialities, scale, network, territory, place, city-regionalism, mobility, contentious politics

Introduction

Academics argue a lot about spatial categories and the implications of a new spatial fix at the metropolitan or city-regional scale (Macleod and Jones, 2007). In parallel, activists face real pragmatic spatial issues in terms of their opportunities and constraints for mobilization (Pastor et al., 2009). Within city-regions especially, their strategic uses of space are bound to a political context in which space, already, is part of existent differentiations and tensions : with the composite spatial texture of city-regions (sprawled mix of dense and non-dense environments) and the particular power dynamics at play in the provision of large infrastructure, between the different constituent parts of the city-region, and between the city region and the higher levels of government (*Jonas et al. , this issue*).

Transport and mobility are especially key topics of both collaboration and conflict within city-regions, and the advocacy for car alternatives thus face multiple spatial puzzles. A key question for activists is whether they should start locally in developing their own alternative forms of mobility, whether they should patiently advocate for the long-term metropolitan transport and dense land-use planning or whether they should play the even bigger game of mobilizing for a shift in national transport investments. This is a real chicken and egg problem, both from a mobilization and a planning point of view : which of these options should be first prioritized? How are the choices linked with the framing of the problem (Aud, 2010), the different actors they can work with and their spatial positionality (Leitner et al., 2008)? A literature on social movements has developed avenues to better comprehend the spatialities of contentious politics (Leitner et al., 2008; Nicholls, 2008, 2009). We propose to use these to articulate a multi-spatial investigation of mobilization within a city-regional context.

The Montreal city-region is a rich case study in regard to this spatial dilemma and its relation to the political scene. There have been for some time different competing visions of mobility with radically different spatial implications : one giving priority to fluidity and the right to circulate by

car, the other to urban conviviality and alternative mobilities — i.e., public transit, walking and cycling (Poitras, 2009; Paulhiac and Kaufman 2006). These divergences have led to question the legitimacy of State's actions in the field of mobility : while central-city civic and public actors have strongly criticized the infrastructure vision of the provincial government for more than a decade, the tension persists.

The academic literature on social movements has recently offered theoretical propositions to dig in the diversity of the spatialities of political mobilization (Leitner et al., 2008; Jessop et al., 2008; Nicholls, 2008, 2009). Those multi-spatial propositions have been especially developed to go beyond the fetishism for one spatiality, after the perhaps too great enthusiasm on the politics of scale. Even just on the scale issue, scholars have argued that we are in need of empirical studies testing to what extent scale is a category of practice (and not just an a-priori from researchers) (Moore, 2008). The multi-spatial propositions have yet to be concretized in an empirical framework which is usable in the investigation of actual cases (Mayer, 2008) (although Leitner et al. do present an empirical illustration). The objective of this article is very pragmatic : it is to propose an operationalization of a multi-spatial framework and to discuss, through the investigation of a large city-regional mobilization, the merits of such an endeavor. Out of the even larger set of propositions, we consider the following four : networks, scale, territory and place (Leitner et al., 2008; Nicholls, 2009; Jessop et al., 2008).

The first section of our paper presents our analytical framework based on the most recent proposals to distinguish different forms of spatiality. The Methods section explains how we investigate empirically each type of spatialities. This leads us to the story of the mobilization for car alternatives in Montreal in the last ten years, in light of the spatialities used by the actors. In the last sections, we discuss the combinations of spatialities used in our case study and their relation to the successes of different expansion strategies. Finally, we conclude on the usefulness of the proposed multi-spatial framework to research collective action in city-regions.

1. Analytical framework: the spatialities of mobilization

Until recently, the discussion on socio-spatial relations was dominated by the rediscovery of the notion of ‘scale’ as a social and political construction. Scale was seen as a way to understand the contemporary transformations of state action in a context of globalization (Brenner, 2004). It was also used in many analyses of social movements and political participation, with the concept of scale-jumping (Marston 2000, Cox 1998).

Some researchers came to question the focus on scale since socio-political practices also involve other forms of spatialities (Leitner et al. 2008, Jessop et al. 2008). Recent work in this field has thus distinguished different forms of spatialities and their interrelations. The present paper takes the next step: *operationalizing a multi-spatial framework and using it in an empirical investigation*, to show what it brings to the study of actors' mobilization and strategies. Our multi-spatial framework contains the four main spatialities discussed in the literature: networks, scale, place and territory (1). In the next paragraphs, we define very briefly each spatiality. There is still a lot of discussion on each concept, and our objective is not to settle those theoretical debates. We rather propose a workable empirical framework.

Networks

Networks refer to a set of relations between nodes (Diani and MacAdam 2003). We focus here on social networks, thus on a set of social relations between actors. Stronger ties allow the development of certain “relational attributes” – trust, loyalty and duty – essentials to tighten solidarities, build alliances and construct joint frames of action (Nicholls, 2008). Weaker ties and

collaborations are made of exchange of information, financing, political backing, and serve the construction of tactics and power leverage, of political identities and of alternative imaginaries (Nicholls, 2008; Leitner et al., 2008; Cumbers et al., 2008). Together, the set of relations create an interconnectivity between different locations. This web is seen as a special kind of spatiality: “the argument is that this topological spatiality – spanning rather than covering geographic space – is necessary for stable ideas and practices to move through geographic space and between regions” (Leitner et al., p. 162).

Scale

Scale refers to “the differentiation of social relations vertically” (Jessop et al, p. 393), and the embeddedness of spatial constructs into a larger configuration of interrelated and built-in parts – e.g., the local, metropolitan, national, global scales – of which some are dominant over the others (idem; Brenner, 2001). The process of scale construction is tied to specific socio-spatial histories, and leads to more or less temporary scalar configurations ('spatial fix', the nested scales of the State) which can be contested – i.e., the politics of scale (Leitner et al. 2008). The politics of scale has been discussed in its material manifestations, as well as in its discursive manifestations (MacKinnon, 2011). We will particularly focus on the last aspect, which has been presented in terms of scalar frames. Actors use scalar frames to argue in a public debate (McCann, 2003), or to mobilize adherents around a cause. Scale then becomes a sort of collective action frame (Martin, 2003; Leitner et al., 2008).

Territory

For Jessop et al., territory refers specifically to the principles of “bordering, bounding, parcelization, enclosure” through which inside/outside divides emerge (2008, p. 393). We rely here on this definition of territory as the defence of boundaries or of bounded spaces (definition which is more specific to the Enligh speaking literature) (Painter, 2010). Territory can manifest itself in two ways in the strategies of actors. First, actors can define their mission by the located interests and perspectives of their members from a specific bounded space. Second, one can strategically construct a new territorial entity with new boundaries. It can be a way to advocate specific investments, or to clearly mark a territory of alternative.

Place

Place consists in the use of the materiality of one physical environment, which has meaning for the social relations and daily routines which therein take place (Leitner et al. 2008 p. 161-162). Those places can be as diverse as a public space, a piece of infrastructure which has larger meaning for the urban network, a bridge, a park, a work-place, etc.

Table 1 summarizes our multi-spatial framework. The first column gives the general definition for each spatiality. The second column focuses on the mobilization dimension of the spatiality: how do actors use it in practice? The last column points out the specific indicator(s) used in our case study. We will now turn to a discussion of these methodological issues.

Table 1. The multi-spatial analytical framework proposed (inspired by Leitner et al. 2008 and Jessop et al. 2008)

Spatiality	General definition	The mobilization dimension of the spatiality	Empirical criteria used in our research on mobilization for car alternatives
Networks	Set of relations between actors	Make strategic collaborations that can create inter-connectivity between actors in different locations	<p>Analysis of inter-relations between the participants to 7 coalitions for car alternatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involvement in only one or diverse transport issues (targeted participation) 2. Inter-sectoral networking: involvement with actors who have their activities in another sector (six sectors: environmental protection, transport, social justice and community work, health, economic development and built heritage) 3. Center-periphery networking: involvement of actors from inner city neighborhoods with actors from suburbs and vice-versa 4. Identification of brokers, their work of coalition-building and collaborative projects
Scale	Configuration of vertically embedded spatial constructs (e.g., local/metropolitan/national/global)	The scalar framing used to put emphasis on an issue	Scales involved in the framing of the mobility problems and solutions by the brokers, in their projects and public stances
Territory	A space delimited by clear boundaries	Mobilizing in giving priorities to a bounded territory	Mentions of spatial boundaries or dividing lines across space in the definition of the projects and priorities of the brokers
Place	A specific physical environment where individuals interact on a daily basis	Occupy a place to symbolically transform its meaning or to use its meaning to serve a cause	Occupation of a place by brokers to underline a mobility issue

2. Methods

The pool of actors mobilized

We consider all actors – public, private or from the third sector – who promote car alternatives and are engaged in coalitions and collaborative projects which the central aim is to make progress in transport and mobility. Their claims are directed to government(s) which have the responsibility of road, transport, public transit and slow modes. In Canada, these responsibilities are shared between the three political levels: federal, provincial and municipal governments (with the associated

city-regional entities introduced below), although large transport infrastructures are usually the responsibility of the provincial government. While Leitner et al. (2008) speak of the spatial strategy of *one* social movement, our study concerns rather a series of coalitions and projects to mobilize on a common issue (car alternatives).

The whole network and its segmentation lines

The network analysis allowed us to identify the constellation of actors involved in car alternatives and their interrelations. We relied on social network analysis to characterize the form and structure of the network : whether it is centralized or de-centralized (with brokers linking actors together or redundancy of ties between all actors), and segmented or non segmented (in different groups which are internally more connected than to the rest of the network) (Diani and McAdam, 2003 p. 307-312). Our database to conduct our network analysis consists in the participants to the seven coalitions for car alternatives in the Montreal city-region, from 2002 to 2012 (with an average of 32 participants for each, and a total of 144 actors). The members of the coalitions are those stated as members by the documents or web pages of the coalitions. In the language of social network analysis, the network is thus constructed on the basis of co-presence to events (a 2-modes network, see Borgatti (2010)). In addition to the network matrices, we have used in-depth qualitative data.

Within the city-regional and urban context, certain tensions or division lines, which actors are struggling with, have been documented: 1) between a particularized and a transversal mobilization (Harvey, 2003), 2) between activism in central city and in suburbs (Pastor et al. 2009) and 3) between different sectors of intervention (Weir et al., 2009). Bridging across those three segmentation lines is considered here an indicator of the use of the spatiality of networks.

Our Montreal pool of actors come from the following six sectors of intervention : environment protection, transport and mobility, social justice and community development work (SJCD), economic development, health and finally built heritage. For each sector transport and mobility may imply different spatial needs. For example, for actors of social justice and community work (SJCW), mobility is linked to the defense of the quality of life in certain local territories; especially for vulnerable populations. But for environmental actors, there are also higher scalar considerations, such as those related with climate change. Brokerage between sectors of intervention can thus mean a more diversified spatial understanding of the mobility issues.

The focus on key actors

This network analysis also allowed us to identify key actors within the network. They consist in the actors, from now on we will name them “the brokers”, that can expand the spatial scope of the movement in building new ties (brokerage) and in activating existent networks (diffusion) (Diani and McAdam, 2003 p.293-296). Those two processes require certain discursive abilities and the development of discursive frames. Spatiality becomes involved in those discursive frames: the politics of scale have been precisely discussed in this way (McCann, 2003; Leitner et al., 2008), while the references to territorial boundaries or to the symbolic meaning of places can also come here into play (Martin, 2003; Gonzalez, 2011).

To identify those brokers, we used as much our data from our 2-modes network of participation to coalitions, as our semi-structured interviews. The first source allows us to identify the most active actors and the ones who share the greatest number of co-membership to coalitions with other actors. Our interviews then gave us more details on the intentions and concrete implication of actors in bridging across segmentation lines, through collaborative projects.

Data collection and analytical steps for the other spatialities

To document brokerage projects and collaborative actions (and the other spatialities involved in them), the interviews were key. Prior to the interviews however, much preliminary empirical work had already been done. For about 60 actors more involved in car alternatives projects and coalitions, internet searches and press reviews were made to document their projects and collaborations. Those actors are listed by sectors and presence to coalitions at the link below (2). In choosing them, we looked for not only the most active, but also for a good representativity of our six sectors, and of a range of spatial localizations. From the 60 more documented actors we succeeded in meeting 38 (once or twice). Forty-three interviews were thus conducted in 2010 and 2011 (lasting from 45 minutes to two hours). Our pools of forty-three interviews confirmed that we touch on the range of all coalitions and collaborative projects in the field of car alternatives and the main linkages between actors, which we had began to draw in the prior step.

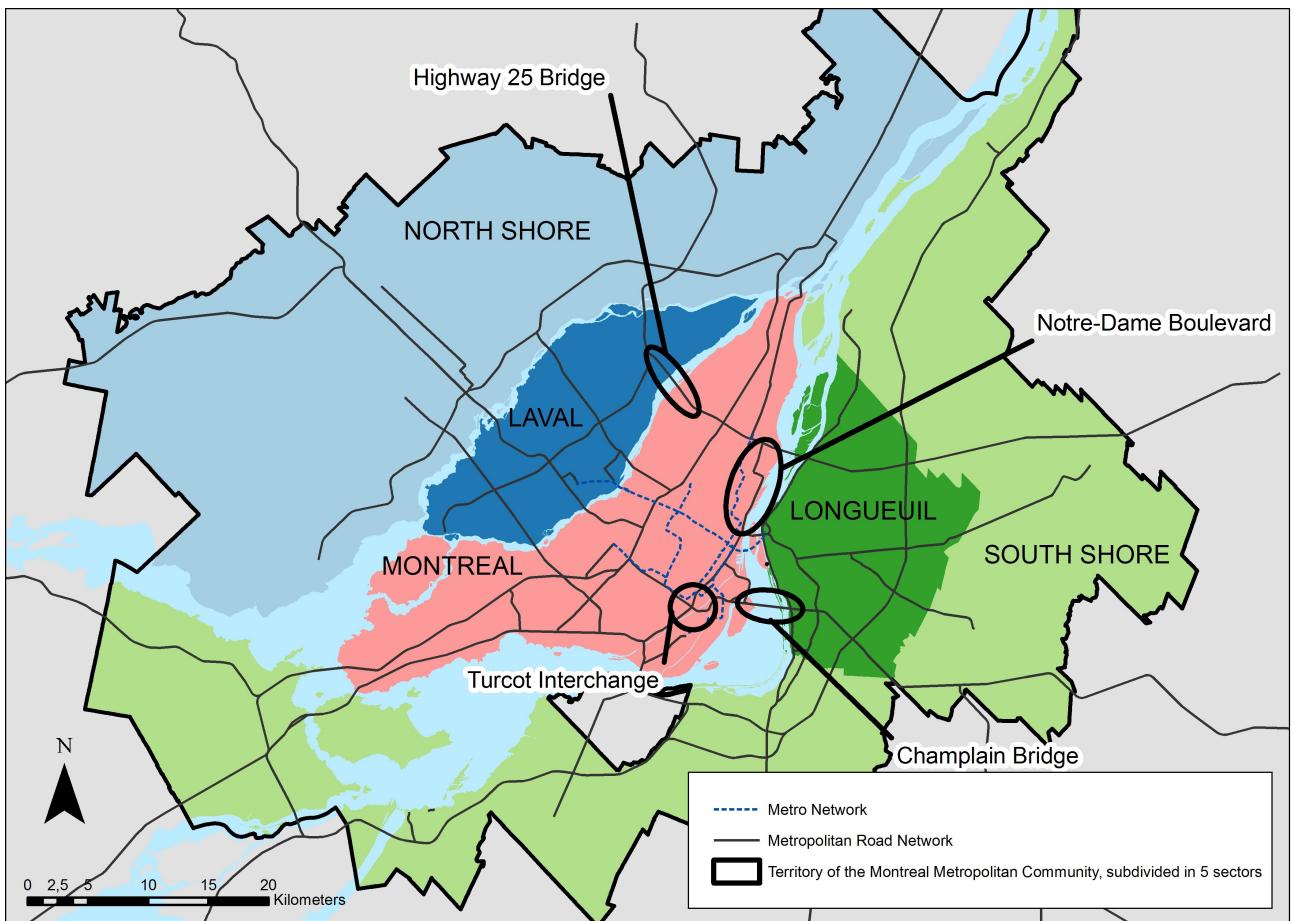
Scalar frames were identified first by analysing the documents of the mobilized actors to find their framing of the mobility problems and of the solutions. In many cases, the scalar frame not only emphasized one scale, but also articulated a certain relation between different scales (in terms of problem/solution or solutions with different temporalities and power relations). Second, when such scalar frame was identified in documents, specific questions were asked about it in the interviews. To document the uses of territory and place, interviews were also used with information previously gathered in documents and press review. For the use of territory we looked in particular for references to boundaries in the priorities and obligations of an actor, and to dividing lines across space (for example, statements such as : “we on the south shore want this”).

In sum, our methodological approach takes networks as the starting point to identify brokers. These are used to make a more detailed analysis of the use of scale, territory and place.

3. Mobilization around car alternatives in Montreal

The population of the Greater Montreal Area (GMA) is 3,6 M. The centre of the GMA is the island of Montreal, which is composed of Montreal city and 14 other municipalities, and the Jesus Island on the northern side, where we find the suburban municipality of Laval (see Fig.1). The main growth in the last years has been in the suburban municipalities of the north and south shores, although 51% of the GMA population lives on the island of Montreal (CMM, 2012). The elected officials of the 83 municipalities of the GMA meet in the Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC) (created in 2002), which has competences on strategic spatial planning and public transit. But this new institution has stayed weak, and has struggled with the sharing of responsibility with the metropolitan transit agency (AMT) created by the provincial government in 1995 (Boudreau and Collin, 2009).

FIG.1 The territory of the Montreal Metropolitan Community, with its 5 main sectors and the transport projects discussed” (Map of Pier-Olivier Poulain, INRS-UCS)



Since the end of the 1990s, we have witnessed in the GMA a new interest for car alternatives. More actors started advocating more public transit, slow modes (walking and cycling), and in general a reduced place devoted to cars in the city. These mobilizations came with several demonstrations, concrete collaborative projects, public debates (and six formal public hearings), as well as coalitions. Seven coalitions were formed in Montreal from 2002 to 2012 to promote car alternatives or oppose car-oriented infrastructures, with in average 32 participant-groups : two were promoting more investment in public transit (2002-2005; 2011-), one for traffic calming measures (2007-2011) and four concerning specific transport infrastructure projects. This last set of four is made of 1) the Turcot Interchange in the south-east of Montreal, 2) Notre-Dame highway east of Montreal (those two coalitions demanded less car capacity, a more human-scale infrastructure and more public transit included), 3) the coalition against the new tolled and privately operated bridge “25” going to northern suburbs, and 4) the coalition for a modernized Champlain bridge going to the southern suburbs, with on-site public transit (those sites are shown in Fig.1). How have the participant actors to those coalitions and collaborative projects used the spatialities of networks, scale, territory and place for their mobilization?

Networks

Our data show that the whole network considered is characterized by a majority of actors (71%) who are involved in only one targeted issue, it is thus very sparse. Yet sub-groups remain connected. Brokers have thus particularly worked on broadening the mobilization from isolated targeted issues

to a more general and inter-connected mobilization. But certain sectors of intervention collaborate more than others, and an important divide remains between the central city and suburban locations. Let's consider those three points in more details.

5. Successful brokerage between targeted causes and broader mobilization for car alternatives

Our interviews have shown how brokers had specific objectives to link together actors mobilized on targeted issues. Within the Coalition for traffic calming, for example, the environmental leader ERC-Montreal (the leader with the most ties with other actors) glued together a bunch of resident associations and community groups, with the help of the public health agency. The brokers offered their support and expertise, and strategically identified resources locally which could serve the larger coalition. The ERC also gave visibility to these local groups in the press and represented them in front of different public authorities. SJCW groups (TROVEP, Women's Council), also developed such kind of platform on the issue of the affordability and accessibility of public transit within neighbourhoods. Finally, Montreal-based leaders also gathered groups from different locations across the province to participate in the coalitions asking more investment in public transit. In itself, the existence of three generic coalitions (with together 76 actors from different sectors and locations), and their inter-connections, show the brokerage between targeted and general causes.

The development of those networks depended on regional and provincial groups which are more central to the whole network and who steered the coalitions. But this brokerage also counted on leaders of targeted causes who made the connections between the coalitions' core and the other actors in their sub-group or local community. In the case of mobilization on highway infrastructures, those leaders of specific causes were often under much pressure since the issues at stake were very concrete for their partners in the affected neighbourhoods. The car-infrastructures meant important effects on quality of life (and sometimes expropriations) in the neighbourhoods. On the other hand, some community groups also feared the consequences of their opposing stance on the subsidies they receive from the government. If many broad alliances have formed, our interviews have shown that their longevity rests in part on the relationship between regional leaders and activists of targeted causes. And these relations are sensitive because of political pressures and the different emotional and geographical proximity to the cause of the two types of actors.

2. Brokerage between sectors of intervention

What about the brokerage between the different sectors of intervention? Environment, health and transport actors participate in more coalitions and collaborate very much in concrete projects. Our interviews show this is linked to intentions of health actors to address mobility issues, while environmental and transport-focused actors (especially cycling and traffic calming groups) also saw much opportunities (in particular, for subsidies) in the collaborations with the health domain.

SJCW actors and economic actors have, in percentage, more targeted participation (79 and 80%) than the actors of the other sectors (42% for environment, 64% for transport and health) : the majority of them are thus involved, individually, in only one cause. Economic actors are also little present in the coalitions, with the exception of the Champlain Coalition. There are exceptional key brokers who link with other sectors, but they rarely represent a consensus within the sector.

The most active actors from the economic domain are on the one side the metropolitan committees of large worker's unions and on the other side the Montreal Board of Trade, but they have few direct links together. The worker's unions are important in terms of resources (mobilization material, people, money) for manifestations and for key linkages with civic actors and political parties. The

Montreal Board of Trade is the representative of employers in the city(-region). She developed economical arguments for public transport, arguments which were much used by actors of other sectors. But other local boards of trade are more isolated and work mostly with local elected officials. They also have sometimes contradictory positions to the ones of the central-city Montreal Board of Trade, promoting new or modernized car infrastructures.

Social-justice and community organizations (SJCW) represent the most populous sector in the whole network, although this is 80% of targeted participation. They are especially present in infrastructure-coalitions; they represent 53% of the members of Mobilization Turcot. SJCW actors formed the basis of the local mobilizations, and could use, to gather support, the institutionalized neighborhood networks with groups of different sectors of intervention (Sénéchal et al. 2008). SJCW leaders thus collaborated with other sectors; but through their focus on one cause.

3. Difficult brokerage between center and suburban locations of the city-region

The co-membership to coalitions gives a clear vision of a central-city and suburban segmentation in the network, center-lead coalitions reaching little to actors located in the suburbs, and vice-versa. The one exception is the political coalition of 2005, which was a joint demand by local elected officials and chambers of commerce for more investment in public transit from higher levels of government.

In the recent Coalition for a new Champlain bridge with public transit (2011), there was no effort to link actors from the suburbs on the south shore to actors involved in the central-city, although the issue itself, the bridge, link the two territories. And the same divided portrait emerges from the more center-lead coalition *against* the new bridge 25 (bridge linking Montreal to the north shore). This central-city/suburbs division comes partly from the higher centrality of economic actors in the northern and southern suburbs, while central-city actors have more links with environmental and transport actors, even in terms of their ties with actors from the south shore.

One event in 2010 tried to promote greater collaboration under the motto for a “metropolitan civic movement”. The Citizen Agora was frequented by almost 400 participants. But it was initiated by actors from the built heritage and spatial planning sector, which have a rather peripheral position in the network of actors mobilized on transport and mobility. Although the event was thought to be interesting in terms of promoting a “metropolitan consciousness” (AuthorA, 2011), and being inclusive of actors located in the suburbs (with conferences from key representatives), it had yet no effect for actors in terms of bridging across the segmented network.

As for concrete collaborative projects between the central city and suburban locations, involved parties have faced important challenges. Environmental groups have faced certain territorial disagreements in regard to priorities for public transit (see section territory). Vélo-Québec has deployed projects to encourage walking and cycling throughout the province. But while this has led to the participation of many suburban municipalities around Montreal, Vélo-Québec feels that much more resources are needed to lead to results. First because the urban form of suburbs often makes walking and cycling less natural. Second, because the network of mobilized actors is much less dense than in the central neighbourhoods of Montreal, where diverse community groups and residents associations are also involved and work in synergy for more results.

Scale

What scalar frames have been put forward by brokers mobilized for car alternatives? In 2006, the Montreal Public Health Agency gets a report out stating that traffic issues is one the most important cause of health hazards in Montreal, considering pollution, collisions and the low physical activity

associated with car mobility (PHA 2006). The report will give fuel to mobilize for car alternatives for several years. It helps particularly to build a case for a local frame of action, in which changes in the built environment is the only concrete action to slow down cars effectively in neighbourhoods' dangerous streets and intersections. Traffic calming measures have to be implemented, in parallel to changes encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transit. The coalition for traffic calming is created the following year. Vélo-Québec and the Urban Ecology Center will also go to provincial hearings and lobby in committees to demand changes in the *Highway Safety Code*, to provincially institutionalize such local frame giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists in streets.

From 2008 and on, the local frame of action continues to be developed, this time in emphasizing a local way of life. While the environmental organization Équiterre has become well known for its “Cocktail transport” (a mix of mobility alternatives to lower carbon emissions), the group also started the campaign “I'm active in my neighbourhood”. It promotes walking and cycling to do the errands within local commercial streets. This scalar frame was developed in giving a positive image and a concrete role to local storekeepers. The Urban Ecology Center also developed a similar scalar frame. They focused on the quality of the design of public spaces and of streets, as spaces of encounter free from car traffic. This frame was developed in partnership with a provincial health actor who promoted more active mobility patterns for the long-term objective of reducing obesity.

The diversified local frame of intervention, and the networks which had been put in place to support it, did lead to changes in streets configurations in certain neighbourhoods. One central borough's interventions lead to a scale debate, giving the opportunity for other actors to mark their different scalar frame. When in Plateau-Mont-Royal borough changes in streets sizes and directions (as well as higher parking fees) were implemented, local businesses complained and asked the Montreal City-Hall to cancel the borough decisions, fearsome for a diminution of their clientele. Drivers transiting through the borough suffered temporarily from long congestion delays, causing frustrations which were much talked about in the media. The opposite idea, common in the planning sphere, is that interventions affecting mobility should be planned at a city-regional level, to ensure some form of coherence. There is here at stake a chicken and egg problem : should local action have to wait for regional planning or could it be done first, to inspire regional planning? But even deeper than this, the most conflicting element comes from the implications of the local frame : it implied putting constraints on mobility by car.

Local businesses and the Montreal Board of Trade, particularly, strongly criticized this local intervention and its local frame. The Board has particularly documented the economic benefits of public transit, in relation to private car. In its framing, public transit ought to be encouraged in making it more competitive (better, more rapid and fluid services) and in changing the dynamics of public investment in transport infrastructures (which still favoured road investments). Their framing had thus been focused at the metropolitan and provincial scales. Local interventions could only come next, and in a spirit of metropolitan coherence.

But within this larger scalar frame the other brokers are much more radical than the Montreal Board of Trade: it is the scale at which car circulation is produced, through the extension of highways. This is where the brokerage between particular infrastructure projects and more general transport issues have played particularly an important role. Local activists were first opposing a change in the road infrastructure which would have detrimental effects on the air quality, housing and urban fabric of their neighbourhood. But when the regional brokers got involved, the link was made with transport issues and a higher scale of interpretation of the problem and solutions emerged. The re-modelled Turcot infrastructure will have direct consequences not only on local residents of the South-East of Montreal, but on all inhabitants of the greater region which would be ever stuck in a

health hazardous car-dependent mobility system; if public transit is not included. The problem of the new infrastructure was thus re-framed in a city-regional perspective, although local SJCW actors remained the primary militants.

This last case shows how brokers played simultaneously with different scalar frames, which they considered supplementary. They have developed local scalar frames promoting a “local way of life” and changes in the built environment, to favour walking, cycling, and to slow down cars. In parallel, they also advocate for a metropolitan mobility planning which makes public transit a priority and puts a moratorium to more capacity for cars within transport infrastructures. But the tension between the two lies in the constraints given to car use and the fluidity of traffic (even public transit) transiting through urban neighbourhoods. While the brokers active in scale framing favour in theory a metropolitan planning, resisting new car traffic by concrete local actions is still welcome by the majority of them. This is precisely where local storekeepers, the Board of Trade and some planners disagree.

Territory

Territory also proved to be part of the practices of actors and have implications for the trajectories of the mobilization. The broker Transport 2000, representing transit users, have tried in the past to link the different territorial localized demands for public transit and create a momentum with all the different “Access” groups. Access groups are suburban citizen committees which ask better transit services for their municipalities. Although some of them are dynamic, they have stayed insulated from wider mobilization, apparently because of their lack of resources. Furthermore, such type of territorial mobilization has shown in the last years dividing rather than unifying effects.

The East Train project is a particular example of such a territorial conflict. The project for a new transit connection in the east of the city-region first included two suburban trains (to improve access to down-town by the north east and east of the city-region), but it was limited to one in its final phase. While the environmental groups advocated in majority for the option with the two trains, the Environmental Regional Council of Montreal supported the one-route preferred, because it was going through the east of the island of Montreal. ERC-Montreal was scared of losing the State investment (and thus the train in Montreal-East, for its Montreal members) if it opposed to the one-train decision. ERC-Laval (its sister organization in Laval) felt that ERC-Montreal abandoned the larger metropolitan alliance which had been made. Since then, ERC-Laval talk of a climate of suspicion from actors of the northern suburbs in regard to the collaboration with Montreal actors, and has started to elaborate its own positions in regard to transport issues (while it earlier left this field to ERC-Montreal).

Territory was also used in a creative way by public and civic actors who proposed new bounded territories to advocate for solutions. Through the pilot-projects “Green, active and healthy neighborhoods” new territorial entities were created. The entrance points mark the fact that residents have there chosen to lower car fluidity to the profit of slow modes. The city of Montreal finds this demarcation especially important to ensure greater acceptability to the traffic calming measures. For the civic groups, the boundaries serve to ensure a demonstration effect within a small urban territory. The health actors want to have clear examples of what interventions on the built environment can do (to improve health and security). This strategy helped to get funding and visibility.

From an analytical perspective now, the *Group of urban research (GRUHM)* proposed an alternative to the territories used by the provincial Ministry of Transport in its transport planning, and especially in its intervention on the Notre-Dame highway and Turcot Interchange (which were

both debated in 2008-2009). The Ministry was focusing each time on specific segments of infrastructure, limiting its intervention, planning, and interaction with the public to this bounded territory of infrastructure segments. GRUHM proposed instead to consider the whole east-west highway axis which crosses Montreal, and of which both the Turcot and Notre-Dame are part of. He proposed thus to consider the east-west road axis as the territory to plan mobility, making it then possible to plan not just for cars but also for on-site public transit services. This territorial (re)construction (based on the historical name of this highway-axis) was supported by more than 50 actors who jointly asked to take it as a basis for the debate in public hearings, instead of the strict infrastructure of the Turcot interchange. Although this proposal to change the object of the public hearings was not formally accepted, the proposition did frame much of the contributions in the debate, and encouraged a wider consideration of the transport infrastructure (AuthorA 2011b).

Territorial strategies were thus used in different ways by actors, leading to different consequences for the trajectories of mobilization. Many actors feel the necessity to strive for the particular interests of their geographically-bounded constituency in a time where investment in public transit is still scarce. In one case, this proved to be harmful for dynamics of city-regional coalition building. New territorial constructions were also invented by brokers, both with a local and a regional perspective, leading to further investment (or at least debate on the need for further investment) in public transit and slow modes.

Place

Place was also used strategically by mobilized actors, to link their cause to a significantly practiced and valued place. The first place used is the subway. Militating against the increasing fares of public transit in Montreal, the social umbrella organization TROVEP has used the subway both to gain support from the users and to give visibility to the implications of higher fares for the poor. Subway demonstrations became an important joint action of the Coalition for public transit (2002-2005), to which environmental actors took part. The group *Environment and Youth*, for example, mimicked a cemetery in front of a central subway station, to show the death of public transit if nothing was to be done. For the TROVEP, these actions in the subway not only gave visibility to the issue to the outsiders, but also accentuated the importance of the social justice issues (affordability) at stake to other groups which focused on environmental ones.

Beside the subway, streets are most often themselves part of the places occupied. An institutionalized place strategy takes places every year in Montreal, like in many other cities of the world : the Day without cars, on September 22th, on which a section of down-town is blocked to cars. While this zone was reduced significantly in the last years, the Urban Ecology Center has encouraged local groups to have their own “neighbourhood without cars”. This meant the organization of a community event on central streets in their neighbourhood, which were to be blocked to car traffic. Year long also, many neighborhood parks and public places were used to promote car-free and convivial environments. Recently, car parking spaces were also occupied. While this use of place is made very much in collaboration with public authorities, a Die-In is also organized by an informal group of cyclists, event which through the years gained visibility in the media. The Die-In (practised in many cities of the world) consists in the occupation of a busy intersection where cyclists “act”, falling on the ground and keeping in silence for two minutes, to denounce the death of many cyclists due to collisions with cars.

Streets were also used in more traditional demonstrations, especially by the coalitions advocating against the planned road infrastructures. Mobilisation Turcot changed several times the place of their demonstration, thinking strategically about the location used. First in the neighbourhoods affected, then in hanging up an immense billboard on the interchange, “25 000 more cars on

Turcot, unacceptable", linking the Turcot debate to the Climate Conference which was in process. Finally, they lead a demonstration walk into the central neighbourhood Plateau-Mont-Royal, where many local associations (and the local administration, see above) were also organizing to have alternatives to cars. This last demonstration was held there specifically to show that the Turcot was not only a local issue of "not in my backyard".

Place is thus used strategically as a way to garner wider support to the cause, and show the extent of people mobilized. Mobilization Turcot also specifically chose the different places of occupation in relation to the scalar re-framing of their claims. Smaller and more radical groups also use place specifically to gain visibility and contest accepted norms of mobility (the Die-In).

Discussion

Our whole portrait of collaborative projects and coalitions point to four strategies through which the mobilization for car alternatives is expended through space in the Montreal city-region : the "local alternative as general alternative", (the neighborhood projects), the infrastructure alliances, the user-based mobilization and the metropolitan movement. Table 2 details each strategy, the projects involved and the spatialities used in each.

Table 2. Strategies of expansion and the assets provided by each spatiality

Strategy of spatial expansion	Collaborative projects and coalitions	Positive and negative assets of the main spatialities used
"Local" alternative as the general alternative	Local neighborhood projects for walking, cycling and convivial public spaces, Traffic calming coalition	Much network brokerage between different sectors and different localizations; Refined inter-twined local scalar frames, symbolics of places (neighborhoods and streets).
Alliances on infrastructures : Redefine the mobility paradigm through major infrastructures	Mobilisation Turcot, Coalition Notre-Dame, Coalition against bridge 25; Champlain Bridge Coalition	Network brokerage between broad mobilization and targeted causes, and between sectors (BUT not between central-city and suburbs); Combination of local, metropolitan and global scalar frames; Symbolics of place (the infrastructure); Counter territorial frame (whole axis of mobility vs. just one highway or one interchange)
User-based : Asking for more and better services (of public transit especially)	Public transit coalitions ; Access groups and Transport 2000; Chamber of commerce frame	Diffuse network; Metropolitan scalar frame abstract and little used, conflictual local territorial priorities; but successful use of place (metro) for affordability
Metropolitan Movement	Citizen Agora, planners' perspective	Network segmentation between central city and suburbs; Conflicts in scalar frames (between local intervention vs. preliminary metropolitan planning); Territorial boundaries hinder collaborations; Not-place based and mobility still little mobilized.

Our analysis show that the successes and difficulties encountered in these expansion strategies are linked to the positive and negative assets of the main spatialities used, especially when their combinations are considered. In the Montreal city-region, the first two strategies are now more visible than the two last ones, and have lead to a densification and diversification of the networks (with more ties between local targeted issues and broad coalitions, as well as more sectors involved) and to an evolution in the framing of the issue. The “local alternative as general alternative” and the infrastructure alliances combine many spatialities which positively affect one another – refined scalar frames, the symbolics of place, much network brokerage and little internal territorial conflicts. These offered alternative imaginaries of mobility : the first focusing on walking, cycling and public spaces within a “local way of life”; the second emphasizing new visions of infrastructures with on-site public transit.

The user-based strategy and the metropolitan strategy, in contrast, are very little linked to strong mobilizing spatialities. They are either a-spatial or the spatialities involved show internal conflicts (territorial priorities, network segmentation between central city and suburbs). In the past, user-based strategy have captured attention and lead to more investments: particularly in the uses of the subway by the first Coalition for public transit. The symbolism of place helped strengthen and broaden the networks. But gradually, demands and needs from users have diversified and have become somewhat conflictual : between different territories who want more access, or between the low-income users and the more privileged, who can pay more. Also, broad coalitions for more services in public transit were provincial, but no scalar frame was articulated to make it a collective urban or metropolitan project. It is through local alternatives and infrastructure debates that user-based demands for more public transit have become more visible.

Yet, the infrastructure coalitions have not won all their battles. They have succeeded in delaying the modernization projects of Notre-Dame and of the Turcot interchange, but much doubt still remains over Turcot. The coalition for an alternative Turcot which rallied local and regional actors (but based in the central-city) lasted about two years and was much publicized, but under pressure it collapsed; and no significant changes were made, yet (but a new provincial government has since been elected), to the planned infrastructure.

This is not un-related to the metropolitan dynamics at play in Montreal. The hegemonic framing of the Ministry of transport rests in part on the belief that it is its responsibility to respond to the demands for car mobility from the residents of the city-region who commute daily to the centre of the agglomeration; in this way the central-city opposition is perhaps not enough. But there is no large alliance at a city-regional level. The metropolitan movement strategy suffers from the central-city/suburban segmentation of the network., The presence of city-regional institutions (the AMT and GMA) did not yet help the metropolitanization of the network. On the other side, the central-city mobilization did coincide with an enthusiasm of municipal and borough authorities for car alternatives, contributing in certain cases to their implementation. But decisions on the larger transport infrastructure projects remain farther from their reach.

Conclusion

The literature on the spatialities of contentious politics has been said to be in need of 1) going beyond mono-spatial fetishism (Jessop et al., 2008; Leitner et al., 2008), and 2) concretizing conceptual propositions in empirical investigations, to see the extent to which spatial constructs are part of the practices of actors, and in what ways (Moore, 2008; Mayer, 2008); challenges to which we tried to respond. Whereas Nicholls (2008) formulated inspiring propositions on the particular spatialities of the *urban* context, our (modest, but also empirical) proposition show the

particularities of the city-regional context.

With clear empirical indicators, our multi-spatial framework allows to explore how not just scale is constructed and disputed, but also how the symbolism of specific places, the force of territorial boundaries and the scope of social relations can give resources and constraints to actors in their collective mobilization. Together, the use of different spatialities seem to contribute to the success and shortcomings of the civic movements' expansion strategies throughout the city-region.

While Nicholls made proximity and co-presence a key advantage of the urban setting for social movements, (for networking and the occupation of places), we see that distance is already an issue at the city-regional scale. Only certain actors with more resources will link central-city mobilizations to those in other nodes and suburbs of the city-region, and beyond. This lack of resources, more funding opportunities on local projects, and political pressures linked to the underlying politics of infrastructures all work together to encourage actors either "to keep it local", or to depend on a limited number of brokers, a more mobile elite (like in global networks : Nicholls 2009, Cumbers et al. 2008). This puts much pressure on certain brokers, most often the leaders of targeted causes and the leaders of broad coalitions. Yet, large alliances were made.

Those findings give substance to the interpretation of city-regionalism as a spatial puzzle for civic actors defending specific causes. The city-region is very much experienced as a space of segmentation and differentiation, where a broad consensual but effective movement is difficult to imagine, even more to put in place. Yet, many do consider they should have a greater role to play in the metropolitan political space. The question is how.

Footnotes

- (1) We can also find socio-spatial positionality and mobility (Leitner et al 2008); but socio-spatial positionnality seems to us to include many others; while mobility was little mobilized in our case study (but showing similar characteristics, in our case, to the use of the materiality of place).

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