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Place-framing against automobility in Montreal

Places are key motivations for mobilization. They are often the 'stuff' for which people mobilize.

Built up over time with material elements (built environment, shade or sunny spots, grass, etc.)

which are perceived, experienced and valued differently by different persons; they imply

different 'structures of feelings' (Williams 1977). Movements or collectives are often formed

around a shared [even if temporarily and non exhaustive] representation of issues and claims,

and of places (Martin 2003); yet we do not have clear schema for the processes involved. Social

movement scholars have examined collective frames; while the study of place meanings in

conflicts has also been a topic of geographic inquiry. These two literatures have been put in

dialogue by Martin (2003) through the concept of place-frame, and extended by Pierce et al.

(2011) to explicitly take into account multiple relations over diverse spaces. We wish to extend

this dialogue further with the following two questions. **First, what are the processes through**

which different (collective) actors connect and affirm meanings to places? Second, how

does the iterative production of place frames take part in conflicts about movement?

Mobilities and place scholarships have intersecting points and common objectives - linking

spatial practices with meanings and politics. But while the 'rhythm' of everyday life is much

spoken of in mobilities scholarship, the rhythm of public debates and struggles over the

production of space and movement has received less attention (Desrozier-Gendron and Boudreau

2011). Explicit attention to the politics of place, we argue, can help mobility scholars consider

the fabric of the sites of everyday life and movement by collective actors during conflicts.

The mobilization for car traffic calming in Montreal provides a heuristic case from which to

reflexively study such dynamic processes. Since the turn of 2000 in Montreal, environmental

groups had been fighting new highways while isolated resident associations were asking for traffic calming in central neighborhoods. Their separate efforts gained momentum as an emergent movement when in 2006, a troubling research report from the Montreal Public Health Agency (DSP) emphasized the health-related impacts of automobile transportation. From then on, the experience of walking and cycling in Montreal neighborhoods became a converging issue of concern. In the Montreal struggles against automobility, this episode stands out as a strategic use of place. We draw on this case to examine the ongoing processes of place-framing, specifically the dynamic co-articulation of discourses and activist networks.

Place meanings and the politics of mobility

Meaning has been central to notions of place in geography (Cresswell 2015). Agnew defined place as materiality, location and setting for spatial practices which are tied to meaning (Agnew 1987). The politics of place, when “different micro-worlds find themselves on the same proximate turf” (Amin 2004: 39) also involves different power geometries and is affected by strategic agendas. The history and past trajectories of places are often re-interpreted for specific purposes in mind, including urban redevelopment, capital accumulation or cultural affirmation (Jones and Evans 2012, Blokland 2009). Through meanings and spatial practices, place is indeed connected to the politics of mobility, which crucially involves multiple relations to places through movements and moorings, with differences in the liberties and constraints, speeds, rhythms, routes, and effects of movements in space (Cresswell 2010).

In relation to mobility, place is neither a flat space with no meaning, nor a site with certain essentialized characteristics. Rather, the literature on place conflicts and place framing tells us two things. First, the literature suggests that the meanings attached to place are constructed through socio-political processes. Place meanings are tied to the experience of place, but since

this experience is varied for individuals, and that its voicing can imply strategic concerns of what this place will become in the future, collective meanings imply power-laden acts of inclusion and exclusion, and of ‘bundling’ together different place meanings (Pierce, Martin and Murphy 2011). Indeed, for Pierce and colleagues (2011, 60), particular aspects of a place are emphasized to make demands for that place in the future: “Place-frames represent only a fraction of any place, the socially negotiated and agreed place/bundle”. For activists it is about considering the resonance of the place-frame in relation to its salience for the subjective experience of the place for participants in the mobilization (Martin 2003). To understand these processes of meaning-giving, we wish to argue that an analysis of discursive struggles offers important insights. Discursive struggles, studied as 'moments' of place-making, discursive framing and network building, are a primary material offered to researchers to understand the politics of place and mobility.

The second key lesson from the literature on the politics of place, especially from its cluster on a networked and relational understanding of place (Pierce et al. 2011, Massey 2005, Amin 2001), is that the characteristics of a place are not only determined by what is physically on the site, but also by how the site is connected (and presented to be connected) to other sites beyond it. The ways place is defined in relation to mobility flows, for example by concerned place users opposing a bus or railway to ‘protect’ the neighborhood from ‘strangers’ or unwelcome neighbors (Henderson 2006, Cidell 2012), correspond in fact to a selective voicing of place (in relation to other places) that is key to the ongoing politics of mobility. This selective voicing relates to norms of what or who is considered ‘out of place’ (Cresswell 2015) as well as in situ practices and ongoing ‘choreographies’ of dealing with overlap and complexity in every street corner (Prytherch 2015), with some actors being heard or given space to move as they wish (and

others not) (Stehlin 2013). If these processes go beyond rational technical imaginaries and transport regulations, the codes producing urban space do often correspond to hegemonic norms going against alternative ways of living and moving around (Patton 2007, Blickstein 2010; Koglin and Rye 2014). Fighting against automobile-centered norms on urban streets (Koglin and Rye 2014), cyclists claim “We are not blocking traffic, we are traffic!” (Furness 2007); yet urban residents also fight to secure car parking spaces in their living environment (Taylor 2014). How place constitutes or constrains flows is a key locus of struggles, and hence an important component of the politics of automobility (the dominance of the automobile in our mobility practices, norms and infrastructures (Urry 2004)) and its alternatives. Place imaginaries play out in complex, power-laden and yet unpredictable ways, sometimes reinforcing automobility and at other times contesting it. Our focus on the discursive struggles and dynamics of network building between different actors experiencing and politicizing place differently can extend beyond a reification of place in relation to automobility, and focus on the intersectionalities of place and mobility claims.

The art of place-framing in discursive struggles

Geographers have already used the vocabulary of 'frames', relying often on the concept of 'collective action frames' from Benford and Snow (Martin 2003, McCann 2003, Kurtz 2003). Benford and Snow (2000, 614) defined collective action frames as a set of discourses “intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support”. They are interpretations of the reality, articulating convincing stories about the motivation for collective action, the diagnostic of the problem and the solution. Benford, Snow and colleagues acknowledged that in the framing literature, considerable attention has been devoted to the identification of (static) frames and much less on their articulation processes (Snow et al. 2014).

This has led to criticism that the activists' diverse regimes of engagement are too little investigated, and the grammars of motives too neatly 'packaged' in a simple strategic motto (Cefaï 2007). According to Cefaï (2007) and Jasper (2007), these studies fail to capture the fine negotiations within concrete situations of disputes and antagonism between participants in the movement. Who the opponents are and what they claim/enforce do of course also shape the content of frames, and counter-frames (Poletta and Kai Ho 2008). Anne Esacove (2004) invites scholars to explore more deeply what Sewell (1999) called this 'dialectic dance of meaning-making'. To respond to this invitation, we draw on Laclau and Mouffe (2001[1985]), who emphasize the *potential* dynamism of political discourse rather than a sense of inevitable fixity. As a tool to study place-framing, Laclau and Mouffe's dynamism sheds light on the transformation of meanings given to places through discursive struggles against a hegemonic definition of place. For Laclau and Mouffe (2001[1985]), the strength of a political idea comes from the association it draws between different elements. A place and its mobility flows can be signified in relation to car fluidity, or in relation to safety, health, and interactions among people. Activists and their opponents try to redefine the same contested terms, through articulating it with alternative elements within a discursive field.

These discursive articulations foreground certain identities and socio-political affiliations. In any situation, the position an actor will take could depend on the predominance of one of many social identifications (women, worker, resident of this neighborhood, etc), which, we want to add, may imply different relations to place. Place-frames are produced in the interactions with others during conflicts, during which such multiplicity of affiliations come into play. For Laclau and Mouffe, the discursive process indeed implies the mixing of the affiliations and loyalties of

different actors (activists already connected, potential new allies, targets, etc.) which imply possible tensions.

Place-framing will occur through several discursive struggles - i.e. several opportunities for re-articulating meanings to place. Benford and Snow (2000) spoke of three core 'tasks' for collective action frames, which Martin (2003) used to analyze place discourses constitutive of neighborhood collective action. We extend her work by considering three framing tasks as distinct (potential) moments of place-framing, outlining these moments as different political processes of engagement with space and with other actors/networks, each fulfilling different framing tasks and different objectives of network building (Table 1). The first moment consists in a particular voicing of the experience of place by participants to a conflict. This moment involves processes of naming and blaming as providing an alternative interpretation to a situation (for example, pointing to an injustice), through the voicing of the experience of place. It is associated with processes of coalition building around joint grievances, which implies recruiting, negotiating, blending.

The second moment is about 'claiming', or prognostics; solutions to the problem. In relation to place, this has to do with the design of the place and the voicing of solutions to the problem *in space*, including codes (bylaws) or specific policies for the production of space. In terms of networking processes, this implies reaching out to potential allies in the actors regulating space or, alternatively, to confront the regulators defending the hegemonic framing of place.

The third moment is about 'practicing'. Benford and Snow spoke of motivations to mobilize. We rather speak here of the concrete implementation of the solution through practices in space. In terms of network processes, this moment could include the building of a community of practice, i.e. a network of actors putting the imagined place in practice.

While not all place-framing necessarily leads to practices in space, some place-framing starts from there. The iconic case of mobilizations for car traffic calming in the Netherlands (Kraay 1986) shows a political engagement starting from practices in space. Residents started putting plant pots and garden benches on the streets, in front of their houses, to limit the passage of cars and show it was an inhabited space. Mobilizations hence started through practices which voiced a certain experience of place, to later make claims on the codes producing urban space. The order and entry points of place-framing moments we have in Table 1 thus varies, but distinguishing between them shows their differences in terms of socio-spatial processes.

Table 1 here.

Case, data and methods

The case study presents discursive struggles over the space devoted to cars versus other modes of mobility in the streets of Montreal from 2005 to 2012. The mobilization of actors take place in a multi-scalar governance context. The City of Montreal depends on higher levels of (provincial and federal) government for large investments, while at the same time, it has expressed many criticisms, even opposition, to provincial policies of highway development since the end of the 1990s. The story from 2005 to 2012 is one in which cars are represented to disrupt place, in threatening certain valued spatial practices (walking and cycling), as we will see. But such association has not always been the dominant frame from Montreal civil society. To understand the particular voicing of the experience of place in relation to cars from 2005-2012, we have to briefly go back to the previous discursive struggle which left traces in networks and discourses¹.

This earlier discursive struggle occurred during a highway debate. The road axis Notre-Dame (see Figure 1), which connects the Port of Montreal to the city center, was part of a east-west highway plan for decades. While significant opposition had stopped the project in the 1970s, in

2000 the Ministry of Transport ensured strategic partnerships with community actors of the neighborhood most directly affected, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Core community groups representing the neighborhood gave their benediction to the project, arguing it ensured a safeguard of the neighborhoods' industrial and worker identity. The highway was represented to be vital for the port and the industrial sectors of the east of Montreal, providing for the protection of the place industrial character and for employment (Sénécal and Harou 2005). This discourse on the neighborhood then supported automobility. But when the debates opened up to more actors during public hearings, the frame was contested by environmental and health organizations from the Greater Montreal, mainly from a point of view of pollution, urban design and worries for increased car traffic in the neighborhood. With their relative success to delay Notre-Dame, NGOs continued with building networks and projects, negatively linking cars to place. Together with a diverse set of actors, they articulated a novel place-frame repositioning Montreal neighborhoods in relation to mobility.

Figure 1 here.

We analyse this mobilization from 2005 to 2012 through three specific discursive struggles, experienced in relation to the hegemonic “auto-mobility” discourse (Urry 2004). The study of such struggles requires data on concrete debates and on the relations between actors. The corpus for the discourse analysis consisted first in the transcription of debates on the spaces of mobility in Montreal: the parliamentary commissions on the Highway Safety Code at the provincial level (2007 and 2010), and the public assemblies on the Montreal transportation plan and its follow up, at the municipal level (2007 and 2010). Discursive struggles were also documented through press coverage; a press review of regional and local newspapers distributed on the island of Montreal on “traffic calming” from 2007 to 2012, for a total of 179 articles. Additional press

coverage was specifically dedicated to the Montreal Public Health Agency's reports on mobility, from 2006-2012, because of the high number of references made to its reports during the debates analyzed. The individual documents which were referred to during the debates and those presenting the civic projects for car traffic calming were also analyzed.

The textual discourse analysis was complemented by twenty semi-structured interviews and one focus group, conducted in 2010 and 2011, with two types of actors: actors mobilized for car alternatives in the civic sector (resident associations, non-governmental organizations, neighborhood community groups) and individuals from governmental agencies. We particularly chose individuals and groups most active in producing discourses, in participating to the analyzed debates and in the formation of projects and alliances.

The discourse analysis of each debate consisted in identifying the discursive 'nodes', that is the key contested concepts which participants articulated and sought to highlight. In each debate analyzed, the nodes were identified, together with their dominant and counter definitions. This was done through two rounds of coding of the transcriptions. The interviews and focus group were an opportunity to have participants speak of discourses through concrete situations of elaboration, negotiation, debate, tensions and antagonism (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). Interviews were also crucial to document the evolution of social relations and the constitution of coalitions and joint projects (especially the four car traffic calming programs we will describe).

Place-framing in Montreal's neighborhoods: the mobilized local community enabling walking and cycling

The discursive struggles constitute the three moments of place-framing identified in Table 1: 1) naming and blaming, a re-interpretation of a situation in space, 2) claiming a solution and 3)

performing the solution in practices. We describe the emergence and development of each of these struggles, with the network articulations involved, in the following sections.

First discursive struggle: making mobility an issue of health, vulnerability and quality of life

The first moment of place framing involved voicing a certain experience of place - the vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists - and blaming car traffic for it. The naming and blaming received more visibility when diverse actors blended their voices together, as we will see. In 2006, the Environmental regional council, a Montreal non-profit environmental organization which had earlier contested the Notre-Dame highway, linked together different resident associations and neighborhood groups under a new *Coalition for car traffic calming*. Isolated residents' groups had asked for traffic calming measures in several neighborhoods of Montreal episodically for many years. The NGO helped structure the actions from local groups, sharing information and resources and a common voice in the media: with this help, local traffic calming demands were transformed from particularized issues to a Montreal-wide issue. The focus remained on actors mobilized locally, residents who voiced their sense of threat and vulnerability while walking and cycling. The Plateau resident's circulation committee, for example, led a campaign called 'My survival in traffic' where residents were invited to send pictures and videos on their experience of how car traffic causes feelings of unsafetyⁱⁱ, which were then presented to the borough council and led to a citizen mobility plan.

In that period, other environmental and mobility focused organizations started to launch new campaigns to emphasize the negative effects of car traffic in neighborhoods on the quality of life. The provincial cyclist organization Vélo Québec organized campaigns in Montreal primary schools to encourage children to walk or cycle to school. In focusing on children, the focus was very much on vulnerability and on feelings of unsafety.

“parents are scared, they are scared for the safety of their kids. There are too many cars around the school, so they take their car and bring their kids to school. What happens? Well there is more circulation around the school. So the streets become more dangerous, and the more the streets are dangerous, the more there are parents driving their kids to school and traffic increases.” (Babin, Vélo Québec, in OCPM 2008: 76, *translated by authors*)

These campaigns thus built on a sense of threat exposed by residents. They also mirror and connect to the new emphasis of the Montreal Public Health Agency (DSP) on the health impacts of transportation. In 2006, the DSP published a report summarizing the up-to-date scientific research on the health-related impacts to transportation, especially air pollution, collisions on the streets, and sedentarity in a car-dominant system. The DSP presented pedestrians and cyclists as vulnerable on the streets, with maps on the geography of collisions with cars, maps which several groups then cited and showed in their documents. The DSP represented collisions with cars as 'one of the greatest world-wide epidemics' (DSP 2006:9). Youth populations and poorer neighborhoods were shown to be more exposed to car collisions, exacerbating social inequalities. The vast majority of the Montreal newspaper articles (22/25) specifically discussing the DSP 2006 report or additions to it in the following years borrowed the same alarmist tone of the agency, especially in regard to collisions of cars with pedestrians and cyclists, trusting its expertise and credibility: “Health and car transport: the DSP warns authorities”, “A safe place on the pavement”, “Road design flaws make for poor public health, Montreal officials say”, “Journeys at high risk to school”, “Watch out for pedestrians! Walking becomes more and more dangerous in the streets of Montreal, especially in poor neighborhoods”, “Reinventing the City: Pity for the pedestrians”. The report did initiate some negative responses in the press (3

editorials), with the most critical of these visible in the following quote, from an article titled 'Subsidized activism'.

“Public bodies yield to the activists temptation and switch to political action, in taking advantage of their resources and credibility. We had a good example this week, with the Public Health Agency of Montreal who devoted its annual report to the mischiefs of automobile transport.” (Dubuc 2006)

In the editorial, transport policy is presented as an object beyond the realm of competency of public health experts. Yet the public health agency argued that transport engineers are out of touch with daily urban life and hence with best circulation policies *in the urban context*. The innovation from the Montreal agency was to directly tackle mobility in the urban space in health-oriented terms, in this way joining in the voicing of vulnerability and the blaming of car traffic for it, that was initiated by mobilized residentsⁱⁱⁱ.

Finally, this phase of naming and blaming culminated in the structuration of networks between civic actors, residents mobilizing and governmental agencies providing funding. Building on the first independent pilot projects and resident mobilizations, civic projects became structurally tied to the public health sector through funding opportunities. A private foundation (‘Québec en Forme’^{iv}) partnering with the government financed up to CDN \$400 millions in 10 years for initiatives promoting 'healthy habits and lifestyles', including healthy mobility habits - i.e. walking and cycling. This funding had as a requirement for projects to be participatory and include local actors in the planning for pedestrians and cyclists. Neighborhood community organizations became formal partners in these projects. This meant a strong convergence of actors (including local community groups who often otherwise lacked funding) on mobility issues which had not necessarily previously been a priority.

This thematic convergence between government, private funding and community organizations did create some tensions and concerns. In the 2002 Notre-Dame debate discussed earlier, the tensions were organized in a schism between neighborhood versus metropolitan actors (Sénécal and Harou 2005). But in this period, their voices blended in a common naming and blaming. Now, the less heightened tensions concerned more the relations between this new agenda and the priorities of community groups for their neighborhood. In the neighborhood Villeray (north of Plateau, see Figure 1), organizers were hesitant to switch from a strict focus on housing and poverty to one also promoting better conditions for walking and cycling. Yet, demands from residents in community forums for greener and safer streets especially, and also for cycling lanes, eventually turned it into a priority. The expertise provided by the civic organizations, and the funding from the public health sector and the borough, made it feasible. It also provided more tangible gains than the traditional poverty issues the community organizers usually worked on (see *Author 1* 2015). The convergence between social justice groups working in neighborhoods with the agenda of promoting walking and cycling was thus encouraged both from bottom-up resident-demands on their local living environment and by strategic opportunism. In the neighborhood Mercier-Est for example, the profusion of such funding was seen as an opportunity to fund urban revitalization, for which they lacked resources. Residents in community forums had identified transportation issues as an issue of quality of life in the previous years: a large boulevard and a railway cutting through their neighborhood being a barrier for pedestrians, difficult access to local services by public transit (the routes focusing on downtown access), heavy industry traffic going to the port, etc. The focus on walking and cycling also enabled them to put energy into the revitalization of a declining local commercial street (with investment into more convivial public spaces).

In sum, this first discursive struggle cumulated in a common naming and blaming, or the first moment of place-framing, qualifying vulnerability in walking and cycling as a problem in space in the urban context. There was a lot of network building work to effectively voice this experience of place which was redefining mobility. The desire to develop car alternatives in Montreal, originally coming from urban ecology and environmental actors, converged with the top-down promotion of healthy habits, with the safety concerns of residents and with the desire for more options and better living environments broadly, in poorer neighborhoods. The node 'mobility' previously articulated by transport engineers with occasional community partners (who in the Notre-Dame case linked a highway with an industrial place identity), now had a counter-definition, a new discursive articulation linking mobility to vulnerability and health. But the extent to which this counter-discourse could make its way in the production of space was not guaranteed.

Second discursive struggle: traffic safety through street design

The second phase of place-framing and network-building consisted of claiming place, i.e. transferring the experienced problem in space into codes --regulations or actions-- for a new production of space. The discursive struggle highlighted two visions of traffic safety: a behavioral versus a design one. The two meanings of traffic safety specified very different policies that would have distinct impacts on spaces and mobility. Each of these received different levels of support at different scales.

The Highway Safety Code is the regulatory code for all roads in the province of Quebec. It presents a *behavioral* articulation of traffic safety. In 2007 and 2010, parliamentarians received different groups and institutions to discuss possible changes in this legislation in order to increase traffic safety and reduce the amount of road deaths and injuries. The additions proposed

by the Minister of Transport to the Code concerned the regulation of road users to ensure their best behavior. Behavioral causes that undermine traffic safety were emphasized: exceeding speed limits, non-use of helmets by cyclists, use of cell phones while driving, alcohol abuse, age of first driving license, etc. The comments from most participants were on line with such perspective on traffic safety through the regulation of bad driving habits.

Civic actors from the Montreal network presented above provided an alternative discourse. They connected traffic safety to the built environment (width of streets, speed bumps, design of intersections, cycling paths, etc.). In their framing, street *design* should ensure appropriate conduct by road users, for example slowing down and giving priority to pedestrians at crossings. Data from the DSP was further provided to argue that such design approach is more effective to transform behaviours than fines and policing. It is the key argument for car traffic calming : “The street, by its design, dictates to the drivers what behavior he must adopt.” (CRE-Mtl 2009). This alternative framing of traffic safety, grounded in the experience of the street for its users, transferred into demands for other codes in the production of space.

This alternative framing of traffic safety focuses on modified street design to reduce the speed and eventually the amount of motor vehicles. But it was considered to be out of place by the Minister of Transport and the parliamentarians of the Liberal party in power. Within this parliamentary commission, the civic actors were told that urban street design is not an issue of traffic regulations, but an issue and responsibility for municipalities. This interpretation of design as separate from traffic is not uniform: in some European countries, design norms were included in the traffic regulatory codes to emphasize the protection of the most vulnerable users of the road (WHO 2004, for example in France, Belgium and the Netherlands). In comparison to the Montreal-based discourse, in which civic organizations grieving about the vulnerability of

pedestrians and cyclists had received strong support, such support was not so effective at the provincial level. Several organizations from the health sector participated, but agencies from other regions adopted a behavioural framing of traffic safety, joining the Minister of Transport. The Montreal public health agency advocating for car traffic calming seemed an outlier in the provincial scene.

If the design framing of traffic safety seemed out of place in the provincial arena, in Montreal it fit with the orientations of the City's planning policies. It had become explicitly part of the City plans (Montreal transportation plan 2008, Guidelines for Borough mobility plans, Mtl 2010). City planners even developed the concept of the 'green neighborhood', which meant a well demarcated neighborhood with traffic calming measures on residential streets, as well as internal access to services, parks, and other greenery.

Paradoxically, the concept of the 'green' traffic-calmed neighborhood was developed from monetary investments given by the provincial Minister of Transport as a *compensation measure* in neighborhoods near an urban boulevard to be developed into a highway. This gain was acquired after the contentious public debate on Notre-Dame. The first discursive articulation on the experience of unsafety which we presented above had also been voiced during that highway debate. In fact, it was the first time the public health agency took a position on this theme, which they then really documented to produce the 2006 report. After public hearings, the provincial Minister of Environment put as a condition for the Notre-Dame highway's approval the financing of traffic calming measures in surrounding neighborhoods to mitigate for the increased traffic. The discursive articulation thus had the effect of increased funding for the planning of 'traffic calmed neighborhoods' by the City (which was a very small victory for opponents to the highway). Paradoxically thus, this funding for traffic calming planning came in the context of

highway development and was given by the institution (the Ministry of Transport), dismissing this articulation for the regulatory code for all roads in the province. We see here how much the traffic calming frame developed itself in relation to the dominant discourse of highway development in Montreal and has even been integrated within it (allowing for highway but mitigating its impact in local streets).

In sum, the second discursive struggle concerned the inclusion of car traffic calming as a mean to achieve traffic safety. The Montreal networks, including ties with planners, did give much support to this framing, which led to concrete changes in streets of several boroughs. Building on the first discursive struggle affirming the experience of unsafety in relation to place, civic actors in this second struggle tried to claim an alternative production of space in which traffic design addressed traffic safety. This focus on design contrasted with the provincial strategy which defined traffic safety in behavioral (mostly driver discretionary) terms. Yet provincial politics allowed for traffic calming as a compensatory measure to highway development, one which nonetheless pointed to the experience of place. This acknowledgement in the safety node of the place-frame was thus kept mostly within the realm of the Montreal political space.

Third discursive struggle: Grounding traffic calming in a local way of life

In the networking leading to a joint process of co-blaming the car, public health actors, residents, social justice community organizers and environmentalists came to work together on four types of pilot projects for safe spaces to walk and cycle in Montreal. We have presented the merging of motivations and funding which institutionalized these partnerships in the first moment of place-framing. These pilot-projects did more, however, than an overlapping of the different claims and motivations for safer streets. They demanded car traffic calming measures and changes in the traffic code (second moment). In this third moment of place-framing they also diffused an

utopian imaginary of what convivial neighborhoods to walk and cycle should be like. The way these partnerships were set up contributed to a real formatting of a discourse on place and on the communities enabling walking and cycling. The regional organizations leading the pilot-projects developed a recipe for action to be implemented in diverse neighborhoods with local groups, while following objectives from their funding agencies.

The four pilot projects promoted similar visions. They were all at the neighborhood scale; although with different spatial units delimiting the neighborhood. Also, the visions from these four pilot projects all emphasized a dense environment with a mix of urban functions and services. The projects fostered a virtuous cycle linking the practice of walking and cycling with the dynamism of a community and the political engagement (and feeling of responsibility) of actors to improve further the neighborhood for walking and cycling.

The Environmental Regional Council gathered the Coalition for traffic calming around a vision of attractive residential communities to walk and cycle. Vélo-Québec emphasized safe walking and cycling to school. Creating 'school communities' would allow for solidarity and caution in travel practices and mobilization to improve street designs, to encourage walking and cycling to school by children. Équiterre targeted local shops and institutions: shopping to the local store fostering walking or cycling by customers (as opposed to driving) and encouraging shops themselves to be favorable to street design for pedestrians and cyclists. The Urban Ecology Center emphasized the importance of neighborhood public spaces which created a sense of belonging to the neighborhood. They emphasized the quality and greenery of public spaces (including streets themselves, but also parks and meeting areas) favorable to the practice of walking and cycling to and through these spaces. In sum, the assets, design and practices in the

neighborhood all worked in a virtuous cycle for more and more walking and cycling within a local way of life.

In this quote from an organizer from Équiterre we get a feeling of this virtuous local way of life:

“Because there is a pretty obvious difference between someone who walks to his bakery and says to his baker ‘Hey, the bread you made, I really like it’, who chats with him about his family, meets his neighbor when he comes back home walking, goes to the local store to fetch a juice or whatever. Compared to someone who takes his car and leaves his neighborhood to go shopping. The relation to the neighborhood is not the same. So people in doing things which are pretty basic like buying food... the fact of doing this in the neighborhood, well it makes them more susceptible of demanding things for their neighborhood. If you bike to drop your child at the daycare center, and then go on to pick your organic vegetable basket, well you'll probably want your bike journey to be a pleasant one and surely, I don't know... if there is a corner that lacks flowers or is dangerous, well you may be more susceptible of speaking to your borough or to a citizen committee about it then if you take your car and come back without having consciousness of what is going on in your living environment.” (translated from French)

The neighborhood itself is privileged as a space of socialization, discursively tied to an increased sense of responsibility for the material space one travels through at low speed (walking and cycling), in which one experiences daily social interactions. The same logic is present in the discourses from the other organizations leading the pilot-projects, and structuring much of the collective action on car traffic calming.

The selectivity of this place-frame becomes more obvious when comparing it to its opposition, voiced in the press, concerning measures implemented in the borough Plateau Mont-Royal. In

the Laurier sector, one-way streets were changed direction and the width of Laurier street was reduced to add a bicycle lane; with the direct consequence that it became more time consuming to pass through the borough in a car (see Figure 1). Drivers had to take the 'correct' road for passing through or, better, around the neighborhood. This triggered a massive controversy in the press. (There were 34 articles on this controversy in 2011, out of which 14 (all from renowned journalists) present the measures to be radical, 4 are positive and the rest are either neutral or factual.) Journalists called this 'A cultural war on what the city should look like', "Two streets, one revolution":

“Among what defines the *Plateau* is its shops. If I go get the best sausages in town at *Queue de cochon*, and it takes me half an hour of artificial traffic at the end of which I can't park... I'll probably pass next time. I'm only a vulgar 450^v so good riddance! But already, shopkeepers tell me furious Montreal clients tell them they will no longer come” (Boisvert 2011, translated by authors).

“The media gave voice to the opponents. The pros were put aside. So that if you are for, you seem antisocial, the well-being of the population from the whole Montreal region being at stake! [...] And yet, we didn't make those 10 000 cars disappear, we just asked them to drive on arteries in the morning and evening.” (Resident group Plateau Milieu de vie 2011, translated by authors)

What was primarily at stake in this controversy was the marking of a neighborhood protected from outside traffic. Opponents, especially journalists and shopkeepers, but also part of the local population, argued that the Plateau wasn't only about 'a local way of life'; people from the greater Montreal participated in its dynamism by coming to restaurants and shops. At stake here in the framing is the relational place itself, which is produced as much by outsiders coming here and

knowing it; mobility is thus essential in this framing to the character of the place. The changes in street directions and the added parking fees all translated into a message of 'closure' which changed the dynamic of the neighborhood in relation to the broader city. The place-frame, especially this third component asserting a 'local community of practice' for walking, cycling, and car traffic calming, was really put to test in the Plateau because of this perceived closure of the neighborhood to the rest of the city-region.

What happened then to the myriad of different civic projects for traffic calming which were developed around the same time in a series of participatory meetings throughout Montreal? The other borough authorities and the central city very much distanced themselves from what was happening in the Plateau, arguing their measures were less radical. Civic actors emphasized the networks they put in place to install a 'community of practice' around their place-frame of walking and cycling in a local way of life. The participatory plans also ensured a 'neighborhood' vision of the needs for traffic calming instead of a clientelist street by street demands (which was the rule in the past). It was a vision of a neighborhood in which people *chose* a lifestyle with little car use, a local way of life. The same journalist quoted above, who was one of several heavily criticizing the Plateau traffic calming measures, acknowledged a few months later he had exaggerated the consequences of the contested measures to reduce through-traffic.

“OK, it’s true, I exaggerated. There is no commercial agony on the Plateau-Mont-Royal. ... In this place where people drive much less than in the rest of Montreal, they suffer exaggeratedly the urban and social choices from others.” (Boisvert 2012, translated by authors)

He even sympathized with the fact that residents of the Plateau chose a locally rooted lifestyle with less car driving, but paradoxically felt threatened while walking and cycling because of the neighborhood positionality in the Montreal car traffic flows (see the map in Figure 1).

If such changes in editorials signal a certain effectiveness to the place-framing, the controversy still showed that the frame of a local way of life was contentious when it affected regional mobility practices. Through the civic initiatives there were other un-easy entangling of spaces for walking and cycling and spaces of rapid flows. One of the four actors that initiated the civic programs, the *Urban Ecology Center*, addressed this issue by organizing new arenas of interaction between neighborhood groups, borough planners, city planners, the Metropolitan transit agency and even the Canadian Pacific Railway company (railways being barriers for pedestrians and cyclists) to deal with frictions between the local and regional scales of traffic planning. These committees lasted a few more months, but were in practice dismantled when funding from the City and the Health Foundation (which was explicitly short term) disappeared. This raises questions on the conditions for a place-frame to evolve from a neighborhood to a regionally-positioned focus, when the place-frame is embodied in closely-knit connections between funded networks and a certain voicing of the experience, desired design and practice of place.

Discussion: The mobile dynamics of place-framing

Place-framing was a key instrument for activists mobilizing for car traffic calming in Montreal. Table 2 shows the discursive and network articulations achieved in the three moments of naming and blaming, claiming solutions, and performing practices. Brought together, a concern about traffic and mobility was redefined as a place-frame of healthy traffic calmed communities, oriented toward walking and cycling.

Table 2 here.

The discursive articulation, however, is not a stable and permanent frame but a discourse elaborated through interactions, subject to ongoing change and contestation (Esacove 2004, Snow et al. 2014). Our emphasis was on the dynamic process of its elaboration rather than its content as coherent package (Cefaï 2007). Doing so shows the multiple meanings given to place and the unpredictable and dynamic overlap and struggle between different actors' input. Place-framing processes highlight that place, mobility, and the relationships between them are contested and dynamic..

The selectivity of place-frames to empower certain mobility projects

In the place-framing examined here, the selective meanings given to place worked to empower certain mobility projects, i.e. to counter automobility. As discourses, place-frames always have boundaries and blinders: they focus on key issues and exclude others. The issues outside the bounded discourse may reappear in subsequent struggles and re-articulations of place/mobility relations, or can be left unheard, depending on the ability of new network relations to voice them. Our study explained a Montreal re-articulation of the car/neighborhood meanings going beyond a previous place-frame which was linking positively a highway and a neighborhood's industrial character, leaving aside health and urban design issues. In the subsequent place-frame and framing we studied, health and pedestrians' vulnerability were at the center. This place-frame too leaves certain issues aside^{vi}, and networks have struggled to adjust to newly claimed, but somewhat inconvenient place meanings. Nevertheless, the selective voicing of the experience of place in terms of vulnerability did empower the cause of car traffic calming.

Place/mobility debates in a multi-scalar and networked governance context

The selectivity and dynamism of place-framing also occurs in a certain scaled and networked governance context. Place-frames may move around through such overlapping governance spaces unexpectedly, sometimes in convergent and sometimes in contradictory ways. In the first discursive struggle the articulation of mobility as a health and vulnerability issue was made through the experience of place by residents but also through the top-down agenda steering from the public health funding. This created a strong convergence. The resonance of the place-frame was grounded not only in residents' experience of place; it was reinforced by the public health agency's expertise and lobby, in conflict with another element of the state, the transport department. In the second discursive struggle, the articulation of traffic safety as street design was simply dismissed by regulators in one provincial arena, but was given funding as a compensation for highway development in another. This multiplicity of governance arenas means that the place-frame travels and generates different responses by actors promoting the hegemonic transport discourse. In response, activists chose to put more efforts in certain arenas and scales of action. Car hegemony at the provincial scale did not prevent innovations for car alternatives in Montreal, but reduced their institutionalization in wider mobility norms. In the third discursive struggle, some of the networks for car traffic calming evolved to include metropolitan actors in their local communities of practice, reducing the frictions with regional mobility planning. Doing so, *a portion of the actors* emphasized a new model of traffic calming - one negotiating with metropolitan flows, demonstrating a potential evolution of the place-frame beyond the (local) neighborhood. The fine details of these struggles show us the peculiar rhythm of place/mobility debates in overlapping and networked governance arrangements. If there is still an unequal state power geometry in favor of automobility, the literature on the politics of mobility should pay attention to the multifaceted governance context that can offer certain

interstices for negotiation and experimentation. Trans-scalar governance spaces offer opportunities for activism and struggle that redefines place/mobility meaning and relations.

Conclusion: Three moments of place-framing as entry points in the politics of mobility

Investigating the intersection of place and mobility claims in a place-framing lens is one way to connect discursive struggles on the governing of mobility with the experience of mobility in everyday lives, an objective of mobilities scholars (Cresswell 2010, Doughty and Murray 2014). Place-framing bridges mobilities and place by highlighting the processes of collective actors' selectively choosing from and then discursively highlighting the experience of place, to then either make effective claims to challenge institutionalized discourses on the production of space for mobility (2nd moment); or directly perform a counter-production of space through practices (3rd moment). Our identifying of these three moments makes explicit such bridging processes and suggests a pathway to investigate and understand the politics of mobility through place. Yet, we do not think place-framing moments necessarily occur in such order and independently of each other. In fact, the order and overlap of the place-framing moments is likely to depend on the specific motivations and power geometry of place/mobility politics in each case, visible in discursive struggles and network dynamics. In particular, understanding the emergence and negotiation of place frames through the relations of activists with governmental actors seems key. Analysing these interactions involves locating the multiple arenas and temporalities of decision-making -- some of which Legacy (2016) notes are in a consensus-driven style avoiding public scrutiny, but in which activists nonetheless can be contesting. We think these relations of activists and governmental actors can illuminate the place-framing moments more prone to challenging and re-articulating institutionalized discourses.

In the face of strong power imbalances, and depending on the privileged relations with public authorities, citizen mobilization does not necessarily enact regulatory steps (our 2nd moment of claiming), focusing rather on practicing (our 3rd moment). The ephemeral appropriations of car parking spaces for pocket parks, and the activists' own drawings of pedestrian paths and bike lanes, are examples of practicing place to push for other mobility choices. When discussing such tactical interventions, Iveson (2013) and Campo (2014) are split between their potential to enact an alternative city order and the apparent need to either engage in 'formality' (Campo) or adopt at least a joint political claim (Iveson). Building on our third moment of place-framing, we think that to understand the performativity of such acts of appropriations one needs to look at the network, the communities of practice (with or without state actors), and its evolution through time. Our case shows that the involvement of the state (with only short term funding) does not guarantee long-term institutionalization either.

The three place-framing moments we propose in this article highlight the dynamic emergence of place-frames as well as the constitutive and differentiated role of networks in each step. In this investigation of how discourses and activists networks are co-articulated to frame sites in mobility conflicts, we find that configurations of alliances among actors, or network building, contributed to 'frame' place as much as the joint discourse. In three distinct processes of voicing, claiming, and practicing, the networks perform and illustrate certain 'qualities' to place in the debate, making new issues, articulations, and connectivities visible in the public sphere over time. The various coalitions and shifting discourses demonstrate that place frames can anchor new coalitions (first moment), new relations/confrontations with space regulators (second moment) and new communities of practice (third moment). The dynamics between different state agencies and activists' discourses point to the significant role of networks within the framing

processes, and the importance of place-framing which is flexible for encompassing broader narratives. These networks and shifting discourses further demonstrate the relational linkages of mobility and place, and their negotiation through conflict. Place frames are not immutably linked to existing landscapes and experiences, but are shaped through network articulations that emphasize communities of practice in (imagined and desired) place(s) and relationalities. Mobility and place must be understood as co-constituted relational socio-spatialities.

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Notes

i We rely here on the work of Sénécal and Harou 2005, and on our own data from interviews, several participants having spoken of this previous debate.

ii Although "unsafety" is not a common English word, we use it throughout this paper because it best represents the debates that occurred in Montreal (often in French).

iii The involvement of the Montreal Public health agency was significant in that it explicitly challenged what Koglin and Rye (2014) call a motorised-oriented rationality in transport planning.

iv This private foundation increased the funds available to community organizations, while steering their interventions. This funding from *Québec en forme* emphasized the short term funding (2-3years), after which communities should support their own projects.

v ‘450’ is the telephone code of the southern suburb. In the Montreal region, it is common to refer to Montrealers as ‘514s’ and residents of the south shore as ‘450s’.

vi The experience of parents moving in the city with their children seems to have been otherwise discarded by activists and public authorities in the case of many parents' preference for car use when they deal with a packed schedule mixing work with the care of children (Author 1, forthcoming).