The Montréal School: Urban Social Mix in a Reflexive City

Annick Germain *Université INRS*

Abstract: Could Montréal be a new "school" in urban studies in North America? This paper shows how research on social and ethnic mix in Montréal has been built on what makes this city unique: its "in-between" nature, its neighbourhoods and the importance of public spaces in urban life. The research agenda is also part of a conversation between scholars and practitioners that has continued uninterrupted for almost 30 years. This is illustrated by revisiting a series of research projects conducted on three topics: inter-ethnic cohabitation in neighbourhoods, in social housing, and planned social mix.

Keywords: Montréal, social mix, neighbourhood, public space, inter-ethnic cohabitation

Résumé : Existe-t-il une nouvelle école en études urbaines en Amérique du Nord, l'école de Montréal? En partant de cette question nous montrons que les recherches sur la mixité sociale et ethnique se sont construites sur ce qui fait de Montréal une ville unique, à savoir sa nature de ville de l'entre-deux, et l'importance de ses quartiers et des espaces publics dans la vie urbaine. L'agenda de recherche est aussi tributaire d'une conversation ininterrompue pendant presque trente ans entre chercheurs et praticiens. Pour illustrer cet agenda, on revient sur une série de projets de recherches traitant successivement de la cohabitation interethnique dans les quartiers, dans le logement social, ainsi que la mixité sociale programmée dans les nouveaux projets résidentiels.

Mots-clés : Montréal, mixité sociale, quartier, espace public, cohabitation inter-ethnique

Introduction

Does Montréal represent a new "school" in urban studies in North America, after Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami? If so, is Montréal an ideal "laboratory which is itself an integral component of the production of new modes of analysis of the urban" (Cenzatti 1993:8)? The Montréal School label was first proposed by French geographer Jean-Pierre Augustin of the Université de Bordeaux, who had closely followed the work of urban studies scholars in Montréal over three decades, in response to the multiplication of "urban schools" in the United States (Augustin 2010). Setting aside any questions of academic fashion, Augustin is convinced that a new reading of the city is taking shape in Montréal, centred on the social study of public places as social space. In this paper I argue that we can indeed talk about a Montréal School if we accept a soft version of the "school" concept. I will show that a particular kind of urban knowledge has been developed as a reflection of Montréal itself, a city of "in-betweens." Its social contours fall somewhere between segmentation and liveable social mix, and it is shaped by a double legacy, European and American, meaning that it has a centralized welfare state but loose urban policies and a vibrant civil society. I will also underline the fact that the Montréal School is the product of continuous discussion between social researchers and practitioners (policymakers as well as grass-roots organizations' workers), who have been engaged in dialogue about the promise and perils of social mix and inter-ethnic cohabitation. This "reflexivity" has inspired pragmatic expertise and policy-making and has produced a distinctive sociological approach to the city that emphasizes social and ethnic differences, neighbourhoods, and public spaces.

To illustrate this approach, I shall discuss some research projects that have mobilized research teams and policy-makers in Montréal with regard to inter-ethnic cohabitation in neighbourhoods, inter-ethnic cohabitation in social housing, and planned social mix in residential

projects. Revisiting these projects allows me to retrospectively sketch out the research agenda they all share, which could be labelled as a school. But before discussing this research, I briefly review the recent debates on schools in urban studies.

The Montréal School: A School or a Conversation?

The "School Debate" started in the late 1980s with claims made by artists, architects and scholars at the University of California, such as Edward Soja, Michael Dear and Stephen Flusty, regarding new ways to think about the city. These scholars sought to distance themselves from the framework put forth by the so-called Chicago School during the 1920s-1940s, since Chicago could no longer be seen as the quintessential capitalist metropolis. The Los Angeles School held that urban development was now taking place in peripheral areas, in ways that were postmodern or even chaotic (in terms of spatial disorder), as well as culturally hybrid. As a result, the old schema of urban ecology—in which, for instance, a city grew outwards in concentric rings from centre to periphery—was no longer useful for studying the fragmentations imposed on the city by post-industrial capitalism (Dear 2002).

Yet, according to Jan Nijman, a Dutch scholar working at the University of Miami, even Los Angeles itself was no longer *the* paradigmatic city at the beginning of the 21st century. How could Los Angeles be an extreme example of the new trends in urban development associated with contemporary capitalism when it was still, after all, a late-industrial city (Nijman 2000)? Instead, he argues, Miami is clearly more convincing as an exemplary global and postindustrial city. Produced by new transportation and communication technologies, Miami is a major hub for transnational communities anchored in ethnic enclaves, and is dominated by flexible immigration, excessive materialism, and a high crime rate. And, adds Nijman, it is characterised by a lack of urban citizenship in that there are no locally shared, place-based identities or urban social movements.[1] Thus, the School Debate is still going on, with a new generation of scholars (Nicholls 2011) and new disciplines entering the conversation, and with a greater emphasis on urban politics (Clark 2008) than radical geography.

The Montréal School points towards another path. For Augustin (2010), the Montréal way of reading the city focuses on public sociability and community dynamics as spaces where a cosmopolitan or multicultural city is being built, a research agenda quite different from that of Los Angeles or Miami. Although I have borrowed the title of this paper from Augustin, I do not wish to hold up Montréal as the new paradigmatic city by arguing that it illustrates the main trends in early 21st-century urban development better than any other city. Rather, I discuss how the research agenda in Montréal is inextricably linked with what makes this city unique and with the continuous reflexive work in which researchers and policymakers engage.

Before looking into what makes Montréal special, let us go back to the idea of reflexivity introduced by British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990), as part of his theory about the consequences of modernity. In modern societies, unlike traditional ones, individuals as well as institutions are continuously reflecting on their choices, such that their practices are shaped by this reflexive understanding. "The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character" (Giddens 1990:38). Giddens notes that the social sciences (especially sociology), which study people and their practices as shaped by their understanding of their world, are used more and more in everyday life to revise our understandings and hence our practices, for better or for worse. The self-knowledge of society therefore plays a part in the action that it exercises on itself. This is particularly true for public action. As we will see, though, the use of scientific knowledge should not be limited to expertise for planning or formal evaluations but can take many forms, including collective debates or organized conversations.

I use the school label, then, mainly as an invitation to debate ways of studying cities, rather than as a proposal of the best or ideal model of city. After all, Robert Park and his colleagues in Chicago did not present themselves as a school in urban studies but focused on Chicago as a site for fieldwork on social transformation, where the social trajectories of immigrants were more important than the urban form of the radio-concentric model (Chapoulie 2001). Los Angeles scholars consider this form to be obsolete and are searching for new ways to think about the urban; for them, only a macro scheme that studies the metropolitan landscape shaped by keno capitalism would be able to capture the endless fragmentation of our cities (Dear 2002). While preoccupations with branding were not absent from the Los Angeles School project—and while many have viewed their research agenda as tinged with ethnocentrism—they nevertheless stimulated huge discussions and research in academic circles (see Clark 2008; Gieryn 2006; Nicholls 2011). In this sense, they started a great conversation. I will follow on this conversation by taking some distance from a

fragmentation-based perspective to present another way to study our cities, based on public sociability and neighbourhood life as a main focus and linked to conversations between researchers and public and community practitioners that started in Montréal almost thirty years ago. This is clearly illustrated by the first of the three topics I will discuss, namely, inter-ethnic cohabitation.

Neighbourhoods and Public Space as Keys to Inter-ethnic Cohabitation

Montréal is only the second-largest gateway metropolis in Canada but it does have distinctive characteristics. As shown in the ethnic diversity index developed by Philippe Apparicio, Xavier Leloup and Philippe Rivet (2007), Montréal stands out from other Canadian metropolises by virtue of the wide diversity of countries of birth of its immigrants. The weight given to knowledge of French in Quebec's immigration policy helps to explain why, even with large numbers of immigrants coming from Asian countries as in Toronto or Vancouver, Montréal also attracts people from Haiti, Algeria, Morocco and France. Moreover, Montréal has no large ethnic enclaves, which flourish in Toronto or Vancouver owing to the large size and "critical mass" of many of their ethnic communities (over 100,000 people each) and the considerable development of immigrant suburbs (Qadeer et al. 2010). Furthermore, according to Leloup and Apparicio (2010), who compared Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, Montréal has hardly any ethnic "ghettos" from a geographical point of view. Census data for the metropolitan region also shows a fluid pattern in the significant spatial diffusion of visible minorities between 2001 and 2006 (Leloup and Germain 2012), and as factorial analysis shows (Dansereau et al. 2012), immigration is present in a great variety of residential areas across the metropolitan region. Recent waves of immigrants, such as those from North Africa, are indeed relatively more dispersed across the island of Montréal than earlier ones. That said, what I would like to discuss here is not so much the particularities of Montréal's landscape of ethnic diversity but the ways in which this urban diversity has been captured—first through a research project and then from a policy perspective—in particular by highlighting "the traces and legacies" left[2] behind by previous modes of settlement, such as neighbourhood life.

Montréal is an "in-between" city, torn between two philosophies of immigrant integration and diversity management: on the one hand, the federal government's model of multiculturalism and, on the other, the Quebec government's model of inter-culturalism, which recognizes diversity but emphasizes dialogue and integration within a shared culture marked by the French language. In fact, inter-ethnic cohabitation in Montréal owes very little to either of these policies but a great deal to the daily experience of Montréalers, which is deeply rooted in neighbourhoods. As Marsan (1981) shows, Montréal's neighbourhoods are a legacy of historical urban morphology. The cadastral plan—the way of dividing land in the first colony—created a series of *côtes,* or portions of land divided into plots giving everyone equal access to the rivers, not to mention a sense of community in case of attacks by the Iroquois. Each portion of land was generally crossed by a *chemin* (meaning "way" or "path"); these *chemins* would become major transportation arteries, which are still inscribed on the landscape of Montréal today (Chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, Chemin de la Côte-de-Liesse, and Chemin de la Côte-Saint-Antoine, to name a few). From the 1870s on, these *côtes* became suburban municipalities, and then annexed suburbs of Montréal, and finally neighbourhoods of the city. Catholic parishes and their boundaries played an equally important role in fashioning neighbourhood identity. Neighbourhoods are still very meaningful in public and social life and are always significant features of Montréalers' representations of urban space, even though administrative reforms have swallowed many of them up into *arrondissements* ("boroughs"). For migrants, too, they would turn out to be important functional, social and symbolic territories in their social trajectory and their gradual integration in their new society.

Before we tell the story of immigration in Montréal through its neighbourhoods, it is important to explain the meaning of the word *quartier* ("neighbourhood") in French. The territory of a neighbourhood corresponds to a meso-scale, which is more than just the immediate vicinity of places of residence and more than the statistical unit of the census tract used by most geographers when studying segregation or even neighbourhood effects (Germain and Gagnon 1999). The *quartier* is not an institutional space but a social one.

Following the British Conquest of 1759, French, Scottish, Irish, American and British settlers lived in a mosaic of neighbourhoods, the urban landscape being segmented along ethnic lines. This mosaic took shape according to a logic of the "cultural comfort" of sticking to one's own kind that served to minimize tensions (McNicoll 1993). Separate networks of cultural, charitable and economic organizations were set up to manage each community's reproduction in its own neighbourhood. If the districts' borders were not always clear, their churches left no doubt as to the distinct cultural identity of each area (Marsan 1981). Although linguistic clashes and religious rivalries already marked Montréal's political life, many historians

and geographers see this segmentation of urban life as having allowed conflicts to be contained (see Linteau 1982). This model of "integration by segmentation" was followed by immigrants arriving mainly from Europe, around the turn of the 20th century onwards. Chinese, Italians, Greeks, Portuguese and Jews all had their *petites patries* ("little homelands"), although each one displayed some internal ethnic heterogeneity (Germain 2009).

In the 1980s, this landscape changed rapidly with the arrival of immigrants from many parts of the world but mainly from so-called developing countries. During the 1990s, immigration levels rose sharply and newcomers continued to maintain their concentrated presence on the island of Montréal rather than dispersing throughout the province (Germain and Mitropolitska 2008). This reinforced the idea of "two Quebecs in one:" a cosmopolitan metropolis and a group of homogenous regions making up the rest of the province.

Since that time, various race-related incidents were erupting in Europe and in North America in areas with a high concentration of immigrant populations. Quebec's Ministry of International Affairs, Immigration and Cultural Communities (MAICC) and the City of Montréal were worried that such an influx of immigrants might have a troubling impact on the social fabric of the metropolitan area. To address this concern, a group of INRS researchers, in partnership with the Quebec government and the City of Montréal, undertook a major research program (Germain et al. 1995). Instead of focusing on segregation and exclusion, we proposed to study what we called "multiethnic neighbourhoods," the ethnic villages that were being transformed by very diverse waves of immigrants, in the inner city as well as the suburbs (and even on the South Shore of the island), and in poor districts as well as middle-class or wealthy areas. These multiethnic neighbourhoods were multiplying at the time, and are now the standard kind of neighbourhood on the island and in the adjacent suburbs. And even if the periphery of the metropolitan region is still very White, diversity is spreading.

Having identified and described the social contours of seven of these multiethnic neighbourhoods, the second feature of the research program was to explore the ways in which residents were involved in community-based and non-governmental organizations in their neighbourhoods. The third and most important component of our research was to look carefully at the way inhabitants were sharing urban public spaces (parks, commercial streets, shopping malls, and so on). In other words, we were looking at modes of inter-ethnic cohabitation in urban public life, ranging from tensions to peaceful coexistence. The results were quite interesting. All neighbourhoods had important community-based organizations involving diverse cultural communities and ethnic groups were often the first ones to set up community organizations to help vulnerable neighbourhood residents, sometimes initially for their own group but gradually extending to other groups.

Public sociability was certainly detached, or distant, but also calm and peaceful, even in very densely occupied public spaces. While inter-ethnic mingling was uncommon—with social contacts still bounded by age, ethnic origin and gender—public spaces were shared in a rather tranquil and non-conflicting way. Interestingly, the most multiethnic neighbourhoods also seemed to have the least inter-ethnic tension. Also, some sort of "soft" cosmopolitanism was on the rise, from the bottom up, revealing that diversity was part of the vernacular social landscape and that neighbourhoods did not appear to lose their vigorous community life as they became increasingly multiethnic. The return of economic growth in the middle of the 1990s, a relatively affordable housing market, and new culinary traditions imported by immigrants probably did a lot to smooth any rough edges in these processes of neighbourhood change. In recent years, Montréal has not escaped some turmoil over issues of racism in some neighbourhoods but these incidents have been concentrated in small areas such as the Pelletier area of Montréal-Nord. Work has been done since then by community organizations and academics (Fontan and Rodriguez 2009), and a new public space has just been designed together with inhabitants in the Pelletier area; interestingly, it is called La Voisinerie (roughly, "the place of neighbours," or the place to be neighbourly).

Our research was well disseminated, and for practitioners in NGOs and public bodies, it proved very useful to work at this meso-scale of the neighbourhood to tackle matters of ethnic diversity and immigration, as we shall see.

Integrating Newcomers in French: When Neighbourhood Matters

While the results of our investigation of multiethnic neighbourhoods did much to reassure our partners about the potential for harmony and vibrant urban life in a multiethnic context, policymakers continued to receive increasingly insistent calls to develop ways of encouraging civic participation among immigrants. Thus, seeking to distance itself from a federal multiculturalist philosophy (that led the government to support mono-ethnic associations, for instance), in the 1990s the province of Quebec, decided to prioritize actions aimed at inter-cultural rapprochement. Quebec reduced its aid

to mono-ethnic associations, encouraging them to open up to a broader clientele so as to become multiethnic or even mainstream.[3] In this vein, Quebec's ministry of immigration (re-labeled the *Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration,* MRCI) rethought its approach to funding immigrant settlement services by giving these a territorial basis, creating local *carrefours d'intégration* or "integration crossroads." "Our whole integration strategy will now be based on enabling immigrants to access neighbourhood social networks, governmental and municipal public services, and the education system" (from a declaration by Robert Perreault, MRCI Minister, November 1, 1999, my translation, Germain, Morin and Sénécal 2004)). This new approach coincided with a growing determination to persuade immigrants to learn French as the main medium of integration. In 1999 the MRCI signed an agreement with Montréal, which gave the City responsibility for managing the "action plan for the reception and integration in French of immigrants in neighbourhoods" (Ville de Montréal, 2002). One of the municipal services called upon to fulfill this mission of French-language integration was the Municipal Housing Office for Montréal (OMHM), which manages the city's public housing.[4] In the 1990s, the proportion of immigrant households in public housing ("habitations à loyer modique" or HLMs), grew by 40 per cent, and is now over 60 per cent, owing to a shortage of affordable, larger private rental housing units along with the typically larger size of immigrant families (Leloup and Gysler 2009). Troubled by growing tensions between immigrants and non-immigrants inside some public housing estates, the OMHM set up several programs: "Speaking Freely," "Citizenship, Key in Hand," "At Home at Last" and "Living with Social Mix." These projects aimed to better inform new tenants of their rights and responsibilities in terms of respecting local norms of neighbourhood life, to encourage the use of French, and to maintain good neighbourly relations (Bernèche 2005). I concentrate here on the "Living with Social Mix" project that achieved a certain degree of success, and return later to the concept of social mix, which has been a subject of research and conversation between researchers and practitioners for quite some time (Dansereau et al. 2002).

In light of the significant growth in the proportion of immigrant families waiting for public housing and interethnic tensions inside those estates, the OMHM commissioned a research study on inter-ethnic cohabitation. The report drew the attention of housing managers to the difficulties encountered not only in the estates but also in the surrounding neighbourhoods and everyday life, as growing numbers of immigrant families were moving into public housing located in the heart of neighbourhoods with strong majorities of white middle-class francophones in their population (Dansereau and Seguin 1995). In addition, ongoing tensions were evident in and around the largest public social housing estates (100 to 500 housing units on a single site), often related to drug dealing (Mackrous 2008 page 139). In response, the OMHM, which only manages properties owned by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) (a provincial organization), sought gradually to expand its mandate to include local social development (Mackrous 2008).

The research study on inter-ethnic cohabitation in HLMs showed a considerable social distance between immigrant and non-immigrant families (Dansereau Seguin 2005). Recent immigrants were often isolated, and tensions revolved around issues such as noise, smells, cleanliness and garbage disposal (238-239). More importantly, the arrival en masse of immigrant families with many children—especially teenagers—transformed the demographic profile of public housing estates, upsetting the balance that the mainly White francophone tenants had been used to, in which older women usually took up leadership positions in various tenants' association committees (for a description of changes in tenant association committes as a "Big Bang," see Mackrous 2008:137-146).

As a result, it became necessary to better welcome the newcomers and to create ties between new and established tenants. The Living with Social Mix project, launched in 2001-2002 as a pilot project jointly led by the OMHM, the City of Montréal and the MRCI, aimed to better inform new immigrant families about their rights and responsibilities as HLM tenants, to help immigrants learn French (enabling them to talk with their neighbours), and to build bridges with neighbourhood resources (Office municipal d'habitation de Montreal 2003). At the same time, the OMHM asked researchers at INRS to monitor the project, to provide critical assessments, and to suggest adjustments as the project unfolded (Bernèche 2005). This research work especially revealed the critical importance of adopting a personalized approach in order to reach immigrant families in their homes—particularly women in very isolated situations—as well as to provide them with support and organize activities in their neighbourhoods. The role and interpersonal skills of the social and community worker employed to establish trusting relationships proved crucial, as shown by the comments collected from the women immigrants (Bernèche 2005:59). It is also worth noting that the follow-up undertaken by the researchers made it possible to identify and surmount certain (sometimes unexpected) obstacles. For example, community organizations working in the neighbourhoods

appeared to be somewhat reluctant to collaborate in the project, viewing it as a form of competition with their own activities (66). This reluctance was overcome once they admitted that in fact they were not used to having immigrants among their beneficiaries and consequently were not very familiar with this "clientele" The constant follow-up and discussion work between researchers and partners (the OMHM, the City and the Ministry of Immigration) has led to many improvements in the project, which is still going on today at a larger scale and is considered a success, given the number of people it has reached.

A few years later, in 2005, another project was set up as an exercise in reflexivity, initiated this time by a group of community organizations working in HLMs with young people, who represent nearly half of the population living in HLMs designated for families (Leloup and Germain 2008). These four community organizations, whose offices and activities are located in four of the largest public housing estates, decided that they needed to take time to critically reflect on their efforts. They particularly wanted to improve the integration of young people from the HLM into the surrounding middle-class neighbourhoods and to encourage middle-class neighbours to be more open to the culturally diverse young people they see on the surrounding streets (Leloup and Germain 2008). With a research team, we organized a series of conversations with community workers in these organizations, along with some municipal civil servants and representatives from the OMHM. Instead of formally evaluating the youth work program, we suggested creating a narrative about life in these HLMs (drawing largely on focus groups with the young people) and about the challenges of cohabitation, as well as organizing seven collective discussions on the work being done by the community organizations.[5] These conversations with community workers were intended to give them the opportunity and the space to think critically about their own work, which consists of running activities (sports, parties, after-school activities, educational activities, crisis intervention, etc.) with young people and their families, who live in settings which are dense and crowded, very diverse (in terms of age and household type as well as ethnicity); and, above all, highly stigmatized, with police intervention being a common occurrence.

One of the discussion topics had to do with what we have called the paradoxes of the ghetto (Germain and Leloup 2006;61-66). On the one hand, community organizations must work towards bringing HLM families out of isolation by opening doors to them in the neighbourhood so that they have access to services, such as after-school activities, gyms, libraries, employment services and sports facilities and so on; in short, alleviating the confinement and isolation of HLM residents. On the other hand, young people are attached to their HLM milieus, which protect them from the discrimination, exclusion and rejection that often await them outside; social and community workers therefore strive to organize activities within HLM premises to compensate for the poor "welcome" given to HLM youth in the neighbourhood. Another discussion topic addressed the temptation to over-ethnicize cohabitation problems that often have more to do with generational conflicts than cultural ones (Germain and Leloup 2006:83-87). In sum, this reflexive work revealed the critical role played by community workers, via their organizations, in the local social regulation of the rather special living environment that is the public housing estate.

If the main issue so far in this paper has been inter-ethnic cohabitation or ethnic mix, an equally important dimension of the "Montréal School" is the notion of *social mix*. As it is understood in urban studies, social mix refers to a housing policy that aims for a mix, in a given zone, of residents from various socioeconomic strata in order to avoid social segregation and the effects of the concentration of poverty on the life chances of the disadvantaged (Dansereau et al. 2002). This type of intervention, which has a long history in Montréal, forms the basis for the next section of our efforts to unpack the particularities of the Montréal School.

Urban Social Mix as Compromise

As mentioned above, Montréal is a city of "in-betweens" in many ways. Politically, it has inherited both European and American legacies. It has evolved between the influences of a central welfare state at the provincial level and a vibrant civil society, often inspired by American community-based traditions, at the local level. Indeed, the political model for modern Quebec was built during the 1960s and 1970s on a strong state—civil society overlap, since the state was constantly seeking to mobilize civil society to expand its own growth and to extend its legitimacy (Renaud 1995).

However, these "strong" social policies were in sharp contrast with "loose" urban policies. For instance, the federal government stopped funding new public housing in the 1990s, limiting its intervention to co-ops and non-profit organizations. Local organizations have since been very active in finding new ways to produce affordable housing and to ensure the social diversity of neighbourhoods (for an overview of housing policies, see Dansereau 2005). Yet in Canada, municipalities are weak players, given their limited resources and mandates.

In France, which is often a source of inspiration for Quebec, residential social mix policies have long been dominated by a state whose republican ideals do not leave

much room for civil society. However, here in Montréal, social mix projects have not stemmed from policies seeking to mix social classes and stimulate interactions across class, to foster social cohesion, or to disperse the poor. They were instead the result of preoccupations about the need for affordable housing and most, in fact, were a product of struggles, followed by negotiations, about diversity in housing tenure between governmental and community-based stakeholders (Germain et al. 2010). In other words, they were *ad hoc* or makeshift projects with multiple actors.

Conversations between researchers (mostly in INRS) and practitioners have infused the evolution of social mix policies ever since Montréal's very first socially mixed housing development in 1983. They started with a post-occupational analysis of the first urban social mix experiment in Montréal (after the False Creek project in Vancouver and the St. Lawrence project in Toronto), built in the Angus Yards neighbourhood during the 1980s (Dansereau et al. 1997). Unlike the Vancouver and Toronto projects, initially, in Montréal, the question of social mix was not the fundamental reason for this project of converting a brownfield site, which had belonged to a railway company, into a commercial and residential area. At first, local small business owners opposed the project, fearing the construction of a large shopping centre. Then, community organizations working in nearby blue-collar, working-class neighbourhoods sought to claim the area for social housing. Many struggles followed among the various interested parties, which then gave way to negotiations between community organizations, local and provincial politicians, and private promoters. Finally, following public consultations, all parties agreed to a compromise over the distribution of housing; 60 per cent was set aside for privately owned housing (1,006 condominium units, 185 single family housing units, and 353 private rental units) and 40 per cent was set aside for social housing (130 units as HLMs, 552 as housing cooperatives, and 200 managed by other non-profit organizations providing housing for specific client groups such as seniors) (Dansereau et al. 1997). In addition, the various forms of housing were to be distributed across the site according to planned public spaces. In our post-occupational study designed to evaluate the success of that experiment in social mix, we found that the semi-public and public spaces, planned and designed, for and by residents, were particularly important in enabling them to take symbolic ownership of their new neighbourhood. These spaces worked as buffer zones between different social groups and spatial distance allowed each group to maintain its privacy and lifestyle, contributing to the harmonious cohabitation of households from different social backgrounds. This early study sparked a continuous dialogue about the promise and perils of social mix with both the municipal government and community groups, as we shall see.

A systematic review of every new social mix experiment in neighbourhoods or housing complexes was carried out by alliances of academics, practitioners and policy-makers in research roles, such as those in the OMHM, not in an attempt to formulate best practices but more in a spirit of continuous reflexivity (Dansereau et al. 2002). Each project was reflected upon and served as a basis for comparison for the next. At the same time, we learned about how challenging it is to live with diversity when people are in close proximity to one another, often by constraint rather than by choice—a sociological perspective introduced by Gans (1961) with reference to poor neighbourhoods in the United States, and Chamboredon and Lemaire (1970) with respect to social housing in France. Those early studies warned us from the beginning against the myth of social propinquity as the perfect mechanism for stimulating interactions across social cleavages, a myth criticized more recently by Chaskin and Joseph (2011).

In 2003, we were also asked to join in a conversation about a redevelopment project known as the Benny Farm Project. For years it had been a source of conflict, as one or the other of the interested parties had blocked each new proposal. It was only when the main stakeholders (public, community-based, and private) agreed to compromise, particularly following discussions of the diagnostics of past experiences like the Angus Yards project, that the project could actually take shape. It turned out to be exemplary (Riel-Salvatore 2006).

Lately, a transatlantic research project comparing the politics and policies of neighbourhood revitalization centred on social mix in Paris, Bristol and Montréal (Rose et al. 2012) has allowed us to reach a more precise understanding of what characterizes the Montréal experience. The Montréal case study that centred on the Lavo Project located in Hochelaga (a working-class neighbourhood in dramatic decline), showed once again the importance of community groups and public space in strategies for residential development (Germain et. al. 2010). The Lavo Project was spearheaded by a community group that was looking for ways to revitalize the neighbourhood in a neoliberal context of limited availability of public funds. The group played the card of rebalancing the neighbourhood's socioeconomic composition in order to attract new homeowners to move into the area, and thereby convinced local authorities and a local merchants' association to envision a brownfield redevelopment project for residential use. The Lavo Project was completed in 2006 with the cooperation of both a private developer and non-profit housing

developers. As in the case of the Angus and Benny Farm projects, this was a locally negotiated real estate compromise with a final tally of about 60 per cent social housing and 40 per cent private condominiums at the low end of the market. Needless to say, it was rather unusual to see local activists making room for some new-built gentrification.

Along with the borough, the local merchants' association also supported the creation of a new plaza, Place Valois, adjacent to the project. This gave momentum to the revitalization of the neighbourhood, which until now had lacked a public space, by attracting small boutiques, specialty food stores and restaurants for a new type of clientele comprised of trendy urbanites drawn from other neighbourhoods, as well as local "gentrifiers."

This project served as a pilot for the new municipal Strategy for Inclusion of Affordable Housing in New Residential Projects that consists of convincing private developers to include partnerships with community groups in their housing development projects in order to produce affordable housing. The strategy is similar in some ways to the intentional and inclusive zoning favoured in other Canadian and US cities; however, the Montréal version is "softer" because it takes into account the scarce room to maneuver that local authorities have in the Montréal context. The City is aiming to increase homeownership in neighbourhoods with a large population of renters, as well as to stimulate the construction of affordable housing in higher-class neighbourhoods, while trying to avoid promoters and construction companies simply moving out to the suburbs (Germain, Rose and Twigge-Molecey 2010).

More recent social mix projects have brought ethnicity back into the conversation about living with difference, since these projects are located in densely populated neighbourhoods with a high concentration of recent immigrants (Ville de Montréal 2010). For example, Cité L'Acadie is a new residential development of 480 affordable condominium units, 240 social housing units and some housing for seniors. This project, nearly completed, is part of the Strategy for Inclusion of Affordable Housing in New Residential Projects of the City of Montréal (Ville de Montréal, 2007). It will be very interesting to unpack how ethnic and social differences intersect there, especially in Parc Mosaïque (the public space located in the centre of the project) the design of which is the subject of heated debate. The conversation continues!

The Montréal School and its Limits

Working in an "in-between" city like Montréal means that it has always been necessary to tailor research agendas to fit the local urban context. Montréal's social fabric, woven from segmentation and liveable social and ethnic mix, and its governance, driven by both the welfare state and community-based organizations, combine with the significant role of neighbourhood life and public sociability to create a unique metropolis. Our focus on neighbourhood life and public space does not ignore recent debates (Dansereau and Germain 2002) about the end or renaissance of neighbourhood on the one hand, and the death of public space on the other (Germain 2010). In the modern metropolis, characterized by mobility and the deterritorialization of social bonds, neighbourhoods capture only part of everyday life; although it can be a very significant part, especially for immigrants (Dansereau and Germain 2002). In Montréal, many public spaces are still vibrant social spaces, both downtown as well as in residential areas, even if they are not always well designed from the standpoint of European standards. In fact, we may be witnessing a kind of golden age of public space, since many aspects of social life from politics to charity events and from anti-cancer demonstration to cultural creativity, are increasingly taking place outdoors in public places in Montréal as elsewhere. Moreover, the multiplication of the Occupy and *Printemps arabe* (Arab Spring)—not to mention the student-led *Printemps érable* (Maple Spring) movement—has shown the importance of public space and can be analyzed from a perspective focused on the state, social violence and class, which are the social markers of neoliberal capitalism, to quote the late Neil Smith (2008). Yet, these events have also proved to be quite instructive concerning the role of public space as places for public sociability. In this regard, cities from the South have long traditions of urban life in public spaces, which are in a way often reproduced in Montréal as a result of international immigration. And urban anthropology could become the next leading discipline in urban studies on those issues, among others. As for community-based organizations, various studies show the crucial role they are playing in Montréal either in housing (Morin et al. 2005) or in economic development (Klein et al. 2009). Here again, a global perspective could bring in more conversations about the changing practices of community-based organization here and elsewhere.

The issues selected in this paper concerning social and ethnic mix are only part of the spectrum of topics in which researchers and practitioners are engaged in reflexive activities. The historical overlap of the state and civil society which led to the modernization of Quebec in the 1960s and 1970s—followed by the evolution, in parallel, of an emerging technocracy and a professionalization of community-based organizations, as well as frequent crossover of personnel from the civil service to NGOs and vice versa—may help account for the easy conversations

we described above. Although the Quebec government did not contribute to supporting the new urban studies of the 1960s and 1970s as much as the French government did, here social scientists, policymakers and NGO community outreach workers did not evolve in worlds apart, especially in a context where applied research is the norm as is the case in urban studies. While in France, national civil servants and private entrepreneurs often belong to the same social world and cross one another's professional boundaries with ease, in Quebec, it is rather the divide between provincial and municipal civil servants and community organizations that is permeable. That, at least, is one plausible hypothesis that we can offer here. In addition, if urban studies in Montréal have led to a long, uninterrupted conversation between scholars and practitioners on the art of "living together in difference," it has been only in a pragmatic way in the field of applied research rather than in theory. Finally, if other cities can teach us how to read social divisions and segregation, Montréal is instead a good laboratory for understanding what cohabitation means in practice—even when it is strained or stressful—in contexts of social and ethnic mix.

Annick Germain, Urbanisation, Culture and Society Research Centre, INRS University Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Université INRS, 385 Sherbrooke Est, Montréal, Québec, H2X 1E3, Canada. E-mail: annick.germain@ucs.inrs.ca.

Notes

1. Now that Jan Nijman is back in Amsterdam, he might perhaps be tempted to consider this Dutch city as the paradigmatic city for the 21st century.
2. To quote the title of the American Anthropological Association annual conference held in Montréal in 2011: *Traces, Tidemarks and Legacies.*
3. The federal government made the same U-turn later in the 1990s; see Helly et al. 2000.
4. It should be noted that since 1982, only very disadvantaged Quebecers have had access to public social housing.
5. The seven themes that were documented by the researchers and then discussed were: the advantages and challenges of working on-site; the paradoxes of the ghetto; the distinctive rhythms of daily life in HLMs; leisure versus social development as a lever for intervention; inter-ethnic cohabitation; the challenges of funding; and myths and realities of working in partnership (Germain and Leloup 2006).

References

Apparicio, Philippe, Xavier Leloup and Philippe Rivet
2007 La diversité montréalaise à l'épreuve de la ségrégation: Pluralisme et insertion résidentielle des immigrants. Journal of International Migration and Integration 8:63-87.

Augustin, Jean-Pierre
2010 Le Québec, laboratoire urbain depuis la Révolution tranquille? *In* Villes québécoises et renouvellement urbain depuis la Révolution tranquille. J.-P. Augustin, ed. Pp. 11-30. Pessac: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine.

Bernèche, Francine
2005 L'accueil et l'accompagnement des immigrants récemment installés en HLM dans des quartiers montréalais: L'expérience du projet Habiter la mixité. Document produit dans le cadre de Immigration et métropoles, Volet 2 – Vie de quartier, trajectoires résidentielles, réseaux sociaux et gestion des équipements collectifs. Montréal: INRS- Centre Urbanisation Culture Société.

Cenzatti, Marco
1993 Los Angeles and the L.A. School: Postmodernism and Urban Studies. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design.

Chamboredon, Jean-Claude, and Madeleine Lemaire
1970 Proximité spatiale et distance sociale: les grands ensembles et leur peuplement. Revue française de sociologie 11(1):3-33.

Chapoulie, Jean-Marie
2001 La tradition sociologique de Chicago, 1892-1961. Paris: Seuil.

Chaskin, Robert J., and Mark L. Joseph
2011 Social Interaction in Mixed-Income Developments: Relational Expectations and Emerging Reality. Journal of Urban Affairs 33(2): 209-237.

Clark, Terry N.
2008 Program for a New Chicago School. Urban Geography 2(2):154-166.

Dansereau, Francine, ed.
2005 Politiques et interventions en habitation. Analyse des tendances récentes en Amérique du Nord et en Europe. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Dansereau, Francine, Stéphane Charbonneau, Richard Morin, Anne Revillard, Damaris Rose and Anne-Marie Séguin
2002 La mixité sociale en habitation. Rapport de recherche réalisé pour le Service de l'habitation de la Ville de Montréal. Montréal: INRS-Centre Urbanisation Culture Société.

Dansereau, Francine, and Annick Germain
2002 Fin ou renaissance des quartiers ? Les significations des territoires de proximité dans une ville pluriethnique. Espaces et sociétés (108-109):11-46.

Dansereau, Francine, Annick Germain and Catherine Éveillard
1997 Social Mix: Old Utopias, Contemporary Experience and Challenges. Canadian Journal of Urban Research 6(1):1-23.

Dansereau, Francine, Annick Germain and Nathalie Vachon
2012 La diversité des milieux de vie de la région métropolitaine de Montréal et la place de l'immigration. Immigration et métropoles, publication no. 48. Montréal: Centre Métropolis du Québec.

Dansereau, Francine, and Anne-Marie Séguin
1995 La cohabitation interethnique dans l'habitat social au Québec. Montréal: Société d'habitation du Québec.

Dear, Michael
2002 Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate. City and Community 1(1):5-32.
Fontan, Jean-Marc, and Patrick Rodriguez
2009 Étude sur les besoins et aspirations des résidents de l'îlot Pelletier. Synthèse des recherches effectuées. Similitudes et différences des différents acteurs rencontrés. Report, Cahiers de l'ARUC-ES no C-02-2009. Montréal: Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale and Service aux collectivités de l'UQAM.
Gans, Herbert J.
1961 The Balanced Community: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity in Residential Areas? Journal of the American Institute of Planners 27(3-I):176-184.
Germain, Annick
2010 Grandeur et misère de la notion d'espace public. *In* 50 questions à la ville: comment penser et agir sur la ville. J.-P. Augustin and M. Favory, eds. Pp. 73-77. Pessac: Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine.
2009 L'histoire des quartiers d'immigration à Montréal: vers la construction d'une mémoire au-delà des territoires? Migrances 34:110-119.
Germain, Annick, Julie Archambault, Bernadette Blanc, Johanne Charbonneau, Francine Dansereau and Damaris Rose
1995 Cohabitation interethnique et vie de quartier. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des affaires internationales, de l'immigration et des communautés culturelles, Études et recherches.
Germain, Annick, Francine Dansereau, Francine Bernèche, Cécile Poirier, Martin Alain et Julie E. Gagnon
2003 Les pratiques municipales de gestion de la diversité à Montréal. Montréal: INRS Urbanisation, Culture et Société.
Germain, Annick, and Julie E. Gagnon
1999 Is Neighbourhood a Black Box? A Reply to Galster, Metzger and Waite. Canadian Journal of Urban Research 8(2):172-184.
Germain, Annick, and Xavier Leloup
2006 Il était une fois dans un HLM... : Portrait de l'intervention communautaire dans quatre HLM de type « plan d'ensemble » de l'arrondissement Mercier–Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Montréal: INRS Urbanisation Culture Société.
Germain, Annick, and Nevena Mitropolitska
2008 Deux Montréal dans un ou le non étalement de l'immigration. *In* Vivre en banlieue. Une comparaison France/Canada. S. Jaumain and N. Lemarchand, eds. Pp.79-94. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, Études canadiennes No. 14.
Germain, Annick, Richard Morin and Gilles Sénécal
2004 L'évolution du mouvement associatif montréalais: Un retour au territoire programmé par l'État. Lien social et politique 52:129-138.
Germain, Annick, Damaris Rose and Amy Twigge-Molecey
2010 Mixité sociale ou inclusion sociale? Bricolages montréalais pour un jeu à acteurs multiples. Espaces et sociétés (140-141):143-157.
Giddens, Anthony
1990 The Consequences of Modernity. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Gieryn, Thomas F.
2006 City as a Truth-Spot: Laboratories and Field-Sites in Urban Studies. Social Study of Science 36(5):5-38.
Helly, Denise, Marc Lavallée and Marie McAndrew
2000 Citoyenneté et redéfinition des politiques publiques de gestion de la diversité: La position des organismes gouvernementaux québécois. Recherches sociographiques 41(2):271-298.
Klein, Jean-Luis, Jean-Marc Fontan and Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay
2009 Social Entrepreneurs, Local Initiatives and Social Economy: Foundations for a Socially Innovative Strategy to Fight against Poverty and Exclusion. Canadian Journal of Regional Science/Revue canadienne des sciences régionales 32(1):23-42.
Leloup, Xavier, and Philippe Apparicio
2010 Montréal: A Multicultural City: Overview of Research on Ethnic Concentration. Our Diverse Cities 7:171-179.
Leloup, Xavier, and Annick Germain
2012 Le métropole fluide: l'évolution de la diversité ethnoculturelle à Montréal (2001-2006). Montréal: INRS-Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Inédits series.
2008 L'action communautaire auprès des jeunes et de leurs familles dans cinq plans d'ensemble montréalais. Régulation sociale locale et construction du lien social. *In* L'habitation comme vecteur de lien social. P. Morin and E. Baillergeau, eds. Pp. 155-195. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
Leloup, Xavier, and Didier Gysler
2009 Loger les familles avec enfants dans le logement social public montréalais: politique d'attribution et profil sociodémographique des résidents. Montréal: INRS
Linteau, Paul-André
1982 La montée du cosmopolitisme montréalais. Question de culture 2 IQRC. Pp. 23-53.
Mackrous, Robert
2008 Le développement social à partir de l'habitat. *In* L'habitation comme vecteur de lien social. P. Morin and E. Baillergeau, eds. Pp. 131-153. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
Marsan, Jean-Claude
1981 Montréal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montréal's Architecture and Urban Environment. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
McNicoll, Claire
1993 Montréal: Une société multiculturelle. Paris: Belin.
Morin, Richard, Marie J. Bouchard, Winnie Frohn, Paul Bodson and Nathalie Chicoine
2005 Le logement communautaire à Montréal: Satisfaction résidentielle et insertion socio-spatiale. Canadian Journal of Urban Research 14(2):261-285.
Nicholls, Walter J.
2011 The Los Angeles School: Difference, Politics, City. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 35(1):189-206.
Nijman, Jan
2000 The Paradigmatic City. Annals of the Association of American Geographers 90(1):135-145.

Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal
2003 L'action communautaire dans les HLM de Montréal: le répertoire des projets communautaires. Montréal: OMHM.

Qadeer, Mohammad, Sandeep K. Agrawal and Alexander Lovell
2010 Evolution of Ethnic Enclaves in the Toronto Metropolitan Area, 2001-2006. Journal of International Migration and Integration 11(3):315-339.

Renaud, Marc
1995 Les réformes québécoises de la santé ou les aventures d'un État narcissique. *In* Santé et société au Québec XIXe-XXe siècle. P. Keating and O. Keel, eds. Pp. 189-218. Montréal: Éditions du Boréal.

Riel-Salvatore, Gabriel
2006 La gouvernance locale: Le cas de Benny Farm à Montréal. Canadian Journal of Urban Research 15(1):41-61.

Rose, Damaris, Annick Germain, Marie-Hélène Bacqué, Gary Bridge, Yankel Fijalkow and Tom Slater
2012 "Social Mix" and Neighbourhood Revitalization in a Transatlantic Perspective: Comparing Local Policy Discourses and Expectations in Paris (France), Bristol (UK) and Montréal (Canada). International Journal of Urban and Regional Research: Early View (online version of record published before inclusion in an issue, first published on-line 18 June). doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01127.x.

Smith, Neil
2008 Afterword: Class, State, Violence. Anthropologica 50(2):283-286.

Ville de Montréal, Direction de l'habitation
2011 The New Faces of Montreal Neighbourhoods: Issues, Needs, and the City's Housing Responses. Montréal: Ville de Montréal.

Ville de Montréal, BRI
2002 Plan d'action visant l'accueil et l'intégration en français des immigrants dans les quartiers de Montréal. Montréal: Ville de Montréal.