What is scheduled in the next year

> To continue the analysis and production, especially of maps.

TRY MONTREAL

jeunes,
espaces et
transformations

Juvenile nighttime practices

MONTREAL

Researcher:

Valérie Amiraux, Cécile Van de Velde

Students:

Mélissa Moriceau, Amani Braa,
Sarah-Maude Cossette, Noah Alder

Socio-community partners:

Conseil jeunesse de Montréal, Respire (Nathalie Boucher, Camille Fuentes Chloé Couvy)

THIS CASE STUDY FOCUSES ON THE ACTUAL MODALITIES OF TRANSGRESSION AND SUBVERSION BY YOUNG PEOPLE AT NIGHT, IN A CITY THAT PRESENTS ITSELF AS TRANSGRESSIVE AND SUBVERSIVE.

Highlights

> The objective is to understand what young people do in Montreal, what are their uses of the urban space, focusing on a particular time: the night. What are their activities? Who are they with? Where do they go? How do they live the «night policies» implemented (or not) by the City of Montreal? What are they lacking? This line of research raises several issues: safety in the city, needs, constrained experiences, mobility and risks, risk-taking and socialization, fragility and vulnerability; issues that are necessarily linked to questions of gender, race, and class. This reflection is conducted in collaboration with the Conseil Jeunesse to ensure that the data collection takes into account the diversity of Montreal's territories, as well as the linguistic and socio-economic plurality of young Montrealers.

What was accomplished this year

> **Ongoing data collection** : Interviews with youth: 48 semi-structured qualitative interviews of approximately 1.5 hours with youth aged 19 to 25 on their night-time practices.

Interviews with 11 stakeholders from the City of Montreal and the community on issues affecting youth, the city at night, and on existing and missing resources.

> **Data entry and compilation, beginning of the analysis**

> **Publications :** Redaction of an opinion for the Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal

Redaction of an article for Amiraux, V., Boucher, N., Braa, A., Cossette, S.-M., Couvy, C., Fuentes Renaud, C., Moriceau, M., Oder, N. (accepted for a special issue on the 2022 night) "Montreal's Ordinary Nights: between lulls and youth experiences", in Boudreault-Fournier A., and E. Diamenti, Ethnologies.

> **Conference :** Nathalie Boucher and Benjamin Herrera (June 15, 2021) "Youth at night in Montreal". **Montréal au Sommet de la nuit**. Montreal, City of Montreal and MTL 24-24.

Preliminary results

Our most recent studies (still in progress) underline the contrast between Montreal's civil and political reflection on night-time governance where nothing is envisaged for young people (in comparison with European examples where the night-time activities are already well established by a framework that focuses on the commercialization of nocturnal hyperactivity). It also outlines the data we have collected which reveals a third dimension of the night, one where young people try, in spite of constraining policies and economies, to live ordinary night activities, centered on the search for intimacy (between oneself, in one's own neighborhood) and quietude (by wandering). We also explore these mundane activities, the main one being to "chill out".

This practice was found to be dominant during the interviews with young people, regardless of their age, gender, or neighborhood. While it is possible to chill out during the day, or in restrictive settings (such as at school, between two classes), this activity takes on its full meaning after sunset, outside of conventional productivity (studies, work) and obligations (family, community, etc.), in an environment that is meant to be comfortable (outside of housing that is sometimes too small, overcrowded and where the noise inherent to chilling out leads to reprobation).

The term "to chill out" is used in a fluid and evolving way, in different contexts (parks, neighborhoods) which constitute local ecosystems, created with their own norms and practices, by a diversity of users. However, it appears that its use, rather than signifying the absence of activity, designates a multitude of situations and practices, from which it is possible to bring out certain transversal qualities. These characteristics shed light on the ordinary activities sought and practiced by young people.

To chill out is first and foremost a general arrangement, of a group or a single person, rather than a specific activity: it is above all a question of gathering (or of settling down alone) in a favorable space, without a predefined objective, in a state of mind open to spontaneity. It can be an opportunity to chat, to spend time with friends, to eat, to play, while offering a window to transition to more hectic activities, such as a cultural, festive, or sports outing.

"Chilling out" is also characterized by its unproductive dimension, in contrast to the world of work or studies, often associated with daytime life and adulthood. Therefore, the nighttime is often qualified as a time outside of these so-called productive activities and offers an opportune setting for chilling out. Intuitively, chilling out is defined as "doing nothing". However, we avoid this association and favor the emic term, which is in itself a normalized, practiced, and tangible activity, necessary and useful to the social and emotional development of young people.

Practiced in public space, and therefore within sight and hearing of others, chilling out can also be subject to sanctions. As a static, unproductive, sometimes noisy practice that can last for several hours, chilling out escapes the hegemonic representations of the norms of occupation of public space, which is constructed as a space of mobility in which "people pass through in order to reach the two spaces of safety that are home and work" (Bellot et al. 2015: 21), and increasingly as a space of consumption (similar to bars, restaurants, and nightclubs) (Atkinson 2003).