

What is planned for the next year

- > To finish the interviews and analyze the data.



Credit: Sarah-Maude Cossette

Type of products envisaged in the coming year

- > Scientific Publication.

2020



YOUTH PRACTICE AT NIGHT

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Socio-community partners: Montreal Youth Council, Respire (Nathalie Boucher and Chloé Couvy).

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THIS CASE STUDY EXAMINES THE ACTUAL MODALITIES OF YOUTH TRANSGRESSION AND SUBVERSION AT NIGHT IN A CITY THAT PRESENTS ITSELF AS TRANSGRESSIVE AND SUBVERSIVE.

Highlights

- > The objective is to understand what youth do in Montreal, how do they use the urban environment, by focusing on a specific moment, the night. What are their activities? Who are they with? Where are they going? How do they experience the "night policies" implemented (or not) by the City of Montreal? What are they missing? This line of research raises several issues: security in the city, needs, constrained experiences, mobility and risks, risk taking and socialization, weaknesses and vulnerabilities, questions of gender, race and class. This reflection is conducted in collaboration with the Youth Council so that the data collection takes into account the diversity of Montreal's territories, and the linguistic and socio-economic plurality of young Montrealers.



Credit: Sarah-Maude Cossette

What was done this year

- > **Preparation and training meetings (Valérie Amiraux, students, Respire):** We had two preparatory meetings where the literature review and methodological tools were presented.
- > **Meetings with the Youth Council (Valérie Amiraux, Mélissa Moriceau, Sarah-Maude Cossette, Respire):** Discussions around the research objectives, methods, and location.
- > **Request for ethics certificate:** Request written and certificate obtained for data collection with 18-25 year olds. An amendment was requested and obtained in October to extend the interviews to 16-18 year olds.
- > **Data Collection:** Data collection began in July and is expected to end in mid-October, totalling approximately 470 hours. According to the criteria of the Youth Council of Montreal (geographic, cultural, economic, size and type of layout), seven public spaces were / will be studied for about 2 weeks each, in this order: Jarry park - fountain section; Jarry park - skatepark section (Villeray – Saint-Michel – Parc-Extension); Lalancette park (Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district); Westmount park (City of Westmount); Martin-Luther-King park (Côte-des-Neiges- district; Notre-Dame-de-Grâce); and Le Carignan and Henri-Bourassa parks (Montreal-North district). Having observed that young people frequent shops and restaurants (McDonald's, Tim Hortons, pizzerias, shopping centers, etc.), we are considering conducting data collection in a McDonald's and Tim Hortons in Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grace. The data collection uses two techniques, behavior mapping and interaction monitoring, used alternately during each observation period. The two-hour observation periods are divided up to cover a weekday evening (Sunday to Thursday)

and a weekend evening (Friday and Saturday), from 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. This systematic data collection strategy makes it possible to count the places occupied and activities undertaken during the night, and to compare



Credit: Sarah-Maude Cossette

the influence of variables such as ethnicity, gender, time, season and the material environment on practices, norms, and the transgressions of young people at night, in public space.

> **Interviews:** 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews of approximately 1.5 hours and a focus group with seven participants with young people aged 19 to 25, on their nighttime practices.

Preliminary results

As we will finish the analysis in the coming months, we are only able to make the following preliminary observations:

- Youth engage in different behaviors and activities depending on the public spaces (quieter here, more sporty there, etc.). The activities observed are being outside (intense heat), being with friends, exercising, and consuming alcohol and drugs.
- The majority of our observations relate to older youths (18-25 years) while the youngest (<16 years) are seen more rarely.
- Specific standards are created in each park, or even each section of the park. Transgressions linked to incivility or a lack of courtesy (eg: intense intimate relations) are more or less tolerated according to the standards in place. The transgressions which fall under illegality (consumption of alcohol or drugs, urinating in the bushes) are practiced discreetly (the level of discretion decreases with age), and tolerated by the authorities depending on the level of tolerance of the other users.
- The more the day progresses, the more the age of users decreases. On the whole, however, the parks empty when the lights turn off. It's hard to tell if the youths would stay longer with later lighting at night, or if they would leave the park around 11pm anyway.
- In some parks there is a regular attendance and youths recognize each other, while in other parks youths gather more irregularly, and are unknown to each other.
- Parks lack clean, secure, and adequate sanitation facilities that are open at all times. Urinating in bushes is certainly the most common transgression in all parks, including those where there are portable toilets.
- The data collection revealed the importance of indoor places that are open late, accessible at low-cost, tolerant of young people, equipped with toilets and wifi, such as McDonald's and similar locations. With the arrival of the cold season, these places have an additional advantage for «chilling» with friends. The imposition of restrictions due to COVID-19 has interrupted research in these places, and accessibility for youths who are left without a comfortable place to gather.