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Housing policies and Montreal's neighbourhoods: Social mix or social exclusion?

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Abstract

Different housing initiatives, policies and programs favouring or impacting social mix at the neighbourhood level exist in Canadian cities, including in the city of Montreal. Social mix was (and still is) part of the political discourse along with local planning practices as a means of including the most deprived and marginalized populations within the urban space through social housing. With the aim of developing a more inclusive city, the local administration has recently adopted an inclusionary zoning by-law which was received positively by scholars and housing advocates, although the considerable criticism for its limited scope. Inspired by a constructivist analysis of public and social policies and based on a study of collective identity of housing groups using document analysis, the goal of this paper is to explore how urban social movements evaluate this housing policy, and how, despite the policy objective of inclusiveness, it cannot satisfactorily address core housing needs of disadvantaged populations.

Keywords: housing, inclusionary zoning, collective action, Montreal

Résumé

Différents programmes, politiques et initiatives de logement favorisant ou influençant la mixité sociale à l'échelle des quartiers existent dans les villes canadiennes, y compris à Montréal. La mixité sociale a fait (et fait) partie du discours politique et des pratiques de planification locales comme moyen d'inclure les populations les plus défavorisées et marginalisées grâce au logement social. Dans le but de développer une ville plus inclusive, l'administration locale a récemment adopté un nouveau règlement de zonage d'inclusion qui a été reçu positivement par les universitaires et les groupes de défense du logement, malgré les nombreuses critiques en raison de sa portée limitée. Inspiré d'une analyse constructiviste des politiques publiques et sociales et basé sur une étude de l'identité collective des groupes de défense du logement à l'aide d'une recherche documentaire, cet article explore comment les mouvements sociaux urbains évaluent cette politique du logement et comment, malgré des objectifs de mixité sociale, le règlement ne peut pas répondre de manière satisfaisante aux besoins en logement des populations défavorisées.

Mots-clés : logement, zonage d'inclusion, action collective, Montréal

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Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, social mix was the object of various studies and was embodied in urban planning practices. It was and still is seen as a counterweight to residential segregation, social exclusion and ghettoization as well as a measure for promoting social cohesion. If the postwar period gave rise to major public investments in large social housing estates in many large cities, social mix has now become an objective of many national housing policies. In Canada, although social mix is not enshrined in, it is promoted by, the National Housing Strategy Act adopted in 2019. But (planned) social mix is both supported and criticized by housing scholars and advocates: supported for its “normative vision of living together”, as an ideal in society (Lenel 2011) and positive neighbourhood effects (Musterd and al. 2003); criticized for these same limited neighbourhood effects (as highlighted by Galster 2007; Ostendorf, Musterd and De Vos 2001) and because it can weaken existing local social networks (Sampson 2012). Moreover, the attraction of middle-class households into poorer neighbourhoods may shield or even boost gentrification and physical or symbolic displacement of less wealthy residents (see for example Giroud 2015; Bacqué and Fijalkow 2011; van Criekingen 2011).

If those studies have analyzed the level of the neighbourhood transformations, and others the socioeconomic and physical transformations of neighbourhoods, sometimes with a residents' perception of these transformations (see for example Chaskin and Joseph 2013), very few have turned to residents' interpretation of those transformations and their necessity from a social movement's perspective. This exploratory research on the city of Montreal aims to contribute to the understanding of how urban policy is linked to the construction of urban social problems and how urban social movements offer an alternate analysis to urban social problems and the efficiency of the policies that tackle those problems.

The city of Montreal (Canada), facing the impacts of decades of social housing disinvestment from superior governments, decades of urban renewal interventions or revitalization projects responsible for too many displacements of low to moderate income households from working-class neighbourhoods, and claims from urban social movements for the right to housing, has adopted in 2005 its own tool with the idea of developing a more inclusive city. With its limited scope, the *Stratégie d'inclusion de logements abordables dans les nouveaux projets résidentiels* (an inclusion strategy of affordable housing in new residential projects, hereafter called the Strategy), has been criticized by housing rights advocacy groups. On January 1, 2021, the Strategy was replaced by a new By-law, *le Règlement pour une métropole mixte* (diverse metropolis by-law, hereafter called the By-law) following new powers devolved to the City by the provincial government, which makes it possible to impose inclusionary zoning (among other things).

Starting from the assumption that the City of Montreal used a social mix rhetoric to justify the adoption of its housing policy, the goal of this paper is to explore how urban social movements evaluate this housing policy, and how, despite the policy objective of inclusiveness, it cannot satisfactorily address core adequate and affordable housing needs of its disadvantaged populations and may even have undesirable effects on them (Wilson 1987).

First, we propose to situate the Strategy and the By-law in the postwar historical continuum of the multilevel government's role in housing as well as in urban social movements' struggles for housing and better living environments in Montreal. Then, based on a document analysis, we examine how two major urban social movements, more specifically two housing rights organizations, assess the 15 years of the Strategy application and the new by-Law that was the object of a public consultation, by mobilizing Melluci's (1996) concept of collective identity that allows a constructivist analysis of social problems definition (Gusfield 1981; Hall and Taylor 1997; Blumer 1971).

Urban social movements, the city and housing

Urban movement studies have long been influenced by Marxist and classist approaches or by their close relationship with political systems (Hamel 2008). Indeed, many theories explain the emergence of movements within the contradictions of capitalism (Katznelson 1981; Castells 1977) or as accidents generated by a broader political and organizational context throughout history (Fainstein and Fainstein 1985; Pickvance 1985). In these theories, the history of the city, its social, economic, and political contexts are the main factor to understand movements. According to these writings, although urban movements' contribution is recognized, at least at a symbolic level, it fails to induce change in municipal policy. However, for Hamel (2008), their impact remained undeniable on democracy and urban governance. In fact, "they are key to the social construction of conflict within the city" (Hamel, Lustiger-Thaler, and Mayer 2000, 1). The action of urban movements reveals power, domination, and exploitation relations at the municipal level, and, as highlighted by Fontan, Hamel and Morin (2013), by doing so, they play a significant role in the transformation of social representations of the city.

Moreover, according to Hamel's vision, the relationship between the state and urban movements is not always confrontational. Indeed, without losing neither their autonomy nor their struggle conflicting dimension, urban movements also collaborate with the state in its urban development policies (see also Fontan, Hamel, and Morin 2013). Therefore, the boundary between urban movements and the state is more porous than Castells (1983) suggests, and the institutionalization of these movements does not necessarily lead to their absorption by the traditional political system, as Pickvance and Fainstein's approaches have suggested (quoted by Hamel 1991; 2000; 2008). From this perspective, participation in the governance of the city has had a significant impact on urban democracy; by becoming involved in public action and claiming their presence, urban movements have contributed to the development of municipal democracy as well as to the politicization of different issues. This contribution stems from several adaptations made within their collective action, notably the challenges brought by the rise of individualism, which is usually considered in the field of social movements as a threat to mobilization.

Urban social movements and the right to housing in Montreal

In Montreal, urban movements contributed to the modernization of urban planning and urban management policies to the benefit of the most disadvantaged populations, particularly on housing issues (Fontan, Hamel, and Morin 2013). However, these positive advances have had a relatively limited impact because they are part of the Canadian housing structure based almost exclusively on the market mechanism, in which housing policies and programs historically prioritized ownership access (Hulchanski 2004).

The first urban movements formed during the 1960s in Montreal's southwest borough neighbourhoods with the creation of citizens' committees in response to major evictions related to the urban renewal projects mostly aimed at eliminating "slum" housing (Bergeron-Gaudin 2016; Hamel and Leonard 1980; Choko, Collin, and Germain 1987). These operations have had devastating social restructuring effects on several working-class neighbourhoods (Morin 1988). Due to the lack of commitment by all levels of government (Filion 1988), private affordable (although run-down) housing demolished located in central neighbourhoods were not solely replaced by public housing but mostly by private housing of higher value. During the 1960s and 1970s, numerous claims, regarding not only eviction but also, among other things, rising rents, or social housing were carried by citizens' organizations (Hamel and Leonard 1980). The provincial housing agency (*Société d'habitation du Québec* – SHQ) was created during that period (in 1967), and a few years later a new renter/landlord conciliation law was adopted, before being replaced by an administrative tribunal in 1980. The establishment of institutional responsibilities regarding housing has enabled tenants' defence associations to identify to whom to address their claims, which led to significant gains including the possibility of contesting a rent increase and the conditions for eviction or repossession (Fontan, Hamel, and Morin 2013).

Still during the 1970s, the City of Montreal initiated the *Opération 10000 logements* in 1979 to facilitate private development to retain or even attract middle classes in the city (Léveillé 1988). This operation was preceded by a few projects under the Neighbourhoods Improvement Program (NIP), a three-level government cost-share revitalization and housing renovation program with the objective of maintaining in place the local population (Perreault 1979). But NIP projects failed to protect the residents from direct or indirect displacement. The deterioration of the situation was a trigger for a mobilization increase during the second half of the 1970s. Housing committees united to claim a rent freeze, and, in 1978, formed the *Regroupement pour le gel des loyers* (grouping for the rent freeze) which will

become the *Regroupement des comités logements et associations de locataires du Québec* (RCLALQ: Coalition of Housing Committees and Tenants Associations of Quebec). The same year, a popular symposium on NIP was organized and attended by various citizens' associations including housing right defence groups from different regions of the province. Among them, 36 signed the manifest claiming the right to stay put, better housing conditions, including social housing, rent control, and a better inclusive development of neighbourhoods (Colloque populaire sur les P.A.Q. 1978). *Le Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain* (FRAPRU: Popular Action Front for Urban Redevelopment) a grouping defending the right to housing was born out of this symposium. These two groupings are of particular interest in the present study.

From a more confrontational approach, housing rights advocates changed their strategies to increase the dialogue between them and with the provincial government to maintain social housing programs following the federal government social housing financing withdrawal in 1994 (Fontan, Hamel, and Morin 2013). But with an increasing stigmatization of social housing as expensive ghettos of poverty sheltering too many residents who “don't really need it” (Suttor 2016), and with pressure from advocacy and community groups, the response of the provincial government was the creation of the *AccèsLogis* program. *AccèsLogis* financially supports the construction of new coop and non-profit housing units, which benefit from a better public perception than large public social housing estates because of the smaller scale of the projects and easier integration into a planned social mix approach. For policymakers, social mix seems to have become a proxy for social equity, a leading value in urban planning, framing various policies and programs that influence socio-residential distribution. By attracting middle-class households into high-poverty neighbourhoods, these policies and programs are associated to “positive” state-led gentrification which is the object of criticism among scholars (Chaskin and Joseph 2013; Cameron 2003). What is of interest here is that social mix discourse seems to hide insufficient public investment, even disinvestment in housing for low- and modest-income households (Tevanian and Tissot 2004), which weaken the right to adequate and affordable housing for all. This housing dialectic was part of Montreal's Strategy and is part of the new By-law which will be described further.

Montreal's Strategy, new powers, and urban social movements

Until very recently, the City of Montreal, recognized as a local administration with devolved power from the provincial government, couldn't implement an inclusionary zoning by-law to impose social mix. This explained the incentive-type strategy, adopted in 2005, following the 2000s housing crisis, and the remaining challenging time in terms of social and affordable housing provision: insufficient provincial government investments to overcome the federal government withdrawal; and a private sector dedicated to the construction of condominium or rental dwellings targeting middle and upper-middle classes. With many vacant lots available and the increasing interest of developers for the city, the Strategy was presented as an opportunity to take advantage of new residential real estate development to help finance the construction of social and affordable housing. The Strategy targeted large redevelopment projects requiring an amendment of the zoning regulation (mostly regarding building height or site coverage) to negotiate the inclusion of 30% of affordable housing units (15% social or community housing mainly provided by cooperative or non-profit housing organizations, and 15% rental or owner-occupiers private affordable housing). Not surprisingly, the developers objected to the Strategy, because it transferred the responsibility of the production of social and affordable housing to them (Desage 2017). In contrast, as we shall see, urban social movements made a more nuanced appraisal of the Strategy, considering that in the short term it enabled the construction of public housing units but that it was not a long-term solution to ensure the right to housing in Montreal.

The Strategy can hardly be compared to policies adopted to socially rebalance communities like the ones in France or in the United States (see for example Lelevrier 2010; Joseph and Chaskin 2010). The Strategy was not thought of as a social mix strategy. However, social mix was part of the discourse behind every project developed, as highlighted by CRACH (2015), a collective housing rights advocate. Although the collective criticized the relying on private real estate developments targeting middle and upper-middle classes to increase social and affordable housing units offer, and the growing social acceptability of high-density condominium projects in poor neighbourhoods that were known for their activism against gentrification, the major problem of the Strategy was not the Strategy itself but the absence of massive public investment in social housing (CRACH 2015). In sum, the Strategy was seen as a last resort in a context of reduced public spending.

Montreal's socioresidential geography shows similarities and distinctions with general North American trends such as the growing socioeconomic inequalities (Charron and Shearmur 2005); gentrification of many of its

neighbourhoods (Rose 2006; Rose et al. 2013; Bélanger 2012; 2014); housing financialization dynamic driving up property values (Gaudreau et al. 2021); and the transformation of long-term private rental to short-term rental such as AirBnB (Wachsmuth, Kerrigan, and Chaney 2017). Studies indicate increasing access inequalities to adequate and affordable housing for low- or modest-income households. Indeed, the most recent data published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the national housing agency, speak for themselves (2022, 140): “In 2021, only 13% of apartments (about 79,000) could be considered affordable for the least affluent 20% of renter households (income under \$25,000)”. The actual housing crisis continues to drive up rents on empty units (CMM 2019), and even encouraged abusive evictions of long-term tenants to increase rent (CLPP 2020), a situation to which the City is sensitive. And, despite renewed interest for rental housing among developers since a few years now, very few projects target low- or modest-income households (Gaudreau, Houle, and Fauveaud 2021).

In 2017, the provincial government adopted the Bill recognizing municipalities as local governments and thereby increasing their autonomy and powers. With this new power, the City of Montreal developed its first inclusionary zoning, the *Règlement pour une métropole mixte* (By-law for a mixed metropolis), commonly called 20-20-20 (20% social units; 20% affordable units; 20% family units). The new regulation, adopted in 2021 after a public consultation, is in line with the former Strategy, but this time with coercive power and a clear social mix approach. The By-law tries to address some of the issues that arose from almost 15 years of the Strategy application, such as its real scope and the size of the projects. As was the case for the Strategy, the new regulation was not welcomed by developers but was supported although criticized by housing advocates (OCPM 2020). In our point of view, social movements in the city such as the FRAPRU and the RCLALQ introduced earlier, offer a grounded, rich, and contextualized evaluation of public policies to highlight the influence of such policies dedicated to fostering social mix might have on access to housing.

How can collective action contribute to the understanding of housing in the city: Theory and methodology

Social movements and public policies: the construction of public problems

For a long time, researchers interested in public policies wanted to measure their effectiveness without considering the factors and conditions that create them and that allow their implementation (Hassenteufel 2008; Hall et Taylor 1997). Focusing on the work of institutions with a normative perspective of change, these studies have been criticized because they ignore the importance of the cognitive process of ideas in the development of public policies but also of the actors who carry them (Saint-Martin 2002). According to Blumer (1971), for too long, sociologists have sought the source of social problems in objective conditions defined by their theory rather than by the collective definition of what is problematic: “social problems are not the result of an intrinsic malfunctioning of society but are the result of a process of definition in which given condition is picked out and identified as a social problem. A social problem does not exist for a society unless it is recognized by that society to exist” (Blumer 1971, 301–302).

Then, from this perspective, research must turn to the challenges of developing and implementing policies: where they come from and what institutional and ideological changes they bring. To do this, the focus should be on the work of actors involved, more precisely on how these actors have constructed the social problem that constitutes the object of the policy. Blumer (1971) adds, “[a] social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions, and objectives. It is the interplay of these interests and objectives that constitutes the way in which society deals with any one of its social problems” (p. 301). Thus, our perspective on public policy is based on political sociology analyzing the symbolic aspects of policies rather than measuring its impacts using a normative and functionalist model.

In this case, the “problem” of social (non)mix is a problem built by municipal administrations that rely on political discourses that denounce the lack of neighbourhoods’ social mix and its impact on the perceived social problems. Faced with these discourses and the constitution of an urban problem and the solutions to tackle it, urban social movements, especially those active in the field of housing, try to question these analyses and especially the solutions put forward. Thus, our analytical proposal is part of the interactionist tradition (Gusfield 1981; Blumer 1971) and seeks to understand the “politics being made” (Cefaï 2009, 226). As we mentioned earlier, urban social movements intervene politically and help to represent social problems in the city in an alternative way. As Hamel (2008, 6 – our translation) puts it:

Social movements challenge established modes of governance, common forms of decision-making, social powers and established policies. Their conflictual and protest action is indicative of the resistance and interests at stake in the transformation of social relations. They contribute to the development of opportunities that allow actors to become autonomous agents of action and to take part in collective decisions. [...] They have helped transform the social representations of the city by drawing the attention of elected officials, the media and the general population to the inequalities generated or reinforced by urban planning. As a result, they reiterated the principle of the 'right to the city' and helped to propose solutions to social problems related to urban planning and development.

Social movements therefore represent these "moral entrepreneurs" (Becker 1963) invested in the construction of public problems. According to Gusfield (1981) perspective, halfway between the sociology of social movements and the sociology of public policies, collective actors have the "ownership" of some specific issues, meaning they have the capacity to intervene in the public sphere and being listened to. Their interventions contribute to the construction of public problems and question the political responsibility of some and the social responsibility of others. This critique of responsibility is an assessment of the policy, of the construction of the problems it aims to reduce and of the solutions it proposes. Thus, against administrative and scientific logic, urban social movements' analysis is based on the people's experience and challenge the legitimacy of the public decision-making process (Melucci 1996, Castells 1983). In doing so, urban movements by intervening on these issues contribute to their understanding and politicization (Meyer 2003). Therefore, this perspective on the action of movements concurs to what Hamel (2008) proposes. Indeed:

The interpretation of the scope of urban movements that we suggest, stems from an understanding of collective action and the system of political representation that takes into consideration not only the production and control of material resources, but also the knowledge and symbolic representations that urban movements have managed to generate. Within such a scheme, the meaning of collective action no longer resides outside the action itself (pp. 37–38).

Analytical framework: Collective identity as a conceptual tool

We draw on Melucci's (1996) approach to social movements because it is based on relational aspects, emphasizes the process of building collective identity, and recognizes the subjectivity of the actors involved. Melucci's (1996) approach to social movements differs from other theoretical perspectives to understand collective action that focus on opportunities, resources, or discursive frameworks (della Porta and Diani 2006). Rather than considering it through structural determinism or as the sum of individual intentions, collective action is considered as a process, emanating from the construction of collective identity based on cognitive frameworks regarding the goals, means and environment of action (Melucci 1989; see also Bradley 2012). This approach is greatly influenced by symbolic interactionism and the Chicago School sociological tradition, where collective action is based upon the "definition of the situation" (Thomas 1923) "which entails certain relational structures, the presence of decision-making mechanisms, the setting of goals, the circulation of information, the calculation of outcomes, the accumulation of experience, and learning from the past" (Melucci 1996, 17). Therefore, a movement's collective identity reflects the tension between the identity defended and promoted by the movement (internal collective identity) and the definition of the context of action, including its relationship with other groups and institutions (external collective identity) (Goyer 2017; 2009; 2006).

What Goyer (2006) calls the internal dimension of collective identity corresponds to the group's self-definition which encompasses its demands, motivations, strategies, and actions. This dimension of collective identity is also a learning process that allows the collective actor to develop over time a greater capacity to solve problems posed by their environment. Speaking of this facet of collective identity, Castells (1999) argues that social movements must be analyzed and understood in their own terms: social movements "are what they say they are" (p. 91). For this reason, it is their practices, both actions and discourses, that reflect the self-definition of the movement. When referring to the external dimension of identity, Melucci (1996) discusses the definition of the movement in relation to their context and other political actors. By building its collective identity, the movement is engaged in a process of differentiation from its environment. This process is relational: the movement must be able to situate itself in its own environment since it cannot build its identity without the recognition (or non-recognition) of other social and political actors. The

socio-political context, and the character of the interactions that compose it, are defined by the actor through their speeches and actions.

Thus, in this theoretical framework, collective identity is not an essence to grasp, but an analytical tool to understand the meaning of action and the environment in which this action takes place: “when actors produce their collective action they define both themselves and their environment (other actors, available resources, opportunities and obstacles). Such definitions are not linear but are produced by interaction, negotiation, and conflict” (Melucci 1989, 26). Therein, identity itself is not what we look for, it emerges when we analyze how the movement itself (Castells 1999) defines its actions, claims, and demands, but also its relations with other actors, which constitutes collective action and expresses collective identity (King 2004).

Housing urban social movements in Montreal

In the province of Quebec, the right to housing is mainly defended by tenants' associations. Through their actions, they develop an excellent knowledge, not only regarding the built environment, but above all, about the housing experience in the territory they represent (Goyer 2017). Through their organizational work, they create spaces for discussion where tenants confront, discuss, and share their experience of housing conditions, which is a central element of the construction of their political positions. In addition, tenants' associations are urban political actors with a detailed knowledge of the city's administrative structures relating to housing issues.

The two groupings selected in this study are important housing players in the city of Montreal and in the province of Quebec. They represent housing organizations, and all have spoken or published on the Strategy and the By-law. They regularly take a stand in the public space as spokespersons around various housing issues. They also represent local organizations whose mission consists in defending or advising tenants in their dealings with institutions or landlords, or in the context of the creation or management of collective housing projects. In this regard, they receive state funding and are considered by the Office of Autonomous Community Action of Quebec as national interlocutors in housing. The FRAPRU and the RCLALQ, briefly introduced earlier in this paper, defend the right to housing from different perspectives.

- The FRAPRU is an association that regroups more than 150 different types of organizations, tenants' associations, community groups and labour unions promoting the right to housing for poorly housed people and families. It was created in the 1970s to oppose urban renewal projects promoted by the City and to claim the development of social housing units instead of privately owned properties. Through the years, its mission has mainly been the defence of the right to housing and to propose inclusive urban planning alternatives to guarantee vulnerable households' right to the city. In the beginning of the 2000s, it began including fight against poverty and the defence of social justice and social programs. In fact, for the FRAPRU, the current state of poor housing in Montreal and elsewhere is mainly due to neoliberal policies that have reduced funding for social programs including social housing. Consequently, they are in opposition to the different level of government and most of their actions and mobilization is directed to them. Their actions organized in the last decade (people's commissions, land occupancy and demonstrations in front of the parliament) aim to demonstrate that the government should do more.
- The RCLALQ identifies itself as a militant organization dedicated to the defence and promotion of the right to housing, primarily by demanding more control of the private market and a better access to adequate and affordable housing for tenants. The RCLALQ also considers itself the tenants' defender, or the spokesperson, in particular of low- and modest-income households. Founded in 1978 to fight rent hikes, it now represents more than 50 organizations in daily contact with tenants that have housing problems such as unsanitary conditions, abusive rent hikes, discrimination based on race or family status, eviction threats, administrative summons at the Housing administrative tribunal, etc. Although the RCLALQ agrees that social housing would contribute significantly to the decommodification of housing, it identifies more with tenants within the private market and to the problems they face. Its actions are related to unequal rental relations, including among tenants living in social or community housing. In consequence, their opponents are, not just solely governments, but also the landlord's organizations, residential developers, and specific local government representatives like sanitary inspectors and judges of the Housing administrative tribunal. Thus, most of their actions target those organizations and actors

but they also produce research documents on the problems caused by those actors and on the experience of tenants.

Before focusing on their assessment of the Strategy and the By-law, the next table summarized their collective identities (Table1).

Table 1

The collective identity of the FRAPRU and RCLALQ

	FRAPRU	RCLALQ
Internal collective identity		
Self-identification (who are we?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly housed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants
Claims (what do we want?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50,000 social housing units Land reserve Residential Rental Construction Subsidies Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moratorium on rent increases Moratorium on evictions Moratorium on residential alterations Better sanitation code Administrative Tribunal (TAL) reform Lease Register
Articulation of claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solutions Right to housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience Tenants' rights
Actions (what do we do to get it?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land occupancy People's commissions Demonstrations in front of parliaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrations in front of the TAL Tours of insalubrity Research reports
Mobilization type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilization linked to the political context and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilization linked to renters' experience
Source of problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neoliberal policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power relations between landlords and tenants
Interpretation of problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures Decommodification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions Power relations
External collective identity		
Opponents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial and federal government through their housing agencies (SHQ and CMHC) Cities and municipalities through their housing offices (OMH) Speculators et 1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlords (CORPIQ) Real Estate Agents Residential developers TAL Quebec's government elected officials Cities, in particular elected officials and sanitary inspectors
Allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations defending the rights of the poor Community housing movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization defending the rights of immigrants CDPDJ (people's rights commission) DSPM

Discourse analysis methodology

If social movements “are what they say they are” (Castells 1999, 91), it is through the discourses and actions of movements that we can define them and learn more about their environment (Melucci 1989). Thus, we turn to the written production and concrete actions of the movements themselves (data invoked), that is, the data written and communicated by the groups. During the spring of 2020, we collected written communications, and documents on the selected groups’ web pages for a total of 123 documents published between 2002 and 2020. The different types of documents they have produced include briefs, general stances, and studies. According to Paillé and Mucchielli (2016), the main objective of thematic analysis is the reduction and organization of data. Among the vast corpus of documents, we specifically selected, after having read all the documents, those referring to the role of the City of Montreal in the field of housing, on the power of municipalities regarding housing, issues of social mix in the context of gentrification and the city’s inclusion Strategy (and By-law) which reduced the corpus to 18 documents for a total of 323 pages analyzed. All documents are in French, the excerpts presented in this paper have been translated by the authors.

It is in this second corpus of 18 documents that we analyzed the collective identity. Using the analytical framework outlined above, we carried out a thematic analysis (Paillé and Mucchielli 2016) by identifying and re-grouping discourse around predefined themes defined in our theoretical framework: the internal collective identity (self-identification, actions, demands and vision of housing) and the external collective identity (mentions of the context of action. We also explored relations with other actors (including the federal government, the provincial government, the Société d’habitation du Québec, the Housing administrative tribunal, the City of Montreal, and other groupings such as the landlords’ organizations, and the evaluation of the city’s Strategy and the By-law. As such, the analysis does not only focus on words used but on discourse, on how the actors justify and explain it, integrating different positions around a coherent and contextualized discourse. Thus, using Nvivo software, the documents were coded according to these themes in a non-exclusive way, therefore several elements were found in more than one theme. This approach allowed us to identify how the groups were evaluating the Strategy and the By-law proposed by the city what role the city could or should play in housing rights, and the main housing issues affecting the city.

The Montreal housing policy according to urban social movements in housing: a critique of social mix policies

As mentioned in the previous section, the evaluation of the Strategy and the By-law emanates from the analysis of the external collective identity. How did the selected groups view these planning tools? What are their evaluations of their social mix approach? Because the groups have a very different internal collective identity and a different “definition of the situation”, the analysis is presented first by groups in the following discussion.

An insufficient tool to foster social mix—FRAPRU

The FRAPRU supported the Strategy and it’s defending the By-law. FRAPRU “rejoices that the City of Montreal uses its prerogatives to impose inclusion” (FRAPRU 2019, 6). Moreover, it mentions that “the fact that the city can impose real-estate developers to include social housing units in their residential projects is a real progress” (FRAPRU 2019, 6). For the FRAPRU, the housing needs of vulnerable households are so important that any strategy is considered a step in the right direction. Despite this positive note, Montreal’s housing policy should not have been reduced to the Strategy and now the By-law: “The demonstration is made and pinpoint that this strategy is not sufficient to answer the needs of vulnerable tenants and, moreover, it cannot guarantee social mix of inner-city neighbourhoods” (FRAPRU 2019, 8).

According to the group, the Strategy had facilitated the construction of affordable housing, which is supposedly cheaper than the market, but whose rents remain much higher than in the community and co-operative housing. Furthermore, it criticized the affordable housing units envisioned in the Strategy that might replace social housing units:

Indeed, if the City has the real desire to increase the supply of financially accessible housing to poorly housed households, it can be achieved only through social housing. In that regard, the bill that uses the term «affordable and family housing» would benefit from being more specific. The term «affordable» is

a vague, even elastic, notion that does not indicate anything about the targeted households and targeted rents. What is affordable for one is not necessarily affordable for the other. With a median annual income of \$9740 (in 2010), renter households who must spend at least half of it on rent cannot do so without impacting their ability to meeting their other basic needs. The only housing that provides truly affordable housing is social housing. (FRAPRU 2017a, 8–9)

Moreover, the group denounces the Strategy loophole which allows private developers to “pay financial compensation rather than build a diverse range of housing on-site” (FRAPRU 2013, 13). This “contribution fund” for social housing was very popular among developers and “has been used to monetize the exclusion of social housing units in large private projects, particularly in high-density projects” (FRAPRU 2013, 13), which impact inclusion objectives. If the fund was supposed to be used by the City to build new social housing projects, “the intense real estate speculation that Montreal is currently experiencing raises fears that the fund will prove insufficient to deliver as much social housing as planned” (FRAPRU 2013, 13). Thus, new residential real estate developments of the Strategy gentrify some neighbourhoods without preserving their existing social mix.

There is a danger that this will be reproduced by the By-law. In sum, the FRAPRU depicts a pessimistic account of public policies in place, and their effect to guarantee the right to the city for all. For the grouping, the housing situation in Montreal threatens the ability of low- and moderate-income households to live adequately. As the FRAPRU puts it:

It is demonstrated and recognized that the inclusion of affordable housing will not meet the needs of poorly housed tenant households in Montreal, nor will ensure social mix (unlike social housing). The City would have everything to gain by raising its social housing inclusion targets to 40%. While this implies more investment from the City and senior governments, the FRAPRU does not believe that such a measure would unbalance the construction market. Montreal will continue to have attractive prices for developers, compared to other Canadian cities, and above all will live up to its ambitions of mixed population in its territory, helping to maintain the level of rent at a truly affordable price. (FRAPRU 2019, 8)

According to the grouping, in order to avoid the effects of real estate speculation and gentrification and ensure neighbourhoods social mix, the City should impose the construction of social housing “that goes beyond the logic of the market while allowing households to remain in their living environment” (FRAPRU 2019: 12). In addition, the grouping wonders why the By-law will take effect only a year after being implemented.

However, as the FRAPRU points out:

When adopting their development plan, cities and municipalities have responsibilities: they must ensure that development is structured and cohesive while meeting a diversity of needs, and that it does not come at the expense of low-income households which are understood and provide for the development of truly affordable housing, namely social housing. (FRAPRU 2017b, 10)

For the FRAPRU, the City could do a lot more that would facilitate the development of social housing while fostering social mix. Thus, the FRAPRU’s positions rather demonstrate that the current forms of policy, by not ensuring the availability and affordability of housing, which poses a real problem for poor tenants in the city, do not support the right to housing in Montreal. In this regard, it calls on the City to become more involved in the construction of social (thus decommodified) housing. In this way, the right to housing and the right to the city are intimately linked through the development of social housing. As it recalls: “[c]ities are in the front line when the supply of rental housing in their territory does not meet the needs of the local population, either because rents are too high, or because housing is too small for families, or when the stock is old, obsolete, or even unhealthy. It is they who must assume the real human tragedies that result from it” (FRAPRU 2017b, 6). In sum, these positions of the group in the face of policies aimed at social mix are part of the parameters of their collective identity, in particular internal, which aims to defend the poorly housed and to promote the development of social housing.

An insufficient tool to answer the needs of tenants – RCLALQ

The RCLALQ, even though it did not oppose the Strategy, nor the By-law, was very critical about its lack of scope in

answering the needs of tenants in Montreal. However, it recognizes the importance and competence of the municipal administration in the fight against social inequalities in the city:

If the right to housing is primarily the responsibility of higher governments and the resources to be devoted to it must above all come from their pockets, the City of Montreal is at the heart of the mechanisms that can guarantee its realization on its territory, or conversely, can result in denials of rights leading to an increase in social inequalities, or even the social exclusion of the most vulnerable. In other words, this draft by-law is an opportunity not to be missed by the City. (RCLALQ 2019, 2)

Nevertheless, from the outset, the grouping was critical of the threshold for social housing established at 20% of units on projects with more than 150 dwellings, deeming it to be greatly inadequate. Instead, the RCLALQ claimed a 40% threshold if the city really wants to ensure social mix. The grouping also criticizes the possibility, in the new By-law, for a developer to meet its inclusion obligations by building social housing units, in a different project, in another borough, which contradicts the basic idea of social mix, by allowing tenants to be able to access adequate housing at a reasonable price in the current neighbourhood development. Moreover, it denounces the fact that private developments respecting the inclusion ratios can be implemented on public land. For the RCLALQ, housing projects on public lands must be 100% public housing.

Like FRAPRU, the RCLALQ criticizes the fact that the new By-law will not be enforced until 2021.

The RCLALQ is also very disappointed to see a step back from the current Strategy by targeting projects of 150 dwelling units or more [to include a social and affordable unit in the project], rather than those of 100 units or more, as it is currently the case. Recent experience has shown that it is possible to include social housing in mixed projects of as few as 40 dwellings. Why then setting the minimum size of the project covered by the new By-law at 150 housing units? Why also decree that the inclusion of social housing units in private projects must be of at least 30 units to be viable? According to the RCLALQ, while this administration and the social and community housing organizations have shown ingenuity in the past, putting barriers in place is unnecessary, even damaging. (RCLALQ 2019, 8)

The group also criticizes the excessive share of so-called affordable housing in projects compared to community and social housing:

The City's By-law provides for slightly higher percentages of social and affordable housing inclusion over those in the strategy, but it continues to target affordable and social housing in the same proportion. However, the City's representatives recognized this at the information session of the Montreal Public Consultation Office on September 19, the affordable component is not affordable for Montreal households (both for home ownership and for rentals). It is absurd that the rent ceilings targeted for affordable housing are calculated based on the market and not on the income of renter households (RCLALQ 2019: 6).

Thus, for the RCLALQ, the policies put in place are minimal and do not meet the real needs of tenants nor urban social problems in general. Indeed, the impacts of policies remain limited in terms of the development of social housing, on the problems of sanitation, and erosion of the rental stock.

The report produced by Montreal's Director of Public Health in 2015 testifies to the many health problems with which Montreal tenants must contend. This report also makes the link between these problems and the financial situation of tenants: those who must devote more than 30% of their income to housing find themselves more strongly affected by the problems of insalubrity. Indeed, these tenants are often forced to rent a dwelling even if it is in poor condition simply because they do not have the necessary financial means to afford a more adequate home. (RCLALQ 2017, 3-4)

The fight for the right to housing is more relevant than ever in the face of the erosion of the rental stock, the gentrification of the central districts of cities and the abuses of land speculators who remain unpuni-

shed. Indeed, the government's inertia in protecting the rental stock and the Régie du logement's lack of enthusiasm to protect tenants' right to remain in the premises are cause for concern. (RCLALQ 2015, 4)

Here, the RCLALQ's position differs: the right to the city goes through the defence of the rights of tenants in the private market. While it recognizes the importance of social housing development, the City's responsibilities do not stop there, as it must put in place policies that will provide tenants with adequate and affordable housing (based on the ability to pay) and also stop the erosion of the private rental housing stock.

Discussion and conclusions

Our goal in this paper was to explore how urban social movements evaluate local government policies promoting social mix and inclusiveness and their possible impacts on disadvantaged populations. To do so, we have analyzed their collective identity present in various documents from Melucci's (1996) theoretical perspective on social movements.

For the FRAPRU and the RCLALQ the Strategy and the social mix By-law remain temporary solutions for building social housing, but do not have the capacity to slow down problems related to gentrification or even foster social mix. For both groupings, the Strategy and the By-law are only a small compensation since the withdrawal of federal and provincial governments from social housing funding, which has significantly reduced the construction and development of social, collective and community housing units. Indeed, since the mid-2000s, Quebec has experienced several waves of fiscal austerity and program revisions. At the same time, as these same groups point out, the price of available land increased with the acceleration of gentrification processes, making the development of dwelling units by the community more difficult. Thus, both austerity and gentrification appear to be a context forcing housing advocates such as housing committees and tenants' associations to accept institutional planning tools such as the Strategy and the By-law, and even to defend it. However, these actors are not fooled, they criticize the fact that the Strategy and the By-law leave it to private developers to build social housing when they are usually actors with whom the groups are in conflict. Indeed, they denounce the fact that these tools allow private developers to expand their influence on the fabric of the city, and worse, to appropriate the public land that would be available for the development of social housing. Even if the City of Montreal is taking advantage of private real-estate developments for the inclusion of affordable housing, there might be contradictions between public discourse and the true objectives pursued as was highlighted by Bricocoli and Cucca (2016, 80) in their study of social mix housing policy in Milan: "Rather than preventing the exclusion of the disadvantaged, the aim appears to be more significantly focused on the production of new values and qualities as well as creating conditions for greater feasibility and profitability of real-estate investments." Admittedly, the Italian and Canadian housing systems are different, and the place occupied by social housing and the target clientele is difficult to compare, but some parallels are worth mentioning and may shed some light on potential undesirable effects in Montreal. The relatively low level of segregation, low ratio of public housing, and the opportunity to develop on public land increase the attractiveness of neighbourhoods for real-estate developments, increasing the risk of (direct or indirect) displacements.

Montreal's socio-residential mosaic presents a relatively low level of socioeconomic segregation while following the general North American tendencies. However, contrary to the United States and some European cities, there are no large enclaves of poverty. This may be partly related to the low number of large social housing estates and their size. The federal government prioritized this type of development for a short period of time, about ten years, before redirecting its priority towards cooperative housing (before withdrawing of social housing financing which has been continued by the provincial government). Co-ops are better integrated into their environment; they have a better public reputation and require less substantial investment, the subsidies corresponding to half of the eligible costs. This reorientation towards smaller projects while disinvesting social housing had another effect: there is now a supply shortage. Today, about 28,000 households are on waiting lists for social housing in Montreal.

This facilitator position rather than a producer one is also occupied by the City of Montreal. Even if the new regulation is coercive, the fact remains that it places the development of social housing in the wake of private real estate residential development. It is not to say "no new private development, no social housing," projects from the community are being built, but the new regulation creates a dependency link. Not only the City seems to use little of these planning or regulatory tools such as the right of first refusal to develop and expand its land reserve for social housing purposes, but it also opens the door to the opportunity for developers to build mixed projects on public land.

Finally, with the new By-law, there is a risk of displacements of the low to modest income households. The redevelopment of vacant land and brownfield sites in working-class neighbourhoods can be the basis of indirect displacements: the neighbourhood becomes attractive following the new development, causing pressure on the private housing market from wealthier households, thus rents increase. In other words, there is a risk that social mix generated by new projects will only be transitory, and that these projects contribute to gentrification and increase inequality of access to adequate and affordable housing.

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