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Julie-Anne Boudreau est professeur-chercheur à l’Institut national de la recherche scientifique, titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada sur la ville et les enjeux politiques liés à l’insécurité. Ses travaux portent sur les dimensions politiques du sentiment d’insécurité dans les villes, plus particulièrement la peur ressentie par les populations marginalisées. Des jeunes Montréalais aux travailleuses domestiques de Los Angeles, des vendeurs ambulants de Hanoi aux jeunes Bruxellois, des élus et fonctionnaires parisiens aux artistes torontois, ses recherches portent un regard comparatif et international sur l’insécurité vécue au quotidien.

Julie Anne Boudreau

Julie-Anne Boudreau is a professor and researcher at the National Institute of Scientific Research and Chairholder of Canadian Research on Cities and Political Issues of Insecurity. She has worked on the political component of city insecurity, specifically on marginalised people’s fear, and studied all kinds of people: young Montrealers, Los Angeles domestic workers, Hanoi street vendors, young Belgians, Parisian civil servants, Toronto artists, etc. Her research aims to compare community safety on an international level.

Julie Anne Boudreau

Julie-Anne Boudreau es profesora e investigadora en el Instituto Nacional de Investigación Científica y Co-Presidente del Centro de Investigación Canadiense sobre las ciudades y cuestiones políticas de inseguridad. Ha trabajado en el componente político de la inseguridad de la ciudad, específicamente sobre personas marginadas mirando el nivel de temor, y ha podido estudiar y trabajar con diferentes tipos de comunidades: con los jóvenes de Montreal, con los trabajadores domésticos en Los Ángeles, en Hanoi con los vendedores ambulantes, los jóvenes belgas, los funcionarios parisinos, los artistas de Toronto, etc. Su investigación tiene como objetivo comparar la seguridad comunitaria a nivel internacional.

Moving around to « get out »

Attraction to gangs and the construction of
autonomy among young Montrealers



Magnitude of the phenomenon

- Approximately 30 gangs are well established in Quebec
- 20 major gangs in Montréal (500 membres)
- 3 emerging gangs for every gang created
- 10 gangs have existed for more than 10 years
- 16 gangs are of Haitian origin
- Montréal is the city with the largest gang presence in Quebec

A shared issue

- Departemental Committee : gave the mandate to the DPLC
- Coordination committee of the SPVM
- Steering committee of the City of Montréal

A common vision

- Be proactive and act together
- Determine potentially successful strategies
- Avoid spread out and repetitive activities
- Act preemptively through social development

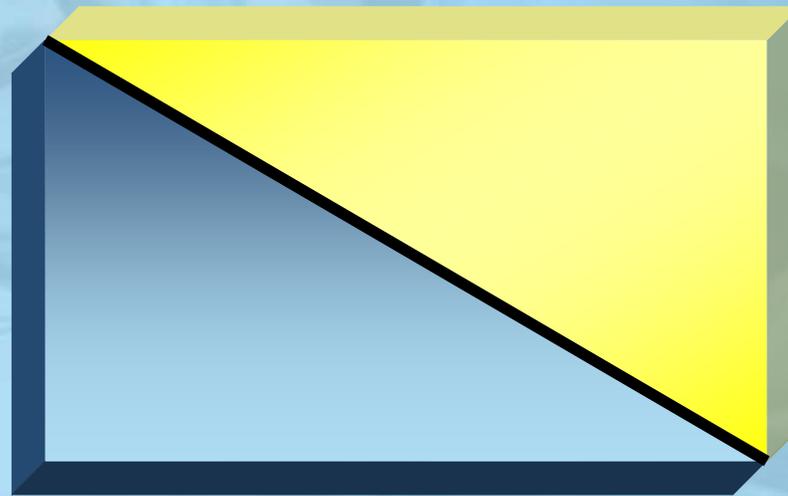
Axes of intervention

Four axes of intervention :

Repression

Research

Communication



Prevention

Mandate of the City Committee

- Develop and implement an integrated action plan to sustainably counter and decrease the street gang phenomenon in Montréal
- Support boroughs and corporate services involved in the phenomenon
- Horizon : 2005 - 2010

Support of local action

Improvement or implementation of projects according to the model developed in 5 priority boroughs :

- Montréal-Nord
- Villeray-St-Michel - Parc Extension
- Rivière-des-Prairies-Pointe-aux-Trembles
- Côte-des-Neiges- Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
- Lasalle

Collaboration with INRS

- Métropolis
- Metro line extension to Laval
- Innovative hypothesis

Research hypothesis

Many factors influence the choice to enter into criminalized gangs: family, school, friends, physical environment, etc.

In addition, we suggest that by **intensifying youth autonomous mobility**, young people would develop skills helping them to counter low self-esteem, uncertain identities and the loss of bearings.

Defining some concepts

- **Skill:** the ability to exercise control over significant spheres of life, and thus realizing desired objectives.
- **Feeling of competence:** Develops when one realizes that his/her actions provide valuable information and generate a discernable event.
- This recurrent experience of personal efficacy will lead someone to reengage in other activities.

Skills facilitating mobility

- **Formal skills:** knowledge of public language, of behavioral codes, of places where needs can be met
- **Expert skills:** knowing how to read a map or a schedule, knowing how to buy a ticket, drive a car, knowing the network of places one wants to visit
- **Kinesthetic skills:** reading different landscapes, knowing how to orient oneself in space
- **Emotional skills:** ability to manage the more or less important « cultural shock » one experiences when going to unknown places, ability to manage emotions related to the absence of dear ones

Pilot project research design

We studied youth (age 17-25) with different access to public transit: inner-city and suburb recently linked to the subway system.

Both neighborhoods are comparable in terms of ethnic diversity and socioeconomic status. Gangs are known to be present in both neighborhoods, although more intensively in the inner-city neighborhood.

Research questions

- What are the practices of mobility of the youth population studied?
- Do they have the cognitive capacity to seize mobility opportunities?
- What skills did they developed as they increased their autonomous mobility?
- To what degree does being autonomously mobile favors the feeling of competence?
- Does this feeling of competence lead youth to engage positively in their milieu?

Preliminary results

- The more mobile (within the city and travels) they are and the longer the period of autonomous mobility, the more decisive and articulate they are. We measure self-esteem according to the following indicators:
 - Level of doubts on one's abilities
 - Ability to make decisions
 - Fear of failure
 - Being extrovert, able to speak in larger groups
 - Ability to express emotions
 - Speaking in terms of respect and denouncing injustices
- The more mobile autonomously, the more youth have a positive attitude towards changes in their lives and the more precise their opinion towards gangs.

Conclusion

- We still need to analyse our data more precisely and we would need to study younger age groups (13-16)

But if mobility can become a valuable prevention tool completing others, this could translate into school and community programs enabling the acquisition of skills necessary for autonomous mobility:

- Developing the curiosity to discover new places
- Learning how to navigate the public transit system or to combine modes of transportation
- Valorise autonomous mobility for youth rather than restricting it
- Diminish fear (mostly for girls) while moving around
- Develop a sense of observation of the places visited
- Insist on the social valorisation of mobility
- Etc.