

# Organizing Heterogeneity: Migrations, Demographic Changes and Cultural Consequences<sup>1</sup>

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A curious story appeared in the Montreal press a couple of winters ago.<sup>2</sup> During the depths of a typically-harsh Quebec February, Filipino and Hispanic parents trekked with their sick children through snow filled streets to a small apartment complex in the fringe neighborhood of St. Laurent. Desperate mothers and fathers beseeched an icon-like portrait of the Virgin Mary to cure their ill offspring. Abderezak Mehdi, the Muslim building manager of the low-rise apartment building, had discovered the Virgin's image in the garbage. According to Mehdi and Greek Melkite Catholic priest Michel Saydé, the Virgin shed tears of oil that could cure the ill and tormented. Michel Parent, the chancellor of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Montreal, cautioned skepticism, noting that "while it is true that nothing is impossible for God, historically, that is not how God acts." This little scene of healing unfolded in a dreary neighborhood built at a time when Montreal was starkly divided between speakers of French and of English—the so-called francophones and anglophones of mid-twentieth century Quebec. Over the past three decades or so, those earlier linguistic boundaries have been submerged within a new mélange of overlapping cultures and religions that so characterizes life in Montreal at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Filipinos, Hispanics from various corners of the globe, Greek Melkite Catholic priests, and Roman Catholics now seek out St. Laurent in search

of a Christian miracle icon uncovered by a pious Muslim.

French Canada's metropolis is hardly unique. Migrants of all sorts—immigrants, emigrants, refugees, displaced persons, guest workers—have become a significant presence in urban communities everywhere. According to the United Nations Population Division, some 200 million people—or 3 percent of the world's population—live outside of the country of their birth.<sup>3</sup> Such projections could well underestimate those living in a new country without complete documentation, and fail to capture migrants moving within the borders of any given state. The people of the world are in constant motion, with no society on earth being left unaffected.

## Diversity in Motion

People don't just move; they resettle in a particular place. In a world in which, for the first time, most humans live in cities, migrants increasingly make their homes in urban neighborhoods of one sort or other. New arrivals—be they from abroad, from another town or city, or from the countryside—disrupt long-standing systems of economic and political dominance. Their very presence forces host communities to confront once dormant issues often assumed to have been resolved in some distant past.

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<sup>2</sup> This story was originally reported in Ann Carroll, "Faithful Flock to See Virgin Mary's Tears of Oil," *Montreal Gazette* (February 28, 2004). This account has appeared previously in Blair A. Ruble, *Creating Diversity Capital. Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv* (Washington, D.C./Baltimore, Maryland: Woodrow Wilson Center and Johns Hopkins University Presses, 2005), pp. 43-44; and in Blair A. Ruble, "Mélange Cities," *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 3 (2006), pp. 56-59.

<sup>3</sup> Jason DeParle, "In a World on the Move, a Tiny Land Strains to Cope," *New York Times* (June 24, 2007).

The processes by which migrant communities become incorporated into a particular urban region vary from city to city. The history of place, community identities, and public policy all impact this process. In addition to confronting language barriers, racial discrimination, unfamiliar cultures, and hostile labor markets that make integration a great challenge, migrants are faced with finding an appropriate balance between maintaining cultural and ethnic integrity while simultaneously accessing the social, political, and economic opportunities of their new city. The need to address issues of process and integration grows in importance as the forces of globalization amplify income disparities in urban areas; as opportunities for employment, education, and basic services become constricted. How do urban communities and migrants adjust as they accommodate the new realities of this century's massive transnational migrations?

To be successful in a time of such a rapid global flow of people as the early twenty-first century, urban communities simultaneously must accept difference and identify shared points of reference. Local legends, memories, and telling of history must go beyond exclusionary understandings of society to accept an inclusive pluralism. In other words, civic identity must embrace a variety of urban groups and individuals. Even if they have been divided in the past, cities must create a shared sense of responsibility for a common future. Urban communities must expand their repertoires of responses to diversity in order to accommodate new arrivals even as migrants must adapt to their new surroundings. Local strategies to promote "diversity capital" must seek to maximize the benefits and to minimize the disruptions of the global forces which promote migration in every region of the planet.<sup>4</sup>

Expanding a community's stock of diversity capital depends on a holistic strategy of addressing multiple human needs simultaneously. Communities must reconfigure local life in order to promote accommodation of diversity and to acknowledge every resident's inherent "right to the city."<sup>5</sup> They need to provide protected meeting places in which people of difference come and go, and interact with one another without coming into conflict and confrontation. Community residents need to learn how to use space—both literal and figurative—in new ways. Schools need to educate students to accept diversity as part and parcel of the world around them. Diversity must be transformed from being seen as a threat to the well-being of a community into becoming recognized as an opportunity for economic success.

Such changes in how life is lived are not easily secured. Cities everywhere are littered with unsuccessful attempts to accomplish any of these goals; failures that all too often have been compounded by outbursts of communal violence. Achievement of even partial and temporary success in accommodating the diversity created by newly arriving migrants—both domestic and transnational—must stand at the center of any effort to reconsider how to organize heterogeneity. The case studies to follow suggest some possible avenues toward the accommodation of difference.

### Reshaping Space, Learning from Quito

Reconfiguring public space so as to encourage various communities within a city to share in a mutual communal experience presents a bedeviling challenge to municipal leaders at a time when those with means seek to separate themselves from society at

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of the concept of "diversity capital," see Blair A. Ruble, *Creating Diversity Capital. Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv*.

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion of the concept of the "right to the city," see Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City. Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003).

large. Political and economic rewards favor efforts to privatize space by granting privilege to commercial projects, or by building walls and gates around the preserves of the well off. The resulting fragmented landscape accentuates difference rather than promoting a sense of shared destiny. This is especially so in cities struggling to manage migration from an impoverished rural hinterland while simultaneously establishing connections to a global capitalist economy.<sup>6</sup> Unsurprisingly, few have attempted to re-invigorate their city-centers to attract international capital while broadening the presence and participation of their most impoverished residents. Quito, Ecuador, marks an important counter-example to the explicit global pursuit of social exclusion.

As elsewhere in Latin America, Quito is divided into distinct spatial zones, with poor squatter settlements being found in peri-urban areas and on the city outskirts. A deteriorating historic city-center dates back to Colonial and Pre-Columbian days, while middle class and wealthy residential areas in between are separated from the remainder of the city by myriad physical, psychological, and symbolic barriers.<sup>7</sup> Such divisions have a long history. Spanish colonizers transformed the city—which had emerged as a major center within the northern Inca Empire by the end of the fifteenth century—into a major colonial center laid out in accordance with the Greek-inspired Laws of the Indies of 1523. An outburst of post-colonial industrialization led to the city's dramatic expansion

at the turn of the twentieth century, to which automobile-oriented modern development added alternative commercial centers and residential neighborhoods for the rich at century's end.<sup>8</sup>

By the 1990s, Quito's historic city-center remained the focal point of local political and religious life, while a new commercial center to the north had emerged as the home to major international corporations. Migrants fleeing rural poverty were drawn to the city's colonial squares and monuments as Quito's oldest neighborhoods became home to a vibrant informal economy dominated by street vendors. Municipal leaders began to find ways to attract international tourists and the local bourgeoisie to return to a city-center which provided the symbols of a once-shared past.

The desire to leverage the symbolic value of a distinguished historic neighborhood was not particularly unusual for a continent in which local elites had long been trying to integrate heritage preservation into economic development plans.<sup>9</sup> Typically, such plans sought to displace poor and unpicturesque indigenous residents through various forms of social control and coercion in order to increase the comfort level of middle class visitors.<sup>10</sup> Quito elites moved in the opposite direction. They draw on discussions of the historic city-center's future to create civic symbols shared by all Quito residents, and to increase citizen participation among previously displaced communities.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Susan Chrisopherson, "The Fortress City: Privatized Spaces, Consumer Citizenship," in Ash Amin, editor, *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), pp. 409-427.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion of Quito's development, see Fernando Carrión and Lisa M. Hanley, *Urban Regeneration and Revitalization in the Americas: Toward a Stable State* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Lisa M. Hanley and Meg Ruthenburg, "The Symbolic Consequences of Urban Revitalization: The Case of Quito, Ecuador," in *Ibid.*, pp. 177-202.

<sup>9</sup> Fernando Carrión M., "The Historic Center as an Object of Desire," in *Ibid.*, pp. 19-65; Eduardo Kingman Garcés and Ana Maria Goetschel, "Patrimony as a Disciplinary Device and the Banalization of Memory: An Historic Reading from the Andes," in *Ibid.*, pp. 67-78; and, Silvia Fajre, "Cultural Heritage and Urban Identity: Shared Management for Economic Development," in *Ibid.*, pp. 143-150.

<sup>10</sup> As has been the case in Ecuador's largest city, Guayaquil, during the past fifteen years. See X. Andrade, "'More City', Less Citizenship: Urban Renovation and the Annihilation of Public Space," in *Ibid.*, pp. 107-141.

<sup>11</sup> Diego Carrión Mena, "Quito: The Challenges of a New Age," in *Ibid.*, pp. 151-156.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Quito's political leaders embraced a strategic vision for their city that was predicated on "reclaiming" the city-center. The goal was to expand citizen participation in municipal affairs through discussions of how the historic center might revitalize. A diverse citizenry gave voice to very different notions about what historic preservation might mean. For example, disparate responses emerged concerning the appropriate balance between preserving the city's indigenous and colonial heritages. Local officials tried to maximize participation and transparency as a way of bringing together the public and private sectors in a shared development strategy. Leaders harnessed transportation, public safety, and environmental policies to promote stable job creation as well as to give expression to collective interests.<sup>12</sup> Informal vendors were brought into extended negotiations which concluded with their moving into more formalized markets and shops.<sup>13</sup>

Quito's efforts have not been wholly successful. Crime has dropped in the historic center, tourism has increased, and informal vendors have been incorporated into a thriving commercial economy. The center's symbolic images and public spaces have begun to create a sense of what it means to live in Quito that is shared by tens of thousands of city residents who have little else in common. Nonetheless, barriers to entry into the formal economy remain high, often forcing the city's poorest residents farther to the periphery of the physical city and the margins of society.

Quito society remains fragmented by social class, ethnicity, language, race, and region; Quito identity remains highly contentious and contested.<sup>14</sup> The Quito experience demonstrates both the possibilities for and the limits imposed on promoting inclusive public space in the absence of deeper structural changes within society.

### Teaching Diversity, Learning from St. Petersburg

Urban social fragmentation of a different sort has been taking place in Russia's second largest city, St. Petersburg, over the past decade-and-a-half. The trauma accompanying the collapse of the Soviet Union accelerated a general decline in the health and in the size of the city's population. During the early 1990s, male life expectancy and births fell in the city at a faster rate than in all but a handful of the country's eighty-nine regions.<sup>15</sup> Rampant heart disease, accidents, and cancer have continued to cut the lives of Russian men tragically short ever since. After reaching 65 years of age in 1987, male life expectancy in the Soviet Union and, subsequently, Russia fell to less than 59 years of age by 2003.<sup>16</sup> This pattern of high male mortality was accentuated within the city of St. Petersburg.<sup>17</sup> As elsewhere in the country, birth and fertility rates declined simultaneously.<sup>18</sup>

The combined impact of these trends on the city's population has been devastating. From

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Lisa M. Hanley and Meg Ruthenburg, "The Symbolic Consequences of Urban Revitalization: The Case of Quito, Ecuador," in *Ibid.*, 214-215.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

<sup>15</sup>Peder Walberg, Martin McKee, Vladimir Shkolnikov, Laurent Chenet, David A. Leon, "Economic Change, Crime, and Mortality Crisis in Russia: Regional Analysis," *British Medical Journal*, v. 317 (7154); August 1, 1998.

<sup>16</sup>Irina Titova, "Russian Life Expectancy on Downward Trend," *St. Petersburg Times* (January 17, 2003).

<sup>17</sup>Vladimir M. Shkolnikov, Alexander D. Deev, Øystein Kravdal, Tapani Valkonen, "Educational differences in male mortality in Russia and northern Europe. A comparison of an epidemiological cohort from Moscow and St. Petersburg with the male populations of Helsinki and Oslo," *Demographic Research*, vol. 10, article 1, pp. 1-26 (January 9, 2004).

<sup>18</sup>Julie Da Vanzo and Gwen Farnsworth, *Russia's Demographic "Crisis"* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1996).

the time the city's fifth millionth resident was born in February 1988 until the official October 9, 2002 census, St. Petersburg's population plummeted by nearly 350,000 residents to 4,661,219.<sup>19</sup> By 2007, the city's population had fallen further to 4,596,000, which still makes St. Petersburg the fourth largest city in Europe after London, Moscow, and Paris.<sup>20</sup>

Hidden within this picture of decline is the arrival of thousands of new Petersburgers who have moved to the city—often from beyond the borders of the Russian Federation—in response to the demand of local employers for labor. The city's economy entered a period of explosive growth around 1999 led by an expanding port, together with rapidly recovering shipbuilding and automotive industries.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence of these various trends, what had been an almost exclusively ethnic Russian city at the end of the Soviet period has become home to over one-million non-Russians.<sup>22</sup>

Not everyone in the city has been pleased by these developments. Racist thought has deep intellectual roots in Russia, as elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> An increase in racial and ethnic

hostility in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union appears to be enlivened by similar trends in Europe.<sup>24</sup> All too frequently, thought has led to action. Increasing "skin-head" violence has challenged authorities throughout Russia.<sup>25</sup> St. Petersburg in particular has been plagued by violent and repugnant racist and xenophobic attacks on individuals who do not appear to be "Russian." Russian and international media reports about such incidents threaten the city's efforts to attract the very domestic and transnational migrants that are essential for the city to sustain economic growth.<sup>26</sup>

City officials have become acutely concerned by the rise of inter-cultural tensions and ultra-nationalist tendencies within their community. The particularly horrifying murder on February 9, 2004 of a nine-year-old Tadzhik girl, Khursheda Sultanova, by a group of local teenagers prompted St. Petersburg City Governor Valentina Matvienko to speak out for the first time against growing racist violence in her city.<sup>27</sup> Local community and political leaders began struggling with how best to formulate a systematic response to inter-cultural conflict.

<sup>19</sup>Pavel Viacheslavovich Rusakov was born to great fanfare as Leningrader number 5,000,000 on February 25, 1988. "S dnem rozhdeniia, Leningradets!", *Sovetskaia Rossiia* (February 26, 1988). The official figure from the 2002 Russian Federation Census may be found in Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, *Numbers and Distribution of the Population: Results of the All Russian 2002 Census* (Moscow: Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service, 2004), Vol. 1, p. 93.

<sup>20</sup>For the current population of St. Petersburg, see the St. Petersburg City Government's official website [http://eng.gov.spb.ru/figures/population].

<sup>21</sup>According to the St. Petersburg City Government's official website, industrial production grew by 131.4% in 2002 alone [http://eng.gov.spb.ru/figures/industry].

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Boris Aleksandrovich Koptin, Head of the Administration for Contacts with National Associations of the St. Petersburg Government Committee for External Relations, St. Petersburg, Russia, April 25, 2007. For further discussion of the city's evolving ethnic composition throughout its history, see: Blair A. Ruble, *Leningrad. Shaping a Soviet City* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 54–56; N. V. Iukhneva, *Etnicheskiĭ sostav i sotsial'naia struktura naseleniia Peterburga: Vtoraia polovina XIX – nachalo XX veka: Statisticheskii analiz* (Leningrad: Nauka – Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1984); and, G. V. Starovoitova, *Etnicheskaia grupa v sovremennom Sovetskom gorode. Sotsiologicheskie ocherki* (Leningrad: Nauka – Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1987).

<sup>23</sup>For a discussion of the roots of racist thought in Russia, see V. A. Shnirel'man, *Ocherki sovremennogo racizma* (Petrozavodsk: K. R. O."Molodzeĭnaia pravozashchitnaia grupa," 2007).

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 30–37.

<sup>25</sup>For discussion of an emerging "Skinkul'tura" in Russia, see V. A. Shnirel'man, "Chistol'shchiki moskovskikh ulits: skinkhedy, SMI i obshchestvennoe mnenie" (Moscow: Academia, 2007).

<sup>26</sup>See, for example, "Four Get Lengthy Terms in African's Slaying," *Moscow Times* (June 20, 2007).

<sup>27</sup>V. A. Shnirel'man, "Chistol'shchiki moskovskikh ulits: skinkhedy, SMI i obshchestvennoe mnenie," pp. 86–87.

In July 2006, the Government of St. Petersburg launched a “tolerance program” aimed at “promoting harmony of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations, and preventing ultra-nationalist tendencies, and strengthening tolerance for all in St. Petersburg.”<sup>28</sup> City authorities formulated the program on the basis of extensive consultation with local law enforcement agencies, academic specialists, civil society leaders, and educational officials.

Among the program’s goals are enhanced coordination among city agencies on questions of tolerance, expanded initiatives to integrate nationalities living in the city into public and cultural life, greater effort to preserve and develop the cultural heritage of all groups within the city, stronger enforcement of laws intended to prevent ethnic violence and punish the perpetrators of hate crimes, as well as improved communication between various communities and local authorities through the establishment of a “St. Petersburg—A City of Peace” hotline.<sup>29</sup> The city has made funding available to encourage local ethnic associations—especially those representing the city’s 200,000 Azeris, 150,000 Tatars, as well as many smaller groups such as Petersburg’s historic Jewish community—to organize cultural festivals.<sup>30</sup>

More ambitiously, city officials are working with the Russian Federation Ministry of Education to introduce a comprehensive tolerance curriculum throughout the city’s school system. This effort is intended to integrate “a positive understanding of ethnic and religious diversity, interest towards other cultures, re-

spect for their values, traditions and special features of their ways of life” into every aspect of the school curriculum, in all disciplines, throughout the entire primary and secondary school program. Simultaneously, the school curriculum is to be re-designed to promote the rejection of chauvinism and extremism. School children and youth are to be taught skills to interact more peacefully with others who are different from themselves.<sup>31</sup>

Beyond making diversity and tolerance seem “better,” concerned St. Petersburg officials and residents are trying to make diversity and tolerance seem “cool.” Non-governmental organizations such as Funky Tolerance sponsor events around the city encouraging young people to embrace tolerance as “hip” and “fun.” Their chat-rooms, parties, and concerts are increasingly popular among students, young managers, and other members of a growing local middle class who are in search of a good time with sufficient wealth to connect on the internet, in local basement pubs (*traktir*), and at concerts.<sup>32</sup>

The relatively spontaneous socializing spawned by Funky Tolerance and other self-organized initiatives bring together small groups of rising elites from different ethnic, religious, and sexual communities. City officials want to associate more wide-spread cross-cultural interaction with a good time as well. Working with local ethnic associations, the St. Petersburg government has supported a variety of festivals promoting cultural diversity throughout the year. By far the largest and most successful among these efforts has been a local staging of the Tatar summer festival

<sup>28</sup>Pravitel’stvo Sankt-Peterburga Komitet po vneshnim sviaziam, “Programma garmonizatsii mezhetnicheskikh i meshkul’turnykh otnoshenii, profilaktiki proiavlennii ksenofobii, ukrepleniia tolerantnosti v Sankt-Peterburge na 2006 - 2010 gody (programma “Tolerantnost’)” (Sankt-Peterburg: Pravitel’stvo Sankt-Peterburga, 2006).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, pp. 8–19.

<sup>30</sup>Interview with Boris Aleksandrovich Koptin, April 25, 2007.

<sup>31</sup>Pravitel’stvo Sankt-Peterburga Komitet po vneshnim sviaziam, “Programma garmonizatsii mezhetnicheskikh i meshkul’turnykh otnoshenii, profilaktiki proiavlennii ksenofobii, ukrepleniia tolerantnosti v Sankt-Peterburge na 2006 - 2010 gody (programma “Tolerantnost’),” pp. 12–13.

<sup>32</sup>E. E. Chebotareva, “Funky Tolerance: Conceptual Analysis of Corporate Management in Multi-Cultural Surroundings,” conference paper, International Academic-Practical Conference on Tolerance and Intolerance in Modern Society, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia, April 25–25, 2007.



Sabantuyi held at the height of the city's famous "white nights" in mid-June.

Celebrated in villages of the mid-Volga before the arrival of Islam, Sabantuyi merged with other local festivals during the late nineteenth century to become a symbol of Tatar nationhood.<sup>33</sup> Further secularized during the Soviet period, Sabantuyi is now an annual celebration of Tatar traditions, song, dance, food, and play. Most Sabantuyi festivals include a distinctive form of Tatar wrestling, horse racing, and more light-natured competitions; together with lots of food and music ranging from folk choruses to raucous rock music. Russian Federation Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin have embraced the celebration as a seemingly benign way to demonstrate their country's diversity; though Sabantuyi retains a strong sense of an autonomous Tatar identity.

The St. Petersburg Sabantuyi is held outside the city in the neighboring Leningrad Region with governmental support from the city, region, federal, and Tatarstan administrations as well as corporate support from major local firms.<sup>34</sup> More than 60,000 attended the 2006 Sabantuyi, with perhaps twice as many people making their way an hour or so north of the city in 2007 to a field along the Siargi highway outside of the village of Kuzmolovo. Once there, Petersburgers spent the day enjoying rides, exploring Tatar cultural exhibits, and listening to a variety of music from three large stages.

For local officials, the Sabantuyi celebrations represent an effort to make diversity seem "normal" and "comfortable." They view the festival's obvious popularity as an opportunity to spread the word that living with people who are different—at least in the controlled environment of a corporate and municipal-

sponsored gathering—is not threatening. This domesticated form of cultural interaction is seen as re-enforcing their city's strengths. Not the least, officials believe, Sabantuyi helps people realize that "diversity can be fun."<sup>35</sup>

The initiation of the city's tolerance program might appear to be surprising in light of a widely-held image of contemporary Russian political development that accentuates a turning away from civil society institutions, a tendency toward nationalist rhetoric, and a growing separation between state and society. The Petersburg experience suggests that this conventional understanding of contemporary Russian politics is limited. More significantly, the Petersburg tolerance program indicates that city officials need not be inhibited in their efforts to address the challenges of heterogeneity by the limitations of a larger national political environment.

The impact of St. Petersburg's tolerance program remains far from certain. Ethnically and racially inspired gang attacks continue with disturbing frequency on the city's streets, public transportation system, and in parks and other public spaces. Police response to such incidents remains disappointing, while the judicial system struggles to handle trials with dispatch. Budgetary allocations to support program activities have been inadequate.

Profound change has taken place in St. Petersburg's response to cultural and racial intolerance over the past two-to-three years. The city government and its leaders are firmly on record as condemning intolerance and violence. City agencies actively promote opportunities to highlight the contributions of various economic groups to the city's overall well-being. City officials publicly embrace diversity more enthusiastically than ever

<sup>33</sup>"Saban tuyi," in *Tatar Encyclopedia* (Kazan': Institute of the Tatar Encyclopedia, Tatarstan Republic Academy of Sciences, 2002).

<sup>34</sup>For example, the Interleasing Group was a major corporate sponsor for the 2007 St. Petersburg Sabantuy ([www.ileasing.ru](http://www.ileasing.ru)).

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Boris Aleksandrovich Koptin, April 25, 1007.

before in Russian history. Finally, serious long term efforts are underway to insure that future “Petersburgers” consider diversity to be a normal state of being in the twenty-first century.<sup>36</sup>

### Profiting from Diversity, Learning from Montreal

Montreal has evolved over the past third-of-a-century from a city divided between two founding linguistic and cultural communities—French and English—into a complex inter-cultural metropolis rooted in generally shared knowledge of French.<sup>37</sup> In most recent years, the city’s economy has expanded as business, community, and political leaders have learned how to capitalize on these changes. Indeed, transnational migration to Montreal during the first years of the twenty-first century has become essential to the city’s well-being given otherwise precipitous projected declines in total population and labor force.<sup>38</sup>

Recent migration within Canada has changed in three dimensions which have reshaped the urban experience of Montreal.<sup>39</sup> First, transnational migrant flows have shifted from Montreal to Toronto and the Canadian west as the economic uncertainties generated by debates over Quebec sovereignty devalued the Montreal region as a receiving area for migrants from abroad.<sup>40</sup> Second, migrants to Montreal—as everywhere in Canada—increasingly have arrived from the Caribbean Basin, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>41</sup> Third, Montreal’s migrants have come more and more from French-speaking societies in Africa, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia.<sup>42</sup> One consequence of these trends emerged in the 2001 Canadian Census count, which revealed that “visible minorities” had come to making-up nearly a fifth (18.7%) of the city’s overall population.<sup>43</sup>

This transformation is most evident in Montreal’s leading transnational neighborhoods such as Côtés-des Neiges and the neighboring Notre-Dame de Grâce.<sup>44</sup> At times known as Montreal’s “Bronx,” Côtés-des-Neiges in

<sup>36</sup>The goal of making diversity “normal” for the city’s schoolchildren is viewed as an essential objective for the program. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>For further discussion of these trends within Montreal, see Blair A. Ruble, *Creating Diversity Capital. Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv*, pp. 34–44.

<sup>38</sup>A point made in a number of studies, as reported in Radio-Canada, “L’immigration: apport essentiel à l’économie montréalaise” (30 December 2003).

<sup>39</sup>Peter S. Li, “Deconstructing Canada’s Discourse of Immigrant Integration,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l’intégration et de la migration internationale*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2003): 315–333.

<sup>40</sup>By 2001, 43.7% of the population of metropolitan Toronto was foreign born, as was 37.5% of Metro Vancouver’s population. Both figures are markedly higher than the estimated 18.4% of the residents of metropolitan Montreal (and only 2.9% of the residents of the Quebec City region) who were born outside of Canada. The 2001 Census figures are available on line on the Statistics Canada website at <http://www.statscan.ca>.

<sup>41</sup>D.F. Levy and L.S. Bourne, “The Social Context and Diversity of Urban Canada,” p. 23. For more extensive discussion of the Asian immigrant experience in Canada, see the essays contained in Eleanor Laquian, Aprodicio Laquian, and Terry McGee, editors, *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada* (Vancouver, B.C.: Institute of Asian Research, the University of British Columbia, 1998).

<sup>42</sup>Denis Helly, *L’immigration pour quoi faire* (Montreal: Institut Québécois de Recherche sur la culture, 1992).

<sup>43</sup>L’INRS-Urbanisation, Culture et Société, *Portrait des populations immigrante et non immigrante de la ville de Montréal et de ses 27 arrondissements* [[www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/diversite/portrait.htm](http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/diversite/portrait.htm)]. The Canadian Census identified Canadians of “Black, South Asian, Chinese, South East Asian, Arab and Middle Eastern, Latin American, Korean, Japanese, and Filipino heritage” as constituting the country’s “visible minorities.”

<sup>44</sup>Côte-des-Neiges has been the subject of extensive social science research in part because of its diverse and complex character and, in part, because of the presence in the neighborhood of l’Université de Montréal and its faculty and students. An excellent collection of articles examining various aspects of neighborhood life during the 1990s may be found in: Deidre Meintel, Victor Piché, Danielle Juteau, and Sylvie Fortin, editors, *Le Quartier Côtés-des-Neiges à Montréal. Les interfaces de la pluriethnicité* (Montréal/Paris: L’Harmattan, 1997).

particular, has become home to Africans, Arabs, Cambodians, Jews, Philippines, Lao, Vietnamese, Chinese, Latin Americans, Portuguese, Haitians, and members of various other groups living in close proximity to one another.<sup>45</sup> By the 1990s, Côtés-des-Neiges and Notre-Dame de Grâce were home to over 154,000 residents who sustained flourishing small business districts dominated by ethnic entrepreneurs.<sup>46</sup> Local businesses were producing sufficient advertising revenues during the early 1990s to support two-dozen ethnic and neighborhood newspapers published in various African languages, Arabic, Cambodian, Hebrew, Philippine languages, Lao, Vietnamese, Chinese, Latin-American languages, Creole French, Québécois French, and English.<sup>47</sup>

Montreal entered the twenty-first century with an astonishing mixture of ethnic, religious, racial, and linguistic communities—often without well defined boundaries among them. Given the historic enmities between anglophones and francophones—as well as between Roman Catholic and Protestant communities—“it is,” in the words of *La Presse* journalist Laura-Julie Perreault, “something of a miracle that Montreal did not become a Second Northern Ireland.”<sup>48</sup> Instead, as Perreault reports, the city’s 350 year old multi-confessional regime has become a marketing tool for the city’s burgeoning tourism industry. The result is not always blissful, as one can see in Stephen Henighan’s popular novels of late twentieth-century Montreal. To quote from the author of a review of Henighan’s 2004 story *The Streets of Winter*, Montrealers “are unable,

or unwilling, to relinquish the individual and cultural prejudice, nostalgia and expectation that alienate them in their quests for ‘*le vrai Montréal*.’” Once starkly divided by language, Montreal has become converted into “a grid of many solitudes.”<sup>49</sup>

This “grid of solitudes” has recovered some of its historic economic dynamism in part because new Montrealers have been arriving every day. Migrants from around Quebec, Canada, and beyond represent critical new additions to a labor force that otherwise would be in precipitous decline. The future growth of Montreal’s regional economy depends on upgrading the skill profile and injecting younger workers into an aging population that has lagged behind other Canadian and US metropolitan regions in educational attainment.<sup>50</sup> Migrants have enhanced economic vitality in the city and region and must continue to add value to the local economy if the city is to thrive. The Montreal experience demonstrates the need to inculcate migrants into urban economic development strategies. Diversity must become recognized as an opportunity for economic success in order for the city and region to develop economically.

### Multiplying Investments in Diversity

The experiences of Quito, St. Petersburg, and Montreal suggest that urban political and community leaders in many cities of the world are struggling to organize twenty-first century heterogeneity in a way that enhances everyone’s well being. These experiences are

<sup>45</sup>Myriame El Yamani with the assistance of Jocelyne Dupuis, “La construction médiatique du ‘Bronx’ de Montréal,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 29-52.

<sup>46</sup>Daniel Juteau and Sylvie Paré, “L’entrepreneuriat à Côtés-des-Neiges: le périmètre Victoria/Van Horne,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 129-160.

<sup>47</sup>Myriame El Yamani with the assistance of Jocelyne Dupuis, “La construction médiatique du ‘Bronx’ de Montréal,” p.35. For a broader discussion of Montreal’s “ethnic” press, see Sylvie St-Jacques, “Des nouvelles de leurs mondes,” *La Presse* (April 21, 2004).

<sup>48</sup>Laura-Julie Perreault, “Embouteillage sur le prie-dieu montréalais,” *La Presse* (June 12, 2004).

<sup>49</sup>Karen Solie, “The Many Solitudes of Montreal,” *Globe and Mail* (June 12, 2004).

<sup>50</sup>“OECD Territorial Review of Montreal,” *OECD Observer Policy Brief* (Paris, OECD, 2004), pp. 2-3 [www.oecd.org/publications/Pol\_brief].

only small examples of a developing trend in urban governance world wide. Momentum is growing to expand the repertoire of responses to social and cultural diversity. Cities are seeking to create better environments for the adaptation of communities and migrants—both domestic and transnational—to one another, thereby increasing diversity capital. Successful politicians in very different cities are making explicit decisions to oppose a global trend toward social fragmentation and isolation.

These brief case studies reveal how difficult a task the reorganization of urban communities for heterogeneity can be. Public space has been reconfigured in Quito to be more inclusive; school curricula have been rewritten in St. Petersburg to promote tolerance; and entrepreneurship in Montreal among transnational migrants has created more

jobs. Few visitors and residents would mistake these cities for an urban ideal.

Policies fall short because improvement in any single urban domain produces the demand for improvement in other areas. More inclusive public space must be populated by better educated residents if jobs are to be produced; urbanites educated in the way of tolerance must have the physical space and the economic opportunity to engage other groups for the city to change; and new businesses must be accessible to diverse residents who have the education to sustain further growth. The task of organizing a city's heterogeneity in a period of rapid demographic change requires long term, multi-faceted, complex strategies which only emerge when the city itself becomes a shared focus of concern and attention. The city must become an agent of organization and education, and not just an object acted upon by others.