INTEGRATED URBAN REVITALISATION IN MONTREAL: LESSONS FROM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES[1]

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Abstract – This paper reflects upon an integrated territorial initiative known as *RUI* (Integrated Urban Revitalization), which has been implemented in a number of Montreal neighbourhoods that have been particularly afflicted by poverty and social exclusion. In these areas, a series of Integrated Urban Revitalization pilot-projects have been implemented with a view to creating new development opportunities. The inter-sectoral *RUI* approach (health, education, crime prevention, housing, employment, transportation, environment...) advances governance, gives rise to a new generation of networks and partnerships and exposes structures to participative democracy. The *RUI* initiative also purports to contribute to rebuilding the identity and culture of disadvantaged people, strengthening territorial bonds (the neighbourhood as a place of belonging and social interaction) and reinforcing territorial cohesion. The *RUI* incorporates a bottom-up logic and constitutes a stimulus to the social economy by reinforcing the networks and institutional capacity of Montreal's society and economy, but the State cannot afford not to participate in the quest for a fairer and more sustainable urban development model. Some of the lessons from this experience can be usefully transferred and adapted to other territories subject to exclusion and poverty.

Key words: Montreal, *RUI*, urban governance, participatory democracy, social innovation, neighbourhoods.

Resumo – Revitalização Urbana Integrada: Lições de Iniciativas de Desenvolvimento Local. Este artigo reflecte sobre uma estratégia de desenvolvimento – abordagem territorial integrada – em bairros ameaçados na cidade de Montreal, nos quais o declínio gerou bolsas de pobreza e exclusão. Nestes, acções de revitalização

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local alavancaram novas oportunidades para o desenvolvimento. Estas iniciativas intersectoriais (saúde, educação, segurança, habitação, emprego, transportes, ambiente…), conhecidas por "Revitalização Urbana Integrada" ou *RUI*, onde uma nova geração de redes e parcerias evidenciam estruturas apelativas de democracia participativa, elementos-chave de reconstrução cultural e identitária das populações estigmatizadas e dos territórios locais (o bairro como um espaço de pertença e reconhecimento, de interacção social e de participação cívica) e parecem contribuir para o reforço da coesão territorial. Apesar das *RUI* protagonizarem uma abordagem integrada de base territorial e adoptarem um modelo de gestão *bottom-up*, e terem estimulado a economia social, incrementado as redes, a capacitação das populações e o seu nível de integração na sociedade, na economia e no território de Montreal, o Estado não pode deixar de se assumir como um actor-chave nesta demanda do desenvolvimento urbano equitativo e sustentável. Acresce que há lições desta experiência que podem ser incorporadas noutras realidades urbanas de exclusão e pobreza.

Palavras-chave: Montreal, *RUI*, governança urbana, democracia participativa, inovação social, bairro.

Résumé – Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée à Montréal: Leçons des Initiatives de Développement Local. On réfléchit sur un essai de développement qui concerne des quartiers de Montréal, menacés par l'exclusion et par la pauvreté. Il s'agit d'initiatives plurisectorielles (santé, éducation, sécurité, habitation, emploi, transports, environnement...) qui donnent lieu à une nouvelle génération de réseaux et d'associations. Elles créent ainsi des structures démocratiques et participatives qui permettent la reconstruction identitaire et culturelle de populations stigmatisées et de leur territoire. Le quartier apparaît comme un espace vécu d'interaction sociale et de participation civique, qui contribue à une meilleure cohésion. Bien que la Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée (*RUI*), par leur assiette territoriale et par le fait que leur action est partie de la base, aient sensiblement amélioré le statut des populations concernées, il est aussi nécessaire que l'État intervienne, afin d'assurer un développement urbain équitable et soutenu. Les leçons tirées de cette expérience peuvent en outre être appliquées à d'autres territoires urbains, où dominent l'exclusion et la pauvreté.

Mots-clés: Montréal, *RUI*, gouvernance urbaine, démocratie participative, innovation sociale, quartier.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The common aim of the various integrated urban revitalisation approaches is the improvement of living conditions in cities faced with problems of poverty and social exclusion, by drawing on a variety of strategies: social mixing, labour market (re)integration and tackling inequalities in the provision of urban public services. One of their defining features consists of seeking to ensure that the various social groups both participate in the projects and actually drive them (Séguin e Divay, 2004; Laurence, 2007).

In Montreal (Quebec, Canada), social development policy dates back to the 1940s, whereas the first urban regeneration experiences took place in the early

1950s. After the Second World War, the State adopted a more overtly interventionist approach to urban planning, namely through the role played by the Central Society for Mortgages and Housing (*Société Centrale d'hypothèques et de Logement*, SCHL) in the provision of social housing. The urban rehabilitation programmes implemented in the 1950s-1960s[3] were financed by SCHL and, in the following twenty years, by the Housing Rehabilitation Support Programme (*Programme d'aide à la Remise en État des Logements*, PAREL) and the provincial-level Neighbourhood Improvement Programme (*Programme d'amélioration des Quartiers*, PAQ) (Laurence, 2007). 1995 saw the launching of the Programme for the Revitalisation of Old Neighbourhoods (*Programme de Revitalisation des Vieux Quartiers*, PRVQ), followed in 2002 by the Urban Regeneration Programme (*Programme de Renouveau Urbain*, PRU) of the Ministry for Municipal and Regional Affairs (MAMR), which constituted the first attempt to adopt an integrated vision. According to Laurence (2007), all these initiatives but the latter were largely characterised by their top-down, centralised approaches, in addition to a number of ambiguities in their formulation.

The Integrated Urban Revitalisation (*Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée*, *RUI*) was launched in 2003 with a view to fight social exclusion in run-down urban areas[4] of Montreal/Quebec within a 10-year time-span. In particular, it seeks to tackle the problems of juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, vandalism (against public space and infrastructure), school drop-out, food insecurity, unemployment, racial tensions, discrimination, etc., in order to improve living conditions in urban areas afflicted by poverty.

This initiative has not been without a precedent, given that it has taken its inspiration from other experiences across the world, such as the *Contrat de Ville 2000-06* programme in France (Green and Booth, 1996). However, most urban development strategies have traditionally been designed and implemented at the national and sectoral levels, whereas the originality and advantage of the *RUI* lays in their inter-sectoral character and the fact that they are anchored to the territory at the municipal and local scales. Indeed, each *RUI* project is implemented in the context of a city sector (neighbourhood) with which the various local residents and actors identify and in which they undertake their activities (http://www.collectifquartier.org/qui-sommes-nous/).

In the late 1990s, the Ministry of Social Security and the Montreal City Hall identified a number of "sensitive neighbourhoods" that suffered from particularly severe urban and social problems and deprivations. Sometime after that, the Montreal City Hall selected Integrated Urban Revitalisation (*RUI*) as a priority pilot-

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[3] According to Laurence (2007), the first urban regeneration experiences undertaken in Montreal consisted of the construction of the *Jeanne-Mance* housing compound in the city centre, followed by the neighbourhood known as Petite Bourgogne.

[4] The Montreal Urban Plan identified a number of areas that had been subject to decay and neglect (insofar as the federal and provincial governments had not made any investments there for quite a while), which were thus selected as those where the RUI pilot-projects were to be implemented.

initiative. Having been launched by the social development office of the City of Montreal, it sought to stimulate local residents and organisations to form coalitions with a view to designing social and urban (i.e. physical) development projects. The *RUI* initiative, which began in 2003 with urban revitalisation pilot-projects in three of Montreal's sectors (*Sud-Ouest/Galt*, *Lachine/Saint-Pierre* e *Ville-Marie/ Sainte-Marie*), were soon extended to five additional areas throughout the city (*Montréal-Nord*, *Saint-Michel*, *Bordeaux-Cartierville/Quartier Laurentian*, *Saint-Laurent/Place Benoît* and *Hochelaga-Maisonneuve/Mercier-Est*).

The concept of integrated urban revitalisation emerged in the 1990s in the context of urban regeneration projects designed for deprived neighbourhoods, and it sought to break with the traditional sectoral approach (in terms of both problem identification and policy design) to territorial interventions. One of its defining features consists of its holistic approach, whereby it seeks to simultane-ously take account of the physical, economic and social dimensions of urban development. In accordance with the principles of integrated development, the specific form of territorial anchoring of the *RUI* initiative brings on board the socioeconomic, physical, cultural, identity, and environmental dimensions, thus constituting a truly holistic intervention at the neighbourhood level. According to Bertrand and Peyrache-Gadeau (2009), the coherence of the *RUI* initiative springs from the interconnected network of relationships that occur in the vari-ous neighbourhoods of the city, of which communities are a part.

The *RUI* initiative has benefited from extensive public support: their "phi-losophy" and funding originate in the City of Montreal, through the provision of "financial packages" (approved on an annual basis for each of the *RUI* ter-ritories) to the various district councils (*conseils d'arrondissement*), which in turn benefit from substantial inputs from the neighbourhood councils (*tables de concertation*) in which citizens, as well as the private, para-statal and social economy sectors, are represented. The actual implementation of the *RUI* involves the active participation of the community, which is regarded as crucial for the identification and setting of the problems, priorities and solutions and as capable of at least partly ensuring social development. Deliberative, or participatory democracy (Frey and Duarte, 2005) is therefore an important conceptual refer-ence in the context of the *RUI* initiative.

Citizen participation, actor mobilisation and the creation of multi-sectoral partnerships are key components in the success of these local development ini-tiatives and constitute a response to the challenge of ensuring the coherence and convergence of the various integrated interventions in the context of a wider scale – that of the city itself, with its complex dynamics in terms of transports, housing, employment, internationalisation, etc. The *RUI* initiative thereby seek, on the one hand, to foster collective capacity-building and develop the (family and professional) competences of individuals and, on the other, to improve the quality of the built environment and of service provision (health, education, employment, transports, crime prevention, environment, etc.). To a significant extent, the *RUI* initiative may therefore be regarded as a set of territorially-based

responses to concrete problems that draw on the cooperation between the public and private sectors and on the participation of the civil society.

To sum up, the disproportionate concentration of poverty and social exclusion in certain areas of the city of Montreal in the 1990s paved the way for a number of different interventions. However, it was not until the 2000s that the Integrated Urban Revitalisation (*RUI*) pilot-experiences discussed in this paper came to the foreground. These have been regarded as stimuli to improving the living conditions and collective self-esteem of run-down areas of the city. Collaborative structures incorporating the various social actors play a central role in them, and have proved especially effective due to the active support and involvement of public agencies and departments. The present paper discusses and reflects upon these experiences based on the analysis of secondary evidence (literature and documental evidence), fieldwork undertaken in Montreal (including interviews with key informants) and attendance of public sessions related with this topic.

There are eight *RUI* projects currently under way across the city. Even though it is still too early for an overall *ex-post* evaluation, the projects that have been implemented and the interim assessments that have been undertaken suggest that the *RUI* experience has indeed constituted a substantial qualitative change in the governance of the city of Montreal, as well as in terms of development strategies anchored in the territory. This initiative draws on collaborative network arrangements that involve a variety of actors with a view to driving local development trajectories; the responses are designed and implemented by the communities themselves. However, the *RUI* projects are also not without their problems, and have faced specific difficulties as well as significant challenges.

This paper discusses some of the changes that urban interventions have undergone over time with regard to their social dimension, in order to provide the general context that accounts for the emergence of Montreal's Integrated Urban Revitalisation pilot experiences. This is followed by a discussion of the interventions themselves, their general features and their associated projects, as instances of local initiatives that seek to reverse the processes that bring about poverty and social exclusion. To conclude, some additional remarks are put forth with respect to the possibility of replicating this model in the context of urban social policies elsewhere.

II. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF URBAN INTERVENTIONS IN MONTREAL: REMARKS ON URBAN GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL INNOVATION AND THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

Urban governance, *social innovation* and the *social economy* are key concepts for understanding what the *RUI* are about. First of all, because these pilot-experiences seek to stimulate the creative potential of the population and to enable it to actively participate in political decision-making. The Integrated Urban Revitalisa-

tion experience in Montreal involves the on-going participation of actors from deprived neighbourhoods, as well as their community associations, in the joint design of integrated responses to their own problems. As Ascher (2004) puts it, this participation gives rise to a social project (which favours consensus and compromise over conflict) that draws on a variety of often innovative ways of involving the population and civil society actors in the process of "making the city".

The *RUI* have proven quite successful and constitute a step towards a decentralised welfare state model based on collaborative arrangements involving the various actors/organisations in ways that transcend the traditional limits separating the public and private domains. For this reason, they can be said to be in accordance with the *urban governance* approaches – by giving rise to new forms of citizenship, enhancing the capacity of the various actors, adopting diverse and flexible ways of organising the city's activities and fostering innovative negotiation and legitimisation dynamics (Le Galès, 1995). The *RUI* projects reflect a maximalist way of conceptualising the city's governance, wherein the local authorities (in this case the Montreal City Hall, commonly referred to as *Ville de Montreal*, or the City of Montreal) are an important, but not the sole, actor.

Governance[5] consists of a system of arrangements and modes of action that brings actors from the civil society into the process of designing public policies (Ascher, 2004). In the present case, urban governance consists of various ways of "living the city", involving the active participation, collaboration and partnerships between actors/organisations that transcend the traditional limits between the public and private domains and which constitute a first step towards a decentralised welfare state model.

The way in which the *RUI* projects are designed reflect an urban governance model in which the Montreal City Hall does not limit itself to the provision of services, infrastructure and facilities in bureaucratic fashion, but rather adopts, as Ascher (2004) puts it, a way of acting that is more strategic, more flexible and more aware of the surrounding environment. The emergence of the *RUI* pilot-experience has meant a deliberate blurring of the line between the public, private and social economy sectors, provided evidence as to the existence of an extended and inclusive vision of the city's government as well as of mechanisms of coordination and control; also constituted a call for the various actors to come forth and participate as well as an option for the complexification of the urban society based on local networks with a view to creating better living conditions.

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   [5]   According to Le Galès (2004), the notion of governance was originally introduced in the context of management and business administration sciences to refer to management forms and practices in the context of private organisations. Later on, the concept would evolve to refer to innovative forms of organising collective action, with a view to overcoming problems of lack of effectiveness and legitimacy in meeting new social needs (Simard and Chiasson, 2008). This idea, which is shared by Stoker (1995), had become very popular across the social sciences, such that, for example, Healey (1997) defines governance as the shift from bureaucratic decision-making to one based on a plurality of networks and partnerships bringing together actors through a variety of scales.

Second, the *RUI* projects generate knowledge concerning new practices within and among the various organisations – knowledge which can be learnt and transferred. According to Fontan *et al.* (2004), *social innovation* is the result of an unmet need, an aspiration or a social problem. It aims at improving the quality of life and arises as a response by the communities themselves to the inability of traditional institutions to attain that goal; it is therefore, *locally* built. In this context, the *RUI* projects are social innovation processes insofar as they constitute new local responses (often pre-emptive ones) to urban and social problems, which produce and regenerate the existing social fabric in various multidimensional ways and which are capable of bringing about social change as well as knowledge creation and transfer.

According to Harrisson and Klein (2007), the knowledge-based society challenges communities to increase their cognitive capital, i.e. to innovate. As a concept, innovation was initially almost solely associated with technology, but it has increasingly come to refer to organisational and social processes and dynamics as well (Fontan *et al.*, 2004; Hillier *et al.*, 2004; André and Abreu, 2006). This idea reaches its utmost expression whenever firms, government agencies, knowledge-producing institutions and civil society organisations come together as a system within which the value that is produced – both tangible and intangible – is widely shared.

An outcome of the search for solutions to unmet social needs (social exclusion, insufficient quality of life or poor levels of civic and democratic participation), the concept of social innovation only became disseminated in the 1990s; it does not necessarily imply a break vis-à-vis traditional institutions, but it is often brought about by the inability of the latter to ensure acceptable levels of quality of life (Fontan *et al.*, 2004). For this reason, André and Abreu (2006: 125) characterise social innovation as *any initiative that escapes or even contradicts the* status quo*, implying a new way of thinking or doing something, a qualitative social change, an alternative – or even a break with the past*. These authors also argue that social innovation will more often than not arise in association with critical thinking as well as innovative products, processes or services that aim at social inclusion and empowering the disadvantaged.

We may therefore conclude that social innovation has two central features (Harrisson and Klein, 2007): on the one hand, the fact that it implies changes in the relations between different actors, such that social problems are understood and addressed in new ways and such that new mechanisms arise that are capable of improving the quality of life; on the other hand, the fact that it implies a shift to more democratic modes of collective action, learning, governance and development, both within organisations and within territories.

In the sense put forth by Fontan *et al.* (2005), the strategies and responses adopted with a view to addressing social problems (especially in the context of city areas undergoing a worsening of exclusion and decay and where traditional models have failed or stagnated) are usually associated with the idea of socio-

territorial innovation, particularly whenever those solutions constitute new ways of improving social relations and the quality of life.

Third, because the *RUI* are largely driven by the *social economy*, that is to say, by cooperatives and associations (non-profit organisations), which play a central role in community development dynamics. These organisations constitute a remarkable phenomenon in the case of Montreal and incorporate both an economic dimension (through their participation in industrial production, construction, etc.) and a social one (through their activity in the health, education, social services, culture, arts and media domains) (Bouchard *et al.*, 2008). In Montreal, it is not at all uncommon to come across a firm whose main activity consists of producing furniture and whose mission consists of promoting the social inclusion of young people with problems in terms of labour market integration. In other words, in the case of Montreal, the pursuit of production and economic activity is very often associated with a variety of social aims and missions. Bouchard *et al.* (2008) account for this phenomenon as a consequence of the restructuring of the labour market, the economy and the State, which have created social *lacunae* that stimulated the development of the social economy: many services that used to be provided by public agencies gradually shifted, in new forms and with a new potential, to collective social entrepreneurs.

According to Bouchard (2006), social innovation often arises in the context of the social economy due to the fact that the latter constitutes an important vector of innovation and social change. In the case of Quebec, the social economy – as a concept and reality – became widely disseminated in the mid-1990s, but the origins of the concept date back from a much earlier period – namely, to the emergence of non-profit organisations, mutual associations and cooperatives in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.

In Quebec, most social economy organisations saw the light under the impulse of disadvantaged social groups that came together to put forth solutions to needs that were unmet (or incompletely met) by both the State and the market (Bouchard *et al.*, 2008). The social economy is therefore a crucial component of the development model of Quebec – the province of Canada where cooperatives and non-profit organisations are most numerous and one in which 70% of the population is affiliated to at least one cooperative (Bouchard *et al.*, 2008). According to the *Portrait Statistique de L'économie Sociale de la Région de Montréal* (Bouchard *et al.*, 2008), in the Montreal metropolitan area alone there are around 3,500 firms, establishments and organisations belonging to the third sector, which account for some 61,500 jobs mostly in the health and social services (29%) and housing (19%) domains.

Bouchard (2006: 127) argues that some of the most interesting features of the social economy, such as the fact of questioning the centrality of the market for economic development and that of the State for social development, *should be understood in the context of the emergence of new modes of regulation whereby civil society actors are brought to the very centre of the processes of allocating*

public resources and providing goods and services for the common interest. This democratising process takes place through new forms of mediation between public agencies, market forces and the civil society. The same author also highlights the fact that new institutional forms have sprung up in the context of Quebec' social economy – including *neighbourhood councils, community economic development corporations* (CDEC[6]) or *social economy development funds –,* which have contributed to new ways of regulating the market that are characterised by greater social concerns and to bringing the civil society closer to government in the context of the process of driving development.

Although the semantic richness of all of these concepts cannot possibly be fully captured in the following lines, it seems pertinent to conclude the following: the lack of effectiveness of public policies and the crisis undergone by the State in the last few decades have led to the emergence of a new perspective that regards the territory and local actors as crucial levers in the development process. Indeed, it is increasingly consensual that the ability of local actors to drive development depends on the degree of involvement and participation of a multiplicity of actors: public agencies, private firms, social economy organisations and the civil society.

III. CAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES REVERSE THE PROCESSES THAT BRING ABOUT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION?

1. Economic and political-administrative change in Montreal and its implications for urban development

City authorities bear responsibility for fulfilling a number of public functions to varying degrees; Montreal constitutes a clear case in which the city plays a structuring role in the economic and social life of the Quebec region.

Up until the 1970s, urban social cohesion rested on two main foundations: traditional solidarity systems (the family and the community) and the institutionalised State system. According to Castells (2005), the State has far from disappeared in the age of globalisation; rather, it has undergone a profound crisis in terms of effectiveness, legitimacy and representation that has brought about severe consequences, particularly for urban areas. In the case of Montreal, the federal government withdrew from financing social housing in the late 1980s, thus causing a severe shortage of low-cost housing (Laurence, 2007); throughout the 1990s, the supply of social housing in the inner-city districts kept decreasing, as it gave way to private condominiums (or *condos*). In their turn, industrial

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[6] CDEC is an acronym for *Corporation de Développement Économique Communautaire*. CDEC bring together representatives from various socio-economic sectors (firms, trade unions, associations, etc.) and their mission consists of improving the citizens' quality of life in areas undergoing revitalisation by supporting sustainable community economic development projects.

activities – which had traditionally provided the basis of Montreal's economic growth – delocalised *en masse* to areas with more advantageous land rent costs (Klein *et al.*, 2003; Klein and Fontan, 2004). This crisis (between 1976 and 1985 the unemployment rate shot upwards from 6.7% to 14.4%) had both economic and spatial consequences, insofar as unemployment and the delocalisation of businesses disproportionately affected the areas in and around the centre, where productive activities had traditionally been located (Klein and Fontan, 2004).

Such urban changes have an impact upon the patterns of city development: on the one hand, in the context of "world cities", the quest for global competitiveness leads to the concentration of wealth in certain locations; on the other hand, neglected and "forgotten" areas and neighbourhoods arise that concentrate the disadvantaged population – a process which Montreal was unable to prevent.

Due to the fact that public agencies found themselves unable to govern by themselves, they had to bring other actors on board and to decentralise their powers and competencies (Castells, 2005; Laurence, 2007); thus, in Montreal, the social economy took up responsibilities in a series of local projects in neighbourhoods in and around the city centre, which were characterised by interdependence, co-production and cooperation between private, public and para-statal actors and which played an essential role in meeting the demands of collective development (Queirós, 2010).

In 2002, the various independent municipalities within the island of Montreal were incorporated into the administrative structure of the *Ville de Montréal*, thus giving rise to a unified City of Montreal that covered the whole of the island (Fontan *et al.*, 2005). However, this political and administrative structure would not be long-lived. According to Frohn (2002), the fusion of the municipalities led to a clash of heterogeneous cultures, which in turn brought about additional changes to these structures. The government of Quebec thus undertook a process of further administrative restructuring of Montreal which lasted for about four years: in 2006, the 27 *arrondissements* (urban parishes) of the city were cut down to 19, some of which (15), especially those located in the Anglophone part of Montreal, returned to their former status as autonomous cities (Frohn, 2002); currently, the city of Montreal (i.e. the island of Montreal), as a political-administrative entity, is made up of an amalgam of different territories that do not always occupy contiguous spaces (fig. 1).

This complex structure has thus evolved through a number of stages and is currently made up of two main administrative structures[7]: i) the *Communauté Métropolitaine de Montréal* (Montreal Metropolitan Community), created in 2001; ii) and the *Ville de Montréal* (City of Montreal), which itself contains

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[7]   For more detailed information, go to:

http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5798,40613589&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL;
http://www.cmm.qc.ca/.

three levels of political decision-making: the *conseil municipal*, which is the main decision-making body for the whole of the city of Montreal; 19 *conseils d'arrondissement*, with varying membership characteristics but well-defined competencies, and the *conseil d'agglomération*, which is not above the municipal level but rather on a par with the former two instances. For the first time in the history of Montreal, the *conseils d'arrondissement* currently have their own budget and are able to intervene in the areas of urban planning, housing, leisure, culture, green spaces, transports and social and community development, in addition to bearing responsibility for intercultural relations in their respective territories. Having undertaken a series of territorial fusions, the city of Montreal is currently asking the federal and provincial levels of government for an expanded budgetary allocation in order to be able to face up to its increased responsibilities.

According to Bacqué (2005/4), the creation of the urban parishes (*arrondissements*) in the 2000s brought forth the need to implement new forms of managing the city that were based on proximity and controlled by local representatives. This has enabled the various local actors in each neighbourhood to play an enhanced role in the local governance structures and created an opportunity that the *RUI* project has swiftly seized.

Source: Le territoire de la Mairie de Montréal
(http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/prt_vdm_fr/media/documents/Cartejanvier2006_mairie.pdf)

Fig. 1 – The city of Montreal, its boroughs and the reconstituted cities, 2006.
Fig. 1 – Cidade de Montreal (Ville de Montréal) em 2006, suas freguesias urbanas (arrondissements) e cidades de subúrbio (banlieue) reconstituídas.

Integrated territorial approaches have found themselves a space, and been met with increasing recognition, within the context of the various strategies aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion, largely due to the acknowledgement of the capacity of the populations and local actors to drive their own development. This *modus operandi* is characterised by an *inclusive* logic and expands the social field of intervention to areas such as culture, leisure, sports, crime prevention, health, employment, etc., in such a way as to reinforce social cohesion and transform the relationships between the various actors. The territories and the local communities therefore constitute the arena where a new model has emerged – one which advances participatory or deliberative democracy and which undertakes the transfer of certain competencies in the social and economic domains from the State to other actors. The neighbourhood becomes an important *locus* of intervention through an integrated approach, whereby the synergies among and between the various actors contribute to fighting poverty.

The urban regeneration programme launched in Quebec in the 1990s by the Ministry for Municipal and Regional Affairs, which was designed to address the specific needs of old neighbourhoods, constituted a first attempt to adopt an integrated approach to improving the living conditions in certain urban areas; Laurence (2007) states that this programme has come to an end and that it is unknown whether it will be resumed in the future. However, according to the same author, the interventions undertaken in the context of this programme, which corresponded to the first generation of *contrats de ville*, were still largely characterised by a hierarchical and sectoral logic. The second generation appeared as of the Montreal summit in 2001 and, in 2003, three *RUI* pilot-projects were autonomously launched by the *Ville de Montréal*. By 2004, action plans had been designed for each of these pilot-projects by the "local revitalisation committees" (*CLR*). The make-up of these committees may vary (although it is to a certain extent constrained by the guidelines emanated from the City Hall) and it includes representatives from public agencies, community organisations, private firms, local residents and the parishes (*arrondissements*).

To sum up, the first integrated projects were launched in the 2000s and the first step consisted of a pact between the Montreal City Hall, the parishes (where particularly neglected neighbourhoods had been identified), the population and the community sector. As concerns their design, the *RUI* are based on an assessment of long-term poverty problems in specific areas of the city, the identification of opportunities for shared solutions (as a consequence of the local groups' enhanced ability to intervene) and the signing of a contract, involving a variety of partners, whereby the City of Montreal provides both leadership and funding in a context of decentralisation, autonomy of the parishes and vibrant social economy (Séguin and Divay, 2004; Laurence, 2007). The Integrated Urban Revitalisation projects do not achieve integration merely in sectoral and institutional terms. This twin integration is also achieved *in and through the territory*.

2. The *RUI* initiative: origins and characteristics of an intersectoral programme anchored in the territory

In 1997, the Montreal City Hall, the Montreal Public Health Department and the *Centraide* of Greater Montreal[8] launched a partnership programme called Local Sustainable Social Development Initiative. Sénécal *et al.* (2008) mention that this programme followed on from a prior (1990) initiative called *Vivre Montréal en Santé*, which emerged in the context of the healthy cities movement and through which the city authorities sought to identify those neighbourhoods that were most afflicted by poverty and social exclusion, and to financially support the activities of Local Partnership Committes[9], better known as "Neighbourhood Councils".

Insofar as the neighbourhood was regarded as the quintessential *locus* of interaction and proximity (Bacqué, 2005/4; Sénécal *et al.*, 2008), community organisations were challenged by the city authorities to establish partnership relations with institutionalised public counterparts with a view to creating intersectoral networks. Thus emerged the *Tables de Concertation* (Neighbourhood Councils), whose internal organisation may vary, but which all seek to meet local social needs, improve the image of their respective neighbourhoods and take part in the urban revitalisation of the city. Sénécal *et al.* (2008) argue that, by their very nature, Neighbourhood Councils facilitate the quest for cooperation and compromise as a solution to the tensions extant within the local associative fabric, as well as the establishment of contacts with a variety of social partners, whence can more easily arise appropriate solutions to the most serious problems of the various neighbourhoods.

Ever since that time, several studies (*cfr.* Sénécal *et al.*, 2008) have shown that, at the scale of the neighbourhood, these Councils act as *fora* that facilitate the convergence of a variety of different actors: community groups and organisations, independent partners and public actors agree on a shared vision for the territory and design and implement joint actions with a view to improving the local living conditions. In this approach, the "neighbourhood" is regarded as the main *locus* of social interaction and for the establishment of partnerships. In it, community and social networks play a crucial role in reinforcing the feelings of identity, belonging and proximity (Ascher, 2004).

Sénécal *et al.* (2008) additionally stress that the option for a territorially-based participatory-democratic model of bringing together the city's various actors has given rise to new networks that have produced and reproduced the city and led the actors involved in the Neighbourhood Councils to set priorities, to seek to improve local living conditions as regards the physical and social environment and to deepen their proximity relations.

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[8] *Ville de Montréal*, *Direction de la Santé Publique de Montréal* and *Centraide du Grand Montréal* (Sénécal, Cloutier and Herjean, 2008).

[9] *Tables Locales de Concertation* (Sénécal, Cloutier and Herjean, 2008).

Table I – An outline of the *RUI* projects.
Quadro I – Uma sinopse das RUI.

Parishes/ neighbourhoods	Weaknesses	
	Social features	**Physical features**
Bordeaux-Cartierville/ Quartier Laurentian	Highly multicultural, 57% are immigrants, high unemployment rate, 20% receive social benefits (compared to 12.5% in Montreal as a whole), 53% of the families have an income below the Montreal average (around 50,000$). Poor supply of local services and retail commerce.	Run-down built environment due to high levels of mobility of the local residents, who seek to abandon this territory as soon as they are able to improve their financial capacity. The area includes some green spaces and has an interesting location.
Sud-Ouest/ Opération Galt	50% of the population is under the age of 35; 20% of the families consist of single-parent households; 1/3 of the population is of Caribbean, African or Asian origin and came to the country relatively recently; low levels of family income; problems in terms of school, cultural and labour market integration.	The area is cut off from the rest of the city by several freeways.
Saint-Laurent/ Place Benoît	Lack of public transport. Insufficient proximity services and local commerce. Around 50 different ethno-cultural groups. Food insecurity. Difficulties in terms of labour market integration. Percentage of single-parent households: 31%.	Cut off from the rest of the city by a train line to the East and a freeway to the South. Mix of residential blocks and industrial facilities. Insalubrious living conditions, health problems, precarious access to healthcare. Insufficient proximity services and local commerce.
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve/ Mercier-Est	Average income below the Montreal average. 25% of the population below the poverty line. Aged population. Strong concentration of single-parent households (26%). High levels of prevalence of respiratory problems (128‰ compared to 93‰ in Montreal as a whole).	Numerous challenges in terms of land-use and urban planning: the area is close to, or crossed by, several freeways, the Montreal harbour, a train line and the Eastern Montreal industrial area.
Montréal-Nord	One of the most disadvantaged and run-down areas in the island of Montreal. Significant Haitian and Latin-American immigrant communities. Street gangs.	Close to the *Trois Rivières* river. Lack of community facilities and venues for socialising. Lack of green spaces and incidence of local heat islands. Poor physical landscape as a consequence of the occupation of public space by local residents and of the severe problems of insecurity associated with these immigrant communities.
Saint-Michel	Mostly francophone population, however 47% are foreign-born. Most local residents are tenants and spend a significant proportion of their income on rent. Low levels of income and schooling. Young, dynamic population with family-oriented values. However, low levels of participation in the social life of the neighbourhood.	Majority of rental situations. The neighbourhood is fragmented by the QC40 freeway. Environmental problems due to the existence of an active landfill up until recently.

Parishes/ neighbourhoods	Weaknesses	
	Social features	**Physical features**
Lachine/Saint-Pierre	Social isolation: lack of youth services and of support to families with children; single-parent households; low levels of schooling among parents and high levels of school drop-out among the children; malnutrition; insufficient access to healthcare as well as to social and community services; high levels of crime.	Located between a train line and a freeway.
Ville-Marie/ Sainte-Marie	Unemployment rate above the Montreal average (12.4% compared to 9.2%). Average income below that for the city as a whole. 15% of the population consists of immigrants (Vietnam, China and France).	Formerly the city's main industrial area (19th Century). Close to the city centre. Numerous vacant spaces.

Source: Borvil D A, Kishchuk N (2007); *Présentation des huit démarches de Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée*, 2009. (Journée de réflexion sur la *RUI*, "*La RUI, une stratégie efficace de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale*" Montréal, 18/09/2009) *www.cacis.umontreal.ca/pdf/Forum2009/programmesRUI.pdf*

In the specific case of the *RUI* initiative, those parishes whose territories included areas/neighbourhoods particularly afflicted by poverty and exclusion – as identified by the City of Montreal – were allowed to submit applications for *RUI* pilot-projects containing revitalisation proposals, which should abide to the general guidelines set for this purpose. However, the parishes enjoyed a very significant degree of autonomy in deciding the ways in which citizens and local groups came together to design their plans for action (Séguin e Divay, 2004).

Initially launched (2003) in three neglected/"sensitive" neighbourhoods of the island of Montreal (which contained abandoned urban spaces or which were cut off from the rest of the city by freeways), whose populations were particularly disadvantaged, the *RUI* projects sought to foster the emergence of local dynamics with a view to meeting and managing the problems and challenges of strategic local development. The programme was later expanded to include projects in neighbourhoods belonging to other urban parishes. There are currently eight underway (http://ville.montreal.qc.ca): *Lachine/Saint-Pierre, Sud-Ouest/Opération Galt, Ville-Marie/Sainte-Marie, Montréal-Nord, Saint Michel, Bordeaux-Cartierville/Quartier Laurentian, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve/Mercier-Est, Saint-Laurent/ Place Benoît.*

As shown in table I, these eight areas of the city of Montreal are especially afflicted by poverty, social exclusion and decay (of the physical as well as social environment). They exhibit a disproportionate concentration of people with low levels of income and schooling, poorly integrated immigrants, young families with community integration problems and single-parent households; these are also disadvantaged territories in terms of their landscape, environmental and urban planning characteristics, which additionally suffer from a poor supply of health, education and social services, local commerce, etc. The

health and safety situation of these populations is also cause for concern. The levels of isolation and crime are usually quite high; problems to do with mental health, alcohol abuse, drug addiction and prostitution are also commonplace; and the poor eating habits have led to problems of malnutrition and obesity in many families.

Divay *et al.* (2006)[10] argue that the main goals of the *RUI* interventions may be usefully grouped under three main headlines: population (crime prevention, health, community participation, co-habitation), urban environment (physical landscape, access to social services, economic dynamics) and processes (innovation, social inclusion and participation in social networks). Also according to these authors, the *RUI* approach exhibits the following features:

– It is based on a holistic and shared vision of the territory.
– It seeks to act in a large number of domains, depending on the characteristics and problems of the area.
– It brings together, adapts and coordinates public, private and community resources with a view to solving or mitigating the problems.
– It delegates a significant share of the responsibility for planning, designing and implementing the various interventions to the local population of the area and its representative institutions.
– It seeks to act upon the factors that bring about poverty and social exclusion according to the principles of sustainable development.
– It seeks to integrate the specific interventions that target the most disadvantaged areas within the broader framework of the city's development.
– It adopts a long-term perspective.

3. Mobilisation strategies and management model

For the most part, the revitalisation approach embodied in the *RUI* projects currently underway is characterised by an operational and organisational architecture that seeks to enhance collaboration, negotiation and the establishment of partnerships between the public, private and third sectors. The various ongoing activities are based on integrated project management models, whereby the local committees/groups that bring together a variety of stakeholders and steer the *RUI* projects seek to identify the problems, set the priorities, design the interventions, raise funds (in addition to those made available by the Montreal City Hall) and implement the actual actions and measures (Sénécal *et al.*, n.d.). All of this gives rise to such intangible benefits as the strengthening of local networks (increasing the density of the local institutional fabric and the intensity of local interactions) or the establishment of lasting partnerships between the various

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[10] This study, undertaken by Divay *et al.* (2006) at INRS following a request from the City Hall, sought to evaluate the outcomes of the *RUI* pilot-initiatives.

actors, in addition to results of a more "objective" character like the reversal of the area's image and the improvement of the quality of life.

By seeking to advance social cohesion, to empower the local communities and to improve the quality of the urban environment in the city of Montreal, the *RUI* projects have stimulated forms of deliberative democracy that have sought to retain and attract (new) residents and activities, through joint, collective actions anchored in the territory. We shall return to this issue further on in this text.

The various *RUI* projects started out by undertaking a variety of activities aimed at ensuring the involvement of the various partners and especially of the local population (surveys, public meetings, newsletters published in various languages, workshops, street markets, community fairs, etc.), eventually leading to projects that differ from those typical of traditional spatial planning in that they involve a much wider array of actors whose common feature is the fact of being strongly embedded in the local milieu. The decisions made within the context of the *RUI* projects reflect a vision that is shared by these actors and a model that has been designed and implemented by them. They also reflect a "living", ongoing process that is embodied in a "plan for action" after the priorities have been set. Table II summarises the main goals and planned activities as laid out in each of these plans, many of which are currently being pursued.

Even though each neighbourhood has its own "identity", they are all confronted with largely similar challenges and share the same ultimate goal: development. As a *work in progress* (which has in itself constituted one of the greatest challenges), the *RUI* projects require stability, long-term commitment, the mobilisation of financial resources, the ability to innovate and the constant mobilisation of the civil society.

As regards the organisational structure of the *RUI* projects, and in order to ensure the stability of the process, the Neighbourhood Councils were invited to take part in the designing of the strategies either as coordinating bodies or as members of the revitalisation committees. And indeed, the active role played by these highly experienced and competent Councils in the *RUI* projects has proven essential to their implementation and continuity, and contributed significantly to the development of new social competences and skills (Divay *et al.*, 2006).

Also with regard to the involvement of community associations in the *RUI* projects, Sénécal *et al.* (2008) have stressed the Neighbourhood Councils' active role and mobilisation capacity in the context of the implementation of the *RUI* initiative, which have facilitated the process of negotiation between the various actors and the search for solutions aimed at improving the quality of life of the local populations; however, the insufficiencies of these Councils have been much more apparent when it comes to providing the actual means to pursue the goals of the pilot-projects. These authors conclude that, in the case of the older areas of the city located in and around the city centre, partnerships and negotiations have largely taken place within the context of networks that were already in place, having been previously set up by community organisations such as the

Table II – Selected *RUI* Projects.
Quadro II – Apuramento dos projectos por RUI.

Parishes where the projects are currently underway	Synthesis of the main activities/projects	Goals
Bordeaux-Cartierville/ Quartier Laurentian Goal (adapted): To build a neighbourhood to our image. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2007).	*United Urban Greens*: planting of trees and promotion of urban vegetable gardens.	To address the local heat islands and the lack of green spaces.
	Project "*To a park near you*": winter party, community market and outdoor cinema.	To facilitate intercultural and intergenerational contacts and communication.
	Discussion-cafés, monthly meetings of citizen's committees.	To mobilise the local citizens.
	Subsidising services and activities in the sports, leisure and cultural domains.	To draw in services and increase the supply of leisure activities.
	Communication and media plan: internet site, brochure, raising the awareness of the local residents with regard to their rights and responsibilities, etc.	To increase awareness of the importance of improving the area's image.
Sud-Ouest/Opération Galt Goal (adapted): To improve the quality of life of the local residents. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2003).	Building and managing a community centre that includes an External Playground Module for children.	To provide the local residents with a venue for socialisation, interaction and information (block parties, etc.)
	Community garden, community markets, creation of a series of pedagogical tools in the areas of food and nutrition.	To improve the quality of the local life and nutrition.
	Project aimed at improving the local levels of employability.	To provide the local residents with enhanced skills in order to meet the labour demands of the firms located in the area.
Saint-Laurent/Place Benoît Goal (adapted). To meet the residents' basic needs. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2008).	Housing cooperative.	To buy and/or renovate houses and make them available to the local population at affordable prices.
	Urban agriculture: planting of fruit trees, creation of a community vegetable garden, project aimed at promoting the growing of vegetables.	To ensure access to adequate nutrition.
	Seasonal community markets.	To stimulate the local economy and foster citizen participation.
	Study on the viability of a locally-based social economy entreprise in the field of agricultural production.	To increase the local job supply.
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve/ Mercier-Est Goal (adapted): To stimulate the neighbourhood's potential. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2006)	Improvement of the external areas of the playground of local school.	To promote a space for residents and students to meet and interact.
	Adoption of a Plan called "*A green, healthy and active neighbourhood*" aimed at promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport.	To improve the quality of urban planning and land-use in the neighbourhood and to foster "active transport" initiatives.
	Creation of a local retailers' association.	To stimulate the local economy.
	Project aimed at raising awareness of the local heritage.	To produce a guidebook on the local heritage and put up information and interpretation signs.
	Improvement of the local facades using plants and flowers, as well as composting initiatives.	To take steps towards local sustainability,

Parishes where the projects are currently underway	Synthesis of the main activities/projects	Goals
Montréal-Nord Goal (adapted): To help the local families achieve their life projects. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2003)	"*A roadmap for everyone – acting from a social development perspective*".	To raise the local residents' awareness of civic and family values, the exercise of citizenship and their own power to act.
	Providing support to young families. Helping single mothers to integrate in the labour market ("*My place in the sun*").	To support the socio-professional integration of young parents, the development of family competences and skills, and the overall development of children.
	Creation of a Cultural and Community Centre.	To provide the neighbourhood with a library and a centre for popular activities and culture.
Saint-Michel Goal (adapted): A neighbourhood for family living and intercultural exchange. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2005)	Employment: through two local employment providers.	To create local jobs and support the labour-market integration of young people.
	Housing: programme aimed at facilitating access to low-cost housing.	To provide assistance and support to families in the process of buying a home.
	Urban Safety and Security Plan.	To improve safety and security in the neighbourhood (the right to citizenship).
	Nomadic art (a *Cirque du Soleil* initiative).	To introduce children to culture and the arts.
Lachine/Saint-Pierre Goal (adapted): To improve the quality of life and empower the local residents. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2003)	Projects aimed at strengthening local retail and tackling the problem of local heat islands.	To stimulate the local population to go out onto the street.
	"*Food encounter*" project in association with a social economy organisation with the aim of providing ready-made and frozen meals.	To provide fresh vegetables and fruits in association with food assistance services and community kitchens.
	House of Youth.	To integrate young people.
	Collective and community garden.	To integrate the elderly.
Ville-Marie/Sainte-Marie Goal (adapted): From industry to sustainable development. (start of the revitalisation/ intervention plan: 2003)	Centre for Cultural Industries: the *Faubougs* Park.	To promote the creation of an area concentrating cultural industries.
	Swimming pool, American football fields, etc. An environmentally-friendly and healthy neighbourhood with a zero carbon footprint.	To design an urban plan for the neighbourhood and improve both infrastructure and the local environment – create an alternative to the city centre.
	Development of the *Frontenac* business area.	To stimulate the revitalisation of a commercial high street and launch a local employment programme.

Source: *Présentation des huit démarches de Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée*, 2009. (Journée de réflexion sur la *RUI*, "*La RUI, une stratégie efficace de lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale*" Montréal, 18/09/2009) *www.cacis.umontreal.ca/pdf/Forum2009/programmesRUI.pdf*

CDECs, which again bears testimony to the usefulness of the local associative fabric for the implementation of the *RUI* projects.

The *RUI* projects have benefited from the involvement of social economy enterprises in many other ways. Much of their success is due to the fact that CDECs and other community organisations are present in the Neighbourhood

Councils and play a varying but always fundamental role in the management of the *RUI* initiatives. In fact, according to the model put forth in the *Guidebook* published by the *Ville de Montreal* (2003, cit. in Divay *et al.*, 2006), the organisational structure supporting the implementation of the *RUI* projects, while characterised by a certain degree of local autonomy in its precise definition, should include three coordination sub-structures, respectively called the Local Revitalisation Committee (the main decision-making body in the case of each *RUI* project, known as CLR), the Coordination Committee (which handles the administrative tasks) and the Thematic Work Committees (specific workgroups aimed at setting the goals and designing the interventions). The make-up of the local revitalisation committees includes the project director, political and administrative representatives from the neighbourhood, local organisations (including economic, socio-cultural and environmental organisations), representatives of the Montreal city authorities, representatives of para-statal organisations and citizen representatives. Often, entities enjoying special local recognition and prestige have been invited to chair the CLRs.

The case of the submission of an application for a *RUI* project by the Bordeaux-Cartierville district in 2005 provides a good example. Due to its social characteristics and those of the built environment, this area had long been regarded as being in special need of revitalisation. In order to facilitate the mobilisation of all the actors and the consolidation of network partnerships, the Ahuntsic-Cartierville parish mandated the Bordeaux-Cartierville Neighbourhood Council (CLIC) to steer the *RUI* project, which it started doing in 2006. Coordination and partnership, which are two of the cornerstones of the *RUI* projects, translated in this case into the existence of a decision-making instance working in close cooperation with the Neighbourhood Council – the Local Revitalisation Committee – which has played a very important role in designing, implementing and monitoring the project. This particular committee is currently made up of representatives from 52 public, private, community, political and citizen organisations and entities (CLIC, 2007).

In 2009, a Seminar was held with the aim of undertaking a joint reflection on the eight *RUI* projects currently underway. In this public meeting, the various institutional partners presented their views and eight workshops were held in which the actors involved in the *RUI* projects exchanged and discussed their experiences and sought to put forth interim overall assessments. The themes of these eight workshops (*Mercier-Est*, citizen participation: innovative approaches; *Saint-Pierre*, winning partnerships: the importance of mobilising the city authorities; *Bordeaux-Cartierville*, networks and the intersectoral mobilisation of partners; *Montréal-Nord*, investment as a lever to develop the community; Saint-Michel, fundholders: the drivers of the partnerships; *Place Benoît*, the challenges of implementing the *RUI* plans; *Sainte-Marie*, the mobilisation and participation of the private sector and employment; *Galt*, the role of *RUI* mobilisation in the context of large-scale urban planning initiatives) render quite clear what the key ideas and actors are in each *RUI* project.

4. Interim overall assessments of the *RUI* projects

The following remarks constitute a synthesis of the conclusions contained in the available documents that have sought to assess the various *RUI* projects: Séguin and Divay (2004); Fontan *et al.* (2004); Divay *et al.* (2006); Laurence (2007); Sénécal *et al.* (2008); Klein (2009); Sénécal *et al.* (s.d.); *Synthèse et Constats de l'activité de bilan des huit démarches* (2009), within the context of the 2009 interim seminar on the *RUI* projects and its various workshops; brochures published by the management structures of the various *RUI* projects; and several personal interviews.

The assessment exercise undertaken by the actors and representatives of the *RUI* projects (*Activité de bilan des huit démarches de revitalisation urbaine intégrée du 18 septembre 2009 – Constats tirés des ateliers*) has highlighted the strengths and challenges that are summarised in table III.

Table III – Strengths and challenges of the *RUI* intervention.
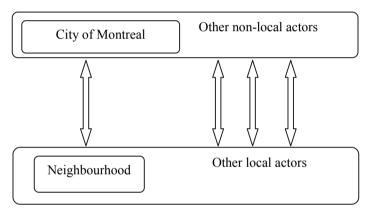*Quadro III – Forças das* RUI *e desafios para as intervenções privilegiadas.*

Strengths	Challenges
The projects have enabled the development of a shared vision that significantly facilitates the implementation of the action plans.	To promote the adoption of an intersectoral approach at all levels and in all circumstances.
They have provided the citizens with a very important venue for expressing their needs and communicating their activities.	To continue to promote and ensure the involvement of the citizens at all the stages of the projects.
They have reinforced the legitimacy and credibility of the local milieu vis-à-vis the external partners.	To adopt a flexible and adapted financial plan that is driven towards, and supported by, the achievements of the local action plans.
They have experimented with ingenious financial models as well as interesting combinations of different approaches.	
They have provided an opportunity for simultaneously tackling the causes and consequences of poverty and social exclusion.	To stress the importance of the local milieu as a fundamental *locus* for expressing needs and taking action.
They have made it possible to optimise the efforts of the various participants.	To move from competition to cooperation as regards the relationships between the various actors.
They have brought together the social and economic dimensions of local development, which are often regarded as being in opposition to each other.	

Source: Adapted from *Synthèse et constats de l'activité de bilan des huit démarches de revitalisation urbaine intégrée du 18 septembre 2009*

These early assessments of the *RUI* processes have concluded that, so far, these have seemingly been characterised by some undesirable tensions (particularly between the representatives of the *Ville de Montréal* and their counterparts from

the local coordinating bodies), not only with regard to the overall vision for the territory, but also as concerns some of the specific sectoral activities included in the projects. Ensuring an adequate articulation between the City of Montreal and the local bodies has proven especially difficult due to the fact that the local and city-level goals and time-frames are sometimes inconsistent. However, one should not overstress this aspect: after all, processes such as these require substantial collective learning and involve actors used to different practices and procedures, thus inevitably requiring tense and lengthy procedures and negotiations.

The implementation of the *RUI* projects (insofar as they contain a learning dimension) has led to changes in the relationships and leadership characteristics of the existing partnerships between the local associations and the city authorities. To a certain extent, a multi-level governance system under the leadership of the City of Montreal has been complemented by a more bottom-up, community-based coordination experience (fig. 2).

Source: adapted from Divay *et al.* 2006: 217.

Fig. 2 – The *RUI* model: relations between stakeholders.
Fig. 2 – As articulações do modelo integrado de gestão das RUI.

On the other hand, the selection and implementation of the projects – whether as regards the built environment, social mixing or the development of proximity services – have taken place without any major difficulties. For example, many *RUI* projects contain a number of environmentally-friendly guidelines and strategic initiatives (such as the *eco-quartiers*) that have enjoyed a high degree of consensus and participation. These have included such goals and actions as increasing the adoption of composting; the construction and upgrading of green spaces, collective gardens and urban vegetable gardens; street decoration and embellishment initiatives; neighbourhood markets; or the creation of food cooperatives (fruits and vegetables) and the holding of cooking workshops. All of these have sought to improve both the local physical environment and the eating habits of the local residents. Other fairly consensual activities have included

those in the crime prevention, safety and security domains – such as projects to curb drug-trafficking and prostitution (like the *Cyclope* project, involving citizens' patrols on foot and on bicycles), or to tackle vandalism and graffitti.

Other activities that have been met with considerable success include those aimed at matching the supply and demand for industrial employment in the vicinity of the neighbourhoods, particularly through targeted training initiatives. Others still have concerned young people and family life, e.g. through the creation of young people's cooperatives, workshops for children, outdoor screenings of movies, or projects, like "Mothers on the move", that promote the socio-professional integration of immigrant women, etc.

With regard to the issue of intersectoral coordination and collaboration, over and above the relational ambiguities between the aforementioned Thematic Work Committees and the CLR, the processes have often been characterised by clashes of organisational cultures. These have on occasions involved a significant level of conflict and the process of reaching a compromise has therefore often been quite cumbersome. While it has usually been relatively easy to agree on a shared vision, agreement when it comes to setting the priorities has been significantly harder to reach, given that each participating institution tends to seek to impose its own agenda at this stage. The questions that these problems raise have to do with the broader issue of governance in the specific context of intersectoral projects, which are still very much in their youth in political and administrative terms and which require deeper and more democratic practices that enhance the "voice" of the population (a "voice" that in some cases is hardly able to make itself heard in the beginning of the processes, but which in the *RUI* framework is regarded as a crucial resource).

According to Klein (2009), the *RUI* projects have great potential to address the problem of the negative image of poor neighbourhoods insofar as they empower the local population and associations to exercise their citizenship rights and to become actors in the context of their own development processes: *Face au processus de dévitalisation, l'action communautaire et l'économie sociale donnent aux collectivités locales des outils importants: connaissance des besoins, savoir-faire, leadership, réseaux, financement dans certains cas, etc. Ces outils sont autant de ressources qu'il faut cependant arrimer avec celles de l'État (aux trois niveaux), dans une dynamique partenariale ouverte et souple, où les actions publiques ont la capacité de s'adapter aux stratégies locales* (Klein, 2009: 1). On the other hand, this kind of model requires that sufficient financial resources are made available to fund the projects of those in the neighbourhoods who have committed themselves, which is why the central public administration should ensure a steady support to those programmes that hold the integrated initiatives of local communities and associations (Fontan *et al.*, 2004).

By adopting a hybrid model that seeks to articulate and integrate various partners with a view to promoting development, the *RUI* projects have been able to promote important debates concerning development choices, and to coordinate a variety of social and economic actors with contrasting characteristics: small

enterprises, social economy actors, non-governmental organisations and local authorities. Although the participation of local citizens plays a fundamental role in the design and implementation of projects that seek to tackle social exclusion, there are also limits to it – among other things, due to the fact that the collectively-organised interests in each community are often a part of wider movements and networks whose scale transcends that of the projects themselves. For this reason, the fight for new achievements and successes in the social policy arena cannot dispense either with the intervention of the State nor with action at the local level.

We are now in a position to outline an overall assessment of the *RUI* projects. These have clearly promoted and given rise to local projects that have a truly collective character. They have constituted experiments in the local governance domain, which have fostered the emergence and consolidation of social networks and social capital. They have contributed to the existing theoretical knowledge on deliberative democracy by introducing a series of procedures and mechanisms that bring about enhanced participation and new forms of local coordination and interaction.

From the point of view of social innovation, it seems pertinent to conclude that the *RUI* initiative has indeed had an innovative character: the strategies and procedures adopted by the various Neighbourhood Councils in seeking to meet different challenges have yielded outcomes and given rise to products and services that have improved urban safety, public spaces and public services – in sum, the quality of life. The responses to the challenges have indeed been designed and implemented at the local level, regardless of the criticisms that have been made of some of the pilot-projects (Divay *et al.*, 2006; Laurence, 2007; Sénécal *et al.*, n.d.). In this context, it is worth highlighting the attention that the *RUI* projects have afforded to those actions that have sought to integrate the areas undergoing intervention with those surrounding them: this has been a crucial component of the *RUI* intervention, given the severe problems of lack of urban and social integration that afflict the selected neighbourhoods. The communities have sought to design and implement projects that take into account the wider dynamics of the city, whether by seeking to improve abandoned and run-down spaces or by promoting social integration: after all, improving the image and attractiveness of these neighbourhoods is a pre-condition for the emergence of positive economic, social and environmental dynamics that will enhance their integration in the wider fabric of the city, while the city itself gains in terms of both cohesion and competitiveness.

Divay *et al.* (2006) additionally argue that the *RUI* projects have above all promoted physical (urban) regeneration, the improvement of the economic vitality of the neighbourhoods and the empowerment of the population; they regard the *RUI* initiative as an effective instrument that has enhanced the ability of deprived populations and local associations to take their development processes into their own hands, thus giving rise to what Bouchard (2006) has referred to as *spill-over effects* in terms of social interaction.

Finally, the *RUI* projects currently underway are also characterised by the existence of knowledge-sharing mechanisms that encourage the transfer of practices between the various people and organisations involved. The interim seminar that took place in September 2009[11] with a view to promoting joint reflection and the sharing of experiences provided a good example of this: the actors were able to confirm that the success of the *RUI* projects has depended to a large extent on the existence of self-organised knowledge-sharing mechanisms and relational networks.

IV.   LESSONS FROM THE *RUI* INITIATIVE FOR URBAN
      REVITALISATION POLICY

As designed from the outset, the *RUI* initiative is led and financed by the City of Montreal, which in turn transfers responsibility for finding appropriate solutions to the various local problems to the urban parishes and neighbourhood councils. This model presupposes a general philosophy that places greater emphasis on the *process* dimension and on *long-term* goals across the various dimensions of urban life (Séguin and Divay, 2004). The improvement of run-down, socially-excluded neighbourhoods requires changes in their social mix, physical landscape, economic activity, relational patterns, etc., but above all the *RUI* initiative seeks to ensure the continuous capacity-building of the local community and local organisations. Yet another of its central features is the idea that regeneration has a *relative* character, given that it is about improving the conditions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods compared to the rest of the city and tackling disparities in terms of social composition, quality of the built environment, the vitality of local commerce, etc.

Séguin and Divay (2004) argue that the *RUI* "philosophy" is based on the concept of an integrated approach to collective action that has the following four characteristics (4M): multisectoral (given that the activities and goals pertain to the social, economic, political, environmental and physical domains); multi-level (for funding and accountability purposes, local participants interact with actors across various levels of government), multi-scalar (insofar as the impact of the interventions is often not confined to a specific, limited area – for example, improvements in terms of public transport facilitate access to the area by everyone); and multi-partnership (the partners hail from different sectors). These authors also argue that the *RUI* model embodies a shift from a welfare state model in which individual *citizens* are the basic unit or criterion in designing interventions to one in which the *territories* themselves play a much greater role as beneficiaries and actors of those interventions in fluid, hybrid ways.

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[11] *Journée de Réflexion sur la Revitalisation Urbaine Intégrée*, Montréal (September 18th, 2009).

As a local development strategy, one may draw a number of lessons from the *RUI* experience that can perhaps be usefully transferred and adapted to other contexts. Some of the most relevant of these lessons concern the importance of a consistent, long-term commitment to coordinating, mediating and building up trust between the various actors; the potential of multi-sector, multi-partnership interventions; and the issue of multi-scalar governance. However, there are at least two crucial elements in the *RUI* experience that are particularly difficult to transfer and replicate and which should not be ignored.

First of all, Quebec has a unique history in terms of community-based initiatives. It is hard to find so many cases of successful social partnerships and instances of social innovation in any other part of the world. As a consequence, there was already a sufficient level of readiness/maturity and the capacity in place to be able to design and implement a planning process that is characterised a very high degree of participatory democracy.

The role and characteristics of the *Corporations de Développement Économique Communautaire*, better known as CDECs, illustrate the specificity of Quebec and the difficulties involved in seeking to replicate this initiative elsewhere. These organisations have long undertaken an intense activity in the social economy and economic development domains, which has been firmly anchored in local initiatives in partnership with a variety of other local and community actors. In the context of the *RUI* initiative, the CDECs have played a very important and often leading role in the Neighbourhood Councils, which reflects a very substantial accumulated experience in terms of coordinating the actions of the public sector, private firms, third sector and civil society. For this reason, probably the greatest difficulty of all when it comes to replicating this experience elsewhere concerns the impossibility of adopting it and adapting it to more rigid societies in which the public authorities confer very little "voice" to the civil society and its organisations, and in which there is little tradition and experience of active civic participation.

Second, the city of Montreal is also quite idiosyncratic as regards its history of multiple territorial fusions and the fragmented territory that emerged as a result; this has meant that the *RUI* initiative found itself a "fertile ground" to bear fruits in terms of seeking to overcome problems of social fragmentation that were partly a consequence of the administrative fragmentation of the city. This political-administrative context is very much unique.

This notwithstanding, it is possible to draw several important lessons, whose transferability is a consequence of the near-universal character of many of the goals of this initiative: to prevent poor people from continuing to suffer from cumulative disadvantage; to reverse problems and processes of social exclusion; to turn the city's inhabitants into full-fledged, legitimised citizens. Within the context of the theory and practice of urban planning, the Integrated Urban Revitalisation model poses new challenges and raises new issues for democratic urban planning in a world where cities face increasing demands in terms of competitiveness.

The *RUI* initiative demonstrates that public action to address or mitigate the problems associated with poverty should include the adoption of more decentralised models, given that the operational effectiveness associated with decentralisation makes it possible to combine local actions that are better able to mobilise local knowledge as a resources, more keenly aware of the local specificities and more effective with the activities of the central State/administration (when it comes to ensuring the universality of policies in the fields of education, health, employment, social security, etc.). This means that, in the case of urban areas especially afflicted by poverty and social exclusion, it is particularly important that the actual policies, initiatives and ways of integrating/including the local actors be adapted to the local context.

Additionally, one may also conclude that pro-active and forward-looking interventions such as those endorsed by the *RUI* initiative seem much more promising and effective than reactive, short-sighted ones. It *is* effective to provide local actors with a "voice" in local planning, especially in the case of urban areas afflicted by poverty. In other words, to bring the local community to the centre of the process of identifying the problems, setting the priorities and designing the solutions, instead of presenting them with a plan for action prepared in advance by the regional or national authorities as a top-down *fait accompli*. The *temporal* dimension plays an important role in this context, given that the aim is both to implement effective responses to problems that are already present *and* to reverse the processes that lead to cumulative poverty and social exclusion – the idea of a better future is consistently present across the projects currently underway. It is also very important that the level of commitment and participation of the local actors does not wane and that they remain involved, possibly as pro-active "animators" of the various projects. The experiences currently underway suggest that mediation and prevention are particularly effective strategies in this context.

The level of willingness to participate and become involved on the part of the community is largely a function of the activities of the local "animators" – those who are able to effectively mobilise the average member of the community, not least because "they speak the same language", i.e. their legitimacy is widely recognised. These activities depend on the leadership of the processes; they are a *work in progress*, which require continuous negotiation, stable agreements and the constant building up of trust – which often lays at the basis for mobilisation itself. Leadership, trust and long-term commitment are attainable constructs in the context of most democratic networks and societies. Montreal's local associations and community economic development corporations are significantly more advanced than those of most other cities as regards the establishment of relationships of trust. However, any such process of collective coordination must have a beginning – which is usually triggered by broader economic determinants, but which needs to be promoted and facilitated by its leaders. The crisis that has been sweeping the world economy and affecting the cities' competitiveness in recent times only increase the need for such

actors, as well as for measures aimed at preventing the further fragmentation of the social fabric.

Another very interesting aspect that can be considered highly transferrable is that of the option for the local territory of the neighbourhood, and its associated identity, as the basis for the interventions. The target-territories have consisted of areas characterised by their poor levels of social and territorial integration – not least due to the significant presence of immigrant communities in the city of Montreal –, in which the strategy of promoting the "assimilation" of the neighbourhood by strengthening the linkages between the space/territory and the population has great potential; identity constitutes a crucial arena in the process of upgrading the territory. Mobilisation strategies that valorise and promote that which is "local" – such as collective gardens, street markets, bicycle rides, popular festivals, discussion forums or public art initiatives – contribute to consolidating the collective memory and identity of the places, as well as to the "appropriation" and success of the projects.

Moving from working in isolation to adopting a truly intersectoral approach is a challenge for any planning process that aims at sustainable development. The process of coordinated collective action requires changes in organisational culture, collective learning, conflict management and adequate funding. These are key elements for social development as well as for participatory democratic governance. Multi-level governance is currently the main challenge in what regards cooperation and coordination between and among public and private actors; in the case of Montreal – which has recently been subject to processes of political-administrative recomposition –, it raises a number of issues to do with the importance of strengthening the competencies and resources of the local urban territories.

In the fight against concentrated poverty, the emergence and consolidation of partnerships (or winning alliances) depends on the creation of mutual bonds and on mutual trust; in turn, these emerge as a result of the joint involvement in relatively consensual projects with mobilising capacity. The process of agreeing on a common vision for the territory and designing the projects to make it come true suggests that, at the neighbourhood scale, project-based planning is often an appropriate strategy. Integrated urban revitalisation includes animation, reflection, planning, decision-making and evaluation, all of which take place at the local level. The *RUI* initiatives are a lever, a way of thinking and acting in the context of a project based on collective mobilisation. The project itself is the driving force, the *raison d'être* of the mobilisation process, whereas leadership constitutes its engine. These are projects that truly "make the city", by mobilising partnerships and networks that are essential for participatory democratic governance.

The future of the *RUI* initiative also raises some specific challenges which should be clearly identified and monitored: the various residents and organisations have different abilities to make themselves heard, as well as different levels of command over cultural and political resources. There is no such thing

as *a single* vision, or voice, of the community. However, the mobilisation of the local network communities by seeking to bring on board a broad array of civil society actors (representatives from public institutions, associations, community groups, local firms, citizens, etc.) is precisely one of the strengths of the *RUI* initiative.

The creation and functioning of working groups, whether in the context of the CLR or in accordance with other organisational models, has great transformative potential to improve the quality of life and the relational capabilities of the population. Are all the *RUI* projects socially innovative? Some may not be so – certainly not at all times –, but in a wide range of these cases the answer to this question is "yes". More rigid societies still have a long way to go in terms of collective learning and of the accumulation of experience in terms of having the civil society assume a leadership role. Once those conditions are met, however, integrated projects such as these may well become standard practice.

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