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Comparing Cosmopolitan Discourses Across Sexual Landscapes: Montreal's Gay Village and Mile End District

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A Thesis
In the Department of
Geography, Planning & Environment

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ABSTRACT

**Comparing Cosmopolitan Discourses Across Sexual Landscapes:
Montreal's Gay Village and Mile End District**

Daniel Moreno Pina

Gay spaces have long been a part in the urban landscape of major metropolitan areas in advanced capitalist societies. These urban forms were largely produced in the 1970s and 1980s as safe spaces where LGBTQ individuals could go to escape societal homophobia. In the following decades, these neighbourhoods underwent major urban restructuring associated with broader neoliberal processes of city remaking. In the beginning of the 2000s, a new wave of studies began correlating the neoliberal urban restructuring of gaybourhoods to the production of cosmopolitan spaces. The cosmopolitan discourse has been a driving force in the remaking of major metropolitan areas that wish to attract capital and compete in a global market formed by creative and diversified cities. According to contemporary literature on creative cities, gay neighbourhoods are an essential component in any global city, as they represent diversity and progressiveness. Alongside traditional gay neighbourhoods, new patterns of intra-urban migration among LGBTQ individuals led to the formation of neighbourhoods where sexual identities are not the main marker of the space but queer individuals are welcomed and an active part of the neighbourhood's life. Queer-friendly neighbourhoods are now a reality in the landscapes of major metropolitan areas. In the case of Montreal, the city's queer-friendly neighbourhood (Mile End) is also home to a creative, young and middle-class population, marking it also as a cosmopolitan space. This research interrogates and compares what kind of cosmopolitan discourses residents of both the gay Village and the Mile End are enacting, producing and performing. The findings of this research indicate that cosmopolitanism is indeed being performed and actively (re)shaping both neighbourhoods. To what extent and what kind of cosmopolitan discourse is employed differs from one space to another and is directly liked to other social and spatial process such as gentrification, safety and urban sexual identities.

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INTRODUCTION

The city of Montreal has long been proud of and actively marketing one of its most iconic neighbourhoods: the gay Village. A neighbourhood formed by and for LGBTQ individuals, it is now an important space in the city's multicultural landscape. Montreal's gay village is usually portrayed and praised by the media and public power as having an exuberant nightlife, home to a great variety of restaurants, cultural activities, bars and clubs (Hunt and Zacharias, 2008; Ray, 2004). A couple kilometers north of the gay Village lays a different yet similar neighbourhood: the Mile End. This neighbourhood has been historically associated with different waves of immigration, from Eastern European Jewish, to Portuguese, as well as Greeks and to a lesser extent Chinese (Rantisi & Leslie, 2010; Rose, 1995). More recently, like the Village, this neighbourhood has become home to queer-identified individuals, and is increasingly seen as a queer-friendly neighbourhood (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009). In the last few years, queer[1] individuals have established residency in the neighbourhood and started to change the social landscape by opening and operating queer social and commercial spaces, transforming a neighbourhood that has been historically associated with immigrants and working class populations (Bélisle, 2011).

These two neighbourhoods, although profoundly different both historically and at present are, however, undergoing cultural and spatial changes that are

[1] The word queer is a contested term within social sciences. In this research, I employ the term as proposed by Cohen (1997) and Oswin (2008) as an analytical category that challenges the institution of heteronormativity. In that sense, queer can be employed as an identity in opposition to other non-heterosexual identities such as gay, lesbian and/or bisexual

associated with broader urban processes (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009; Nash, 2013b; Rushbrook, 2002). Once seen as spaces for constructing identities and as safe sites from societal homophobia, the neighbourhoods known as gay Villages (or gayborhoods) across North America and Western Europe have increasingly become sites of consumption (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002). Most analyses of these cultural and political spatialities were largely produced within geography at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. If, on the one hand, this literature has insightfully described a change in the political orientation in parts of the LGBTQ movement (Duggan, 2002; Puar, 2006; Richardson, 2005) followed by a critique the homonormatization of gay spaces (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002); on the other, it has overlooked the symbolical aspects of what such spaces might have represented to less privileged or marginalized populations (Lewis, 2013; Nash, 2013a).

In recent years, a new wave of studies has emerged focusing on the changing residential patterns amongst LGBTQ individuals in major metropolitan areas. In the early 2000s, scholars argued that Western societies were entering what was called a post-gay era (Brown, 2005), where non-heterosexual individuals would have access to all areas of modern life and where homophobia would no longer be structural (Ghaziani, 2011, 2014). A critique of such a premise soon followed, arguing that such a statement overlooked the struggles of other minorities within the LGBTQ acronym (especially women, people of colour and trans individuals). Moreover, scholars have cautioned that the idea might represent the embodiment of social privileges (Nash,

2013a). Ongoing research into LGBTQ identities and new spaces in Western cities then led to new studies about neighbourhood formation beyond the gay Village. Different districts in major metropolitan areas would now be attracting queer individuals in search of new spaces of residence and sociability (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009; Nash, 2013b). Who these queer individuals are and what they are seeking varies according different studies, but what they seem to point to is the formation of a new urban reality, as well as new forms of mobility and communication among young LGBTQ individuals (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014).

The literature about creative cities has long branded gay Villages a necessary urban form in any city that attempts to compete globally by branding itself 'creative' (Florida, 2002). Scholars have also noted the movement by city planners to brand gaybourhoods as cosmopolitan spaces in order to attract flocks of tourists by promoting these areas as synonymous with a city's diversity (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). The revival of the study of cosmopolitanism in social sciences is also fairly new (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). Since the 1990s new studies in social sciences are trying to make sense of the concept and how it should be analyzed in light of modern life's many facets. More recently, scholars have recognized that both material and discursive cosmopolitanism have an important spatial component, being grounded in cities at different scales, including at the neighbourhood level (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Robbins, 1998). At the same time, different versions of the term have been described, ranging from those that associate it with negative connotations for social life to those that perceive it as a positive politic for society (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004).

New studies on cosmopolitanism have sought to understand the concept as a discourse that is enunciated and performed by different social actors and as a powerful agent of urban change (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Radice, 2010). Different types of cosmopolitanism can then be identified. According to Radice (2010), there are four main types of cosmopolitan discourse: political cosmopolitanism, identity cosmopolitanism, personal cosmopolitanism, and commodified cosmopolitanism. All cosmopolitan discourses are actively at work in the reshaping of cities that wish to brand themselves as cosmopolitan and creative, sometimes acting on their own and sometimes overlapping in the construction of new urban narratives. If gay Villages can be accurately described as spaces where different cosmopolitan discourses are present and actively participate in the reshaping of neighbourhoods, the same cannot yet be said about queer-friendly neighbourhoods. The literature about queer-friendly spaces is new, and it has not yet interrogated how cosmopolitan discourses act and are performed by their residents, leaving an under-studied gap in the literature about urban LGBTQ individuals and cosmopolitanism.

In this thesis I interrogate the links between sexual identity construction and cosmopolitanism focusing on the residents' perspectives in two neighbourhoods. I utilize Montreal as a case study by comparing two different types of LGBTQ neighbourhoods to illustrate how this operates. The choice of two neighbourhoods populated by LGBTQ individuals is because it reflects the contemporary reality of LGBTQ landscapes in North American post-industrial cities. I argue that the residents of both the gay village and in the Mile End districts are enunciating and performing

cosmopolitan discourses in their production of sexual identity neighbourhoods. To what extent the residents of each neighbourhood perceive their own space as cosmopolitan varies, but they are all in one way or another performing some type of cosmopolitan discourse as part of their performance of sexual identity. However, I argue that the type of discourse being enunciated and performed changes according the neighbourhood under analysis. The type of discourses utilized are associated and dependent upon other social and urban processes, such as gentrification, and are also linked to the amount of social and cultural capital one has to navigate between both neighbourhoods. In that vein, in order for a cosmopolitan discourse to make sense, it is imperative that it is associated with other aspects of sexual identity and neighbourhood, including, for example, safety, gentrification processes, and the construction of particular LGBTQ urban identities.

The objective of this research is to present a comparative urban study of two cosmopolitan neighbourhoods in the city of Montreal with known LGBTQ populations. If cosmopolitanism is associated with a queer urban lifestyle, to what extent does this association change in different neighbourhood contexts? The choice of a comparative urban study arises from the need to render implicit urban realities into explicit ones. Scholars in the field of urban studies (Binnie, 2014; McFarlane, 2010; Ward, 2008) have suggested that a comparative study can render the explicit in urban processes visible by critically deconstructing the implicit assumptions of mainstream urban theories. The gay village is an implicit urban form of LGBTQ sociability and territoriality in that it is the urban form usually associated with this

social group. In this vein, queer-friendly neighbourhoods are new forms that are not yet fully understood, and are operating in new and different ways from their most immediate urban counter-part: the gay village. In that sense, a comparative study between these two urban realities could render visible new forms of LGBTQ urban engagements with discourses of cosmopolitanism.

In the next few chapters I present the theoretical basis for my research, my methodology and the results of a comparative study of Montreal's gay village and its queer-friendly neighbourhood, the Mile End district. In Chapter 1, I present a literature review that focuses on urban experiences of LGBTQ individuals by exploring 1) the production of LGBTQ neighbourhoods in Western countries (traditional gay villages and queer-friendly neighbourhoods), and 2) what is the cosmopolitan discourse in these spaces, and how it is connected with broader urban processes. In Chapter 2, I describe my methodology and how I utilized the framework discussed in Chapter 1 to build up my questionnaire for interviews conducted in both neighbourhoods. In Chapters 3 and 4, I present the data collected, and delineate the main findings regarding the different types of cosmopolitan discourses emerging from each case study site. In Chapter 5, I compare both neighbourhoods, what they have in common, what kind of cosmopolitan discourses resonate in each space and discuss the significance of such commonalities and differences. Lastly, in the conclusion, I present final remarks about how cosmopolitanism operates in the construction and experiences of these two different sexual landscapes in Montreal, how it engages wit

the literature, its significance and implications, and I then reflect on future studies of cosmopolitanism and urban LGBTQ experiences.

CHAPTER 1: LGBTQ URBAN EXPERIENCES AND THE COSMOPOLITAN DISCOURSE

Since the rise of gaybourhoods in North America in the late 1970s, many scholars have sought to understand these urban forms, either in terms of their particularities as places of LGBTQ sociability or within larger urban processes, such as gentrification and cosmopolitanism (Brown, 2013). This research follows this tradition in urban and sexuality studies by expanding and bridging the available literature. More than a decade has passed since the first studies about queer spaces made a powerful connection between queer urban experiences and cosmopolitanism (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). This connection remains central to the analysis of such spaces, as new studies still point to these spaces as representations of cosmopolitan lifestyles (Nash & Gorman-Murray, 2014). Another strain in this literature includes studies that examine new urban patterns of LGBTQ residency in inner cities of major metropolitan areas (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009; Nash, 2013b). However, since there are only a handful of such studies, many questions as to how cosmopolitanism operates in these new neighbourhoods remain unanswered, as well as what kind of cosmopolitan discourses are being performed.

In this section I will provide a survey of the literature on the formation of LGBTQ spaces in major urban areas in Western countries and its intersection with cosmopolitan studies. First, I analyze the rise of the first gay neighbourhoods in the 1960s and 1970s, and how they shifted from spaces perceived as 'ghettoes' to gay Villages in the 1990s. Secondly, I review the literature on cosmopolitanism,

highlighting the diversity of forms that it takes in urban neighbourhood formation. I then move to analyze how, since the early 2000s, gay Villages have been rendered as cosmopolitan spaces and what this signifies for residents, tourists and the physical landscape of the neighbourhood. I then move to analyze the recent literature on queer-friendly neighbourhoods, where I argue that although their creation symbolises an increase in the overall freedom homosexual subjects might feel in Western urban centres, these spaces are also subject to significant social differentiation as they are also undergoing processes of gentrification. Here, I also point to the gap in the literature about the role of cosmopolitanism in the reshaping of queer-friendly neighbourhoods. Lastly, I analyze claims that Montreal is a cosmopolitan metropolis, and what impacts such a discourses have on local urban life.

1.1 The production of gay spaces in North America

The history of the gay movement in North America is a history built on a spatial strategy. Currently, it is commonplace, and expected, to find an LGBTQ neighbourhood or district in major cities in both Canada and United States. The appropriation of urban territories as gay spaces was an integral part of the gay movement in the second half of the 20th century. This strategy was first introduced in large urban centres like New York City and San Francisco in the 1970s and it quickly spread to other metropolitan areas. By the late 1970s, most cities in USA (Castells & Murphy, 1982; Levine, 1979) and Canada (Nash, 2006; Nash & Gorman-Murray,

2014) had emerging gay territories where non-heterosexual individuals could go in search of safe spaces to reside and socialize (Hanhardt, 2008, 2013).

The ground-breaking studies of Castells (1983) and Castells and Murphy (1982) about the gay community in San Francisco's Castro district are usually cited as the first to investigate gaybourhoods in USA. Despite their insightful ideas about gay territory and sociability, it was Levine's (1979) work that first examined LGBTQ neighbourhood formation. In his work, Levine (1979) analyzed several neighbourhoods throughout the USA and provided the methodological basis for understanding the formation of what he dubbed *gay ghettos*. The author argued that during the 1960s and 1970s several neighbourhoods in major urban centres in USA prospered as spaces formed by and for LGBTQ individuals. Drawing upon the ideas of the Chicago School, Levine (1979) defined the gay ghetto as a place where i) there is a concentration of institutions that cater specifically to a gay population, ii) a dominant local gay subculture, and iii) a residential pattern formed mostly by gay individuals. Most importantly, he contended that the central idea of the gay ghetto is the spatial isolation of this population from the rest of the society. In that sense, the first LGBTQ neighbourhoods were framed as voluntary ghettoes, which not only implied a spatial isolation but also a social isolation from the rest of the urban fabric.

Most gay neighbourhoods in the 1980s retained the stigma of places where "deviant" individuals would gather (Hanhardt, 2008, 2013; Schulman, 2012). The AIDS crisis of the 1980s reinforced the stigma of gay neighbourhoods as places to avoid, creating a narrative of places without any "morals", making gay ghettos part of

the, immoral geography within major metropolitan areas (Hubbard, 2013). It is no surprise, then, that such spaces would also be home to many artists and intellectuals, spaces where societal norms could be questioned and sometimes broken (Schuman, 2012). This scenario, however, changed in the 1990s. With the advance of antiretroviral therapy some of the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS declined. Equally important was the powerful grassroots gay movement headed by groups such as ACT UP that fought to destigmatize gay men by making it clear that they were also citizens. Their acts and performances ensured that gay issues had visibility in the media, bringing the debate to a national (and international) forum.

The 1990s marked a new era for gay neighbourhoods, shifting from deviant spaces to spaces which governments and other political actors valued for their economic potential. Scholars have analyzed this shift proposing that by creating territories for themselves in a homophobic world, LGBTQ individuals (mostly white men) have fostered processes of urban regeneration, leading to gentrification (Knopp, 1997; Lauria & Knopp, 1985). In the urban studies literature gentrification is defined as a process where capital, both cultural and economic, invades a specific area bringing changes to both urban and social landscapes (Smith, 1982, 1996, 2006; Ley, 1980, 1986; Zukin, 1998). As a result, lower income populations are usually displaced to other areas of the city and the price of proprieties increase in a fast pace. In an insightful piece about the gentrification process of the West Village in New York city in the 1980s (the gay neighbourhood of NYC at that time), Schluman (2012), argues that the process goes beyond the landscape, inculcating itself also in

the mind of individuals. Remarkably, the narrative surrounding these spaces, likewise, changed. If in the 1970s and 1980s gay spaces were seen and coded as gay 'ghettoes', by the 1990s the social and urban narrative was altered and these spaces became gay villages (Nash & Gorman Murray, 2014), prime areas in inner cities that emulated the city's renewed diversity.

From the late 1980s throughout the 1990s most of these locations turned into spaces of consumerism, through the commodification of both neighbourhood life and LGBT identities (Richardson, 2005; Rushbrook, 2002). The rise of gay villages as spaces of consumption is deeply connected with the rise of neoliberalism (Richardson, 2005). Neoliberalism has been a strong force in the economy since the 1970s and it has impacted other areas of society, including social and political culture and urban governance (Harvey, 1989, 2005; Smith, 2002). It can be defined as a pro-corporate ideology based on a free market economy (Richardson, 2005) and the privatization of the public sphere (Duggan, 2002). Neoliberalism is thus an ideology that endorses the shift of social services from the control of the state to the control of private business. According to Duggan (2002: 178), "neo-liberalism shrinks the scope of democracy dramatically in all areas of material production and distribution." In other words, it privatizes the profits and socializes the losses, creating and perpetuating social inequalities as well as spatial unevenness.

The neoliberal ideology acquired an important aspect in the (re)production of the urban. Harvey (1989) has argued that since the 1970s cities in advanced capitalist societies have experienced economic and fiscal losses, impacting their capability of

their own existence and urban self governance. In his article, Harvey analysis this scenario and contends that cities have now shifted from an old-style managerial approach to one based on an entrepreneurial one. The seizing of the commons by private business is the mark of the entrepreneurial style, and the techno-political argument to implement this ideology is the public-private partnerships (Harvey, 1989). Consequently, inner-cities neighbourhoods were rebranded and profitably appropriated by such partnership, via their remaking, branding and later consumption.

This broader change in the social and spatial landscape of North American and European cities had an impact in inner-city neighbourhoods, where most gay villages were located. Through rebranding strategies, gayborhoods were turned into sanitized spaces of consumption, where tourists and visitors could feel at ease to not only consume entertainment and commodities but also to consume exoticised bodies and identities, feeling part of a *cosmopolitan* lifestyle (Binnie & Skegg, 2004; Nash, 2013a; Rushbrook, 2002). In less than twenty years, a whole new narrative of gay spaces in major metropolitan areas was crafted. If, as gay ghettoes, these spaces were to be avoided by the rest of the city's population, as gay villages at the turn of the millennium, these spaces were rendered places where one must be, where both locals and tourists should go to consume and spend their leisure time.

The neo-liberalization of gay villages has led many authors to identify and frame gay villages as homonormative spaces. Most analysis followed the critique first postulated by Duggan (2002) about shifts in the LGBTQ political landscape in North America and the rise of a homonormative individual. But, many scholars argue that

this depiction is too simplistic. For example, Nash (2013a) has argued that even though gay Villages are spaces that can reproduce certain homonormativities, it is very problematic to approach it only from this perspective, since a “monolithically homonormative [perspective] can also overlook the importance of past struggles” (Nash, 2013a: 2), and I would add, ongoing struggles within the gay Village and between the gay Village and the rest of the city. According to Podmore (2013b: 223) this approach “can reduce queer identities to commercial representations” and “depict hegemonic relations such as homonormativity as complete and totalizing.” Sothern makes a similar argument: “the uncritical acceptance of these normative unidimensional representations denies the complexity and multiplicity of desire and subjectivity” (2004: 186). Consequently, it has been argued that the study of gay Villages should focus on their multiplicity of subjectivities, identities and performances. This line of inquiry could be taken even further, extending the analysis of LGBTQ neighbourhood diversity to the whole city as LGBTQ populations and place-making now extends far beyond the gay village. Even territories historically occupied and constructed as heterosexual should not be seeing as homogenous spaces, since “heteronormativity is not a monolithic or unbending structure, but a concept that shifts to encompass different masculine and feminine performances over time” (Hubbard, 2008: 650).

1.2 The cosmopolitanism discourse

The idea of cosmopolitanism is not new and it is certainly not restricted to gay spaces. As the literature about the subject suggests, the term itself is highly contested (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Cheah, 1998; Radice, 2010). The word's etymology dates back to the ancient Greeks, referring to a citizen (*polites*) of the world (*kosmos*), and it was first introduced to designate a person who felt a sense of belonging to a community beyond their city-state of origin (Radice, 2010). But it was not until the 18th century that the concept was revived and theorized in light of modern philosophy. Philosopher Immanuel Kant was interested in the idea of a universal community formed by sovereign states, and to him cosmopolitanism would be the concept that best embodied this idea (Radice, 2010). Cheah (1998) argues that Kant's vision of cosmopolitanism predates the formation of nation-states and, therefore, the notion of nationalism, a notion that contests the argument that cosmopolitanism is a reaction to nationalism. The idea returned to mainstream social sciences in the 1990s as a shift of paradigm where cultural issues are no longer bounded by the "nation-state definition of society and politics", but are now in need of a "cosmopolitan outlook" (Beck & Sznaider, 2006: 2). Since the notion of cosmopolitanism has attracted the attention of several scholars in different fields of knowledge, from geography and anthropology to international relations studies (Beck & Sznaider, 2006).

Despite different visions of cosmopolitanism, the literature seems to point to an understanding of the concept that broadly describes it as a relationship or attitude towards the other (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). The universal notion that the term might

suggest should not, however, be confused with other concepts, such as globalization, trans-nationalism and universalism. As Beck and Sznaider (2006: 2) argue, cosmopolitanism should not be confused with other concepts as “[t]he boundaries separating it from competitive terms ... are not distinct and internally it is traversed by all kind of fault lines,” perhaps even overlapping in certain instances and at certain spaces. Work by Binnie & Skeggs (2004) has pointed to a polarized framing of the discussion represented by those that are more critical towards it and view it through a negative prism (Zizek, 1997) and those who view it through a more positive and liberal prism (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Cheah, 1998).

In order to move forward with the discussion, Binnie & Skeggs (2004) identify four different types of cosmopolitan discourses: 1) anti-national, 2) a type of citizenship, 3) a form of consumption, and 4) a form of subjectivity. In their work on Manchester’s gay village, however, they only employed the latter two, leaving the former unexamined. Their depiction of the effects of cosmopolitanism as both a form of consumption and a form of subjectivity makes clear that they are considering it in terms of its negative connotations, both for the neighbourhood residents and to society at large. In a similar vein, Radice’s (2010) analysis of Montreal’s cosmopolitanism describes four types of cosmopolitan discourses. These include: political cosmopolitanism, identity cosmopolitanism, personal cosmopolitanism, and commodified cosmopolitanism. In her work she mapped these forms of cosmopolitanism and their discursive negative and positive connotations. In Radice (2010) was also careful to present a detailed description of each type of cosmopolitan

discourse, what they entail and how they should be understood. According to her study, each discourse can be defined as follows:

- Political cosmopolitanism: the discourse that operates in the level of institutions. It is produced by local authorities by means of zoning or how inclusive they make urban planning. This discourse is framed as having a positive outcome for both local social groups and society at large.
- Identity cosmopolitanism: a discourse that operates in the level of one's 'Self', by broadening the idea of citizenship to include many other forms of citizen experiences. It is identification with others going beyond the scale of a national state. This discourse is framed as having a positive outcome for one's 'Self' as well as for society.
- Personal cosmopolitanism: an attitude or disposition to be open towards the cultural 'Other'. It also entails the possibility of not just engaging with the different, but to be, if only momentarily, part of other cultures by absorbing some of their traits or cultural practices. This discourse can be framed as having either a negative or positive outcome, depending on how one utilizes it.
- Commodified cosmopolitanism: operates in the level of monetary exchanges. The idea of cultural difference and openness is co-opted and transformed into a commodity ready to be sold in the global market, one that is more and more driven by the production and

commercialization of cultural differences. This discourse is framed as having a negative outcome for the cultural 'Other', as it transforms people into products, for residents of a neighbourhood or a city.

Even though Binnie & Skeggs (2004) leave two types of cosmopolitan discourses under theorized, it is possible to create certain parallels between their work and that of Radice (2010). Both works are relevant because they analyze two different aspects that are central to this research: while the former describes the ways in which cosmopolitanism inscribes itself in a gay space (Manchester's gay village), the latter analyzes the production of Montreal as a cosmopolitan city, and how cosmopolitanism is produced in different neighbourhoods in the city. Since this research intends to analyze the perception residents of different neighbourhoods have about cosmopolitanism, I will not engage with the notion of political cosmopolitanism, as it is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage the discourse of public agents, such as planners, city councillors, and others. However, the spatial notion of cosmopolitanism remains imperative to this project.

More than a personal attitude or an engagement, cosmopolitanism connects experiences of places and identities, creating and changing already existing spaces, acquiring, thus, an important spatial component. As Robbins noted, "… like the nation, cosmopolitanism is *there*" placed somewhere in space, acting as "feelings that have already shaped and been shaped by particular collectivities, that are socially and geographically situated, hence both limited and empowered" (Robbins, 1998: 2).

Beck and Sznaider (2006) go further in their analysis by stating that cosmopolitanism is grounded in space but is not, in any way, 'spatially fixed':

> The outcome of this is that the concept and phenomena of cosmopolitanism are not spatially fixed; the term itself is not tied to the 'cosmos' or the 'globe', and it certainly does not encompass 'everything'. The principle of cosmopolitanism can be found in specific forms at every level and can be practiced in every field of social and political action: in international organizations, in bi-national families, *in neighborhoods*, in global cities, in transnationalized military organizations, in the management of multi-national co-operations, in production networks, human rights organizations, among ecology activists and the paradoxical global opposition to globalization (Beck & Sznaider, 2006: 3, my emphasis)

Although the idea of cosmopolitanism involves a spatial component, it is also important to consider the particularities of the cosmopolitan subject. One characteristic that is central to this research is the idea of mobility. Scholars in the field of cosmopolitan and mobilities studies have argued that to be cosmopolitan is to be mobile (Jensen, 2011; Kesselring, 2006; Molz, 2006). Cosmopolitan subjects possess, thus the means to move from one place to another, sometimes regardless of the geographic scale. This also applies to LGBTQ individuals who seek a cosmopolitan lifestlye. Nash & Gorman-Murray contend that to "a modern LGBT person, to be stable or territorial is to deny the modern imperative/ideologies of mobilities, globalization and cosmopolitanism" (2014: 766). Therefore, to navigate between countries or even locally between neighbourhoods involves a certain degree of both social and cultural capital, a previous knowledge of where and when one must go to a specific place. More importantly, mobility requires access to capital, as in order to live and travel in a globalized world one must possess the means to fund such a lifestyle.

This research engages with the multiple discourses of cosmopolitanism (identity, personal and commodified), but not only as discourses from the perspective of tourists who engage with the different or prefer to consume it. Rather, I am interested in the perspective of LGBTQ individuals who live in neighbourhoods that are either perceived or branded as cosmopolitan, and how this process is inscribing itself in space via the enactment and performance of cosmopolitan discourses affects their residents. In this vein, I understand cosmopolitanism as a discourse that can be grounded in space, but not simply that, as a political and spatial strategy that has been actively participating in the reshaping of cities and neighbourhoods in the 21th century.

1.3 Gay neighbourhoods as cosmopolitan spaces

More than just a space for social interaction between its inhabitants, gay Villages have gained greater visibility within the urban scale over the last two decades. There has been a deep connection between the increased visibility of LGBTQ populations and the inner-city rebuilding process underway in many North American and European cities since the 1970s and 1980s (Brown, 2013). At the same time, gay villages have also become important tourist spaces that often serve as markers of difference, cosmopolitanism, and urban development (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002). As the literature on creative cities argues, through its bars, restaurants, shops and many other forms of commerce, the gay Village has marked itself as a mandatory component of any city that aspires to be a participant in the

circuit of elite cities (or global cities) in the globalized economy (Florida, 2002). To be cosmopolitan is to be a producer of cultural capital (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002) and the gay Village has been (re)producing this very unique urban narrative, a place where diversity meets creativity. Florida (2002), for example, has argued that homosexuality can be considered the "last frontier of diversity in our society, and thus a place that welcomes the gay community welcomes all kinds of people" (Florida, 2002: 256), an argument that repositions the homosexual subject as a potential thermometer for development.

Thus, it is not just a matter of seeing the gay Village as a space of consumption of goods, services and even homes, but as a space where one can consume (and also be consumed) and be part of a certain cosmopolitan and unique lifestyle. However, as Binnie and Skeggs (2004: 46) argue, "it is imperative that we recognize that cosmopolitanism operates through access and knowledge of specific places and spaces." Their statement implies that cosmopolitanism is not for everyone and it is only possible for those who have enough cultural and political capital to understand what places carry the cosmopolitan label and what one must do in order to gain access. Furthermore, cosmopolitanism operates through differentiation, establishing those who can and cannot be part of certain spaces by erasing most forms of difference, therefore, reproducing disparities of class, race and gender. Within this framework, the cosmopolitan gay Village is thus a gentrified space, part of socio-spatial processes that lead to the production of a sanitized space "in order to maximise its appeal as a desirable site of consumption for the broadest possible audience"

(Brown, 2005: 135). Seen through this lens, the gay Village also becomes a site of normative (re)production through which docile homosexual bodies are produced.

As mentioned earlier, some scholars (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Bouthillette, 1994, 1997; Knopp, 1997; Lauria & Knopp, 1985; Ross, 2012) have demonstrated how gentrification processes spatially restructured entire gay neighbourhoods throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. More than just a process of spatial differentiation and the displacement of low-income residents for higher-income populations; gentrification is also a social process that "produces an urban landscape that can be consumed by the middle and upper-middle class… and that contributes to the *formation of class identities* across a significant class spectrum, albeit in highly differentiated way" (Smith, 2006: 199-200 my emphasis). Concurrently, cosmopolitanism also works as a medium through which class identity is established. As Brown has argued, "cosmopolitanism remains a distinctly middle-class habitus through which certain middle-class fractions distinguish themselves both from the working classes and from more 'conservative' sections of the middle class" (Brown, 2005: 134).

In that sense, the gentrified gay village is a space that reinforces the formation of a middle and upper middle class identity, reproducing class hierarchies (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002) and normative citizens (Richardson, 2005). Through this process non-normative bodies are usually excluded from these spaces; trans individuals, lesbians, queers of color, low-income individuals are all "erased from the discourse of cosmopolitanism and globalization, as consumers and commodities"

(Rushbrook, 2002: 184). As consequence, they are denied access to full citizenship, both in the gay Village and in the city as a whole, due to their non-conforming characteristics and their lack of consumer power. For example, queer critic Schulman (2012) analyzed the gentrification of gay neighborhoods in New York over the 1980s and 1990s and came to the conclusion that "it is safe to say that personal happiness at the expense of other people's deprivation is a normative standard of gentrification culture, which depends on it to thrive" (Schulman, 2012: 167). Thus, both concepts (gentrification and cosmopolitanism) work through the production of normative bodies as well as the identification of those who can and cannot have formal access to a territory.

The desirable cosmopolitanism of gay Villages has attracted many heterosexuals to these neighbourhoods in the last two decades. The desire to consume and to be in a cosmopolitan milieu cuts cross all types of urban sexualities, and serves, perhaps, as a marker of middles-class urban status. The increased influx of heterosexual women consumers into the gay Village (and to a lesser extent heterosexual men) has made scholars (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Casey, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002) question a possible 'degaying' of the gay Village, a consequence of its ongoing commodification. The creation of sanitized and ordered spaces through the gentrification process has produced safe spaces for tourists to consume and visit. The gay Village is thus presented to the rest of the city, and to an international audience, as a space where one can experience and consume with a safe distance from an "exotic other" (Casey, 2004; Valentine, 2002). As a consequence, these gender

dynamics have ironically brought problems of comfort and safety for lesbians, who have gradually excluded themselves from spaces frequented by tourists (Nash, 2013b; Skeggs, 1999).

Therefore, the ideal of cosmopolitanism includes the commodification of both spaces and lifestyles, producing, as a result, social differentiation. By defining those who can and cannot access a certain space it produces a sense of exclusivity that can only be reached by certain bodies that fit into specific social and consumer norms. Neoliberalism is thus the ideological discourse behind these processes that promotes consumerism as a lifestyle and as a necessary means through which a neighbourhood (and in a larger scale the city) can reach development.

Although these processes do operate on a basis of differentiation, it is important to note that they are in no way totalizing. The materialization of these urban processes not only produces resistances but also co-exists with different forms of urban experiences and identities, which sometimes creates a somewhat paradoxical space. Consequently, the gay Village can be a space that reproduces normative and non-normative identities, subjectivities, practices, and discourses creating a more diverse environment than most scholars might concede. The effects on the landscape of this 'complicit' (Oswin, 2005) and 'interdependent' (Brown, 2009) relationship also defy what scholars have so far been presenting. I do not intend to attenuate the impacts such processes have had in both physical and social landscapes in the global North, quite the opposite; it has been reshaping entire neighbourhoods. But it is important to highlight, as Foucault brilliantly stated some time ago, that "where there

is power there is resistance" (Foucault, 1979: 95), working in complicity with the production of both spatial and social relations.

1.4 Beyond the Gay Village: Queer-Friendly Neighbourhoods?

Although a post-gay era when gay Villages have lost all symbolical or cultural meaning has yet to present itself, some researchers have been exploring the movements of LGBTQ individuals within the city to areas beyond the gay Village. This recent literature has shown a particular interest in the impact of social cohesiveness at the local scale (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009), but also in how social ties are formed and maintained (Brown-Saracino, 2011), and how local context plays an important role in the constitution of such spaces (Nash, 2013b). However, some scholars have pointed out that some populations (lesbians, trans people, queers of color) have not always made space in gay villages (Adler and Brenner 1992, Podmore, 2006, Valentine, 2002), and, for that reason, the idea of LGBTQ spaces beyond the gay Village is not necessarily new. While these scholars have focused on identifying the social mechanism for why these groups did not have access to the gay Village, the new literature on queer-friendly neighbourhoods is focused on understanding why LGBTQ populations are now choosing to live and consume beyond the traditional gayborhoods.

Gorman-Murray & Waitt's research (2009) on queer-friendly neighbourhoods has opened up new possibilities considering LGBTQ territorialisation in the city. They state that a queer-friendly space is a spatial category that challenges the very

notion of heterosexual and gay spaces and identities. They define a queer-friendly neighbourhood as an area where the presence of gays and lesbians is visible yet not dominant; where there is a concentration of gay and lesbian local businesses and associations; and finally where a lesbian and gay presence is noticed and welcomed by heterosexual inhabitants. Similarly, Brown-Saracino (2011) studied the presence of lesbians in Ithaca, a small town in upstate New York, USA. She argues that in this small town, lesbians are integrated in the community rather than being assimilated or ghettoized. Integration is, thus, a middle path between both, and represents new possibilities for an historically marginalized community, many of whom "seek residence in a place where they can be 'out' about their sexuality while also living alongside both heterosexual and queer individuals" (Brown-Saracino, 2011: 370).

In their research, Gorman-Murray & Waitt (2009) focused their attention on two different neighbourhoods in Australia in two singular contexts, one in inner-city Sydney and the other in Newtown, a small suburban area with expressive visible LGBTQ population. Their goal was to analyze them in terms of social cohesion and sexual diversity. Drawing upon Brown's (2005) idea of post-gay space (a space where sexual difference is acknowledged by the inhabitants without being the main marker of a particular place) they propose the idea of the 'queer-friendly neighbourhood', an area where "the presence of sexual difference is not only acknowledged, but interaction and cohesion across sexual difference *is* a key characteristic of these localities" (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009: 2859 emphasis from the original). In a similar vein, Brown-Saracino (2011) proposes that in Ithaca

(the whole city) there is an ambient community of lesbians which creates "a sense of belonging and connection that arises from informal voluntary and affective ties – largely fashioned around shared tastes and activities and predicated on a sense of safety and acceptance – forged among a heterogeneous collection of proximate individuals" (Brown-Saracino, 2011: 363). Her findings point to a space where even though there is a perception and acceptance of sexual difference there is also a lack of a sense of community among the queer-women who live in the town. Gorman-Murray & Waitt's (2009) findings, in contrast, point to somewhat more cohesive communities that "demonstrate that respect for difference is sustainable at the neighbourhood scale" (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009: 2870).

While their analytical approach is focused in a broader sense of the meaning of acceptance of queer individuals at the local scale, Gorman-Murray & Waitt, (2009) do not further analyze (even though they recognize) the meaning and impact of what an incipient gentrification might represent in both communities. This is a significant oversight since gentrification is a process of social and spatial differentiation that is likely disrupting the social cohesion found at the local scale. Brown-Saracino (2011), on the other hand, does not identify signs of gentrification in the entirety of Ithaca or in the neighbourhoods where she conducted her research. She does recognize, however, that the heterogeneity of social ties was in part fostered by a shared class position among their network of informants who confessed that most of their socialization happened among individuals who share a class position. Another factor that she pointed as being responsible for such social cohesion was the homogeneity of

race throughout the city of Ithaca. Perhaps this homogeneity in terms of race (and on a lesser extent class) is what makes cohesiveness across sexual identities in that space possible.

Moreover, it can be argued that homogeneity and gentrification are, perhaps, the reasons why both populations can support and foster social cohesion and also form social ties. In these two cases, class and race seem to be important categories in the production of the local landscape. Nash's (2013b) analysis of a neighbourhood known as "Queer West" in Toronto, Canada, shows that the queer-friendliness of the space "is driven by both its simultaneous marginality and nascent gentrification" (Nash, 2013b: 200). Her findings indicate a possible commodification of the marginality (or the exotic other or culture) with an incipient gentrification. However, she cautiously argues Queer West falls in between what Brown (2004) defined as being a post-gay space and Gorman-Murray and Waitt's (2009) definition of a queer-friendly neighbourhood. This suggests that new queer spaces outside the village in most Western cities will have specific characteristics tied to the social, economic, political, sexual and place-making realities of each location, making it impossible (or even fruitless) to look for an overarching structure or process.

Although the gay Village remains a spatial unit worth analyzing from a geographic perspective (Brown, 2013), the aforementioned scholars have shown that the city is changing spatially and socially and that LGBTQ individuals are part of this change. New LGBTQ spatial patterns are reshaping the post-industrial city, inside and outside the traditional gay Village. What remains under analyzed is how different

cosmopolitan discourses operate in newly-formed queer-friendly neighbourhoods. Most of these neighbourhoods, such as Queer West in Toronto, the Mile End in Montreal, or Newtown in Sydney, are gaining global visibility, as places tourists should go, acquiring a cosmopolitan status. But are these neighbourhoods producing the same cosmopolitan discourses as traditional gay Villages? What type of diversity do such spaces attract? How do residents perceive and perform different types of cosmopolitanism? And, if these discourses are different from gay Villages, why are they different?

1.5 Montreal: A Cosmopolitan City?

Since the 1970s, the urban West has seen a shift in the role of major cities from centres of production to centres of consumption (Zukin, 1998). In response, major western cities reinvent themselves as objects of consumption, which led to a fast growing strategy to market themselves to a national and international audience (Harvey, 2001; Hunt and Zacharias, 2008). Home to almost four million people, the Montreal Metropolitan Area is the second largest metropolitan area in Canada. A producer of cultural capital, in the last couple of decades Montreal has tried to reinvent and to market itself as a cosmopolitan city. For example, Rantisi *et al*. (2006) have analyzed Montreal's attempt to brand itself as a design city. They argue that cultural branding is a trend in post-industrial cities used to maintain competitiveness and to attract financial investments. But how can branding a city improve the consumption of this space? Rantisi *et al.* (2006) have suggested that this 'hard

branding' operates through the creation of safe spaces where consumers are made to feel at home so that they can do what they want to do: "Hard branding introduces order, certainty and coherence into an unruly urban landscape, making it easier to 'read'" (2006: 366). This seems to resonate with Brown's (2005) description of Spitalfields as a sanitized (ordered) post-gay space produced to appeal to a broader audience of consumers. Moreover, Hunt and Zacharias (2008) have pointed out that this intense commodification and branding of gay spaces is not designed to attend to the needs of the local residents or the gay community, but rather, to create a package ready for consumers from outside the local community.

The hard branding strategy is thus part of the production of a cosmopolitan Montreal. As seen earlier, commodified cosmopolitanism operates in a similar way to gentrification, creating sanitized spaces for consumption while determining which bodies are suited to consume and occupy specific spaces. Like many other major North American cities, Montreal's inner city has been undergoing a gentrification process since the 1980s. Moreover, this process operates in different ways in different neighbourhoods in Montreal, thus making a unique social and spatial process. Rose (1984, 1996) has suggested in opposition to the stage model proposed by Smith (1996), that gentrification in some inner-city neighbourhoods of Montreal was only possible via a marginal process. Rose (1984) defines marginal gentrifiers as the less privileged sectors of the new middle classes that are attracted by the social and cultural environment of the inner city, in other words, a moderate-income-gentrifier. In the existing literature, marginal gentrifiers have been associated with studies of

both the gay village (Ray, 2004; Ray & Rose, 2000) and the Mile End (Rantisi and Leslie, 2010; Rose, 1995).

The cosmopolitanism Montreal assumes seems to be fruit of a hard branding by the city administration that seeks to attract capital to the city and to label Montreal a creative and progressive city (Rantisi *et al*, 2006), as well as the presence of different cultures due to the city's past and ongoing immigration (Rose, 1995). What kind of cosmopolitan discourse is being enunciated and performed in the city remains to be analyzed in light of the recent literature on cosmopolitanism, although it's likely that all four types of cosmopolitanism (political, identity, personal and commodified) are present in both the social and spatial landscapes throughout the city. Both neighbourhoods being considered in this research are part of this cosmopolitan movement in the city, and their residents are part of this cosmopolitan production.

1.6 Conclusion

The connection between cosmopolitanism and gay spaces is not new. As shown in this chapter, cosmopolitanism has been operating in gaybourhoods since the 2000s as an outcome of the process of gentrification observed in many gay Villages throughout the 1990s. Cosmopolitan discourses not only organize and reshape neighbourhoods, but are also performed and (re)produced by the local LGBTQ residents. The power of a cosmopolitan discourse depends upon who enunciates it, as well as its capability to ground itself in space.

Gay Villages have long been recognized as mandatory spaces for tourism in major metropolitan areas in Western countries. Queer-friendly neighbourhoods, on the other hand, are slowly developing into spaces with some touristic potential, although urban processes like gentrification have been pointed to and described in studies about this new urban reality. Cosmopolitanism in queer-friendly neighbourhoods remains one such topic in which more attention is needed. These neighbourhoods are acquiring importance as spaces of creativity and diversity, attracting not only intra-municipal consumers but also an international audience, reproducing their cosmopolitan character. In that vein, it is essential to interrogate what kind of cosmopolitan discourses are operating at the neighbourhood scale in order to understand broader changes in the city's landscape.

In the next chapter I present the methodology employed in this research. The chapter will also include a detailed description of both neighbourhoods being considered in the research, as well as details of how the research and fieldwork were constructed and conducted.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I present the methodology used in the elaboration of this research. The choice of a methodology is central to any research as it delineates how one specific tract of social reality is going to be analyzed. This chapter is divided into subsections. First, I will provide a brief description of the neighbourhoods chosen to be part of this thesis. The choice of these two neighbourhoods is central to my analysis and it is directly related to the choice of a comparative urban study. Secondly, I will establish my conceptual framework, my qualitative methodology, the development of the questionnaire and what types of information the questions intended to unveil. Thirdly, I will briefly discuss how the data was collected, the struggles with finding informants to collaborate in the research and the snowball sampling method. Fourthly, I will make a brief description of the path involved in the approval by the Departmental Ethics Committee (DEC) of my fieldwork plan. Lastly, I will present a summary of the profiles of the sample participants.

2.1 Choosing the research sites: spatial delimitation

The data collection for this research took place in two distinct neighbourhoods in the city of Montreal. The data collected in these two different spaces were analyzed and later compared, thus making this research a comparative urban study. Ward (2008) has pointed out that recently there has been a renaissance of comparative urban studies among urban geographers, and argues that the next generation of comparative urbanism could help unravel global urban processes when comparing

transnational realities. In this research, the comparison was made in the same socio-spatial reality, an approach that assists in understanding how two different Montreal neighbourhood spaces are shaped and reshaped within the same urban context. Therefore, the two selected neighbourhoods were the city's gay village (*Le Village Gai*) and its queer-friendly-space, the Mile End neighbourhood. Although they are quite distinct in terms of inhabitants, landscape, infrastructure and so on, they are both part of the same urban and political reality. At the same time they represent different time periods, populations, urban processes and political strategies. Map 1 illustrates where both neighbourhoods are located within the city of Montreal.

2.1.1 Gay Village

According to Remiggi (1998) the rise of the gay Village in the centre-south area of the city reflected an ongoing linguistic conflict between English and French Montrealers. In the 1970s, most of the gay establishments in the city were located in downtown (between Stanley and Peel Streets), an Anglophone area. At that time, the city was divided into Anglophone and Francophone districts, with St-Laurent Boulevard as a loose geographic dividing line between east and west. The Anglophone community inhabited the west side of Saint-Laurent whereas the Francophone community inhabited the east. In the beginning of the 1980s, most of the gay businesses moved toward a working-class neighbourhood east of downtown core today called the centre-south district of Montreal (Giraud, 2013; Podmore, 2006; Remiggi, 1998), an area that was once a working-class neighbourhood for workers in

the Molasses industry (Ray, 2004). However, more than just a linguistic search foridentity, the movement to the east was facilitated by neighbourhood economic change: “massive deindustrialization and concomitant job losses and population decline” (Ray & Rose, 2000: 509) with in the Centre-Sud district created a stock of housing and commercial spaces with low rents. At the same time, the choice to move towards the east was also related to the large presence of marginalized social groups in the Centre-Sud district, with no political capital to create antagonism with the new gay incomers (Hunt and Zacharias, 2008).

Most of the gay businesses opened in the Village in the 1980s were owned by and catered to a male clientele (Podmore, 2006). Lesbians, on the other hand, migrated to a different area of the city, the Plateau Mont-Royal, where they established a community with businesses owned, run and exclusively frequented by women. Referring to the women-only status of the lesbian bars in this area, Podmore has argued that “sex segregation meant that lesbians were less exposed to male voyeurism but it also had important implications for lesbian sociability” (2006: 606). Some authors have suggested that lesbians, like heterosexual women, have historically had less access to capital, thus explaining their difficulty in owning businesses or even competing in a male environment, at the same time the fear of male violence led them to create exclusive lesbian spaces (Adler & Brenner, 1992; Podmore, 2006; Valentine, 2002). Valentine, drawing on previous studies (Castells, 1983; Adler and Brenner, 1992) goes further and proposes that “the influence of

feminism has also meant that lesbian 'communities' have tended to be more radical, politicized, and less materially oriented than gay men" (2002: 148).

In a study about Montreal's gay Village at the turn of the millennium, Ray (2004) described it as a paradoxical space, a place that produces diversity as a commodity to be consumed, marking the post-industrial economy of Montreal. In his analysis, Ray (2004) identified discourses and practices both normative and non-normative: "As many of the lesbians and gay men interviewed indicate, Montréal's Gay Village remains in many ways a remote, sometimes liberating, sometimes dangerous, and often quite paradoxical landscape" (Ray, 2004: 75). From a different perspective, Hunt and Zacharias (2008) have described Montreal's gay Village as a space produced and promoted by a political and economic alliance between the local media, the government and corporations. This alliance is responsible for producing a common imaginary of the gay Village and what it represents. In this sense, Hunt and Zacharias (2008) argue that it is possible to qualify the gay Village as a cohesive space.

The alliance between different actors in the village goes beyond the symbolical level. Since 2006 the neighbourhood was designated a business improvement area. This type of public-private partnership between local business and the government in Montreal's gay village functions via a business improvement association that lobbies the city hall in questions of urban infra-structure and urban planning. The main focus of such an association is "to promote the Village as a place through three primary processes: renovation, festivalization and securization"

(Podmore, 2015: 265-266). Podmore (2015) argues that since its creation, the association has increased its power to influence the (re)shaping of the both the physical and social landscape of the neighbourhood. Therefore, the transformation of such space in a touristic attraction and as an international space is not only supported and promoted by city planners, but also by local business.

2.1.2 Mile End

The Mile End is a neighbourhood north of the gay Village, officially part of the borough of the Plateau Mont-Royal; it is a space that has experienced major changes in its urban dynamics in the last decade. According to Rose (1995) the Mile End was a working-class neighbourhood whose inhabitants used to work for the companies alongside the railroad which runs along the northern boundary of the district. The neighbourhood was also known as an immigrant corridor (Germain & Radice, 2006; Rose, 1995), being home to several different ethnicities over the 20th century. Italian, Japanese, Greeks, Portuguese, Chinese, and Orthodox Jews, have each established residence in the neighbourhood at different times, all of whom left marks in the local landscape. The presence of immigrants, and consequently of Allophones, are spread throughout the neighbourhood, especially in the area between Avenue du Parc and Boulevard Saint-Laurent.

Gentrification and the growth of lesbian and queer communities began to impact the Mile End district in the early 1990s. In the beginning of the 1980s, the neighbourhood suffered an economic downturn led by the loss of industrial activities

(Rantisi and Leslie, 2010). This scenario attracted a different kind of population to the area, motivated by affordable rents. According to Rose this population was “highly educated, French and English speaking, widely non-immigrant, but including an important number of European [immigrant decedents]” (1995: 59, my translation). Rantisi and Leslie (2010) have identified a wave of liberal young professionals moving into the neighbourhood in the end of the 1990s in search of an ‘edgy’, creative and cheap space to live. Moreover, they argue that the built environment in the Mile End “directly mediate[s] creative practices in both a functional and symbolical way” (Rantisi and Leslie, 2010: 2833). According to these authors the predominance of lofts and warehouses in the area (due to its industrial past alongside the railroad) is an important factor in attracting this type of creative labour to the neighbourhood. Regarding queer populations, Podmore (2006) has demonstrated that throughout the 1980s and 1990s a lesbian population established residence in the Plateau Mont-Royal. However, by the end of the 1990s their commerce, such as bars and bookstores, slowly began to disappear, or as Podmore (2006) insightfully argues, went underground. Gentrification played an important role in dismantling lesbian businesses, forcing them to move from the centre of the Plateau to surrounding neighbourhoods like the Mile End and Petit Patrie. In her work, Podmore (2006) has mapped all lesbians’ establishments in Montreal and has pointed to one single lesbian establishment in the Mile End area, Cats. This bar operated for a few months in the late 1990s and then closed. Later by the end of the 1990s, a new establishment (the

Cagibi) opened up one block away from the extinct Cats. The Cagibi still exists as a queer coffee shop, likely the first queer establishment in the neighbourhood.

The literature available about the Mile End has not yet touched this recent yet important aspect of the neighbourhood: the expressive presence of queers, and more notably lesbians. The idea of the Mile End as a queer space has been presented and promoted mostly through the local press, especially after 2010. One headline has described it as the new gay community of Montreal (Béslile, 2011). Another has suggested that the Mile End offered a place connecting Montreal to the rest of the world: "Out of the Montreal Village and into the world" (McCarthy, 2011). This suggests not only the Mile End as a queer space but also a space producing cultural capital and cosmopolitanism. More recently, an important media outlet that ranks the most important establishments in the city has put two queer bars in the area (Royal Phoenix and Notre Dames de Quilles) as the two best gay and lesbian bars in the whole city, ranking better than traditional bars in the Village (CultMtl, 2013, 2014). This queer population, alongside the creative and liberal young professionals, is helping reshape the local landscape.

2.2 Choosing the Research Framework

This thesis is a comparative case study of two neighbourhoods with important LGBTQ populations in Montreal. The literature on gay spaces in developed countries has already established that such spaces have undergone major social and spatial changes over the last 20 years (Brown, 2013; Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). Moreover,

studies have also sought to understand how and what kind of impacts a cosmopolitan narrative and remaking of these neighbourhoods have had in metropolitan areas. The recent literature on queer-friendly neighbourhoods has not yet interrogated how cosmopolitanism operates in such spaces, and what kind of cosmopolitan discourses are behind it. The present research, thus, works to fill this gap by interrogating how LGBTQ residents of both the Mile End and the gay Village perceived, reacted to and performed different cosmopolitan discourses.

Scholars in the field of urban studies (Binnie, 2014; McFarlane, 2010; Ward, 2008) have suggested that a comparative study can render urban processes visible by critically deconstructing the implicit assumptions of mainstream urban theories. Gay Villages are implicit urban forms of LGBTQ sociability and territoriality, that is, they are the urban form usually associated with this social group. In this vein, queer-friendly neighbourhoods are new forms that are not yet fully understood, and are operating in new and different ways of its most immediate urban counter-part: gay villages. In that sense, a comparative study between these two urban realities could render visible new forms of LGBTQ engagement with discourses of cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism, thus, assumes a central role in my research. As established in the previous section, cosmopolitanism can be broken down into four main discourses: political, identity, personal and commodified (Radice, 2010). With the exception of political discourse, all the others operates in the neighbourhood scale and are (re)produced by its residents, sometimes by itself and sometimes overlapping

with one another. Although there are different methods that could have been employed (e.g. archival, historical, survey, etc.) a qualitative comparative case study was selected because the objective was to have a deep understanding of the residents' perspective on cosmopolitanism and neighbourhood life. Table 1 illustrate the four types of cosmopolitanism proposed by Radice (2010), and demonstrates how each was operationalized in the study using specific questions in the qualitative interview guide.

Table 1 – Types of cosmopolitan discourses and interview questions

Cosmopolitan discourses according to Radice (2010)			
Type of discourse	**Value Judgment**	**Example of questions asked to the interviewees**	**Characteristics of each discourse**
Political	Positive	Not relevant to this research	Discourse that operates in the level of institutions.
Identity	Positive	Do you consider yourself a Montrealer? A Quebecker? Or even a world citizen? Can you explain why?	Discourse that operates in the level of one's 'Self', by broadening the idea of citizenship to include many other forms of citizen experiences
Personal	Positive and/or Negative	Do you feel like you live in an ethnically diverse neighbourhood? Do you wish there were more ethnic or queer establishments in your neighbourhood? Do you feel that by living in this neighbourhood you are more likely to engage with and learn from other cultures?	An attitude or disposition to be open towards the cultural 'Other'. It also entails the possibility of not just engaging with the different, but to be, if only momentarily, part of other cultures by absorbing some of their traits or cultural practices
Commodified	Negative	Do you feel that a diverse neighbourhood brings a positive or negative image to your neighbourhood?	Discourse that operates in the level of monetary exchanges. The idea of cultural difference and

Cosmopolitan discourses according to Radice (2010)			
Type of discourse	**Value Judgment**	**Example of questions asked to the interviewees**	**Characteristics of each discourse**
		Do you feel that the neighbourhood attracts tourist or people from other parts of the city/suburbs? Do you feel that your neighbourhood has been changing in the past few years?	openness is co-opted and transformed into a commodity ready to be sold in the global market

The conceptual framework served as a guide to understand how the inhabitants of both neighbourhoods interpreted them by making use of cosmopolitan discourses. The different types of cosmopolitan discourses were articulated in different moments of the interview. First, I explored the notion of identity cosmopolitanism in the first part of the interview by asking them if they considered themselves to be either Quebecker, Montrealer, Canadian or a world citizen. My intent here was to test their personal identities through different scales to see how their notion of citizenship is built and what are the social mechanisms behind it. I then came back to the idea of cosmopolitanism when I moved to the last part of the interview by asking them about notions of diversity. I then explored the interviewees' relationship with diversity on the neighbourhood scale and also if and how the neighbourhood is changing in the past few years and how this relates to the diversity found there.

The second and third part of the interview was intended to explore notions of gentrification, safety and identity construction within their neighbourhood. As shown

in the previous chapter, cosmopolitanism is part of broader social and spatial process in the neoliberal city (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). Cosmopolitanism, thus, affects the way in which individuals relate, feel, experience and navigate their own neighbourhood, fostering gentrification and impacting notions of safety, both of which have a direct impact in the construction of urban sexual identities. In that sense, throughout the interview I explored how residents perceived notions of cosmopolitanism in their neighbourhood, their rejection or embracing of (homo)normativity discourses and practices, and whether they celebrated or condemned diversity at the local scale. Four research questions guided my work:

- Are these two neighbourhoods cosmopolitan?
- How the cosmopolitan discourse ground itself in these two spaces?
- Do residents of both spaces consider their neighbourhood cosmopolitan?
- How is cosmopolitanism connected to other LGBTQ neighbourhood considerations such as safety and gentrification?

The notion of Montreal's gay Village and the Mile End as cosmopolitan spaces was then tested amongst residents through a series of hypotheses about the cosmopolitan discourse. My first hypothesis was that residents in the gay village were producing and performing a commodified cosmopolitan discourse, as the literature about these spaces has been arguing in the past decade. My second hypothesis was that residents in the Mile End were producing and performing a personal cosmopolitan discourse connected with the notions of creativity, youth, and also associated with an alternative lifestyle (hipster and queer). I was also interested in

understanding if their perceptions of cosmopolitanism stemmed from their own interpretations of urban spaces or if it was a discourse imposed by other social and political actors (top-bottom).

The choice of semi-structured interviews stems from my interest in the subject's point of view about their neighbourhood and their experiences. During the interviews we discussed the extent to which inhabitants relate to the aforementioned concepts, how these concepts reflect on the (re)shaping of the local landscape, and how they perceived notions of safety and gentrification. Accordingly, the interviewees perspective on the neighbourhood matters because they are an active part of its (re)shaping, both socially and physically. By listening to their interpretation and their experiences within the neighbourhood I could see how cosmopolitanism grounds itself in space, how it is connected and performed by urban sexual identities, and how it impacts urban sexual landscapes in the city of Montreal.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Before starting the fieldwork was the ethics approval by the Departmental Ethics Committee (DEC) in the Geography Department. The Committee is responsible for approving all research involving human subjects, making sure the research in question does not pose a threat to the subjects under scientific investigation.

I submitted a protocol requesting the approval of my research on May 2014. The protocol involved a series of question about the overall goal of the research such

as: basic information about the researcher, brief description of the thesis, description of the sample to be studied, method of recruitment, treatment of participants, confidentiality, and how to ethically deal with their questionings. In the end of June 2014 I was granted approval and started to conduct the fieldwork in the end of Summer 2014.

In order to ensure that informants who participated in this research remained anonymous, all the names utilized in the next few chapters are pseudonymous chosen by the participants themselves. All the pronouns utilized to describe the participants (he or she) were also selected by the participants themselves to ensure that their gender identity was correctly addressed throughout this research.

2.4 Snowball Sampling

In social sciences, there are several methods to discover, create and maintain a network of informants or sources. Commonly used in research on hidden populations, snowball sampling (also known as referral sampling) is a non probability technique involving a situation where one does not have access to a list of possible participants or people who share the same desired characteristics for the research (Jackson, 1999; Bryman, 2001). In this case, existing study subjects recruit future subjects amongst their own network of contacts.

Working with hidden populations can be a difficult task given that the fact they are hidden is most likely because being open about their lifestyle or 'traits' could lead to (more) discrimination (Browne, 2005). The difficulty in identifying non-

heterosexual subjects in social sciences is evidenced in some of the research reviewed in the previous section (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Browne 2005; Casey, 2004; Skeggs, 1999). For that reason, and given that this research focuses on subjects who are not recognized by heteronormativity, snowballing was the best sampling technique. It is also important to note that snowballing cannot claim to produce a statistically representative sample since it uses contacts between established social networks rather than random selection. However, this study does not intend to be statistically representative; rather, it focused, like most qualitative research, on the qualitative and empirical richness developed through in-depth interviews.

The main data used in this study was collected via in-depth interviews. The interviews were carried out between September 2014 and September 2015. It involved 20 subjects, 10 in each neighbourhood and covered four main topics: a) identity; b) scenes and culture; c) neighbourhood life; d) and diversity, cosmopolitanism and consumption. The first topic aimed to understand how individuals self-identify and what aspects of their identity played the most important role. The second topic was designed to gather information about spaces and places interviewees frequented and if there were share common spaces between individuals in the same neighbourhood. The third topic investigated their choice of residence and their impressions about their own neighbourhood. Finally, the fourth topic tested hypothesis of cosmopolitanism and diversity, testing to what degree they understood their neighbourhood as diverse and why. A copy of the questionnaire can be founded in Appendix A and a copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix B.

The selection process involved two main criteria; I selected LGBTQ identified individuals between the age of 18 and 35 years old. My interest in younger individuals stems from the findings in the academic literature about who are the individuals living in neighbourhoods beyond the gay village. Young and creative individuals are more likely to inhabit spaces such as the Mile End. Therefore, in order to create a comparison comparable sample, I adopted this criterion in both neighbourhoods. Once selected, the subjects were invited to a face-to-face meeting where the interview happened. The interviews lasted in average 45 minutes and were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews tend to be flexible, with a focus on the interviewees' point of view and maintain a similar structure, which allows for further comparison between interviewees (Bryman, 2001).

Even though snowballing is the most common method in this type of research, it is important to recognize the limits of the chosen sampling method. If, on the one hand, snowball sampling can help reveal populations that live outside hegemonic norms (such as race, class, sexuality, nationality, among other), on the other hand, it can be a biased sampling technique since it focus exclusively on the social network of specific subjects, raising issues of representativeness and generalization (Browne, 2005). In that sense, studies that start the snowball process with only one specific subject might end up with one specific social group "representing" the entire nature of the phenomenon under analysis, creating the impression of homogeneity both socially and spatially. At the same time, different spaces can represent boundaries and prohibited spaces to different people on bases of race, gender, sexuality, nationality or

disability. Browne (2005: 52) also recognizes the paradox of inclusion/exclusion in snowball sampling since "it is difficult to assess who has been excluded when the group under investigation is 'hidden'."

In order to resolve some of the inherent problems of the method itself, I have utilized as many entry points as possible among populations in both spaces, moving through different social networks. In the Village, I was able to find four different entry points, whereas in the Mile End, I was able to find five. This permitted me to map different discourses coming from different social groups of friendship.

2.5 Internet, technology and the quest for informants

The first few subjects I interviewed in both neighbourhoods were selected using my own network of contacts and following the criteria I established prior to the fieldwork (living within the boundaries of the neighbourhood, being part of the middle-class and being between 18 and 35 years of old). I talked to friends and acquaintances that either participated directly in the research or pointed me to their friends and acquaintances. At first, my own network of friends was able to provide me with subjects to interview. It is relevant to note that most of the interaction, even among my own network of friends, was done online. The website Facebook was an important tool where most of the communication took place. The use of social media as a space of interaction also illustrated how young people rely on Internet in broader ways than older generations, as well as how and through which means they communicate.

After eight interviews and several refusals, I exhausted my own network of contacts and started to utilize more traditional channels in this type of research. I contacted social centers, NGOs and even talked to some key actors in both neighbourhoods. However, these interactions proved themselves to be fruitless. As a last resort, I went back to Facebook and started to use the website as a means to find new informants. At first, I tried to contact LGBT groups through their community pages, such as Queer Concordia, Queer McGill, LGBT *Université de Montréal*, Roller Derby Montreal, Trans/Queer Montreal, among others. In order to do so, I posted a collective message on the groups' wall presenting myself and asking for people to participate in the research. These contacts brought me 3 more interviewees, but unfortunately no more than that. Finally, I decided to recruit informants through a community page on Facebook dedicated to queer individuals who are seeking a place to live in the city of Montreal. The community in question is called *Chez Queer Montréal* and most of the people in this group identify as LGBTQ or at the bare minimum as queer-friendly. After several attempts of communication with different individuals I was able to retrieve the rest of the informants for this research.

As it happened with my first attempt to select informants using my own network of contacts, most of the interaction happened online. Even after I met with them in person and asked for them to point me to other informants, they would still use Facebook as a mean to put me in contact with other parties. In this sense, this project acquired a very interesting aspect in the fieldwork stage, as it relied heavily on social media, specifically on Facebook, suggesting that Internet could be not only a

way to exchange information, but also a way to be mobile (not needing to move through different spaces in order to find informants), to unveil new information and to be granted access to new spaces, both material and virtual.

2.6 Network of informants: who are they?

During the research, I had the opportunity to meet with 20 individuals from different backgrounds. Although I looked for individuals with some common features, such as age and social class, I came across a varied sample. Table 2 presents all the interviewees with their main self-identified characteristics. After the table, I provide a brief discussion about who they are.

Overall, the major differences between these two populations revolved around how they perceive their own sexuality, gender and linguistic identity. In the Mile End individuals were more likely to identify as being queer whereas in the gay village all informants identified primarily as being male. This is probably due to the fact that the sample in the Mile End was composed with a more diversity of gender identities (both male and female), whereas in the village all informants were male. Regarding the linguistic diversity, all informants in the village declared themselves to be Anglophones with some identifying as being bilingual. In the Mile End, the sample was more diversified, with some individuals identifying as Francophone and others as Anglophones. The number of bilingualism was also higher in the Mile End.

Table 2 – Data on the network of informants

	Informants	Sexuality	Social Class	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Education	Profession	Mother Tongue	Primary Language	Nationality
Gay Village	Bradley	Male	Middle Class	Caucasian	Male	31	Grad Studies	PhD Student	English	English	Canadian
	Naoufel	Gay	Middle Class	Arab	Male	31	Bachelor	Business Admin	Arabic	English	Maroccan
	Justin	Queer	Lower Middle Class	Caucasian	Male	31	Grad Studies	Self-employed	English	English	American
	Zee	Homo	Middle Class	East Asian	Male	28	Bachelor	Self-employed	English	English	American
	Fabian	Homosexual	Upper Middle Class	Hispanic	Male	23	College	Student	English/Spanish	English	American
	Tom	Gay/Queer	Upper Middle Class	White	Male	26	Bachelor	Student	English	English	Canadian
	Steadn	Gay	Lower Middle Class	White	Male	25	Bachelor	Student	English	English	Canadian
	Samuel	Gay	Middle Class	White	Male	23	Undergrad	Student	English	English	Canadian
	Matt	Gay/Queer	Lower Middle Class	White	Trans-man	22	High School	Self-employed	English	English	Canadian
	Mike	Gay	Middle Class	White	Male	26	Bachelor	Communications	English	English	Canadian
	Informants	**Sexuality**	**Social Class**	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Education**	**Profession**	**Mother Tongue**	**Primary Language**	**Nationality**
Mile End	Laurie	Queer	Middle Class	Haitian	Female	27	Grad Studies	Translater/Musician	French	French	Quebecker
	Coco	Lesbian	Middle Class	Caucasian	Female	25	Bachelor	Web Designer	English	English	Canadian
	Leon	Bisexual	Middle Class	White	Male	28	Bachelor	Dancer	English/Hebrew	English	Israeli/USA/Dutch
	Sam	Gay	Upper Middle Class	Caucasian	Male	30	Grad Studies	Translater/Musician	French	French/English	Canadian
	Nelly	Queer	Upper Middle Class	White	Female	30	Grad Studies	Volunteer Manager	Hebrew	Hebrew/English	Israeli/Canadian
	Nigel	Homosexual	Middle Class	White	Male	24	Undergrad	Busboy	English	English	Canadian
	Lisa	Queer	Lower Middle Class	Jew	Female	34	Some University	Artist/Musician	English	English	Canadian
	Sheila	Queer	Lower Middle Class	White	Female	28	Bachelor	Barista/Artist	French	French/English	Canadian
	Alex	Queer/gay	Middle Class	White	Male	27	Bachelor	Designer	English	English	Canadian
	Anna	Queer	Middle Class	Caucasian	Female	29	Bachelor	Film maker	French	French/English	Canadian

2.6.1 Gay Village

All the interviewees in the neighbourhood identified themselves as being cis gender male, with one exception who was a trans-male identified individual. Their ages varied between 23 and 31 years of age, with most of them being in their late 20s. The majority self-identified as either White or Caucasian, and three individuals self-identified as being at least one among the following: Hispanic, East Asian or Arab. Regarding their nationalities, most of them stated being born either in the USA or Canada. There was only one exception, an informant born in Morocco. All individuals are part of the middle class, with some degree of difference about which middle class stratum. However, the data shows that only two individuals stated being part of the lower middle class, with the rest being part of either the middle class or upper middle class.

When questioned about their sexual identity, the vast majority self identified as being gay. The exception was two informants identifying as queer, which in a way was surprising, seen that the literature points to an understanding of these identities being and feeling out of place in gay villages. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview lesbians or trans women, which resonates the literature about how this population was and is excluded from gayborhoods. Concerning their primary language, all subjects identified as being Anglophones. The lack of Francophones individuals in the pool could be, at a first sight, problematic seeing that Montreal is a city with 60% of its population identifying as Francophone. However, the pool also illustrates a linguistic diversity in a neighbourhood often seen and framed as a space

dominated by Francophones, which in part contributes to the notion of a diverse and cosmopolitan space. Lastly, half of the informants were students at the time of the interview. The other half worked in the fields of communication, business administration or declared to be self-employed.

2.6.2 Mile End

The sample in the Mile End ended up being more diverse than the Village. A little more than half of my informants identified as female, whereas four individuals identified as being male. Their ages varied from 24 to 35 years old, with most of them being in their late 20s or early 30s. The majority identify as being either Caucasian or White, with only two individuals identifying as either Jewish or Haitian. Regarding their nationalities, a little more than half identified as being Canadian, two identified as being part Jewish (one Jewish-American and the other one Jewish-Canadian), and one identify as being Quebecker. All individuals reported being part of the middle class, with only one informant stating being part of the lower middle class. The majority stated being part of the middle class and upper middle class.

When questioned about their sexual identity half of the sample identified as being queer. Curiously enough all the self-identified queers also identified as being female. The men in the sample identified as either being: gay, homosexual or bisexual; one female identified as being a lesbian. Concerning their primary language they were mainly Francophone and Anglophone with two individuals reporting speaking Hebrew as their mother tongue. The diversity of the pool represents better

the linguistic differences in the Island of Montreal. Lastly, regarding their occupation most of the informants reported working for the creative economy, such as dancers, musician, artists, and web designer. This echoes the finding of Rantisi and Leslie (2010) about the creative inhabitants of the Mile End.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I detailed the methodology utilized in this research. The choice of a qualitative comparative study is due to the necessity to critically engage with explicit urban theories and to bring into light implicit social and spatial processes. By comparing two different urban realities it is possible to render visible non-normative narratives and what make them so singular or not. My interest in the residents' own life stories and point of view intends to explore the connections between cosmopolitan discourses and sexual identity construction in perceptions of queer-friendly and gay neighbourhoods.. The use of snowball as a method helped me navigate a social group not easily identifiable through other traditional means in social sciences. The use of my own network of contacts allowed me to gain access to both territory and social groups.

In the next two chapters I present my findings on both neighbourhoods. Chapter 3 presents the perspective of the gay Village residents. In the following chapter I present the data from the Mile End residents. Finally, in Chapter 5, I make a comparison about the findings in both spaces.

CHAPTER 3: INTERROGATING COSMOPOLITANISM AMONG RESIDENTS OF MONTREAL'S GAY VILLAGE

Neighbourhoods formed by and for LGBTQ individuals are a part of the modern gay movement. This spatial strategy was central in the fight for equality and against homophobia (Hanhardt, 2008). Montreal's gay Village is no different, and since its inception and formation in the 1980s, it has served as a space for LGBTQ individuals to gather and meet in safety (Ray, 2004). However, the history of this iconic Montreal neighbourhood has changed over time. As most of gaybourhoods elsewhere, the gay Village in Montreal also underwent changes in its urban landscape as part of largerprocesses of urban reconfiguration of the city's inner neighbourhoods throughout the 1990s and 2000s. These processes are actively reshaping the neighbourhood and transforming it. Through fieldwork I was able to collect testimonials of what effects these processes are having in the recent wave of population inhabiting the neighbourhood.

Montreal's gay Village has been described as a paradoxical space "a social landscape in which there is both a celebration of difference from the mainstream and a simultaneous erasure of identities (Ray, 2004: 75). But it was not until I started my fieldwork in the neighbourhood that I was able to fully understand what such a statement meant. Most of the narratives I collected in the neighbourhood were in a sense contradictory, pointing to how differences intersected in the same time and space within the neighbourhood. A decade since Ray's (2004) study, this

characteristic seems still to be very much present both in the neighbourhood life and in its residents' perspectives.

In this chapter, I shall explore the findings collected from the fieldwork carried out in the neighbourhood. I will start by discussing how the interviewees defined their identities in terms of sexuality, class, race, nationality, language and citizenship. The ways in which they self-identify are important as they illustrate how social and spatial processes impact the informants' lives. Secondly, I will describe the reasons why they choose to live and remain in the neighbourhood, as this decision impacts the construction of their sexual identities, and in some cases are related to how cosmopolitanism is performed. I will then discuss notions of neighbourhood identity and changes in the landscape, such as gentrification. Gentrification has been associated with the production of cosmopolitan spaces, and this sub-section will explore in what ways these two processes are intertwined. After, I will present a discussion about notions of safety, how informants related to it, and in what ways is safety an important aspect of a cosmopolitan space. Lastly, I will explore notions of cosmopolitan discourses and how the interviewees related to these discourses.

3.1 Gay Village Identities

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the interviewees came from different backgrounds. As I actively looked for individuals who belonged to the middle class and were between the age of 18 and 35 years old, most of their other characteristics, as shown in Table 2, were varied. However, the majority self-identify as being either

Caucasian or White, illustrating how race plays either an active role in the selection of the population that inhabits the neighbourhood, or perhaps also illustrates how race shapes my own network of contacts. All of interviewees identified as being male, including both cis-gender and transgendered male identities.

3.2 The Choice of the Village

There were a few reasons why interviewees chose to live in the neighbourhood. Some point to the notion of living among other gay men as the primary reason to live there. One informant, named Noufel, lived in the neighbourhood for one year. He then decided to experience living in a different yet nearby neighbourhood, the Plateau Mont-Royal. He told me that after a few months experiencing the Plateau he decided to move back to the Village because he wanted a sense of community. He has since been living in the neighbourhood for one year and a half. To Noufel, being part of a community is one characteristic he appreciates about the Village:

> What brought me there? I used to go out a lot there, the proximity is easy. I think as well that sense of community that it provides around there. Yeah, that's why I kinda moved back. (Noufel)

He further explained the notion of community when I asked what he liked about the neighbourhood: "I think what I like is it provides the sense of community, so like you feel you are surrounded by similar people in a way" (Noufel). Another informant, Zee, who has been living in the neighbourhood for the past three and a half

years, told me that the reasons he moved to the Village had more to do with its location, safety and how convenient it was for him to go around different places in the same neighbourhood:

> Well, for one thing I really like my apartment. It's really convenient, it's a pretty good deal, it's next to two subway stations, and it's a pretty unbeatable location. It's an old house, I love old houses, the architecture really appeals to me […] and honestly, despite the crime and everything, I like the Village. I really like urban spaces that are dense. I enjoy the urban geography of the Village. I think it's a fantastic neighbourhood. Is it like the safest neighbourhood in the world? No, it's not the safest neighbourhood in the world. It's not the kinda of neighbourhood where your mailman can leave your Amazon box sitting on your doorstep and nobody will touch it. But it's a cool neighbourhood, and it has like a going on kinda feeling. And if I feel like doing something some night or any random time it's just like 'ok, so we just move a couple of blocks away'. (Zee)

The proximity to downtown was an important aspect of the decision to move into the neighbourhood for other informants as well, much more than being part of a community. Another interviewee, Mike, who has been living in the neighbourhood for the past half year, also stressed how his apartment and the proximity to downtown played an important role in his decision to move into the Village. Mike's answer illustrates, as those of most of my interviewees did, that the reasons why they decided to move into the neighbourhood are more complex and go beyond than simply the

need to be among other LGBTQ-identified individuals. According to Mike, the reasons to move there are more related to issues such as location and aesthetic value than the notion of LGBTQ community. Mike told me:

> Actually to be honest, I moved to the Village because of the apartment. I really loved the apartment that I found. It was the best apartment in terms of the aesthetic value and the location being downtown, and the roommates were great. So, those were the primary reasons why I ended up moving to the Village. (Mike)

The Village's location is indeed very privileged within the city of Montreal. The neighbourhood possess its own subway station (Beaudry Station), with two others at the east and west border of the neighbourhood (Berri-UQAM and Papineau Stations). The neighbourhood is also well-served with a variety of different restaurants, bars, corner stores and other amenities, such as liquor stores, clothing stores, and bakeries, among others. The vast offerings of its commerce and services cut cross all the interviewees' narratives about why they chose to live there. Another factor that was relevant in their choice of residency was the price of rent. Although the literature about gay Villages and specifically about the Village in Montreal indicates an ongoing process of gentrification, at least in Montreal's Village the price of rent seemed to be considered cheap and/or affordable for most of the interviewees. This resonates with Rose's (1984, 1996) idea of gentrification being a marginal process in Montreal, acting in different ways than most North American cities, thus producing different urban landscapes. Zee made an interesting remark about the

affordability of rent prices in Montreal's gay Village by comparing it with the urban reality of Boston's gay Village:

> In Boston I wanted to live in a neighbourhood like this, not necessarily a gay neighbourhood but like a neighbourhood with at least the amenities, the proximity to the metro [subway], 24h deps [depanneurs], and like having a lot of restaurants and stuff like that, but that would be like extraordinarily expensive, and I feel like we're getting a pretty good deal on the rent we're paying. Where I come from we'd probably be paying 4/5 thousand dollars a month if we lived in a neighbourhood like this. (Zee)

3.3 Gentrification and Community Identity

When I asked the informants the reasons why they chose to live in the neighbourhood, they were quick to make a connection between their own life story and choices and the broader urban processes that seem to be at work in both the city at large and in their neighbourhood. Gentrification was one such process to which most of my informants referred. Montreal, like many other North-American cities, is indeed undergoing gentrification, with the pace of the process being different at different neighbourhoods. According to Rose (1985, 1996), gentrification in Montreal throughout the 1980s was led by what she named marginal gentrifiers, a population composed of less privileged individuals of the new middle-class with a high educational profile but low-income. This seems to still be the case of some of the informants founded in the gay village, as they are part of the liberal professions,

people who are highly educated but with limited capital. My fieldwork points to a similar finding, although some of the interviewees were still in the process of acquiring education, and thus being marginal gentrifiers themselves.

Steadn and Samuel are good examples. They are a couple, both students in their mid-twenties, who have been living in the neighbourhood for the past two and half years, but they are being forced to move out by the end of the summer 2015. When I asked Steadn the reasons why they moved into the neighbourhood he pointed to a similar reason as Zee:

> The rent is crazy cheap in the neighbourhood. It's gentrifying really fast though, like we're the third […] I've been gentrified out myself just now, so I won't be living there at the end of summer, and I'm the third house of my block that this happened to. So, I moved there because one, it is really convenient to come to school here, it's like 10 minutes, it's right on the green line and it's cheap. And two, I was moving from Alberta and I felt why not? (Steadn)

Although Steadn does recognize the lower rent prices in the neighbourhood, he also points to an ongoing change in the social landscape of the Village. He does so by describing how gentrification worked to displace him and his boyfriend from their own household. Steadn's testimonial about his own situation as well as the situation of other residents in his own block suggests that the process is indeed working at a fast pace. When I asked another informant, Bradley, what he did not like about the neighbourhood, his answer focused on how gentrification is changing the landscape

he was used to by removing places he frequented and liked with new establishments that do not seem to cater specifically to him or his friends. He also points to a historic, and somewhat tragic, reading of gayborhoods as places where gentrification thrives. He explained:

> What I don't like is the gentrification aspect. It's kind of a tragic story that gay Villages are originally gentrified neighbourhoods. But also there's a new occurrence of a wave of gentrification that is really happening which I really dislike. Like for instance, like City Bar, at Champlain and Ontario [streets], got shut down and re-opened as like a very generic expensive cocktail bar and I don't like that. So, I don't like those sorts of things happening at all. (Bradley)

Although some informants stressed how gentrification is indeed changing the neighbourhood, all of them agreed that, to some extent, the Village, despite its new social and urban dynamics, still plays an important role in the gay community as a space where LGBTQ individuals can congregate, share similar desire and identities, and feel at ease to socialize. However, they were cautious to highlight that, at the same time, the role of the Village seems to be changing. Naoufel explained why, in his view, this could be considered a paradox:

> It's a paradox, but I think it's important that there's a Village or a gay Village where people can come and be more comfortable, as well as be surrounded by people who are attracted or have the same sexuality. But, I think we are really going to an age that, because of how open our society is, I think the

> importance of it plays less of a role today than it did 20/30 years ago. I think today, like taking Montreal as an example, anywhere you would go, I don't know like a bar, you would always find other gay people. We are not constrained anymore by how we're gonna behave. I think it's a very open area. Yeah, that's why it is not as important today as it was a long time ago. (Naoufel).

Naoufel's description of the importance of the Village seems to resonate with what Ghaziani (2014) has described in different gayborhoods across North America. In his research, Ghaziani (2014) have analyzed how present and former residents of gay villages throughout USA perceived the importance of the neighbourhood both historically and at present. His findings pointed to a similar narrative, where residents speak about the political and historic importance gay villages once had, while at the same time, they dismiss the idea of these spaces still having any symbolical importance to their lives. When questioned about his take on the importance of the gay Village, Steadn pointed to this problematic shifting in narrative:

> I feel like there's a commercialization of gayness and pride and those sorts of things, and I feel like […] because being queer and being gay varies […] traditionally it has been among counter culture, like the opposite of what's happening now, the commodification of homosexuality, and that's what you see in the Village. I feel like a lot of people prefer to live in other neighbourhoods such as the Mile End, or the Plateau, or Saint-Henri. And I feel like it is not as desirable for a gay person to live in the gay Village, and I

> feel there's a lot of, I would say almost, negative association with that. (Steadn)

Fabian, on the other hand, comments on how the Village could also represent a territorial constraint for LGBTQ people by normalizing only one space as appropriate for this population:

> But I think in some sense [the Village] kinda alienates or kinda makes that gays [need to be in one] spot, so all the gays must go here and we can't do anything outside of here, because the gays must be here. And I feel like those who are not gay kinda also have that […] I feel kind of a separation with the gay community and the straight community. (Fabian)

Fabian's view of the Village seems to be closer to Levine's (1979) description of the gay ghetto; a place separated both physically and morally from the rest of the city. His statement contrasts with Steadn's, who sees a movement of LGBTQ individuals more and more towards other neighbourhoods in the city, notably the Mile End, Plateau Mont-Royal and Saint-Henri. This shift in residential patterns among LGTQ individuals in Montreal resonates the findings of studies carried out in cities like Toronto, Canada (Nash, 2013b) and Sydney, Australia (Gorman-Murray & Wait, 2009). Both studies interrogate the reasons why individuals have chosen to live outside gay Villages, and they point to new patterns of residency choice among LGBTQ individuals beyond the boundaries of gaybourhoods.. I will discuss this notion further in the next chapter when I talk about the Mile End, Montreal's own queer-friendly neighbourhood.

3.4 Notions of Safety

Another point that all interviewees were careful to comment on was the idea of safety. For most, despite localized acts of homophobia that still affect the neighbourhood, they felt somewhat safe being out and about in the Village. Naoufel explained how paradoxical the Village can be; a space where homophobia might be more widespread than the rest of the city simply because perpetrators of homophobia know where to localize possible targets. The perception of Villages as spaces more prone to homophobic attacks was first documented by Myslik (1996) on a study about the gay Village in Washington, DC which showed that the formation of neighbourhoods thought to be safe spaces can ironically, sometimes, attract more violence due to greater visibility. Naoufel commented on the issue:

> Safety in the Village, it's becoming a very relative term. I think it's safe in the sense that people feel safe, in the sense that you are around people that are the same […] you don't feel like you are gonna be judged or harassed in a way. I think it's not safe in a way […] it's an easy target as well for haters. So like, you know, we've been hearing a lot of stories of gay bashing around the Village, and I feel like it happens more at the Village than outside of the Village, because those people who have that hatred kinda like make a target of that space. It makes it unsafe a little bit. (Naoufel)

When questioned about his perception of safety in the neighbourhood, Zee explained that he does not feel in danger regarding his sexuality, but there are other sorts of

crime that constantly take place in the area. For him his physical well-being is not a concern, however, he fears for his property and possessions. He commented:

> Well, I consider the Village a safe space for being gay, otherwise it is pretty crime ridden. My car has been broken into repeatedly, and even has had its window smashed. Once during the summer I had left my front window just cracked a little bit opened and somebody opened the screen and stuck their hands in and stole my wallet […] I don't feel like my life is in danger, or that I'm in violent danger ever. I do feel like my property is constantly in danger. (Zee)

When I asked Mike the same question he was more careful to respond it, putting it in perspective about how safety is perceived not just in Canada, but elsewhere. For him Canada as a whole can be considered a safe society, where one does not need to be worried about one's life or property. Even when questioned about whether he considered the gay village to be more or less safe than the rest of the city he was emphatic that Montreal is 'equally safe'. He shortly and concisely explained:

> D – Was safety an important aspect of your decision to move into this neighbourhood?
>
> M – No. I just consider […] I usually don't consider safety that important, 'cause I usually feel safe no matter where I am. In Canada, that is. I've lived in Senegal, I've seen what real unsafe is; here we are pretty safe.
>
> D – Do you consider the village to be less or more safe than other areas of the city?

M - I'd say is equally safe around Montreal. (Mike)

3.5 Cosmopolitanism and LGBT Identities in Village

Until this point in the interviews, I wanted to establish the reasons why the informants moved to the neighbourhood as well as their impression on topics such as gentrification, safety and importance of the Village to the LGBTQ community. On the fourth and final part of the interview the questions focused on their perceptions of cosmopolitanism. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I wanted to test Radice (2010) and Binnie and Skeggs (2004) hypothesis on the links between queer-friendly neighbourhoods and gaybourhoods and cosmopolitan discourses. I first tested the identity discourse by simply asking them if they considered themselves to be a world citizen. According to Radice (2010: 13) identity cosmopolitanism can be defined as "the expression of a certain kind of citizenship of many groups in the world, one of which may well be humanity as a whole." Half of the sample told me they considered themselves to be world citizens for a variety of reasons, ranging from being a human being to have travelled extensively.

When I asked Naoufel about what aspects of his many identities were the most important to him, the first thing he responded was that he considered himself a citizen of the world. I then asked him to elaborate on that idea a bit more. He told me:

> So, I look at myself as really as a citizen of the world […] I think when we start moving around we develop that feeling, as well as you move around what you realize is that you start adopting into other culture, as well as people

> around me […] because my circle of friends have always been people from everywhere, so you realize at that point that you kinda adopted every culture because of that diversity of the group you're a part of it. (Naoufel)

Naoufel's idea of world citizenship is very much tied with the notion of mobility (consequently having the freedom to do so), which is a characteristic of the cosmopolitan subject (Jensen & Richardson, 2007; Kesselring, 2006). He also made an interesting link with another type of cosmopolitan discourse, the personal, when he stated that by being surrounded by different cultures he could, to some extent, absorb them (Radice, 2010). Justin was quicker to make a connection between being a world citizen and performing some sort of cosmopolitanism. When I asked Justin if the considered himself to be a world citizen he answered:

> Yeah, actually. Cosmopolitan, yeah. In a lot of ways I believe in a kind of a worldview of cosmopolitanism. It's kinda of a philosophy of one world one humanity type of thing, so maybe that's why I don't bother getting my immigration status fixed. (Justin)

Some participants did not identify with the personal expression of cosmopolitanism. Zee, for example, said that he does not see himself as a world citizen. He spoke critically about being a privileged individual and how his life experience revolves mostly around being a citizen of a rich country. What is interesting about his perspective is that his interpretation of cosmopolitanism is tied with the notion of social privileges rather than a new ethos for humankind.

> Do I see myself as a world citizen? No, I don't. I see myself as a privileged kid who was born in a foreign country and then moved very quickly to a very rich country and lives like a pretty good life, and I don't think I have the right to say I'm a world citizen, and that I share like so much with everybody else (Zee)

3.6 The Village as a Cosmopolitan Space

As mentioned earlier, cosmopolitanism can be grounded in space and at different scales, taking the shape of a household, an organization or even a neighbourhood (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Robbins, 1998). In that sense, Montreal's gay Village is branded a cosmopolitan space not only through their residents' own personal identification with the notion itself, but also through what the neighbourhood has to offer. When I simply asked if they considered the Village to be an ethnically diverse space, or diverse at all, their opinions were quite different. For some, the Village is a place that congregates different ethnicities, although only a few were able to list the ethnicities they could see in the neighbourhood (mostly Asians and Arabs due to the restaurant chains). Some provided examples of businesses owned by different ethnic groups. Others reflected on the variety of different backgrounds found in the street on an everyday basis. Naoufel made an interesting observation by relating the diversity found in the neighbourhood with the presence of LGBTQ individuals. He explained:

> Yes, I think the Village is very ethnically diverse. I don't think there's like an ethnicity that necessarily jumps to mind. I feel like is just very diverse; you

> can see people from different backgrounds there […] It’s a neighbourhood that’s sexually based in a way, so it attracts LGBT people. (Naoufel)

When I asked Zee the same question he contested the dominant narrative about Villages being diverse spaces. Quite the opposite, he explained how gayborhoods in general reproduce social and cultural dominant norms, reinforcing racism and normalizing the notion of whiteness. The marginalization of individuals on the basis of race in gayborhoods has been under studied and analyzed in the field of geography of sexualities (Brown, 2013). Nero (2005) has argued that gay villages are spaces formed for and by white gay males with little space or opportunities for people of colour. Visser (2003) and Tucker (2009) made a similar argument showing how racism and classism are intertwined in the systems of social regulation and oppressions LGTBQ individuals of colour face in South Africa. Opposing Naoufel’s vision of a diverse neighbourhood in part because of the LGBTQ presence, Zee credits the diversity found in the neighbourhood to residents and not to the LGBT community who live in the same area because they want to be closer to downtown and not to any relation to a notion of gayness. Zee answered:

> No, not really. The gay community is pretty white in general. The gay community is probably one of the most racist in existence [...] The village is culturally diverse and ethnically diverse, but a lot of the cultural diversity and ethnic diversity comes from families who live here and other people who live here, and not necessarily people who live here because it is the Village. People

> live here just because they want to be close to the green line, and it is near downtown and rents are affordable. (Zee)

Establishing if they perceived their neighbourhood as diverse or not led me to a new set of questions, where I tested the personal discourse of cosmopolitanism. According to Radice (2010) this version of cosmopolitanism entails openness to other cultures and willingness to engage with different cultures. In order to determine that, I asked them if they engage with different cultures, if that was something important to them, and if by doing so, they could absorb or feel part of the different culture they were engaging with. Again, their answers varied greatly, with some individuals affirming that they do indeed absorb and engage with different cultures, whereas others, especially those that identify the village as a white and male environment, affirmed that they do not engage with different cultures on a neighbourhood scale. Different from other forms of cosmopolitanism, this discourse was the one that resonated least with my informants, with only one third stating that they engaged with and felt part of different cultures.

However, those who did engage with others in the Village told me that although they did value engagement with other cultures and ethnic groups, they have a closer connection to the gay identity present in the neighbourhood. Bradley, for instance, told me how he appreciated the diversity he finds in the neighbourhood when compared to the suburban reality he grew up in. For him, the proximity to different cultures is what makes one connect with them. He told me:

> When you have proximity to different cultures you end up connecting to it. The suburbs I grew up in, it's like majority white, but 30% or something are South Asian, so I feel connected to that culture in a way that I don't feel to other ones, because a lot of friends are part of it and that's a big part of living in that town. So, I definitely think that having that experience makes a big difference. (Bradley)

Mike, who moved to Montreal from Nova Scotia, Canada, mentioned that his experience living in the Village helped him face life 'with more of an open mind', a direct result of the diversity found locally. He commented: "I think that it helps, because just living in the Village you see everything, all kinds of different things. So, you just go into life with more of an open mind" (Mike). Naoufel made a similar argument by positing one's personal experience and immersion in a diverse environment with the development of a collective well-being and a more culturally sensitive society. He explained:

> I think yes in a way, there's a lot […] because of how ethnically diverse [the neighbourhood is] I think that interactions help a lot, learning from other cultures and developing this well being [makes people] more culturally sensitive toward people. So, I think the Village kinda provides that. (Naoufel)

3.7 Selling the Cosmopolitan Village?

Finally, I tested the notion of commodified cosmopolitanism. This discourse seemed to be the one discourse in which most of my informants agreed upon at some level.

Notions of the Village as a commodified space cut cross all their narratives, changing only how interviewees framed the notion as positive or negative. To some, the branding of the Village as a tourist space has a direct positive impact both in the urban landscape and on their lives. To others, the neighbourhood's ongoing commodification and transformation into a tourist attraction erases parts of its gay history, rendering the space as somewhat ahistorical. Moreover, constant presence of the tourist as a subject in the neighbourhood also supports their claims of a commodified space. Mike explained that the gay Village is part of a Montreal strategy to attract people because of the how big Montreal's gay village is when compared to other American cities. For Mike the pedestrianization of Sainte-Catherine Street in the summer is a positive public policy. From his perspective, this means that the city is including the gay village as a 'big feature in the city'. He explained:

> I think that the Village is marked as being a big part of Montreal as a tourist city, because it is the largest gay village in North America. It is very well known; they do a good job to prepping it up for the summer. So, I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that the tourism industry really includes the Village in its marketing because they consider it a big feature in the city. (Mike)

For Mike, the annual process of turning Sainte-Catherine into a pedestrian-oriented street in the summer, thus valuing its businesses and contribution to the city's tourist economy, involves showcasing the neighbourhood as a cosmopolitan space, a place where tourists can be part, even if temporarily, of a diverse entourage

in the district. Samuel agrees that the pedestrianization of Saint-Catherine Street is one of the features that attract tourists to the Village. He also made an interesting comment regarding who these tourists are and where they go. He told me:

> When I go to Mado I often see like straight people. They could be like families, like even parents quite often that go to see a drag show to laugh and all that. I think you could probably say that, a generalization about the street, there're probably a lot of gay tourists, but I think that, at the same time, there are a lot of straight tourists and families that come into the street. I don't see that many children, it's usually like older people. (Samuel)

What is interesting about Samuel's description of the Village tourists is that it encompasses both gay and straight tourists. According to the literature (Cassey, 2004; Valentine, 2002), gay villages have been changing in their demographics, with different social groups discovering them as a place to go out and have fun. Casey's (2004) study of the gay village in Newcastle, UK, has shown that the influx of heterosexual women in gay Villages in search of a safe space to go out disrupted the gender dynamics in this particular environment. As a result, the increasing transformation of gay spaces into mixed leisure spaces brought discomfort to some groups within the LGBTQ community, specifically lesbians, as the influx of heterosexual women reinforced gender normativities. Samuel's observations, as well those of other informants, indicate that Montreal's gay Village is also going through a similar process. Steadn, on the other hand, raised some concerns about this movement of heterosexual individuals into the neighbourhood. His concerns revolved around the

notion of 'commodification of homosexuality', rather than just the influx of other sexualities into the neighbourhood. Steadn also explained to me how, in his opinion, the Village is not a diverse place during the day, with mainly local inhabitants and people who work in the proximities being present in the neighbourhood. However, he pointed to an ironic change in the social landscape at night. Steadn told me that at night, especially during the weekends, the neighbourhood receives different social and racial groups who come to enjoy what the neighbourhood has to offer. The nightlife of the Village assumes thus a cosmopolitan aspect, congregating and creating a space for interactions among differences:

> You get a lot of people coming at night, from a lot of different backgrounds and depends on what event or what's going on. In Sky they have a Spanish night […] where they do Spanish bands and Spanish things. In Sky they have two sections, where they have like top 40s stuff. And then you have people of colour, a lot of black music, a lot of black artists, and there're a lot of black people in another section of Sky. So, I feel like that the nightlife that comes into the neighbourhood, it's really diverse, there's a mix of everybody. (Steadn)

In that sense the interviewees' perspective on commodification was very unique to their own social experience of the neighbourhood. For a few informants the commodification of their lives and bodies in order to satisfy an international audience had a negative impact. For others, it was seen as an interesting public policy that gave them access to relate to an international audience in their own neighbourhood. It is

important to note that from the residents' perspective commodified cosmopolitanism was framed as something positive for the neighbourhood, depending how well one can be granted access to this version of the village and whether or not one has enough cultural capital to gain access to this aspect of the neighbourhood.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings of my fieldwork in Montreal's gay Village. The answers to my questions about their life experiences varied greatly, but nonetheless they helped me better understand how the neighbourhood is lived and perceived. Their reasons to move into the neighbourhood had more to do with the location of it in relation the city as well as the several amenities expected in a neighbourhood as central as the Village. Although community as also something important to my informants, they place this importance in the past as part of the history on the neighbourhood formation rather than the main reason to be there.

Most of the informants pointed to changes in the urban landscape, as gentrification seems to be working in the neighbourhood. However, despite the ongoing presence of gentrification, most of the informants still consider the neighbourhood an affordable option in the city. In regards to safety, most considered it a safe environment, although some informants mentioned ongoing cases of homophobia and the occurrence of petty crimes in throughout the neighbourhood.

Their perception of cosmopolitanism was related to an identity discourse, where half of my informants considered themselves to be a world citizen, or part of

multiple citizenship groups in the world. The commodified discourse of cosmopolitanism was the one that resonated the most amongst informants in the Village, varying only in the degree of how they perceive it or engage with it, having a positive or negative outcome to their lives, bodies and to their neighbourhood. Next, I will present my finding regarding the Mile End neighbourhood,the following chapter will have a similar structure in order to make a relational comparison feasible.

CHAPTER 4: EXPLORING COSMOPOLITANISM IN MONTREAL'S QUEER-FRIENDLY NEIGBHOURHOOD

As the literature about queer-friendly neighbourhoods has shown, new patterns of urban residency among LGBTQ individuals are now visible in some major Western cities (Gorman-Murray & Nash, 2014). In Sydney, Australia, queer individuals are choosing to live away from the city's downtown and are searching for communities not solely based on sexualities (Gorman-Murray & Waitt, 2009). In Toronto, Canada, a neighbourhood in the border of downtown is now attracting queer identified women in search of an alternative space where they can be out and about (Nash, 2013b). Montreal's Mile End could be considered one such space, a neighbourhood where sexual identification is not the main characteristic of the place, nor does it intended to be, but it is something that is shaping the neighbourhood identity.

Unlike the Village, Mile End was a neighbourhood I had some familiarity with before starting the fieldwork. I have been living in the neighbourhood since I first arrived in Montreal three years ago, and I was aware since the beginning of its reputation as a queer neighbourhood. In that sense, to navigate among different social groups was not that much different from what I usually encountered in my daily life. Apart from the local queer community, it is also possible to identify different races and ethnicities residing in the area, or simply coming to enjoy the diverse range of amenities that the Mile End has to offer. The neighbourhood is also known as

Montreal's creative hub (Rantisi & Leslie, 2010), producing a different type of cosmopolitan discourse more strongly linked to creativity.

In this chapter I shall explore the evidence from the fieldwork carried out in the neighbourhood. I will start by discussing how the interviewees defined their identities in terms of sexuality, class, race, nationality, language and citizenship. The ways in which they self-identify are important as they illustrate how social and spatial processes impact the informants' lives. Secondly, I will describe the reasons why they choose to live and remain in the neighbourhood, as this decision impacts the construction of their sexual identities, and in some cases are related to how cosmopolitanism is performed. I will then discuss how residents perceived the neighbourhood as queer-friendly, the community's identity and in what ways is the neighbourhood queer-friendliness is cosmopolitan. After, I will present a discussion about notions of safety, how informants related to it, and in what ways is safety an important aspect of a cosmopolitan space. Lastly, I will explore notions of cosmopolitan discourses and how the interviewees related to these discourses.

4.1 Queer Identity in Mile End

The sample in Mile End was also composed of middle-class individuals in their late 20s and early 30s. Unlike the Village, however, the individuals interviewed for this research were all employed in the quaternary sector, specifically fields connected to the creative class: musicians, artists, designers, researchers, and so on.

This seems to resonate with the findings of Rantisi & Leslie (2010) about the inhabitants of Mile End.

Regarding their gender identity the majority of the sample identified as being cis-women and the remainder as being cis-men. My network of informants did not put me in contact with any transgendered individuals. Their sexual identity varied greatly, with individuals identifying as lesbians, queers, gays, and bisexuals and at sometimes an intersection of two or more sexual identities. My findings are similar to what Nash (2013b) encountered in Toronto's Queer West, a population composed mostly of lesbian/queer women. The presence of lesbian/queer women in the neighbourhood could also be linked to the previous wave of lesbian occupation in the same Plateau Mont-Royal Borough. As Podmore (2006) has shown, the 1990s saw a boom in lesbian spaces of sociability in the Plateau Mont-Royal, specifically around Sant-Denis Avenue. By the turn of the millennium this population, as Podmore (2006) describe, went underground. Perhaps this population not only went underground but also moved a bit northwest to the Mile End.

4.2 Neighbourhood Choice

Amongst the reasons why interviewees have chosen to live in Mile End there were two main narratives. The first one was common to the residents who have been living in the neighbourhood for more than three years and revolves around the idea the neighbourhood's centrality, its safety and its housing aesthetics (the triplex apartment buildings) of the neighbourhood. One informant, Coco, told me that before

moving to Mile End she lived in the Village for more than 3 years. She also confided to me that she moved to the Mile End neighbourhood in search of safety, quietness and peace. Her life in the Village was filled with worries about her personal well-being. Her answer to my question, why did you move into to neighbourhood, was straightforward:

> I just like it. It's nice and clean; it's safe and quiet. I was in the Village before and there was a lot of poverty, a lot of like homeless people […] and here I don't feel like I have to worry when I'm walking by myself. There's just like families, and it's a lot more like gentrified I guess than the Village. So, I moved to get away from that. (Coco)

Another informant, Leon, who has been living in the neighbourhood for the past three years, told me he moved to the neighbourhood without knowing it was a gay-friendly area. Before moving to Mile End he lived in Laurier Village, an affluent neighbourhood that borders Mile End, and it is also part of the Plateau Mont-Royal Borough. Leon spoke about leaving the Plateau Mont-Royal further east in search of cheaper rents. Mile End, he told me, was a convenient place to move to, having cheaper rents. It was also close to where he works and to where his friends live. Mile End was thus a convenient choice, one that would not disrupt his life style. He explained:

> Why did I move there? I kinda liked the neighbourhood; I didn't really know it was super gay before I moved. It was cheap, the rent was definitely cheaper than other places at least coming from the Plateau, you know. I didn't wanna

> go so far away from where I work and where my friends live, so it was a good solution. (Leon)

Another informant, Samuel, spoke about living in the neighbourhood for the past nine years. When he first arrived in the neighbourhood he was looking for a place with cheap rents and with an easy access to downtown. He curiously told me that the reason he moved into the neighbourhood differed from the reason why he decided to stay after so many years:

> The reason why I came here is very different from why I live here now. I moved here because it was close to the 80 [bus line], which would get me down to McGill, but nine years ago the Mile End was pretty different, it wasn't like it is now. But it was nice and the rent was cheap. My rent was dead cheap back then […] and then it turned into a great neighbourhood that I wanted to stay in, so I bought this place five years ago. (Samuel)

Leon also spoke about how much the neighbourhood has changed in the past few years. He explained that the past few years saw an increase in the number of restaurants in the area as well as other amenities that are changing the physical landscape of Mile End. He commented: "I also liked the fact that there are lots of restaurants around here. I mean, you can even see the difference between now and what it was 3 years ago" (Leon).

The narrative changed a little bit when I asked the same question to individuals who moved into the neighbourhood in the past year or so. For them, Mile End represents a space where they can be among young people who might share the

same interests and desires about music, cultural practices, places of sociability, and sexual identities. Another factor that was important to some interviewees was the fact that the Mile End is known and it is home to a large population of Anglophones, composed mostly by immigrants and students (either international or from other parts of Canada), in the midst of the predominantly Francophone East of Montreal's island. Nigel, an informant that moved to Montreal from Vancouver and has been living in the Mile End for the past year told me the following: "It's just where all young people my age that are interested in the same things as me are kinda hanging out, I guess […] it seems like a place where I can immerse myself in the French community but also have like English comrades too" (Nigel). Nigel's perception of the alleged Anglophone presence in the neighbourhood seems to corroborate Rose's (1995) findings about the influence immigrants populations have brought to the Mile End, creating a linguisticly diverse environment with a larger presence of Anglophones and Allophones. According to the Canadian Census of 2006 the neighbourhood has retained its diverse linguistic profile. The amount of residents who reported their mother tongue as being only French composed 45.35%, those that reported as being only Anglophone composed 20.97%, and those whose mother tongue were any other than French or English accounted for 33.01%.

4.3 Mile End as a Queer-Friendly Neighbourhood

The notion of Mile End as a queer-friendly neighbourhood permeates all informants' narratives. According to my findings the neighbourhood attracts all sorts

of queer individuals seeking an alternative location from the Village to set up residency and to socialize. One informant, Sheila, who has been living in the Mile End for the past five years, went straight to the point when I asked her how she felt about the neighbourhood being described as queer-friendly. She simply put: "I think it is important to have, you know, queer spaces in a city. But I think that we are at the point now where we can admit that the Mile End is like the other [queer space in the city]" (Sheila). To Sheila, the Mile End is the new LGBTQ space in Montreal, in an direct opposition to the other queer space in town: the gay village. Another informant, Coco, told me she finds the neighbourhood a hub for lesbian, or individuals she identifies as lesbian. She also describes these individuals as being well-educated and different, people who enjoy things like 'biking' and 'reading'. She told me:

> I would describe it [the Mile End] as queer-friendly. I see a lot of what I perceive as being lesbians around here. They could just be like alternative straight people, who also are usually queer identified or like just not gonna gay bash you. (Coco)

Coco's perception of queer-friendliness is also very much tied to the notion of safety. Throughout our conversation she confided to me that she felt safe in the neighbourhood and also that she felt that being out about her sexuality would not bring her any physical harm. When I asked Lisa (who has been living in the neighbourhood for the past 12 years) the same question she was doubtful about the possibilities of the neighbourhood to retain its queer-friendly status. She explained:

> Yes [the neighbourhood is queer-friendly], but I think it's about to lose its status because of all these weird new yuppies coming from the suburbs, and the fact that some of the queer business are moving and closing. I don't know what's gonna happen, I feel like we are on the break, either things stay the same for a little while or this change over from hipster to deep yuppie, where people now have more money and are close minded or something. I just see like more weird confrontation. It used to be really cool and accepting around here and, for the moment, still is, but I feel like a bunch of bros, 19-year-old douchebags come to Ping Pong Club and start yelling douchie things to my friends and then we've got a problem. I think there's more of that attitude: young, aggressive and drunk. (Lisa)

Lisa's comment presents a series of interesting notions about the many changes that the neighbourhood is undergoing. Mile End is indeed at a turning point. Several queer-owned and oriented-businesses are closing their doors. She mentioned Ping Pong Club, formerly known as Royal Phoenix, one of the first and main queer establishments to open its doors in the neighbourhood. Royal Phoenix ran for almost four years and every weekend it attracted a diverse clientele of LGBTQ individuals looking for different parties than the ones found in the Village. Another important queer space that had its doors closed recently was Cabaret Playhouse, home to several queer and queer-friendly parties.

Lisa also pointed to an interesting identity that seems to be attracted to the neighbourhood: hipsters. Leon also commented about the notion of hipsters amongst the residents of the neighbourhood:

> I think the people in this neighbourhood are pretty open. I find that most of the young people that live here are hipsters or open-minded or at least… I don't think they put their gender attractions in a certain mould as well. I mean, whether they have a girlfriend, I don't think they are a 100% putting themselves in the mould of being heterosexual men. (Leon)

Nelly made an interesting point about how queer and hipster identities can sometimes overlap, making it difficult to analyze them separately.

> I think queer and hipster sort of overlap and it's kinda hard to tell often what group or not you are affiliated with. You are not affiliated with any group when you are a hipster, but still. I think there's that, the look basically. When you were saying like do queers bring diversity, it's like people who look queer walking down the street, so yeah, and hipster as well. (Nelly)

I then questioned her if she saw herself as a hipster individual. She replied that she does not feel threatened to be labelled or allocated in the hipster category, even though she does not necessarily see herself as part of the hipster community. To Nelly, being a hipster is more about an aesthetic than it is about cultural values. Ironically enough, in the end of her comment she confessed that queer and hipster are indeed intertwined. I asked her:

> D – Do you consider yourself to be a hipster?

> N – Not really, but I think some people […] you know, I mean I do have the whole skinny jeans, button-down shirt and a bike look, so I think some people might look and say hipster, and I don't mind, I really don't mind. Like some people are really defensive, I don't think it matters, I think it's all bullshit. But yeah I think I'm a little bit, I would say that I'm a bit on the hipster side, like the queer hipster: queepster […] Queer and hipster? They really go well together (Nelly)

The two identities are indeed co-habiting the Mile End. To what extent they overlap, and to what extent they need to be considered separately, is beyond the scope of this research. However, it is important to note that they seem to be overlapping in Mile End, and at times, they are mutually constructed. Moreover, based on the sample I built in the neighbourhood, this identity seems to be present in their lives as either a part of their own identities or part of their social networks.

4.4 Notions of Safety

For the majority of the interviewees, Mile End is a safe neighbourhood when compared to the rest of the city. Except for one informant, none of them said that they have suffered nor witnessed homophobia or transphobia in the neighbourhood. They do not fear for their safety or well-being. Where they differed in was regarding the extent to which Montreal can be considered a safe space. For some, the entirety of the municipality of Montreal can be considered a safe space; for others, there are some neighbourhoods in the city where queers might not feel at ease at certain periods of

the day or night. The sensation of unsafeness is due to a series of factors and can have different impacts according to interviewees' class, race or gender expression. For instance, when I asked Nelly this question she compared Mile End to the neighbourhood where she works, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG). This is what she told me:

> Yeah, it [Mile End] is safer than some areas in the city. I mean, yeah, like next to my work place in NDG, for example, there are places where you wouldn't necessarily wanna walk at night. They are just like not lit, there's no one there, it's sort of like known as a place not ideal to be in. Yeah, it is safer than some places in the city. I don't think it's a really dangerous city to be in, but yeah, I think that the Mile End is a really safe place. (Nelly)

Coco made an interesting remark about this issue by relating the idea of safety with the notion of class. According to Coco, although most areas of the city can be considered safe, including Mile End, there are probably gentrified areas in the city where safety apparatus is more present through surveillance technologies or simply through the erasure of poverty altogether, like in newly redeveloped areas. For her, the sensation of increased safety, therefore, is a direct result of a neighbourhood's social-class status. In Coco's own words:

> Yeah, it [Mile End] is probably safer than most areas in the city, yeah, probably one of the safest places. Maybe like Griffintown or like by the Old Port, where all the rich people are, might be safer. (Coco)

Laurie was more cautious about discourses of safety in Mile End. As Mike did when I asked him the same question about the Village, Laurie put the concept of safety into perspective. Laurie explained that the problems she experiences while living in the city are closer to annoyances rather than lack of safety. She does not feel immediately threatened by the people she encounters in her daily life, but she does perceive some situations as annoyances she has to endure. When I asked her if she considered any neighbourhood in Montreal to be unsafe she answered:

> No, definitely not. I could've said that before traveling ever, but after having travelled no. I mean Montreal isn't unsafe at all. Definitely, like, there're things that are annoying, I'm pretty sure there are parts of town… even just walking on Crescent [street] women would be catcalled and stuff like that, but it's not necessarily dangerous, it's just annoying. (Laurie)

4.5 Cosmopolitanism in Mile End

When I asked Mile End informants how they felt about the notion of world citizenship, the answers were quite interesting and there was no consensus about how they perceive the idea. Half of the interviewees felt that the concept did resonate with their life experiences, while, for the other half, the concept translated and embodied ideas of colonization and social privileges. Leon, for instance, considered himself to be a 'global person', in part due to his experiences living in different countries as well as his cultural background (born in Israel to an American father and a Dutch Mother, and raised in the USA). For Leon, his ability to move from and within different

countries gave him a sense of belonging to more than just one nation, therefore, performing some sort of global identity. Leon told me:

> I would probably identify myself as a global person, ...not necessarily consider myself as American or Canadian or Francophone […] I do have a side that's Mediterranean, where I was born, as Israeli specifically, whatever entails with that. But, I also lived in the United States; a lot of the social feel of the place definitely got stuck with me. (Leon)

Samuel responded in a similar vein by specifically arguing that he is not a patriotic person. Samuel's perspective of world citizenship opposes the idea of nationalism. He spoke about feeling neither like a Canadian nor a Quebecker, but like something else. He also considered that even though he does not identify with these two categories (Canadian and Quebecker), he is, in a way, stuck with them. Samuel succinctly responded: "Yeah, for sure. I don't consider myself Quebecois or Canadian. Well, I do, but I'm not patriotic in any way" (Samuel). On a different note, Laurie made a critical connection between the notion of world citizenship and colonialism. Like Leon, she comes from different backgrounds: her family's history is tied with places that were historically colonized (like Haiti and Jamaica) and also places that were producers of settler colonialism (like Spain). In that sense her understanding of world citizenship is built on a critique of how people coming from less privileged places do not have the same access to the notion of citizenship as people coming from places considered developed or as producers of colonialism. Her

answer to my question about if she considered herself to be a world citizen was quite critical:

> Not really. But when I really think about it sometimes I see myself as a product of colonialism, which is pretty depressing. Definitely, because Haiti is a place of colonization and my parents' backgrounds are partially from Spain and Jamaica and other countries, which were, like, colonizers and colonized, so it's interesting. (Laurie)

Lisa was also troubled by the idea of world citizenship. She started her answer by bluntly saying she hated the concept itself. After a pause for reflection that lasted a few seconds she continued her answer by acknowledging she is indeed a world citizen, but almost as if by default. To Lisa, this notion is intertwined with notions of social, spatial and national privilege. She told me that even though she considered herself to be a poor Canadian, when compared with other social realities she is quite fortunate, and her social position/nationality would give her access to being a world citizen. She also implied that the notion in itself is tied to the possibility of one being mobile, moving freely from one place to another, and therefore having the means (capital) to do so. In her own words:

> Nah, I hate that, and I don't know why. I'm from here. I'm not a citizen of the world. Why do I hate that? […] To be honest, I've never thought about this concept to be a world citizen. Yes, I am a world citizen; I think my issues are with globalization and coming from a very privileged place. I'm a poor artist, but like I have so little, and my family worries about me, and I'm squeaking

> by living like hand-to-mouth, it is hard for me to live day-to-day as an artist, I do not have enough money. But I'm still in such a huge place of privilege, it is hard to see the rest of the world and claim any kind belonging to it. This is where I'm from. I think is cocky to say that, because it kinda feels like I can afford plane tickets. I have issues with that. (Lisa)

4.6 Mile End as a Cosmopolitan Queer Neighbourhood

The majority of the informants told me they felt like they were living in an ethnically diverse neighbourhood. Most were able to identify different cultures (such as Orthodox Jews, Latinos, Europeans, etc.) living, and for the most party peacefully, amongst the queer residents. Laurie told me that in her own street she could find different cultures living peacefully together. She also alluded to the diversity in terms of languages, with residents in the neighbourhood who speak neither English nor French. She explained:

> I live on a street where there's the most, the biggest number of Hasidic Jews in Montreal. My neighbours, there's a lot of Italians in my neighbourhood, on my street. My immediate neighbours I don't know where they are from, but probably somewhere around India or Bangladesh. Where else? It's the main diversity I see every day. I guess there's a big Greek community in this area, like on Park [Avenue], tons of Greek restaurants. That's all I think I can identify on a daily basis, but I would say yes. There's a lot of Francophone and Anglophone diversity as well; it's pretty mixed. Within my neighbours

some people don't even speak either, so we communicate with smiles and gestures. It happens. (Laurie)

When I posed the question about if they considered that they live in an ethnically diverse neighbourhood, some informants were confused by the question because of the interconnection and interdependency of the concepts of ethnicity and race. In that sense, some interviewees did consider Mile End to be ethnically diverse but not racially so. For instance, Coco told me she sees Mile End as a predominantly white space. She answered the question being cautious and honest about her difficulty comprehending the subject:

I don't know… well, I guess Orthodox Jews, yeah, that's an ethnicity, right? So, there're lots of Orthodox Jews. As far as like racial, not so much. Kinda up by Park [Avenue] there's a big Indian community, but Mile End is probably pretty white. I mean, you see people of color everywhere, but there's more, I would say, in other areas of the city than the Mile End probably. There are lots of white people in the Plateau and the Mile End. (Coco)

Leon had a similar perception of diversity in the neighbourhood. He spoke about not seeing a 'colourful scheme' of people in the street on a daily basis. He, like Coco, was cautious about the differences between ethnicity and race stating that most of the different ethnicities he perceived in the neighbourhood are usually Caucasian. Even when he mentioned ethnicities that may be associated with blackness (such as Brazilians), he described the individuals associated with that ethnicity as being white. This could mean that to some extent the new immigrant residents that are choosing to

inhabit Mile End are part of an economically privileged class, such as the Brazilian upper middle class who are more likely to be white[2], thus blurring and intersecting notions of class, race, nationality and ethnicity. According to Leon, Mile End cannot be seen as completely diverse:

> No, well that's the thing. Ethnically yeah, you have different kinds of Caucasians I would say. You have Italians, you have people from France, you have Anglophones from Western Canada, from the US. You have Spanish people, you have Brazilians, and you have Israelis. At the same time, you have Orthodox Jews too, I mean there's all that, but when it comes to more of a colourful scheme I wouldn't necessarily say that there's lots of black people, African descent, or Caribbean, not at least that I've experienced or at least I've seen it. (Leon)

Nelly was a bit more direct than Leon in terms of pinpointing the socio-economic character of the neighbourhood. She affirmed that Mile End is indeed an ethnically diverse neighbourhood, however she believes that when it comes to the socio-economic profile of residents, racial diversity seems to disappear. According to Nelly the neighbourhood is 'diverse in a way and not diverse in another.' She explained:

> There are people who come from different places, I don't know if I would call that ethnically diverse. I mean there is like the store just below my place, they are all Portuguese, you know, when you have stores that are specifically

[2] For more on the relation of race and class in Brazilian society see Freyre & Onís (1980)

> affiliated with one group of people, I don't know, you can get into the debate about if that's an ethnic thing, an ethnic identity or not, I'm not sure. So, there are people who come from different places, and whose parents came from different places. I think it's very diverse when it comes to that. I think maybe it is less and less socio-economically diverse. I think people of lower socio-economic status are kicked out; there is less room for them in the area right now. So, I mean it's diverse in a way and not diverse in another. I think racially it's not very diverse. (Nelly)

The majority of my informants admitted to engaging with other cultures in the neighbourhood. More than just engaging with difference they narrated experiences of absorbing or feeling part of different cultures even if momentarily. Street fairs are a part of the neighbourhood life, especially in the warmer months of spring and summer. Greeks, Italians and Orthodox Jews frequently close down streets in the neighbourhood in order to celebrate their religious or cultural holidays. Sheila commented on how this common collective activity is part of the neighbourhood life, and that by participating in it, one might 'absorb' or 'pick up the nuances' of the different ethnic groups that inhabit the neighbourhood. She told me:

> For sure, I mean, yeah, you notice […] there's so many holidays here that are associated to different cultures […] there's always these street fairs that are either Italian or Greek days, just the neighbourhood being happy. Yeah, I guess you do absorb or at least pick up on a lot of nuances of each group. (Sheila)

Laurie commented on how different worlds can sometimes be combined and how they can produce different outcomes and interactions between distinct groups. For her, these interactions shape the neighbourhood's cultural identity, an identity that she shares and embraces. She told me about how the indie music scene sometimes mixes with the Jewish scene. She also told me something similar happens with the queer community, sometimes the queer community also mixes with the indie music scene, a moment where they exchange life experiences by engaging and learning with one another. When I asked Laurie if she felt like she could learn and absorb aspects of other cultures by engaging with them she replied:

> Yeah, definitely. I feel like all neighbourhoods have a culture of their own and I feel like I'm definitely a part of that one [...] I see it around fellow musicians being in Jewish choirs, not specifically Hassidic choirs, but singing at the Synagogue, for instance, which I think is an interesting bridge between two communities that tend not to speak to each other: indie rock and religion. Same with the queer community, tons of people in that community are musicians and it's a place where both worlds kinda meet. It's nice. (Laurie)

Coco confessed that during one of the many Hassidic Jewish community street parties she felt so intrigued by what she was hearing and seeing that she felt compelled to research their customs. It was a moment that she felt closer to this community even without being present or even welcomed by them. Informants have told me that the Hassidic Jewish community in the neighbourhood is usually very closed, and does not socialize with individuals outside their own community.

However, being in Mile End, the community is bound to occupy the same space as other social groups, even if unintentional and momentary. Coco narrated her experience of being curious about the Hassidic community:

> Like the other day I was researching what Orthodox Jews believe in and what they do just because there was a big […] it was one of their festivals, I don't know exactly which one, but they were singing in Yiddish outside of my window and I was just like 'hmm I wonder what's going on'. So, I researched what they do and then I got into like their customs and what the women do and that kinda thing. I probably wouldn't have gone out of my way to look that up had I not had it like happening outside my window, you know. (Coco)

But sometimes the roles can be reversed. Nelly, who was born and Israel and immigrated to Canada when she was 18 years old, told me that some of her friends are from other parts of Quebec or Canada, such as Lac Saint-Jean, that means that to her social circle of friends she is the cultural other, the one not born and not intrinsically part of the cultural reality of Canada and Montreal. At the same time, she also recognized that different interactions do occur in the neighbourhood through the most mundane interactions such as recipe exchanges in a supermarket or a brief conversation about the history of a specific foreign item one can encounter in the many small run markets. She attributes this diversity and the possibilities that come with it to the fun aspect of living in the neighbourhood. She commented:

> I think maybe I'm the other in this story. I mean, you know, just like in more of a superficial level, when you go into a store and there's a product you don't

> know and the person in the store tells you what it is and you are like 'oh, you can put this in this kind of food', or 'it's related to this and this tradition', I mean, that definitely exists and it's a nice thing […] subconsciously I think the fact that there is some diversity is something that definitely enhances the […] it's like yeah, it's like a part of the reason why it's fun to live here and it's interesting to live here, yeah, I think so. (Nelly)

These moments of interaction with different cultures, through a simple conversation on a small ethnic market, or simply watching other cultures taking to street to celebrate their faith, illustrate how in the neighbourhood residents are drawn to and engage with difference. When they engage or participate in this demonstration of difference, they absorb and bring with them, even if momentarily, parts of other cultures, performing, therefore, a personal expression of cosmopolitanism. They all agreed with the statement that the neighbourhood is in some way or another diverse, and this diversity and their willingness to engage with it is what allow this form of cosmopolitanism to be performed.

4.7 Neighbourhood Change or Commodified Cosmopolitanism?

When I asked informants about changes in both the social and physical landscape in the last few years, only those who have been living in the neighbourhood for more than three years were able to pinpoint them. Among the changes identified by the interviewees were the rise in rents and also the changes in the residents' profiles, with the influx of people of different ages and higher socio-economic

profiles. Another change most of them noticed was the increase in the number of tourists that visit Mile End in search of the uniqueness and creativity associated with the neighbourhood. Tourists have become a common subject in streets and coffee shops in the area and some of them are queer tourists that come to explore, celebrate and consume the queerness of the neighbourhood. When I asked Sheila if there is a queer international audience who comes to the Mile End she told me:

> Tourists who come here who are queer know about the Mile End and they know about the Plateau. I know because I've met people who are tourists, who said so, like 'yeah, it's written in the book', or 'we know people who went there and that's what they told us'. So, yeah, I definitely think it's sort of a place that really attracts tourists in general and queer tourists as well. (Sheila)

The tourists, whether queer or not, also come to neighbourhood in search of the area's creativity. The neighbourhood has been associated as the city's hub of creativity. Work by Rantisi and Leslie (2010) explores this aspect by investigating designers and small art-oriented businesses in the neighbourhood. The creative aura that emanates from the neighbourhood is also found in local businesses like coffee shops and restaurants where different populations come to enjoy a coffee and to socialize (Rantisi & Leslie, 2010). According to my informants, the attempt by the city to brand the neighbourhood as a creative space, part of the creative economy, seems to be working. Laurie told me she sees the neighbourhood as unique, something that she connects to the concentration of creative minds. From her perspective, this creative environment is refreshing and quite different from other

neighbourhoods in Montreal and even other cities in the country. When I asked her what attracts tourists to the neighbourhood she told me:

> I think they definitely seek uniqueness, but also [...] From most people I hear from it's definitely the fact it's a creative neighbourhood, and I think that's a big change from some other cities or neighbourhoods and I think that's refreshing I guess. (Laurie)

Leon, on the other hand, does not think the neighbourhood does a good job attracting tourists. He told me that the neighbourhood remains a secret among Montrealers and queers, and that he is quite happy with the situation as it is. From his perspective, Mile End is still a neighbourhood made for its residents' enjoyment. The only exception to his interpretation was the culinary scene in the neighbourhood, which, according to him, has seen a boom in the past few years. He explained that Mile End has become a destination for 'foodies' that invade the neighbourhood's restaurants every weekend morning for brunch. He told me:

> I don't think tourists know very much about the Mile End; it's kinda of a hidden secret, and I kinda like it being that way, there's some sort of quietness, not needing to explain to tourists 'oh yeah, this is the Greek Church' or 'oh yeah, this is where you can find great burgers'. But when I have friends coming from out of town I tend to bring them up here at least for dinner or at least for a coffee. And, for the residents of Montreal, I think when the Mile End became a culinary revolution in a sense it brought people up here especially on weekends. The brunches are full. (Leon)

The commodification of the neighbourhood seems to be an ongoing practice, although at a slower pace when compared to the village and mostly based on the creative label the neighbourhood seems to carry, in opposition to the commodification of sexual identities found in the gay village. Some interviewees reported that flocks of tourists are now visible in the neighbourhood and gay tourism seems to be a part of this movement. Other informants pointed to the neighbourhood's recent increase in the number of restaurants as evidence that there is a demand for this type of business that arises in part from tourists, and is slowly becoming a culinary reference in a city that is already known for its culinary tradition.

To most informants, tourism activity, however, does not seem to be connected with the desire to consume sexual identities that inhabit the area. In their judgment, tourism seems to be motivated by the creative aura the neighbourhood seems to emanate. Although queer tourists and tourists in general do come to party in specific nights and events that might be queer or not, it is not the central aspect of the cosmopolitanism performed and consumed in the neighbourhood. According to my informants, the creative brand already associated and strongly welcomed by the residents is the motor behind an incipient commodification of the neighbourhood. However, in their view, neither residents nor tourists are yet performing a commodified version of cosmopolitanism in Mile End.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the findings of my fieldwork in the Mile End. The answers to my questions about their life experiences varied greatly, but nonetheless they helped me better understand how the neighbourhood is experienced and perceived by young, middle-class queer identified individuals. Their reasons for moving into the neighbourhood varied according to how long the informant had lived in the neighbourhood. For those living in Mile End for more than three years the reason to move there revolved around the neighbourhood's centrality, its safety and the housing aesthetics of the neighbourhood. For those living in the neighbourhood for less than one year, the reason to move there was related to the perception of the neighbourhood as being populated by young and different people, most of which are part of the quaternary sector, working in the fields of music, design, research, technology, and so on. And the Mile End is the physical representation of such ideology, because it connects my informants to the creative, young, middle class and sexual sub-cultures that find a home in the area. This is exactly the reason why most of the informants highlighted that the neighbourhood is fairly populated by a young generation and it is also home to identities usually associated with youth and creativity: hipster and queers.

The notion of the neighbourhood being queer-friendly is present in all informants' narratives: they all agreed that, at some level, Mile End is being populated and attracts queer-identified individuals. Some informants also associated the neighbourhood with another identity: hipsters. According to some interviewees,

this identity is present in the Mile End, and sometimes it overlaps with the queer identity, being part of most informant's lifestyle or social networks.

Most of the informants acknowledge the neighbourhood as being a safe space in general, and specifically for queer individuals. Almost all informants told me they have never felt or witnessed homophobia in the neighbourhood. Although most informants believe the neighbourhood is diverse in some way, some were careful to say that diversity might operate in some categories, but not others. Some pointed to the fact the neighbourhood seems to house different ethnicities, but not necessarily different races, as whiteness, according to their perspective, seems to be predominant in the neighbourhood.

The discourses of cosmopolitanism that resonated the most amongst informants in the neighbourhood were identity and personal. The identity discourse, where individuals would have multiple belonging echoed with half of the sample, as their middle-class status allow them to be mobile and to visit, be and feel part of other cultures. The other half was highly critical to the concept though, connecting it with access to (or lack of thereof) social privileges and colonialism. The personal discourse of cosmopolitanism was the one that resonated the most amongst informants in the Mile End, as some believe that the presence of different cultures does have an impact in their lives. They all agreed with the statement that the neighbourhood is in some way or another diverse, and this diversity and their willingness to engage with it is what allows this form of cosmopolitanism to be performed.

In the next chapter I shall compare the findings in both neighbourhoods, looking for commonalities and differences in terms of how cosmopolitanism is performed and perceived by the residents of both spaces.

CHAPTER 5: COMPARING COSMOPOLITAN DISCOURSES IN MONTREAL'S SEXUAL LANDSCAPES

Studies of cosmopolitanism have long recognized that the concept can operate at different scales, from the national and urban to local organizations and neighbourhoods (Beck & Sznaider, 2006; Robbins, 1998). The findings presented in the previous chapters reinforce this notion by interrogating how different cosmopolitan discourses materialize in LGBT neighbourhoods according to their resident's perspective. In that sense, cosmopolitanism does operate in both the gay village and Mile End. However, it does so in distinct ways by engaging with different cosmopolitan discourses.

The findings collected in the gay Village resonate with the literature about cosmopolitanism in traditional gay spaces. As Binnie and Skeggs (2004) found in the case of Manchester's gay village, the most common form of cosmopolitan discourse among residents of Montreal's gay village was the commodified version. Residents of Mile End, on the other hand, did not follow a similar path. The literature about queer-friendly neighbourhoods is fairly new and has not reached the point of interrogating whether such spaces are indeed producing cosmopolitan discourses or what kind. In that sense, the research finding about Mile End do not have a parallel in the academic literature on LGBTQ neighbourhoods. It is precisely the lack of research about cosmopolitanism in queer-friendly neighbourhoods that makes a comparative study necessary in order to relationally comprehend these two spaces in Montreal.

In a recent piece about comparative queer urbanism, Binnie (2014) argues that most scholars devoted to urban sexualities have focused their attentions to the study of territorialisation of same-sex desires, and consequently overlooked possible connections between different cities and their sexual politics. In his critique, Binnie (2014) followed Ward's (2008) call of a return to a comparative urban tradition, by recognizing, as Robinson (2011: 4) did, "the locatedness of much of what passes for universal and substantially extending the geographical and analytical scope of theorizing." Although this research focuses on a comparative analysis of different spatialities in the same city, it does so in a way that recognizes the local aspects of such neighbourhoods by drawing upon the available academic literature and by critically engaging with it. If traditional gay spaces were studied and framed as commodified cosmopolitan spaces, the same cannot be said about queer-friendly neighbourhoods. Most importantly, the findings hereby presented point to an understanding of Mile End as a queer-friendly neighbourhood marked by an identity discourse of cosmopolitanism rather than a commodified version, which was the case for the city's gay village.

5.1 Confronting the Data

The data collected in both neighbourhoods described two unique neighbourhood experiences involving LGBTQ populations in the city of Montreal. After the data was carefully treated I realized that the individuals selected via snowball sampling shared communalities. Some of these common features were not

random. I specifically selected individuals in a particular age range and a particular social class in order to make this comparison feasible. By selecting common features, a relational comparison of the neighbourhoods was possible; a similar population formed by non-heterosexual individuals with local specificities that produced different realities.

The 20 informants who participated in this study were primarily in their late 20s and early 30s. All of the informants declared being part of the middle class, with a variety of middle class stratum. However, only four individuals, two in each neighbourhood, declared being part of the lower middle class. In that sense, the research looked deep in the life and urban experience of LGBTQ middle class young adults and how they perceived and experienced cosmopolitanism in urban neighbourhoods. My interest on this specific target group relies on their means to be mobile, their access to specific social networks and to networks of knowledge, as well as their capability to have monetary access to goods and experiences involving different cultures. Social class seems to be a decisive factor defining the cosmopolitan subject, reason why it was a central aspect in the design stage of this study. To a lesser extent, some other features such as nationality and 'race' also cut across both groups, with most declaring being either Canadian or American and also declaring themselves as either White or Caucasian. The open-ended questionnaire presented a variety of answers that, at some moments, revealed similarities among the residents of both neighbourhoods, showing a common interpretation of the urban reality of Montreal.

In terms of the reasons why the informants have chosen to live in both neighbourhoods the common narrative was the location of the neighbourhood in relation to the rest of the city, and especially to downtown. The idea of an experience of queer or LGBT neighbourhood seems to have less of an importance today than it was 30 years ago when the first wave of gay men started to settle in the neighbourhood now known as the gay village. Even the queer-friendly aspect of Mile End seems to be a secondary reason to move there. What my sample revealed was that the queer-friendliness in Mile End is a reason to stay, but not necessarily a reason to move there. In a sense, the same can be said about the Village, where most interviewees stating that they chose to be there mostly for its strategic location in the urban fabric.

The notion of safety was one element that varied greatly from one place to another. In Mile End, safety was not a preoccupation in the daily lives of the interviewees. To some informants, the reason they moved into the neighbourhood was precisely because the Mile End is a quiet and safe space, both from general crimes and from societal homophobia. In the Village, on the other hand, the notion of safety was, to some extent, contested. Some informants expressed concerns about their personal well-being, citing cases of homophobic violence in the streets of the Village. Others were more worried about petty crimes in the neighbourhood. In Mile End, on the other hand, none of my informants expressed worries about petty crimes, homophobia and transphobia or more broadly about their own personal safety.

Although the interviewees in both neighbourhoods linked their desire to live where they do to a spatial convenience and lower rental prices, they all agreed that the LGBTQ experience in both spaces was important and relevant to their lives. In the village, informants recognized the historic importance of the neighbourhood as a space of resistance and congregation for sexual minorities. They also spoke about the symbolic importance that this neighbourhood retains. The informants in Mile End also recognized the queer atmosphere of the neighbourhood and, according to their perceptions, the importance of having different queer establishments with a more diverse approach than the ones found in the Village. This lack of motivation to live in an LGBT area points to a paradox whereby although sexual identity does not seem to be enough to intentionally foster neighbourhood formation in this particular urban context, it is something that is valued by residents once a neighbourhood achieves a status of queer-friendliness.

Another point of convergence in both spaces was the ongoing process of gentrification. Residents in the Village pointed to the process acting not only on the housing market but also on the commercial spaces of the district. Two informants in the Village confessed to being in the process of displacement during the period of interviews, and others pointed to the ongoing gentrification of the neighbourhood's nightlife, changing not only the landscape but also the clientele of local businesses. However, since some of the informants did recognize that rents in the Village are somewhat affordable, this implies that gentrification is perhaps acting in a less direct way, through marginal pathways, as described by Rose (1985, 1996). In Mile End,

residents reported being worried about the process and how it will affect them in a medium and long term. Their worries also revolved around an increase in new types of consumers from other parts of the city that comes to participate in the neighbourhood's nightlife, creating anxiety among some queer residents who feel less at ease sharing the neighbourhood with the young heterosexual clientele of local nightclubs. This anxiety was also reported by some interviewees in the gay village, notable among those that are part of lower middle-class.

The perception of world citizenship was quite similar in both neighbourhoods, with half of the sample accepting and celebrating the notion and the other half criticizing the idea itself as a product of either colonialism or social privilege. What is important to stress with the idea of an identity discourse of cosmopolitan is that it is not necessarily related to a local urban experience. For most of the informants who declared being and feeling like world citizens, the notion is more tied with their personal experience abroad and with their capability to move from and within different countries and cultures. It is no surprise, then, that in both neighbourhoods this notion would be similar for those who embrace it and for those who criticize it. The personal cosmopolitan discourse was the only one that seemed to resonate in a similar fashion in both neighbourhoods; although the informants in Mile End were more critical about what it means to be a world citizen. The interviewees in Mile End were not only more prone to criticize the concept, but to relate it to other social processes such as colonialism and social and spatial privileges.

The personal discourse of cosmopolitan, linked with openness to cultural diversity, resonated better with the residents of the Mile End. Although residents of both neighbourhoods did recognize the presence of different ethnicities both living and occupying their neighbourhoods, the informants in the Village had more problems identifying such ethnicities and social groups than residents in Mile End. Most informants in Mile End openly described and pointed to a somewhat complex list of different ethnicities in the neighbourhood. They were also more prone to have a critical look at the notions of ethnicity and race, pointing out how these two categories are mutually constituted but are not necessarily the same. By recognizing the presence of 'others' in their neighbourhood, the informants in Mile End were more likely to have a closer relationship with the difference as well as to absorb parts of other cultures and traditions in their daily lives. This aspect of cosmopolitanism did not resonate as much with the residents of the Village, who described the neighbourhood diversity arising from the rest of the population and not from within the local LGBTQ community. Another reason, perhaps, is in part because of the reported whiteness found locally as well as its touristic character, where 'difference' does come to the neighbourhood but in the form of a temporary visitor (either straight or not) making it harder to have a closer relationship, and thus absorb parts of other cultures.

The commodified discourse, on the other hand, seemed to resonate better with the population in the village rather than the Mile End. This notion of cosmopolitanism entails the commodification of the 'other' and the different. My findings in the village

point to a cosmopolitanism based on the commodification of sexual identities, where they are sold to an external audience as an authentic part of the neighbourhood, ready to be visited, appreciated and later consumed. As the informants reported, the neighbourhood has been branded as iconic in the city of Montreal due to its sexual diversity; consequently this has attracted a variety of tourists. In Mile End, the tourism, although also present, is found at a smaller scale and the commodification of local cultures, and specifically of sexual identities, is not as massive or present. What it seems to be the case in the neighbourhood is that everything is in the process of being commodified: sexual identities, cultural identities, contra-cultural identities, and so on. What seems to be interesting about residents' perception of this type of cosmopolitanism in the village is how some see this as having positive effects on their lives, as they have enough cultural and social capital to engage with tourists from a position where they are not the "other", and therefore, they are not being commodified themselves, but actively participating in the consumption of other locals. This finding contrasts with those of both Radice (2010) and Binnie and Skeggs (2004) who interpret commodified cosmopolitanism as inherently negative. This type of cosmopolitan discourse does indeed have a pervasive impact on the lives of less privileged individuals and is indeed working through a neoliberal framework. Such negative aspects were mentioned and criticized by some of the interviewees in the village, many of whom complained about being part of the spectacle created specifically for touristic consumption.

In this sense, for the residents of the village, the neighbourhood acquires a degree of cosmopolitanism because some residents see themselves as cosmopolitan individuals at a personal level, and the neighbourhood congregates multiple individuals with similar experiences: well-traveled, connoisseurs of world culture, and with a worldly background. At the same time, most residents decode the neighbourhood as a space that attracts tourists and that is marketed as an international attraction by government bodies. The pedestrianization of Sainte-Catherine Street is perceived by the residents as the manifestation of such public policy to attract the gaze of a class of tourists. The residents in Mile End share the same notion of personal cosmopolitanism, which could be explained in part due to the middle-class characteristics of all informants, having the means to be mobile, the knowledge of different cultures and their background. They also related closely with notions of identity cosmopolitanism in that they felt that they were connected to the different ethnicities found in the neighbourhood and that they absorbed some of their cultural traits.

5.2 Conclusion

Although Mile End and the Village are two distinct neighbourhoods, with different histories and populations, in this research they were both perceived and described as cosmopolitan spaces. What kind of cosmopolitan discourse that most resonates amongst residents is what differentiates them in regards to the aforementioned notion. Montreal's gay Village, as most of the gay Villages described

in the academic literature (Binnie & Skeggs 2004; Richardson, 2005), was framed as a commodified cosmopolitan space, where sexual identities are being commercialized and consumed by an international audience in the form of tourists. In Mile End, on the other hand, the form of cosmopolitan discourse that resonates most with the residents was identity cosmopolitanism, where their engagement with other cultures and their absorption of traces of different cultures and practices seems to be the discourse mostly performed.

If these two types of cosmopolitan discourse separate both neighbourhoods, the personal discourse seems to bring them together at some level. Their experience as middle-class individuals may approach them where other forms of identities (sexual, politics, etc.) may further drive them apart. The capability that comes with a class status (e.g. mobility, social and cultural capital, purchase power, etc.) seems to approach these individuals with the discourse of personal cosmopolitanism, where they see themselves as part, or in a way interconnected, with the rest of the world.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I interrogated and explored the links between sexual identity construction and cosmopolitanism discourses in two neighbourhoods. I used Montreal as a case study by comparing two different types of LGBTQ neighbourhoods to illustrate how this operates. The choice for two neighbourhoods populated by LGBTQ individuals is because it reflects the contemporary reality of LGBTQ landscapes in North American post-industrial cities. Throughout this thesis, I argued that the residents of both the gay village and in the Mile End districts are enunciating and performing cosmopolitan discourses in their production of sexual identity neighbourhoods. To what extent the residents of each neighbourhood perceive their own space as cosmopolitan varies, but they are all in one way or another performing some type of cosmopolitan discourse as part of their performance of sexual identity. However, I argue that the type of discourse being enunciated and performed changes according the neighbourhood under analysis. The type of discourses utilized are associated and dependent upon other social and urban processes, such as gentrification, and are also associated with the amount of social and cultural capital one has to navigate between both neighbourhoods. In that vein, in order for a cosmopolitan discourse to make sense, it is imperative that it is associated with other aspects of sexual identity and neighbourhood life, including, for example, safety, gentrification processes, and the construction of particular LGBTQ urban identities.

Gay spaces in major metropolitan areas have been an urban reality for quite some time now. At first, these spaces were seen and decoded by society at large as

part of an immoral geography of Western cities. The LGBTQ movement was able to change the urban narrative of immorality created in the 1970 and 1980s by one that presented such spaces and residents as a strong feature in any modern city through the idea of diversity. The commodification and later the implementation of a cosmopolitan label followed and thrived on the idea of diversity and creativity, leading to the production of cosmopolitan spaces. By the turn of the millennial, gaybourhoods were branded and marketed as cosmopolitan spaces, where tourists could go in search of a space and exotic identities to consume. The new millennium also witnessed the arrival of new urban patterns amongst LGBTQ individuals. Queer-friendly neighbourhoods arose as an alternative to traditional gaybourhoods, formed mostly by young queer identified individuals in search of a queer urban experience beyond the gay Village. Recent studies have shown how these newly-formed neighbourhoods are home to a young, creative, and mobile population, raising the question if these neighbourhoods are perhaps also cosmopolitan. This research engaged with this notion and interrogated what kind of cosmopolitan discourses are being performed in Montreal's gay Village and Mile End neighbourhoods.

This research, then, addressed a gap in the academic literature about queer urban experiences and cosmopolitanism, more specifically about what kind of cosmopolitan discourses are being performed in queer-friendly neighbourhoods. Moreover, it also compared the discourses found in such spaces with discourses produced and performed in a traditional gayborhood in the city of Montreal, looking for any type of cosmopolitan discourse other than its commodified form. It is

important to notice that these gaps in the literature are in no way due to a lack of academic rigor in the studies considered and utilized in my framework. Since the literature on queer-friendly neighbourhood is fairly new, as is the revival of comparative studies, it is expected to find gaps as new studies are being produced concomitantly with the present one.

Throughout the chapters, I argued that the residents of both the gay Village and the Mile End are enunciating and performing cosmopolitan discourses. To what extent each neighbourhood residents perceived their own space as cosmopolitan varied, but they are all in one way or another performing some type of cosmopolitan discourse. The type of discourses utilized is associated and dependent upon other social and urban processes, such as gentrification, and are also associated with the amount of social and cultural capital one has access to in order to navigate amongst both neighbourhoods. In that vein, in order for a cosmopolitan discourse to make sense, it was imperative to correlate them with other aspects of the residents' social life.

As Binnie and Skeggs (2004) have already argued some time ago, cosmopolitanism is a highly contested idea. Granted that the authors were speaking about the ongoing notions of the term in the academic realm, I confirm this statement by analyzing how my informants were very much troubled and confused with the term itself. Even though I avoided to explicit the term in the questions I asked them, the notion was sometimes quite evident. They were aware that the conversation was about not only diversity and neighbourhood changes, but also about cosmopolitanism.

This indicates that the term has broken through the realm of academia and is now spoken and performed in everyday lives by ordinary people. This is perhaps the reason why Radice (2010) proposes that we should understand the concept beyond the realm of politics or commodification, an approach adopted mainly by Binnie and Skeggs (2004), buy proposing a framework for understanding how the concept deeply impacts one's Self.

The data collected in both the gay village and Mile End pointed to a common narrative regarding the identity discourse of cosmopolitanism. Most of the interviewees in both neighbourhoods performed and identified with cosmopolitanism through their life experiences in different places and different cultures. By having the means to be mobile and to consume new places and cultures they broaden their notions of citizenship. The possibility of being mobile is probably a common characteristic due to the fact that all my informants are part of the middle class. Class status is thus an important aspect of mobility, and consequently of cosmopolitanism. However, Mile End residents presented a more critic notion of the idea of identity cosmopolitanism. For some in the neighbourhood, the idea is not only a reflection of social privileges, but also a perpetuation of colonialism, by upholding differences and oppressions. Although those who negatively interpreted cosmopolitan identity were a minority amongst the research sample, it is important to point out that in Radice's (2010) research, this aspect of cosmopolitanism was seen as being inherently positive. This indicates that class position might be the differential between negative and positive experiences of identity cosmopolitanism.

Regarding other forms of cosmopolitan discourse, the notion of a personal cosmopolitanism resonated most with the residents in Mile End. For them the different cultures that live in the neighbourhood, alongside the queer residents, are perceived in a positive way. They seem to embrace this diversity by either participating or engaging with them. My findings point to a positive exchange between those who consider themselves to be the 'standard' Canadian citizen and those who consider themselves to be the cultural 'Other'. In the gay village, on the other hand, the notion of commodified cosmopolitanism was the one that resonated the most amongst my informants. In one way or another, they all noticed changes both in the physical landscape through new establishments and in the social landscape with residents being kicked out of the neighbourhood. The attempt by the City to promote Sainte-Catherine Street as an attraction to draw tourists also acts as a way to put the neighbourhood into the tourist map. A minority of the informants in the neighbourhood confessed that they experience this commodification as a positive outcome for both the neighbourhood and their lives, as some had the opportunity and the means to engage with the tourists and with what they perceive as new opportunities with the arrival of new developments and cultural establishments in the neighbourhood. This, again, contradicts Radice's (2010) notions, as well as Binnie and Skeggs' (2004) ideas about commodified cosmopolitanism as being inherently negative. However, the positive perception of commodification was only possible via the possession of both cultural and monetary capital, illustrating once more how class is a decisive category in how one perceives cosmopolitanism.

The framework proposed by Radice (2010) with regards to cosmopolitan discourses proved itself important as an analytical tool in preparation for the fieldwork stage. However, after the data collection, the framework presented some limitations. First, the judgment involved in the association of cosmopolitanism with negative or positive attributes created an analytical binary in which life experiences and identities were perceived and/or constructed within narrow possibilities. Moreover, the data collected showed that cosmopolitan discourses are more fluid than could be captured in this static positive or negative framework, depending on who is enunciating it and in what context.

The notion of cosmopolitanism as a process that expresses and embraces difference at the same time as it creates engagement at the neighbourhood scale also proved to be problematic. This narrative of cosmopolitanism romanticizes all forms of encounters as being meaningful or positive, as if no conflicts could arise from it. At the same time, the notions of cosmopolitanism reviewed in this research seem to point to an understanding of the term within a specifically middle-class perspective. In that sense, cosmopolitanism seems to be defined in relation to a middle-class and normative perception of social relations, possibly erasing other discourses as well as marginalized populations.

What I presented in this research is just a snapshot of a particular urban reality, in this case in Montreal. Future studies about what forms and performances cosmopolitanism can assume is very much needed, and should focused on the identification of what kind of discourses are being produced and by whom. At the

same time, as Nash and Gorman-Murray (2014) have already suggested, new studies should also focus on the relationship between traditional gay villages and new queer-friendly neighbourhoods, how LGBTQ individuals navigate in both spaces and in what ways are they mutually constituted. The notion of mobility, and consequently cosmopolitanism, should be central to any analysis that focus on the mutual relationship of both spaces, as to be mobile in a cosmopolitan world is to possess a great amount of cultural, social, political and monetary capital.

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APPENDIX A:

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND GUIDE

Identity

1) Could you start by identifying yourself? (Tell me about yourself)
2) In terms of your sexual and gender identity, how do you identify?
3) Can you explain what those terms mean to you?
4) What other ways would you define yourself? Could you describe these? (language, gender, 'race', cultural, ethnic, immigration history)
5) What aspects of your identity are the most important?
6) Do you consider yourself a Montrealer? A Québecer? Or even a world citizen? Can you explain why?
7) Where did you grow up?
8) What languages do you speak on a regular basis?
9) How would you define your social class?

Scenes and Culture

10) Do you consider yourself to be 'queer'? What does being queer mean to you?
11) Where do you socialize and hang out? Why there?
12) What kinds of LGBTQ events do you participate in and why?
13) Are you involved in any LGBTQ political activism?
14) Do you think the gay Village still plays an important role in the LGBTQ community as a gay space? Do you consider it a safe space?

Neighbourhood life (both the Village and the Mile End)

15) Why and how long have you been living in this neighbourhood? What brought you to this neighbourhood?
16) What do you like/dislike about this neighbourhood?

17) Do you have friends in this neighbourhood? How would you describe them?
18) Are there any particular activities/businesses that you frequent there?
19) Would you describe your neighbourhood as queer-friendly? Why or why not?
20) Do you have a sense of belonging in your neighbourhood?
21) Have you ever experienced homophobia or transphobia in your neighbourhood?
22) Was safety an important aspect of your decision to move into this neighbourhood? Would you consider your neighbourhood to be more or less safe than other neighbourhoods or areas of the city?
    [If participant lives in the Mile End]

23) How often do you go the Village? If you don't go, why not?
24) What do you like and dislike about the Village?
25) Is there a specific space you frequent there?
    [If participant lives in the Village]

26) How often do you to the Mile End? If you don't go, why not?
27) Is there a specific space you frequent there?
28) What do you like and dislike about the Mile End?

Diversity, Cosmopolitanism and Consumption

29) Do you feel like you live in an ethnically diverse neighbourhood? Can you identify some of the different cultures and/or ethnicities that also live in this neighbourhood?
30) Do you think that queer residents are solely responsible for the diversity of this neighbourhood?
31) Do you feel that these different cultures and ethnic groups live peacefully with the gay population in the neighbourhood?
32) Do you often shop in ethnic or queer establishments like restaurants, clothing stores, bakeries, etc.? What attracts you to these places?
33) Do you wish there were more ethnic or queer establishments in your neighbourhood? Are they important to your every day life?
34) Was the decision to live in this neighbourhood based on the diversity of cultures you find here? Or was it based on the presence of queers?
35) Do you feel that by living in this neighbourhood you are more likely to engage with and learn from other cultures? Is engagement with others something that interests you?
36) Do you feel that a diverse neighbourhood brings a positive or negative image to your neighbourhood? What kind of image do you think the presence of queers brings to the neighbourhood?

37) Do you feel that the neighbourhood attracts tourist or people from other parts of the city/suburbs? Do you think they frequent this neighbourhood because of the uniqueness of local establishments? Or do you think the gayness of the neighbourhood is what attracts them?
38) Do you feel that by living in a diverse neighbourhood you can either absorb or feel part of different cultures? If so which ones do you feel you have a close connection to? What is this connection between different cultures and queer groups?
39) Would you prefer to live in a neighbourhood with a more homogenous population, closer to your socio-economic, racial or national profile? Or living amongst queers is the most important aspect when chosing a neighbourhood?
40) Do you prefer to shop in openly gay business? Do you feel that by doing so you are contributing to the local gay community?
41) Do you feel that your neighbourhood has been changing in the past few years? Have you noticed any increase in rents, business prices, real estate value in the area?
42) Have you noticed any change in the residents' profile in the last few years? More affluent, different ethnic groups, different races?

APPENDIX B:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN COMPARING COSOPOLITAN DISCOURSES ACROSS SEXUAL LANDSCAPES: A CASE STUDY OF MONTREAL'S GAY VILLAGE AND MILE END DISTRICT

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Daniel Moreno Pina of the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment of Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to examine the production of cosmopolitan discourses and formation of urban sexual identities in the city of Montreal. I understand that this is a qualitative study of how LGBTQ populations of both the Mile End and the Village live and perceive their neighbourhood.

B. PROCEDURES

- I understand that I will be interviewed in my place of work during normal business hours, unless I indicate otherwise.
- I understand that my participation in the study will last approximately one hour.
- If permission is granted the interviews will be recorded. I understand that no one will have access to the recordings other than Daniel Moreno Pina
- I understand that my participation will bring only minimal risk or harms.
- I understand that there is no obligation for participants to answer any question that they feel is invasive, offensive or inappropriate.
- I understand that I may ask questions of the researchers at any point during the research process.
- I understand that there will be no payment for my participation.

C. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is **confidential** (i.e., my identity will not be revealed in study results).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)____

SIGNATURE

DATE

If you have questions about the study itself, please contact the investigator of the project Daniel Moreno Pina, Department Geography, Planning and Environment of Concordia University (1455 de Maisonneuve West, H1250, Montréal, QC, H3G 1M8; daniel.m.pina@gmail.com), or Julie Podmore (1455 de Maisonneuve West, H1255-56, Montréal, QC, H3G 1M8, (514) 848-2424 ex 2049, jpodmore@johnabbott.qc.ca)

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact a member of the Departmental Ethics Committee at the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424, ext. 2050 or by e-mail at geogprog@alcor.concordia.ca.