Queer Inclusivity Mapped in Montréal

By

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ABSTRACT

Gayborhoods have been a focus point for identifying queer communities and activities in a city. However, spaces beyond the boundaries of the gayborhood exist throughout many cities and serve a larger variety of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. This research aims to understand perceptions of inclusivity in public space in Montréal, QC from the perspective of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. My study revealed that participants view queer inclusivity as visibly represented in a space. Through a combination of pedestrian-friendly street or park venues, and visibility of other queer individuals, the most inclusive spaces were found outside the boundaries of the typical gayborhood, known as The Village in Montréal. Instead, parks and streets in the Plateau and Mile End proved to be more inclusive spaces for participants. Numerous participants pointed to the subtle queer nature of Mile End and the Plateau. They valued the freedom to live openly without the pressure to declare their identity, but without the necessity to conceal it either. This thesis showed that inclusivity was not localized in one area of the city but rather found in pockets all throughout Montréal through hand mapping techniques and focus groups.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND AIM

1.1 Introduction

The notion of the gayborhood traditionally refers to distinct urban neighborhoods where LGBTQIA2S+ communities have historically congregated, fostering a sense of safety, acceptance, and belonging. The gayborhood emerged to combat the heteronormative and homophobic closet that "isolated and erased homosexuals from both public and private spheres" (Brown, 2014, 458). While still a prominent space for gay people today, LGBTQIA2S+ communities extend beyond the borders of the traditional gayborhood. As societal attitudes shift and LGBTQIA2S+ identities become more visible and embraced, queer individuals increasingly seek community beyond these traditional enclaves. Moreover, the historical dominance of gay males and predominantly white populations in gayborhoods have spurred the emergence of alternative spaces where queer people of color make their own communities. Some examples include cities such as Chicago which hosts distinct Latina queer communities, Black queer females, and Asian and Black male party scenes outside the gayborhood. Another is New York City, which has enclaves of Latino gays in Jackson Heights, Queens and a clustering of Black gay professionals in Fort Greene, Brooklyn (Ghaziani, 2019).

Montréal is no exception. Mile End has been highlighted as an immigrant community with an emerging queer scene that caters to the broader queer community (Podmore, 2021). Historically, sections of the Plateau and the Red Light District were visible gathering sites of LGBTQIA2S+ communities (Podmore, 2001; 2006). These areas have served as focal points for queer expression and solidarity, reaffirming the importance of inclusivity and acceptance outside one defined space in a city. This thesis seeks to further understand how inclusivity is perceived in public spaces around Montréal through a queer lens.

1.2 Montréal's Demographics

To contextualize this study, Montréal is a large and diverse city in Canada. Montréal is the most populated city in Quebec, Canada and second largest populated city in Canada after Toronto, Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2022). Montréal is an island that sits in the St. Lawrence River. As of 2021, the island of Montréal has a population of 1,762,949 people and the greater census metropolitan area (CMA), including the island of Laval, Longueuil, and suburbs on the

South Shore, has a population of 4,291,732 (Statistics Canada, 2022). Of the CMA, the total number of gender-diverse couple families in the region recorded was 18,040 out of 935,615 total couple families (Statistics Canada, 2022). Among those were same-gender couples, inclusive of transgender or nonbinary individuals. In this case, couples are defined as legally married or common-law spouses (Statistics Canada, 2022). The cumulative count of individuals belonging to visible minority groups, including those in the aforementioned categories, amounted to 1,143,825 in Montréal's CMA. It is important to note that the term "visible minority" is defined by the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in color" (Statistics Canada, 2023). These demographics reflect the governmentally defined numbers of the LGBTQIA2S+ population, but may not reflect the actual number due to limitations in data availability and how a LGBTQIA2S+ couple is defined.

1.3 Montréal's Queer Scene

Montréal's most notable queer enclave is called The Village, or the gay village, where clubs, restaurants, and bars are catered specifically to the LGBTQIA2S+ community. The Village lies just east of the downtown core and developed through the 1980s (Hinrichs, 2011). The Village hosts over 90 percent of Montréal's queer commercial activity and institutions (Podmore, 2006). The Village is a "is a commercial strip and residential enclave located in the Centre-Sud district and it is centered on the area's primary commercial axis, Sainte Catherine Street East between Amherst [now Rue Atateken] and Papineau" (Podmore, 2006, 600) (see Map 1.1).

Gay and lesbian activities have existed in spaces all over Montréal and have gone through many changes (Chamberland, 1993). Before the Village, the Red Light District, just west of the Village, was an established space for queer gatherings (see Map 1.1). Due to its cheap rents and numerous venues for bars, cabarets, and strip clubs, the Red Light District was host to many lesbian and gay bars, cafes, and cabarets during the 1950s, especially for the working-class population (Chamberland, 1993). Towards the end of the 1960s, the working class population was slowly replaced by other marginalized individuals looking for cheap rooms, changing the population of who frequented the venues in the Red Light District. As a result, a number of lesbian clubs disappeared, and more gay men's establishments emerged. Throughout the 70s, lesbian establishments came back with a focus on lesbian-only clientele. These venues were

again concentrated in the Red Light District as well as the West Island (Chamberland, 1993). The 1980s were deemed Montréal's golden years due to prominent visibility of lesbians at the urban scale including a concentration of bars, restaurants, bookstores and commercial spaces (Chamberland, 1993; Podmore, 2006). At this time, The Village emerged "following the displacement of gay and lesbian nightlife from the downtown core" and primarily served gay male clientele (Podmore, 2006, 600). Throughout the 1990s, the Village became a commercial and economic center for a more unified GLBT community (Burnette, 2002; Podmore, 2006). Into the early 2000s, a number of challenges led to the closure and decline of lesbian establishments. In just a decade, the number of lesbian bars in Montréal dropped from seven to one (Podmore, 2006). Moreover, The Village was criticized for who it served and represented. Questions of class, language, race and gender arose (Podmore, 2006).
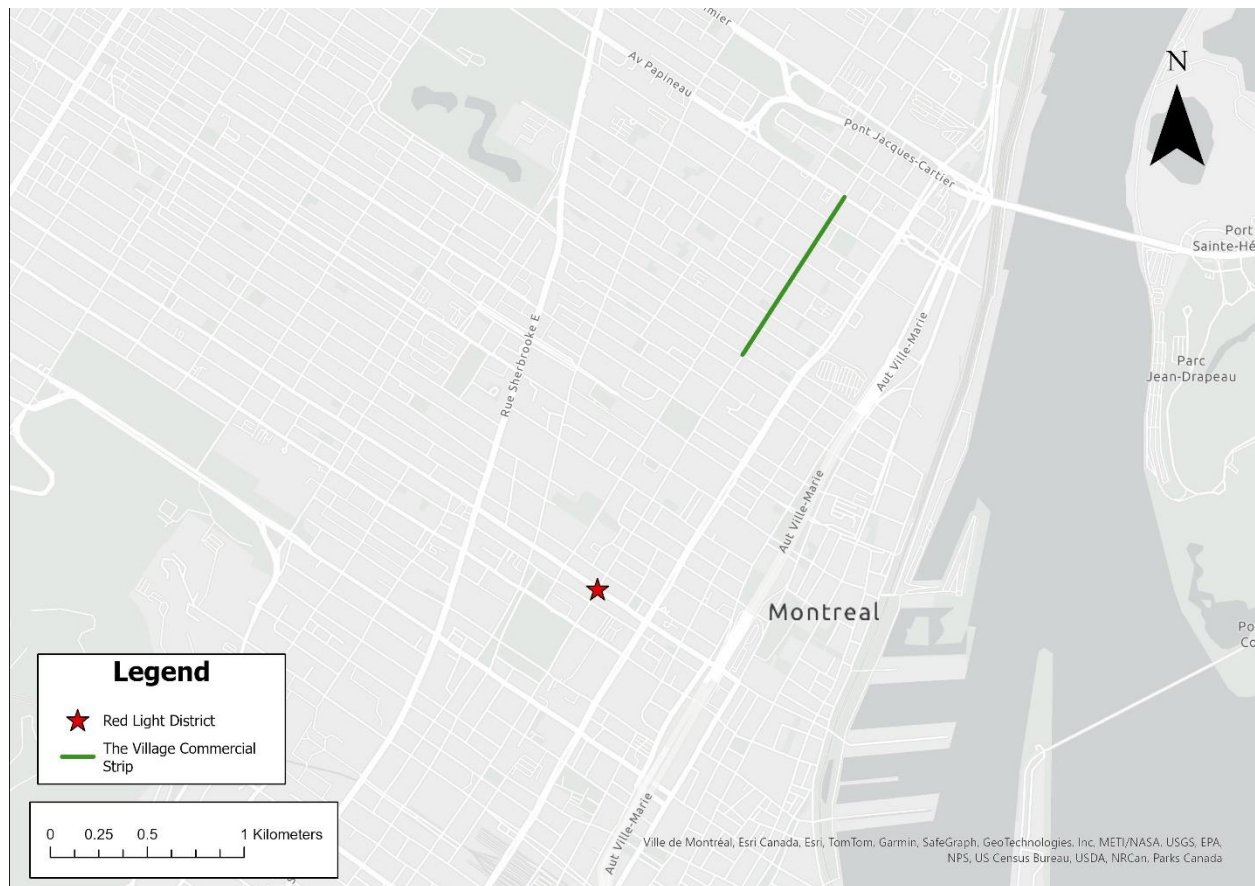
Map 1.1 The Village and Red Light District

1.4 Research Aim and Research Questions

Much of the previous literature focuses on the gayborhood as the default space of queerness. However, due to exclusionary practices in the gayborhood detailed in the following Chapter, inclusive spaces have broken out beyond their historical boundaries. This led me to question what inclusive public space looks like now. What spaces in Montréal do LGBTQIA2S+ individuals find inclusive? Moreover, this research was inspired by Julia Podmore's (2021) study of the "queering" of Mile End and the desire to explore what this means among today's young adults.

Given this context of a changing queer scene, **the aim of this research project is to understand how LGBTQIA2S+ individuals perceive inclusivity in public spaces in Montréal.**

To approach my aim, my project is guided by three research questions.

1. **What are the principal determinants of perceived inclusivity within the context of Montréal?** To answer this question, I examine the criteria focus groups most frequently used when hand mapping.

2. **How does seeing queerness influence the LGBTQIA2S+ community's perception of inclusivity in Montréal?** To approach this question, I interrogate participant's perceptions of inclusivity through what and who they see on the street, what aspects of the space influences how they present themselves, and if being with a partner changes their perceptions.

3. How are queer spaces in Montréal being redefined by young adults today? My final research question is informed by an analysis of the results of my study and the findings of previous studies of Montréal's queer scene. This question gets at the core of my research aim, namely how the perceptions and uses of the built environment reflect a range of everyday strategies that LGBTQIA2S+ people carry out to exist in public spaces comfortably. Here, I consider how participants look beyond the Village as a boundary of queer inclusion and instead look to other areas around Montréal for pockets of inclusion.

1.5 Thesis Layout

In the following Chapter, I develop the theoretical framework that guides my research. I draw from two conceptual bodies of literature, namely critical approaches to queer geography and public space. In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the methods I use in this research: hand

mapping and focus groups. I also detail the entire research process from recruitment to data analysis. In Chapter 4, I present the results of each focus group. I determine the principal determinants of perceived inclusivity and the key spaces discussed, answering my first research question concerning how focus groups determine inclusivity. In Chapter 5, I answer my second research question focusing on how visibility specifically influences perceptions of inclusivity through key themes from each focus group discussion. My final Chapter, Chapter 6, explores how queer spaces are being redefined today translates into a changing understanding of inclusivity for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. I conclude that Chapter with a summary of my findings.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

My research is framed by previous scholarship on queer theory, geography, public space, and queer inclusivity. This Chapter offers an overview of queer geography and public space literature. My work builds upon the previous research done through examining how urban space and queer identities interact to create and inhabit inclusive spaces beyond conventional "gayborhoods". This literature also guides my analysis in Chapters 4-6.

2.2 Terminology

Queer as a term "refer[s] to members of society who defy heteronormativity" (Sanschagrin, 2011, 24). Queer plays with and disrupts traditional binary oppositions through acts such as drag and cross-dressing (Butler, 1993; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Doan, 2007; Sanschagrin, 2011). During the 1990s, queer was used as a homophobic slur but has since been reclaimed by the LGBTQIA2S+ community (Bell & Valentine, 1995). Most significantly, queer represents inclusiveness: "queer embraced literally anyone who refused to play by the rules of heteropatriarchy" (Bell & Valentine, 1995, 21).

In this thesis, I will not be using the term "queer" to refer to LGBTQIA2S+ individuals because my study focuses "on exploring aspects of the community rather than theorizing their interactions with or challenges to society" (Sanschagrin, 2011, 24). The term queer will be used to define the public spaces in which members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community interact.

2.3 Queer Geography

As laid out below, relevant scholarship looks at how identity, specifically a queer identity, shapes how individuals exist and interact with the world. This shapes how my research approaches public space, queer identity, and inclusion.

Queer geography looks at the role of space and place in the production of sexual identities, practices, and communities (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Brown & Knopp, 2008; Oswin, 2008). Two of the most influential researchers in this field are David Bell and Gill Valentine. Bell and Valentine (1995) were one of the first to critically review geography's role in work on sexuality. Bell and Valentine (1995) highlighted the diversity of identities that are "'being' and

doing' sexuality" (10). Bell and Valentine's (1995) work dove into the multiplicity and contradictory ways sexualities were lived out and revealed lines of difference between lesbian and gay communities during the 1970s and 80s.

Queer geography "seeks to challenge otherwise largely accepted and essentialist categories as well as normative understandings of sexuality and gender in space" (de Montigny, 2013, 10). Queer geography has evolved from "describing the lives of sexual and gender minorities spatially" to "taking a critical approach to categories and normative understandings of gender, sexuality and space" (de Montigny, 2013, 10). Assuming heterosexuality in spaces results in the elimination of other identities that make up space such as race, class, and nationality (Puar, 2002). Furthermore, Natalie Oswin (2008) argued that queer geography "engages deeply with feminist, postcolonial and critical race theories" (Oswin, 2008, 90). Other notable discussions include tourism and cosmopolitan cities (Rushbrook, 2002), gayborhoods and queer enclaves (Brown, 2014; Doan, 2007; Podmore, 2001), youth (Andersson, 2015; de Montigny, 2013), and racial, colonial, and gender studies (Podmore, 2006; Puar, 2007; Sanschagrin, 2011). Ultimately, queer geography examines how space and place intersect with sexual and gender identities and how these intersections shape experiences and communities.

2.4 Public Space

Public space in this study "indicates any space outside the home, another person's home, or a workspace, including privately owned but publicly available spaces like a bookstore" (Sanschagrin, 2011, 7). Many studies focus on the theory of public spaces, examining their construction and the debates surrounding access and purpose (Lefebvre, 1991; Sanschagrin, 2011). Others look at the role of public spaces in everyday life. This research does the latter through centering the experience of LGBTQIA2S+ in public space with regards to inclusion. Thus, examining public space in the following ways shapes how I interpret the findings of my own research.

Public space is more than a conglomeration of "urban forms" made of materials. Public space is composed of meanings, language and symbols (Tonkiss, 2005). Tonkiss (2005) noticed the spatial organization of cities reinforced social differences and divisions. Thus, public space is often controlled and only made available for certain groups, rendering some people worthier of access than others (Tonkiss, 2005). This aligns with the focus of my research, where I investigate

the delineation of public space along the lines of inclusivity in Montréal for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals.

Identity is a critical component of navigating public space. The domination of heterosexual relationships in public spaces (advertisements, billboards, music, etc.) makes it difficult to navigate and feel comfortable in many public spaces if one does not fall into this category. In most cultures, "the 'normality' of heterosexuality is so deeply ingrained… that it is not even seen" (Myslik, 1996, 158). Wedding ceremonies, engagements, taxes, booking hotels, public displays of affection, and more, all are "public announcements and affirmations of one's heterosexuality" (Myslik, 1996, 158). This kind of open visibility is not as automatic among those in same sex or non-heterosexual relationships. My research looks to understand how a queer identity influences what public spaces are inhabited. While this research focuses on sexuality and public space, other forms of identity (race, class, gender) will also be crucial in understanding the results of my research.

2.5 Queer Space

Queer geography and public space studies intersect to examine the influence of queer identity on public space. The following literature details the ways in which queer space has been defined through settlement patterns of gay and lesbian couples and the clustering of gay and lesbian individuals due to safety concerns. Moreover, the findings below reveal factors that shape feelings of inclusivity. This will establish the groundwork for addressing my research questions regarding inclusivity and the perception of visible queerness, and their effects on public spaces in Montréal.

Many studies on queer space have identified where gay or lesbian spaces are (Brown, 2014; Brown & Knopp, 2008; Hayslett & Kane, 2011; Podmore, 2021). Oftentimes, gay space is defined by housing patterns (Hayslett & Kane, 2011; Nelson, 2020). With regards to "queer spatialization" in Vancouver, Nelson (2020) notes how housing drew definite borders between male and female gay spaces. Hayslett and Kane (2011) had similar findings in Columbus, Ohio. This was largely due to the difference in income between men and women in general (Hayslett & Kane, 2011; Nelson, 2020). Other factors that influenced where lesbian women and gay men resided were the cultural amenities within the neighborhood (Hayslett & Kane, 2011). Beyond differences in housing patterns based on economic ability, what was teased out is the response of

the LGBTQIA2S+ community to create spaces for themselves. While housing patterns show where gay and lesbian people reside in a city, there are various studies that capture the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people within a city (Andersson, 2015; de Montigny, 2013; Myslik, 1996; Podmore, 2001, 2006; Sanschagrin, 2011).

2.5.1 Gayborhood

One of the most common examples of queer space is the gayborhood (Doan, 2007; Brown, 2014; Podmore, 2021). Found in most major cities, this area of the city is defined by the influx of spaces catering to gay men (Brown, 2014). Gayborhoods were created after the 1960s in a wave of liberation but were just as much a clustering of gay men for safety (Brown, 2014; Myslik, 1996). Gayborhoods are characterized as a small series of enclaves that serve LGBTQIA2S+ audiences (Brown, 2014). Gayborhoods are usually close to areas of employment, often in socially marginalized parts of the city, overtly display homosexuality, and offer "at least one promenade for visibility and street cruising" (i.e. pride parade) (Brown, 2014, 458). Gayborhoods "create a strong sense of empowerment that allows men to look past the dangers of being gay in the city and to feel safe and at home" (Myslik, 1996, 168). Since the Stonewall Riots (1969), gay spaces moved from temporary or private spaces to permanent and public offices and buildings, rendering queer spaces more visible (Myslik, 1996). Now, the LGBTQIA2S+ community's visibility is no longer confined to gayborhoods and pride parades.

2.5.2 Safety

However, this increased visibility is met with increases in violence against the LGBTQIA2S+ community and their physical spaces. Studies of fear, exclusion, violence, and gentrification grapple with the reality of being "out" and how that influences LGBTQIA2S+ individual's perceptions of public space (Andersson, 2015; Doan, 2007; Myslik, 1996; Sanschagrin, 2011; Taylor, 2008).

Myslik's (1996) study noted that gay men are four times more likely than the general population to be violently attacked. Andersson (2015) discussed police harassment of Black gay bars and frequent arrests of transwomen on prostitution charges along Christopher Street in the West Village in New York City. Furthermore, the targeting of queer youth of color highlights racism against Black and Latino queer youth in the West Village (Andersson, 2015). This

"cleansing" of "wild" queer youth in the West Village was coupled with shutting down bars and clubs that catered to Black and Latino crowds (Andersson, 2015). These levels of violence and danger present physical and emotional barriers for LGBTQIA2S+ people to be out in public space. This further normalizes and promotes heteronormativity.

Thus, queer space is both a site of resisting heteronormativity and can also attract violence and lead to exclusion and discrimination - both within and outside LGBTQIA2S+ spaces. This is where my work most intersects with the research being done on public space and the LGBTQIA2S+ community. By looking at where people feel included in spaces across Montréal, a greater understanding of the factors that create inclusivity within public space can be revealed.

2.6 Queer Inclusion

Many studies have looked at how various factors influence individuals' sense of inclusivity in space (Brown, 2014; Doan, 2007; Hayslett & Kane, 2011; Nelson, 2020; Podmore, 2001, 2006; Rushbrook, 2002; Taylor, 2008). My work aims to complement the following literature's findings in how certain genders, races, and sexualities lead to uneven spaces of belonging. The findings here shape how I understand my own results. Moreover, I aim to focus on the element of inclusion, whereas previous studies mentioned focused on safety and violence.

2.6.2 Barriers to inclusivity

Studies have shown the difficulties of lesbians to find community and places to settle (Hayslett & Kane, 2011; Podmore, 2001; Taylor, 2008). Lesbian neighborhoods are less visible, partly due to more subtle presentations such as pinkie rings, labris earrings, or overt gazes (Doan, 2007). The heightened familial obligations and reduced economic adaptability experienced by lesbians, as compared to gay men, may limit their capacity to pursue comparable quality of life attributes (such as finding clusters of lesbians to live with) (Hayslett & Kane, 2011). Consequently, gay men are likely to have a higher income, a lower likelihood of familial responsibilities (such as raising children), and the capability to identify existing clusters of gay men, making it comparatively more feasible to reside in neighborhoods that align with their identity.

Moreover, most queer spaces leave bisexual, transgender, and non-binary people vulnerable and invisible in public spaces (Doan, 2007). This is not limited to public space. Much of the geographic literature regarding sexuality and space is limited to heterosexuals, gays, and lesbians, but seldom discusses bisexuals and transgendered people (Doan, 2007).

Race is another limiting factor in finding belonging within queer space. Particularly, the intersection between race and sexuality. Gay spaces have been spaces of whiteness (Brown, 2014). The norm is white straightness, which creates spaces of difference and, consequently, hierarchies (Rushbrook, 2002). These hierarchies limit places to one identity: "oppositional zones in a hierarchy of places reinforces the production of queerness as white; Chinatown is not Harlem is not the Village… every body has its singular place" (Rushbrook, 2002, 185). Another example is in the United States Supreme Court ruling of Lawrence v. Texas (2003). This ruling avoids the mention of race altogether. This "assumes whiteness as a queer norm […] To verbalize the obvious, not all acts of sodomy are equivalent" (Puar, 2007, 141). While this landmark case allowed people of the same sex to engage in intimate conduct, it did not change anything for Black people.

2.6.3 Commodification of gay space

Queer space has been commodified, leading to skewed perceptions of what the LGBTQIA2S+ community looks like and who they serve (Rushbrook, 2002). Queer spaces are functioning increasingly similarly to ethnic spaces, "serving as a marker of cosmopolitanism, tolerance, and diversity for the urban tourist" (Rushbrook, 2002, 187). Increasingly, cities are promoting queer spaces as tourist attractions, often erasing their history and frequently framing them within the binary of gay or lesbian. Furthermore, these tourism boards promote the gay community as "white, affluent, male, and educated, an image that circulates as the dominant representative of gay ethnicity" (Rushbrook, 2002, 191). Nelson (2020) found broader efforts of injecting a white, affluent narrative in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with the racialization of the hotel housing market. Indigenous populations were refused from hotels, due to the narrative that Indigenous people are "hypermobile" and therefore undesirable tenants. Moreover, these communities were seen as more perceptible to disease, referring to them as risks to public health. Thus, racial and sexual minorities were understood not only as "agents of disease but more broadly threats to the order and health of the City and the City's housing" (Nelson, 2020, 77). In

conclusion, the commodification of queer spaces not only distorts the diversity of the LGBTQIA2S+ community but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and exclusionary practices, echoing broader patterns of discrimination and marginalization experienced by racial and sexual minorities in urban environments.

2.6.4 Towards inclusion

Intersectionality is frequently paired with inclusion, but some scholars argue going beyond a lens of intersectionality to foster inclusion (Doan, 2007; Puar, 2007; Rushbrook, 2002). Intersectionality considers how different systems of oppression converge so that those who don't share the same race or class will face different obstacles (Crenshaw, 1991). However, Puar (2007) critiques this notion because of the differences in access this creates. Public spaces and queer spaces are built and maintained by an intersectional model, continuously othering within inclusion, forcing people to choose an identity rather than show up as they are (Andersson, 2015; Doan, 2007; Nelson, 2020; Puar, 2007; Rushbrook, 2002). Instead, viewing identity as an assemblage sees "particles, and not parts, [...] where forces, and not categories, clash" (Puar, 2007, 215). Instead of separate pieces of identity, an assemblage regards multiple identities as "interwoven forces" (Puar, 2007, 212).

Although queer spaces may have become more numerous and visible in the years since Stonewall, they have not necessarily become utopias for inclusivity. Queer spaces predominantly cater to gay men (Brown, 2014; Podmore, 2021). Gayborhoods other within inclusion by who they serve (and do not). Lesbian and other sexual and gender identities are either blended so far into the urban fabric that they are barely visible or are rendered completely invisible. Moreover, transgender people, and other groups that make up the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community, have difficulty forming concentrated groups that gay men have been able to do (Doan, 2007). Therefore, there is still much work to be done to not only be more inclusive to the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community, but to include their perspectives in discourse surrounding queer space. Thus, this research seeks to explore ways in which LGBTQIA2S+ individuals find and experience inclusive spaces in Montréal.

2.7 Conclusion

My research aims to build upon the literature outlined here in attempts to better understand the various factors in finding inclusivity while identifying as LGBTQIA2S+. Moreover, this literature provides extensive findings in how queer inclusivity is formed through public space. These studies provide a framework for defining queer space and the unevenness of public space. Previous research has proved that queer space is both a site of violence and a space of safety and resistance. Moreover, elements such as race, gender, sexuality, and the nation impact how individuals are included. By looking at inclusivity from the lens of an assemblage, we can see how multiple identities themselves do not clash but are pitted against each other by outside forces (i.e. laws, police, government). Much of the literature discusses queer belonging in relation to defined queer space or larger political contexts. In my research, I aim to lean more into the role of public space in everyday life for LGBTQIA2S+ people. Thus, I hope to build upon the work done, applying these concepts to Montréal to further explore factors that influence inclusivity and public space within the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I discuss how I employed focus groups, hand mapping, and semi-structured discussions to identify participants' emotions associated with public space in Montréal. I also explain the significance of using focus groups and hand mapping in the context of social geography. I discuss the compilation of maps produced and describe how I carried out qualitative data analysis. Here, I argue that these methods of analysis center the participants' self-representation and allow for both individual and group emotions to form. I conclude with my ethical considerations for the project.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Focus groups and hand mapping

Focus groups and hand mapping were the methods I employed because of the "discussion fostered […] and the format tends to promote an ethic of cooperation, mutual aid and collaboration" (Bloor et al., 2001; de Montigny, 2013, 40). Focus groups provided access to group meanings, processes, and norms. They reveal meanings behind group assessments and shed light on normative understandings (Bloor et al., 2001). While the LGBTQIA2S+ community cannot be represented by a few people, focus groups allowed for both collective feelings and individual sentiments to emerge. Hand mapping is defined as "cartographic representations of individual or group spatial experiences, commonly produced by placing locational markings onto geographically referenced base maps" (Boschmann & Cubbon, 2014, 237). Hand mapping allows for a personal and more realistic perspective of the area as seen and known by the people that inhabit that area (McKinnon, 2010). Along with discussions in focus groups, the use of hand mapping allowed participants to "self-represent, rather than being represented by those with authority" (Pain, 2004, 658). Moreover, hand mapping allowed participants to "map their emotions across the city" and "directly define areas themselves" (Sanschagrin, 2011, 47). Thus, focus groups combined with hand mapping provided a participant centered representation of Montréal's public spaces.

For each focus group, I collected demographic data, emotions of participants, and hand drawn maps. Because my research focused on identity and space, I collected certain aspects of the participants' identity that the literature deemed relevant to my study (Sanschagrin, 2011). I retained information such as gender identity, race, sexual orientation, and age. This was needed because race, gender identity, and sexual orientation influence how people perceive space (Doan 2007; Oswin 2008; Puar 2007; Rushbrook 2002; Sanschagrin 2011). Participants' information is confidential in the results. They are referred to as focus groups one through three. However, to reflect the differences in perceptions by race, gender, and sexual orientation, this data remains in the final output. The identities they shared will help to understand how different identities perceive inclusivity within public spaces. Participants consented to this in writing.

The name of each participant was only revealed during the focus group, and any identifying details such as contact information was not shared with anyone before the focus group. All scheduling was anonymous and only I had access to their contact information. Participants agreed through written consent to keep all information from the focus group confidential. The transcript of the audio was anonymized because of the difficulty, if not impossibility, to identify who spoke.

Focus group sessions consisted of two parts. First, each group spent time drawing and labeling maps of Montréal in terms of inclusivity. These maps consisted of places the groups determined to be very inclusive, inclusive, neutral, exclusive, or very exclusive. A set of coloring markers, pens, and colored pencils were provided to highlight, circle, draw, label, and note places around Montréal. Using a color scale (see Figure 3.2.1.1), the following colors represented the level of inclusivity they felt in the spaces they highlighted.

Most inclusive

Inclusive

Neutral

Exclusive

Most exclusive

Figure 3.2.1.1 Color scale for hand mapping

Black and white maps were printed from ArcGIS Pro and included details such as street names, parks, and neighborhood names. Each map was printed large enough for participants to locate specific buildings (see Map 3.2.1). Maps were printed on eleven by seventeen-inch sized paper. ArcGIS Pro was used because of the amount of data included in their maps and the ability for users to zoom to a desired area and export it.
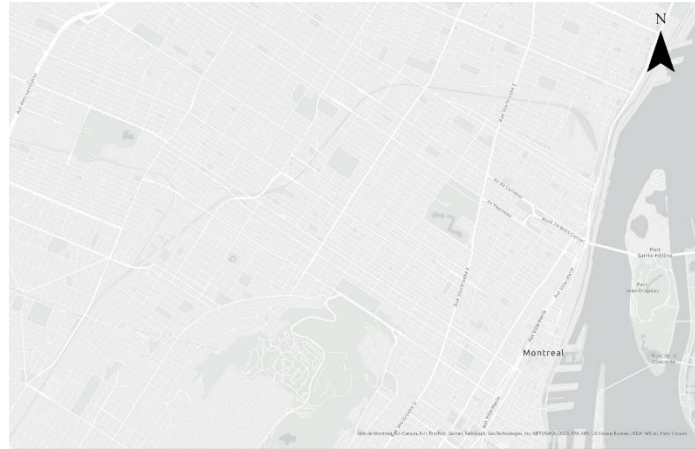
Map 3.2.1 Base map used for The Village, Plateau, Mile End and Parc Ex (see other base maps in Appendix C)

Four maps were given to each group. The first map included the entire island of Montréal. The second map included the northern side of Parc du Mont-Royal until Rue D'Iberville with a western bound of Rue Jarry O and an eastern bound of the St. Laurent River. This area was chosen because it included areas such as the Village, Le Plateau, Mile End, and Mile Ex; commonly known queer spaces (Podmore, 2021). The third map included the downtown core and parts of Westmount, Little Burgundy, and Verdun. This area was chosen because these areas are known for their nightlife. The fourth map included more of Westmount, St. Henri, Verdun, and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, going to Rue Ferrier. This was chosen because these are more residential areas, with St. Henri and Verdun being some of the most affordable places to live in Montréal. Participants were given full artistic freedom in how and what they drew on the map.

Participants spent around 30 minutes mapping locations in their group. I was not in the room during this time to allow participants to get to know one another, discuss freely, and to avoid any input from me. I also did not record any of their dialogue while mapping. Afterwards, I joined the group and began the discussion to give more context to the maps. The discussion was audio-recorded and used for analysis purposes only. The discussion consisted of eight semi-

structured interview questions for the group and lasted around 30 minutes. Semi-structured questions were employed so that the same eight questions were asked for each group, but there was also room for follow up questions that needed more explanation or further inquiry (Sanschagrin, 2011). The questions asked about what factors influenced their decision to map certain places, the types of public spaces participants felt most included in, the places they frequented most often, and if there were any differences within the group. I set the audio recording device, my phone, in the middle of the table to capture the audio. I first had each group describe what they mapped and then proceeded with my discussion questions (see Appendix A). I took handwritten notes in a notepad during the discussion.

The data collection took place in Montréal, QC during October 2023 on McGill's downtown campus. Focus groups were held in Burnside 512, a conference room that can be booked through the department of Geography. There were three groups total with three to four people per group. Each participant identified as LGBTQIA2S+ and was 18 years or older. Each group met once and produced three to four maps total.

3.2.2 Recruitment

The participant population was determined by identifying a few key informants (members of Queer McGill and personal contacts) and snowball sampling (Sanschagrin, 2011). Once I identified two people who met my criteria, I asked them to ask their network who met the criteria, who then asked their network. I used a Microsoft Form to track interest in participation, which I posted on my personal Facebook page, Instagram story, and emailed to Queer McGill, a student group at McGill University to share with their network. The participant requirements included being 18 years or older, identifying as LGBTQIA2S+, and having English proficiency because the focus groups were conducted in English. I was able to recruit all twelve participants through these methods of snowball sampling and public sharing of the interest form. The interest form asked for name, sexuality, gender, and a form of contact. Responses were only visible to me and contact information was not shared.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Compilation of maps

The overall aim in analyzing these maps was to identify where LGBTQIA2S+ participants' felt most included in public space. Furthermore, the maps allowed me to identify any patterns across groups. First, I scanned each map into PDF form, which I uploaded into Adobe Illustrator. Each map had points, lines, and polygons of areas of the city that focus groups ranked from very inclusive to very exclusive. Some groups included stars to mark specific locations, but generally points represented specific locations, lines represented streets, and polygons represented areas or blocks of Montréal. I first examined each map individually alongside the corresponding focus group audio and notes I took to understand the various places they mapped. Then, to compare similarities and differences in the maps by each focus group, I took maps of the same area and looked at them together. This was done by layering each map on top of one another to see if any major areas or places were shared across groups (see Map 4.3). This was also used to identify any stark outliers from the groups. Two groups used colored pencils to color their maps, which upon scanning these, made it difficult for the color to show through on the scan. To make each group's labels/colors visible, I retraced parts of the maps before layering them together in Illustrator.

Figure 3.3.1.1 Focus group one map of Boul. Saint Laurent

Figure 3.3.1.2 Focus group two map of Cégep Vieux Montréal

3.3.2 Analyzing discussions and maps

The goal of hand mapping is to reveal participants' attitudes towards various areas in Montréal. (Boschmann & Cubbon, 2014; McKinnon, 2010; Sanschagrin, 2011). Identifying and analyzing areas of overlap between focus group maps showed what areas of the city were being agreed upon and who agreed upon them. The next step was to understand why they were agreeing upon the areas that were highlighted. This was found through analyzing the transcripts of the audio recordings. To account for intra-group variation, I compared the notes of each individual for similar remarks across focus groups (Bloor et al., 2001).

Audio recordings of each focus group were transcribed and coded. To analyze each focus group's results, I employed a method called "logical analysis" (Bloor et al 2001). Logical analysis can be described as revealing the "logistical shape of an informant's ideas," so "the research attempts to elicit the informant's logic" (Bloor et al., 2001, 15). This type of analysis is three-fold. First, the analyst looks for patterns (i.e. if A, then B). Then, these assertions are grouped to make an overarching assertion that fits the group. Finally, the analyst examines connections between each group's assertions (Bloor et al., 2001). As with any research, some conflicting details may come up that lead to uncertainty in the final interpretation. How to deal with this uncertainty in the data is discussed later. Along with a logistical analysis, I aimed to be attentive to narrative and emotion. The maps provide a spatial visualization that is solely from the perspective of the participants. Rather than leaving it up to the researcher to interpret and possibly misrepresent the maps, the participants represent themselves rather than the researcher doing this (Pain, 2004). This allowed for individual and group emotions and narratives to form.

Thus, the findings are guiding the result rather than the researcher forming their own interpretation and conclusion.

Following a logical analysis, I identified five common patterns among all three audio transcripts, which I then used as codes in the transcription process. These included fashion, visibility, outdoor space, time of day, and personal experience. All of these codes influenced how participants determined the inclusivity or exclusivity of a space. I then determined some assertions that fit the groups based on some key themes pulled out from these codes. For example, the visibility of other queer people was a key factor in determining if a place was inclusive. This was also supported by understanding the maps and transcriptions from focusing on narratives and emotions. Using participant's personal experiences and maps added meaning beyond what I can conclude myself. All spaces highlighted came from the participants themselves rather than asking participants to discuss pre-chosen locations by me. Therefore, the findings were derived from what participants produced.

3.3.3 Data retention

Once the study was completed, the physical maps were destroyed, and only digital copies remained on an encrypted hard drive. Audio recordings of focus group discussions were not retained, but transcriptions were. Data will not be shared with non-McGill collaborators.

All data is stored on an encrypted hard drive and will be retained for seven years following McGill policy. Only the researcher and supervisor had access to this hard drive and all identifiable study materials for the duration of the study. The supervisor will oversee retaining the data after the completion of the study.

3.4 Participant Demographics

I conducted three focus groups with varying identities. Two groups had four people while one group consisted of three people. Focus group one consisted of one cis man who identified as white, 22 years old, and bisexual. The two other participants were white cis women who identified as queer. Focus group two consisted of a participant who identified as agender, gay, white, 25 years old, and as a local resident. Another participant identified as cis-female, Asian American, 21 years old and lesbian. The third participant was 22 years old, queer, white cis-female and the fourth was 21 years old, bisexual, white cis-female. The third focus group

included two white cis males who were both white, 22 years old, and identified as gay. The third participant was a cis-female, also 22 years old, white, and lesbian who was a local resident. And finally, the fourth participant identified as cis-female, 22 years old, and queer. All of the participants had the most familiarity with the downtown area, McGill's campus and surrounding areas, and the Plateau region. These are the areas that they focused on most. Overall, their age and status as predominantly students heavily dictated the areas in which they spent their free time and resided.

3.5 Ethics, Positionality, Limitations

This research required approval from the Research Ethics Board of McGill, which I received in June 2023. Because this research involved humans and more sensitive topics, I was cognizant of the impacts of this study on individuals. While there is no direct benefit to those who participated, focus groups invite "group members to inspect, elaborate upon, and question rules that we normally take for granted" (Bloor et al., 2001, 7). The collective effort required to map and discuss removed the researcher from the center of the study and instead left room for ideas to be expanded and evaluated by peers (Pain, 2004).

The maps and analysis from this study cannot speak for the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community of Montréal. The LGBTQIA2S+ community is diverse, with no one person with the exact same identity and experience. Therefore, each group that creates a map will not produce identical maps. Due to the variation in people, experiences, and places each map will reveal, intra group variation will pose a significant limitation in the results of my analysis. While I can draw upon similarities between maps and stories participants share, no one experience, or place will be exactly the same. Moreover, the places and emotions revealed in this study may not be true for other members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Therefore, while there will be intra group variation, this further emphasizes the diversity within the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

I also have biases that limit the scope of this research. I am a 22-year-old, anglophone, queer, Asian undergraduate student from the United States who has lived in Montréal for the past four years. When conducting these focus groups, I did not disclose my identity to participants, but it aided in my ability to connect with participants, ask follow up questions, and relate to their sentiments which helped with the overall flow of discussion. Because I am not functionally bilingual in French, I was only able to circulate in social networks that included English

dominant groups. It is important to state again that this study does not represent all LGBTQIA2S+ people of Montréal. Thus, the sample I drew from strongly reflects my age, neighborhood, student status, and linguistic ability. This sample population is lacking in a diverse range of ages, languages, and ethnicities, making the results of this study very narrow in terms of the population they represent. All of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 25 and were majority white. Moreover, of the participants, there were only two local residents. This greatly limits my results in scope due to participants' limited knowledge of many areas of Montréal and varied experiences based on race and age. Sexualities ranged from lesbian, gay, and queer. No one identified as transgender, but one identified as agender. The lack of transgender perceptions previously mentioned is something that I could not address in my study either, posing a great limitation in providing such insights.

3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the overall aim of this study is to understand spaces of inclusivity determined by LGBTQIA2S+ people in Montréal. Moreover, to explore spaces outside Montréal's gay village created in response to cater marginalized people. Through these maps and focus groups, I hope to highlight a few of those voices and their lived experiences in Montréal. In this Chapter I have detailed the methods I employed in the field, namely semi-structured focus group discussions and hand mapping. I then described the analysis process I undertook, ethical considerations, limitations, and my positionality. By outlining my methods, I have laid the foundation for presenting and discussing my research findings in the following Chapters.

CHAPTER 4: MAPPING INCLUSIVITY IN MONTRÉAL

4.1. Introduction

This thesis has sought to better understand perceptions of inclusivity in public space in Montréal. The following findings are drawn from the hand maps that were made by each focus group as well as from the discussion held afterwards. This Chapter presents key findings from my analysis that answer my research question: **what are the principal determinants of inclusivity within the context of Montréal?** To do this, the hand mapping portion of the study centered on the following aim: to understand where in Montréal LGBTQIA2S+ individuals felt most included. The discussion that followed focused on what criteria participants used to determine the spaces they mapped. In the subsequent sections, I first present determinants of inclusivity described by focus group participants (4.2). Then, I discuss what spaces they focused on most and why (4.3). Responses indicate that factors such as safety, pedestrian-friendliness, type of venue and who the venue caters to are the most significant influences of a public space's inclusivity. As such, my research has sought to add to current literature regarding the ways in which LGBTQIA2S+ people perceive inclusivity and public space.

4.2 Determining Inclusivity

Participants mapped four sections of the city along with an overview of the entire island of Montréal using the color scheme outlined in Chapter 3 (See Map 4.2). Purple represented the most inclusive areas, which turned out to be predominantly parks, pedestrian friendly streets, and a couple specific venues in the Plateau, Mile End, and on McGill campus. Green represented inclusive areas and included many parks and outdoor spaces, the Plateau, and university campuses including McGill's downtown campus and Macdonald campus. Areas shaded blue were considered neutral and included parts of the city that catered to specific communities such as the Village, Old Port, China Town, the McGill Ghetto and other residential areas (Westmount, Town of Mount Royal, etc.). Orange reflected exclusive areas which most commonly included Boulevard Saint Laurent (Boul. St-Laurent) and Downtown. Finally, areas colored red were most exclusive and represented sections of Boul. St-Laurent, night clubs, Rue Sainte Catherine, and Rue Crescent.

Drawing from the discussions I held with each focus group, I explored the reasoning behind what each group mapped. Personal experiences and knowledge of spaces delimited areas described by participants. This can be seen in sparse areas of the maps where participants hadn't personally been in and had no previous knowledge about the space:

> [We were able to be] more specific in areas where we had personal experience or knew people who had been in those areas and reported back to us. Those areas were more specific in terms of the gradient between inclusive to most inclusive whereas other areas we just hit with neutral or neutral and a bit inclusive (Focus group two participant).

One participant discussed how very inclusive areas (purple) for them meant that an active effort was being made to include LGBTQIA2S+ people. Meanwhile, inclusive spaces (green) meant they never felt unsafe there and they felt good expressing themselves there. For example, they wouldn't drop their partner's hand in an inclusive space. Another participant agreed with them by saying, "how you would feel safe presenting in that space is a good way to determine if a space felt inclusive or not" (Focus group three participant).

Neutral places were deemed uncomfortable but not unsafe. Furthermore, they explained that neutral spaces had no active effort in including LGBTQIA2S+ people. One participant noted, "You would feel like an outsider being queer in that area" (Focus group three participant). Exclusive spaces were to be avoided: "you wouldn't go on a gay date there" (Focus group three participant). Very exclusive spaces were marked due to individual negative experiences in those places.

The primary distinction between labeling a space as neutral versus exclusive was in the contrast between the absence of active efforts to include LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and personal experiences recounted by people that resulted in bad outcomes. For example, they noted experiences of harassment such as getting spat on, yelled out from cars when with partners, and followed. Areas in which this happened, they actively avoided. Another example of many exclusive spaces they determined were clubs around Boul. St-Laurent and Prince Arthur. They noted how they felt "fratty" and "aggressively straight". Additionally, the volleyball court area of Jeanne Mance felt "fratty" too. They mentioned how there's always "shirtless frat guys" and pong tables in the southern part of the park. This created an exclusive atmosphere for the participants.

Map 4.2 All three focus groups' interpretation of inclusivity in The Village, Le Plateau, Mile End. Drawn by focus groups, edited by author.

Legend

▇ (purple)	Most inclusive
▇ (green)	Inclusive
▇ (blue)	Neutral
▇ (orange)	Exclusive
▇ (red)	Most exclusive
▓	Focus group 1
▨	Focus group 2
▨	Focus group 3

Streets Highlighted

━	Ave Mont Royal
━	Rue Sherbrooke
━	Ave des Pins
━	Boulevard Saint Laurent
━	Rue Sainte Catherine Ouest (West)
━	Old Port Waterfront

Locations Mentioned

●	Bar Champs
●	Segal's Market
●	Shakti Rock Gym
●	Burnside Building
●	SSMU Building
★	Cégep du Vieux Montréal
●	VIA Rail Station
●	Jean Talon Market
●	Église catholique Saint-Boniface
●	Bar Le Ritz
●	Club Unity
●	Muzique
●	Cafe Campus
●	Le Rouge Bar
●	Bronfman Building

Map 4.2 Legend

4.3. Mapping Inclusivity

Discussions with each focus group revealed participants focused on the pedestrian-friendliness of an area, personal feelings of safety, type of venue, and who that venue catered to. Participants delved into specific areas they mapped and revealed these themes through the discussions held afterward. Map 4.2 shows all three focus group's interpretation of inclusivity in The Village, Le Plateau, and Mile End. This area of the city was what participants could speak the most about.

4.3.1 Pedestrian-friendliness

The pedestrianized aspect of Montréal was a factor in participants' perceptions of inclusivity. The residential aspects of parks added to their inclusivity because there are less cars and tourists. They talked about how they saw "most queer presenting couples in parks or on streets" such as on Ave Mont Royal or Duluth when they're pedestrian-only streets in the summer (Focus group one participant).

A substantial part of the city's exploration and experience is facilitated through walking or cycling. This approach significantly increases visibility at the street level, more so than in regions predominantly oriented towards car transportation. For example, the Town of Mount Royal (TMR) is mainly residential with very few people out and about, unlike the Plateau where people are walking or biking through constantly during the daytime. Moreover, wealthier areas, residential areas, and family areas had a reputation of being less inclusive for participants. For example, one participant described Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue as "sleepy and less active with predominantly old people and it feels like people are watching you out of their windows" (Focus group two participant). Another agreed with this feeling saying, "Less people around you feel like people care more about you" (Focus group two participant). They further explained, "the reasons why being in a city is so inclusive for many different minorities is because there's so many people, it's hard to care about one specific person" (Focus group two participant). When they could see LGBTQIA2S+ people around, they felt more at ease and able to present themselves as queer. Seeing a visibly queer person, even in places they deemed exclusive, made a space feel more inclusive. Outdoor places with lots of foot traffic increased the chances of seeing visibly queer people.

4.3.2 Safety

Another driving factor was each participant's assemblage of identities (Puar 2007) and how this affected their own safety as LGBTQIA2S+ people. Being a woman affected feelings of safety in general and when combined with being LGBTQIA2S+, this added uncertainty for some areas. For example, Rue Sainte Catherine at night didn't necessarily feel exclusive, but due to the use of drugs on the street and proximity to the Red Light District, it was not where many felt comfortable going. "If you don't feel safe, you don't feel in an inclusive space" said one participant (Focus group two).

They also talked about the ability to blend in for certain scenarios and the privilege to do so. One participant was bisexual, cis-male, and white, which he said made it easier to exist in a variety of spaces without feeling threatened. Another participant mentioned how she felt she had the privilege to decide when to appear queer and when not to. They both agreed they felt unsure if this was a good or bad thing. They discussed how not everyone has this privilege and subjects others to more discrimination because they cannot easily "morph" into different places. Another participant approached inclusivity from a different angle. She heavily weighed whether she could walk openly with her girlfriend in a space or not. She feels comfortable walking around Montréal by herself, but she is cognizant of where she goes when she is with her girlfriend. One participant summarized, "It depends on what you're wearing, how you're presenting, whether you're with a partner. Those sorts of things very much change" how a space feels inclusive or exclusive (Focus group three participant).

4.3.3 Type of Venue

As defined previously, public spaces encapsulate anything outside the home or the workplace, not limited to privately owned but publicly available spaces such as a café or bookstore (Sanschagrin, 2011). Outdoor spaces were by far the most mapped as inclusive across all focus groups. As one participant put it, "the trees don't judge" and "everyone is in their own world" (Focus group two participant). "Outside you see all walks of life and everyone minds their own business" (Focus group one participant). Outdoor spaces included parks, bike lanes, and streets with high foot traffic. Rather than mapping specific places that might include bars, restaurants, or clubs, groups tended to generally map larger areas of the city such as certain blocks and streets.

Montréal turns certain streets into pedestrian-only walkways during the summers for events such as Mural Fest, Jazz Fest, and Pride. Participants noted this made spaces that were usually deemed exclusive more inclusive to them. Again, this reiterates the focus on inclusive spaces as ones that are open, outdoors, and less of a targeted focus on queer identities.

4.3.4 Targeted Community

Boul. St-Laurent was highlighted for its nightlife that catered specifically to straight people and created an exclusive atmosphere. Participants highlighted the objectification of girls waiting in line for clubs, the numerous drunk people around, and the lack of visibility of LGBTQIA2S+ couples. At night,

> when people are lined up for clubs and bars all in similar outfits and there are less visibly queer couples, and everyone is drunk and the cars are revving and ambulances and police and traffic and the scouters trying to get hot girls inside their clubs, it's all yucky and objectifying and so loud. Overall unpleasant (Focus group two participant).

However, they also discussed that Boul. St-Laurent was much more relaxed north of Avenue Mont Royal. The groups mentioned that there were fewer clubs and bars. One participant said people going out to get wasted frequented Boul. St-Laurent between Sherbrooke and Mont Royal while people going out to get a drink go to other sections of Boul. St-Laurent.

Another area mentioned was the Village. It was deemed neutral for most groups and highlighted as an area that not many frequented often. They discussed how it catered to gay men, especially older gay men. One participant noted "it doesn't feel like it's for me" when he goes there. In addition to the tourist nature of the Village, it did not feel as safe as other areas at night. Moreover, the Red Light District and the Village sexualized LGBTQIA2S+ people. In contrast, in the Plateau, being LGBTQIA2S+ was more of a lifestyle than a specific identity for nightlife.

Club Unity, a club in the Village, was deemed exclusive by focus group three. While this is known as a LGBTQ friendly club, recently it has been less inclusive. The group attributes its exclusivity to the straight gentrification happening, the expensive cover fee ($25+ CAD/entrance), and issues with the staff. Participants spoke of their straight friends going to Club Unity "as big groups of straight people for a fun night at a gay club and it has turned it into not really a gay club anymore. It doesn't feel inclusive" (Focus group three participant). One participant said she danced with a girl and got catcalled by a man in the club. She commented,

"which is a silly thing to happen in a gay club" (Focus group three participant). Club Unity was debated on whether it should be noted as neutral or inclusive for other groups. They determined it was inclusive to a very specific group of people within the LGBTQIA2S+ community (those into nightclubs), but exclusive towards others.

Another club in the village, District Video Lounge, was a point of difference because it felt inclusive to male gay participants, but they recognized that it was not inclusive for women/those who are not gay. One participant who was white and gay said that "I've had [female] friends that have felt very unsafe whereas, personally, I don't think I've ever felt unsafe" (Focus group three participant). They explained how it was "grope heavy" in comparison to other clubs in the Village.

Venues that specifically cater to the LGBTQIA2S+ crowd were found to not include the entire spectrum of LGBTQ and hypersexualize their identity in a way that they did not feel comfortable with. This is an ongoing theme which I will discuss further in Chapter 6 in the shift away from the Village and towards other areas in the city that treat LGBTQIA2S+ identity as a lifestyle rather than a targeted gathering space at night.

4.4 Conclusion

To conclude, focus groups relied on visibility of other queer people via pedestrian-friendly streets, personal experiences that impacted their safety, type of venue, and what community that venue served to delineate inclusive and exclusive public spaces. It is critical here to note that the spaces these groups discussed were generally not aimed specifically at catering to LGBTQIA2S+ people. Instead, they focused on areas where they felt they could exist without drawing much attention to themselves. This included feelings of safety, the ability to hold a partner's hand, and being surrounding by other LGBTQIA2S+ people. The following Chapter will delve into understanding how inclusivity plays out in Montréal.

CHAPTER 5: SEEING QUEERNESS

5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I present research findings to answer my second research question: **How does seeing queerness influence the LGBTQIA2S+ community's perception of inclusivity in Montréal?** In the subsequent sections, I detail the insights that respondents provided regarding queer visibility through fashion (Section 6.2), self-presentation (6.3), and time of day (6.4). Throughout this Chapter, I consider how connotations of visibility influence feelings of inclusivity and how this is achieved through both perception of others and perception of self, and how the shift in activities from day to night affect this.

5.2 Fashion

Fashion was a defining feature of "looking queer". When inhabiting marked queer spaces such as Champs Bar or Club Unity, the way people dressed helped delineate who was queer and who was not. However, they also mentioned how these spaces are being taken up by increasingly more straight people. This made it harder to identify other LGBTQIA2S+ based on outfit alone. Moreover, fashion in Montréal was noted as being unique because of the variety in streetwear. Generally, "queerer" looking outfits do not necessarily mean someone is queer in Montréal. As one participant described,

> I feel like I've experienced where you meet somebody and they look so gay, like so queer. And then they're straight. And my brain is like, *what*?! Which is totally fair. I think self-expression is awesome and really cool. Maybe that's a good thing that we're transitioning to a place where it's less boxed. But I do think that it makes queer spaces kind of strange because those signs used to be really clear cut. I feel like historically, fashion has been really important (Focus group one).

Another participant noted,

> it blurs the lines, specifically in a bar setting if you were going to meet somebody. But I also think it opens things up. It allows people who are questioning or aren't super set, to express themselves in ways that don't need to be final decisions. I think that's a good thing (Focus group one).

They talked about how this made it challenging at times to inhabit spaces aimed at LGBTQIA2S+ people because Montréal as a whole is quite accepting and has a lot of allies that also take up places aimed for the LGBTQIA2S+ community. However, as seen above, they talked about how this is also a positive thing. It feels safer to dress in queer fashion in Montréal "because it doesn't necessarily put a target on your back in the same way it might in other places" (Focus group one participant).

Another participant added, "Sometimes it's not just that this particular kind of fashion is queer, it's just different from the trends and the norms that exist right now. Even if [an outfit is] horribly ugly, you're like, 'oh, this is kinda camp', you're like 'that's a queer person right?'" (Focus group two participant). It was agreed that the variety in outfits and the ability to express yourself more freely, especially in Le Plateau, made for a more visibly queer area, and thus, more inclusive. One participant noted the variety of outfits is a marker of queer identity unlike other outfits they saw. They said,

> If you walk down [Boulevard] Saint Laurent, I feel like the main type of outfit you're going to see is, this is a big generalization, so let's make that clear, but girls wearing their crop tops and their jeans and people are dressed the same. Not that that isn't a bad outfit, there's nothing wrong with that, obviously. I feel like queer people have more expression so they do whatever they want (Focus group two participant).

Another topic of conversation was the ability to blend in or out based on what they wore. The setting they were in determined how they dressed. One participant discussed working in a school. She said, "It's not that I wouldn't feel safe, but I'm unsure. I have the privilege of kind of morphing, I guess" (Focus group one participant). Another participant discussed the use of fashion as a way to protect themselves. For them, dressing in more "queer" fashion feels like a risk. Meeting new people lead them to dress in a way that makes them appear straight or undefinable. They only take fashionable risks when they know they are entering a space that is accepting.

In this way, fashion is both a marker of the variety and individuality expressed in Montréal, yet still an indicator of a LGBTQIA2S+ person. While Montréal is more unique in the freedom to express oneself in comparison to other Canadian cities, there were still feelings that certain fashion choices resulted in a queer identity. When participants saw more variety in

outfits, they felt the space as a whole was more inclusive. If people were accepting of a variety of outfits, they would be accepting of a variety of identities.

5.3 Self Presentation

Participants factored in how they would feel presenting themselves as LGBTQIA2S+ in a space. Some examples of presenting as queer included holding a partner's hand or dressing outside traditional gender norms. Ability to present was determined by active efforts to include the LGBTQIA2S+ community. This ranged from residents in an area, signage, the type of space and what kind of interaction it facilitated.

5.3.1 Residential areas

Being from a place or visiting a place influenced how comfortable participants felt presenting as queer. For example, Outremont, Westmount, and Parc Ex were not determined based on how safe or unsafe they felt but rather what beliefs the people in that area held about queer people. For example, Outremont is generally known to be more conservative based on the high concentration of Hasidic Jewish people. One participant discussed Pointe Claire: "it's more of a suburb experience […] they're like 'we don't really wanna see it' or 'we don't really wanna talk about it'" (Focus group one participant). Another participant who worked in the West Island mentioned, "I never felt comfortable coming out at work, like I kept that aspect of my identity super private because I wasn't sure how people would take that and how employees would see that" (Focus group three participant). They attributed this to the lack of effort from the West Island to include queer people. Instead of feeling like they would be victimized by hate crimes when being there, it was more about the predominant culture and attitude towards queer people that exists within that area based on its residents. Resident perceptions carried weight when determining places to openly present themselves.

The groups noted the residential aspects of parks made them feel more inclusive because there are less cars and tourists. Mount Royal was deemed inclusive rather than very inclusive because there were still a number of tourists and cars that reduced the more local feeling of Parc Jeanne Mance and Parc La Fontaine. Participants identified closer to being locals than tourists and felt more comfortable existing as themselves in spaces with locals rather than touristy areas. Another tourist area they discussed was Old Port. As one participant put it, "it's not one of those

places where you actively feel unsafe, but there's no active effort to feel included". They attributed the touristy nature of it to the uncomfortable feeling.

Participants highlighted the Lachine Canal as inclusive due to its open space, ability to be outside, and the noticeable number of queer people out. Saint-Henri was noted as a quiet family area where people minded their own business, which made it more comfortable to be visibly out (holding a partner's hand, dressing outside traditional gender norms, etc.). According to one participant who briefly lived in Saint Henri, it was not a space of queer community, but it was not a space of homophobia either.

The downtown area of the city brought up some nuances. A street to note is Rue Crescent, which was marked as very exclusive due to its numerous bars and nightlife that caters to a heterosexual crowd. Participants discussed being both women and queer, streets such as Rue Crescent and Rue Sainte Catherine felt unsafe, but not necessarily exclusive. Moreover, corporate areas felt more exclusive than areas in the Plateau and Mile End. They compared being in cafes in the downtown area to the Plateau and felt that places downtown felt more "subtly heteronormative". They discussed feeling actively included and welcomed when seeing pride flags in the windows of small cafes and apartment windows while seeing a pride flag in the window of TD bank felt corporate and ingenuine (focus group three).

Another point focused on was the stark divide between the Plateau and Milton-Parc. They noticed a distinct shift between feeling included and excluded when entering each area. One person described Milton-Parc as "frat bro" while the majority of LGBTQIA2S+ people they knew lived in the Plateau or Mile End. That in and of itself made the Plateau and Mile End more inclusive.

5.3.2 Universities and colleges

McGill's downtown campus was considered neutral due to its lack of permanent residents and its transient character, resulting in a space where there is less attention directed towards individuals. Participants talked about the education surrounding LGBTQIA+ issues at McGill as being a step in the right direction and the act itself makes it feel like an inclusive environment. "The act of educating and starting those conversations is good" (Focus group three participant). The student body in general was noted as inclusive, and the group was in agreement that they

"had never met so many gay people until they came to McGill, and that it was easy to find gay people" (focus group three participant).

One participant noted other universities and colleges throughout Montréal were generally inclusive. They said, "Universities or spaces where there are students generally feels more inclusive because there's more young people". This participant continued,

> everyone that has ever gone [to College Saint Laurent] is super gay. Vanier is a mixed bag. Vieux Mont Royal on Rue Ontario is also known to be super gay. Lasalle College has a fashion school where it feels inclusive, but the rest of the school is more neutral. McGill is like a small city where nobody cares and has its own little zones of inclusivity. For example, Blues is not very inclusive, but Burnside is.

Another participant referenced Concordia as most inclusive due to their active inclusion of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. They noted the abundant signage, advertisement of groups, their personal experience with the community, their gender-neutral washrooms (labeled simply as washroom), and their fine arts programs as being reasons why Concordia comes across as more inclusive than McGill University.

5.3.3 Outdoor space

Another point made was the difference between entering an outdoor space versus an indoor space. One participant mentioned how entering an indoor space they had never been before is "more intimidating if you haven't been in before to know what it's going to feel like, whereas with a lot of the parks you have an idea before you enter that space yourself" (Focus group one). Another participant jumped in and said,

> I think you're forced into a lot of interaction in an indoor space. Sometimes I personally wonder, 'how are people reading me?' … In an outdoor space, you're not really forced into those interactions (Focus group one).

The ability to present openly was dependent on the visibility of other LGBTQIA2S+ people and the ability to "blend in" in a way that meant existing normally without feeling targeted. This was most found in outdoor places such as parks and pedestrian friendly streets: areas where people are not paying attention to others. In contrast, indoor spaces meant more focus on the people inside and targeted specific audiences that many times do not cater to the entire LGBTQIA+ community, if at all.

5.4 Time of Day

The time of day was also an influencing factor. For example, "walking past the intersection of Prince Arthur and Boul. St-Laurent at like 2:00 in the afternoon, I don't know if I'd be holding hands but would feel safe, whereas even just walking by at like 2:00 AM it's bad vibes. I would go out of my way to avoid it" (Focus group three participant). Another participant supported this view by noting that the spaces she perceived as inclusive were during the day, whereas exclusive places were mostly considered because of nighttime activities.

Participants discussed the nuances of Boul. St-Laurent because of the varying degrees of inclusivity they felt. They called it a "mixed bag". They discussed in particular the difference in time of day attributes to the range of places and feelings towards these places. During the day, Boul. St-Laurent feels neutral to inclusive, but at night the section of clubs between Prince Arthur and Ave des Pins shifts to being exclusive (see quote from 4.4). Another area that fell into this category was the McGill Ghetto. During the night it felt exclusive because of the fraternity houses and because many cis-straight people are belligerently drunk during the weekend. In contrast, during the day it is filled with students going to and from class.

The group also noted their feelings on McGill's downtown campus because this is the place they frequent most in their day-to-day. Some places mentioned that were inclusive were the Geographic Information Centre (GIC), Douglas Hall (first year residence), Solin Hall (first year residence), and Birks Reading Room (Religion department). One participant said in the classes she's taken in Birks, many of the students presented as queer. Moreover, another participant noted how Birks Reading Room was her friend's favorite study spot. "It feels cozy," one participant said. Another area mentioned was the McGill Gym. One participant found it "pretty neutral". She noted that she has gone into the gym with her girlfriend to the heavyweight section (squat racks) and had no issues. The education building was mentioned as neutral to inclusive because "nobody is anti, but there's less openly queer people" (Focus group one participant). Some places noted as exclusive were Bar des Arts (Faculty of Arts student bar) and Blues Pub (Faculty of Engineering student bar). These felt "very straight and sweaty" according to one participant. Again, this shows the divide in daytime activities to nighttime activities. Furthermore, this shifts the mood from feeling able to present as queer to feeling less comfortable to do so at night.

Other spaces the group noted included concert venues where it depended on who was playing to determine if they felt it was an inclusive space. Parc Jean Drapeau, was one example. One participant had only experienced Parc Jean Drapeau during the day and found it pleasant. Others who had attended festivals and concerts said that the artist (e.g. Phoebe Bridgers versus T-Pain) made the park inclusive or exclusive. Other spaces included Centre Bell, L'Olympia, and other event locations and their surrounding areas. They explained, "sometimes it would be 'the cool gays' and others it would be stereotypically heteronormative" (Focus group two participant). It was ultimately dependent on the artist playing and the type of crowd they attracted. Moreover, many participants had only experienced these places at night, which meant factors such as excessive drinking, likelihood of being surrounded by "fratty guys" and people in certain attire usually meant a "subtly heteronormative" atmosphere. The shift to night time activities created a certain ambience to the setting that left participants unsettled, more uncomfortable, and on more edge than experiencing many places during the daytime.

5.5 Conclusion

Across all groups, fashion, self-presentation, and time of day heavily influenced how visibility was perceived and enacted on the street. Visual markers of inclusivity mattered (pride flags, gender inclusive washrooms, signs for community events). Visibility was most noted in pedestrian-friendly parts of Montréal which mainly include outdoor spaces and highly walkable areas such as the Plateau. Fashion was both a marker of queer identity and a reflection of street style in general in Montréal. Montréal is known for its more unique street style among young adults making it less identifiable in some cases to easily determine if someone is LGBTQIA2S+. However, it was still an important determinant in inclusivity in that spaces with more variety in outfits tended to be more inclusive areas. The fashion choices of participants individually were connected to feeling comfortable to present as they wished. Certain areas of the city or interactions meant they dressed "straighter" or protected their identity more. This was also heavily influenced by the time of day. Nighttime activities involved more drinking and the sexualization of individuals. The shift from day to night changed perspectives of spaces. This was noted most in the McGill Ghetto/Milton Parc area as it transitioned from a transient space for students during the day to more "fratty" night scene. In the next Chapter I will explore how

queer spaces are being redefined and shaped beyond the Village through participants'
perspectives of inclusivity.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

My study revealed that participants view inclusivity as visibly represented in a space. Although my findings were limited in scope and scale, they offer some insights into how inclusivity is perceived by some of Montréal's LGBTQIA2s+ community. Through a combination of pedestrian-friendly streets or park venues, and visibility of other queer individuals, the most inclusive spaces lay outside the boundaries of the typical gayborhood, known as The Village in Montréal. Instead, parks and streets in the Plateau and Mile End proved to be more inclusive spaces for participants. Numerous participants pointed to the subtle queer nature of Mile End and the Plateau, valuing the freedom to live openly without the pressure to declare their identity, yet without the necessity to conceal it either. Reviewing past studies on the gayborhood reveals a shift in space from an overt, congregated section of the city to a more diverse and less visibly noticeable queer space (Brown, 2014; Podmore, 2001, 2006, 2021). This does not mean that the gayborhood is disappearing; rather, it may serve a different function than its original purpose (Andersson, 2015; Bitterman & Hess, 2016; Brown, 2014; Oswin, 2008; Rushbrook, 2002; Taylor, 2008). In this Chapter, I build on past research in order to conceptualize an everyday politics of being queer in Montréal.

This discussion is guided by my research question: **How are queer spaces in Montréal being redefined by young adults today?** In the first section of this Chapter, I present previous literature and key findings from participants that relate to a shift away from The Village towards a "Queer Mile End" (Podmore, 2021) (Section 6.2). In the second section, I discuss the sentiment of participants to exist in public space without needing to outwardly define themselves (6.3) and pull in previous studies that discuss similar findings. Finally, in my final section, I summarize my key research findings (6.4).

6.2 Beyond the Gay Village

The Plateau has been one place that has held space for a wider spectrum of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. The Plateau is known for its history of housing lesbian and gay people, dating back to the 'Golden Age' in the 1980s as well as hosting a few gay and lesbian bars along one of its main streets, St. Denis (Podmore, 2006). In the Village, lesbian visibility

was limited, and many lesbians saw the Village as a "gay space" rather than a "queer space" resulting in a divide in districts. Moreover, The Village had many venues that limited entry to gay males only while lesbians settled in the Plateau and developed communities there (Podmore, 2001). Today, the lack of lesbian bars is noticeable with no lesbian specific bars in The Village and only one "more lesbian" bar in the Plateau (Champs Sports Bar). Many lesbian bars closed their doors in the early 2000s (Podmore, 2001).

   Since the 2010s, another area of Montréal that has emerged as a queer space is Mile End. Essentially an extension of the Plateau, Mile End lies north of the Plateau with Boul. St-Laurent being its main artery. Originally an immigrant gateway, it has attracted many young queer people and is host to venues run by queer people but are not necessarily queer centered venues (Podmore, 2021). This creates a more lived in experience rather than a targeted one like that of the Village. This phenomenon of new inner-city neighborhoods for LGBTQIA2S+ people is not new. Many researchers have found a disidentification and movement away from the gayborhood across cities from Paris to Sydney (Brown 2014; Ghaziani 2017, 2019; Hayslett & Kane 2011; Podmore, 2021).
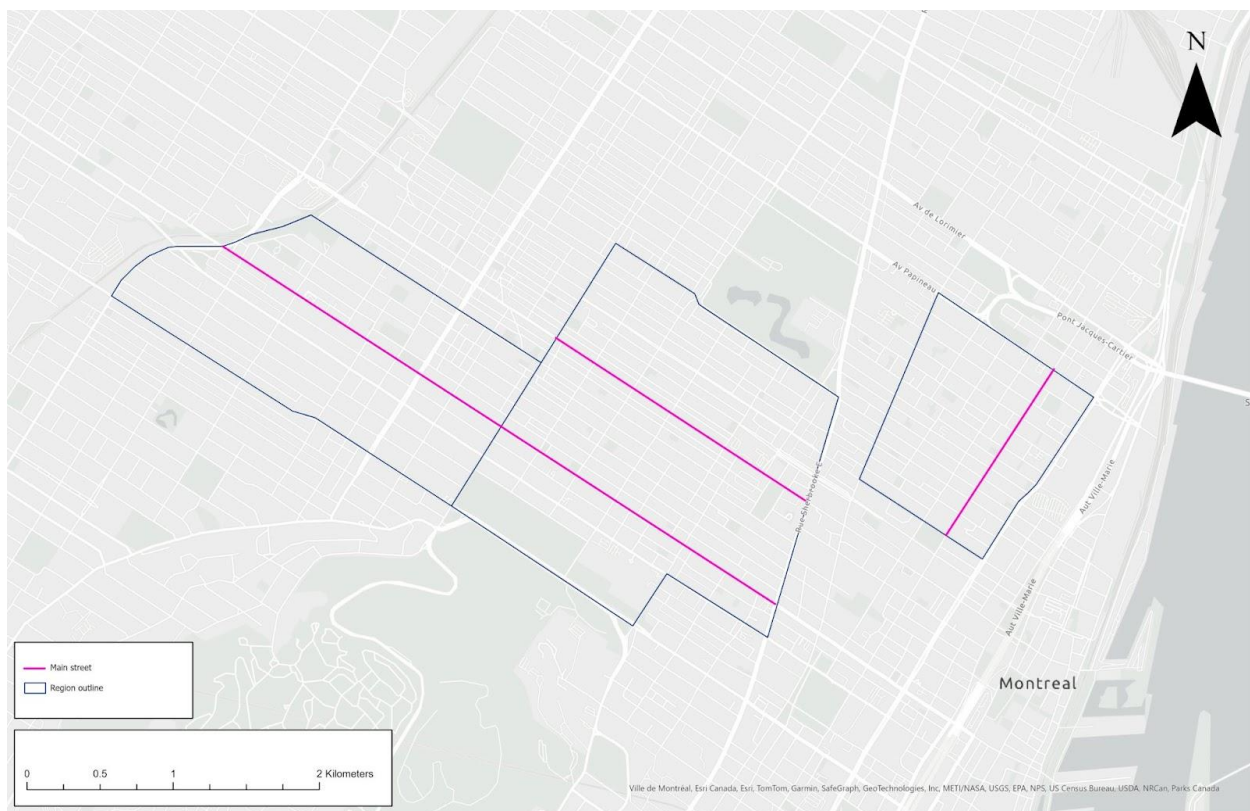
Map 6.2 Mile End, Le Plateau, The Village

The shift away from the gayborhood is a result of both a need to have inclusive spaces for the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community, but also as a result of gentrification. Increasing housing costs, zoning changes, and transit changes lead to changing demographics resulting in a decline in gay businesses (Brown, 2014). Other factors such as more acceptance and assimilation of homosexuality and the normalization of mobile apps that facilitate social and sexual connections have contributed to the decline in interest and need for a queer territory (Ghaziani, 2019). Another is the privileging of the male and masculine over the female and feminine in bars, clubs, and restaurants (Brown, 2014). Many of these venues cater specifically to gay men. One example participants mentioned was District Video Lounge where most of the attendees were older gay men. Another example is the skate parks. One participant said, "I go there and it's like I'm not supposed to be there. Like it's not my space to be in. It's a boy space". Previous literature and participants understand the gayborhood as being a male space. This not only excludes women, but transgender and non-binary people (Doan, 2007). To further this point, one participant in Ghaziani's (2019) study said, "And trans folk? Where are they? We never talk about trans neighborhoods. And I don't think that's the gayborhood" (10).

Similarly, to previous discussions, participants found that the Village catered to a specific subset of people that many did not identify with. The Village was not an area that participants noted as inclusive. Those that were gay men recognized their inclusion and the exclusion of others. What they marked as most inclusive aligned with many of the findings from Podmore's (2021) study. Mile End and surrounding areas were marked as inclusive due to its inclusivity towards the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community and the lack of emphasis on nightlife. Unlike the Village, Mile End does not have strip clubs catered towards men only or many clubs in general. Rather, the numerous cafes, small restaurants, and pedestrian friendly streets cater to a more inclusive existence during the daytime. Heading into Mile End, there are fewer clubs and bars, which participants said created a more pleasant atmosphere. Moreover, a higher visibility of queer couples made for a more welcoming environment. Participants discussed the difference between Champs Bar and Club Unity. Both venues cater to the LGBTQIA2S+ crowd, yet Champs holds many non-sexual events (Trivia Night, pool, line dancing) in comparison to Unity (solely a nightclub). Furthermore, participants felt more actively included in Mile End because of the pride flags in the windows of cafes and apartments. These felt more authentic and less performative than when they saw rainbows in more corporate settings or in the Village.

Looking at the various exclusive tendencies of the gayborhood, many of these resonate with what was exclusive about many areas of Montréal. Age, activity, and who the space catered to - families, youth, students, etc. - affected how included they felt. Other areas in Montréal such as West Island and Outremont (just a street over from Mile End), were noted as more suburban and car-centered which reinforced the idea that presenting as queer is contained within certain areas or a private matter. For example, one participant mentioned how in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue (another suburban residential area) she felt watched by people in their homes whereas walking around in a park or in more pedestrian-populated areas, she felt less singled-out. Feeling like one could blend into the space more without compromising their appearance or identity was a large factor in finding comfort and safety in spaces around Montréal, which will be discussed in the following section.

6.3 Blending in While Being Out: Co-Existence

A recurring topic for participants and previous studies alike, is the desire to be able to exist openly in spaces without needing to outwardly label oneself or be in exclusively targeted areas. In Podmore's (2001) study of Boul. St-Laurent, she found that lesbian populations saw Boul. St-Laurent as a site of interaction where difference was the key to sharing the space. Some of her participants discussed how on Boul. St-Laurent, their sexuality didn't matter. There was no dominant definition of the street or the area, allowing for a greater presence of multiple identities (Gubbay, 1989; Podmore, 2001). The multiplicity of commercial space, activities, and residents along Boul. St-Laurent allowed for the "integration of multiple aspects of self that are often subsumed in other queer spaces" (Podmore, 2001, 343). In the Village, one carries a singular identity as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans or queer. The heterogeneity of bodies on Boul. St-Laurent offered a different type of visibility, one that involved a more nuanced performance of identity (Podmore, 2001; Puar, 2007). While Boul. St-Laurent did not, and still does not, host many lesbian or queer institutions and businesses, its mixed-use draws a variety of people resulting in the visibility of an assemblage of identities (Puar, 2007). This is noted in my study specifically as Boul. St-Laurent heads into the Mile End.

Mile End is not only made up of queer people, but generally a space of young hipsters which "serves to disrupt heterosexual norms and to recode the area's spaces as progressive, creative and open" (Podmore, 2021, 302). It is more common to find bars, restaurants and cafés

that are owned by LGBTQIA2S+ or LGBTQIA2S+ populated in Mile End (Podmore, 2021). Thus, Mile End felt more integrated than the Village. There is a more subtle queer nature to the daily life of Mile End residents. Mile End offers a space to carry multiple identities without being labeled for a specific one.

Going beyond the Village as a marker of queer identity and activities, and instead looking at the various ways in which a city creates pockets of inclusivity through various activities, we can see a cultural archipelago form of the various identities and sexualities that make up a city (Ghaziani, 2019). In Montréal, queer inclusivity can be found in parks, on pedestrian-only streets, and venues that cater to a wider audience than just to gay men. Older generations of gay men have held onto the physical significance and meaning of the gayborhood while younger residents look to go beyond the gayborhood to exist as themselves (Bitterman & Hess, 2016; Brown, 2014). Pride Parades and venues specifically marked with rainbows are no longer the only ways in which people today can express themselves. With the age of social media and a broader heteronormative tolerance and acceptance of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, the physical boundaries of the gayborhood are not a necessary boundary of safety anymore as they once were (Brown, 2014).

This is also reflected in my findings. Participants noted spaces such as Shakti Rock Gym (indoor climbing gym in Mile End), Paragym (acrobatics-centered fitness gym east of Mile End), parks (Jeanne Mance, La Fontaine, Lachine Canal, etc.), and cafés (in the Mile End and Plateau) that were not targeted towards a specific sexuality, but were inhabited by people of similar identities and sexualities anyways. One participant mentioned a run club called "Out Run" that meets at Parc La Fontaine. This club is geared towards queer women, but anyone is allowed to join. Moreover, parks in general were highlighted consistently across all my focus groups as inclusive because they felt less judgmental for participants. The spaces participants in my study talked about as being inclusive were places that held space for everyone.

Moreover, the nature of the city itself leads it to be inclusive because of the anonymous feeling of a big city. The "queering" of Mile End also promotes a wave of new areas in the city that queer people are defining as their own. More and more "hip" places are emerging throughout the city (Little Burgundy, Hochelaga, Le Plateau, etc.) where the blending of cultures, sexualities, and people will start to challenge existing heteronormative practices (Podmore, 2021).

Participant's sentiments about Montréal's inclusivity as a whole reiterates the idea that inclusivity stretches beyond the boundaries of the Village. Each focus group discussed how Montréal as a city, in comparison to other cities across Canada and North America, was seen as inclusive and welcoming to queer people. As one participant put it, "in Montréal it's just normal to be queer. Here you're just a person who happens to be gay". One participant noted how they never felt they needed to officially "come out" when they moved here. There are other issues in Montréal that take precedence. Another participant explained, "Oh you're gay, great, but which language do you speak". They also mentioned that Montréal, as a city, makes significant efforts, particularly during pride events, to foster a more vibrant queer community compared to other cities in Canada. Participants tied this to why they felt more touristy areas were less inclusive for them. Touristy areas involved less local Montréal residents. They discussed how locals tend to contribute to the overall culture of inclusivity in Montréal in regard to the queer community. Participants specifically noted Old Port, the Village, and Mount Royal as touristy areas. Another aspect is the larger focus on art and culture throughout Montréal that adds to the sense of inclusivity. Events put on by the city such as Jazz Fest, Mural Fest and Pride were examples of this.

What this study has revealed is that traditional markers of queer space - bars, clubs, and restaurants that target queer audiences - are not clear indicators of inclusivity. Instead, queer space cannot be seen in a city as a single area, but as a cultural archipelago (Ghaziani, 2019). One can find pockets of queer inclusivity all over Montréal, but specifically in outdoor settings and pedestrian friendly streets. Areas of Montréal in which queer people can seamlessly integrate into everyday life are perceived as more inclusive than being in specifically labeled "gay" or "queer" areas such as the Village.

6.4 Summary of Key Findings

To understand perceptions of queer inclusivity in public space in Montréal, I answered three main research questions using focus groups and hand mapping exercises. To reiterate, the sample I drew from does not cover a diverse range of ages, languages, or ethnicities. This study does not seek to reflect the entire LGBTQIA2S+ community but rather give a glimpse into the insights of some LGBTQIA2S+ individuals.

In Chapter 4, I drew from major themes in determinants of inclusivity from participants and the hand drawn maps to answer this question. Pedestrian-friendliness, safety, personal experiences, type of venue and the targeted community influenced how they perceived a space. Familiarity with a place shaped where groups predominantly mapped. Groups were most familiar with McGill's downtown campus and the Plateau and were able to talk extensively about these areas in contrast to lesser-known areas such as Westmount or Verdun. This study revealed that pedestrian-friendly areas offered the ability to maintain a more anonymous front. Outdoor areas such as Jeanne Mance, the Lachine Canal, festivals, and street closures to cars created a more inclusive atmosphere for participants. In line with many studies, participants looked beyond the gayborhood for spaces of inclusivity, rarely mentioning Montréal's gay village at all.

In Chapter 5, I explored how visibility was a key factor in determining inclusivity. Visibility was spoken about throughout each group and came about in three themes: fashion, the ability to present oneself, and time of day. Fashion was deemed a marker of queer identity but participants found the lines were blurred in Montréal. While it marked individuality, it did not necessarily identify someone as queer. What they found were areas with a variety of outfits and styles tended to be more inclusive than areas where the same type of outfit can be seen (such as on Boul. St-Laurent at night).

Participants also looked for ways in which an area was actively trying to include LGBTQIA2S+ people. This ranged from signage on bathrooms to perceptions of residents in a neighborhood. Predominantly family residential areas were noted as being more exclusive, alongside predominantly car-trafficked areas. Outdoor spaces were talked about in depth because of the ease of identifying other queer couples and less pressure to interact with others.

Time of day heavily influenced perceptions of inclusivity in certain areas. Sections of Boul. St-Laurent and the Village revealed that hyper sexualized nightlife of both queer and straight individuals made for an uncomfortable atmosphere. The numerous night clubs and bars that line Boul. St-Laurent between Sherbrooke and Ave des Pins were noted as exclusive.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I revealed that queer inclusivity is not confined to the gayborhood but rather can be found all over the city. Most notably, the "queering" of Mile End reflects a neighborhood that has emerged as an inclusive place for multiple identities. The exclusionary practices within the gayborhood reveal other areas of the city in which pockets of inclusivity can be found. I then explored how participants sought out places in which they could integrate into

everyday life while still presenting openly as LGBTQIA2S+. Reframing the city in Ghaziani's (2019) terms of a cultural archipelago reflects the many spaces in which participants defined inclusive spaces that were far beyond the boundaries of the gayborhood.

From this research, I have sought to formulate a comprehensive understanding of what inclusivity looks and feels like in Montréal for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. This research ties together queer geography literature, public space literature, and identity politics scholarship for the purpose of understanding the perceptions and experiences of a small group of LGBTQIS2S+ individuals in Montréal. This thesis has shown that queer inclusivity is not localized in one area of the city but rather found in pockets all throughout Montréal.

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Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

**Pre hand mapping exercise questions**
1. While your name will not be attached to anything, it would be helpful to have some demographic information to make sense of the map you will make. Could you please share your:
    1. age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, occupation, and religion (if any)?

Post hand mapping exercise questions (semi-structured)
1. Can you walk me through your map?
2. What criteria did you use to determine if a space was inclusive?
3. What criteria did you use to determine if a space was exclusive?
4. Were there any factors that weighed heavier than others when determining whether these spaces were inclusive or not?
5. Were there any areas the group disagreed on? Why?
6. What public spaces did you take into consideration?
7. What types of public spaces do you feel most included in? Why?
8. How often do you frequent the spaces you highlighted as inclusive?

Appendix B: Focus group maps
Base maps
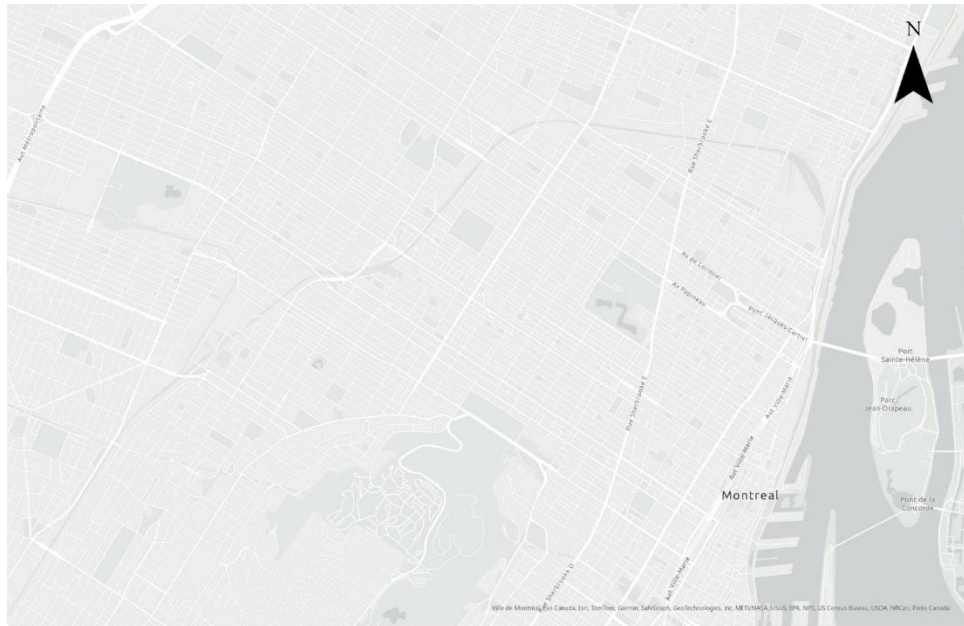
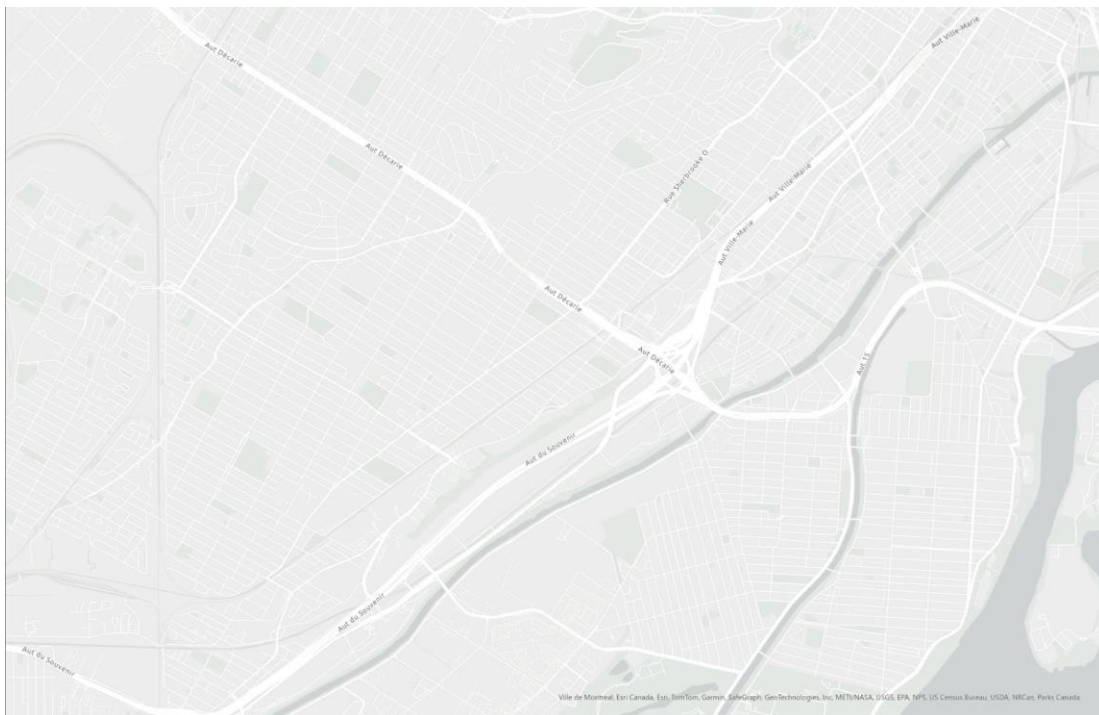The Village, Plateau, Mile End, Parc Ex

Entire Island of Montréal

Downtown Montréal
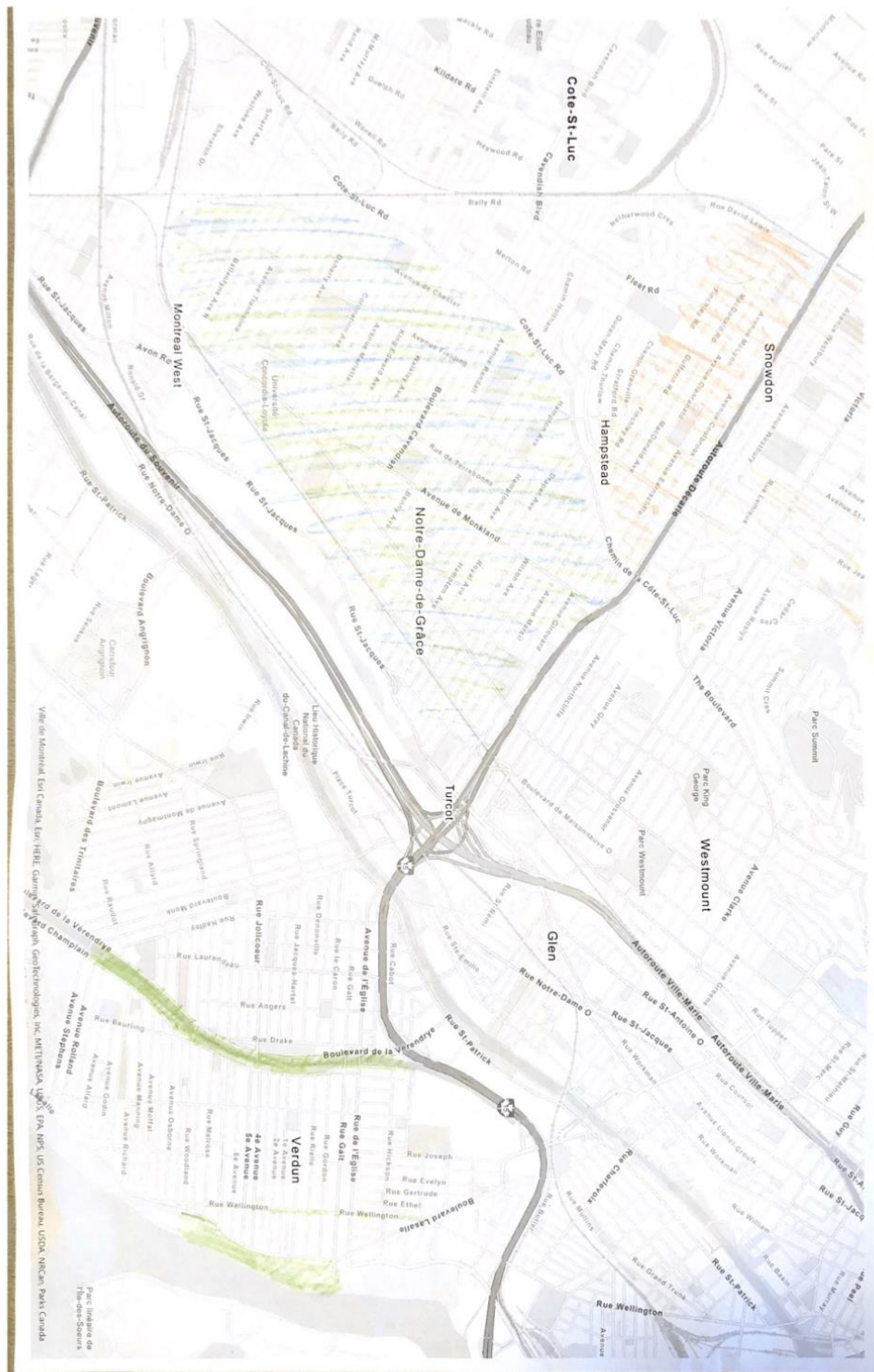

Verdun, West Island

Results: Focus group one

Results: Focus group two

Results: Focus group three