

***Logement social* – Right to Housing**

A Sceptical Overview of Social Housing Research, Policy and Struggle in Montréal

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Québec has a history of *logement social* or social housing. This is a first glance survey for anglophone readers of the French-language literature on community housing in Québec's large cities, with a focus on Montréal.

Public Health and the Welfare State in Québec



The publications of the Directeur de santé publique are quite comfortable in situating Montréal in the vanguard of the historical development of urban citizens' health quality of life, citing their continuity from the first historical critiques of the conditions of urban populations in the 1840s (Massé, 2015, p. 8). However, Québec's *logement social* has suffered many of the weaknesses found in other Canadian provinces. Historically, two approaches have been pursued: investing in the supply of housing or supporting the demand for housing through grants or tax refunds for low-income citizens so that they can afford rental accommodation or home ownership (see Chronology, Table 1). Municipalities find there is a continuing demand for housing with waiting lists for access to both municipally managed and social service agency managed housing. At the turn of the millennium, Papineau notes that 275,000 people in Québec "use more than half their income for shelter, which forces them to cut down on essential expenses such as food, medicine and clothing" (Papineau, 2000, p. 28).

Social housing programs are designed to assist households which cannot afford to acquire adequate and suitable housing at affordable prices on the private market. Social housing, which is an important component of the social safety net, includes programs specially adapted to various client groups such as seniors, handicapped persons [sic], native people, victims of family violence, single-parent families and the working poor (Government of Canada 1993: Section 26, 1).

Logement social – Montréal Chronology

While Québec public health measures from the mid-1800s to First World War can be cited, the consensus of policy writers is that, unlike the United States, housing was not originally part of the welfare state in anywhere Canada. "Public housing only started as a policy with the National Housing Act (NHA) of 1948 and only truly became a national program with the revisions to the NHA in 1964" (Nettling, 2020).

The Federal government's *Lalonde Report* proposed that housing conditions were a determinant of health (Lalonde, 1974, p. 18). Contemporary studies link housing and health in terms of:

- security of tenure (ownership status, costs, availability)
- physical risks (quality of construction, level of repair)
- the socioeconomic stability of the occupants (employment, family stability),
- sociopolitical security (risks from and solidarity with, neighbours and social ties in local groups; policies affecting affordability, gentrification) and
- geographical access to services supporting health and well-being (e.g., in 2012 "In Montréal, over 135000 people under the poverty line did not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables within walking distance" (Directrice Régionale de Santé publique, 2012).

For example, the need to devote a significantly greater proportion of their household income to housing costs leaves low-income households with less funding to pay for nutritious food or medication and medical treatments (e.g., Massé, 2015, p. 10). For housing activists,

1880s	Public health measures
1948/1964	National Housing Act Keynesian welfare state, Municipalities as partners Catholic organizations: e.g. Ligue ouvrière catholique Habitations Jeanne-Mance
<p>...Social housing programs are designed to assist households which cannot afford to acquire adequate and suitable housing at affordable prices on the private market...</p> <p>"A group of unrelated persons living together, [or] residents [and] people living alone" did not qualify</p>	
1964-1978	CMHC funding for cooperative housing administered by not-for-profit community enterprises channeled via Société d'habitation du Québec
1965	Comité des locataires de Habitations Jeanne-Mance
1967	Expo 67
1968-1973	Haiti becomes 2 nd origin country of migrants to Montreal
1974	<i>Lalonde Report</i> : housing conditions determinant of health
1975	<i>Marsh Report on Social Security</i>
1976	Parti Québécois elected – crisis of urban elite and city image
1977	Québec <i>Livre blanc</i> right to housing as an essential good necessary for sustaining human life. <i>Right to housing – Right to the city – Right to Remain</i> Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain restriction of evictions
1980	Deinstitutionalization
1985	Ville de Montréal recognizes tenant associations
1990s	Provincial, nationalist politics. Meech Lake Accord "Nativism" AccèsLogis Withdrawal of Federal funding. "Parcellization": Fragmentation of a set of programs Gentrification issues
1996-2015	Metropolis Project on global migration
1998	Stronger tenant representation on municipal housing organizations
2000	Neoliberal urbanism, Quartier des Spectacles
2007	15% "Affordable" housing quota for new developments
2010	Habiter Montréal – critiques of infrastructural approach Housing First approaches
2015	Decline of housing research, rising energy efficiency research
2019	Increasing global speculation in Montréal properties

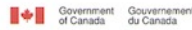
Table 1. Chronological overview of social housing programs and issues in Montréal.

Housing is at the crossroads of social and civil struggles of the past 50 years. First of all, the fight for social rights, since the issue of housing has as its starting point the ever greater financialization of the housing market. The general rise in property prices . . . leads the housing sector to be seen as first a business opportunity instead of a vital necessity. . . . The defense of the right to housing also joins the fight for civil rights and freedoms, since it is almost impossible to exercise one's democratic rights, to vote or to participate in public gatherings such as demonstrations when one does not know where to sleep. . . . the marginalization of poor people explains the virtual absence of their concerns in the public debate. . . . housing is not just a roof for one person, it protects all the needs

necessary for a decent life. ...if housing is a right...then we must together defend it as such. Not as something that concerns only the poorest, not out of charity, not as a political issue among many, which would be interchangeable according to the fashion of the day (Guay, 2020, pp. 10–11).

However, the influential *Marsh Report on Social Security for Canada* on social services set the tone at the federal level, by omitting a chapter on housing (Marsh, Leonard, 1975). Social workers and social services agencies have seen housing as a separate domain. As a result, a non-integrated approach has predominated. Shelter has been provided by specific agencies such as missions to house the homeless and YMCA hostels that provided overnight shelter. Health care has become

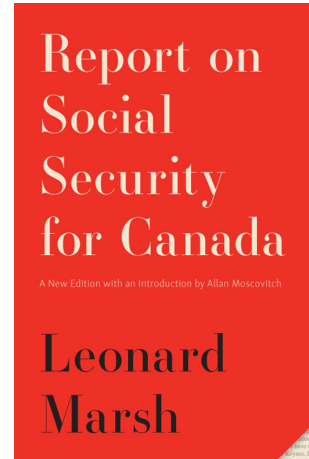
concentrated in hospitals. In Québec this “hospitalocentric” approach has been challenged (Vaillancourt & Jetté, 1999). Affordable and adequate housing was not seen to be a determinant of health or relevant to domestic violence until relatively recently (Marsh, Alex et al., 1999): “social housing has become the ‘poor cousin’ of social policy. In the past, the fields of institutionalization and social housing too often have been treated as separate and compartmentalized” (Vaillancourt & Ducharme, 2001, p. 11). Nonetheless, Québec’s health and welfare policies acknowledge the importance of housing and attempt to avoid fragmenting clients’ problems across agencies. After 1980, for both Federal and Provincial governments, social housing was viewed as an alternative to institutionalization and hospitalization for those with disabilities. A causal chain is proposed in the literature from economic inequality to unequal housing conditions which mediate and compound the impacts of other social and environmental risks of individuals, thus degrading the overall population health (Rauh, 2008).

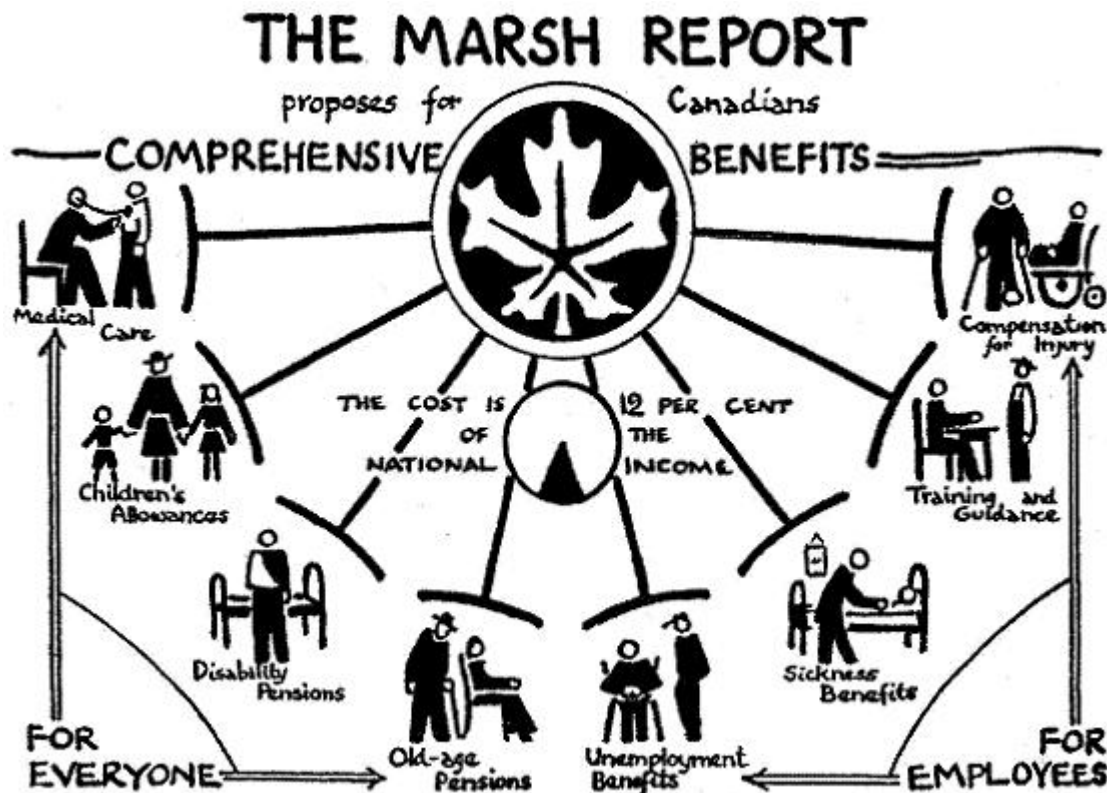


**A NEW
PERSPECTIVE
ON THE
HEALTH OF
CANADIANS**

a working document

Marc Lalonde
Minister of National Health and Welfare





The Institute of Public Affairs, Halifax, 1943

There is no explicit constitutional division of responsibilities for housing in Canada between different orders of government. For example, municipalities and cities, which are regarded as a separate order of government, are created by provinces. Banting argues that social housing has historically been used as “a weapon in the struggle for hegemony among the governments of Canada” (Banting, 1990, p. 131)—notably the struggle between the federal and provincial governments, with municipalities struggling for a seat at the table as the order of government that has most often been the partner implementing and managing projects.

From the 1950s to about 1975, public housing developed as part of the Keynesian welfare state. Housing was viewed as a tool to stimulate the market and create employment while satisfying the demand of a growing population and the 1950-63 baby boom. In Québec, the Province was not engaged in community housing. Instead, Catholic church-based groups such as the Ligue ouvrière catholique provided a network of residences with municipalities as partners. One product of the NHA was Habitations Jeanne-Mance in Montréal. This was a partnership between the City of Montréal and CMHC. Couched within middle-class urban reformers’ convictions that urban clearance was needed to eliminate poor slum dwellers who were seen as a threat to public order, HJM became a leading centre of tenant activism against paternalistic and socially intrusive surveillance. At the time, federally mandated rental contracts that discriminated against non-heteronormative families and relationships, and arbitrary evictions were permitted. “A group of unrelated persons living together, [or] residents [and] people living alone” did not qualify for tenancy. Furthermore, the death of a partner immediately caused an eviction, as the resident then fell under a different category: “people living alone.” (Arnopoulous, 1969 cited in (Nettling,

2020). The Comité des locataires de Habitations Jeanne-Mance (“Comité”) influenced provincial and national policy from a class and also a linguistic perspective through the 1990s.



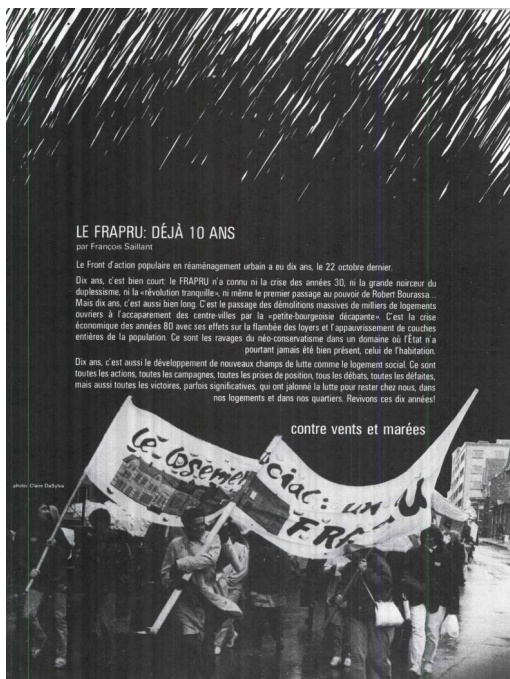


Housing and Québec Nationalism

While the City refused to recognize tenants' associations, "In confronting federal statutes by expressing a demand for rights, the Comité's declaration was their first collective act against the slum-dweller discourse, policies of urban renewal, and power within Montréal.... this newfound

power was forcibly shown during Expo '67, the World's Fair.” (Nettling, 2020) The effect was to delegitimize top-down urban renewal projects that prioritized anti-loitering and anti-pedestrian “defensible space” over social rights and to create a sense of uneasiness with large-scale social housing among the elite, designers, social reformers and professionals over the last 50 years. Social housing projects were labelled as concentrating social pathologies by a left-conservative consensus (Wimhurst, 1984; Klemek, 2011). The Comité was at the forefront of the shift to anti-capitalist politics and the Canadian New Left. The Comités of public housing developments supported the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 and their influence was reflected in the recognition of housing as a right enacted in 1979 and 1980 (Gouvernement du Québec, 1977, p. 5). The Government’s *Livre blanc* defined the right to housing as an essential good that was a necessary basis for sustaining human life. However, the City of Montréal was able to suppress tenant recognition until 1985 until it was forced to change by Provincial laws.

Similar to other provinces, CMHC funded new public housing in Québec, particularly between 1964 and 1978 (Morin et al., 1990). Between 1973 and 1990, about 80% of this funding shifted to cooperatives and social housing administered by not-for-profit community enterprises. In 1986, funding was channelled through the Société d’habitation du Québec as the sole provider of social housing throughout the province (except on Federal Indian Reservations). The Province thus took over combined programs and private nonprofits, rent supplements, and the Canada-Québec Rehabilitation Assistance Program (PARCQ).



British Columbia and Québec took advantage of the delegation of jurisdiction. From the mid-1990s, provincial control made housing an important sector for economic development and Québec nationalist policies (Dufour et al., 2020). Québec’s AccèsLogis program was created to fund cooperatives and nonprofit housing organizations. The long-term AccèsLogis(FQHC), administered with third sector groups -- including tenant associations -- was implemented in 1997. These programs also channelled the selection and prioritization of protest issues, and thus the collective actors that came to the fore in the sector such as the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) and the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ). In effect, the national question shaped the housing debate. Housing actors created ad hoc alliances that inflected housing debates and structured the implementation of actual programs (Dufour, 2021). For example, throughout the 1990s, debates focused initially

on the withdrawal of federal funding, then on the Meech Lake Accord. FRAPRU aligned itself with the governing pro-independence forces, highlighted the particularity of Québec’s housing needs and imbalances in relation to allocations to other provinces. At the same time, they demonstrated in front of the Assemblée Nationale and achieved a small provincial government

investment in 1200 housing units, which ultimately resulted in the creation of AccèsLogis and measures to increase government contributions to the community housing sector.

Part of the funding to tenant associations conditional on promoting social housing, including participating in protests on this issue, the *contribution au secteur* generated a mechanism of selection, which partly explains the great concern for, and visibility of, the issue of social housing—a concern and visibility that is largely absent in the area of rent control, evictions and housing discrimination, for example, by comparison. . . . With this institutional arrangement, social housing became the main claim around which social protest in the sector was organized. (Dufour et al., 2020)

From 1990, Federal funding declined in the face of high-interest rates and the replacement of Keynesian with neoliberal policy. CMHC focused on supporting the efficiency of housing markets with only residual programs in support for low-income households. There were few provincial government initiatives to offset the Federal withdrawal of funds. Municipalities granted only small loans, land and buildings to a third sector or community organizations and not-for-profits (Morin et al., 1990). Federally, the Mortgage Indexation Program encouraged the development of nonprofit social housing, targeting low-income households (Selby & Wilson, 1981, p. 10). A second program encouraged access to the cooperative model for a mixture of full-market rate residents and subsidized low-income tenants so that they did not spend over 25% of their income on rent.





From the 1990s, CMHC defined “social housing” as a set of programs rather than as part of social policy. In part, this reflects a fragmentation of jurisdiction and responsibilities between the provinces and the federal government. For example, at the end of the 1990s, shelter allowance programs for seniors (LOGIRENTE) and people on welfare (Allocation-logement MSR) reached 145,500 households, whereas tax breaks reached 732,000 households (Société d’habitation du Québec, 1997). Programs were often delegated to these municipal-civil society collaborations such as The Federation of Montréal Nonprofit Housing Organizations. They attempted to integrate residents socially by providing assistance to those in need of accommodation. Due to deinstitutionalization, increasingly vulnerable clients were being accommodated by municipalities with limited and declining resources.

While financing new projects continued to be a problem, the importance of the third sector of cooperatives and not-for-profit organizations was recognized in the first decade of the millennium (although funding has been curtailed in the last few years). ‘Community support’ in the form of assistance to and interventions with community housing tenants was a bottom-up innovation by social workers and community organizers that was more formally adopted and institutionalized in the 2000s on a regional basis (Bergeron-Gaudin & Jetté, 2021). This was an example of what Vaillancourt et al. refer to as the “co-construction of social policy” by both state and non-state third-sector actors. However, after about 2014, this declined with a more provincially directed approach (Vaillancourt et al., 2016).

From 1998, Québec municipal housing organizations have become more democratic by including at least 2 representatives of tenants' associations on their boards. This was a long-fought outcome of tenant activism such as that of the *Comités*. However, the contribution of this activism tends to be silenced in Canadian histories of social housing (Nettling, 2020) even though the need for tenant recognition and participation features in the Federal report by Dennis and Fish in 1972 (Dennis & Fish, 1972). However, the 1969 Hellyer report had been hostile to public housing. It refused to recognize tenants or to critique anti-tenant provincial officials and municipal elites (Hellyer, 1969; Wheeler, 1969, pp. 199–200). By the 1980s tenant politics had made gains. “Tenants effectively controlled HJM from 1985 to 1994. Wielding power, tenants secured renovation funding in the late 1980s and halted plans to partially demolish HJM” (Nettling 2020). What is striking is the division of the literature on Montréal's social housing policy and its issues. On the one hand, blandly statistical reports suggest a technocratic approach. On the other hand, a separate literature foregrounds a repressed history of popular struggles over rights and political battles in which power over social housing is linked to control of the city (Racette, 2018). That is to say, because housing struggles were linked to broader understandings of rights, the stakes were seen to be much greater than mundane struggles over contracts, renovation and tenure. Nothing less than the city itself was at stake – and Montréal's elites from the 65 to 1980 understood the city as an elite global capital, a status underscored by Expo 67, the 1974 Olympics and the vested interests of wealthy families and provincial crown corporations.

Homelessness and Nativism in the 2000s

In the 2000s, the need for accommodation for the most marginal and vulnerable became a more visible homelessness and indigent problem. Barrack-like shelters for the homeless have been one institutional response that, however, exposes the vulnerable to lateral violence and exploitation by criminals. From about 2007, a quota-based approach provided incentives to developers gentrifying and densifying neighbourhoods to create social housing units. The City of Montréal created over 200 homes through incentives to make 15% of new units “affordable” housing. However, affordable rent is not determined based on a tenant's income but in relation to the average cost of rent in a neighbourhood. There have not been firm percentages, and access to what has been built has been limited to those screened by housing cooperatives. Applicants with social skills such as a history of volunteering and community engagement are preferred. This screens out the most marginalized and outsiders. Desage argues that this illustrates the exclusions that operate within Québec social housing policy even when inclusion is an objective (Calavita et al., 2010; Desage, 2017, pp. 171; 169).

By prompting the poorest individuals to live next to those richer than them, the call for social mixing has often resulted in placing the latter group (or collective actors speaking on its behalf) in a position to judge and authorize the presence of the former, thus returning to the impersonal attribution of rights ...[rather than]...a true (positive) right to housing (Desage, 2017, p. 170).

Dufour et al. identify a “logic of selection” that operated in housing protests continued to be tied to a Québec nationalist politics (2020). Roche and Rutland identify how housing policy worked in favour of white Québec-born citizens by emphasizing a “right to remain in place” in urban neighbourhoods in the face of gentrification and redevelopment. This restricted evictions — a key

victory for the tenants' rights movements of the 1960s and early 1970s. However, from the mid-1970s, social housing policy worked against Anglophone and, in particular, black racialized immigrants whose "right to remain" could be overlooked. They were seen to be claiming a right to live in areas that they did not deserve as relative newcomers (Roche & Rutland, 2019, p. 15). In a context of increasing black francophone migration to Québec and Montréal in particular, housing policy worked as a mechanism of racial domination and control in favour of non-black francophones. Black immigrants, and the public housing projects occupied by them, were unfairly stigmatized in the media, police and by the municipal government and Office Municipal d'Habitation de Montréal (OMHM) as areas of criminality. For example, Goyette discovered that the OMHM provided the police with building plans, keys and possibly the master key to residential complexes and evicted up to 60 households of which only one resident was suspected of selling drugs (Goyette, 2017).

Racism in public housing is reflected in an ongoing absence of policy discussion of race and poor migrant residents up to 2020. For example, federal investment in gentrification research and social science policy studies of white inner-city residents and neighbourhoods has made an important impact on public housing since the 1990s. Since 2007, the WHO has laudably fostered attention on senior citizens in the form of an "Age-friendly Cities" program in which the province has taken a collaborative governance approach (Paris & Garon, 2020). At the same time, homeless Indigenous people are subject to racialized management by the police and penal system. This has excluded visible poverty from the city centre.



Studies of race and housing in Québec appear relatively rare in the last decade. There has been a significant ongoing migration of francophones from Africa and the Caribbean settling in Montréal. For example, the 2006 Census found 34.2% of the population of Montréal and 22.6% of Greater Montréal are non-white, with Blacks as the largest, racialized, visible minority group (Bendaoud, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2010). As of 2016, Blacks formed 10.3% of the City of Montréal's population, Arab 7.3%, Latin American 4.1%, followed by South Asian and Chinese both 3.3% and Indigenous peoples 2.2% (Statistics Canada, 2017). Given that about a third of the population is a racialized visible minority there appears to be a separation between the social science on immigration, race and social difference divided from the housing literature, at least on first glance. This may be changing in the last 2 years but there is room for more (Roche & Rutland, 2019). For example, Gervais notes that Indigenous residents of large cities such as Montréal have an intersectional experience of racialized disqualification from social programs and services (Gervais, 2020). The federal government is responsible for on-reserve housing provided through band councils. However, much of the focus on housing in relation to Indigenous peoples has been on residential units provided in mostly Indigenous-controlled towns that are not on reserves, such as in the northern periphery of James Bay (Eeyou Istchee) and Nunavik (Thibault, 2016).

In this period nationalist debates continued to inflect housing issues. However, the repression of race alongside a selective response to housing needs in ways that appear biased against migrants

and newcomers suggests a nativism that combined racialization, class and established insider status in constructing access to community housing and entitlement to any right to the city. This may also be entangled with policing of migrant social groups and the anti-Indigenous politics of the Oka Crisis era. This hypothesis of nativism bears further research.



Neoliberal urbanism and housing as a policy focus

Significantly in this period, a shift to neoliberal municipal policy regimes foregrounds the city as a cultural attractor for high value-added industries such as software development, computer graphics, film and videogame production. The redevelopment of the eastern downtown as a Quartier des Spectacles with a new outdoor festival square, office developments, a contemporary art and multimedia museum, conference and performance space took place adjacent to the older Habitations Jeanne Mance (Ethier & Margier, 2019). This “spectacularization” of Montréal won the highest international planning awards. The Quartier des Spectacles project implemented not only new construction but a fine-grained renovation of the surfaces of the urban area, putting into place a signature spatialization that envisioned a symbolic recoding of urban space, the smoothing of flows of pedestrians, and the integration of street furniture and infrastructure into a streamlined and copyrighted design — against which Canada Post, for example, resisted in refusing to redesign the signature angles and colours of its 1990s post boxes. Less discussed, however, the project profoundly changed property values, the purpose of the area, and the vision of who were legitimate citizens and users of the area.

From about 2015 through 2020, academic and specialist analysis of social housing drops off greatly even though housing programs continued to be active at the municipal level in Québec.

The focus instead is on the experience of specific groups: Indigenous, women, elderly women and the elderly in general (Simard, 2019), and specific problematics: homelessness, sexual harassment (M.-E. Desroches, 2018; 2019; Namaste, 2019), lack of affordability (Germain et al., 2018) and gentrification of the city. This “parcellization” of shelter and housing issues, is also reflected in the closure of the City’s housing office Habiter Montréal in 2012 and an emphasis on public health problems. Social housing continued to be regarded by powerful medical professions as a physical infrastructure. It is somewhat vaguely understood by these professions alongside spatial factors such as the local availability of medical and police resources, childcare facilities, neighbourhood schools and a safe environment. In part, the woolly thinking reflects the reality that housing infrastructure stands awkwardly beyond the reach and control of disadvantaged individuals and families. But furthermore, housing is outside of the control of medical professions and the clinical models that have developed in mental and medical health science and practice. Social housing is treated as epiphenomenal, a mediator and as a symbol and symptom that is also at times a corollary and at others an outcome of socioeconomic inequality that produces health inequality. The spirit of medical wisdom at this time was to look to genetic and evolutionary determinants of health. As such housing and environmental conditions easily appear as an extrinsic factor despite the lip-service paid to it as a determinant of health. It is thus not surprising that public health authorities do not conduct and publish further studies of social housing after 2015.

Housing First versus Urban Land Speculation

Nonetheless, the conception of “housing first” as a key determinant of public health is reflected in the academic literature and human rights discourse from 2015 (Beaudoin, 2016). By contrast with past practice — where housing was a reward gained by economic success or entitlement and good behaviour in the eyes of housing authorities, according to the housing first doctrine — stable and safe housing is a prerequisite for the amelioration of other health problems and social ills (Hurtubise, 2018). Housing further works to anchor individuals into social networks based on location and contiguity (Donner, 2018). However, a broader approach to public health would necessitate the integration of other professions such as planning and architecture, hand in hand with medicine, challenging the balance of power and status among elites and the division of public budgets. One is prompted to ask, is lack of social housing partly a result of not just a hospitalocentric approach to health but a social structure that is heavily invested in the status of the medical professions?

The reduction of research means that data reflecting more recent changes in the social and economic profile of Québec have not been synthesized in the literature. Many reports use 2011 Statistics Canada data, now a decade out of date. It does not reflect any diminishing of the housing problem. Since 1980, Global TV cites the Québec Professional Association of Real Estate Brokers and Statistics Canada to say that the cost of purchasing an average home in Montréal has risen from just over two times to over four times the average household income in 2011. In 2020, this is now just under six times the average household income in the city, reflecting a notable jump of 20% in the last year (“Here’s How Home Prices Compare to Incomes across Canada,” 2021). In the same period, there has been an increasing percentage of Canadian families living below Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) poverty line. This decline

exacerbates the economic exclusion of a greater proportion of families from house ownership and increases the percentage unable to pay market rents.

Land and housing become more highly valued, more marked as an object of social struggle in and of themselves. In the face of rising number of homeless families, basic shelter becomes a vexed social problem.

The development of Airbnb and temporary rentals has changed the rental market in major Canadian cities such as Montréal. For example, between 2015 and 2017, almost 4970 units were rented for an average of 137 days, 15% of the total of 31449 apartments and rooms (Wachsmuth & Kerrigan, 2017). The pattern is to remove accommodations from the rental market. Every 1% of AirBNB units in a neighbourhood is argued to increase local rents by 1.58% (Alert, 2018). Arguing that “high rents remain the main obstacle to the right to housing in Quebec as in Canada,” Trebillon extends access to affordable housing to a right and onward as the operationalization of Lefebvre’s “Right to the City” (Lefebvre, 1975).

The right to the city means benefiting from adequate housing, having a remunerative job, settling in a family, living free from police hassles even if one was born far away... but also, everything simply and more specifically, living in a city that is beautiful, comfortable, healthy and respectful of the environment (Trebillon, Jean-François, n.d.).

This quotation reiterates the long standing popular movements explicitly engaged with questions of housing as a right and applying the “right to the city” through concrete policy proposals and programs. Montréal has been presented as a surrogate for a general discussion of community housing in Québec.

Concluding Comment

I have called this first glance survey a “sceptical overview.” The attempt has been made to include an all-of-society approach rather than accepting the limits of professional debates, or worse, acceding to the parcellization of shelter issues between subdomains. The focus is on Montréal as an example of urban housing issues in Quebec. Starkly different issues prevail in small, peripheral towns, notably for Indigenous populations.

In this brief survey, gaps around *race and indigeneity* are identified. This is understood in terms of a hypothesized shift from nationalism to nativism which also marks the research and policy profile of researcher’s work on community housing in Québec.

These lacunae appear through the division of housing literature and a preferential focus on public health questions. This speaks to the influence of administrative and medical professions that preferred and developed clinical and medical rather than housing and environmental responses to public health problems. These are *medicalized* and defined in terms of medical treatment and investments in facilities rather than as *political* problems of community economic organization

The literature on public housing often appears to cast community housing as a technical policy domain dominated by questions of finance and administration. The policy literature on housing

is often starkly arid and devoid of human content. This literature does not explain why policies change. Only when one turns to the literature on popular struggles in the city and to media reports, does one see the relation between critique, struggle and policy and administrative change.

Acknowledgements

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