

## **When the city excludes. The voice of marginalized women that we don't hear**

Charlotte Biddle-Bocan, L'R des centres de femmes du Québec  
[biddle-bocan@recentres.qc.ca](mailto:biddle-bocan@recentres.qc.ca)

Carolyne Grimard, École de travail social, Université de Montréal  
[carolyne.grimard@umontreal.ca](mailto:carolyne.grimard@umontreal.ca)

Our presentation proposes to put forward a critique of today's cities, where many social services are found. This critique will be based on various theoretical observations that focus on the realities experienced daily by marginalized people, particularly women (economically poor women, women who are racialized, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, trans women, women who work in the sex trade, etc.), and that allow us to better understand the issues surrounding their voice (Amster, 2003; DeVerteuil, May et von Mahs, 2009; Flatley, 2008). Various obstacles demonstrate how difficult it is to integrate women's voices into the implementation of projects aimed at changing intervention practices in relation to the needs of these people (Astier, 2007; Baillergeau et Bellot, 2007; Fontaine, Lapointe et Vallée Doré, 2019).

Based on the theoretical ideas of geographers (Harvey, 2011; Kern, 2019; Springer, 2018), and feminists (Spivak, 2020; Hill Collins, 2019; Battacharya, 2017; McNally, 2020; Fraser, 2017) we will address various dynamics intrinsic to contemporary cities that are constructed to address certain types of populations, at the expense of others. We will discuss the stereotypes that are at the heart of a lack of understanding of the diversity of needs of marginalized people in Montreal. We argue that these stereotypes are often at the heart of the decision-making processes, which prevents institutions from truly understanding their needs. We will briefly discuss some realities specific to the Montreal context to concretize our theoretical proposal.

This presentation will therefore focus on what we believe is the "paradox" of the state. In our view, today's democracy systematically refers to the state institution, as well as to specific habitus, often making many marginalized people reluctant to get involved in projects aimed at making their voices heard. We believe that the systematic appeal to the state to undertake structuring changes and social projects is at the heart of the challenge of participatory initiatives. Indeed, some communities have gradually lost their political autonomy due to the rise of the state (Dupuis-Déri, 2013). Thus, the current social structure (funding made available for community-based organizations, social assistance benefits, etc.) has not been thought through or constructed with the objective of listening to or putting forward the diverse voices of the community (Côté, 2012). This (historical and contemporary) review of the state institution and democracy is, in our view, at the heart of the knot that explains the exclusion of many marginalized people in today's cities. All these theoretical observations explain, in our opinion, part of the persistent frustrations of actors in intervention who do not necessarily feel heard despite the multiplication of consultative processes.

## References

- Amster, R. 2003. Patterns of exclusion: sanitising space, criminalising homelessness, *Social Justice*, 30, p. 195–221.
- Astier, I. 2007. *Les nouvelles règles du social*. Paris : Presses universitaires de France.
- Baillergeau E., Bellot C. (sous la dir. de). 2007. *Les transformations de l'intervention sociale : entre innovation et gestion des nouvelles vulnérabilités?*, Québec, PUQ.
- Bhattacharya, T. (Ed.). 2017. *Social Reproduction Theory*, Londres: Pluto Press. Côté, P-B. 2012. « Besoins et droits, deux modèles en politiques sociales en itinérance au Québec ». *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, Vol. 24, n°2, p. 151-167.
- DeVerteuil, G., J. May et J. von Mahs. 2009. « Complexity not Collapse : Recasting the Geographies of Homelessness in a 'Punitive' Age ». *Process in Human Geography*, vol. 33, no 5, p. 646-666.
- Dupuis-Déri, Francis. *Démocratie Histoire politique d'un mot*. Lux : Montréal, 2013.
- Flatley, J. 2008. *Affective Mapping. Melancholia and the politics of modernism*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Fontaine, A., F. Lapointe et B. Vallée Doré. 2019. « Une intervention de proximité pour une meilleure inclusion des personnes en situation d'itinérance » *Sociographe*, vol. 3, n° 67, p. XXIX à XL.
- Fraser, N. 2017 ». Crisis of Care ? On the Social-Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism", *Social Reproduction Theory*. Londres: Pluto Press, p.21-36.
- Harvey, D. 2011. *Le capitalisme contre le droit à la ville*. Paris : Éditions Amsterdam.
- Hill Collins, P. 2019. *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kern, L. 2019. *Feminist City : A Field Guide*. Between the Lines.
- McNally, D. 2020. *Blood and money : War, slavery and the State*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Spivak., G. C. 2020. *Les subalternes peuvent-elles parler?* Paris : Éditions Amsterdam.
- Springer, S. 2018. *Pour une géographie anarchiste [The Anarchist Roots of Geography : Toward Spatial Emancipation]*. Montréal: Lux Éditeur.