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EDITORIAL / ÉDITORIAL

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It is a great pleasure for us to write this editorial, our first, for ANSERJ. We would like to begin by thanking our predecessors, François Brouard and Peter Elson, for all the hard work they have put into launching this journal and bringing it to the point that it is at today. It is a clear testament to their work and vision that the readership of the journal has steadily grown over their tenure, and that our readership is now truly international. Thank you so much Peter and François, we wish you all the best!

Going forward, we want to focus on solidifying the legacy left by François and Peter. This means that we will continue to solicit high-quality articles broadly focused on the non-profit and social economy. We are also committed to continuing to provide a space for broader reflections on relevant issues and to continue to support as well as facilitate the publication of practitioner and graduate student work. Finally we are resolutely dedicated to continuing the publication of ANSERJ in both official languages.

But we do envision some changes. Looking to the future, we plan not only building on the past but also for a renewal of the journal. This has a number of facets in our opinion. First, we are committed to

C'est pour nous un grand plaisir d'écrire cet éditorial, notre premier, pour *ANSERJ*. Nous aimerions commencer en remerciant nos prédécesseurs, François Brouard et Peter Elson, pour tout le travail qu'ils ont fait à lancer cette revue et à le rendre ce qu'il est aujourd'hui. C'est une indication claire de leur dévouement et leur vision que, pendant leur mandat, le lectorat de la revue ait cru constamment et qu'il soit véritablement international aujourd'hui. Merci beaucoup, Peter et François, nous vous souhaitons tout ce qu'il y a de meilleur!

Dorénavant, nous voulons nous concentrer sur le renforcement de l'héritage que François et Peter nous ont légué. Cela signifie que nous allons continuer à rechercher des articles de haute qualité sur des sujets reliés à l'économie sociale et sans but lucratif. Nous nous engageons en outre à fournir un espace pour des réflexions plus générales sur des questions pertinentes et à continuer à appuyer et à faciliter la publication d'articles par des praticiens et des étudiants diplômés. Enfin nous nous résolvons à continuer de publier *ANSERJ* dans les deux langues officielles.

Mais nous envisageons aussi de faire des changements. Ainsi, en allant de l'avant, nous chercherons non seulement à nous inspirer du passé mais aussi à renouveler la revue. Ce renouvellement comptera

renewing all of the support mechanisms of the journal, especially the editorial board. We encourage readers who are interested in joining the journal to be in touch with one of us with your expressions of interest. Second, we will be actively encouraging articles on particularly relevant issues to the journals readership as they emerge. This may mean more special issues or invited articles. An integral part of this will be proposals from our readership and editorial board. We again encourage our readership to submit ideas to us for subject areas in their interest, and we promise to bring as many of these ideas to our pages as possible.

Third, we would like to not only bring the ideas of ANSERJ to the world, but also to bring ideas from around the world to ANSERJ. To this end we are going to put energy in soliciting work from likeminded scholars, students, and practitioners from around the world to make our journal truly international in its scope. Finally, we would like to begin our tenure as editors with an eye to the future of the journal. We will be encouraging scholars of all levels to participate in the functioning of the journal both to provide opportunity for career development, but to also deepen the pool of potential future editors for the journal.

We look at this opportunity to be the editors of ANSERJ with excitement. We hope that our excitement leads to a wonderful journal. But we also hope that you, the readership, share our excitement and join with us in making ANSERJ even better over the years to come.

plusieurs éléments. Premièrement, nous nous engageons à renouveler tous les mécanismes de soutien de la revue, surtout le comité de rédaction. Nous encourageons à ce titre tout lecteur ou lectrice qui aimerait participer à la revue à communiquer son intérêt à l'un d'entre nous. Deuxièmement, nous allons activement encourager la rédaction d'articles sur des sujets d'actualité qui soient particulièrement pertinents pour le public de la revue. Cette approche pourrait entraîner davantage de numéros spéciaux et d'articles invités. Des suggestions de la part de notre lectorat et de notre comité de rédaction feront partie intégrante de cette approche. Nous encourageons à nouveau nos lecteurs et lectrices à soumettre des idées reflétant leurs champs d'intérêt et nous comptons inclure autant de ces idées que possible dans la revue.

Troisièmement, nous aimerions non seulement présenter les idées d'*ANSERJ* au monde, mais aussi incorporer des idées du monde entier dans *ANSERJ*. Dans ce but, nous allons faire un effort pour solliciter des travaux de la part d'académiques, d'étudiants et de praticiens de partout au monde afin de créer une revue qui soit véritablement de portée internationale. Finalement, nous aimerions commencer notre mandat en préparant l'avenir de la revue. À ce titre, nous allons encourager des experts de tout niveau à contribuer à l'évolution de la revue, tant pour fournir des occasions de développement de carrière que pour faire augmenter le réservoir de futurs rédacteurs.

C'est avec enthousiasme que nous assumons le rôle de rédacteur d'*ANSERJ*. Nous espérons que cet enthousiasme entraînera la création d'une revue qui soit merveilleuse. Mais nous espérons aussi que vous, nos chers lecteurs et lectrices, partagerez notre enthousiasme et vous joindrez à nous afin d'améliorer encore plus *ANSERJ* dans les années à venir.

Staying Afloat While Stirring the Pot: *Briarpatch* Magazine and the Challenge of Nonprofit Journalism

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ABSTRACT

Briarpatch Magazine's four-decade history presents an enlightening case study of the value of government grants to the nonprofit and co-operative media sector, as well as the pressures these programs bring, from conflict over editorial content to unexpected funding cuts. The study reveals that a major challenge for journalism operating within the social economy is to maintain editorial independence while sustaining daily operations. *Briarpatch* has benefited from healthy reader support and organizational flexibility. However, this resiliency is now threatened as allied civil society networks dissipate under neoliberalism. The lessons gleaned from *Briarpatch* are broadly relevant to social-economy researchers and advocates, as they speak to wider questions of funder-nonprofit relationships and the role that social networks play in organizational sustainability.

RÉSUMÉ

Les quatre décennies d'histoire du magazine *Briarpatch* représentent une étude de cas éclairante sur la valeur des octrois gouvernementaux pour le secteur des médias coopératifs et à but non lucratif, ainsi que sur les pressions entraînées par ces programmes, allant de conflits au sujet du contenu éditorial jusqu'aux coupures budgétaires imprévues. Cette étude montre qu'un défi majeur pour le journalisme de l'économie sociale consiste à conserver son indépendance éditoriale tout en assurant son bon fonctionnement au quotidien. *Briarpatch* bénéficie d'un appui solide de la part de ses lecteurs et d'une bonne flexibilité organisationnelle. Cependant, cette faculté d'adaptation est actuellement menacée par un néolibéralisme qui dissipe les alliances de la société civile. Les leçons à tirer de *Briarpatch* sont pertinentes pour les chercheurs et partisans de l'économie sociale car elles soulèvent des questions de rapports entre investisseurs et organismes à but non lucratif et de rôles joués par les réseaux sociaux pour maintenir la durabilité organisationnelle.

Keywords / Mots clés : Third-sector media; Nonprofit media; Magazines; Grants; Fundraising; Social economy / Média du troisième secteur; Média à but non lucratif; Magazine; Octroi; Levée de fonds; Économie sociale

On September 7, 2013, readers of *Briarpatch* magazine gathered at the Artesian, a Regina concert hall, to celebrate 40 continuous years of publishing. Forty years is a major milestone, even for large-scale commercial magazines. The fact that a donor-supported, nonprofit, Saskatchewan-based publication had not only survived, but had developed a national audience, was a source of wonder even to those who helped make it happen. Speaking to the assembled celebrants that evening, Gary Robbins, a board member during the 1970s, offered an explanation, pointing to years of volunteer-run bottle drives and garage sales. He added:

> There is a good, strong base, and I think that's really critical and really important, and why so many of the other publications that we knew of back then weren't able to continue, why those organizations morphed and changed and came and went. That's part of the lives we live in these perilous times. So it's good to see the stability of a magazine like *Briarpatch* …

It was not only bottle drives that kept the presses rolling, however. In addition to advertising and newsstand sales, the magazine walked a tightrope of provincial and federal media development grants. *Briarpatch*'s history presents an enlightening case study of the supportive value of public funding, as well as the pressures magazines face in this environment—from conflict over editorial content to unexpected funding cuts.

The lessons gleaned from *Briarpatch* are broadly relevant to social economy researchers and advocates, as they speak to wider questions of funder-nonprofit relationships and the role social networks play in organizational sustainability. First, however, it is important to recognize the space such media occupies within the social economy. Due to the perceived cultural dominance of commercial mass media, there is a tendency to view media outside this framework. However, there exists a rich ecology of co-operative and nonprofit media around the globe that easily falls within social economy viewpoints, as defined by John Restakis's (2006) description of a wide range of collective actions for social benefit; Marie J. Bouchard, Frank Moulaert, and Oana Ailenei's (2005) categorization of voluntary, democratic, nonprofit goods and service provision; and Charles Gide's broad conception of "all efforts made to improve the conditions of the people" (quoted in Moulaert & Ailenei, 2005, p. 2040). As an example, community radio is an established global phenomenon, embraced in particular by rural and Indigenous communities as accessible communications platforms (Karikari, 2000; Murillo, 2008). There are some ten thousand community radio stations operating in Latin America, while African nations saw a combined 1,386 per cent increase in stations between 2000 and 2006 (Meyers, 2011). In Europe, the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) has mapped 521 community television stations and 2,237 community radios (CMFE, 2012). The United States is home to long-standing media co-operatives, such as the Associated Press and the *St. Petersburg Times*, nonprofits, such as *Mother Jones*, as well as numerous examples of foundation-supported journalism, ranging from ProPublica to the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Throughout Canada, Indigenous and northern broadcasters operate primarily within the social economy, for example the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), a Saskatchewan co-operative radio network, Taqramiut Nipingat Inc. (TNI), a northern charitable nonprofit radio-television network, and Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN), a national nonprofit cable channel. Canada's publishing sector is replete with social economy enterprises, including co-

operative book publishers, such as Couteau Books, foundation-supported magazines, such as the *Walrus*, and a diverse array of nonprofit academic journals and monthly magazines, such as *Briarpatch*, *Canadian Dimension*, and *This Magazine*. Together, these social economy organizations work to improve media diversity and democratize Canada's communications networks, providing an alternative to heavily monopolized commercial media and underfunded public broadcasting. However, their daily travails often go unnoticed and unsupported as a distinct media sector, even among civil society allies, as noted by Robert Hackett and William Carol (2004). Meanwhile, parsimonious and politicized government funding environment have created new vulnerabilities for social economy media, as illustrated by *Briarpatch*'s long history of involvement with provincial and federal media development support programs.

GAINING AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

Briarpatch Magazine began in August 1973 as *Notes from the Briar Patch*, a 10-page corner-stapled newsletter published by the Saskatoon-based Unemployed Citizens Welfare Improvement Council (UCWIC). The organization's goal was to create "a magazine for and by poor people so we could tell our own story, since we found it next to impossible to get our side represented in the mainstream media" (Fisher, 1993, p. 10). Gambling that funding would be attainable if it first established a readership, the UWIC continued to produce issues throughout the fall, distributing 500 copies monthly via the city's service agencies. The first four editions, produced on an early photocopier owned by the Saskatoon Family Service Bureau, were expensive to produce and the Thermofax paper quality was poor (as a result, no issues survive today). However, the gamble paid off; in November, the UWIC successfully obtained a $2,500 federal grant for the newsletter from the federal Human Resources Development Agency (HRDA). Thereafter, *Notes from the Briar Patch* was printed on a Gestetner at the Saskatoon Community Clinic at a cost of $300 per month. The improved printing techniques allowed circulation to expand to 2,000 copies by 1974. Co-founder Maria Fischer (1993) recalls:

> Donations of dollars and fivers came in, a unionist came with a handful of stamps, letters with some quarters taped to them arrived, while other people donated packages of Gestetner paper. People from all over the province encouraged our project. (p. 10)

From the beginning, it was clear the publication intended to be more than an information sheet. Its very name represented a critical stance, being a playful pun on the last name of an unpopular local welfare officer named Brierly (Collier, 1993). The idea of media-empowered citizen engagement was described as an effort "to organize low income people in order that they might change a dehumanizing life situation … something which the established media did not seem to be doing" (*Briarpatch*, 1977a, p. 1).

While the HRDA grant helped launch the publication, it was not enough to cover ongoing expenses. "We were often in a panic over whether we would be able to scrounge together enough money to prevent our phone from being cut off," UWIC president Helen Kudryk recalled (quoted in Karst, 1977, p. 6). Nonetheless, within a year *Notes from the Briar Patch* had an impressive distribution network and a desire to become an independent entity. At the same time, the UWIC was winding down. In 1974, the Briar Patch Society was incorporated, with a membership fee set at $1 (*Briarpatch*, 1977a, p. 1). At the society's first general meeting, held February 21–22, 1974, the members agreed to produce an independent newsletter that would: act as a communications link for

low-income people; provide educational workshops and media access; and "evaluate, analyze, and provide constructive criticism of government programs and dealings with low income people known to the public" (Karst, 1977, p. 2). For core funding, the Briar Patch Society turned to the Saskatchewan Coalition of Anti-Poverty Organizations (SCAPO), which provided $2,500 from its pool of federal funds. Added to this was $3,800 from the Protestant, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Anglican Aid Committee (PLRA, later known as PLURA, with the addition of the United Church). Although the grants were small, it was enough to carry the Briar Patch through to April 1975, when the organization received its first substantive government funding of $36,000 from the Department of Social Services (DSS). This was supplemented by $12,700 from the province's Employment Support Program (Karst, 1977). Consequently, government grants became central to the magazine's revenues (see Table 1).

Table 1: Early grants to the Briar Patch

Year	Agency	Type	Amount
1973	Human Resources Development Agency (HRDA)	Federal	$2,500
1974	Sask. Coalition of Anti-Poverty Organizations (SCAPO)	CBO	$2,500
	Protestant, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Anglican Aid Committee (PLRA)	CBO	$3,800
1975	PLRA	CBO	$3,800
	Employment Support Program	Provincial	$12,700
	Dept. of Social Services (DSS)	Provincial	$36,000
1976	DSS	Provincial	$36,142
1977	DSS	Provincial	$51,376
	Canada Manpower	Federal	$1,236
1978	DSS	Provincial	$54,431

Sources: Karst, 1977; *Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1976–1978

However, even after the receipt of the DSS funding, the continuing need and desire for donor involvement was evident in a May 1975 appeal to readers:

> The *Briar Patch* typewriter has broken down and we are in desperate need of a replacement. Any offers and suggestions from our readers is much appreciated. (Pottruff, 1975, p. 1)

Thus, while provincial funding was a boon to operating expenses, the idea of pitching in remained central in the magazine's communications with its readers and supporters. The Briar Patch Society successfully pursued

federal charitable status in 1975, allowing the society to issue tax receipts in exchange for donations (Pottruff, 1975).

The issue for May 1975 opened with a poem that underscored the *Briar Patch*'s connection to movements for social change:

> We are all getting wise
> We have to organize
> We all just must pitch in
> A better world to win
> A few have a ball
> Many nothing at all
> The welfare of one
> Must be the welfare of all.

The edition's 22 stories conveyed a mixture of information, advocacy, and straight-up news reporting. Also included was a letter from the provincial government's Vocational Training Program that disputed a previously published editorial, revealing some early tensions between the information needs of government and the independent spirit of the magazine. For the moment, though, *Briar Patch* staff remained confident in the support they were receiving from a socially minded New Democrat Party (NDP) government. A 1975 letter from a DSS supervisor noted, "Certainly in the province of Saskatchewan, where the number of communication avenues are few and generally polarized, this paper has been of immense value to many people in the province" (Reiter, 1975, Sept. 26).

In 1976, the *Briar Patch*'s main office shifted to Regina, to be closer to the province's political centre, and the enterprise began to take on the feel of a newsroom rather than an antipoverty service organization. At *Briar Patch*'s second annual meeting in April 1976, members significantly added workers and Indigenous people to its stated mandate of supporting low-income people. This reflected the beginning of a longstanding association with the labour movement. That year the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) agreed to mail 500 copies to its affiliates, a significant contribution to the cost of distribution (*Briar Patch* staff meeting minutes, July 20, 1976). The expanded mandate statement also signalled increased interest in coverage of northern and Aboriginal issues. At the meeting, members restated that, in addition to producing a newsletter, the society aimed for a more just society (Karst, 1977).

At this point, the province appeared satisfied with the magazine's direction and growing audience (see Table 2). A letter from social services minister Herman Rolfes wishes the Briar Patch Society "every success in the continued publication of the monthly newspaper, [which provides] a valuable service to the economically disadvantaged people in our community" (Herman H. Rolfes letter to M. Fisher, April 26, 1976), accompanied a grant of $36,053 for 1976–1977. The government's expectations of the magazine were clarified in its 1977 funding agreement, which outlined the parameters of a $39,000 grant for the coming year. According to the terms of reference, the role of the *Briar Patch* was to "report events by and of interest

to disadvantaged people around the Province of Saskatchewan" as well as to "publish letters, articles and reports that will foster the expression of concerns and communication about disadvantaged people" (Saskatchewan. Dept. of Social Services, 1977, p. 1).

Table 2: Subscription growth, 1976–1977

| Year	Saskatchewan	Out of Province	International	Total
April 1976	251	41	5	297
February 1977	494	84	23	601

Source: Karst, 1977

The government's sense of the magazine's purpose was narrower than the mandate set out by *Briar Patch* members, who at their founding annual meeting called for "factual and relevant information to the public," without limiting the topic areas to antipoverty issues or the audience to impoverished people (Briar Patch Society, minutes of the first annual meeting, 1974). The disparity of aims was observed by Grant Karst (1977):

> The department is financially supporting an organization whose mandate includes critically analysing service delivery and exposing inadequacies and abuses within that department. *The Briar Patch* is accountable to its target population. (p. 10)

The movement away from a localized volunteer-produced newsletter to an independent, staffed provincial magazine created internal debates over ensuring continued public input. One outcome was a restructuring initiative that established local editorial collectives around the province with the goal of "truly becoming a paper with a provincial scope" (Minutes of the editorial committee, September 19, 1976). In January 1978, the nonprofit society reincorporated as Briarpatch, Inc., and changed the publication's title to a single word, *Briarpatch*. Board and staff sharpened the focus on independent journalism, joining the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association and attending the founding conference of the Canadian Investigative Journalism Association (Gilmour, 1993). *Briarpatch*'s primary *raison d'être* was by now well grounded within common definitions of accountability journalism, i.e., carrying out investigations and holding establishment structures to account for policy decisions. For example, *Briarpatch* printed critical coverage of the expansion of uranium mining in the north under the NDP, as well as provincial cutbacks to daycare and legal aid. It perhaps should come as no surprise then, that *Briarpatch*'s funding relationship with the province was endangered in the back rooms of power.

There were few hints of what was to come. Buoyed by generously worded letters of support from DSS officials, society members assumed the relationship remained harmonious. In its 1977 submission, *Briarpatch* asked for and received additional funding to hire a fifth staff person (Briar Patch Society, 1977a, May 3). Dependency on provincial funding had by now grown to a very high level. The DSS grant for 1977–78 amounted to $51,376, almost the entirety of the magazine's $58,628 in revenues (see Figure 1). Donations, in comparison, were $142, or less than 1 percent of revenues.

Elliott (2015)

Figure 1: *Briarpatch* revenues, 1977–1978
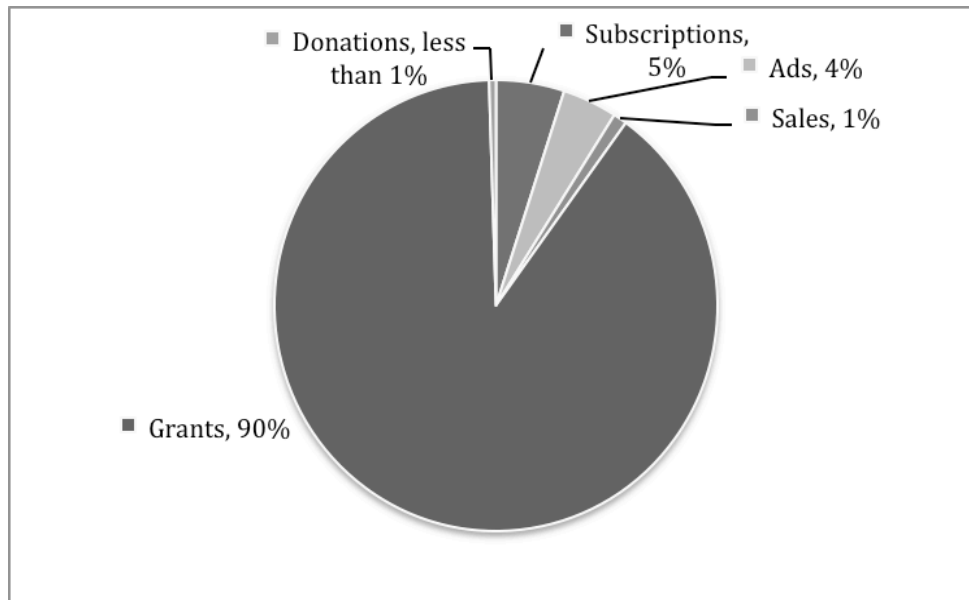
Source: Briar Patch Society annual financial statement, April 1, 1977 to March 31, 1978

Clearly, this was a balance that left the magazine vulnerable and, indeed, the society worked to diversify its revenue by establishing a typesetting business called First Impressions. First Impressions was almost immediately successful, grossing $9,514 in its first year of operation. Additionally, donations were modestly boosted in 1978–79 to $1,505 (*Briarpatch* annual financial statement, 1978–1979). Although the contributions of First Impressions and donors were relatively small, the seeds planted would prove to be crucial to the magazine's survival in the coming year.

In December 1978, Briarpatch, Inc. submitted a $60,000 budget for 1979–1980. A few days later, staff received a tip from a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) source that funding was about to be refused (*Briarpatch* president's report on funding, 1979). A follow-up call to the DSS in early January 1979 resulted in reassurances that the magazine was doing a good job and there was no reason to worry about future funding. But then, at an April 12, 1979, meeting, the DSS's new head of community services informed the nonprofit that it would be given six months of funding, during which time it should seek a new revenue source. A report to *Briarpatch*'s board from its president stated, "The reasons for this decision were basically that the department had changed its priorities and that *Briarpatch* was not providing direct accountable services" (*Briarpatch* president's report on funding, 1979, p. 2). Indeed, in the wider economic picture, the DSS faced a potential loss of $6.5 million in anticipated federal transfers, after a new federal-provincial financing agreement had died on the order paper. In preparation for the coming budget year, officials sought 3 percent cuts throughout the department (Brettle, 1979c).

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Finally aware of the lay of the land, the magazine's board met to discuss measures to have in place within six months, including increased ad sales, applying for a loan, and approaching civil society organizations for support. Then, on April 19, 1979, the *Leader-Post* and the *StarPhoenix* reported *Briarpatch*'s funding had been entirely cut as of April 1 (Brettle, 1979b). In the article, Minister Rolfes stated the magazine no longer addressed poverty issues and therefore was not a candidate for DSS funds. Staff member Rici Liknaisky responded, "When they say we are not covering poor people's issues they mean we are covering poor people's issues that are embarrassing to them" (quoted in Brettle, 1979b, p. 18). It was not until April 26 that the magazine received official notice of a cut retroactive to the beginning of the month, in the form of a letter from the minister (*Briarpatch* president's report on funding, 1979, p. 2).

Although the cut was framed as a purely economic measure, "many suspected the real reason was the magazine's vigourous anti-nuclear stance" (Powell, 1993, p. 15). Staff members conducted an inventory of stories and found antipoverty coverage remained a substantial portion of the magazine's coverage; they concluded articles critical of uranium mining and social service cutbacks were the likely red flags (Gilmour, 1993). This sentiment appeared to be backed up by an anonymous DSS official, who stated in the *Leader-Post*, "How can I go to cabinet and ask them to approve funding for a magazine that is critical of uranium development?" (quoted in Brettle, 1979d, p. 53). A commentary in an NDP-affiliated newspaper called the *Commonwealth*, added the DSS would be "ill advised" to support an independent, critical news magazine because "of what the opposition could do with in the legislature" (Robertson, 1979).

Without the promised six-month grace period, the magazine was thrown into immediate crisis. The May edition on the theme of disabled people's issues was already on its way to the press, budgeted for on the premise of a six-month transitional grant (Brettle, 1979b, p. 18). Half the staff members were laid off and the June 1979 issue was cancelled (Powell, 1993). Attempts to find replacement grants, including applications to the Donner Canadian Foundation and the Sask Sport Trust, were unsuccessful; neither agency included media undertakings among eligible projects (C. MacKinnon correspondence with C.V. Powell, April 25, 1980; D. Fry correspondence to N.L. Burton, July 3, 1979). Nonetheless, "we're not going to pack up and go home," board member Gary Robbins vowed (quoted in Brettle, 1979b, p.18). The magazine turned to revenue seeds it had fortuitously planted the previous year. The typesetting business First Impressions provided a lifeline, grossing $17,892.81 in 1979–1980. The board launched a successful emergency fundraising campaign that raised nearly $10,000 in one-time and sustaining monthly donations before the year was out (*Briarpatch* annual financial statement, 1979–1980). The magazine also held its first $20-a-plate dinner—no small sum at the time—raising $3,400 in a single evening (Manz, 1993). These activities set the basic template for *Briarpatch*'s future sustainability; by the end of fiscal year 1980–81, the revenue picture was substantially transformed, with nearly $20,000 raised in donations and subscriptions, and First Impressions sales of $12,974.93 netting $5,438.49 for the magazine (see Figure 2). Thus *Briarpatch* managed to pay its bills (primarily salaries and printing) and realize a modest surplus of $1,696.56 (annual financial statement, 1980–81), prompting the *Leader-Post* to declare "a major victory" for the magazine (Leader-Post, 1981, p. A4).

Figure 2: *Briarpatch* revenues, 1980–1981

Source: Briar Patch Society annual financial statement, April 1, 1980 to March 31, 1981.

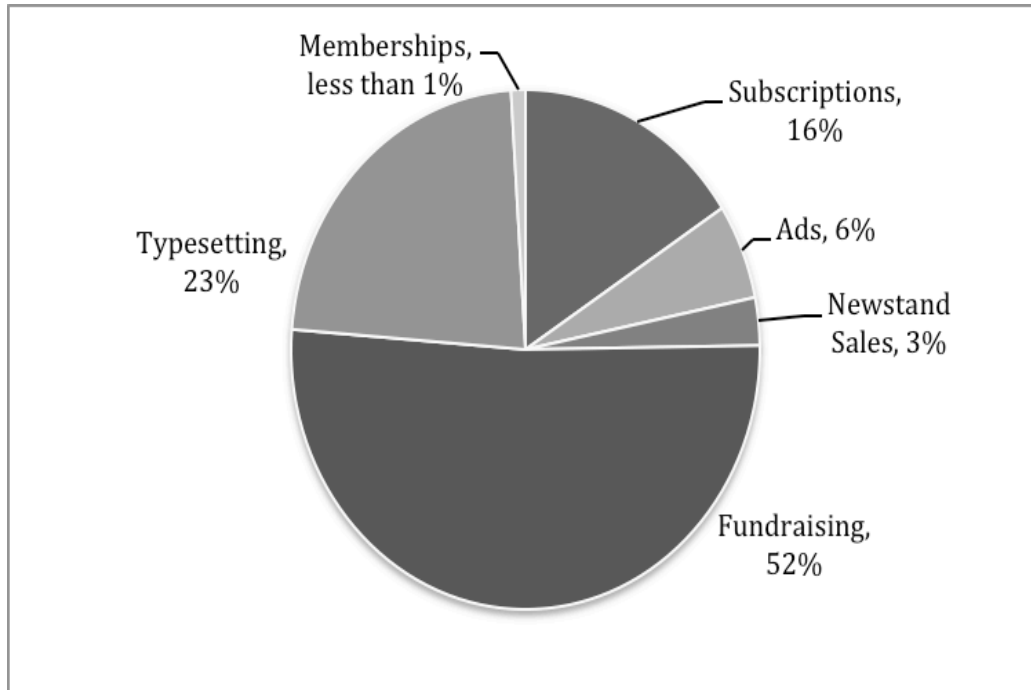## ACCOUNTABILITY JOURNALISM: REWARDS AND RISKS

How a magazine could increase reader support from a few hundred dollars to nearly $20,000 within two years may be attributable to this observation by Beth Smillie (1993): "*Briarpatch* developed into something much more than a low-budget magazine. It became a social movement of its own" (p. 17). As a primarily reader-supported magazine, *Briarpatch* continued to sharpen its journalistic teeth in the 1980s, providing critical analysis of environmental and labour policies during the NDP government's last years of power (Powell, 1993). Following the 1982 election of Grant Devine's Conservative Party, *Briarpatch* became a locus of critique and investigation in the realm of provincial politics, digging deep into business links between Conservative Party supporters and the spoils of privatization (Paavo, 1993). During this time period the magazine received several awards and honourable mentions from journalism organizations, however, it also attracted less favourable attention. Right-wing commentators, unfamiliar with *Briarpatch*'s thorny NDP relationship, assumed the coverage was partisan, and voiced complaints about the magazine's charitable status:

> Out of power, socialists must find ways to rally the troops. … Brierpatch [*sic*] plays a vital role in their survival strategy. … Somehow Brierpatch [*sic*] contrived to get it registered as a charitable foundation so left-wingers across the country can get tax write-offs on their donations, leaving taxpayers to subsidize its proselytizing work. (Baron & Jackson, 1991, p. 18)

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In 1987 Revenue Canada revoked *Briarpatch*'s status, stating the magazine "is not only concerned with the issues affecting low income individuals and organizations but also deals with many topics (e.g. international events, native education, strikes at industrial plants, shopping for home mortgages, the health care system and apartheid) in a manner that is not considered to be charitable at common law" (quoted in Paavo, 1993, p. 20).

Noting that overtly ideological organizations, such as the Canadian Anti-Communism Crusade, held charitable status, the board launched an energy-sucking and ultimately fruitless challenge to the ruling. In the end, however, it appeared tax receipts mattered little to *Briarpatch* donors, whose contributions climbed to $29,356.51 in 1987–1988, outstripping subscription and advertising sales, and reached $31,693.33 by 1990–1991 (*Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1988 and 1991). The magazine also regained a foothold in the grant world, primarily in the form of job creation subsidies, as well as international-themed project funding via Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-sponsored development education centres. However, these grants never amounted to more than 25 percent of total revenues and disappeared entirely for nine years after 1995–1996, a year that saw massive federal cuts to social spending, including a 100 percent cut to development education centres across Canada (Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1995) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: *Briarpatch* major revenue streams, 1976 to 2009
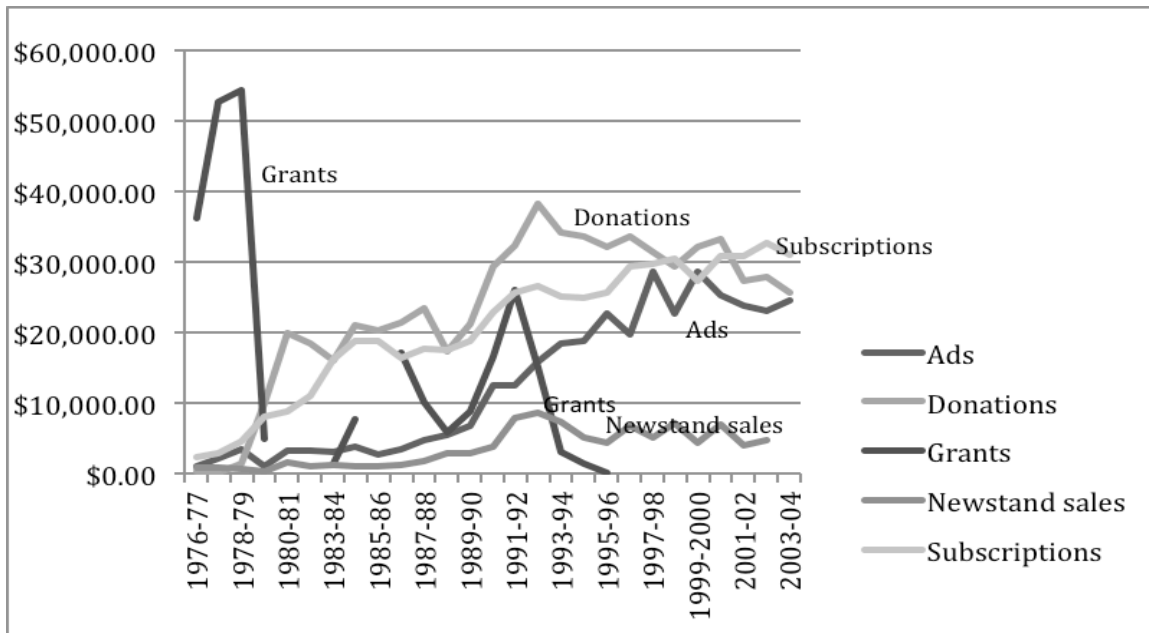
Source: *Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1979 to 2010

Following the 1991 election of an NDP government, donations and sales flatlined, perhaps reflecting a lessening sense of urgency among left-leaning readers (Warnock, 1993). As well, the diversity of supportive Saskatchewan-based social movement organizations declined in the 1990s, a decade when arts, women's, and international development organizations saw funding dwindle. While there is no quantifiable data connecting organizational loss to stagnating revenues, it stands to reason that each group that closed its Saskatchewan office represented one less platform for reaching new subscribers and donors. One area where the phenomenon of organizational loss can be quantified is in the diversity of *Briarpatch*'s advertising revenues (see Figures 4 and 5 for comparison).

Figure 4: *Briarpatch* advertising revenue sources, 1986
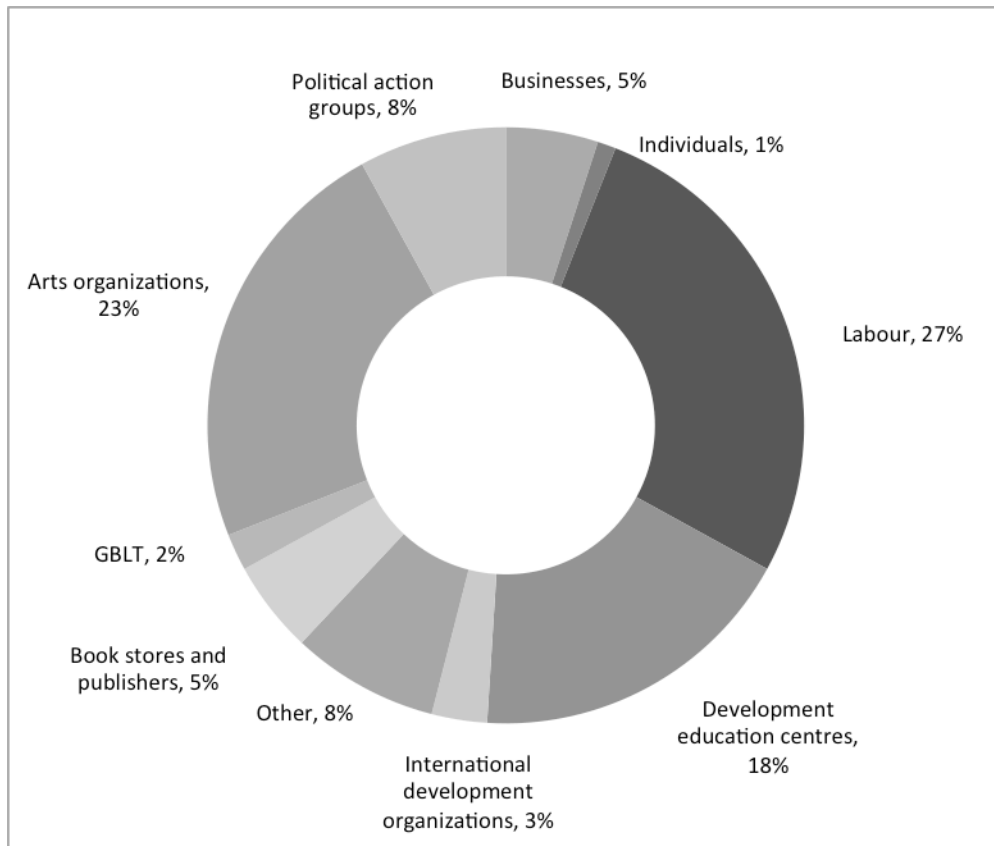
Source: *Briarpatch* advertising invoice log, 1986 calendar year

Figure 5: *Briarpatch* advertising revenues, 2000

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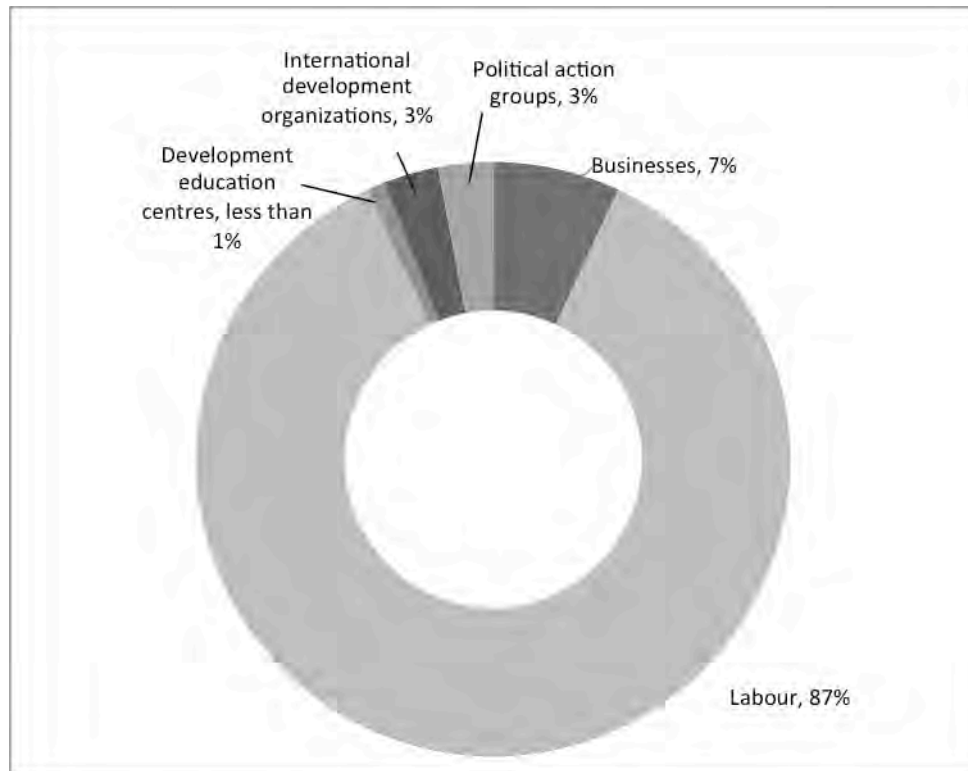
Source: *Briarpatch* advertising invoice log, 2000 calendar year

By 2002–2003, in addition to putting out the magazine, two staff members were left to coordinate more than $23,000 in fundraising, along with managing $37,508 in magazine sales and $23,108 in ad sales (annual financial statement, 2002–2003). In contrast, in 1977 four staff members were responsible for selling some $2,000 in advertising and managing approximately $3,700 in magazine sales, with little responsibility for additional fundraising (annual financial statement, 1977–1978). Further, stagnating revenues thwarted the board's desire to pay its writers, which was considered key to expanding the magazine's investigative content. As observed by Valerie Zink, editor-publisher from 2010 to 2013, "[i]t's quite evident that the investigative stories we do publish are the ones that are most widely read and most well received, and there's a real hunger for that" (personal communication, March 27, 2012). These pressures pushed *Briarpatch* to look beyond Saskatchewan's borders for assistance (David O. Mitchell, past *Briarpatch* publisher-editor, personal communication, June 12, 2012).

CALLING THE TUNE: FEDERAL GRANTS

In 2003, editor Debra Brin drafted a three-year $121,581 proposal to the Canada Magazine Fund (CMF), administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The proposal included a full-on marketing campaign, including billboards, radio ads, bus ads, media kits, a portable display, logo design, staff car decals, and new building signage. The stated goal was to increase circulation by 10 percent annually, reaching a 30 percent increase by the end of year three. In discussions with CMF program officers over the next several months, the

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plan was honed down to a single-year $28,805 request, primarily for staff training and market consultations; in early 2004, the magazine received word that $26,295 was approved (Judith Larocque letter to D. Brin, January 26, 2004). Staff training was a welcome investment. In an application to attend a Canadian Magazine Publishers Association training course, Brin wrote, "I had no training or background in journalism before I took this job so I am basically learning by surviving one disaster or close call after another" (Magazines Canada School for Professional Publishing (MCSPP) application, February 10, 2004). This and other national training programs, covering topics such as circulation management, marketing, and other aspects of the business of publishing, were appreciated and put into practice by staff (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Of perhaps greater impact, however, was the manner in which the project led *Briarpatch*'s staff and board to reconsider their understanding of the publication's core audience and, therefore, its editorial focus.

In a business plan drafted in preparation for the 2003 funding application, *Briarpatch* positioned itself as a provincial magazine that featured a majority of articles written by Saskatchewan writers who offered "a view of social justice issues from a perspective unique to Saskatchewan" (*Briarpatch* business plan, 2003). Once the project was funded and underway, however, a different picture emerged. Within the context of a market study, *Briarpatch*'s board and staff undertook a structured review of its 1,100-member subscription base. The review revealed that the majority of *Briarpatch* subscribers lived outside Saskatchewan, with more than half in BC and Ontario (*Briarpatch* summary data report, n.d; D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Accordingly, the magazine transformed its editorial focus from that of a provincial magazine to a magazine aimed at a national and international audience.

Briarpatch successfully applied for business development funding in subsequent years, receiving a total of $116,983 between 2005 and 2008 (Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage, 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2008). Direct mail ad campaigns carried out with project funding assistance realized a 31 percent increase in paid circulation by March 2006, meeting and slightly exceeding the campaign's original stated goal of a 30 percent increase within three years (staff report, grant history, 2006). This was followed by a 29 percent increase in a single year, 2007–2008 (final report to CMF, June 23, 2008). With increased subscription revenues, the magazine fulfilled its longstanding goal of paying writers, starting with $491 paid out in freelance fees in 2006, followed by $2,107 in 2007 and $5,040 in 2008 (*Briarpatch* financial statements, 2006–2009). Other CMF-supported accomplishments included launching a revamped website in 2005 and updated subscription management and publishing software. In summary, the support of federal media development funds helped lift *Briarpatch* from a stagnating provincial publication to a national magazine with paid writers, trained staff, and an ever-widening base of subscribers. However, this came at a price. First, the grant application and reporting processes consumed increasing amounts of staff time to meet the government's need for detailed information, as illustrated by this query:

> Who will be responsible for converting new data to new fulfillment software? (if other than regular staff, please provide c.v.) … . What is the content of the brochure? Format? Is there a detachable subscription portion? (N. Jordan email to D. Brin, November 25, 2004)

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These information needs did not begin and end with the annual application but continued throughout the year. For example, a decision to send the editor to an Independent Press Association (IPA) conference rather than to a labour convention generated five email exchanges with Ottawa, and required recalculation of the in-kind budget line, along with a detailed written description of what knowledge would be obtained at the IPA conference and how it would be disseminated (interim report email correspondence, Nicole Jordan to Chelsea. Looysen, February 9–23, 2006).

Second, the CMF grants once again increased the magazine's dependence on external government funds that were beyond the magazine's control, echoing a picture that had led to crisis three decades earlier (see Figure 6). From this perspective, the magazine's situation could be considered more precarious, not less precarious.

Figure 6: *Briarpatch* revenues, 2008–2009
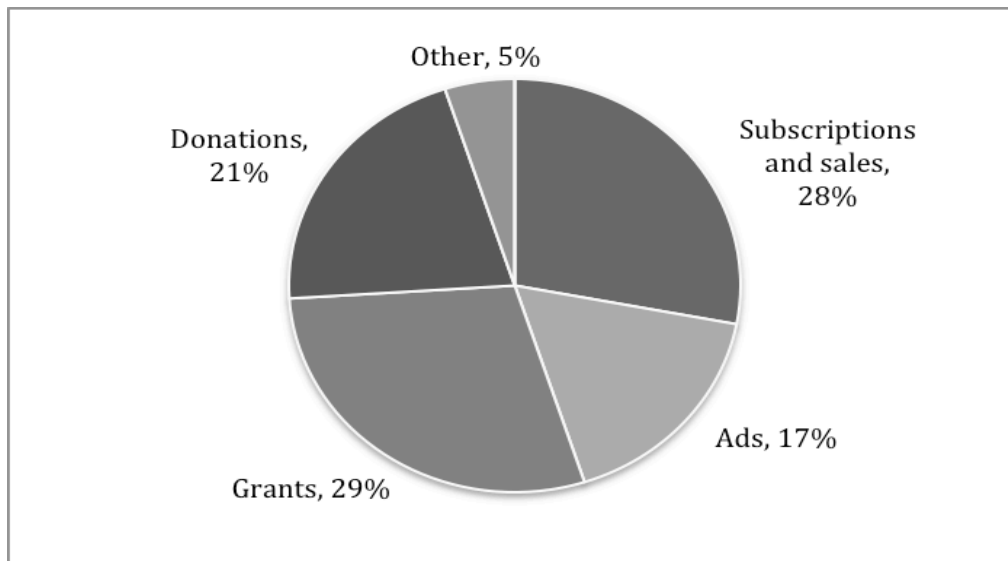
Source: Annual financial statement, 2008–2009

This vulnerability was made clear following the election of a Conservative-led federal government in 2007. *Briarpatch* staff developed a relatively modest project plan for 2008–2009, requesting $25,000 for a direct mail subscription campaign and funds to hire an advertising consultant to negotiate long-term advertising agreements (project funding application, 2008). For the first time, the application generated hard questions from CMF staff about the magazine's evolution since its first grant, noting, for example, a lack of growth in profits. The publisher responded that:

> given we are a nonprofit magazine that is currently comfortably in the black, this is not a major concern for us at this time; nor, I would argue, should it be used as an argument that we have failed to evolve. As a nonprofit our goal is not to run a large surplus each year, but to reinvest the revenue increases we've enjoyed in recent years into the operations of the magazine—and

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this we have done. (Shayna Stock, publisher, Briarpatch, email to Nicole Jordan, project officer, Canada Magazine Fund, August 14, 2008)

In late September, CMF staff responded that the magazine's "justification in support of the project was well received by the committee" and a recommendation was going forward to approve the full amount of the project, scheduled to begin December 1, 2008 (N. Jordan email to S. Stock & D. Mitchell, September 26, 2008). This was followed by a long period of silence. In February 2009, serious concerns began to develop in the *Briarpatch* office about how to manage proposed activities that were still un-funded. Email inquiries to CMF staff shed little light on the situation (email correspondence, February 2–24, 2009). However, internal CMF correspondence reveals staff was aware the project application was caught on the minister's desk (MINO):

> Just a reminder. We still have an SBDMP [Support for Business Development for Magazine Publishers] project in MINO: Briarpatch. It was sent December 5, we still don't have a decision, and it shows 'holding MINO.' We have followed up constantly with G&C Secretariat (Chantal Paré) who basically confirms it's still there. We're not sure how to proceed and what we can say to the client. (Jeanne Lahaie-Torres, manager, SBDMP, Canada Magazine Fund email to Scott Shortliffe, director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs (PPPP) March 3, 2009)

A response from the fund's program director stated no progress had been made and suggested taking the issue to higher levels. A series of subsequent emails, presumably taking up this suggestion, are too heavily redacted to discern the nature of discussions. However, the frequency and tone of email inquiries from staff suggests that difficulty gaining a ministerial signature for an approved project was unusual. On May 6, an email informed program staff, "fyi—we can consider briarpatch rejected," adding that the client should be informed of the "ministerial decision" via standard rejection letter (Scott Shortliffe, , director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs (PPPP), to Jeanne Lahaie-Torres, manager, SBDMP, Canada Magazine Fund, May 6, 2009). A staff member's request for clarification on why the recommendation was rejected was answered with "come and see me if you wish to discuss" (Scott Shortliffe, director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs (PPPP) to Marija Renic, project officer, Canada Magazine Fund, May 6, 2009). Whatever may have been discussed, the reason conveyed to *Briarpatch* employed a rejection letter template developed in April 2009:

> Your proposal was reviewed in light of the government's ongoing objective to fund projects that provide measurable, tangible results which contribute to Program objectives and meet the needs of Canadians. It is within this context that I regret to inform you, on behalf of the Honourable James Moore, Minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage, that your application has not been approved. (S. Shortliffe letter to S. Stock, May 6, 2009)

The internal departmental rejection report stated, "File rejected by Minister Moore. Instructions given by the Chief of Staff at the May 4 Look Ahead Meeting of May 4, 2009 to inform client of the decision" (Canadian Heritage Grants and Contributions rejection report, July 31, 2009). On May 21, CMF program staff filed a "request for change of fund commitment" from $25,000 to zero, indicating the project had already been in the budget pipeline before failing to gain the minister's signature. In a telephone conversation with a staff member,

editor Dave Mitchell asked if the rejection was related to the magazine's political content; the response indicates staff members themselves had few solid answers about the new funding environment:

> I indicated that as far as I know there was no [political] issue — we weren't aware of any. [He] wanted tips concerning reapplying to [the] program. I told him I didn't really have any — but that applicants showing significant gains in their financial results were more likely to be approved. (unknown author, CMF hand notes of telephone conversation with D. Mitchell, May 7, 2009)

The latter sentence indicated that larger commercial magazines were likely to fare better than nonprofit and small circulation magazines. Nonetheless, the conversation was reassuring enough for *Briarpatch* staff to undertake work on a new funding application for 2009–10, a $33,545 request for online marketing and advertising development. This application was sidelined in the midst of a program revamp that included the ending of the SBDSMP grant program (*Briarpatch,* Inc., SBDSMP funding application, August 18, 2009; Canadian Heritage grants and contributions rejection report, Dec. 3, 2009).

Undeterred, *Briarpatch* submitted an application to a new Business Innovations for Print Periodicals (BIPP) program in September 2010, again focusing on Web development and marketing (*Briarpatch* Business Innovations application, September 27, 2010). This time there appeared to be nothing standing in the way of approval. Correspondence between submitting and finalizing the application shows a period of minor tinkering over how expenses were expressed in various budget lines of the $22,453 request, while the overall project concept itself appeared to have the support of the new Canada Periodical Fund (CPF). An internal funding commitment request was formatted and finalized on December 3, 2010, and submitted to the Grants and Contributions Management Information System (S. Belisle email to M. Legros, December 3, 2010). A standard response notification acknowledged the amount was entered in the system, and that any communication of approval to the client must await the minister's signature (GCMIS notification, December 22, 2012). Then, in a replay of *Briarpatch*'s earlier experience, a long silence followed. Finally, on February 9, 2011, program staff received an internal notice of rejection from the minister's office, signed by Minister James Moore, with the rationale recorded simply as, "I do not approve this grant" (ministerial decision document, February 9, 2011). A standard rejection letter to *Briarpatch* stating the fund was seeking measurable results for program objectives followed. Once again, *Briarpatch* followed up with a phone inquiry seeking future guidance*,* this time from publisher Shayna Stock. The program director noted:

> Talked to her. Very disappointed, asked if there was an appeal process, asked what more they could do in terms of measurable results (as this is their third rejection). I had to say that there is no appeal process, and that as these are judgement calls, there is no specific threshold for measurable results. (Scott Shortliffe, director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs (PPPP), Canadian Heritage email to Jeanne Lahaie-Torres, manager, Support for Business Development for Magazine Publishers, Canada Magazine Fund, February 22, 2011)

Dissatisfied with the response, Stock emailed the project officer assigned to *Briarpatch* for further insight. Noting that the officer had indicated the project was "a solid one" and seemed confident in its approval, Stock asked,

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"Do you have any insights whatsoever what happened to our application after it left your hands, and why it might have been denied?" (S. Stock email to J. Lahaie-Torres, February 22, 2011). This prompted an internal request from the project officer seeking clarification of the response already given, to which the director replied:

> since this was not an eligibility question, but a judgment call, there is no guidance we can provide on future projects at this time. … I realize this is frustrating for the applicant, but there is no more information we can offer on the decision. (Scott Shortliffe, director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs (PPPP) email to Jeanne Lahaie-Torres, manager, Support for Business Development for Magazine Publishers (SSBDMP), Canada Magazine Fund, February 24, 2011)

Thus, after three years of intensive, time-consuming work on project applications, *Briarpatch* walked away suddenly bereft of nearly 20 percent of its planned budget, and a nagging suspicion that politics had come to bear on the final decision. Once again, *Briarpatch* turned to its readers to help fill the gap. "Part of the response to the denial of funding was to really push the monthly donations and make up the shortfall," recalls former editor Mitchell (personal communication, June 12, 2012). This was not easy in a new political landscape where "everybody's having to jump back at the same time, from institutional funding to individual support" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). And although readers responded generously, there would be no cost recovery for lost staff time and three years of budget instability.

Another cost was local accountability journalism. The "federal funding years" had pulled *Briarpatch* into a paradigm that required continual market expansion, drawing the magazine toward national and international audiences. Previously, *Briarpatch* had a strong record of covering rural and northern Saskatchewan policy issues, and policies affecting low-income urban dwellers. These stories no longer had space in the magazine, unless filtered through a national lens (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2013). This is not to assume stories written for a national audience did not have a local dimension or local impact. Local actions, for example a First Nations blockade or a new food co-operative, were frequently featured and linked to larger national or international movements. As well, there was a strong sense among the editors that national and international stories were ultimately aimed at inspiring and informing civic participation at the local level (Valerie Zink, past editor-publisher, *Briarpatch*, personal communication, March 27, 2012). In December 2008, an entire issue was dedicated to Saskatchewan, in the context of explaining and critiquing its changing economy to the rest of the country. However, this did not assuage a desire among Saskatchewan readers for articles specifically examining the provincial scene.

Much of the push was around northern and environmental issues, such as tar sands development, as well as the policies of the Saskatchewan Party, established in 1997 and elected to power in 2007. *Briarpatch*'s board recognized that failure to respond to the local base could affect the magazine's future sustainability. While the magazine's market was national, its core supporters, the people who collected swim-a-thon pledges and volunteered for bottle drives, were Saskatchewan residents (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2013).

In response, the *Briarpatch* board began discussing the idea of establishing a new provincial publication that would share resources with the magazine. Its goal would be to re-introduce the style of independent investigative

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journalism that defined the *Briarpatch*'s heyday of muck-raking journalism under the Grant Devine Conservative government (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012). A *Briarpatch* reader survey confirmed a desire for investigative work; 70 percent of respondents stated they wanted to read more investigative journalism, compared to 38 percent requesting more theory and analysis (survey summary report to Briarpatch AGM, 2007). On the surface, it seemed conditions were ripe: a right-wing party was in power provincially, and topics like privatization and uranium development, which had been popular with readers in the 1980s, were back in the limelight. The launch of the *Sasquatch* would soon reveal, however, that the landscape had shifted in other ways, leaving less space for a nonprofit publication to grow roots and thrive. In particular, a push for labour support—considered a key fundraising strategy—fell flat after some initial uptake. "There was sort of polite tolerance … I got the sense that … it wasn't really a priority," recalls Mitchell (personal communication, June 22, 2012). The publication launch had dovetailed with a general decline in social unionism and a rise in professionalized union communications campaigns that privileged paid advertising in commercial media, according to union activists who worked to support the *Sasquatch* (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012; L. Hubich, personal communication, August 15, 2012). In February 2010 the *Briarpatch* board made the difficult decision to pull the plug on the *Sasquatch* after just eight issues (S. Stock letter to Sasquatch subscribers, February 16, 2010). While *Briarpatch* itself survived as a national/international magazine, the experience was a sobering illustration of the necessity and precarity of strong social networks. As observed by Alfonso Gumucio Dagron (2004), maintaining essential relationships is just as important as maintaining a healthy bank balance, if not more so, when it comes to the long-term sustainability of social economy media.

Indeed, today individual donors form the bedrock of the magazine's sustainability, outperforming both magazine sales and advertising revenues:

> Our readers are very, very loyal, and I can't overlook the people who provide the five-dollar bill in the mail and say this is the best I can do, and there's [*sic*] still doing something. And that does amount to a significant amount of money for us. (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

However, the donor culture may be shifting as well. Although the magazine has been gaining younger readers and volunteers, donors tend to be older. "It's a bit concerning when we look through our donor appeals and it's in this impeccable penmanship that you could have only gotten if you went to school in the '30s," noted past editor Valerie Zink (personal communication, March 27, 2012). Indeed, recent census data indicate persons over 75 are far more likely to donate than persons under 35, which Martin Turcotte (2012) postulates could be due to religious influences, greater awareness of the needs beyond family once children gain independence, and, for some, not all, increased income stability. Zink noted there also appears to be a more fundamental cultural shift at play, led by a new generation unaccustomed to passing the plate, paying for written content, or contributing monthly dues to an organization (Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012). This observation may well turn out to be prescient, particularly as it was offered by someone who was herself a member of the under-30 generation.

In an attempt to capture support from its new-generation readership, *Briarpatch* launched its first online fundraising campaign through the website Indiegogo in July 2014, grossing $4,055 in a four-week period, with

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the net amount still to be determined after free gift subscriptions for donating are fulfilled (*Briarpatch*, 2014). Comparatively, the traditional fall 2014 mail-out raised approximately $5,000 in donations before mailing costs (A. Loewen, personal communication, December 8, 2014). Editor Andrew Loewen said he recognized that online fundraising was important for expanding donor drives to *Briarpatch*'s national and international online readers, who view content for free on the web rather than via paid subscription. At the same time, he noted that web campaigns tend to work only when they focus on short-term projects, instead of core operations. Thus, while online donation drives may offer short-term injections of cash, monthly sustainers and subscribers remain key to budget stability and long-range planning. "For us, it's going to be one more tool in the box … it's never going to be game-changing," observed Loewen (personal communication, December 8, 2014).

THEMES

Reviewing *Briarpatch*'s four-decade history, six major themes emerge regarding media development supports and the struggle for sustainability.

Official media development support is effective

Government-sponsored media funds significantly contributed to the magazine's development. Both periods of major grant funding coincided with major periods of expansion and professionalization of the magazine. Staff training, improved subscription management, and payment for freelancers were among the benefits experienced.

Media development support generates change

The ensuing development activities spurred changes in *Briarpatch*'s understanding of its function in the world, and in its relationship with readers. Starting as a hands-on local volunteer activity, the magazine spread its social networks and readership from the streets of Saskatoon to locations throughout the province. In essence, provincial funds helped create a provincial magazine. This change process was mirrored nearly 30 years later with the acquisition of federal funds. Through this process, *Briarpatch* undertook reader surveys that revealed the breadth of its audience beyond Saskatchewan. In response, *Briarpatch* began to tailor its content to national and international readers. Just as provincial funding helped create a provincial magazine, federal funding helped create a national magazine. Both of these trends were accompanied by tension between a changing mission and the magazine's relationship to its readers and volunteers.

Government support is attached to competing interests and ideologies

The *Briarpatch* case suggests that successful media development strengthens the very things governments seek to avoid—namely, the creation of public platforms for the scrutiny and critique of government policies. After three years of funding, DSS officials were openly disenchanted with the growth their grants had wrought. Federally, through documents obtained through Access to Information, it is apparent that two of three *Briarpatch* requests between 2008 and 2011 were recommended for approval, but were ultimately rejected by the minister's hand without explanation. Both cuts were sudden, retroactive, and preceded by periods of uncertainty and back-and-forth discussions that absorbed much time and energy among *Briarpatch* staff, volunteers, and supporters. In this sense, government grants garnered more instability than stability in the long run.

The landscape of non-governmental support has changed

When provincial funding was withdrawn, *Briarpatch* was able to survive on the strength of its institutional and social networks. In particular, the labour movement backed the magazine with bulk subscriptions and advertising. By 2008, when the board attempted to launch the *Sasquatch*, the labour movement had undergone a cultural shift not fully recognized or anticipated by the publication's volunteers and staff. Starting a new publication meant establishing a new relationship in a new era, an era that featured the rise of union communications departments and increased emphasis on controlled messaging through slick in-house publications and paid advertising in the mainstream media. Meanwhile, a landscape of government funding cuts to non-labour groups, including arts groups, environmental NGOs, and development education organizations, left fewer organizations capable of augmenting labour's contributions.

The landscape of reader support is changing

Whenever Briarpatch experienced financial crisis, its loyal network of donors and subscribers stepped into the breach. Such contributions constitute "the miracle of *Briarpatch*" that has kept the publication operating for four decades. However, long-term donors and paying subscribers are aging; magazine staff members have initially—not conclusively—observed that the emerging online generation is less likely to proffer tangible, corporeal support to nonprofit organizations, potentially imperiling future fundraising.

Social economy solutions are needed to rebalance the current media ecology

In the U.S., the potential of nonprofit media to restore public interest journalism has been recognized by two national inquiries: the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities (Knight Commission, 2009); and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Working Group on the Information Needs of Communities (Waldman & WGINC, 2011). Co-operatives UK has also released a report that concludes the marketplace's failure to deliver quality journalism presents a unique social economy opportunity (Boyle, 2012 [QA: 2012?]). Indeed, the case of *Briarpatch* would suggest that the development of a healthy, diverse media ecology requires a reinvigorated civil society investment in non-commercial media. This is not to say Canada's governments should be let off the hook for fulfilling cultural development obligations, particularly in regards to Indigenous media. However, it must be recognized that a precarious and declining funding environment has seriously destabilized Canada's social economy media in recent decades. Civil society organizations that invest their communications budgets primarily in mainstream media advertising need to better recognize the important social role of nonprofit media, as well as the social economy's potential for re-establishing accountable, quality journalism. Non-controlling operational funding—for example, through arms-length foundations and labour-sponsored venture capital funds—support for capital equipment purchases, funding pools for investigative journalists, and creative solutions, such as assisting worker takeovers of failed commercial media outlets, are among the types of needed supports identified by practitioners (Elliott, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Briarpatch's fundraising record is an important example of a community-generated solution to the problem of nonprofit media sustainability. Sustaining donor campaigns and subscription sales supported the magazine where official media development assistance failed. A fully reader-supported model allowed the magazine to maintain editorial independence by limiting the influence of funding agencies and advertisers. However, the

model has not delivered resources for in-depth journalism to the extent that its publishers desire. As corporate and state media increasingly abandon the field of accountability journalism, this leaves an important question for nonprofit media practitioners and social economy scholars alike to tackle in the coming years: "People want investigative journalism. Do they want to pay for it, how might they pay for it, where will those resources come from?" (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012). An answer to this question may lie within a social economy that embraces media development as a key undertaking.

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Third Sector Organizations in Québec and the New Public Action in Community Development

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the context for and particular relations between the state and third-sector organizations in the province of Québec. A typology inspired by Coston and developed by Proulx, Bourque, and Savard is used to describe interactions between these actors. The article documents how an agreement that the private Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon signed with the Government of Québec had an impact on community organizations that respond to the social needs of vulnerable groups. A major repercussion has been the relegation of third-sector organizations to a model between subcontracting and coproductive. This is notable, as the sector had managed to establish itself as a central actor during the previous twenty years, particularly in health and social services, participating in the co-construction of public policies.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article aborde la question des relations entre les organismes communautaires et l'État au Québec en mettant l'accent sur le contexte particulier et les dimensions qui les distinguent dans cette province. Une typologie adaptée de Coston par Proulx, Bourque et Savard est utilisée pour encadrer cette réflexion. Nous discutons de l'impact de l'arrivée de la Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon (FLAC) sur le rôle des organismes communautaires après la signature d'une entente entre la FLAC et l'État québécois. Nous observons qu'une des conséquences de cette entente a été de confiner les organismes communautaires à un rôle allant de la sous-traitance à la coproduction alors que, depuis vingt ans, ces organismes avaient réussi à s'établir comme partenaires centraux en contribuant, en co-construction avec l'État, à l'élaboration de politiques publiques.

Keywords / Mots clés Third-sector organizations; Partnership; Québec; Private foundation; Community organization / Co-construction; Partenariat; Fondation privée; Organisme communautaire

INTRODUCTION

The third sector has been invited over the past 30 years to enrol in a "partnership" with the state, characterized by the participation of third sector community organizations (TSCOs) in public policy development. This "Québec model" that responds to health needs of individuals and communities is a hybridization among the Anglo-Saxon heritage of the welfare state, the American model of a community-based approach, and the republican model of centralizing the French state (Savard & Bourque, 2014)**.** Over the past 30 years, relations between the state and TSCOs have intensified and taken many different forms, depending on the areas of intervention. Some models offer opportunities for TSCOs to participate in the co-construction of responses to social and health problems lived by individuals and communities. This was the case in the field of early childhood services (including child care), which are now supported by a progressive public policy involving a configuration that includes for-profit organizations, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations. The latter form the majority among the three and are called early childhood centres (*centres de la petite enfance* or CPEs), wherein parents hold the majority of seats on the boards. Since these centres receive significant financial contributions from the provincial government, fees for parents were capped at $7 per day until January 1, 2015 (yet, fees are adjusted based on parental income and range from $7 to $20 per day). Other configurations assign a role to TSCOs that is centred primarily on the provision of services or programs whose strategic choices have been determined outside local jurisdictions.

The objective of this article is to analyze the impact of the arrival of a new player, a private foundation, on the role of third sector community organizations in the field of health and social services in Québec. Firstly, we started by presenting the social and political context in which the TSCO and the Québec government developed their partnership. Secondly, we discuss a model or typology adapted from Coston (1998) that we developed to describe the multiple configurations that the relationship between a TSCO and the state can take in the province of Québec. The third section of this article is the core of our subject matter. In this part, we expose how the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon (FLAC) has modified both the function and the role of the TSCO in communities where it operated. In the final section, we postulate on possible future developments, considering the recent evolution of the attitude demonstrated by FLAC representatives and their will to engage TSCOs in a way that is more respectful of their historic engagement in the response to the health and social needs of vulnerable populations.

PARADOXICAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are linked to the notion of paradoxical dynamics because they relate simultaneously to disparate logics and embrace both the potential democratization of the public management of the social sphere and the risk of instrumentalizing TSCOs (Lamoureux, 1994). Thus, on one level, Duperré (1992) considers that partnerships are the result of both a descending logic (government institution policies on community use) and an ascending logic (demands by social actors, including TSCOs, for autonomy and leverage). We may add, however, that on a second level, each of these logics is itself fraught with paradoxical dynamics. Thus, the descending logic is itself composed of two paradoxical logics originating with the state, identified by Lamoureux (1994) as the logic of according leeway to partnerships in terms of their supervision and control (TSCO participation and empowerment versus technocratic management strategy). The ascending logic, as well, is composed of two logics identified by Proulx (1997) as (1) the autonomist, which is the result of demands from TSCOs for the self-determination of practices; and (2) the complementarist, in the form of demands for integration into state policy that originate in the descending logic and are often the result of financial need. Figure 1 illustrates this paradoxical dynamic.

Figure 1: Paradoxical dynamic of partnership sources

Top-down logic
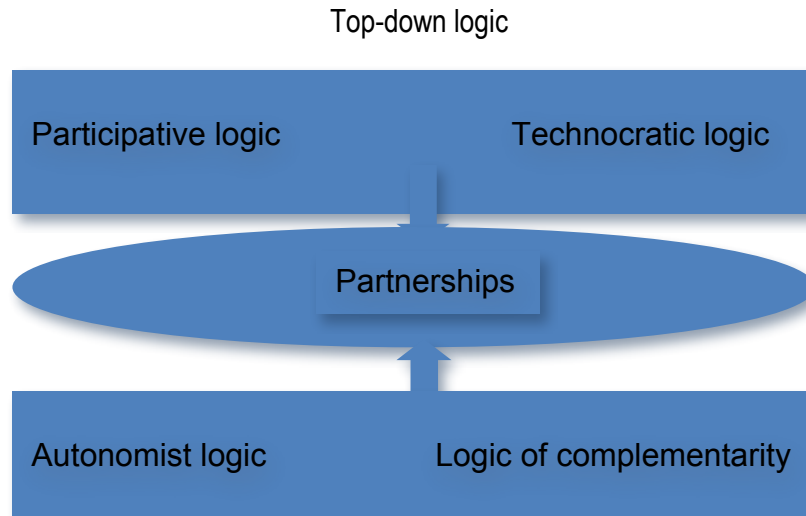
Source: Bourque, 2008

The development of relationships and interfaces between social actors is conditioned by the social, legislative, and political contexts of the society in which they evolve. An actor is understood here not to be holding a role, but to be taking action in a given situation (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). These relationships and interfaces are marked by continual tensions because they are conditioned by three co-existing realities: (1) as a source of funding, they represent a means of survival for many actors, including TSCOs; (2) they represent opportunities to augment capabilities for collective action; and (3) they represent the risk inherent in the instrumentalization of social actors and, potentially, the loss of their independence. There is now a general agreement in the international literature concerned with third sector–state partnerships that TSCOs are being instrumentalized, to the detriment of their specificity and autonomy. This analytical current puts more emphasis on the political and structural determinants of partnership than it does on actors' and organizations' capacity for action. Yet, partnerships are social constructs in which interfacing actors produce relationships that may be located on a continuum that extends from subcontracting to co-construction (Proulx, Bourque, & Savard, 2007).

PARTNERSHIPS: BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT TOOL AND INSTRUMENT OF THE TECHNOCRATIC GOVERNANCE OF THE SOCIAL SPHERE

Around the world, the management of public services is increasingly conducted in concert with civil society (Proulx et al., 2007), particularly in the field of local services. The state and the public sector increasingly share the delivery of public services, to varying degrees, with other actors such as private for-profit organizations, private families, or TSCOs. In this context, some now fear that states will attempt to divest themselves of certain responsibilities in order to confer them on TSCOs by way of partnerships. Moreover, in developed countries, the state does not act unequivocally, but pluralistically. Depending on circumstances, it oscillates between the polarities of state regulation (notably in the case of income security) and self-regulation, particularly in the field of social services and community development. In light of the failure of centralized, technocratic management, Lamoureux (1994) considers that partnerships are favoured by many states as a means to bring new actors (such as TSCOs) into the planning and

organization of collective public services. The partnership is therefore seen to be the result of social change and the concomitant changes in the role of the state and, at the same time, seen as a vector (conductor and generator) of those same changes. This conception of the partnership is based on an analysis of its paradoxical character. It appears that partnerships cannot be considered in terms of binary opposition. Indeed, they are the expressions of often paradoxical, and even contradictory, purposes, as is demonstrated by their simultaneous relation to disparate logics.

Thus, we consider that partnerships may be seen as relationships that are never simple and are often characterized by asymmetrical (unequal power and resources) and hierarchical (power struggle) relations between actors (Lévesque & Mager, 1992). Partnerships are fundamentally political processes that create relations and tensions between actors whose organizational interests, approaches, and cultures are often disparate, if not outright contradictory. The results generally stem from compromise, defined by Lévesque and Mager (1992, p. 28) as the "search for the common effects of differing approaches" and by Lamoureux (1994, p. 185) as a process "which infers that the actors can agree on common objectives, but that they do so based on distinct identities, which they partly surrender in the process."

The work of Proulx et al. (2007), inspired by Coston (1998), concludes that interfaces between the state and the third sector can crystallize along a continuum on which the authors have set down seven distinct types of interface. This typology rests on the analysis of three main parameters, that is to say, the degree of openness of the government to institutional pluralism (including the third sector); the degree of formalism of the relations; and the balance of power (see Figure 2). In this model, the further to the left of the continuum, the more limited is the openness of the government to institutional pluralism. On the other hand, the "co-construction" type represents the highest level of openness of the government to the third sector. In the same way, the types of relations to the left of the continuum are those in which the balance of power is clearly to the advantage of the government, while it is shared more with the third sector toward the right of the continuum. Finally, the parameter relating to the degree of formalism of the relations makes it possible to decide between the types of relations according to their more or less formal character—even if does complicate the model somewhat. Each one of the seven types of relationship is characterized thusly:

- The "competition" relationship, whereby government agencies and third sector organizations are engaged in a competition dynamic (e.g., for access to grants or subsidies).
- The "subcontracting" relationship, whereby the government, while remaining an important player, delegates operations to third sector organizations for delivery of certain services.
- The "third party" relationship, whereby the government delegates both operations and responsibilities to third sector organizations, thus sharing a substantial degree of its prerogatives and limiting its influence on organizational activities.
- The "coexistence" relationship, whereby the government is sympathetic to the activities of third sector organizations but not necessarily proactive in supporting them. The relation is often limited to the exchange of information through ''non- constraining coexistence.''
- The "supplementarity" relationship, whereby the government sets up public services according to average preferences of the population, but agrees to partly support the minority preferences with which third sector organizations deal. The advantages of self-sustaining services by third sector organizations are thus combined with official ones in supplementing governmental services.

- The coproductive relationship, where third sector organizations may participate in decision-making regarding the means and processes of deployment, particularly as a part of the organizational aspects of services (Jetté & Vaillancourt, 2009). This means that these organizations are able to influence the manner in which services are offered to the public, but without the possibility of influencing the general direction and the strategic choices around the goals to pursue.
- The "coconstruction" relationship, whereby the government shares its responsibilities and operations with the third sector while each party maintains its autonomy, values, and mission. Co-construction also implies the participation of third sector organizations in the development of public policies. To indicate this type of relation, we sometimes refer to "mutualist strategy" or "rationalized welfare pluralism."

Figure 2: Typology of relationships between government

Dimensions	Competition	Subcontracting	Third party	Coexistence	Supplementary	Coproduction	Coconstruction
Openness to institutional pluralism	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High
Symmetry of power relationship	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Intensity of relationship	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High	High
Formality of relationship	Low	High	High	Low	Moderate	High	High

Source: Proulx, Bourque, and Savard (2007), adapted from Coston (1998)

This is dependent on the credibility and the political clout that TSCOs succeed in developing individually and collectively. We therefore used this model to study (Savard & Proulx, 2012) the relationship between public social and health service agencies and third sector organizations in specific sectors, such as services for frail elderly people, employability, intellectual disability, and Youth Services. The methodologies applied to conduct our research were quantitative, through the use of a questionnaire, and by qualitative through semi-structured interviews.

The questionnaire includes 35 questions that address the four dimensions of the typology. For example**:** Does the administration of the public organization or establishment with which you have a relationship recognize the expertise you have developed in your sector of activity? What is the average frequency of your formal and informal interactions with the public organization or establishment with which you have a relationship (meetings, phone calls, written communications, etc.)? Does your organization have a written agreement, contract or collaboration protocol

with the public organization or establishment with which you have a relationship? When planning policies, programs and action plans affect a common public, would you say that the public organization or establishment with which you have a relationship consults your organization?

Answers to the questions were graded on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 and, depending on the scored obtained for each dimension of the typology, determine what kind of relationship the TSCO is engaged in with a specific public agency. Fifty-two respondents out of a possible 54, who were all executive directors or coordinators of a TSCO, filled out the e-questionnaire from March to June 2010. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 TSCO managers (executive directors and coordinators) with a view to obtaining more complete and insightful information and to validate the results obtained from the questionnaire.

The results analysis leads us to observe that TSCOs have a role and a place in community development and in response to social and health needs. However, at the time of this research (2010), the trend in third sector involvement seemed to focus on a role in the subcontracting of services or programs. This is due to the fact that local community organizations still have little influence on the strategic choices of targets and orientations that facilitate intervention geared to problems or needs identified at the national level. In some areas, such as rural development, local actors (e.g., TSCOs) have a greater autonomy and a greater role in decision-making that place both of which place them in a better position in terms of the co-construction of policies and programs. But in the area of health and social services in general, there is more of an instrumental relationship (for more information on the results of this research, refer to Savard & Proulx, 2012).

Vaillancourt (2008) proposes using the concept of co-construction to designate TSCO participation in the elaboration of public policy. Public programs and policies are, in a way, always co-constructed (whether via neoliberal or corporatist co-construction). All the same, as Vaillancourt (2008) points out, the quest for the public good requires a more democratic co-construction of public programs and policies, which necessitates the pluralist participation of civil society stakeholders in the elaboration of programs (the institutional dimension) as well as in their implementation (the organizational dimension, or co-production).

Co-construction refers to dimensions that are not mainly organizational in the sense of the organization of products and services but, rather, institutional and political in the setting of overall aims and the principles underlying policies and programs. It is for these reasons that co-construction, in our opinion, must be applied to more than just the management or delivery of programs and services. Indeed, it must also include the elaboration of their aims and rules of operation based on a principle of mutual recognition and statutory equality between protagonists, as well as the democratic and significant participation of concerned individuals and communities. Thus, partnerships oscillate between polar opposites: on one hand, the democratization of public services, programs, and policies (characterized by co-construction); and at the other extreme, the subordination of civil society to a neoliberal or technocratic system of management centred on the disengagement or non-involvement of the state (characterized by subcontracting), especially in light of the more recent phenomenon of partnership between government and private philanthropic foundations in response to new social and community needs.

The 1980s and 1990s were characterized in Québec by a partnership favourable to community innovation and social economy, and this was made possible by the presence of an emerging co-construction model. In the 2000s, the New Public Management has led to a New Public Action (Gaudin, 2007), which seeks to activate local dynamics and community action with rules and logic that challenge the TSCOs in their practices. The results of our initial research may well indicate that the increasing presence of philanthropic foundations in recent years constitutes an

interesting development. The most important of these foundations are major partners in a kind of corporatist co-construction relationship with the state. At the same time, rather than operating along the lines of TSCOs, they function more like businesses inspired by commercial logic.

THE NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

In Québec, the commercial private sector is much more present than in previous years and is growing quickly in the field of health services in terms of how it provides social welfare and related services. Currently, the commercial private sector is focused mainly on housing for seniors. However, in the majority of domains related to community or local services in which that sector is active (such as home care services for people with loss of autonomy or in the field of child care), it is the TSCOs that have a dominating presence**.** This situation can be explained by the historical establishment of these services as a result of initiatives from civil society that have been recognized and financially supported by the state under more or less co-constructed public policy. It is the same in the areas of community support for individuals and families, mutual aid, temporary shelters for people in difficult circumstances, community development, and the prevention of social problems.

Our research is directed toward a more recent phenomenon in Québec, namely the use of partnerships between government and private philanthropic foundations in response to new social needs. The emergence in recent years of the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation (acronym FLAC in French) arouses strong reactions from TSCOs, associations, and academics (Chamberland, Gazzoli, Dumais, Jetté, & Vaillancourt, 2012). From its launch in 2000, FLAC posed a problem in that the source of its capital primarily took the form of a major tax shelter that deprives the Québec provincial government of hundreds of millions of dollars in potential revenue. The FLAC funding base was generated by the sale of a Chagnon-owned communications company (Vidéotron) to another Québec firm (Quebecor). The purchase was made possible by the financial involvement of the public institution Caisse de dépôts et de placements du Québec (CDPQ), which manages pension funds for a segment of the Québec population. In fact, the CDPQ invested $3.2 billion in the purchase of Vidéotron and its subsidiaries (including the private network TVA). Since 2007, the Québec government has made contributions through four joint programs in partnership with FLAC to promote support for caregivers of the elderly, the educational success of young people, healthy lifestyles among young people, and the development of children from birth to five years of age. (This $570-million funding arrangement will expire in 2017.)

This foundation seems to be the perfect example of the "new philanthropy" that Edwards (2008) characterized for the United States. Specifically, this philanthropy is viewed as a private action that not only supports existing organizations, but also assumes the form of an investment that will bring benefits in the longer term and demonstrate that strategies employed in the world of private enterprise can also be applied to solve social problems. Edwards (2008) mentions three characteristics that may apply to all new philanthropists:

- Very large sums of money committed to philanthropy that mainly resulted from remarkable profits earned by a small number of individuals;
- A belief that methods drawn from business can solve social problems and are superior to the other methods in use in the public sector and in civil society; and
- A claim that these methods can transform society, rather than a reliance on greater access to socially beneficial goods and services. (pp. 31–32)

According to Lesemann (2008, p. 9), FLAC has a new "offensive political project" in the organization of social services that is rooted in a "strategy of targeting at-risk groups," especially children and young people from certain disadvantaged social groups or regions. The foundation seeks to be a different kind of player—one that not only offers more charitable services in a complementary spirit with the public or voluntary sector, but also "shares and spreads a critique of government action considered ineffective and not sufficiently open to the private sector as such, or to a voluntary sector that should reach performance criteria and be accountable" (p. 9).

Foundations in the third sector

In Canada, fiscal laws make a distinction between public foundations (e.g., the United Way) and private foundations. The qualifier "private" is not related to a potential commercial or mercantile nature of these foundations, but to their main sources of income and the composition of their boards of directors. Given their nonprofit nature, Chamberland et al. (2012) place private foundations within the scope of the third sector, therein defined as "all social enterprises, community organizations, cooperatives, mutual societies and foundations operating on democratic principles and working to the benefit of communities in a context of general interest and common good" (p. 52).

However, these authors call for refining the analysis of private foundations beyond their nonprofit dimension to include an analysis of their democratic structures, governance, diversity of stakeholders, the effective participation of different protagonists, and the presence or absence of co-construction in the development and implementation of projects. These elements distinguish private foundations from collective organizations in the third sector, particularly in Québec, where there is a profound collective action and associative tradition generally described as "community." Lesemann (2011) states, "Today, there are more than 5,000 groups in Quebec functioning on the basis of deep integration or engagement in the 'community,' offering one form or another of service to people or to the defense and promotion of rights, often with State funding" (p. 92). To this associative way of life must be added some 7,000 social economy organizations that engage 125,000 employees, with a turnover of $17 billion. On the other hand, FLAC actually adopts a very different mode of operation than the voluntary and social economy.

A new mode of operation

The Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation targets four thematic areas, with the general purpose of preventing poverty. These areas are child development from birth to five years of age; support for caregivers of the elderly; promoting academic success; and healthy lifestyles among young people. FLAC develops a specific program for each of these themes. It becomes actively involved in all stages of the intervention: identification of problems and objectives to pursue, program development and implementation, choice of territories and populations prioritized, financing activities, and evaluation.

Since the identified causes of poverty and targeted problems are related to issues of individual behaviours, action taken centres upon healthy lifestyles and social skills rather than other living and environmental conditions. This is a model of intervention "equally technocratic, and top-down as the government intervention" (Lesemann, 2008, p. 11) and allows for efficient implementation of public-private partnership (PPP) with the state. Intervention is also made possible by the fact that new public policies in the welfare sector in Québec are implemented through the mobilization and coordination of local actors and TSCOs. For example, there is the approach used by FLAC to administer its four programs:

> One of the Foundation's approaches is to promote the mobilization of a wide number of civil
> society actors—organizations, institutions, stakeholders and parents—in order to spark the

creation and implementation of appropriate solutions. We believe that individuals who are are present in children's lives are particularly well-placed to contribute to their development, starting with their parents and family, as well as the local actors who work in the communities where those children live, especially in areas where many of them are living in poverty. (FLAC, 2013, n.p.)

Programs initiated through PPPs call for the deployment of development agents across Québec who offer to assist local representatives in regrouping local committees, which, in turn, define an action plan focused on a given problem observed in the community. This plan will be funded to the extent that it meets the objectives and priorities of the program and on condition that it includes new activities only, rather than funding existing services. Public programs and PPP policies are therefore realized through contributions from TSCOs to address predetermined priorities and, oftentimes, activities. All the same, such programs and policies do not fund the specific mission of these organizations. Thus, in recent years, new funding for a public response to emerging community needs is not being channelled through direct contact with the TSCO; rather, the support is furnished via a PPP, whereby the TSCO is involved in an instrumental relationship model. The third sector is thereby partly marginalized and experiencing repercussions in its operations that have been documented recently (IRIS, 2013).

IMPACTS ON THIRD SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

The impacts on TSCOs and local communities must be divided into two categories: first, impacts related to the early implementation of these programs; and second, the most recent impacts. Chamberland et al. (2012) put forward that one of the impacts

> is related to the unsightly manner with which the foundation has imposed, in the early years, its social action in bastions of community organizations such as the social development of small communities, support to children and to the elderly. Another criticism concerns the undemocratic way in which the foundation has created a privileged position with the Quebec State and program designers, and that many have seen as directly inspired by the private management model. While the community sector operates from a slow local foundation building movement and deserves, according to many observers, more consideration from a government, FLAC imposes its local role through its substantial financial resources. (p. 51)

Criticism of the performance of deployment programs in their early years is extensive and well documented. Research conducted by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS, 2013) identifies increasing accountability as an instrument of control, a stronger influence of donors on committees, and the modification of TSCO activities in order to obtain funding. The authors noticed impacts on the evolution of the funding of TSCOs, including the introduction of private-sector logic and the bureaucratization of their environment. These changes threaten the original mission of TSCOs that, due to new requirements imposed by the funder, could limit the function of TSCOs to that of service providers instead of one whereby they defend and promote the varied interests and claims of their members.

Research by Ducharme and Lesemann (2011) reports discomfort related to the imposition of expertise in terms of practice in the field and a transformation of values that guide the actions of TSCOs and local communities. This situation, which tends to invalidate ways of doing things and experiences acquired from practice, "reflects a new logic of action which is equal to new paradigms, both in the scientific field and in the field of governance, which compete with those that have emerged from years of experimentation on the field" (Ducharme & Lesemann, 2011,

p. 205)**.** These authors add that there is a feeling among the TSCOs that FLAC uses them as cheap labour and that the mode of operation affects their democratic structure in that decisions are made by committees that do not allow representatives of TSCOs to consult their members before final decisions are made.

It is possible to cite other potential impacts on existing or emerging practices from local communities that PPP programs refused to recognize and fund at early stages of deployment. This has weakened and compromised these practices (including innovative ones) given the rule of non-funding of all pre-existing activities. Similarly, the creation of local committees from PPP programs could have had the impact of marginalizing and eliminating local pre-existing collective action processes and endogenous processes of consultation or community mobilization.

The major difficulty for TSCOs and communities lies in the requirement to enrol in a program that includes not only objectives, but also strict management rules that exclude support for what is already done (and oftentimes not yet accomplished) due to the depletion of funding for the general mission of the TSCOs. These are not partnership instances or processes insofar as they do not support (or do not favour in their first draft) recognition of what has already been achieved.

The first years of program implementation under PPPs were witness to a trend toward transformation of the Québec model. While the state was considering itself as an "accompanist," the development of the third sector and communities in the 1980s gave way to the co-construction of certain public policies. Since the late 1990s, the state (and other funders) have changed their role to that of "operators or managers," with a growing influence on the community practice in a "top-down" and more hierarchical dynamic, which contrasts with the more democratic approach of the previous period (IRIS, 2013).

POSSIBLE CHANGES

Although the methods used by the Chagnon Foundation to deploy programs have angered several players during the initial implementation phase (Chamberland et al., 2012), more recent research suggests that the foundation changed some of its practices after the first experiences of consultation and partnership with the third sector and local communities. According to Lesemann (2011), initiatives that were targeting transformation in the offer of services for individuals and strategies used by TSCOs have been confronted by the very *modus operandi* that the foundation wanted to change. As Lesemann (2011) maintains:

> These ways of functioning are not only archaic resistance, conservative, and associated with the defense of corporate interests. They are also the result of years of work experience in popular neighborhoods, as well as knowledge of the areas and their populations. They testify to the sense of democratic traditions, which can be perceived as an obstacle to the effectiveness of persons coming from a business culture, but which are, for those who know the specifics of the land, the conditions for efficiency and sustainable and long-term change. (p. 93)

For Ducharme and Lesemann (2011)**,** some TSCO representatives recognize that FLAC has taken its mistakes into consideration and adjusted its programs. Others argue that there have been changes in the discourse, but the reality remains the same. Participants in their research even mentioned that there is indeed a community mobilization through PPP programs and a bottom-up movement from areas where they are located. The authors point out that in this case, it would be necessary to more thoroughly investigate the role of individuals in the structure of the FLAC and PPP programs to understand the opportunities they have to change and adapt programs according to their perception of community needs. It would also be interesting to know the extent of control and

influence that local protagonists have on projects they implement. However, relationships between TSCOs and FLAC are not identical in all territories. Some territories are better equipped than others or have a long history of mobilization that increases their capacities for negotiation. Lesemann (2008) adds:

> The challenge is to know how far community groups and associations involved are able—and it depends on the domain in which they intervene, the ability of the local populations to mobilize—to submit projects based on the local history and identity roots of the involved groups, and to negotiate a partnership that respects their own political dynamics. In brief, to truly co-produce the action, rather than only being subject to the representations of an imaginary 'local community' conceived by technocratic services planners, regardless of whether they come from public agencies or a private foundation. (p. 11)

Among the reasons for the possible change of direction by FLAC, one example lies in the fact that the PPP programs are halfway into their 10-year term and their effectiveness and sustainability come into question. As well, the cultures of dialogue and collective action in Québec have influenced the functioning of PPP programs that were confronted with the limits of their managerial and authoritarian approach to communities and associations. Moreover, the approach to quantification evaluation that FLAC promoted at the outset demonstrated certain limits as well as services or programs externally imposed to local communities.

FLAC itself arrived at this conclusion after analyzing the results observed in the most organized and self-determined territories (FLAC, 2013). The foundation is currently working on a new grant for a project dedicated to developing territory in which issues and priorities would be determined by the local partners themselves. The funding would be dedicated to concerted collective action processes and would support initiatives selected by local representatives, and not according to program priorities.

EFFECTS OF HYBRIDIZATION ON THE QUÉBEC MODEL AND PROSPECTS

While the public-private partnership between the state and the Chagnon Foundation influences the Québec model in the social field, it does not increase the presence of the private commercial market or reduce public engagement. It influences the state–third sector relationship by increasing the contribution of the latter in the response to certain needs in the social sphere insofar as we consider private, nonprofit foundations to be part of the third sector. In the early years, this public-private relationship excluded voluntary and community movements (and civil society in general) from the conceptualization of PPP as embodied in the four targeted programs. These programs will promote three elements: (1) a programmatic approach (problems, solutions, and activities determined by experts); (2) a managerial mode (quantitative indicators and contracted relationships where TSCOs focus on providing services in which strategic choices are determined by interests outside the communities, etc.); and (3) individualizing action (problems caused by personal choices and behaviours, interventions gounded in at-risk lifestyles adopted by some groups and not in living conditions and environments, etc.).

This is a model that was already present in some public policies inspired by New Public Management (Larivière, 2005) and therefore did not constitute a breach or a change in public action, except with respect to the funding mode. In a prolonged period of fiscal austerity, the new public money in the social field has been invested for a term of 10 years in a PPP, whereby the TSCOs are taking a loss in several ways. These TSCOs, as well as local communities and civil society, have nevertheless played their role as social protagonists to influence decisions because, as pointed out by Ducharme and Lesemann (2011):

> The foundations are not private companies or public agencies operating in a world all to themsleves. They make themselves open—to a certain extent—to collective forms of governance and to objectives that reach beyond any mere benefit to their founders (whether from moral considerations, seeking praise or tax deductions). Because foundations operate in a social and political context, the impact of their activities needs to be seen. (p. 62)

These authors add that the interaction between persons who uphold different or even contrary principles of action can transform their respective practices. In their eyes, "that is the meaning of these transformations which are fundamental because they allow us to measure the importance of the hybridization phenomena in action and to identify the nature of action principles that predominantly affect the evolution of the relationship between these organizations" (p. 57). Since early in 2000, and leading up to today, the PPP between the state and FLAC has kept TSCOs from becoming part of a co-construction model that exists in the typology of relationships between the Government of Québec and the third sector.

FLAC was a way for that government to manage social action according to the New Public Management principles, which undermines the public logic (redistributive) and seeks to instrumentalize the associative logic (reciprocity). PPPs cannot be initiated without TSCOs and local communities, on which the existence and effectiveness of the partnerships are dependent and which, in turn, require compromise and open new opportunities for co-construction in the search for better answers to collective needs. It remains to be seen whether these compromises will be based on a partnership that creates opportunities for the participation of the persons concerned, ensures respect for community dynamics, and embraces the original contribution of associations and community organizations.

CONCLUSION

Partnerships fall into two overlapping categories: instrumentalization, which brings the third sector (excluding private foundations) into line with the implementation of public and private programs and policies; and co-construction, in which negotiation determines the partners' respective contributions. Consequently, these partnerships carry both a potential for the democratization of collective services as well as the risk of subordination of civil society to a technocratic system. Partnerships can take on a variety of forms that range from subcontracting to co-construction. The latter goes beyond the administration and delivery of programs and services (co-production) and confronts the very definition of their goals and rules of operation on the basis of a principle of mutual recognition and statutory equality between partners.

Within the scope of centralized private or public programs, partnership practices cannot be expected to address the local consequences of structural difficulties. Rather, partnerships can support emerging initiatives that contribute to the creation of conditions whereby local organizations set their own rules of operation when confronting the causes and consequences of problems. These organizations can then develop their capacity for taking appropriate action. The principal challenge inherent in partnership practices is how to successfully take on the role of an instrument of development, rather than that of a cogwheel of technocratic planning and administration. All the same, local organizations must inevitably position themselves within the policies and programs set out by planning and funding institutions whose requirements they have to satisfy, if for no other reason than to obtain the means necessary to put their plans into practice. They must also permit (and perhaps even advocate for) the adaptation of programs to community realities, notably those of local actors such as TSCOs. It has been demonstrated that the effectiveness of programs is greater when they take into account local stakes rather than evidence-based requirements from outside (Bourque, Lachapelle, & Sénéchal, 2010).

In order to better adapt to the new context and fulfill their potential, partnerships must first break with instrumentalization and operate according to an "endogenous" model—one that empowers third-sector actors and private foundations to have a more profound impact on the function and ultimate objectives of their efforts. Social actors can influence the course of partnerships toward co-construction, even though this type of partnership does remain subject to a paradox: it takes the form of a dynamic that is dependent on a certain balance of power determined by the political influence that TSCOs can achieve and sustain, despite—or even in part, thanks to—new public-private partnerships.

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A Comparative Analysis of Nonprofit Policy Network Governance in Canada

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ABSTRACT

Across Canada, provincial governments and nonprofit network leaders are engaged in a "third wave" of consultations, policy dialogues, and policy alignment strategies. Unexplored to date is how nonprofit policy networks are governed and structured. Network structures could have important implications for policy management and any bilateral collaboration agreements with provincial governments. This is a new point of analysis for both public administrators and nonprofit network leaders. The alignment of network governance in four structural dimensions is analyzed, as are parallel nonprofit policy network structures within provincial governments and select nonprofit policy outcomes.

RÉSUMÉ

Au Canada, les gouvernements provinciaux et les dirigeants de réseaux à but non lucratif se sont engagés dans une « troisième vague » de consultations, dialogues politiques et stratégies d'alignement politique. Inexplorée jusqu'à ce jour est la manière dont les réseaux d'action publique à but non lucratif sont gouvernés et structurés. Pourtant, la structure des réseaux pourrait avoir des implications importantes pour la gestion politique et tout accord de collaboration bilatérale avec les gouvernements provinciaux. Il s'agit ici d'un nouveau sujet d'analyse, tant pour les administrateurs publics que pour les dirigeants de réseaux sociaux. Cet article évalue la division en quatre dimensions structurales de la gouvernance des réseaux, les structures parallèles des réseaux d'action publique à but non lucratif au sein des gouvernements provinciaux et certains résultats émanant de politiques à but non lucratif.

Keywords / Mots clés Network governance; Nonprofit sector; Government relations / Gouvernance de réseaux; Secteur à but non lucratif; Relations

INTRODUCTION

Across Canada, provincial governments and nonprofit network leaders are engaged in a "third wave" of consultations, policy dialogues, and policy alignment strategies. The first wave took place in the early 1970s, the second during the mid-1990s to 2005, and the third wave is underway (Elson, 2014). When the first National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (Hall, de Wit, et al., 2005) was first released in 2004, there was a new appreciation by both provincial governments and their respective nonprofit sector constituencies that this was a substantial relationship that could be measured not only in policy proposals, services rendered, and volunteer efforts, but also in terms of employment and economic growth.

In recent years, provincial governments and nonprofit policy networks have signed collaboration documents outlining principles of nonprofit sector-government engagement that commit the government—at least on paper—to fostering a productive, interdependent relationship with the nonprofit sector (Carter & Speevak Sladowski, 2008; Elson, 2011b).

This development alone could be considered remarkable, given the complex mix of nonprofit organizations with a significant variation in size, mandate, and focus (Hall, Barr, Easwaramoorthy, Sokolowski, & Salamon, 2005). Provincial governments relate to the nonprofit sector in a variety of ways that are formal or informal, centralized or clustered (Elson, 2014). At the same time, government policies are often in a state of flux, subject to both election cycles and changing policy priorities. This article focuses on the "Third Wave" provincial nonprofit policy networks and institutional forms that have been developing since 2006 (Elson, 2012). So how do provincial nonprofit policy networks, with a focus on a collective voice for the nonprofit sector, manage nonprofit sector policies and their related network governance practices? And once this is known, can any inference about the nature of nonprofit-government relations be made?

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Network governance, as defined by Jurgen Willems and Marc Jegers (2012), is used here as a framework to examine the degree of centrality and formality associated with the provincial nonprofit policy networks. This research uses the operational definition of policy networks cited by Annica Sandström and Lars Carlsson (2008); namely that policy networks are "organized entities that consist of actors and their relations engaged in the process of collective action for joint problem solving" (p. 498).

The relationship between provincial governments and their nonprofit sectors has been systematically monitored by this author to identify network governance changes, including internal network governance structures. The monitoring of structural changes was triangulated by key informant interviews, public reports, and websites within provincial governments and the nonprofit sector. Over a six-year period (2009-2015), recurring and singular confidential interviews were conducted with senior policy makers and nonprofit policy leads in provincial governments and representatives of provincial intermediary nonprofit organizations. In total, 65 semi-structured interviews were conducted in intervals of approximately 18 months across all ten provinces. Of the 65 interviews, 31 interviews were conducted with government officials and 34 with nonprofit sector representatives. Where the comments from a particular interview have been cited, they have been coded by province; otherwise the interview citations reflect a summary of commentaries across multiple jurisdictions. Network governance structures do not simply appear, but are determined by decision-makers, government policy officials, and nonprofit network leaders alike, based on what form is believed to be most likely to be effective at the time (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Thus,

network governance, even within established structures, is in a continuous state of flux or adaptation to both internal and external pressures.

The policy network itself is the designated unit of analysis, and within this analysis both network and governance perspectives are combined. Networks are defined as a set of actors, or nodes (e.g., apex provincial nonprofit organization or network), with relationships among these nodes (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Several network types have been delineated, including Carey Doberstein's (2013) metagovernance analysis, but those most compatible with this analysis are goal-directed networks, which "have become extremely important as formal mechanisms for achieving multi-organizational outcomes, especially in the public and nonprofit sectors where collective action is often required for problem solving" (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 231). This focus brings to the fore the articulation of goals, either for nonprofit policies or the nonprofit sector at large.

A structural-functional definition of the nonprofit sector policy arena was used for this study, namely sectoral policy networks that are specifically designed to give a collective voice to and engage in systematic nonprofit policy dialogue. Bilateral policy or program discussions between individual ministries and their nonprofit sector constituencies in areas such as social services, arts, agriculture, or recreation, while valuable, are largely excluded in this analysis; but all instances of collective policy action are included. This macro-level analysis, while missing the nuances of specific bilateral initiatives, is intended to provide a broader perspective and reflect the collective policy of either government on the one side, or the nonprofit sector on the other. There are two notable exceptions. In Saskatchewan and New Brunswick there is a government-directed network that provides a venue for policy implementation that includes nonprofit sector representation (the Regional Intersectoral Committees in Saskatchewan and the Community Inclusion Networks in New Brunswick). What follows here is an examination of recent trends within and across Canadian provinces.

A cautionary note must be sounded: Several provincial governments have undergone substantial shifts in the importance placed on nonprofit sector relations, aligning such relations to culture, human services, or labour market policy priorities. Others have developed a broader nonprofit sector relations policy strategy and established a hub at a senior level of government. Nine of Canada's ten provinces have been engaged in some form of deliberate, sustained engagement in nonprofit sector-government relations policy (Campbell & Speevak Sladowski, 2009; Carter & Speevak Sladowski, 2008; Elson, 2010).

NETWORK GOVERNANCE

Willems and Jegers (2012), it is important to examine the reinforced expectations of behaviour or performance in provincial-nonprofit sector relations. Trust is critical for network performance and sustainability, particularly its distribution and reciprocation among network members (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Goals and goal consensus is a second dimension of network governance. Lead network organizations assume most strategic and operational decisions, particularly when other network members are only partially committed to a network-level goal, (e.g., variance in the relation of any particular nonprofit network member to policy issues). Lead network organizations hold the big picture and build the connection between the mandates of individual network members and the policy network goals (Provan & Kenis, 2008). This is why many nonprofit policy networks choose to address cross-sector issues related to the labour market, pensions, governance, and the like, rather than topical issues that would be relevant to only a few network members.

Keith Provan and Patrick Kenis (2008) also address the need for network-level competencies. The level of competency required, they argue, depends on the task or goal to be achieved and the external demands and needs

faced by the network. This speaks to the level of representation on internal networks, whether on ad hoc coalitions or network policy clusters, and the external demands of funding challenges and changes in ministers or government policy priorities. Administrative leads are better suited to address network-level demands, but in order to do so, the administrative lead must have the skills, competencies, and financial capacity to match the needs of the network members (Provan & Kenis, 2008).

This variable highlights the importance of the size, competence, knowledge, and budgets of policy networks that assume the lead on nonprofit sector policy formulation. The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO), the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) (2014), the Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) (2014), the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA) (2008), and the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia (CSC-NS) (2015b) are five examples of policy networks where the level of network trust, goal coherence, and administrative competency appears to match the needs of network members (Elson & Rogers, 2010; interview respondents, 2009, 2011, 2013, & 2015).**"**

This is reflected in open and transparent policy formulation processes (e.g., work groups), member accountability and response mechanisms (e.g., forums, surveys), and staffing levels and responsibilities, (e.g., policy and network support staff).

A second dimension, namely that of centralized or (decentralized) clustered structures adds a locus of control variable within the formal or informal reporting dynamic; resulting in the four dimensions profiled in Figure 1. This is an extension of earlier research that focused on the degree of formality within network structures (Elson, 2008, 2011a).

Figure 1: Classification of policy network
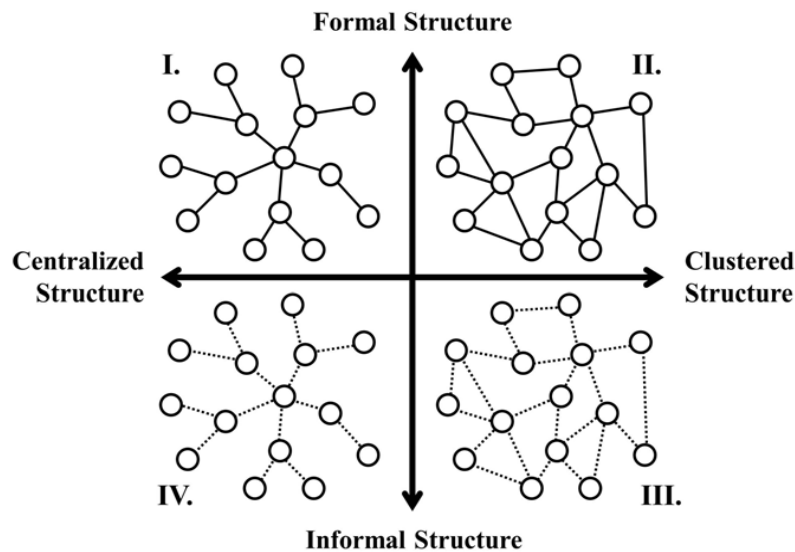
Source: Willems & Jegers, 2012, p. 72*.*

Formal, centralized structures (Type I) have a central actor with control over information/knowledge shared and/or the actions of others (e.g., the Chantier). In a formal, clustered, or lateral relationship (Type II), parties operate under formal agreements or rules of conduct, yet the actors have equal power and status in the relationship (e.g., a

dedicated coalition with a Memorandum of Understanding or MOU). There is reciprocity in this relationship, and the relationship is based on a mutual exchange of information and knowledge. In an informal, clustered structure (Type III), rules, if any, are flexible, implicit, and unwritten. The content of the relationship is based on culture, habits, and beliefs (e.g., internal patterns that emerge within a well-established policy network). In an informal, centralized structure (Type IV), the relationship may be based on an particular ideology or sense of "community" (e.g., Community Sector Council) (Willems & Jegers, 2012). Willems and Jegers (2012) clearly note that while this framework is divided into quadrants, the reality is much more of a continuum and organizations certainly move from one quadrant to another. The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) is an example of a policy network that has, since its inception, moved from Type IV to Type I.

NONPROFIT POLICY NETWORKS

Table 1 shows that five provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and British Columbia) developed a mechanism for sustained policy dialogue following the end of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (2000–2005), while three provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, initiated a nonprofit sector policy while the Voluntary Sector Initiative was still underway (Voluntary Sector Initiative, 2008). Provincial governments did not participate in the Voluntary Sector Initiative, nor were they mandated in any way to do so, but they were certainly kept informed of its developments (Brock, 2010), as were provincial and local nonprofit associations. Between 1995 and 2000, Québec saw the emergence of two substantive policy networks, the Chantier de l'économie sociale and the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome, which were founded as collective responses to the state of poverty and unemployment in Québec and the 1995 Women's March for "Bread and Roses" (Mendell & Rouzier, 2006). Prince Edward Island is the only province that has yet to formally engage its nonprofit sector, although there have been attempts by nonprofit sector organizations to articulate common issues (Community Foundation of PEI, 2011). Canada's three territories also lack dedicated nonprofit networks, although there are collective arctic-wide networks related to resource development and sustainability (e.g., the Canadian Circumpolar Institute and Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic). This absence could be attributed to the lack of a critical mass of established and well-funded nonprofit sector organizations to assume the lead in developing a network.

Table 1: Collective provincial nonprofit sector policy agenda (years)*

Province/Year	1995	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015
British Columbia						←————————→			?		
Alberta				←——————————→					?	←——→	
Saskatchewan			←————→					←————————→			
Manitoba		←——————————————————————————————————→									
Ontario							←————————————→				
Québec	←——→										
New Brunswick					←————————————————————→						
Nova Scotia					←————————————————————→						
Newfoundland and Labrador						←——————————————→					

*The bars mark the years in which a collective nonprofit sector policy agenda has been in place.

In 1995, Québec was the only province exerting a collective government policy agenda for the nonprofit sector[1] dedicated to addressing the issues of poverty and unemployment (Laforest, 2007). By 2011, six of ten provinces

(Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador) had an affiliated minister or deputy minister responsible for the relationship of provincial governments with their nonprofit sectors. Three other provinces (British Columbia, Saskatchewan,[2] and New Brunswick) developed collective bilateral policy networks that engaged the social service segment of the nonprofit sector (Campbell & Speevak Sladowski, 2009; Carter & Speevak Sladowski, 2008; Elson, 2011b). Saskatchewan and New Brunswick continue to operate within a policy-focused committee structure, Saskatchewan for human services and New Brunswick for economic and social inclusion (Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, 2011; Human Services Integration Forum, 2010).

Variances in network representation

There is considerable variance in how the nonprofit sector is represented in policy forums across provinces. In several provinces, the provincial government officially appoints nonprofit "representatives," and while informally nominated by recognized leaders within the nonprofit sector, their official status is one of an individual rather than collective representation (interview respondent ab2, 2015). In other words, they speak for themselves, not as a representative of the nonprofit sector. Examples of this type representation can be found in the former Government Non-Profit Initiative in BC and the current Alberta Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI) (Alberta Culture and Tourism, 2015a; The Government/Non-Profit Initiative, 2009).

In other provinces the nonprofit sector is collectively recognized through autonomous nonprofit policy networks. Examples include the Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations, the Ontario Nonprofit Network, the Chantier de l'économie sociale and the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome in Québec, and the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia. These nonprofit policy networks take the lead role of collectively representing the nonprofit sector within their respective jurisdictions. These kinds of policy networks are mutually recognized sector representatives and designate their own representatives to government policy forums and committees accordingly. The Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador is also a nonprofit sector policy network, as is the emergent Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership.

Administrative leads in nonprofit networks

In British Columbia, a number of policy networks represent different constituencies within the nonprofit sector. These include the Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia (VOCBC), Board Voice, and Volunteer BC (see Table 2). The VOCBC (2015) is a communications and convening network of provincial and coalition organizations and community benefit organizations. Board Voice (2015) is an organization comprising the volunteer boards of community-based social service agencies dedicated to creating a clear and effective voice for volunteer community-based boards. Volunteer BC (2015a) promotes the value of volunteering in collaboration with volunteer centres across the province. Periodic collaborations among these networks are evident in, for example, the Imagine Canada provincial dialogue sessions and the "Next Steps" initiative (Gent, 2012), but these collaborations are neither consistent nor formalized—a reflection of a Type III network configuration (informal and clustered) (interview respondents, 2015).

A similar dynamic exists in Alberta, where policy networks with administrative leads include the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Volunteer Alberta, and the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. It could be argued that the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations has a more sophisticated policy network administrative capacity, but other lead organizations also play significant roles in the nonprofit policy process in Alberta, as does the Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies and the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation. In addition, there is an ongoing liaison and a significant level of collaboration (e.g., provincial pre-budget deputations; engagement on the Alberta Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector Initiative) among the three lead organizations that is

more typical of a Type II than a Type III policy network configuration (Alberta Culture and Tourism, 2015; interview respondents, 2015).

Table 2: Nonprofit sector policy administrative leads

Province	Nonprofit Sector Policy Network Administrative Lead(s)
British Columbia	Various (e.g,, Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia/Board Voice/Volunteer BC)
Alberta	Various (e.g., Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations/Volunteer Alberta/Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations/ Alberta Ecotrust Foundation)
Saskatchewan	Various (e.g., Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership/SaskSport Inc./SaskCulture/Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association)
Manitoba	Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations
Ontario	Ontario Nonprofit Network
Québec	Chantier de l'économie sociale/Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome
New Brunswick	None identified (alignment with Community Inclusion Networks)
Nova Scotia	Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia
Prince Edward Island	None identified
Newfoundland and Labrador	Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador

A similar dynamic exists in Alberta, where policy networks with administrative leads include the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Volunteer Alberta, and the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. It could be argued that the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations has a more sophisticated policy network administrative capacity, but other lead organizations also play significant roles in the nonprofit policy process in Alberta, as does the Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies and the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation. In addition, there is an ongoing liaison and a significant level of collaboration (e.g., provincial pre-budget deputations; engagement on the Alberta Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector Initiative) among the three lead organizations that is more typical of a Type II than a Type III policy network configuration (Alberta Culture and Tourism, 2015; interview respondents, 2015).

In Québec, two organizations dominate the nonprofit policy network landscape, namely the Chantier de l'économie sociale and the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA) (see Table 2). Each represents a different constituency, yet both have attained a high level of political and policy sophistication and administrative acuity and engage in formal policy network processes—both within the two networks and between the networks and the provincial government (Elson & Rogers, 2010). These are examples of Type I policy networks.

The Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations (MFNPO), the Ontario Nonprofit Network, the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia, and the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador have each established themselves as the representative voice for the nonprofit sector within their respective jurisdictions. In Manitoba and Nova Scotia, the provincial government has funded a labour force adjustment strategy and industry-focused human resource councils. The provincial nonprofit policy networks in Manitoba and Nova Scotia are aligned with this strategy.

Administrative leads in provincial governments

Typically, existing network structures within provincial governments, rather than new ones, are used as a conduit for internal nonprofit policy dialogue, a reflection of institutional layering (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010). For example, issues about nonprofit sector-government relations are raised at cabinet meetings, standing committee meetings of deputy ministers,[3] or informally (interview respondents, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015. There is considerable variation in internal network structures within provincial governments, which has been described in detail elsewhere (Elson, 2014). Typically though, nonprofit secretariat staff operate informally across departments, operate with powers of persuasion, and work to establish themselves as the "go-to" place for advice on nonprofit sector issues. Only Alberta has a bilateral government-nonprofit policy forum (Alberta Culture and Tourism, 2015a).

POLICY NETWORK STRUCTURES

Where, then, do nonprofit policy network governance structures within provinces fit in this governance framework? Figure 2 provides a preliminary schematic of this internal network governance structure within nine provinces.

Figure 2: Provincial nonprofit policy network structures
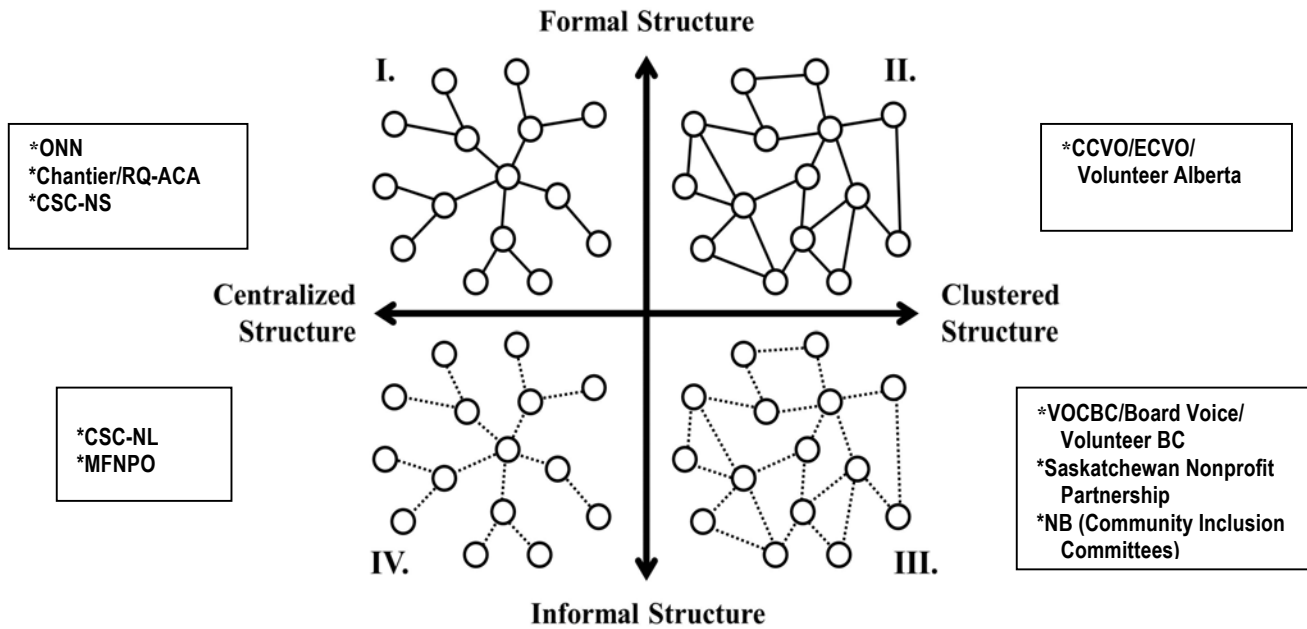
Source: Adapted from Willems & Jegers, 2012, p. 72

British Columbia

Until 2013, the primary nonprofit policy forum in British Columbia was the Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI), co-hosted by the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (then the Ministry of Housing and Social Development) and the Vancouver Foundation (Wightman & Siebe, 2011). While focused on social service policy, the GNPI provided an ongoing forum for policy dialogue and periodic joint initiatives, including an annual provincial forum and procurement policy workshops (Ministry of Housing and Social Development, 2009). While the GNPI no

longer exists, what has moved to the policy forefront is Hubcap BC, an initiative of the Partners for Social Impact. Partners for Social Impact is a broad government-private-nonprofit sector forum, organized with support from the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (Hubcap BC, 2015; Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, 2015). Both of these BC government-sponsored initiatives leave more nonprofit organizations outside the policy tent than inside.

Nonprofit policy networks in BC are loosely knit and, while they co-exist in a broad nonprofit policy context, there is little glue that binds them together. Board Voice, established in 2009, represents the voice of nonprofit board members in about 70 social service organizations. Board Voice (2015) sees itself as "a clear and effective voice for volunteer community-based boards supporting high quality social services and strong vibrant communities" (n.p.).

The Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia (VOCBC), initiated in 2002 and unincorporated, is primarily a "network of networks," striving to bring nonprofit organizations of all stripes together. The VOCBC has recently re-branded itself as "proVOCative thinking and has undertaken an initiative called New Directions. New Directions is a collaborative, blended education and training initiative for nonprofit organizations. It combines community conversations and training opportunities; and builds on a similar initiative conducted by Imagine Canada (interview respondent bc, 2015). Imagine Canada (2015), a national organization dedicated to representing and enhancing the role of charities in Canada, has co-sponsored a number of provincial sector dialogue sessions with provincial nonprofit organizations.

Volunteer BC, the voice for strengthening volunteering in BC, is also a strong member of the VOCBC. For example, in collaboration with the Administrators of Volunteer Resources of BC (AVRBC) and the New Directions for BC's Non-Profit Sector Project, Volunteer BC toured the province offering training and community conversation sessions to identify, in part, key features and impacts of the sector in order to create a new sector-based narrative (Volunteer BC, 2015).

Belying this recent collaborative initiative is a history of government and nonprofit umbrella initiatives that have left individual organizations suspicious and burned out. Often competitive contracting through BC Bid leaves organizations wary about sharing information; and there are more examples than sector leaders can count of provincial initiatives that have been announced with great fanfare only to wither on the vine (Lindquist & Vakil, in press). As a Type III policy network structure (informal and clustered), nonprofit policy networks in BC readily accept the value of the sector to society in general and communities in particular, but collaboration is inconsistent. To date, no one policy network is seen as a leader for the sector as a whole.

Alberta
In Alberta, the Alberta Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI) went on hiatus in 2012 for reasons similar to those in BC: a significant change in political leadership and internal government reorganization. The difference in Alberta is that a leaner and more focused ANVSI Leaders Council and Stewardship Forum emerged from the ashes of the former ANVSI (interview respondent ab2, ab1, 2015).

There appears to be a movement toward greater policy alignment[4] and having the right players around the table— not just to build better relationships but also to implement public policy (interview respondent ab2, 2015). Membership in the ANVSI has shrunk from eighteen to nine members and the Leaders Council and Stewardship Forum has been introduced. Nonprofit sector membership, via an official Cabinet appointment process, is currently drawn from the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations,

Volunteer Alberta, the Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies, and the Alberta EcoTrust Foundation (Alberta Culture and Tourism, 2015b). The approval process on the government side leaves the final arbiter of nonprofit representation on ANVSI to the provincial government and there are times when nominees have both been rejected and augmented (interview respondent ab2, 2015).

At this time, the provincial government is represented by deputy ministers from Alberta Culture and Tourism, Alberta Human Services, and the Executive Council of Cabinet who attend ANVSI meetings (no substitutions are allowed). The progress to date appears to be encouraging as constellations of activity pertaining to nonprofit data and labour market issues have emerged (interview respondents ab2, ab3 2015). Less fully developed is a new Stewardship Forum, intended to widen the formal engagement of other sector organizations and government departments in this bilateral policy forum.

Alberta Culture and Tourism has been the administrative lead on the nonprofit sector file for a number of years, and continues to act as a catalyst for broad sector-wide discussions within government (interview respondent ab2, 2015). Other ministries, such as Alberta Human Services, have an important funding regime relationship with the sector, and other ministries are called in on an issue-specific basis. In the manner of the now defunct Government and Non-Profit Initiative in BC, this forum is more of a "think tank" and issue resolution forum than a formal deputation and issue resolution process.

There is a substantial degree of consultation and policy strategizing that takes place among the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and Volunteer Alberta, although there are times when other organizations are also involved, or the three organizations act independently, depending on the policy focus. This arrangement is informal, although there are times when an MOU is created. A wide variety of sources is used to both identify and prioritize policy issues, including network members, polling and survey data, and members of the boards of directors; but the administrative leads for these policy networks are executive and policy staff within the policy networks (interview respondent ab1, 2015). Alberta, a Type II network structure (formal and clustered), has achieved consensus on the overall goal of enhancing the contribution of the nonprofit sector in the province, yet exhibits segmentation among policy networks to work on particular aspects of that goal.

Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP) (recently re-branded from the Saskatchewan Network of Nonprofit Organizations), is a burgeoning unincorporated network in the process of following up from a series of regional consultations and a 2012 provincial summit to assess the appetite for such a policy network (Langen, 2012). Like the VOCBC, the goal of the SNP is to be as inclusive as possible, to operate independent of government, and to operate from a shared or distributed leadership model (interview respondent sk1, 2015).

At this time, the SNP steering committee (nine members) is considering action in the areas of government relations, labour market initiatives, and nonprofit research. Its intention is to provide tangible evidence of the value of a policy network cluster before formalizing any organizational processes. It is pertinent to note there is broad representation on the steering committee. Members include representatives from the United Way (two), nonprofit boards of directors (three), Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation, Saskatchewan Culture, human service organizations (three), and the Community Initiatives Fund (interview respondent sk1, 2015).

Because sport, culture, and parks and recreation groups in Saskatchewan are collectively the exclusive beneficiary of provincial lottery funds, they have a significant capacity to engage in a policy network and engage grassroots

organizations (Gidluck, forthcoming) should they wish to. The informal and clustered (Type III) structure nature of the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership has been deliberately chosen to build the network from the ground up. Over time it hopes to increase both its capacity and reach across the province.

Manitoba

In Manitoba, the administrative lead with respect to the nonprofit policy network is the Manitoba Federation of Nonprofit Organizations (MFNPO). The lead department for the nonprofit sector in the provincial government is the Department of Housing and Community Development, while the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade assumes the lead on labour market adjustment and corresponding sector councils. The MFNPO is a member of the Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils, and this membership has influenced its policy network priorities, including, for example, the promotion of the Canada Job Grant program to the nonprofit sector (interview respondent mb1).

The MFNPO works hard to hold its attention on other (non-labour) issues, such as legislative agendas, sales tax increases, and contracting regime developments (Frankel & Levasseur, 2015 forthcoming; interview respondent mb1, 2015). Like the CCVO in Alberta, the MFNPO uses a number of sources to determine its policy priorities, particularly its board of directors. Since the MFNPO does not have a membership base, it is a centralized representative of the nonprofit sector in the province and operates as a Type IV (centralized, informal) "network of networks" (interview respondent mb2, 2015).

Ontario

The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) is a dedicated public benefit action-oriented policy network. Recently incorporated after seven years spent building its constituent base and policy network capacity under the umbrella of the Centre for Social Innovation, the ONN (2015) has 7,000 social media followers, more than 300 volunteer leaders providing time and expertise, eight full-time staff, and six volunteer board members. Although the ONN has individual nonprofit organizations as members, individuals as supporters, and others as social media subscribers, it sees itself as neither an organization nor an association. There are no standing committees in the ONN, but rather ad hoc workgroups that ebb and flow according to policy priorities and network members' interests (interview respondent on1, 2015). Yet, like any organized network, it has a board of directors, a policy committee, an outstanding annual conference, and processes in place to manage policy investments and workgroup formations (Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2014). This gives the ONN a unique Type II (formal and clustered) network structure.

Policy priorities are determined by their congruence and readiness for concrete action in relation to the ONN's mission, vision, and values. The ONN's mandate is to engage, advocate, and lead with—and for—nonprofit and charitable organizations that work for the public benefit in Ontario, and to work toward policy and systemic change (Ontario Nonprofit Network, 2015). At a practical level, policy priorities are also determined by the availability of energy and resources, active sector engagement, and strategic opportunities to make a difference. Active sector engagement brings the ONN's convening capacity to the fore, both within the ONN, regional networks, and other policy-related groups.

The ONN does have a policy committee, and as with other facets of the ONN's network approach, there is constant communication and a collective responsibility among committee members and policy staff. This arrangement enables both the focus required to get policy issues addressed and the flexibility to respond to new developments (interview respondent on1, 2015). Current working groups are the Rural Social Enterprise, Connect the Sector,

Shared Platforms, and the Ontario Social Economy Roundtable. The ONN (2015) has substantial reach across the provincial government.

The ONN's policy network capacity has been developed with the explicit intention of engaging as many people as possible across as many sub-sectors as possible in broad cross-sector issues (interview respondent on1, 2015). A prime example of this policy engagement is the role the ONN (2014) has played in the evolution of the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and in creating nonprofit access to surplus Ontario government land. The ONN regularly connects with more than ten provincial ministries to engage in a policy dialogue and as a member of joint working groups with ministries such as citizenship, finance, treasure board, economic development, employment and infrastructure, and the attorney general (interview respondent on1, 2015).

Québec

For almost two decades in Québec, the social economy and social justice movements have built and consolidated their representation in the Chantier de l'économie sociale and the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA). The main policy forum for the RQ-ACA representation in the provincial government is the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome within the government Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity (Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, 2001). The Chantier's structural point of entry, although by no means the only one, is the Ministère des Affaires municipales et Occupation du territoire. The RQ-ACA, like the Chantier de l'économie sociale, has its origins in the "Bread and Roses" Women's March in 1995 and the subsequent socioeconomic summit in 1996 (Mendell, 2003). Le Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA) was established in 1996 and like the Chantier de l'économie sociale it too operates within a Type I (formal and centralized) network structure.

Chantier de l'économie sociale

The main objective of the Chantier de l'économie sociale is to promote the social economy as part of the socioeconomic development of Québec and thereby recognize the pluralistic nature of the economy (Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2014). The Chantier de l'économie sociale promotes and supports the emergence, development, and consolidation of businesses and social economy organizations in all sectors of the economy (Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2015). One example is its "valeurs ajoutée" (values added) campaign (Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2012). The Chantier de l'économie sociale is an explicit centralized Type I (formal and centralized) "network of networks," with a formal policy identification, formulation, and approval process.

The Chantier board of directors is composed of 35 members, 27 of which are elected at the Chantier's annual general meeting or general assembly. The board of directors is a strategic planning body and plays a guiding role to link the board and the electoral colleges (the Chantier's designation for its "network of networks"). Consultations prior to the Chantier board of directors' adoption of a policy position generally occur through electoral colleges, which in turn engage their member organizations. Each electoral college is responsible for both hosting meetings of its members throughout the year and for providing the Chantier with a scan of emerging and pressing issues (Elson & Rogers, 2010; interview respondent qc1, 2009). The board of directors, in the case of a budget deputation for example, would formulate its policy priorities from this information. The executive committee then calculates how best to position and present these strategic priorities.

The wide scope of representation of the Chantier across the social economy in Québec—combined with its capacity to capture, formulate, and represent the policy interests of its members and its internal organizational capacity—

gives it a powerful platform from which to engage with the provincial government and to act as a representative of the social economy in Québec internationally.

Le Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome
The Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA) is the designated intermediary for organizations and groups in Québec that engage in autonomous community action, namely the leading networks and associations representing the 4,000 autonomous community action agencies across the province that lead the struggle for greater social inclusion, equality, social justice, antiglobalization, and diversity (Elson & Rogers, 2010; Réseau québécoise de l'action communautaire autonome, 2013).

The RQ-ACA has one primary source of funding: a core operating grant from the provincial Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action. This funding supports three full-time staff members and a provincial office in Montreal. It also provides the capacity for advocacy work across multiple ministries without fear of financial retribution (interview respondent qc2, 2009). The RQ-ACA closely monitors funding for autonomous community action across 22 provincial ministries.

Policy positions must be explicitly consistent with the values of the organization and are approved by members at the annual general meeting, either individually or as part of the approval of the annual action plan. Subsequently, when policy positions are taken, they are ratified by the board of directors and presented to policy makers by the RQ-ACA president or the designated representative (interview respondent qc2, 2009).

The strength of the RQ-ACA lies in its commitment to social justice and democratic action both in the affairs of the association and Québec society at large. While the RQ-ACA may be seen as a thorn in the side of some government officials and more economy-centred organizations, it consistently speaks for, and represents, the community voice of a wide spectrum of grassroots organizations collectively committed to achieving social justice and greater equality, inclusion, and diversity in the province of Québec.

New Brunswick
There is no designated nonprofit policy network in New Brunswick. The network that does exist operates under the auspices of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (2011) is a crown agency mandated under the Economic and Social Inclusion Act to reduce income poverty by 25 percent and deep income poverty by 50 percent by 2015. The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation is charged with making significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion.

With the creation of the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities in 2012, New Brunswick aligned both its internal departmental structure and its nonprofit sector administrative lead with the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (interview respondent nb1, 2013). The minister for Healthy and Inclusive Communities is also the co-chair of the board of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation. The approval of a social enterprise policy framework for the province (Advisory Committee on Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds & Corporation, 2012) is a recent manifestation of this mandate. Twelve regional Community Inclusion Networks throughout the province provide a policy venue for nonprofit engagement, together with a broad range of other community, nonprofit, and business representatives.

Nova Scotia
The launch of the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia in December 2012 was the culmination of more than two years hard work by key nonprofit sector organizations to align the council and its policies and put it on a better footing with the provincial government (Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia, 2014; Phoenix Youth Services & FOCO, 2012). Like the Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations, the Community Sector Council in Nova Scotia focuses on labour force issues and is a member of the provincial Association of Industry Sector Councils, the purpose of which is to address skills development and human resources (HR) issues (Department of Labour and Advanced Education, 2014). The Ministry of Labour and Advanced Education, under which labour force issues reside, is also the government's administrative lead for provincial government relations with the nonprofit sector.

As a new and developing policy network, the Community Sector Council is focused internally on governance and operational systems and structures and externally on education (e.g., HR management), promoting a collective sector, identifying collective networks, and creating effective partnerships. The Community Sector Council blends network development and training, leaving the question of memberships to a later date (interview respondent ns1, 2015), as did the Ontario Nonprofit Network. In addition to social media, online resources, and regional forums, the Community Sector Council hosts an annual conference (Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia, 2015).

Regional conveners
The Community Sector Council, hosted by a well-established nonprofit organization, has contacted individuals to act as regional conveners in six regions throughout the province. In addition to board members, the conveners act as a key conduit from the regions to the central office. It appears that this unique arrangement has been mutually beneficial, giving the host organization insights into developments across their own and other regions (interview respondent ns1, 2015). This formal, centralized structure (Type I) formalizes nonprofit sector and regional convener connections within the provincial network.

Policy engagement
As a new voice for the nonprofit sector there is no lack of policy issues of interest to the Community Sector Council. Multiyear funding, employee benefits and pensions, contract reporting mechanisms, and impact measurement are some of the policy issues that have come to the fore. Care has been taken to brief members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) on Community Sector Council activities and there is consistent and regular contact with ministers and deputy ministers (interview respondent ns1, 2015).

Newfoundland and Labrador
The Community Sector Council, established in 1976, has played a leading role as both a nonprofit network and policy advocate in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Community Sector Council most often advocates for the nonprofit sector's contribution to poverty reduction, volunteerism, and community sustainability (Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador, 2014). While the Community Sector Council provides training, facilitation, and network building for and with sector and community leaders in a wide variety of areas, it also acts as a conduit for student placements and online access to news, resources, and programs.

Networks fostered by the Community Sector Council do not have a reporting or representative relationship. An example of this informal consultative relationship (Type IV, informal and centralized) is the establishment of a "pulse panel" of community leaders who agree to be surveyed online regarding policy issues on a quarterly basis. This development of a more systematic survey approach followed the completion of a number of periodic surveys of trends and issues (Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador, 2014).

For its part, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador appointed the first provincial minister in Canada to be responsible for the nonprofit sector in 2007. A Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat (VNPS) now operates as a subset of the Office of Public Engagement (2015). While the policy currency and staffing levels of the secretariat have varied considerably over time, three provincial summits have been held (in 2010, 2012, and 2014)—initially to formulate a "roadmap" for action, and later to take the pulse of the sector, including the role of social enterprise (interview respondent nl1, 2014; Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat, 2013).

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT POLICY NETWORKS

More formal network governance structures appear to exist in Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Québec (see Table 3). Each has a centralized governance structure at multiple levels up to and including cabinet ministers. There is a vetting process to ensure that policies are implemented and programs are consistent with these policies, going as far, as is the case in New Brunswick and Québec, as to have multiple sectors actively engaged in the policy process (Elson, 2014).

Table 3: Comparative network structures (nonprofit/government [GOV])

Province	Type I (formal, centralized)		Type II (formal, clustered)		Type III (informal, clustered)		Type IV (informal, centralized)	
BC						VOCBC/ Board Voice/ Volunteer BC	GOV	
AB			GOV	CCVO/ ECVO/ Volunteer Alberta				
SK					GOV	SNP/ SaskSport/ SaskCulture/ SPRA		
MB	GOV							MFNPO
ON	GOV	ONN						
QC	GOV	Chantier/ RQ-ACA						
NB					GOV	Community Inclusion Committees		
NS		CSC-NS					GOV	
NL							GOV	CSC-NL

A less formal, yet centralized policy network governance structure was found in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador (see Table 3). In these cases there is a centralized policy focus and a responsible ministry. In Nova Scotia, for example, there is a small and dedicated voluntary sector component within the Ministry

of Labour and Advanced Education; and there are also significant initiatives underway through the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (Elson, 2014). This governance structure is reflected in Table 3.

In Alberta and Saskatchewan, the governance structure is less formal and occurs in multiple ministries. In Alberta, Alberta Culture plays an active role, as does Human Services, in some way dividing the sector into expressive and instrumental organizations respectively. However, one would be hard pressed to find a singular focus for nonprofit sector policy either within the government as a whole, or in one particular ministry. In Saskatchewan the expressive side of the nonprofit sector policy file (sport, culture, and recreation) is addressed by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport and the instrumental (service delivery) side is addressed through the Ministries of Education and Social Services (Elson, 2014).

Where network governance is more formal and centralized (Type I), a different picture emerges. The first observation concerns where in the bureaucracy this centralization occurs. In Manitoba, Ontario, and Québec this centralization occurs within a crosscutting ministry (Housing and Community Development in Manitoba; the cabinet in Ontario; and a partnership of two central ministries—the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire and the Ministère et de l'Économie—in Québec). The Ministry of Housing and Community Development in Manitoba has consolidated its centralized position by leading a crosscutting nonprofit sector funding reform initiative, and is the designated lead on nonprofit sector policy (Frankel & Levasseur, 2015, forthcoming; interview respondent mb1, 2013). In Ontario, the cabinet serves as a vetting and allocation point on nonprofit sector strategies while in Québec, the newly minted Social Economy Law centralizes the coordination and implementation of nonprofit sector (read: social economy) policy (Gouvernement du Québec, 2013; interview respondent, 2013).

DISCUSSION

The evolution of nonprofit sector-government relations at the provincial level in Canada is undergoing a remarkable wave of change. Some of this change has been driven by the mutual recognition of a substantial and hidden relationship brought to light, in part, by the 2005 National Survey of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations.[5] In other cases, provincial issues of poverty, unemployment, fiscal austerity, and an uncoordinated and under resourced service delivery system have brought the two sectors to the policy table.

The burgeoning sectoral policy relationship that developed relatively simultaneously across multiple provinces was based on a number of common issues. Some of these issues, particularly those related to funding, human resources, capacity building, and volunteer management, were profiled in reports related to the Voluntary Sector Initiative (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2009; Social Development Canada, 2004). The fact that these issues existed was not new to either the nonprofit sector or provincial governments. The national survey helped to elevate nonprofit policies from anecdotal stories to system governance issues; particularly when placed in the context of the dominant role Canadian nonprofit sector organizations play in the co-production of human services (Vaillancourt, 2009).

Complementing this development, an informal (Type IV, informal and centralized) policy network, the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks (2012) was established in 2002. Monthly teleconferences have been held among network members approximately every 18 months since 2008, and a national "gathering of counterparts" (nonprofit and provincial government representatives) was also held (Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks, 2008).

Another characteristic of the third wave of policy dialogue has been the emergence of formal bilateral policy networks designed to address crosscutting issues. This was the case in British Columbia's GNPI and is currently the case for the ANVSI in Alberta. An informal version of a government-sponsored bilateral policy network (non-exclusive) exists in Saskatchewan through Regional Intersectoral Committees and in New Brunswick with the Community Inclusion Committees established by the Economic and Social Inclusion Agency (2011) (Human Services Integration Forum, 2010). Other provinces have seen the emergence of a more centralized policy network structure, independent of government, where a policy network creates either formal—Ontario, ONN; Québec, Chantier/ RQ-ACA; Nova Scotia, Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia—or informal—Manitoba, MFNPO; Newfoundland and Labrador, Community Sector Council of Newfoundland and Labrador—centralized structures.

The ONN could be easily classified as a Type IV structure (informal, centralized), and it is adamant about maintaining its flexible cluster structure. However, as the ONN has matured as an organization and fostered regional networks, more routinized processes to vet policy positions and network developments have been put in place, signalling the transition to a Type I (centralized, formal) structure. This Type I structure will likely provide a balance between the ONN's desired level of flexibility and accountability as an expanding policy network.

In other provinces there is a clustered or decentralized policy network structure due to the existence of multiple nonprofit policy networks. In the case of British Columbia, the VOCBC, Board Voice, and Volunteer BC maintain an informal liaison that is due more to informal interactions between key actors than a formal strategy. In Alberta, the level of liaison and systematic policy coordination among the CCVO, the ECVO, and Volunteer Alberta is frequent and consistent enough to reflect a more structured and formalized relationship than one sees in British Columbia. The Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP) is emergent, much like the ONN was in Ontario in 2006–2007. While at this point, the SNP is dedicated to an inclusive and flexible network model, the long-standing and dedicated policy networks represented by SaskSport, Sask Culture, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association cannot be ignored (Gidluck, forthcoming). Over time, the SNP could become more centralized (Type IV), or establish more formal connections with sister policy networks (Type II).

The existence of individual or collective nonprofit sector representation, while necessary for a sustainable policy dialogue to be established, is not sufficient. Political will on the part of governments is also required, and this willingness appears to be tied to the alignment of the nonprofit sector to poverty reduction, community economic development, service delivery, and to a lesser extent, volunteerism (Elson, 2011). The neoliberal contract culture that took hold in Canada in the mid-1990s, displacing citizenship-based project funding during a time of massive deficits at the federal and provincial level, has not been significantly modified with either the establishment of inter-sectoral partnership agreements or variances in economic conditions (Elson, 2011b).

Comparative analysis

Table 3 provides some preliminary results concerning the comparative policy network structures within provinces. In Ontario and Québec similarly formal and centralized structures exist (Type I). Manitoba and Nova Scotia share centralized policy structure characteristics, while differing in the level of formality within those structures. Alberta's nonprofit policy network structure (formal and clustered) shares characteristics with the formal and clustered structure within the provincial government, particularly with the new configuration of the ANVSI (interview respondent ab1, ab2, 2015). New Brunswick and Saskatchewan share a similar structure (informal, clustered), both inside government and in the nonprofit sector, as does Newfoundland and Labrador (informal, centralized). In British Columbia there is a common informal structure inside government and the nonprofit sector, the difference being that a degree of centralization exists in the provincial government that is absent in the nonprofit sector.

It is beyond the scope of this article to systematically address all the reasons why each of these nonprofit networks have emerged and the forms they have chosen. While no means exhaustive, here are four common elements associated with network development observed over seven years of interviews (2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015) and ongoing monitoring of nonprofit-provincial government relationships. First, a critical mass of lead organizations, and individuals from those organizations who see themselves as network and sector (as distinct from organization) builders, and are prepared to invest time and resources in building a sector-wide network. Second, there is a catalytic event that galvanizes and mobilizes both the network leaders and the nonprofit sector as a whole. This event provides both the opportunity for a conversation that transcends individual organizations and the rational to invest in a sustainable network. Otherwise, less formal network structures are either still emergent (Saskatchewan), or operate within provincial government program networks (New Brunswick).

Third, there are few nonprofit network structures that have emerged fully formed. Most networks have undergone an emergent experimental phase in which a prototype network structure has failed to sustain itself, existed only as long as government funding was available, or required substantive changes. Fourth, lessons learned from this experimental phase, together with a willingness to "try again" and a better understanding of how similar networks have or have not worked in other parts of the country, has resulted in the development of a second, more sustainable network prototype. These four factors pertain to the development of the network itself. If the network is working to establish itself in a climate where a provincial government is explicitly supportive of the nonprofit sector, then this will certainly make a difference, not necessarily to the existence of the network, but likely to its pace of development and long-term policy impact.

Policy outcomes

What then of the policy outcomes associated with nonprofit networks outlined above? Examples include networks in Alberta (CCVO), Manitoba (MFNPO), Ontario (ONN), and Nova Scotia (CSC-NS) that have each made progress on a number of labour market strategies. Québec (RQ-ACA/Fédération des Femmes du Québec) has established a multiemployer pension plan for the sector and the ONN is advocating for one. Subsequent to the Calgary flood in 2013, the CCVO has taken the lead on sector-related emergency preparedness. The ONN has attained pre-public nonprofit access to the surplus public land registry and to the provincial vendor of record program; and in Manitoba a multiyear funding, and simplified application and reporting pilot program has been introduced and evaluated. Thus the four provinces with organized, formal, and well-resourced networks, Alberta, Ontario, Québec, and Nova Scotia, have also made important inroads in advocating for and achieving tangible policy outcomes. While less formally structured, the Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations and the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador have each made some important policy contributions, thus giving a voice to the sector in their respective province. The policy outcomes associated with the numerous nonprofit networks in British Columbia are difficult to identify and it is still too early to assign any policy outcomes to the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership.

CONCLUSION

There is considerable value in examining the network governance structures within nonprofit policy networks as well as their corresponding provincial governments. Nonprofit sector-government relations do not neatly fit into aligned ministries such as agriculture or tourism, and thus for any substantive policy outcomes there should be a deliberate "placement" of nonprofit sector policy within the overall governance structure. Where and how this policy portfolio is placed says a great deal about the value and status of this file. The more formal governance structures in the governments of Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Québec are tied to clear policy goals and oversight by the highest levels of government, including the cabinet office.

The policy network structures within the nonprofit sector across Canada are centralized where there is a dominant nonprofit policy network and clustered where there are multiple policy networks with dedicated sectoral interests. The degree of formality in the network structures appears to be a reflection of both the maturation of the policy network (emergent or established) and how a lead nonprofit policy network operates in relation to other nonprofit networks. Regardless of the structure of the nonprofit or provincial government policy network, two conclusions can be drawn. First, no configuration isolates one sector from the other, and second, there is a greater degree of compatibility between the nonprofit and government policy network structures than one might expect. Clearly this is an avenue of exploration that would benefit from further investigation and analysis. It is hoped that this research is a meaningful contribution to this area of investigation and to government and nonprofit partners dedicated to furthering their policy relationship for the benefit of Canadians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)
Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier)
Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC-NL)
Community Sector Council-Nova Scotia (CSC-NS)
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)
Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations (MFNPO)
Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN)
Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA)
Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership (SNP)
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA)
Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia (VOCBC)
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA)

NOTES

1. There was a Minister of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers (Hon. Jenny Kwan) in British Columbia between 1999 and 2001, but this position was terminated, as were many sector-focused initiatives, when the provincial Liberals defeated the New Democratic Party in 2001.
2. Saskatchewan also has a significant bilateral relationship with its sport, culture, and recreation community, as these three sub-sectors collectively manage the provincial lottery scheme.
3. Deputy minister standing committees are another example of a network structure.

4. Policy alignment is defined here as the degree to which the configuration of policy interests within government are horizontally (i.e., centralized to clustered) and structurally (i.e., formal to informal) coordinated. In the context of network governance, policy alignment with an administrative lead would be the network goal, requiring, if it is going to be effective, ongoing monitoring, moderately high goal consensus, and a high level of operational competency in operating as a network.
5. The National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) was the first-ever, large-scale survey of nonprofit and voluntary organizations in Canada. The survey provided detailed data on the size and scope of the voluntary sector in Canada, including types of organizations, what they do, their budgets, and numbers of paid staff and volunteers. The survey also helped clarify the needs and challenges facing the sector by providing data on organizations' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses.

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Administrators of Volunteer Resources of BC, http://www.avrbc.com/
Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, http://www.albertaecotrust.com/
Alberta Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Initiative, http://culture.alberta.ca/community/albertas-voluntary-sector/nonprofit-voluntary-sector-initiative/
Alliance of Manitoba Sector Councils, http://www.amsc.mb.ca/
Association of Alberta Agricultural Societies, http://www.albertaagsocieties.ca/
BC Bid, http://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/open.dll/welcome?language=En
Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, http://www.calgarycvo.org/
Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI), http://www.cci.ualberta.ca/
Centre for Social Innovation, http://socialinnovation.ca/
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, http://www.ecvo.ca/
Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations, http://www.mfnpo.org/
Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic (ReSDA), http://yukonresearch.yukoncollege.yk.ca/resda/
SaskCulture, http://www.saskculture.ca/
Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA), http://www.spra.sk.ca/
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Cultivating Alliances: The Local Organic Food Co-ops Network

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ABSTRACT

Although social movements can lose their way in neoliberal times, building alliances can help them to leverage their strengths and overcome their weaknesses, thus avoiding co-optation and "mission drift." One example of this strategy can be found within the co-operative movement: the Local Organic Food Co-ops Network in Ontario. A pilot study of six co-operatives in this organization reveals that they cultivate alliances in four ways: among member co-ops, through the creation of the network, with other types of organizations, and with other social movements. These alliances strengthen the co-operative movement, help to make the politics of alternative food systems work, influence the economy toward co-operation, and open up possibilities for establishing and maintaining a more sustainable food system.

RÉSUMÉ

Les mouvements sociaux, bien qu'ils puissent s'égarer à l'ère du néolibéralisme, peuvent établir des alliances afin de profiter de leurs atouts et surmonter leurs faiblesses, évitant ainsi la cooptation ou les déviations. On retrouve un exemple de cette stratégie d'alliance dans le cadre du mouvement coopératif en Ontario : The Local Organic Food Co-ops Network. Une étude pilote de six coopératives faisant partie de cette organisation révèle que celles-ci créent des alliances de quatre manières différentes : entre coopératives membres, grâce à la création du réseau même, avec d'autres types d'organisation et avec d'autres mouvements sociaux. Ces alliances renforcent le mouvement coopératif, aident à faire fonctionner les systèmes d'alimentation alternative, encouragent la collaboration économique et contribuent à établir et maintenir un système d'alimentation plus durable.

Keywords / Mots clés Alliance; Co-operative movement; Local Organic Food Co-ops Network; Social movement; Sustainable food system / Alliance; Mouvement coopératif; Local Organic Food Co-ops Network; Mouvement social; Système d'alimentation durable

CULTIVATING ALLIANCES: THE LOCAL ORGANIC FOOD CO-OPS NETWORK

Many social movements have opposed the depredations of neoliberalism, but some of them could be considered ineffectual or even co-opted—caught in the narrowing of the "politics of the possible" (Guthman, 2008, p. 1180) that characterizes the neoliberal project. To overcome this problem, some movements have formed alliances in order to leverage their strengths while overcoming their weaknesses. Using a political economy framework, this article will present findings from a recent pilot study of the Local Organic Food Co-ops (LOFC) Network (2013) in Ontario, Canada. It will begin by looking at social movements, and then briefly discuss the co-operative movement, before describing the study and presenting the findings. Analysis of the data from the field research revealed that by cultivating alliances, the LOFC Network, although small in comparison to the overall food expenditures in the province, is creating a potent form of social, economic, and environmental sustainability that promotes participation, democracy, and sharing, supports a collaborative economy, and protects ecological integrity.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

A social movement can be understood as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity" (Diani, 1992, p. 13). Social movements are generally divided into two types: the so-called "old social movements," composed of organized labour, and the "new social movements," such as the environmental movement, the peace movement, and women's movements. While the old social movements are class based, practice recognized strategies, such as strikes and working to rule, and get involved in organized politics, the new social movements (NSMs) are more issue specific, cut across class lines, employ a wide variety of unconventional tactics, and operate more outside the realm of organized politics (McCarthy, 2000).

NSMs emerge from the near-dissolution of traditional politics. They contain the double prospect of autonomy and consolidation, but also the possibility of descent into sectarianism and political impotence. Should they take root locally and develop strong cords of political connectedness, they may turn out to be the one force capable of cracking the mould of corporate globalization (Ratner, 1997, pp. 275–276).

Corinne Gendron, Véronique Bisaillon, and Ana Isabel Otero Rance (2009) have refined the concept of NSMs by proposing new economic social movements—a new generation of social movements that focuses primarily on the economic sphere and influences the economy toward political or social ends. For example, some social movements engage in "buycotting" strategies, which are "based not only on the education and awareness of consumers but also on measures of traceability and labelling" (p. 72). By doing so, they argue, these movements pressure businesses on a sociopolitical level by using the economic status of the consumer or the investor, thus redefining, re-politicizing, and re-socializing economic transactions.

Social movements of every kind have a long history of resistance and change. From the labour movement through the movements associated with women, civil rights, the environment, and peace to the gay rights movement, antiglobalization movement, and new social economic movements, people have been acting collectively to challenge repressive laws and mores. While not all social movements are progressive (e.g., the white supremacist movement), the large majority ascribes to emancipatory values and seeks a more sustainable world.

The progressive orientation of social movements has been seriously challenged by the rise of neoliberalism, a theory of political-economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by the

maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms, supported by an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2006). By seeking to bring all human action into the domain of the market, neoliberalism promotes a disembedded market economy that has entailed a great deal of what Joseph Schumpeter (1994) referred to as "creative destruction"—the process of industrial mutation that constantly destroys and creates the economic structure. According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism involves the creative destruction

> not only of prior institutional frameworks and powers (even challenging traditional forms of state sovereignty) but also of divisions of labour, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life and thought, reproductive activities, attachments to the land and habits of the heart. (p. 3)

Another example of this creative destruction is the co-optation of social movement visions of sustainability. In his study of the politics of co-optation, David Campbell (2001) sees co-optation as an ongoing process. He quotes Kenneth Dolbeare and Murray Edelman (1985), who provide a description of the policy dynamics that typically result when protest leaders challenge the status quo:

> When the [co-optation] process has run its course, some new policies have been instituted, the basic complaints against the system have been reduced, the establishment has absorbed new members, and the system has acquired new defenders. The basic outlines of the system have again survived. (p. 508)

The co-optation of social movements can result in what McMurtry (2010) refers to as mission drift. For example, liberal feminism ignores the transformative change that drove the feminist movement by merely aiming to include women in the existing status quo. Demutualization strikes to the heart of the co-operative movement as some co-ops bend to the pressures of the neoliberal market and change into shareholder-based businesses. Fair Trade USA, for example, weakens the fair trade movement by breaking away from the global parent organization (Fairtrade International), setting up on its own, and certifying large-scale plantations. Organic twinkies negate the ethic of the organic pioneers who believed in healthy soils, plants, animals, people, and communities, not an organic version of an infamous junk food. These are all examples of the co-optation of social movements under the relentless onslaught of neoliberalism. Given the potential for co-optation, what options do social movements have?

To begin with, it is important to recognize that all social movements have both strengths and weaknesses. For example, women's movements have done much to improve the status of women around the world, but have been dominated by white, middle-class activists who have been accused of neocolonialism by women in developing countries (see, for example, Day, 2008). The labour movement has brought enormous benefit to the lives of working people, but has often ignored the environment, associating environmental protection with the loss of jobs (see, for example, Sawchuk, 2009). In an era of unrelenting neoliberalism, social movements must learn to leverage their strengths in new ways and overcome their weaknesses by forming alliances (Sumner, McMurtry, & Renglich, 2014). We can find an inspiring example within the co-operative movement.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND THE LOCAL ORGANIC FOOD CO-OPS NETWORK

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (ICA, 2015). As

democratic, member-owned, and member-operated organizations whose defining feature is membership control, co-operatives aim to meet the membership's economic and social needs (McMurtry, 2010).

Over time, individual co-operatives have coalesced into a social movement with global reach, spurred by the principle of cooperation among co-operatives, formalized in 1966, but dating back to the Rochdale Pioneers' grand vision of a co-operative commonwealth (Quarter, 1992). The co-operative movement, like other social movements, has long been involved in resistance and change. Born out of unfair treatment of consumers in Rochdale, England, more than 150 years ago, it spread around the world, with the movement now found in over 65 countries and made up of co-ops that serve the needs of consumers, producers, and workers (ICA, 2015).

While the co-operative movement can be found in most areas of human endeavour, it is particularly prevalent within the realm of food. Indeed, alternative food systems feature co-operatives at almost every level of development, and in fact they are often initiated by co-ops. Further, co-operatives themselves emerge as a distinct form of business with the first formal co-operative in Rochdale having as its motivation quality food—namely unadulterated grain—for its members, which the emerging industrial and capitalist food system in England was loath to ensure. From these humble beginnings, the co-operative movement has been, and continues to be, uniquely placed to feature centrally in any alternative food system focused on a sustainable future.

For this reason, the co-operative movement can be understood in terms of Gendron et al.'s (2009) new social economic movements. While it may not be new, the co-operative movement uses economic forms of social pressure. For example, cooperation among co-operatives (the sixth co-operative principle) can be understood as a form of buycott—deliberately choosing to buy from other co-ops instead of non-co-ops. By operating in the economic sphere, the co-operative movement contributes to a redefinition, re-politicization, and re-socialization of economic transactions.

In common with all social movements, the co-operative movement exhibits both strengths and weaknesses. As a social economic movement, its strengths include a united voice in the market, a democratic platform for decision-making, and a collective approach to problem solving. One of its weaknesses is its lack of formal commitment to the environment: none of the seven co-operative principles address this vital aspect of human life. In an age characterized by climate destabilization, soil degradation, and water scarcity—much of it the result of neoliberal policies—the co-operative movement's insufficient engagement with the environment needs to be directly addressed.

One group of co-operatives, however, has been leveraging its strengths while overcoming its weaknesses by forging a novel suite of alliances. The Local Organic Food Co-ops (LOFC) Network (2013) is a coalition of co-operatives that specialize in locally and sustainably produced food in the province of Ontario. From an initial group of 18 co-ops in 2010, the LOFC Network now includes over 75 active co-ops and is still growing. It is housed and supported by the Ontario Natural Food Co-op, an organization that brings to market natural, organic, and local foods and products—all within a co-operative framework (ONFC, 2015). The purpose of the LOFC Network reflects its status as part of a social economic movement: to educate about and advocate for local and organic agriculture and food co-ops; to facilitate and support the growth of existing co-ops; and to connect and scale toward regional food processing and distribution hubs (LOFC Network, 2013). In spite of the variety of organizational models within the network—farmer-owned, eater-owned, worker-owned, and multistakeholder—all the co-ops within the network have six common characteristics:

1. Bringing local farmers and eaters closer together;
2. Growing and supplying fresh, healthy food locally;
3. Keeping money in the community;
4. Trading fairly, whether domestically or internationally;
5. Saving energy, building the soil, and protecting water; and
6. Celebrating good food, culture, and community (LOFC Network, 2013).

Unlike the ruthlessly competitive neoliberal market, the LOFC Network shares information and creates a platform for collaboration and cooperation in the realm of food—all with the aim of establishing a sustainable food system.

THE STUDY

This article is based on a pilot study of the LOFC Network that was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Institutional Grant administered through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto (UT). It involved semi-structured interviews of seven people involved in six co-ops (Garden City Food Co-operative, Eat Local Sudbury, On the Move Organics, the Mustard Seed Co-op, the Karma Project, and Karma Co-op), plus the animator of the LOFC Network, Hannah Renglich. Five interviews were conducted face-to-face and three by telephone, using a set of open-ended questions, with each interview lasting approximately one hour. Participants were suggested by the animator and represent a mix of old and new member co-ops from around the province. While this sampling strategy is not necessarily representative of all the co-ops in the LOFC Network, it provides a rich picture of the possibilities inherent in the network, while laying the groundwork for a larger study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The co-operatives in the LOFC Network cultivate alliances in four main ways: among member co-ops, through the creation of the network, with other types of organizations, and with other social movements.

Cultivating alliances among co-ops
For over a century, co-operatives have been encouraged to follow the sixth principle of co-operation, "cooperation among co-operatives." Within the LOFC, this cooperation takes many forms, including sharing resources, initiating relationships, mentoring, actively supporting one another, and participating in the evolution of the network and systems-level network projects.

One of the most common ways in which participating co-operatives are collaborating is by sharing resources and initiating relationships. This has been particularly important for newer co-ops as they begin their journey, because it allows them to avoid common pitfalls and find inspiration from the work of others. For example, two people involved in the creation of one of the co-ops visited over 35 other co-ops, within and beyond the network, and read every piece of information circulated by other member co-ops and the network's animator before opening a storefront.

Another form of co-operation among co-operatives is mentoring. While it might be assumed that older co-ops would mentor newer co-ops through their initial phases, in reality many of the relationships between co-ops in the LOFC Network are actually predicated upon a form of "mutual mentorship." As co-ops grow and develop they are experiencing and overcoming challenges, such as expansion, member engagement, business planning and strategic development, and sourcing from the local supply chain. Co-ops at all levels of development are offering one another insights into these and other areas through peer-to-peer workshops, skill and information sharing, and

open lines of communication. At an annual assembly, co-ops host and attend sessions on sourcing, governance, environmental sustainability, and member engagement, among a plethora of other topics. This collaborative sharing, in which no particular co-op has all of the solutions and the learning is co-created, is inherently democratic and an integral part of being a co-op.

This resource sharing and mentorship often goes beyond passive communication and involves active participation and engagement. In a very salient example, an established member co-op was nearly at the point of closing its doors when it reached out to the other members of the network for assistance. Co-ops at all stages of development—some were not even officially opened at the time—came together and offered support and resources that were instrumental in keeping this co-op in business. Nearly every interviewee discussed it as a primary example of how co-ops in this movement are working to support one another. Other co-ops have helped one another to develop promotional videos in order to receive funding, and actively share supplier lists and business information. These relationships highlight some of the strengths of the co-operative model, where co-ops not only support one another but actively work together.

The most overarching way in which co-ops work together in this alliance has been the creation of the network itself, which was formed as a response to a request to build a support system for cooperatives. Today, the collaborative relationships between co-ops inform the ongoing creation and evolution of the Network's role and identity. For example, regional relationships between co-operatives have made it clear there is a need and desire for regional distribution networks that would allow smaller co-ops to combine their purchasing and transportation power to support local growers. These networks would also make inter-regional trade of products possible, such as accessing beef from northern Ontario and produce from southwestern Ontario. With this in mind, the LOFC Network, through the Ontario Natural Food Co-op (ONFC), applied for and received a grant for 2014/2015 from the Local Food Fund to determine the viability of regional food hubs in the four areas represented by the True North Community Co-op (far north), Eat Local Sudbury (northern Ontario), On the Move Organics (southwestern Ontario), and the Ottawa Valley Food Co-op (eastern Ontario). This new approach to eating locally adds the dimensions of eating well and justly, closer to home, which will be discussed more in-depth later in the article.

As the number of co-ops continues to increase, they are facing challenges, such as runaway growth, disputes over the source of organic products, tensions between building the business and paying employees fairly, and inadequate locations. The network was developed to help them address such problems.

Cultivating alliances through creating a network

Following the sixth principle, co-ops can band together in what Lynn M. Harter (2004) refers to as "nets of collective action" (p. 96). These co-operative support organizations help their "constituent cooperatives survive by effectively consolidating resources in order to better intersect with organizations in a larger bureaucratic system" (Harter & Krone, 2001, p. 249). Alliances take on different forms, such as federations, value chains, and—the focus of this article—networks.

In general, networks can be understood as a collection of relationships that connect groups and can both impose restraints that limit options and provide resources (Johnson, 2000). Charles Levkoe (in press) contends that networks can increase the success of social movements through not only alliance building, but also the diffusion of ideas and practices, more sustained levels of activity, and more desirable, legitimate, and democratic forms of political organization. In addition, he sees networks as sites for sharing and exchanging ideas, identities, and frames, thus contributing to a more generalized discourse and practice. In sum, he maintains, networks are central

to developing solidarity across sectors, scales, and places and for engaging in social and/or political action—all factors that make social movements successful.

Within the co-operative movement, a network manifests as a group of co-operatives that work together without establishing a lead co-op (unlike a federation, which involves a lead co-operative owned by a group of co-operatives, such as Federated Co-operatives Limited and La Coop fédérée, or the umbrella organizations, known as apex organizations, such as the Ontario Co-operative Association and Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada). The LOFC Network was created so that both established and new co-operatives could work together to address their needs. In 2009, the Ontario Co-operative Association hosted a meeting in Toronto to bring together a number of new co-operatives with three established co-operatives to encourage information sharing and potential collaboration. The meeting had four objectives (Christianson, 2009). First, it aimed to help foster and maintain connections between co-operatives working in the areas of local and organic food and to provide sources of support for their work. Second, it planned to develop a strategy that would help co-ops grow by allowing them to share experiences and knowledge with each other. Third, it wanted to learn how the co-op model was working in various communities, and how it could share those experiences with other communities across Ontario that are also interested in developing local organic food co-operatives. Fourth, it wished to provide board governance training and technical assistance. As a result of a follow-up meeting in 2010, the Local Organic Food Co-ops initiative was born, and was to be housed and supported by the Ontario Natural Food Co-op (ONFC); the term "network" was added at a third assembly of the involved co-ops in 2011. The ONFC then hired Hannah Renglich, who has an MA in Natural Resources and Peace and a background in food security organizations, as the first network animator. Her job was to coordinate and develop all areas related to the network, as well as its relationship to the ONFC. Under her guidance, the network came to recognize the importance of alliances for survival in a competitive market:

> Through the sharing of information and exploration of innovations in food-based social enterprise, the co-ops are co-creating the network as a platform for internal strengthening and province-wide collaboration. (LOFC Network, 2013)

The network is made up of over 75 co-operatives of all types: producer, consumer, worker, and multistakeholder. Although several are located in the northern part of the province, most can be found across southern Ontario, from Windsor to Ottawa. Some, such as Karma Co-op and the Big Carrot, have been active for decades, while others, such as the Garden City Food Co-operative and the Mustard Seed Co-op, are just beginning. Overall, this network of food and farming co-ops works toward "a co-operative and sustainable food system by strengthening the food co-op movement in Ontario" (LOFC Network, 2013). Analysis of the interview data shows how the network contributes to economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and to an alternative food system that is more sustainable than the current industrial food system.

In terms of economic sustainability, the network helps new co-ops get started and established co-ops survive. In both cases, the sharing of knowledge and information allows co-ops to receive constructive feedback and advice, make better choices, learn from others, and avoid reinventing the wheel when it came to running a business. One participant emphasized the importance of having successful co-operative food-related businesses spread across the province that all share similar ethical principles and act as nodal points for the distribution and redistribution of local organic food. Another participant stated, "I don't know if we'd be here if it wasn't for the Network. … I've learned lots about what it means to be [a] co-op from the Network. How to run meetings, ideas for AGMs … I just feel like we've learned everything about being a food co-op from the Network, and from other co-ops, and you know, [starting a co-op] is something that would be impossible to do without any support from outside."

In terms of social sustainability, the network gives individual co-ops credibility in the eyes of the public. It also helps those co-ops broadcast their mission and let people know what they are doing, especially when the network animator participates in community meetings and helps to connect the community to the co-ops. The existence of the network, both symbolically and as a group of people who share similar values, contributes greatly to the sense that there is a "community of food practice" (Friedmann, 2012, p. 27) in local organic food co-ops. Several co-ops stated that the network provides both moral and practical support, a sense of "being a part of something larger," and a feeling of solidarity. These social aspects of the network are often the impetus to continue working through challenges. In addition, the culture of sharing that infuses the network allows member co-ops to share very practical tools, such as business plans, human resources (HR) lists, contracts, supplier lists, and information about equipment costs. As one participant stated, "[B]ecause it's a co-op network, it's amazing how much people share information differently than through a normal business network. There's just not nearly "… the [same] competition or protecting of your intellectual property."

The co-ops also include aspects of social sustainability in their day-to-day operations, such as providing living wages for employees, supporting local producers, engaging volunteers, providing education through workshops, classes, advertising, and events, and offering community spaces such as kitchens. Several interviewees discussed how their co-op had become a place for people to meet each other and build community. Thanks in part to the network, the co-op model is also being used to transition some food businesses into community-owned endeavours; as the animator shared, "It's an interesting process for a community to suddenly have a business open all of its books to them, and welcome them in as decision makers and investors and participants." While it is not unique to only food co-ops, transitioning to a co-op will allow these businesses to continue to play important roles in their communities, without relying on a single proprietor to carry the workload.

In terms of environmental sustainability, the culture of sharing spreads to environmentally friendly initiatives, such as buying from and with other local co-ops and strengthening the local economy and local farmers. The network also creates a space to share concerns about the environment and climate change, with a section on the website dedicated to environmental sustainability. In addition, it helps forefront environmental issues by circulating articles on such topics as conservation, environmental stewardship, neonicotinoids, and the impact of chemicals on the environment. Co-ops share information on how to become a zero-waste store, and how to establish an "environmental scorecard" to communicate to members and customers their goals and progress in achieving environmental sustainability goals. By joining up like-minded activists in the ecological arena, the network also gives members the support and strength to move forward and fulfill their mission, especially in the area of more local food procurement. In this regard, every co-op in the network sets purchasing priorities and defines and prioritizes local food depending on its particular context and mission. However, all the co-ops interviewed discussed the importance of "local," meaning they had a direct relationship with their producers and suppliers built on trust and similar ethical principles. While not every member co-op stocks strictly certified organic produce, they all aspire toward organic principles through ensuring that producers and suppliers have an "ecological ethic of care" in their work. Notwithstanding the tensions around the conventionalization of organic agriculture and organic certification issues (see Sumner, 2015; Sumner & Llewelyn, 2011), being part of a network reinforces the good intentions associated with this ethic of care because the members share knowledge, provide support, and make it economically feasible to act ethically.

The LOFC Network also contributes to building and maintaining an alternative to the global corporate food system. To begin with, the network offers a fundamentally different way of looking at food and then weaves the co-

operatives together "so that the province is a quilt of amazing food system work and partnership." This is reinforced by building shared knowledge and skills for a sustainable food system, hosting conferences and workshops to bring together ideas about sustainable food systems, and making people aware of what is happening elsewhere in terms of smaller scale, alternative, or non-industrial, non-centrally controlled food enterprises.

The network also helps co-ops learn the practicalities of feeding a population sustainably. It is in a unique position to develop a co-operative distribution system that trades provincially, nationally, and internationally while still adhering to co-operative values. It can link member co-ops to markets that value what they are producing and grow more opportunities by connecting different markets and people. In addition, through communication, resource sharing, and trade opportunities, the network enables small-scale, sustainable, local, organic food co-ops to compete in a system that is structured to favour huge multinationals, and to avoid ending up as "siloed operators fighting on multiple fronts."

And finally, the network represents a manifestation of food sovereignty, which focuses on the right of peoples and governments to determine their own agriculture systems, food markets, environments, and modes of production (Koç, Sumner, & Winson, 2012). In effect, the network provides space for people to overcome the alienation from food that is reinforced by the global corporate food system and to learn to (re-)engage with food in meaningful ways while creating a sense of community among members and the public. One interviewee described what she was gaining through the network and through being involved in a co-op as learning and practicing the skills required to create a better world—skills such as democratic practices, consensus building, the logistics of sourcing locally, and community engagement. While she expressed feeling challenged at times by trying to run a business within the constraints of a capitalist economic system, she felt that the co-op model and the support provided through the network allowed her to participate in a business that is more aligned with her values, and through which community could be created and supported.

Cultivating alliances with other organizations

The co-operatives that make up the LOFC Network have also forged alliances with other organizations. For example, the network has built an alliance with Sustain Ontario, an umbrella organization that focuses on a food system that is healthy, ecological, equitable, and financially viable—all aspects of sustainability. Membership is open to a range of groups, food enterprises (businesses and farms), and the public sector, and encompasses such diverse organizations as Afri-Can FoodBasket, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Chathum-Kent Public Health Unit, the Ecological Farmers of Ontario, and the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council. This alliance has helped the LOFC Network leverage its position as a newcomer in the realm of local food, allowing it to achieve greater visibility and support transformative change in the food system. The LOFC Network has also received moral and in-kind support from the Ontario Cooperative Association, Food Secure Canada, Co-ops and Mutuals Canada, and the Organic Council of Ontario, among others. Attendees at the 2015 annual assembly included supporters from FarmStart and the National Farmers Union. Additionally, the network recently teamed up with the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and the Greenbelt Farmers Market Network to offer a workshop in "High Bionutrient Crop Production," which provided valuable learning for farmer members and those interested in learning about ecological agriculture. Finally, the network is connected to academic groups, such as the Canadian Association for Studies in Cooperation, the Canadian Association for Food Studies, and the Nourishing Communities Research Group. These alliances connect the network to broader food-systems-level work and create opportunities for the network's role to be documented and shared with others.

Cultivating alliances with other social movements

The co-operatives in the LOFC Network cultivate deep alliances with two other social movements, both of which work toward various forms of sustainability: the organic movement and the local food movement.

In his authoritative text, Philip Conford (2001) dated the start of the organic movement from 1926, based on a confluence of events and initiatives occurring in inter-war Britain and continental Europe. Then, as now, the organic movement arose in reaction to the industrialization, marginalization, and destruction of rural as well as urban landscapes (Fromartz, 2006). The impetus for what coalesced into the organic movement came not simply from farmers but also from those working with the downstream impacts of the industrialization of agriculture, whether in deteriorating public health, soil infertility and pest outbreaks, livestock disease epidemics, rural community disintegration, or environmental degradation. In spite of the dubious politics associated with some members (see Reed, 2001), what unified these organic pioneers was the shared perception that soil, crop, livestock, and human health, as well as family and community health, were integrally and functionally related.

The organic movement spread in earnest after World War II. Bolstered by the back-to-the-land movement in the 1960s, it grew in strength and numbers to include a wider range of movement players: chefs, restaurateurs, nutritionists, green entrepreneurs, farming associations, back-to-the-landers, disaffected conventional farmers, conservationists, environmentalists, academics, and co-operatives—all focused on organic food. Today, it has become an international movement dedicated not only to resisting the industrialization of food and agriculture but also to providing a model of alternative ways of eating and living, and to highlighting the social, ecological, and economic goods and services organic agriculture provides (Lynch, Sumner, & Martin, 2014). Today's organic movement has been critiqued on a range of issues, including gender bias (Sumner & Llewelyn, 2011), lack of commitment to social sustainability (Shreck, Getz, & Feenstra, 2006) and co-optation (Jaffee & Howard, 2009), but it continues to evolve and mature. This maturation is reflected in the many strands within the movement, such as those who follow agro-ecological approaches, non-organic but environmentally concerned farmers (e.g., Practical Farmers of Iowa), and followers of holistic resource management. The success of the movement is illustrated by the rise of "greenwashing" and questionable forms of "sustainable agriculture" that try to capitalize on the growing market in organics.

One strength of the organic movement is its attention to environmental sustainability. Its weakness lies in its lack of social parameters, in spite of the efforts by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) to encourage them. For example, Patricia Allen and Carolyn Sachs (1993) have argued for forms of organic certification that take into account the social conditions of farm workers. This highlights, among other things, that food could be grown that was strictly organic, but produced using slave labour. An alliance with the co-operative movement bolsters the environmental credentials of co-ops, while providing the missing social sustainability to the organic movement. For example, analysis of the data from the study reveals concern for fair wages and safe working conditions, as well as adherence to the co-operative principles of democratic decision-making and an ethic of co-operation, not exploitation. Another criticism of organic agriculture is that the organic standards can be technically applied without an accompanying paradigm shift to farming as an ecological practice. When this happens, organic products and practices can merely be substituted for conventional synthetic chemicals and practices, resulting in, for example, giant monocrops of organic lettuce requiring massive inputs from offsite sources. The interviews revealed that co-ops in the LOFC Network approach this issue by establishing direct, trusting relationships with producers, with the understanding that an "ecological ethic of care" will be applied throughout their farming practices.

The second alliance the co-operatives in the LOFC Network have forged with other social movements involves the local food movement. This relatively new movement has been defined as "a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies—one[s] in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption [are] integrated to enhance the economic, environmental, and local health of a particular place" (Feenstra, 2002, p. 100). Made up of a loose coalition of individuals, groups, and organizations that promote local food production and self-sufficiency, the local food movement is expressed in ongoing projects, such as farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, urban agriculture, farm-to-school meals, and local food festivals.

The local food movement emerged as a form of resistance to the entrenchment of the global corporate food system and its "faceless, placeless food that is shrink-wrapped in the sterile confines of the supermarket aisle" (Sumner & Wever, in press). A study by the Canadian Co-operative Association found that there were approximately 2,300 local food initiatives in Canada, with 24 umbrella organizations supporting and promoting these initiatives and over 200 co-operatives involved with local food (CCA, 2009). As the movement expands, the pressures to scale-up increase—with all the possibilities and problems such a move would entail (see Mount, 2012).

To complicate matters, the word "local" is highly contested, meaning anything from the surrounding community (Selfa & Qazi, 2005), to one hundred miles (Smith & McKinnon, 2007), a three-hour drive (Pollan, 2006), a foodshed (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996), or a province (CELA, 2013). As Laura DeLind (2010) notes, the very amorphousness of the term has attracted an odd assortment of adherents to the local food movement: survivalists, environmentalists, artisans, union labour, and both the healthy and the unhealthy. The result is a term that has become easy to swallow and serves the status quo, thus "losing track of its own self-reflexive, and often contradictory and embodied nature … [and] much of its potential for system resilience" (p. 275). Not surprisingly, this contested term is both a strength and a weakness of the movement.

The strength of the local food movement is its dedication to raising awareness about local food, local farmers, and the local economy, all of which have been bypassed by the global corporate food system. Its weakness has been summed up in a seminal concept developed by Branden Born and Mark Purcell (2006) called the local trap. In essence, they argue that scale is a social construct, so there is nothing inherent about any scale; that is, local is not automatically more sustainable or more just than any other scale. As a result, scale is not an end in itself, but a strategy based on the agenda of those who are empowered by the scale.

Many champions of local food have touted its presumed merits, from increased sustainability to greater social justice. These empty claims can only be substantiated when local food is backed by an agenda based on a set of values that promote sustainability or social justice. That agenda can come from the co-operative movement, with its prescribed values and seven co-operative principles. Analysis of the data from the study reveals that members operated from an agenda that included democratic decision-making, education and outreach, an ethic of co-operation, and a deep concern for community—a prime example of how alliances can help to overcome social movement weaknesses. The local food movement, in turn, can bolster the co-operative movement's weakness in the area of the environment by reducing the distance food travels from field to fork (called "food miles") and reinforcing its economic and social commitments to community.

CONCLUSION

The Local Organic Food Co-ops Network exemplifies some of the synergies that a social economic movement such as the co-operative movement can achieve by cultivating alliances—among co-ops, through creating a network,

with other types of organizations, and by way of other social movements—all for the purpose of increasing sustainability in a world that is becoming increasingly unsustainable. These four main ways of cultivating alliances help the co-operatives in the LOFC Network to leverage their strengths while addressing their weaknesses. David Goodman, Melanie Dupuis, and Michael Goodman (2014) maintain that such alliances—between groups with different interests but some overlapping agendas—make the politics of alternative food systems work. If these politics are focused on increasing sustainability, then the possibilities for establishing and maintaining a more sustainable food system open up. Although this pilot study only dealt with a small number of the co-ops in the LOFC Network, the rich picture of alliance building they provided clearly indicates a viable strategy for social economic movements to pursue in search of social change, particularly in the economic sphere.

Are there any key features inherent in co-operatives that allow them to create successful alliances and that other social movements could learn from? In his study of co-operative movements in developing countries, Patrick Develtere (1993) posited a social movement triad—three components of all social movements that help them realize their objectives. The first component of the triad is the movement's ideology or vision, which outlines a desirable society based on a set of particular values and how to achieve it. The second component is the movement's praxis or action, which "embodies the spontaneity of all social movements and is responsible for the mobilization and participation of the membership base" (p. 182). The third component involves the development of an organizational structure, however minimal. According to Develtere (1993), each component interacts dialectically with the others to create, in the best scenario, a balanced and simultaneous involvement of the three forces—otherwise the movement loses strength, cohesion, and legitimacy.

Develtere's (1993) social movement triad can be fruitfully applied to a social economic movement such as the co-operative movement, including the LOFC Network. First, in terms of ideology or vision, the co-operative values and the seven principles provide a moral touchstone for building alliances. Second, in terms of praxis or action, the amount of inter-cooperation among co-operatives is a working model that is based in alliances. Third, in terms of organization, the forms of incorporation and the organizational structures of co-operatives are collective and democratic by nature and encourage alliance making. These three components of co-operatives have allowed them to create successful alliances for many years and thus support a social economic movement such as the co-operative movement. For the LOFC Network, cultivating alliances reinforces its strengths while addressing some of its weaknesses, resulting in a more powerful potential to broaden the politics of the possible, influence the economy toward co-operation, and normalize a sustainable food system.

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Big Carrot, http://thebigcarrot.ca/home/
Canadian Association for Food Studies, http://cafs.landfood.ubc.ca/en/
Canadian Association for Studies in Cooperation, http://www.coopresearch.coop/
Chathum-Kent Public Health Unit, http://ckphu.com/
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Federated Co-operatives Limited, https://www.coopconnection.ca/wps/portal/fclretail/FCLInternet/AboutUs/FCL/
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Book Review

By Rachel Laforest

Globalization and Food Sovereignty: Global and Local Change in the New Politics of Food. *Edited by Peter Andrée, Jeffrey Ayres, Michael J. Bosia, & Marie-Josée Massicotte.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2014. 392 pp. ISBN 9781442612280.

Globalization and Food Sovereignty looks at how individuals and communities are coming together to resist and transform globalized food regimes. Drawing on a number of case studies, the book successfully discusses and analyzes how the concept of food sovereignty is utilized by multiple actors as an organizing principle in order to gain power and authority within the global food regime. Coherently structured, the book moves from theoretical analysis to solid empirical research. The work clearly fits into the tradition of political economy with an emphasis on how capitalism has intensified and expanded the industrial model of agriculture. This book is aptly timed against the backdrop of the growing global food crisis, when new theoretical alternatives are needed.

The book is divided into three coherent sections. Part 1, "Food Sovereignty in Theory and Policy Debates," examines the concept of food sovereignty. It explores the tensions and contradictions inherent in a globalized neoliberal food system. In Chapter 2, "The Territory of Self-Determination: Social Reproduction, Agro-Ecology, and the Role of the State," Michael Menser effectively articulates the link between democracy and expressions of food sovereignty. In Chapter 3—one of the most provocative chapters in the book—"Exploring the Limits of Fair Trade: The Local Food Movement in the Context of Late Capitalism," Noah Zerbe uses a "moral economy" lens to compare the transformative potential of the global fair trade movement to that of the local food movement, arguing that the local food movement can only have limited impact within a very globalized capitalist agri-food system without broader social justice, oppositional, and transformative considerations in mind. Rather, Zerbe contends that successful food movements aim to actually oppose and transform the system instead of trying to work within it. In Chapter 4, "Local Food: Food Sovereignty or Myth of Alternative Consumer Sovereignty?" Martha McMahon also emphasizes that alternative movements that tend to adopt an individualist and consumer-focused discourse, as opposed to a more radical agrarian citizenship-based discourse, are unable to tackle the challenges created by the system. In each of these chapters, the truly innovative insight comes from the proposed theoretical framework that extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the state to recognize the role that social networks can play as spaces of democracy.

Part 2, "Food Sovereignty in Comparative Perspective," embraces empirical evidence of how the neoliberalization of food and agriculture is transforming practices on the ground. The case studies begin to unravel the complexity and tensions embedded in the movements mobilizing to gain power and authority over food systems. The emphasis in Part 2 is on how different actors engage in food sovereignty. In Chapter 5, on "citizen farmers," Peter Andrée examines more closely alternative food networks in Australia, one of the most liberalized agricultural sectors.

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Although he observes that farmers are market driven because they are embedded and structured by neoliberal norms, he still believes this movement of change can lead to first steps toward the transformation of the system. In Chapter 6, "From Food Security to Food Sovereignty in Canada: Resistance and Authority in the Context," Sarah J. Martin and Peter Andrée examine how the food sovereignty movement has gained power and authority around food governance. Contrary to other chapters, their analysis focuses on the discourse of food sovereignty and the frames that are being used by food security organizations in Canada. Chapter 7, on farmer-led sustainable agriculture in the Philippines by Sarah Wright, describes the tensions inherent in the struggle for food sovereignty. While incomes and health outcomes have improved in that country, Wright argues, the reality on the ground is that farmers have tended to adopt more conventional forms of agriculture. The breadth and diversity of case studies in Part 2, from Australia to Eastern Europe to the Philippines, demonstrates how the lens of food sovereignty can help us understand how farmers and consumers challenge neoliberal agricultural policy.

Part 3, "Food Sovereignty in Contentious Politics," provides additional case studies, this time focusing on social movements and how they strategize around food sovereignty via direct action tactics. The analysis in Part 3 looks at more localized forms of resistance. In Chapter 9, Marie-Josée Massicotte examines from a feminist perspective the strategies of the La Via Campesina (International Peasant Movement) farmers' movements in Brazil. She paints a positive picture of the food sovereignty movement by illustrating that peasant farmers in Brazil have been able to improve their conditions and reclaim their rights through their resistance efforts. In a similar vein, in Chapter 10, "Food Sovereignty, Trade Rules, and the Struggle to Know the Origins of Food," Elizabeth Smythe discusses how food labelling can be used as a mechanism to protect local systems from market forces and the global food regime. Finally, Chapter 11, "Food Sovereignty as Localized Resistance to Globalization in France and the United States" by Jeffrey Ayres and Michael J. Bosia, connects food sovereignty to the alter-globalization movement and the broader movement to "think globally, act locally." It provides a historical overview of how the movement of food sovereignty and its philosophies have evolved over time.

Overall this is a rich collection of solid critical theoretical perspectives and empirical cases that invites us to think about how collective action is being transformed as a result of the globalization of food systems. What is clear from the debates, which are vividly illustrated through numerous case studies from the Philippines to the European Union, is that the tensions inherent in trying to change local food paradigms within a neoliberal globalized food system are complex and challenging.

As the editors of the book note in the introduction, food sovereignty is "a central issue that cuts across social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological domains" (p. 12). This book will be of interest for readers from a diversity of backgrounds, from undergraduate and graduate students to practitioners. Food politics has implications for a number of policy issues such as improving health outcomes, reducing environmental impacts, increasing social justice, and economic development. Those interested in the growing literature on the new wave of emergent social movements contesting traditional forms of authority will find the theoretical insight particularly extensive. The only downside of the book is the detail inherent in a case study approach, which can be overwhelming at times and distract from the central arguments of the book. Nevertheless, I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in understanding how power dynamics are changing and transforming within our globalized food system.

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Book Review
By Mumtaz Derya Tarhan

Co-operatives in a Post-Growth Era: Creating Co-operative Economics. *Edited by Sonja Novkovic & Tom Webb*. Zed Books/Fernwood Publishing: London, UK/Halifax, NS, 2014. 312 pp. ISBN 9781783600779.

Co-operatives in a Post-Growth Era features a collection of articles that call for a new economy where the "growth-at-any-cost" doctrine of neoclassical economics is replaced with co-operation for the sake of all people and our planet. The book is an outcome of the *Imagine 2012: International Conference on Co-operative Economics* that took place in October 2012 in Québec City, Canada, one of the events marking the UN's International Year of Co-operatives. The editors of the book, Sonja Novkovic[1] and Tom Webb,[2] are pioneers and leading figures in the field of co-operative economics both in Canada and internationally.

In their introduction to the book, Novkovic and Webb distinguish co-operative enterprises from investor-owned businesses based on four key elements: (1) the purpose of the business (meeting the needs of communities and people versus maximizing return-on-investment); (2) values (co-operation, solidarity, reciprocity, and trust versus greed and competition); (3) principles (common ownership and collective decision-making versus centralized ownership and decision-making); and (4) founding ethics centred on fairness or social justice (genuine concern for human well-being and ecological sustainability versus economic return at the expense of all else). Accordingly, and fuelled by the four key elements identified above, they set out to answer the following question: is there a co-operative advantage in addressing the ill-doings of the neoclassical economic doctrine at the macro level *and* in doing business at the micro level? The book's 14 chapters, presented in two parts, are brought together with the goal of answering this question. Part 1 is entitled "What is the New Economy and Why Do We Need It?" and Part 2, "Co-operatives and the New Economy." Each part comprises seven concise and well-researched chapters, written by some of the world's leading scholars on co-operative economics.

Part 1's chapters aim at debunking neoclassical perspectives on the economy in order to make the case for a new, "post-growth economy." Contributors, in turn, argue that neoclassical attitudes to wealth (Manfred Max Neef, William Rees, Peter Victor, John Fullerton) and prosperity (Neva Goodwin, Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett) uphold the "growth-at-any-cost" economic doctrine, which has not only resulted in financial and economic crises on a global scale, but also in converging ecological, social, and humanitarian crises for the first time in human history. As a solution, contributors to Part 1 advocate for the transition of the global economy into a post-growth era, where the unceasing pursuit of short-term economic benefits is subdued to the well-being of human beings and the planet.

Part 2 focuses exclusively on the co-operative business model and its potential role in spearheading a transition toward a new economy that could address the converging crises caused by the growth-at-any-cost doctrine of

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neoclassical economics. Part 2 includes both theoretical and empirical work dedicated to exploring the co-operative advantage in five main areas: economic productivity (Morris Altman, Vera Zamagni, Stephan Smith & Jonathan Rothbaum, Claudia Sanchez-Bajo), resilience during times of economic turmoil (Sanchez-Bajo, Altman, Smith & Rothbaum), enhancing human health and well-being (David Erdal), reclaiming the commons (Barbara Allen), and cultivating a paradigm shift that is necessary for a transition toward a post-growth economy (Stefano Zamagni).

Based on the arguments from Part 2, Novkovic and Webb conclude that the four key elements of the co-operative business model provide co-operatives the edge to succeed in a highly competitive market *and* the tools to lead the economic and ideological shift necessary for addressing the greatest converging crises in human history. While all seven articles in Part 2 are well argued and concisely written, they are all supportive articles by co-operative advocates. Here the book could have been enriched by incorporating some illustrative neoclassical or Marxist perspectives critical of co-operatives to remind readers of the ongoing debates in economic theory and to strengthen the case for co-operative economics by putting it to the test of contending views. Given, however, the overly critical view of co-operatives proffered by neoclassical and some Marxist economic literatures, the editors can be forgiven for contributing a much-needed counterargument in strong support of not only co-operative firms but, most evocatively, for a broader co-operative economy.

As for a game plan in transitioning to a more co-operative economy, Novkovic and Webb call on co-operatives to enlarge their share in the total economy through solidarity building, both among themselves and with other social and economic networks that support co-operative values. While the editors are very optimistic about the role co-operatives can play in the transition to a post-growth economy, they rightly remind readers that co-operatives operate within the highly competitive capitalistic economy, where they are subjected to pressures of co-optation. They warn co-operatives to not compromise from their collective values and practices in the face of such pressures; after all, as Novkovic and Webb contend, it is those very values and practices that provide co-operatives with the competitive edge to succeed in a highly competitive market.

Prior to making a statement of such ambition, the book could have benefitted from further elaboration into the theory and practice of "co-operative economics." If, for instance, "co-operative economics" intends to replace the neoclassical *approach* to capitalism instead of capitalism *itself*, capitalistic social relations could end up being reproduced, if under a more "human" guise. This is due to the fact that co-operatives, in and of themselves, may not eliminate or even challenge the root causes of our converging crises: the unfettered extraction of surplus labour and natural resources inherent in capitalism. Moreover, as Novkovic and Webb themselves point out, co-operatives may mimic the practices of hierarchical enterprises due to capitalistic market pressures. Therefore, an increase in the number of co-operative enterprises would not wholly address our converging crises; only a new economic system based on co-operative values can. However, as it stands, it is unclear if the book proposes "co-operative economics" as an alternative economic system based on co-operative values or as a method of increasing the share of co-operative enterprises within the global capitalistic economy.

Nevertheless, the book goes a long way in building on and contributing to a rich body of literature on co-operatives that focuses on their economic productivity and resilience (i.e., Birchall & Hammond-Ketilson, 2009; Logue & Yates, 2005), human well-being (i.e., Erdal, 2011; Restakis, 2010), and how they can potentially spearhead an ideological and practical transition toward a more equitable and ecologically sustainable society more broadly (i.e., de Peuter & Dyer-Witheford, 2010; Parker, Cheney, Fournier, & Land, 2014). Thus, the unique and perhaps most valuable contribution of this book is its focus on co-operatives' potential for taking a leading role in the economic and ideological transition necessary for addressing the greatest converging crises in human history.

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Overall, despite its minor shortcomings, *Co-operatives in a Post-Growth Era: Creating Co-operative Economics* communicates in a successful and accessible manner how co-operatives can play a significant role in the development of a more collaborative, compassionate, and ecologically harmonious way of collective living. It is an intellectually stimulating and inspiring resource that I would recommend to scholars, students at all levels, and the general public alike.

NOTES

1. Sonja Novkovic is the co-director of the Co-operative Management Education Programme at St. Mary's University and the chair of the International Co-operative Alliance Research Committee.

2. Tom Webb is an adjunct professor at Saint Mary's University School of Business and a co-operative practitioner with over 25 years of experience.

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