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EDITORIAL / ÉDITORIAL

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As the winter unfolds over the next few months, the editorial team of ANSER-J is pleased to present this 2nd issue of its 7th volume. The current issue offers analysis on various topics of potential interest to a wide range of researchers, students, and community members: community support for carers in the labour market in Quebec, community economic development in the Atlantic provinces, strategies for locating credit unions, relationships between governments and the nonprofit sector, and permaculture in communities, urban villages, and ecovillages.

We would remind our readers that we always welcome articles, in French and English, on our preferred themes: the third sector, the social economy, nonprofits and charities, collective enterprises, social and cooperative movements, and community organizations. We encourage in particular the submission in French of reviews, analytical texts on current practices, and research articles from any geographical source, in order that we may enrich the French-language content of the Journal.

We are also considering the possibility as editors of publishing thematic issues coordinated by guest editors. The purpose of doing so would be to create a space for cross-cultural exchanges (between

Au moment où l'hiver s'installe pour les quelques mois à venir, l'équipe éditoriale de la Revue est heureuse de vous présenter ce 2ème numéro de son 7ème volume. Celui-ci vous offre des analyses sur divers thèmes d'actualité : le soutien communautaire aux proches aidants insérés sur le marché du travail au Québec, le développement économique communautaire dans les provinces de l'Atlantique, les stratégies de localisation des coopératives de crédit, les rapports entre gouvernement et secteur sans but lucratif, la permaculture des communautés, villages urbains et écovillages.

Rappelons que nous accueillons toujours des articles, en français et en anglais, portant sur nos thèmes de prédilection : le tiers secteur, les entreprises collectives, les mouvements sociaux et coopératif, les organismes communautaires. Nous encourageons en particulier la soumission de recensions, de textes d'analyse sur les pratiques ou d'articles de recherche, de toute provenance, ceci afin d'enrichir le contenu francophone de la Revue. Avis aux intéressé.es!

Nous envisageons aussi la possibilité de publier des numéros thématiques coordonnés par des éditeurs ou éditrices invités. Il s'agira de présenter des regards croisés permettant de déverrouiller les discours parfois

Francophones and Anglophones certainly, but also between other cultures, identities, and regions) focusing on issues of importance and opening these issues up for discussion and debate. We always encourage pieces of a critical character, but these thematic issues would feature a critical engagement of a type that would, we hope, nourish debates on content, ideas, and methods within our fields.

Happy New Year to you all!

cantonnés dans un des deux champs linguistiques et culturels du Canada et d'ouvrir ainsi la discussion et les débats. Le caractère critique formerait le cœur de ce projet, nourrissant ainsi des débats sur les contenus, les idées et les méthodes.

Bonne et heureuse année à tous et à toutes!

QUESTIONING NEOENDOGENEITY: CASES OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE FROM ATLANTIC CANADA

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Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

ABSTRACT

Neoendogenous approaches to community economic development have risen to prominence in recent years. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has described such approaches as nothing less than "the new rural paradigm." But is this paradigm reflected in practice? This research examines the community economic development landscape—from the perspectives of federal and provincial funders to that of community-based groups—through two Atlantic Canadian case studies (Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Montague, Prince Edward Island). Governmental funders are found to prioritize economic and business development objectives above social, cultural, and community-oriented ones. These preferences shape the types of projects that are funded and the community groups that propel them, undermining the adoption of truly neoendogenous, community-driven practices.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans les dernières années, les approches néo-endogènes envers le développement économique communautaire ont cru en importance. L'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OECD) a décrit ces approches comme entraînant ni plus ni moins qu'un « nouveau paradigme rural ». Mais la pratique reflète-t-elle ce paradigme? Cette étude examine le contexte pour le développement communautaire économique—du point de vue des subventionneurs fédéraux et provinciaux et de celui des groupes communautaires—au moyen de deux études de cas menées dans deux villes des provinces de l'Atlantique (c'est-à-dire Marystown, Terre-Neuve et Labrador, et Montague, Île-du-Prince-Édouard). Il se trouve que les subventionneurs gouvernementaux donnent la priorité aux objectifs de développement économique et commercial aux dépens des objectifs sociaux, culturels et communautaires. Cette priorité a un impact sur les types de projets subventionnés et sur les groupes communautaires qui les appuient, entravant ainsi l'adoption de pratiques véritablement néo-endogènes dans les communautés.

KEYWORDS / MOTS CLÉS : Atlantic Canada; Community development; Economic development; Neoendogenous development; New rural paradigm / Canada atlantique; Développement communautaire; Développement économique; Développement néo-endogène; Nouveau paradigme rural

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Community economic development in Atlantic Canada is small 'c,' big 'E,' and small 'd.'
—Personal interview, project officer, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Anonymous, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades a new paradigm for rural development has emerged—one that rejects aspatial, "top-down" industrial and sectoral development policies in favour of place-based, multi-sectoral, integrated development where communities and community-based actors have a strong role to play (Ambrosio-Albala & Bastiaensen, 2010; Ellis & Biggs, 2001; OECD, 2006, 2015, 2016; Shucksmith, 2010). This approach demands participatory development and explicitly values spatial planning, social attributes, cultural amenities, and the environment (Cabus & Vanhaverbeke, 2003; Ray, 2001; Ward Atterton, Kim, Lowe, Phillipson, & Thompson, 2005). It is an approach that recognizes something that community development practitioners have long argued: top-down development approaches "range from being weak to being outright failures since their policies and programs have not emerged out of the very fabric of the affected region" (Johnson, Hodgett, & Royle, 2007, p. 28). In essence, meaningful community development requires the transformation of fundamental *relations of power* within a community, which is no small feat.

A host of scholarship has set out to theorize, describe, and analyze this "new rural paradigm," which is sometimes also referred to as "neo-endogenous development" (Ray, 1999, 2001). This article contributes to this body of literature by examining the community economic development landscape in two rural communities—Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Montague, Prince Edward Island. It explores the relationship between local development groups and their government funders, including their operating environment; the pressures and constraints they face; the goals and values they wish to pursue; and the development objectives they prioritize. In doing so, relations of power that are so central to the local and community-based participatory intentions of the "new rural paradigm" are explored. This work is grounded in historical institutionalism with particular attention paid to the political economy of scale. Specifically it describes a situation where the structure of governmental funding places a heavy emphasis on economic and business development over community development. In this environment, projects focused on the latter are subsumed by priorities defined by governmental funding bodies, thus potentially placing constraints on truly endogenous forms of development.

This article is organized into four parts. First, the study is situated within the community economic development literature. This is followed by a description of the methods and theoretical framework. Next, the two community case studies are presented and finally, conclusions and recommendations for further study are offered.

EMPHASIZING THE COMMUNITY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The impetus to bring communities into economic development has come from many places. In Atlantic Canada, the Antigonish movement was highly formative in the 1930s in forwarding a system of cooperative economic institutions that were community led (Dodaro & Pluta, 2012). In the 1960s, the rise of community power and social justice movements challenged established development practices (Harding, 1996, 2009; Magill & Clark, 1975). It has also arisen from practices incorporated from the "developing" world, where the community scale is central due to the underdevelopment of state institutions (Pieterse, 1998; Stiglitz, 2002). It has been borne along with critique of technocratic and top-down forms of public administration—critiques that have been bolstered by increasing demands for more democratic and place-based policy making (Bradford, 2005).

Though there are diverse variants of community economic development (e.g., those who view economic success as a requirement for social well-being, in contrast to those who place poverty reduction and social exclusion as their focal point), common among them is a focus on *endogenous* development, where "genuine development is generated in a bottom up fashion, fuelled by the organization and mobilization of local communities" (Johnson, Hogett, & Royle, 2007, p. 48). This is a fundamental basis for what the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2006) has called the "new rural paradigm" and more recently the "Rural Policy 3.0"(OECD, 2016). In contrast, *exogenous* models focus on either bringing *in* the institutional factors required to create market-based opportunities (referred to as a state-led technocratic approach) or view growth as being *led by* dynamic centres to the exclusion of peripheral locales wherein a market-led (neoliberal) policy agenda is prescribed. Both of these exogenous takes on underdevelopment view the basic problem as a shortage of private-sector investment. Thus, supportive policies aim at lowering the cost of investment and supporting the labour market (in terms of competitive wages, supply, and skill set).

Neoendogenous variants of community economic development fundamentally entail changing "relations of domination" or reorienting power and agency to the local level (Bridger & Luloff, 1999, p. 380). Such approaches are replete with such phrases as "devolution of decision-making authority to the local level" (Gibbs, 1994, pp. 106–107), "increased community self-reliance" (Rees & Roseland, 1991, p. 17), and "localizing economic production and commerce" (Ernest Yanarella & Richard Levine quoted in Bridger & Luloff, 1999, p. 382). The literature in this area is diverse and variously describes the necessity for community resiliency, sustainability, agency, and capacity across *economic, sociocultural, and environmental* realms. This community-based case study suggests however that governmental funders—who are so instrumental in shaping local development priorities—do not treat these domains equally. While the language of "bottom-up development," community "resiliency," "capability," and "leadership" can be found in government policy documents (e.g., Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013, p. 6; Government of Prince Edward Island, 2010, pp. 13, 15, 16), it is important to question whether this is in fact just "fashionable rhetoric," as Alan Barr (1995) has described in the Scottish experience. In attempting to unpack these different approaches, is it important to pay attention to "that way in which change is promoted who is promoting it, what legacy is expected to be left in communities and the extent to which communities may own that process and the outcome of change" (Noya, Clarence, & Craig, 2009, p. 28). This study takes this approach by focusing on experiences of community economic practice through case studies grounded in local institutions, context, history, and experiences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

This project focuses on the meso-level—bridging the macro or national/provincial and micro or community levels. This work is grounded in historical institutionalism as a way to understand the institutional strategies and policies adopted in the case study communities (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; March & Olsen, 1989, 1995, 2006; Steinmo, 2001; Steinmo & Thelen, 1992; Thelen, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003). This framework emphasizes that institutions structure responses to socioeconomic change; that socioeconomic and cultural contexts are key to understanding actor behaviour and outcomes; and that historical processes shape present institutional configurations and socioeconomic contexts. This approach—with its emphasis on institutions, context, and history—offers a bridge between actor-centric and state-centric interpretations. This research also draws on the political economy of scale literature that explores how the scalar organization of political and economic life under capitalism is socially produced and periodically transformed (Brenner, 1998; Smith, 1993; Swyngedouw, 1997). Such attention helps to understand the relationships between local groups and their provincial and federal funders and the logics that carry and reproduce them.

This research entailed a case study of two rural communities: Marystown, Newfoundland, and Montague, PEI. The case studies included: i) a review of regional and community economic development theory and literature; ii) analysis of primary and secondary documents and grey literature (e.g., newspaper articles, including local community papers and blog posts about rural and community development); and iii) 23 semi-structured interviews with community leaders, government officials (federal, provincial, and municipal), community-based organizations, business owners, and academics in the field. These are not mutually exclusive groups—some business owners are also community leaders and involved in managing community-based organizations. To offer further breakdown: 10 federal and provincial government officials were interviewed (including those in regional offices); 11 members of community-based groups were interviewed; and 2 academics. The term community-based group is used here to account for a broader array of groups beyond nonprofits and charitable institutions, such as local chambers of commerce that forward local development projects (often in tandem with others). Field interviews were conducted between September 2012 and March 2013. Participants were identified and approached based on non-probability key informant and snowball sampling. Together, the document and interview analysis were used to map emerging strategies for community and economic development. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and participants had the ability to choose an anonymous and non-attributed interview or an attributed interview for which all published attributions would be cleared with the interviewee in advance through written consent.

The two case study communities were chosen by using 2006 Statistics Canada Census data to filter out characteristics/variables (e.g., population change, population density, industry composition) at two levels of geography (larger Census Districts and smaller Census Subdivisions) with consideration given to proximity to larger centres, industry composition, and local government organization. The primary rationale for this process was to reduce bias in case selection. A second consideration was to choose communities with differing industrial composition and a large enough population to have a robust local community development landscape.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this work. This research captures perspectives of community-based organizations and the governmental authorities that structure funding by focusing on but two communities in Atlantic Canada. While the trends evident in these cases are reinforced by other research on the voluntary sector and community-based organizations in Canada, the generalizability of these cases to Atlantic Canada is limited due to the specific community characteristics and dynamics of each place.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
RURAL ATLANTIC CANADA: CASE STUDIES

What does the institutional landscape of community economic development (CED) look like on the ground? How do community actors experience CED and how do they interact with other levels of government? What shapes the kinds of projects they pursue and how they work with each other? These are the questions that have propelled this research. Among the community groups interviewed, governments (both federal and provincial) were key partners in the development process, both in terms of the structure of funding and the expertise that they bring to bear. Emphasizing this point, in a 2009 program review of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) (2009) work in community development, program stakeholders reported, "without ACOA as a committed partner in community development projects, it would be virtually impossible to attract funding from other partners" (p. 3). But of course, this is because government agencies such as ACOA provide key resources to the sector. As such, the ways that they structure programs shapes the agenda of groups at the local level.

Over the duration of fieldwork for this project (2012–2014) the relationship between government funders and community groups was in flux. Funding was increasingly structured for smaller amounts with requirements for matching funds both from other levels of government and the groups themselves. Community economic development projects now require robust business models, clear evidence of long-term sustainability, and heightened reporting requirements. Government funding bodies want to see that the projects they fund are robust and successful. However, something may be lost in the process. Several interviewees noted that the priorities of governmental funders did not match up with community priorities and that the governments involved (provincial and federal) focus disproportionately on business development over social and cultural development objectives.

This section proceeds by first discussing the institutional landscape for community economic development in both Prince Edward Island (PEI) and Newfoundland and Labrador (NFL) followed by a discussion of each case study in turn. This information is based on a literature review, review of secondary documentation (e.g., government reports), and interviews with research participants.

The institutional landscape

Early development initiatives in the Atlantic Provinces prioritized exogenous models of development. However, there has been a shift over time toward a more endogenous approach. From the 1990s onward, there has been recognition of the importance of social and human capital to development, and agencies such as ACOA have been increasingly instrumental in supporting local businesses including social enterprises. In 1999, the federal department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) released *The Community Development Handbook: A Tool to Develop Community Capacity,* which exemplifies this approach. The handbook describes the following elements as critical to community capacity: "people who are willing to be involved; skills, knowledge and abilities; wellness and community health; ability to identify and access opportunities; motivation and the wherewithal to carry out initiatives; infrastructure, supportive institutions and physical resources; leadership and the structures needed for participation; economic and financial resources; and enabling policies and systems" (HRSDC, 1999, p. 10). This research project has focused in particular on the last point—policies and systems that are embedded in institutions at multiple scales and how they enable or constrain community capacity.

The federal government has long been a major presence in rural development in the Atlantic region with ACOA at the helm—a role that is changing. ACOA faced an $18 million budget reduction over three years starting in 2012 and has since reorganized some of its programs (CBC News, 2012). ACOA eliminated funding for Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs) across Atlantic Canada, which played a major role in community capacity building (ACOA, 2009, p. ii).[1] Accordingly, it will now take a more direct role in engaging with groups for funding. ACOA's (2013, 2014) most recent reports on plans and priorities indicate that the organization is focusing on economic competitiveness, productivity, business development, and, in coordination with Infrastructure Canada, on infrastructure investment. This is a shift from some of its previous activities, including funding for social enterprise. The emphasis of this funding matters greatly where community groups are asked to match funds from other levels of government for projects. The priorities that ACOA sets have major implications for group access to provincial funds, particularly through matching grants requirements.

In terms of CED funding and support, PEI has adopted a unique model that arose out of the provincial government's *Rural Action Plan* (Government of PEI, 2010). Upon forming a new government in 2007, the Liberals articulated a policy focus on rural development and a large, province-wide community consultation strategy was undertaken. These consultations resulted in the 2010 *Rural Action Plan* and set out a strategy for

rural development, including 40 action items. The plan entailed some reorganization: three rural action centres (and two satellite ones) were created in order to bring together a variety of community economic development and business supports under one roof, and the portfolio of "rural development" was added to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (now the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development [FARD]). The plan also moved some provincial departments to rural areas to spread employment benefits across the province. It is for this reason that FARD is located in Montague. The plan promised increased resources for "effective, bottom up" community-based development in rural regions. While all provincial departments are involved in some aspect of rural development, FARD's role is to provide "a rural lens that relates to rural Prince Edward Island policies and programs across government" (personal interview, December 6, 2012). Under the report's sixth goal of supporting community development and capacity building fall a number of smaller goals: the creation of community economic development investments funds; increasing access to development funds; facilitating access to data and statistics; enabling information sharing; creating local population strategies; investing in rural infrastructure; expanding the role of municipalities in rural development; and investing in rural jobs (Government of PEI, 2010). The Community Economic Development Funds allow businesses to receive personal income tax credits for their commitment to local community investment.

In the late 1990s, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1998) announced a Strategic Social Plan (SSP). This signified a "community turn" in economic development and prioritized the bottom-up involvement of community actors, empowering them to be a part of the policy process. The strategy was, however, short-lived: implemented in 2000 and replaced in 2004, it was subsequently eliminated a year later. Nevertheless, it took a novel approach: it focused on empowering the voluntary and community sector to "pursue place-based solutions that encouraged collaborative governance" (Close, 2007, p. 1). In his assessment of the Strategic Social Plan, Close (2007) found that:

> the SSP did not realize the hopes of its proponents and designers, i.e., generate evidence-based policies and programs to produce viable communities and sustainable regions. It did, however, show that securing those objectives will require more support, financial and administrative, than the Plan received; it tested a model for regional consultation that proved to need revision, and raised interesting questions about what might be needed if government were to engage the community-based, voluntary sector in a genuinely devolved system of governance. (p. 25)

The strategic plan secretariat has come to be replaced by the work of the rural secretariat, which has been absorbed into an Office of Public Engagement of the Provincial Government. The rural secretariat has established nine regional councils that are composed of cabinet-appointed community members (not representatives of organizations) who provide advice to government and conduct some of their own research (supported by secretariat staff). There are nine such councils in the province, one of which covers the Burin Peninsula, the site of our case study. The Regional Councils could be seen as a "shade of grey": they are citizens, but are cabinet appointed. They are meant to consult with local citizens, but this consultation is in the form of reporting upward to government. The CED landscape in Newfoundland is changing yet again as the regional economic development boards have lost their provincial and federal funding. Most, such as the Schooner Regional Development Association (SRDA), are closing their doors. The evolution of the present model is not entirely clear, but regionalism and collaborative forms of governance seem to be at the forefront of present machinations.

Community case study: Montague, Prince Edward Island

Montague is a regional centre in eastern PEI. Its main industries are fishing, farming, and tourism. While the town's population is small—a mere 1,895 in 2011 (and a land area of roughly three square kilometres)—it holds a draw for surrounding areas across Kings County and its flow of traffic and amenities reflect this. It has a small main street and several larger businesses, including two grocery stores and a large hardware store. The waterfront has been developed with a marina, park, and cafe. The town has seen slight population growth over the past few years, increasing 5.16 percent between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011). However, this figure is deceiving since the functional community—those who live, work, and use the community's amenities—is much larger than the town's jurisdiction of roughly three square kilometres. Similar to many rural Atlantic communities, Montague's population is older; it has a median age of 47.2 years (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The town has a resourceful community economic development sector that has implemented some major projects. A count of the number of the number of registered non-profit organizations and charities reveals Montague to have 39 entities (including a large number of faith organizations); this stands in contrast to the second case study, Marystown, where the figure is but nine. The CED landscape in Montague faces significant challenges. Foremost is access to long-term operational funding, the recruitment of volunteers, and demands for the professionalization of the sector, trends that are echoed in a 2011 report of the Community Foundation of PEI on capacity building in the third sector.

The changes within the sector are grounded in a further overarching shift—from community development toward economic development at the community level. It is an important distinction. Governmental funding programs (provincial and federal) tend to use the term "community economic development," but the economic component looms large over other considerations. In the words of the Deputy Minister for FARD:

> We are trying to promote economic development projects and to get them to think about economic development rather than quality of life things. We have the Island Community Fund for gaps that aren't available through federal-provincial agreements. We reworked the mandate of it to focus on rural economic development. It is a struggle to get community groups to think about economic development. Its not hard for them to think about fixing community assets like fire halls and community halls. (Personal interview, Deputy Minister Richard Gallant, December 6, 2012)

Funding decisions reflect this reorientation with increasing demands for mixed revenue sources, sustainable business plans, and professional reporting and accounting practices. This means that the types of groups involved in community development are different than in the past. A member of the local Chamber of Commerce, has described the situation thus:

> No one thinks about how to develop the village into the future. In essence—community development and strategic planning is being pushed from a place where you don't usually see it: the chamber of commerce. It's more of an American idea. (Personal interview, December 10, 2013)

This issue was discussed with economic development officer Amie Swallow MacDonald who at the time worked closely with community groups to help develop and fund projects. It was reported that there is less funding focused on the development of community assets and far more focused on economic development activities than in the past. One of the town's most successful projects—Artisans on Main—illustrates this point. Artisans

on Main is a cooperative enterprise of artists that have brought vitality to the town's downtown by reclaiming unused buildings. However, the local Chamber of Commerce conceived the project. It was created as a form of place-making and street revitalization and received some municipal and provincial support and funding. It is an example of community economic development, with the Chamber of Commerce as the key institutional actor driving the process.

Throughout the interviews the issue of capacity was repeatedly raised. All interviewees commented on the capacity of community groups to carry on existing activities. One economic development officer describes the changing environment thus:

> When I look at the capacity of community groups to continue their process—we have seen a lot of change—provincial and federal funding is far less than it was. Greenwich National Park was a project worth millions and now we are struggling to get $200,000 projects. We aren't seeing as many projects. Most of the groups are trying to handle what they have. They have already developed quite a bit. I think you'll see them struggle because the capacity is not necessarily there for them to handle much more. The declining and aging of the populating has been a major challenge as well. Government and society keeps expecting groups to continue—but if you continue to cut their resources, everything is harder for them. They lost the resource of the Regional Economic Development Authorities; funding is harder to come by; the application process is more complicated; they are required to have much stronger arguments for what they do. (Personal interview, economic development officer, December 6, 2012)

Associations and authorities such as the Surrey Harbour Authority and the local Chamber of Commerce have greater capacity because they have staff and resources. But for the voluntary and non-profit sector as a whole, there are major challenges: "The capacity of volunteers is dwindling just because the population is dwindling and they are getting tired—they have been doing things for years" (Personal interview, economic development officer, December 6, 2012).

This issue is well known and FARD has worked with the Rural Action Centre to create training programs for the voluntary sector (a similar capacity building program is offered in Newfoundland and Labrador). Training topics have included how to make greater use of technology to save time, how to raise awareness, and how to effectively chair and run board meetings. This training aims to professionalize the sector. Follow-up workshops are anticipated. One rural planning officer (of FARD) who was involved in the leadership development workshops commented:

> We are losing our volunteer base and community capacity—time seems to be of the essence. We are looking at how we can get resources together and boards together to work efficiently across a variety of areas. (Personal interview, rural planning officer, FARD, December 6, 2012)

Literature on the voluntary and non-profit sector in Canada reinforces these statements. For example, Lynn Eakin and Heather Graham's 2009 report which interviewed 32 non-profits and charities found that they are under increasing strain, and that funding challenges and regulatory challenges lead to a "veritable maze that adds a huge administrative burden to already over-burdened organisations" (p. 2). A major issue raised by the report is a lack of engagement with the non-profit and charitable sector in reform processes.

Community case study: Marystown, Newfoundland and Labrador

Like Montague, Marystown is a regional centre. Its strategic location on the ice-free Bay of Mortimer has historically made it a centre for fishing and ship-building activities. Today it is a community under stress: two of the major fish processing plants in the region have closed, the groundfish fisheries have collapsed, and the local economy is transitioning toward shellfish, aquaculture, and the oil, gas, and mining sectors and support industries. It is thus a cyclical and seasonal economy. It is the regional centre of the Burin Peninsula and as such, has a range of amenities, services, and stores greater than one would expect given the population base, which was 4,181 in 2011—little changed from the previous census (Statistics Canada, 2011). Similarly to Montague, the community development landscape in Marystown is in flux. During the course of field research, the Schooner Regional Development Association (the Regional Development Association for the region) closed its doors. However, there are a number of other development associations operating in the region, such as the Placentia West Development Association (which has recently been working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to support the lobster industry) and the Fortune Bay Development Association (which is pursuing research to develop the nearby Gisborne Lake as an asset).

Community development groups in the Marystown area face the same pressures for stronger business cases and more diversified funding sources as seen in Montague. In the words of Newfoundland and Labrador Assistant Deputy Minister Bruce Gilbert, "the rural development department is now focused on business; it is not really focused on community development" (Personal interview, Bruce Gilbert, February 23, 2013). A major feature of CED in Marystown is that it takes place in an economy that is industrially focused. Accordingly, the scale and scope of projects that engage with the industrial sector tend to be larger and require land-use planning. The municipality has been critical here. Despite limited formal capacity, together with project funders such as ACOA, the municipality has conducted strategic planning exercises to reorient local development and take the most advantage of short-term industrial project work.

Similarly to Montague, there are pressures facing the CED sector to professionalize and to contribute a portion of its own revenues to projects. The restructuring of funding has an irreversible impact on CED groups. In the past, the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development (IBRD) would cover up to 25 percent of a project's cost while ACOA would fund up to 75 percent (Personal interview, March 1, 2013). Now, groups are expected to contribute 10 percent of their own funds, ACOA will contribute a maximum of 33 percent of the total project cost, and IBRD a maximum of 25 percent (Personal interview, March 1, 2013). This pushes groups to prioritize their own funds and related projects. In the words of ACOA project officer Jody Brushett:

> I don't think that ACOA's vision has changed, but some of our program criteria have changed and we have raised the bar a little higher. We have become more in tune to how community economic and business growth work together and how municipalities need to be strongly involved in future successes. (Jody Brushett, personal interview, February 29, 2013)

Groups such as the Heritage Run Tourism Association (HRTA) (an association of tourist operators) have managed to thrive amid this changing structure, while others have not. Throughout our interviews, the HRTA was recognized as an involved community actor that has undertaken significant projects. In the words of economic development officer Trevor Bungay, "they are a good example of a rural group that has been and continues to be successful" (personal interview, March 1, 2013). The association has a significant presence—in cooperation with local municipalities, it has created scenic lookout spots along the roadways, has privately operated tourism information centres in three locations throughout the peninsula, and has developed tourism assets and guides. The creation of two full-time staff positions was critical to these achievements. In 2007, the

HRTA met with each of the five major towns on the peninsula to promote a regional project for museums. Together with the towns, it has established a capital levy for ongoing tourism projects (Personal interview, February 28, 2013). It has, developed a project to pool resources and coordinate the museums on the peninsula, leveraged money from the Department of Innovation, Trade (now Business) and Rural Development to create a tourism map brochure, and has assisted community groups to develop a regional ATV trail network.

CONCLUSION

Local development groups face distinct pressures. Their access to funding has shifted: funding tends to be for smaller amounts and projects increasingly require own-source revenue contributions and robust business and sustainability cases. ACOA's 2012 funding crunch was a major driver of these changes. Communities in Atlantic Canada are not alone in facing these shifts; research from across Canada, the United States, Australia, and Europe demonstrates similar trends (Eakin & Graham, 2009; Ryser & Halseth, 2014). Together, these factors push for professionalization within the sector, more collaborative and networked projects, greater funding diversity, and a strong business case tied to economic development objectives (as opposed to social and cultural ones).

As a response to these shifts there are two promising actions in the communities of study. The first is that non-profit and voluntary groups are increasingly networking to share resources and knowledge and collaborate on projects. It is difficult for groups to create such networks and related opportunities on their own, and government support has been instrumental in supporting these efforts. Second, governmental departments and agencies are in some instances providing professional training and support for this sector to help it meet the challenges arising from the shifting funding landscape as well as broader pressures related to declining and aging membership and the over reliance on key leaders within organizations to get things done. Both PEI and NFL have delivered workshops and training for the non-profit and voluntary sector in this regard.

However, on the flip side, as the two case studies here have shown, there is also a shift in the types of groups involved in the community economic development sector and the types of projects that are taken up. In both communities, business groups have led the major community economic development projects in the area. In Montague, the chamber of commerce was seen as the most active and resourceful community group while in Marystown, this was the association of tourism operators. One could say that these groups are institutionally aligned to the priorities of governmental funders, contributing to their success. Where economic development priorities loom large over community development ones it raises questions about the potential for locally derived endogenous development. In the words of one senior NFL government official:

> Community development used to be all the rage—now it is like, yeah whatever. It went from community development to economic development to regional economic development. It's patronizing and top down, if nothing else. (Personal interview, anonymous NFL provincial government official, February 25, 2013)

The term "community economic development" requires dissection. Peter Boothroyd and Craig Davis (1993) offer a three-part distinction between the different components of community economic development; where the "economy" is prioritized, the focus is on growth promotion; where "development" is prioritized, the focus is on structural change, and finally, where "community" is prioritized, the focus is on communalization (p. 230). In the cases at hand, there is a focus on growth promotion, and this seems out of step with neoendogenous approaches. Commenting on this, Dr. Robert Greenwood of Memorial University states:

At a time when the OECD and researchers and governments for the most part recognize that you need a holistic and integrated approach, with horizontal policy coordination, interdepartmental and intergovernmental strategies and governance that connect government with NGOs—but the driving force of how funding is allocated and how authority is delegated or not is going in exactly the opposite direction. (Personal interview, Dr. Robert Greenwood, February 28, 2013)

This research has laid bare inherent tensions between the various aims of the stakeholders. There are clear power asymmetries that are embedded in institutional relationships that constrain and shape the local level. Truly neo-endogenous development requires reconciling of these contradictions along with far more participatory and community-driven forms of development. There are many extensions to this avenue of research. For instance, comparative research might examine the European Union's LEADER approach or Quebec's rural policy, both of which devolve power to local community groups and valorize cultural and social outcomes alongside economic ones. Other research extensions may look at the consequences of heightened regulatory and reporting requirements for the non-profit and voluntary sectors and how this has impacted how and what they work on in order to ascertain changing practices in Canada (Eakin & Graham, 2009).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTE

1. In PEI, ACOA funded 100 percent of the operating cost of REDOs (ACOA 2009).

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CONCILIER EMPLOI ET SOINS À UN PROCHE AU CANADA : QUEL SOUTIEN DES ACTEURS COMMUNAUTAIRES?

Sarah Nogues & Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay

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RÉSUMÉ

S'il peut être satisfaisant de prendre soin d'un proche en perte d'autonomie, le rôle de proche-aidant engendre un certain nombre de tensions et des difficultés à se maintenir en emploi. Face à cette situation, les acteurs communautaires ont été désignés comme une source de soutien importante pour les proches-aidants. Il n'existe toutefois à notre connaissance aucune étude qualitative se penchant sur la relation de soutien entre organismes communautaires et proches-aidants en emploi. Suite à notre recherche comprenant 33 entrevues semi-directives auprès de proches-aidants actifs sur le marché du travail et d'organismes communautaires québécois, menée entre septembre 2014 et juin 2015 au Québec, nous constatons deux faits majeurs : 1) les acteurs communautaires ont le potentiel de constituer une réelle ressource pour concilier emploi et soins à un proche; 2) par contre, leurs services tendent à être méconnus et difficilement accessibles par la majorité des employés proches-aidants.

ABSTRACT

However rewarding taking care of a relative can be, to be a caregiver causes multiple tensions and difficulties in remaining employed. In view of this issue, community organizations have been referred to as a great source of support for caregivers. However, to our knowledge, no qualitative study has ever focussed on the supportive relationship between the community sector and employed caregivers. Our study involved 33 semi-directive interviews with working caregivers and community organizations in Quebec between September 2014 and June 2015. It revealed two main facts: 1) community organizations have the potential to be a real source of support for work-care balance; 2) however, their services remain unknown and hard to access by the majority of employed caregivers.

MOTS CLÉS / KEYWORDS : Services communautaires; Conciliation travail-famille; Proches aidants; Théorie de la conservation des ressources; Soutien social / Community service; Work-life balance; Caregivers; Conservation of resources (COR) theory; Social support

INTRODUCTION

Au Canada, le nombre de personnes âgées de 65 ans et plus a dépassé pour la première fois en 2015 le nombre d'enfants de 0 à 14 ans au sein de la population (Statistique Canada, 2015). L'allongement de l'espérance de vie allant de pair avec une proportion croissante de risques de maladie, le nombre de personnes dépendantes est en augmentation (Decady et Greenberg, 2014). Combinée à ce phénomène, la désinstitutionnalisation des systèmes de soins fait apparaître la famille comme ressource première pour la prise en charge des personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie, malades ou dépendantes (Guberman et Maheu, 1994; Martel et Légaré, 2001; Lamontagne et Beaulieu, 2006; Vézina, Vézina et Tard, 1994). Ce sont ces membres de la famille, ou de l'entourage plus large incluant voisins et amis, que la littérature francophone récente qualifie de proches-aidants.

La majorité de ces personnes étant en emploi (Sinha, 2013), les proches-aidants tendent à vivre des tensions issues d'un conflit entre leurs responsabilités de soin et leurs responsabilités professionnelles, et cela coûte cher aux individus comme à la société (Duxbury, Higgins et Schroeder, 2009; Greenhaus et Beutell, 1985; Fast, Lero, Keating, Eales et Duncan 2014a; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek et Rosenthall, 1964), à tout le moins en l'absence d'un soutien adéquat (Kossek, Colquitt et Noe, 2001, p. 39; Sherman et Reed, 2008, p. 32). Dans ce contexte, le soutien social dans le milieu du travail (par supérieurs et collègues) est tout aussi important que le soutien dans la sphère privée de l'individu (Greenhaus, Ziegert et Allen, 2012; Tremblay, 2012a, p. 199-211), ce qui a notamment été étudié par rapport au soutien du conjoint dans le cadre de couples avec enfants à charge. Toutefois, il y a moins de recherches réalisées sur les responsabilités de soins auprès d'un adulte dépendant ou d'un enfant handicapé. Par ailleurs, très peu de chercheurs se sont intéressés aux ressources communautaires comme source de soutien aux employés. Les organismes communautaires sont pourtant présentés comme des ressources-clés pour les proches-aidants qui se heurtent souvent à un mur face au réseau de la santé (Grant, 2014; Schroeder, MacDonald et Shamian, 2012).

Notre recherche a donc consisté à capturer de manière qualitative la mesure dans laquelle les acteurs communautaires constituent une source de soutien pour les proches-aidants, dont la majorité doit concilier ce rôle avec une activité rémunérée (Duxbury *et al.*, 2009; Sinha, 2013). Nous allons voir pourquoi, malgré une offre de soutien variée, seule une minorité de proches-aidants en bénéficient.

PORTRAIT DES PROCHES-AIDANTS CANADIENS

En 2012, l'Enquête sociale générale (ESG) révélait que 13 millions de Canadiens âgés de 15 ans et plus, soit presque la moitié de la population (46 pour cent), avaient au moins une fois pris soin d'un proche dépendant au cours de leur vie (Sinha, 2013). Au moment du sondage, 8,1 millions de Canadiens faisaient l'expérience de responsabilités de soins, que les écrits regroupent généralement en trois catégories : un accompagnement dans les tâches de la vie quotidienne (tâches ménagères, transport), des soins corporels et médicaux (faire prendre le bain, accompagner aux toilettes, administrer les médicaments) et une aide administrative, notamment pour la gestion des biens (Davis *et al.*, 1997; van den Berg et Spauwen, 2006). Selon les résultats de l'ESG 2012, les proches-aidants passent un nombre médian de trois heures par semaine à s'occuper d'un proche; cet indicateur varie toutefois en fonction du type de soins prodigués et du sexe : il s'élève à 10 heures par semaine pour s'occuper d'un enfant malade et à 14 heures pour s'occuper d'un conjoint, et les femmes effectuent plus d'heures de soin que les hommes (Sinha, 2013). Il s'agit même pour certains d'un deuxième emploi à temps plein, puisqu'au moment du sondage 60 pour cent des proches-aidants combinaient leurs responsabilités de soin avec une activité rémunérée, soit 4,8 millions de Canadiens (Fast *et al.*, 2014a; Sinha,

2013). En outre, la majorité des proches-aidants en emploi font partie de la « génération sandwich », devant ainsi concilier emploi et soins avec des responsabilités parentales (Duxbury, Higgins et Smarta, 2011).

LES COUTS DES RESPONSABILITES DE SOIN

S'il existe une forme d'enrichissement à être proche-aidant (Li et Loke, 2013; Yatchmenoff *et al.*, 1998), les recherches insistent davantage sur les tensions engendrées par ce rôle : les proches-aidants présentent de plus hauts niveaux de fatigue, de douleurs musculaires ainsi que de maladies cardiaques et chroniques que les personnes sans responsabilités de soin (Sawatzky et Fowler-Kerry, 2003; Cannuscio *et al.*, 2004; Carretero *et al.*, 2009; Feinberg *et al.*, 2006; Robison *et al.*, 2009; Bialon et Coke, 2012; Williams *et al.*, 2016). Sur le plan émotionnel, ils font face à de plus hauts niveaux de stress, de dépression et de culpabilité que les non-proches-aidants (Duxbury *et al.*, 2009; Rajnovich, Keefe et Fast, 2005; Scharlach, 1994; Smith et Dumas, 1994; Pyper, 2006). Leur appauvrissement est également un enjeu puisqu'ils sont nombreux à réduire leurs heures de travail ou à se retirer du marché du travail afin d'assumer leur rôle (Lilly, Laporte et Coyte, 2007; Sinha, 2013). En 2012, cela représentait au Canada une perte de 220,5 millions de dollars pour les femmes et de 116,3 millions pour les hommes (Fast, 2015).

Ces tensions vécues par les proches-aidants, qui constituent aujourd'hui environ 30 pour cent de la main-d'œuvre canadienne (Fast, 2015), ont aussi des répercussions négatives pour les employeurs. À partir des résultats de l'ESG 2007, Fast, Lero, Keating, Eales et Duncan (2014a) ont estimé à 3,8 milliards de dollars le taux de roulement lié aux responsabilités de soins pour les employeurs canadiens. Fast, Lero, DeMarco, Ferreira et Eales (2014b) ont rapporté qu'en 2012, 9,7 millions de journées de travail ont été manquées, il y a eu réduction de 256 millions d'heures de travail et 557 698 employés ont quitté le marché du travail pour s'occuper d'un proche. Les résultats d'un sondage auprès d'employeurs canadiens de tous secteurs montrent qu'un nombre important de gestionnaires perçoivent une performance réduite chez leurs employés proches-aidants, notamment en raison de comportements tels que le fait de téléphoner pendant les heures de travail, d'arriver trop tard au bureau, de quitter trop tôt, d'être anormalement distraits, de même que d'erreurs professionnelles et autres comportements pouvant représenter un danger pour les collègues (Fast *et al.*, 2014a).

Pourtant, l'emploi constitue une ressource importante pour ces individus en leur permettant, outre l'aspect financier, de faire l'expérience de succès personnels qui les valorisent en dehors de leur rôle d'aidant (Krisor et Rowold, 2014; Robison *et al.*, 2009). Par ailleurs, les entreprises ont le pouvoir de réduire les conséquences organisationnelles négatives liées au rôle de proche-aidant de leurs employés : les proches-aidants qui perçoivent que l'organisation, le supérieur et les collègues comprennent et soutiennent leur situation tendent à vivre moins de tensions (Plaisier *et al.*, 2014; Sherman *et al.*, 2008; Zacher et Schultz, 2015; Zacher et Winter, 2011; Zuba et Schneider, 2013). Cependant, Greenhaus, Ziegert et Allen (2012) suggèrent que le soutien social le plus efficace pour réduire les conséquences négatives du conflit travail-famille est celui qui combine au soutien du supérieur le soutien du conjoint dans la sphère privée. De fait, le soutien dans la sphère professionnelle et le soutien hors-emploi sont généralement reconnus comme déterminants pour faciliter la conciliation emploi-famille en général (Tremblay, 2012a, pp. 199-211). Ces constats nous ont incitées à postuler qu'il en serait de même pour les proches-aidants et à étudier le soutien hors-emploi dont bénéficient les employés proches-aidants.

LE SOUTIEN AUX PROCHES-AIDANTS

Les proches-aidants canadiens peuvent bénéficier d'une aide financière du gouvernement, avec par exemple le crédit d'impôt pour aidants familiaux, s'élevant jusqu'à 2 093 dollars en 2016 (Agence du revenu du Canada,

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2016), ou encore les prestations de compassion qui permettent à un employé de prendre six mois de congé pour accompagner un proche en fin de vie, à raison de 537 dollars maximum par semaine (Gouvernement du Canada, 2016). Ils ont également dans une certaine mesure accès au réseau de la santé pour la prise en charge de l'aidé : outre l'intervention d'infirmiers à domicile et de travailleurs sociaux, ils peuvent accéder à des centres de jour et services de répit qui peuvent aider à réduire leurs niveaux de stress (Harding et Higginson, 2003; Mossello *et al.*, 2008). D'autres mesures ont été reconnues comme efficaces pour soutenir les proches-aidants, notamment des programmes psychoéducatifs qui peuvent réduire la détresse psychologique et augmenter la résilience personnelle (Carretero *et al.*, 2009; Parker, Mills et Abbey, 2008; Yesufu-Udechuku *et al.*, 2015), ainsi que des thérapies comportementales pour apprendre à mieux gérer leur stress (Long *et al.*, 2004). Des programmes de soutien sur internet semblent également être facteurs d'un meilleur bien-être (Boots *et al.*, 2014; Perron, 2002; Zengh *et al.* 2013), de même que des groupes de soutien par les pairs (Harding *et al.*, 2003), davantage dispensés par le milieu communautaire. Des études ont montré que les proches-aidants qui n'ont pas recours à au moins une de ces formes de soutien, combinée au soutien informel de l'entourage, ont davantage de problèmes de santé physique et mentale que ceux qui en font usage (DeFries *et al.*, 2009; Robinson, Buckwalter et Reed 2013).

Dans un contexte où le réseau de la santé se fragmente de plus en plus, et où les listes d'attente sont parfois très longues (Grant, 2014), les acteurs communautaires jouent un rôle majeur en permettant aux proches-aidants de « naviguer » dans le système de santé en leur fournissant l'information nécessaire (Schroeder *et al.* 2012, p. 45). En 1994, Vézina, Vézina et Tard soulignaient déjà l'importance de ces acteurs « oubliés » pour soutenir les personnes en perte d'autonomie et leurs aidants. Il semble en effet que les proches-aidants canadiens ont besoin d'être mieux accompagnés : s'ils étaient environ 50 pour cent à manifester des problèmes de santé en 2007, moins de 20 pour cent avaient reçu un soutien du gouvernement, ou même de la communauté (Williams *et al.*, 2016). Plutôt qu'un manque de services, certains auteurs indiquent une sous-utilisation de ces derniers et suggèrent l'existence de réticences d'ordre culturel à y recourir (Robinson *et al.*, 2013), ou encore une surdose d'information décourageant la recherche d'aide (Winslow, 2003). Dans une revue des écrits, Pépin *et al.* (2012) montrent également l'existence d'autres facteurs de contingence : la gravité de la condition de l'aidé et de ce fait l'intensité des besoins du proche-aidant, ainsi que les capacités d'organisation personnelle de ce dernier, influencent la probabilité de réussite des interventions. En somme, celles-ci ont plus de chances de réussir si les besoins sont modérés et si l'aidant a de bonnes capacités d'organisation personnelle.

Cependant, la relation entre les besoins des proches-aidants et les services communautaires qui leur sont destinés est très peu documentée, particulièrement sur le plan de l'accès à ces ressources. Nous croyons comme Scharlarch, Gustavson et Dal Santo (2007) que le fait d'avoir un travail rémunéré est une variable importante pour mieux comprendre les besoins de soutien des proches-aidants, qui pour la majorité sont en emploi (Sinha, 2013). Ainsi, notre question de recherche vise à déterminer de quelle manière les acteurs communautaires contribuent à la conciliation emploi-famille des proches-aidants.

CADRE CONCEPTUEL ET THEORIQUE

Pour ce faire, nous définissons en premier lieu les concepts centraux à notre étude, soit la « conciliation emploi-famille-soins » et le « soutien social ». Nous expliquons ensuite la pertinence d'étudier ce phénomène sous l'angle théorique de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 1989).

Conciliation emploi-famille-soins

La notion de « conciliation travail-famille » prend sa source dans la constatation que la sphère individuelle et la sphère économique sont dans une certaine mesure perméables (Kanter, 1977). Cette idée a premièrement été abordée sous l'angle du conflit, le « conflit travail-famille » ayant été défini par Greenhaus et Beutell comme « une forme de conflit inter-rôles où les pressions issues des rôles joués dans la famille et dans la sphère professionnelle sont, à certains égards, réciproquement incompatibles » (1985, p.77; traduction libre). Ce conflit tend à se manifester sous plusieurs formes : le conflit de temps, qui survient d'une part lorsqu'il est physiquement impossible de faire coïncider les emplois du temps associés à chaque rôle (« conflit d'emploi du temps ») ou, d'autre part, lorsque l'individu se trouve excessivement préoccupé par certaines obligations de rôle alors même qu'il est en train d'assumer les obligations d'un autre rôle (« surcharge de rôle »); le conflit de tension, qui est communément associé à un manque d'énergie et qui survient lorsque les tensions issues d'un rôle diminuent le rendement dans un autre rôle; et le conflit de comportements où des comportements particuliers développés pour l'un des rôles sont inadéquats pour rencontrer les exigences des rôles joués dans l'autre sphère (Greenhaus et Beutell, 1985).

Pour le cas des proches-aidants, il faut tenir compte de la nature particulière des responsabilités de soin qui diffèrent de celles des parents d'enfants en santé, tant au niveau de la nature des tâches que de leurs conséquences pour l'individu (Kossek, Colquitt et Noe, 2001). C'est la raison pour laquelle nous employons l'expression « conflit emploi-famille-soins » (Tremblay et Larivière, 2013), qui à travers le vocable « soins » rend compte du « stress de proche-aidant » défini comme « changements dans la vie quotidienne des proches-aidants pouvant être attribués à la nécessité de fournir des soins » et qui comportent des facteurs de stress émotionnels, physiques et financiers (Duxbury *et al.*, 2011, p. 31). Enfin, nous préférons le choix du vocable «emploi » pour désigner l'activité rémunérée exercée par l'individu plutôt que le vocable « travail », qui tend à suggérer que les responsabilités de soin (ou responsabilités parentales) ne constituent pas en soi un travail (Tremblay, 2012b).

Notons que si le rapport emploi-famille ne saurait se résumer à des conséquences négatives pour l'individu, et que des formes d'enrichissement sont possibles entre les deux sphères (Greenhaus et Powell, 2006), nous utiliserons essentiellement le concept de conflit emploi-famille-soins dans cette étude puisque notre objectif est de voir en quoi le soutien communautaire est à même de venir contrebalancer les aspects négatifs de la relation d'aide sur l'emploi.

Soutien social et communautaire

Le soutien social est aujourd'hui reconnu comme un construit multidimensionnel, impliquant la « dispensation ou l'échange de ressources émotionnelles, instrumentales ou d'informations par des non-professionnels, dans le contexte d'une réponse à la perception que les autres en ont besoin » (Caron et Guay, 2005, pp. 16-17). La littérature distingue généralement un soutien de nature instrumentale qui consiste en une assistance concrète axée sur la résolution de problèmes, un soutien émotionnel qui renvoie davantage à des échanges verbaux et à de l'écoute active, et un soutien informationnel, soit une aide indirecte où l'on fournit à la personne de l'information utile pour faire face aux problèmes qu'elle rencontre (House, 1981; House, Umberson et Landis, 1988). Dans une revue des écrits récente, Nurullah (2012, p.173) souligne que le soutien social doit être reconnu comme tel par celui qui l'offre autant que par celui qui le reçoit.

Le soutien social s'obtient à travers divers liens sociaux avec d'autres individus, des groupes et la communauté plus large (Lin *et al.* 1979, p. 50). On parle ainsi de *système* de soutien social, pouvant être défini comme « un sous-ensemble de personnes dans le réseau social de l'individu sur qui il ou elle compte pour une aide

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socio-émotionnelle, instrumentale, ou les deux » (Thoits, 1982, p. 148, traduction libre). En ce sens, les organismes communautaires peuvent être considérés comme un système de soutien social si l'on se base sur les travaux de Lecomte qui, dans une étude du réseau de soutien communautaire pour les individus atteints de maladies mentales, souligne l'existence de ressources informelles et alternatives au réseau institutionnel de la santé : celles-ci s'appuient sur les valeurs de l'entraide individuelle (réseau naturel) mais « s'en distinguent par leur degré de structuration » (1986, p. 9). Selon Vézina *et al.* (1994, p. 71), les ressources communautaires sont complémentaires au réseau officiel de la santé, notamment à travers l'offre de services socioaffectifs. Du point de vue du soutien à la « conciliation travail-famille » à proprement parler, la littérature en gestion indique que le soutien social peut être fourni par tout acteur du milieu de travail (collègues, superviseurs, clients et représentants syndicaux, entre autres) comme hors du milieu de travail, ce qui inclut en théorie les acteurs communautaires (House, 1981, p.109).

Approche théorique et question de recherche

Pour évaluer le soutien social offert par le milieu communautaire à la conciliation emploi-famille-soins, nous adoptons l'angle théorique de la conservation des ressources qui postule que « les individus s'efforcent de conserver, de protéger et de construire des ressources, et qu'ils se sentent menacés par la perte potentielle ou réelle de ces ressources convoitées » (Hobfoll, 1989, traduction libre). Hobfoll (1989, p. 517) souligne que les relations sociales ne peuvent être considérées comme une ressource que dans la mesure où elles fournissent et facilitent la préservation des ressources qui sont valorisées par l'individu (par exemple, temps, argent, estime de soi, etc.). Si les individus préfèrent généralement recourir au soutien des personnes qui leur sont directement proches (Martel et Légaré, 2000), en vertu du phénomène de substitution des ressources sociales décrit par Hobfoll *et al.* (1990), les individus manquant de soutien social dans leur entourage proche pourraient recourir à leur entourage social plus large, notamment le soutien d'organismes communautaires proposant des interventions spécialement dédiées aux proches aidants. Bien que la théorie de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 1989) soit essentiellement employée dans le cadre d'études quantitatives hypothético-déductives, la théorie de la ressource en soutien social qui en découle (Hobfoll *et al.* 1990) met en jeu des concepts qui nous ont paru fort appropriés à notre objectif d'analyser la relation de soutien entre l'employé proche-aidant en tant qu'individu et le milieu communautaire. Ainsi, nous regardons dans un premier temps en quoi le soutien social offert par le milieu communautaire peut être qualifié de soutien social, et dans un deuxième temps, s'il est perçu comme tel par les proches-aidants souhaitant minimiser leur conflit emploi-famille-soins.

METHODOLOGIE

Afin de répondre à notre question de recherche, nous avons décidé d'adopter une approche inductive en commençant par des observations sur une question encore méconnue afin de travailler ensuite à l'élaboration de schémas généraux (Patton, 2002). À l'aide d'un guide d'entretien, nous avons pu recueillir dans le cadre d'une première série d'entrevues semi-dirigées auprès d'employées et d'employés proches-aidants (N=23) des informations sur des points spécifiques liés au « stress de proche aidant » (financier, émotionnel et physique) ainsi qu'au soutien social *perçu*, tant au niveau des sources du soutien (travail, entourage proche, entourage plus large notamment communautaire) que de sa nature (instrumentale, émotionnelle, informationnelle). Notre deuxième série d'entrevues semi-directives auprès de représentants d'organismes communautaires (*N* = 12) a porté sur leur perception du stress vécu par les employés proches-aidants et sur leur jugement de l'*offre* de soutien faite par le milieu communautaire aux proches aidants, en particulier ceux qui sont en emploi. Le recours à la vision des acteurs communautaires correspond à une multiplication des sources de données que l'on peut aussi qualifier de technique de triangulation des données (Patton 1999, p. 1193). Cette technique vise à enrichir la compréhension du phénomène à l'oeuvre et à ainsi accroître la crédibilité de notre recherche qualitative (Patton, 1999).

Nos deux séries d'entrevues qualitatives semi-directives ont été menées entre septembre 2014 et mai 2015 au Québec, principalement en région urbaine. Nous avons choisi de mener cette étude au Québec où le milieu communautaire, composante importante du « tiers secteur » et de l'économie québécoise dans son ensemble, est en pleine évolution (Grenier et Fleury, 2014; Savard et Proulx, 2012). Le milieu communautaire est toutefois pris dans une dynamique ambivalente entre « un discours de rupture radicale » avec l'État et un « compromis pratique avec l'"adversaire" » (Tremblay et Fournis, 2016, p. 4). De nombreuses questions se posent ainsi actuellement sur la mission fondamentale du milieu communautaire et sur ce qu'il en est en pratique (Savard et Proulx, 2012), notamment en ce qui concerne son rôle en regard des services publics de santé et des services sociaux. Notre étude pourra apporter un éclairage sur la question tout en explorant pourquoi les acteurs communautaires ont été présentés comme des acteurs en émergence dans la réponse aux besoins issus des responsabilités de soins croissantes au sein de la population (Vézina *et al.*, 1994; Schroeder *et al.*, 2012).

Pour rejoindre les répondants, nous avons contacté les regroupements de proches aidants par téléphone. Après leur avoir présenté notre projet de recherche, nous leur avons demandé s'ils étaient d'accord pour diffuser un appel à participants auprès d'employés proches-aidants avec lesquels ils étaient potentiellement en contact. Parfois, les représentants d'organismes proposaient d'informer les répondants potentiels en face-à-face. Si ces derniers acceptaient de participer, les organismes nous fournissaient avec leur accord leurs coordonnées pour les fins de l'entrevue. Par la même occasion, nous avons invité ces organismes à participer à notre deuxième série d'entrevues. Le bouche-à-oreille et la technique « boule-de-neige » nous ont également permis de rejoindre des répondants proches-aidants. Il s'agit donc ici d'échantillons de commodité, car il n'existe pas de liste représentative de proches aidants ou d'organismes intervenant dans le domaine. Afin d'être inclus dans notre étude, les participants devaient avoir travaillé ou été en recherche d'emploi au moment de dispenser des soins à un proche, et ce pendant au moins cinq heures par semaine. Ces larges critères laissaient place à de nombreux cas de « proche aidance », faute de l'existence d'une définition unanime du rôle de proche aidant, et également à cause de la difficulté que nous avons eue à rejoindre ce groupe de personnes qui ne sont pas répertoriées et qui sont justement déjà fort occupées par les différents rôles qu'il leur faut concilier. Nous avons ainsi accepté dans notre groupe d'étude des personnes ayant pris leur retraite définitive (N = 4) ainsi que des individus dont le proche était décédé (N = 7), et les avons interrogées quant à leur expérience passée de conciliation emploi-famille-soins. Nous avons veillé à contrer ce parti pris en précisant régulièrement « lorsque vous étiez à l'emploi » ou encore « à l'époque » à la fin de nos questions. Enfin, nous considérons comme une force le caractère hétérogène de notre groupe (par exemple relativement à la profession ou aux responsabilités de soin) dans le cadre de notre recherche inductive, en ce qu'il permet de mettre en évidence « des schémas communs importants qui sont transversaux et tirent leur caractère significatif du fait qu'ils proviennent de l'hétérogénéité » (Patton, 2002, p. 235, traduction libre). La seconde série d'entrevues a été menée auprès d'organismes communautaires (N = 12) dont la mission portait au moins partiellement sur le soutien de proches aidants.

Avant chaque entrevue, nous avons rappelé aux répondants le caractère confidentiel de l'entrevue et leur liberté de s'en retirer à tout moment. Nous avons ensuite retranscrit chaque entretien en attribuant à chacun un pseudonyme, puis avons analysé les données en formulant des « descriptions détaillées de haute qualité pour chaque cas, utiles pour documenter l'unicité » (Patton 2002, p. 235; traduction libre) que nous avons ensuite interprétées puis évaluées afin de relever les schémas communs que nous présentons dans notre article.

RÉSULTATS

Nous présentons dans cette partie les résultats de notre recherche, qui s'organisent comme suit : nous commençons par une analyse du soutien communautaire offert, puis dressons brièvement le profil des travailleuses et travailleurs proches-aidants interviewés et indiquons l'ampleur du conflit emploi-famille-soins vécu avant de montrer de quelle manière ceux-ci perçoivent l'offre de services communautaires au regard de leur situation.

Soutien communautaire

Les paragraphes qui suivent présentent la nature des services offerts par les organismes communautaires puis examinent dans quelle mesure celle-ci est adaptée aux proches aidants qui sont en emploi, selon les acteurs eux-mêmes.

L'offre de services

Sur les douze organismes communautaires de notre étude, quatre se consacraient exclusivement au soutien des proches aidants. Les huit autres avaient développé des services aux familles et aux proches de la clientèle qu'ils servaient en premier lieu, telle que les personnes aînées en perte d'autonomie ou les personnes en déficience intellectuelle. Les services principaux offerts par les organismes étaient les suivants : prise en charge de l'aidé sur place dans le cadre d'un centre de jour ou à domicile (« répit »), soutien psychosocial individuel, aide administrative et juridique, information et références administratives, conférences à thème, groupes de parole et d'entraide par les pairs, activités de détente comprenant méditation, art-thérapie, musicothérapie, entre autres. Ces services étaient gratuits ou à prix réduit, et chaque organisme offrait au moins deux types de service.

Cette vaste offre de services couvre un soutien de nature instrumentale, émotionnelle et informationnelle. Le soutien instrumental est disponible au moyen du répit, offert par la moitié (six) des organismes. Il s'agit d'offrir au proche aidant une aide concrète venant prendre le relais au niveau des tâches de soin, et de lui libérer ainsi du temps. Le temps de répit gratuit était variable, allant de trois à vingt-quatre heures à l'échelle d'une journée. En ce qui concerne le soutien émotionnel, les intervenants communautaires décrivaient des rencontres plutôt informelles où l'accent était mis sur les problématiques propres au proche aidant (et non uniquement à la personne aidée) et où l'intervenant « leur parlait », « prenait des nouvelles », et répondait aux questions pouvant survenir. Les rencontres de groupe étaient également décrites comme servant un soutien de type émotionnel, « pour aider les gens au niveau de l'estime de soi » et avec l'objectif plus particulier « qu'ils s'impliquent dans la communauté ou l'organisme ». On retrouve donc ici une volonté d'impliquer les proches aidants dans un processus de réciprocité. Enfin, les organismes communautaires mettaient de l'avant leur rôle d'informer et de guider les proches aidants dans la multiplicité des démarches administratives liées à la gestion des soins envers l'aidé telles que « les services financiers, les informations sur les crédits d'impôt, les soins à domicile et l'hébergement ». Plus encore que le simple fait d'informer les proches aidants des démarches à suivre, certains intervenants n'hésitaient pas à « exercer une pression » sur les services afin de faciliter et d'accélérer l'obtention de ressources pour les proches aidants.

Adaptation des services aux proches aidants en emploi

Les intervenants communautaires comptaient parmi leur clientèle de nombreux proches aidants en emploi, qui constituaient souvent plus de la moitié de leur clientèle proche-aidante. À plusieurs reprises, les services de répit ont été présentés comme une ressource-clé vis-à-vis de la conciliation emploi-famille-soins, comme le montre l'exemple de cet organisme soutenant les personnes avec déficience intellectuelle :

> Pour l'été souvent on offre un service de camp de jour. Ça permet aux parents de pouvoir continuer leur travail, parce que sinon bien, on peut pas demander à un employeur d'avoir un été complet de congé (organisme n° 9).

Dans ce cas, le répit donné sous forme de camp de jour remplace une ressource que l'employé ne peut pas obtenir de son employeur : un congé. La fonction de relais instrumental que représente le répit agit ainsi sur le conflit de temps vécu par l'employé proche-aidant qui ne peut à la fois être au travail et surveiller son enfant handicapé, faute de congé ou de la possibilité de travailler à domicile pendant la période où l'enfant n'est pas pris en charge par une institution formelle. Cet autre organisme considère également que l'offre de répit influence positivement la conciliation emploi-famille-soins, pour autant que les services s'adaptent aux contraintes temporelles des employés :

> Le fait que notre offre de service soit flexible, je crois que ça facilite la conciliation travail-famille, ça c'est certain (organisme n° 10).

Toutefois, les proches aidants en emploi constituaient rarement une clientèle « active » au sein des organismes, et la question de la conciliation emploi-famille-soin n'était pas toujours une priorité dans la réflexion sur les activités mises en place. En effet, les « jeunes » proches aidants, soit ceux qui étaient toujours sur le marché du travail, étaient décrits comme difficiles à « recruter » pour les activités leur étant spécialement consacrées, telles que les activités de détente ou les services psychosociaux. Leur participation se résumait souvent à conduire la personne aidée jusqu'au camp de jour ou de bénéficier du répit lorsque disponible, mais « on ne les voit pas ». Ainsi, les employés proches-aidants tendent à constituer une clientèle difficile à mobiliser et à impliquer, sans doute en raison de leur horaire de travail et de la durée hebdomadaire de leur travail. Une intervenante mentionnait toutefois l'offre d'un service fréquenté par des proches aidants en emploi : une activité de détente une fois tous les quinze jours ayant lieu après les heures de travail, permettant aux participants d'apprendre des mouvements spécifiques qu'ils pourraient pratiquer chez eux une fois maîtrisés. Dans ce cas, l'autonomisation de la personne vis-à-vis du soutien instrumental dispensé et l'offre du service après les heures de travail habituelles étaient décrites comme deux conditions gagnantes au recrutement d'employés proches-aidants. Par ailleurs, il s'agissait d'un service développé suite aux recommandations des proches aidants eux-mêmes qui avaient été impliqués dans son élaboration. Toutefois, offrir des activités après les heures habituelles de travail n'était pas envisageable pour tous les organismes communautaires.

En somme, on peut dire que l'offre de répit du milieu communautaire faisait l'objet d'une forte demande, à tel point que deux organismes mentionnaient avoir été contraints de mettre en place des listes d'attente. Le répit apparaît ainsi comme une ressource pour la conciliation emploi-famille-soins en tant que service, mais il ne fait pas l'objet d'un soutien social à proprement parler puisque les proches aidants en emploi l'utilisent peu et que la dynamique d'échange entre les employés proches-aidants et les acteurs communautaires semble absente. En effet, il apparaît difficile de recruter des employés proches-aidants pour les activités psychosociales et les activités de détente qui sont surtout fréquentées par une clientèle de proches aidants à la retraite. Quoiqu'il en soit, du point de vue de l'*offre* de service communautaire, on a bel et bien affaire à un soutien couvrant des besoins instrumentaux, émotionnels et informationnels. Les paragraphes qui suivent, après avoir exposé les difficultés vécues par les employés proches-aidants, vont montrer de quelle manière le soutien communautaire est *perçu* par ces derniers.

Profil des travailleurs proches-aidants et conflit emploi-famille-soins

Tel que cela s'observe dans la réalité, les proches aidants que nous avons rencontrés étaient surtout des femmes (N=20 sur 23), avec une moyenne d'âge de 55 ans. Les répondants travaillaient en majorité dans le secteur public ou communautaire. Cinq d'entre eux ne travaillaient pas au moment de l'entrevue : quatre avaient pris leur retraite définitive et une était en arrêt de travail suite au diagnostic de son conjoint. Tous les autres répondants étaient à l'emploi lorsque nous les avons rencontrés. Notre groupe comportait sept personnes s'occupant simultanément d'un ou plusieurs enfants et d'un proche dépendant, comme cela s'observe dans la population canadienne (génération sandwich).

La plupart des répondants étaient satisfaits de leur condition économique et 17 participants occupaient un emploi qualifié selon les critères de la classification nationale des professions (CNP). Cependant, trois personnes rapportaient une situation « juste » ou « défavorisée ». Il s'est avéré difficile d'évaluer le nombre d'heures de soins dispensées par semaine : la moitié n'a pas souhaité ou n'a pas été en mesure de répondre clairement. D'après la réponse de ceux qui ont fourni une estimation, la médiane était de 27,5 heures de soins par semaine. Ces activités de soins étaient souvent décrites comme intenses par les répondants, avec dans 18 cas des répercussions sur la santé et dans 17 cas des répercussions sur l'emploi ou la carrière.

Pour ce qui est du bien-être et de la santé personnelle, la grande majorité des répondants se trouvaient en situation de perte d'énergie, avec des symptômes de fatigue émotionnelle et/ou physique et de stress. Notre groupe comportait également certains cas de santé mentale à risque. C'était le cas lorsqu'ils indiquaient avoir reçu un diagnostic pour dépression ou épuisement professionnel, mentionnaient avoir eu des pensées suicidaires ou rapportaient que leur santé mentale se dégradait en raison des soins. La grande majorité rapportait avoir sacrifié leurs loisirs et leur vie sociale pour dispenser des soins. Toutefois, certaines personnes avaient développé des stratégies de résilience personnelle en essayant de maintenir une bonne hygiène de vie (sport, alimentation). Pour ce qui est des impacts sur l'emploi et la carrière, bon nombre de répondants avaient dû interrompre leur emploi provisoirement ou s'absenter du travail, leur employeur considérant ces absences comme étant problématiques, soit qu'elles étaient perçues comme nuisibles à la réputation, soit qu'elles ont entraîné des avertissements ou une perte de salaire. Les activités de soin avaient également un effet sur les projets de carrière : en tout, six personnes avaient réduit leurs heures de travail pour dispenser des soins. Certaines ont également repoussé leur retraite pour des raisons financières, pour « profiter de la vie » face à la déchéance de la personne ou pour cause de fatigue. En tout, deux personnes ont refusé une promotion ou un temps plein, deux personnes ont quitté un emploi qui n'offrait pas la flexibilité requise ou qui était trop éloigné du domicile. Du point de vue des conséquences de l'emploi sur les soins, une personne manifestait sa culpabilité de travailler à temps plein, laquelle de ce fait avait le sentiment de ne pas être assez présente pour son conjoint qui souffrait du cancer.

Les employés proches-aidants sont donc majoritairement en situation de perte de ressources (temps, énergie, loisirs) ou anticipent une perte de ressources, notamment vis-à-vis des banques de congés payés qui s'épuisent au profit de la personne aidée et non de soi-même. Face au conflit emploi-famille-soins, la majorité des proches aidants (18) déclarait recevoir au moins une forme de soutien dans le milieu de travail. Il s'agissait essentiellement de flexibilité offerte de manière informelle par le supérieur (soutien instrumental), et de soutien émotionnel (écoute, compassion) de la part de collègues. Pour ce qui est du soutien hors-emploi, dix personnes disposaient d'une forme de soutien d'un conjoint et sept personnes, y compris trois retraitées, avaient recours à une forme de soutien communautaire.

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Perception des services communautaires par les travailleurs proches-aidants

Trois types d'attitude se sont manifestés vis-à-vis des services communautaires : 1. la perception des acteurs communautaires comme une ressource; 2. une méconnaissance de leurs services; et 3. la perception que leurs services étaient inadaptés ou inaccessibles.

Les acteurs communautaires comme ressource

Rares sont les répondants ayant explicitement fait le lien entre un service communautaire et leur conciliation emploi-famille-soins. Une participante, cependant, déclarait avoir reçu un soutien de première ligne de la part d'un organisme communautaire :

> Y'a des dames qui étaient là qui m'ont aidée pendant plusieurs mois, parce que j'avais pas encore de travailleuse sociale, et ma mère était pas suivie par personne … Puis ça, c'est des gens qui m'ont écoutée là quand j'étais en crise … Mais eux autres ils voyaient bien que j'étais rendue là vraiment au bout de la corde [...]. Ils m'ont sauvée ces gens-là (Alice).

En parlant du fait qu'elle était « rendue au bout de la corde », Alice se rapportait au conflit emploi-soins qui s'est soldé par un épuisement : « J'ai fait un burnout, parce que là je travaillais, puis je l'avais ici à la maison … Puis je me suis ramassée en burnout ». Le soutien communautaire est ainsi intervenu dans un moment critique pour Alice et a été pour elle une ressource facilitant son retour à l'emploi suite à son arrêt de travail. L'absence de soutien social *efficace* dans son entourage proche, de même que dans son milieu de travail, peut expliquer l'importance qu'elle a ainsi donnée à l'organisme communautaire comme source de soutien social. Cependant, il s'agit d'un cas d'exception parmi nos répondants : seuls ceux qui étaient à la retraite au moment de l'entrevue avaient recours aux services psychosociaux sur les lieux de l'organisme, et ils ne l'auraient pas fait alors qu'ils étaient à l'emploi :

> Mais j'allais à ces rencontres de groupe-là, et c'est peut-être ce qui m'a le plus aidé sur le plan personnel […]. — *Auriez-vous eu le temps de fréquenter les groupes de soutien lorsque vous étiez en emploi?* — Euh, il me semble que … non (Marc).

Notons que Marc n'aurait peut-être pas eu autant besoin de ces groupes d'entraide dans la mesure où il bénéficiait d'un fort soutien social au travail et y faisait l'expérience d'une grande valorisation personnelle. Dans ce cadre, le groupe de soutien par les pairs a pu constituer un remplacement des ressources en estime de soi dont il avait bénéficié antérieurement grâce à son emploi : la retraite, précipitée en partie par les responsabilités de soin, a constitué pour lui un moment particulièrement difficile sur le plan émotionnel. De manière générale, les employés proches-aidants ayant eu recours aux organismes communautaires en cours d'emploi pour du répit, de l'information ou des tâches ménagères étaient peu nombreux (*N* = 4).

Méconnaissance des services communautaires

Les services communautaires étaient le plus souvent inconnus ou méconnus de notre groupe de répondants. Dans le cas suivant, Linda n'avait pas idée que des services existaient pour elle en tant que proche aidante :

> *Est-ce que vous avez fait appel à des intervenants du gouvernement ou de la communauté?* — Non, non aucunement. — *Pourquoi?* — Ben, je pensais pas que ça pouvait m'aider moi, moi-même là, j'ai pas pensé (Linda).

D'autres ignoraient que l'offre de service communautaire correspondait à certains de leurs besoins. Par exemple, en vertu des services d'information et de référence offerts par les organismes et en vertu de leur rôle d'intermédiaire-pivot avec le réseau formel, Rosalie aurait pu bénéficier de leur aide pour accéder plus facilement aux ressources qu'elle avait de la difficulté à obtenir auprès du réseau de la santé :

> *Avez-vous pensé à faire appel à des organismes communautaires?* [...] — Ça aurait été plus …
> de l'aide médicale dont j'aurais eu besoin (Rosalie).

Pour d'autres personnes, le besoin de ce type de ressources ne se faisait simplement pas sentir. Dans le cas suivant, Isabelle n'a pas envisagé la ressource communautaire, car elle disposait à la fois d'un soutien instrumental et émotionnel fort dans son entourage personnel tout comme dans son milieu de travail :

> *Avez-vous fait appel à des organismes communautaires*? — Des organismes? On a fait appel à
> des personnes qui faisaient le relais dans des moments où on pouvait pas être là. On a
> embauché (Isabelle).

Isabelle ne se rapporte pas à la dimension socio-émotionnelle caractéristique des services communautaires et, n'ayant besoin que d'une ressource instrumentale occasionnelle, elle s'est tournée vers des services privés.

En somme, les personnes que nous avons interrogées n'avaient généralement pas le réflexe de se tourner vers les organismes communautaires dont les services leur demeuraient relativement méconnus. Les acteurs les plus consultés étaient les médecins et autres professionnels de la santé, qui pourtant ne répondaient pas toujours entièrement aux besoins des proches aidants, particulièrement à leurs besoins de soutien émotionnel. Cependant, les employés proches-aidants pouvaient percevoir les services des organismes communautaires, même lorsqu'ils les connaissaient, comme étant inaccessibles, ou inadaptés à leurs besoins.

Inadéquation perçue des services communautaires

Ce dernier cas de figure met en évidence les diverses contingences mises de l'avant par les employés proches-aidants lorsqu'ils n'utilisaient pas sciemment les services communautaires. À ce titre, le fait d'occuper un travail à temps plein a été désigné plusieurs fois comme incompatible avec les activités de jour proposées par les organismes. Nous avons mentionné plus haut le cas d'un répondant qui n'aurait pas eu le temps de fréquenter les groupes de soutien lorsqu'il était en emploi. Ici, le discours de Florence montre que participer aux activités de l'organisme communautaire auquel elle était affiliée engendrait une surcharge accentuant le stress de ne pouvoir assumer adéquatement son rôle au travail :

> Dans le fond c'est intéressant, sauf que c'est toujours le jour. Les cafés-rencontre… y'a pas
> de soirées-rencontre […]. Bien moi je travaille, c'est sûr que je pourrais… Mais sauf que je
> m'absente déjà, mettons… (Florence).

Parfois, les besoins étaient présentés comme trop grands pour être assumés par les organismes communautaires, soit parce que les intervenants n'avaient pas les compétences requises pour certains cas trop lourds, soit parce que leurs capacités étaient perçues comme trop limitées pour par exemple offrir un répit de 24 heures « dans une petite maison de campagne ». Enfin, dans certains cas les services étaient mal reçus par les personnes aidées elles-mêmes, ce qui dissuadait l'aidant d'y recourir.

En somme, de nombreuses raisons expliquent la non-utilisation des services communautaires. Si les personnes jouissant d'un soutien social dans leur entourage proche et/ou dans leur emploi n'y ont généralement pas recours, d'autres personnes plus isolées auraient eu avantage à en bénéficier. L'occupation d'une activité rémunérée ressort également comme un facteur explicatif, la nécessité de se rendre sur le lieu des activités communautaires pouvant créer un conflit de temps avec l'emploi.

DISCUSSION

Notre article offre une analyse du soutien offert par le milieu communautaire, du point de vue des bénéficiaires (employés proches-aidants) mais aussi des dispensateurs (intervenants communautaires) de ce soutien, telle que suggérée par les recherches dans ce domaine (Nurullah, 2012). À l'aide des théories de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 1989) et des ressources en soutien social (Hobfoll *et al.*, 1990), nous avons mis en évidence que les services communautaires peuvent constituer une ressource pour la minimisation du conflit emploi-famille-soins : le répit peut réduire le conflit d'emploi du temps vécu par les employés proches-aidants, en leur offrant un soutien instrumental leur permettant d'assumer leur rôle d'employé pendant que des acteurs de confiance prennent la relève dans le rôle de proche aidant. Par ailleurs, le soutien émotionnel d'écoute, de compréhension et de conseils peut faire l'objet d'une ressource précieuse pour l'allégement du conflit de tension et pour le maintien en emploi des proches aidants, particulièrement lorsque ceux-ci ne disposent pas de soutien social efficace de la part de leur entourage proche ou de leur milieu de travail. Ces formes de soutien semblent particulièrement importantes dans un contexte où les proches aidants, et en particulier les femmes dispensant plus de vingt heures de soins par semaine comme c'était le cas dans notre groupe, sont à risque de quitter le marché du travail (Lilly *et al.*, 2007). Par ailleurs, nos résultats révèlent que le soutien émotionnel dispensé par le milieu communautaire, à travers des rencontres individuelles ou des groupes de soutien par les pairs, est particulièrement utilisé lors de moments de crise (par exemple, arrêt de travail pour épuisement professionnel) ou de transition de carrière (par exemple, retraite).

Cependant, il semble que nous ne soyons pas systématiquement en présence d'un phénomène de soutien social lorsque nous étudions la relation entre milieu communautaire et employés proches-aidants, puisque d'une part la majorité d'entre eux ne perçoivent pas que les organismes communautaires peuvent répondre à leurs besoins, et d'autre part le soutien social implique une forme de réciprocité dans l'échange de services que l'on n'a pas observée dans le rapport entre employés proches-aidants et acteurs communautaires. En effet, si le bénéficiaire du soutien n'a pas l'occasion d'offrir une contribution en retour du service rendu, la relation de soutien social risque de s'éteindre car « les individus ont besoin d'occasions à la fois de fournir et de recevoir un soutien afin de maintenir l'équité dans les relations » (Heller, Price et Hogg, 1990, p. 484, traduction libre). Probablement est-ce l'une des raisons pour lesquelles la littérature a souligné la difficulté inhérente à la mise en place d'interventions de soutien social efficaces (Heller, Price et Hogg, 1990, p. 483). Ces considérations trouvent écho dans nos résultats, qui montrent bien la difficulté vécue par les acteurs communautaires à recruter et à impliquer les proches aidants dans la vie de l'organisme, difficulté qu'ils attribuent aux nombreux rôles que ceux-ci ont à concilier, particulièrement lorsqu'ils occupent un emploi.

En effet, nous avons vu que les employés proches-aidants recourent le plus souvent aux organismes communautaires pour leurs *services* de répit ou de ménage plutôt que pour leurs activités de socialisation, ce qui soulève une question importante relative au milieu communautaire et à sa mission fondamentale au sein de la société québécoise. Le rapport des employés proches-aidants au milieu communautaire, tel que présenté dans nos résultats, semble indiquer chez les organismes communautaires un rôle de « co-production des services publics » plutôt que d'affirmer leur mission de « co-construction des politiques sociales » (Savard et Proulx, 2012). Pourtant, les organismes ont mis en place les espaces nécessaires pour stimuler la participation

des employés proches-aidants à travers des groupes d'entraide qui, s'ils étaient davantage fréquentés, permettraient une meilleure connaissance des problématiques vécues et ce faisant une meilleure représentation des proches aidants au sein de la société civile, surtout que ceux-ci sont aujourd'hui plus susceptibles d'être en emploi qu'à la retraite (Fast, 2015; Sinha, 2013). On a donc affaire à un phénomène double : d'une part, nos résultats montrent que le milieu communautaire reste encore méconnu du public malgré son importance au sein de l'économie québécoise (Bélanger, 1999) et, d'autre part, la manière dont les employés proches-aidants recourent au milieu communautaire tend à orienter ses activités vers une prolongation à bas prix de services publics.

Pourtant, ce changement n'est certainement pas souhaité par le milieu communautaire qui tend à subir un sous-financement et craint une perte d'autonomie liée aux diverses ententes de services qu'il est amené à signer (Grenier et Fleury, 2014) afin d'obtenir des ressources telles que le répit. Leur rôle n'est pas de supplanter les services publics mais de « répondre aux besoins des citoyens selon leur propre définition de leurs problèmes et sans lourdeur bureaucratique » (Lecomte, 1986, p. 6), en tant que ressources alternatives et, dans l'idéal, *complémentaires* au réseau formel de la santé. Cependant, comme le réseau de la santé a été touché par des coupures budgétaires, la situation a pu évoluer. Par ailleurs, nos résultats ne révèlent pas que les employés proches-aidants n'ont pas intérêt à bénéficier du soutien socio-émotionnel offert par le milieu communautaire, mais plutôt qu'ils s'en privent en raison de divers facteurs de contingence. Notre étude ajoute en cela aux travaux précédents concernant les facteurs expliquant la sous-utilisation des services communautaires : outre des résistances culturelles (Robinson *et al.*, 2013), la surdose d'information (Williams *et al.*, 2016), les capacités d'organisation personnelle moindres de certains proches aidants et la lourdeur de certains besoins qui dépassent les capacités du milieu communautaire (Pépin *et al.*, 2012; Vézina *et al.*, 1994), l'emploi du temps au travail, la distance qui sépare l'organisme du domicile ou du lieu de travail de l'aidant ainsi que la résistance de la personne aidée à diverses interventions sont également des facteurs à prendre en compte. Le milieu communautaire, qui se caractérise essentiellement par des mouvements sociaux prenant leur signification localement (Tremblay et Fournis, 2016), semble peu compatible avec une répartition équitable des services sur le territoire. En effet, on observe des inégalités territoriales : par exemple, bien qu'il existe une ligne téléphonique mise à disposition par l'Appui national à laquelle les proches aidants peuvent recourir pour connaître les services disponibles à proximité de chez eux, les lieux de rendez-vous sont parfois à plus d'une heure de trajet de leur domicile. En y ajoutant les embouteillages et la difficulté de se stationner en ville, ces divers facteurs peuvent dissuader des proches aidants qui passent déjà beaucoup de temps en transit de se rendre à leur lieu de travail ainsi qu'aux divers rendez-vous médicaux de la personne aidée.

De notre analyse découle un certain nombre d'implications pratiques et théoriques que nous approfondissons dans les paragraphes qui suivent.

Retombées pour la pratique

En fil directeur, et suite aux considérations qui précèdent, le défi des organismes communautaires consacrés au soutien des proches aidants semble être de s'adapter aux besoins d'une population active tout en évitant la dérive de se limiter à l'offre de services apparentés aux services publics, faute de pouvoir impliquer les individus dans leurs activités de socialisation.

Dans ce cadre, il semble pertinent pour les organismes d'affirmer leur identité d'intermédiaire-pivot avec le réseau de la santé, en écoutant les besoins des individus puis en accompagnant ces derniers dans les diverses démarches associées à leurs besoins. Les démarches administratives liées à la prestation de soins étant souvent chronophage pour une personne qui n'a probablement jamais réfléchi à la question auparavant, il

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pourrait être intéressant de mettre en évidence l'économie de temps et d'énergie qu'elle peut faire en recourant à un organisme dans le cadre d'un échange—en personne ou même téléphonique—avec un intervenant communautaire connaissant bien le système, plutôt que de gaspiller de l'énergie à effectuer toutes les démarches par elle-même. Dans ce cadre, la proactivité des organismes et leur rôle d'accélérateur dans l'obtention des ressources gagnerait à être promue auprès des employés proches-aidants. À cette occasion, l'intervenant pourrait repérer les failles potentielles dans le réseau de soutien de l'aidant (à la fois dans son entourage proche et au travail) et lui présenter les activités psychosociales de l'organisme ainsi que la manière dont il bénéficierait à y participer.

À l'image de certains organismes que nous avons rencontrés, les acteurs communautaires gagneraient à s'informer à l'aide de sondages des besoins précis des proches aidants qui les consultent, et à manifester une certaine flexibilité dans leur offre de services. Étant donné la difficulté récurrente à mobiliser les proches aidants en emploi, il pourrait être intéressant pour les acteurs communautaires de développer des forums en ligne en demandant leurs impressions et suggestions de manière à faire évoluer les activités communautaires. Par l'intermédiaire de cette plateforme, les proches aidants auraient peut-être davantage l'occasion de s'impliquer et pourraient trouver une certaine satisfaction au fait de contribuer au développement de l'organisme.

Par ailleurs, pour éviter une surdose d'information, davantage de coordination entre les acteurs communautaires et l'ensemble des professionnels de la santé serait souhaitable. Toutefois, cette recommandation s'adresse davantage au réseau de la santé qu'au milieu communautaire qui semble déjà déployer de nombreux efforts pour ce faire. Les médecins en particulier semblent être des acteurs-clés dans la diffusion de l'information, de par leur autorité médicale reconnue. En cela, il serait important que ceux-ci connaissent le réseau communautaire consacré aux proches aidants et pensent à y référer les proches aidants de manière plus systématique, dans un esprit de complémentarité. Dans la même veine, le milieu de travail constitue également un endroit stratégique dans la diffusion de l'information et les organismes gagneraient à poursuivre leurs efforts pour se faire connaître dans ces milieux, notamment à travers les programmes d'aide aux employés.

Enfin, les proches aidants bénéficieraient grandement d'un discours public les incitant davantage à demander de l'aide plutôt que d'un discours se contentant de les remercier, voire de les louer, pour un rôle qu'ils n'ont pas toujours choisi de plein gré.

Considérations théoriques

Les acteurs communautaires sont à même de constituer un soutien de substitution (Hobfoll *et al*. 1990) pour les employés qui ne bénéficient pas de soutien social dans leur entourage personnel et/ou au travail et souhaitent se maintenir en emploi. Le répit est une ressource à même de réduire le conflit de temps entre emploi et soins grâce au remplacement du proche aidant lorsqu'il travaille (Greenhaus et Beutell, 1985). Le répit peut également agir sur la deuxième composante du conflit de temps qui est la surcharge, pourvu qu'un lien de confiance existe entre l'employé proche-aidant et les acteurs communautaires quant à la prise en charge de la personne aidée. Dans le cas contraire, l'employé proche-aidant serait susceptible d'être distrait au travail en se préoccupant de savoir si la personne aidée se trouve adéquatement prise en charge par les intervenants auxquels il l'a confiée. D'autre part, le soutien psychosocial dispensé par le milieu communautaire à travers les rencontres individuelles et les groupes de soutien par les pairs est un soutien de type émotionnel à même de réduire la tension, en amenant notamment l'aidant à travailler sur la dynamique de culpabilité associée au fait de ne pouvoir remplir son rôle d'aidant « à temps plein » en raison de l'emploi occupé.

Toutefois, nos résultats montrent que les activités communautaires qui ont généralement lieu pendant les heures de travail sont susceptibles de constituer davantage une exigence supplémentaire qu'une ressource pour la conciliation emploi-famille-soins, et peuvent engendrer un conflit de temps chez l'employé proche-aidant qui doit réfléchir à une manière d'intégrer cette activité dans son emploi du temps déjà chargé. Ces résultats peuvent s'ajouter à la littérature concernant les « effets pervers » du soutien social offert, susceptibles d'augmenter le stress plutôt que de le réduire (Nurullah, 2012, p. 174). D'autres approches théoriques pourraient davantage éclairer l'apport des ressources communautaires à la conciliation emploi-famille, surtout chez les proches aidants qui ne disposent pas forcément du soutien d'un conjoint pour remplir ce rôle.

Par ailleurs, si les acteurs communautaires peuvent en théorie être considérés comme formant un système de soutien social (Lecomte 1986; Lin *et al.*, 1979), nos résultats montrent en concordance avec la littérature sur le sujet (Heller *et al.*, 1990) qu'il est difficile de mettre en place des interventions à même de reproduire les interactions sociales dans le réseau naturel des individus—en témoigne la difficulté à impliquer les employés proches-aidants et à obtenir d'eux une forme de réciprocité dans la relation. Cependant, les quelques recommandations pratiques formulées ci-dessus pourraient faire en sorte que les ressources communautaires soient perçues comme un soutien social par les employés proches-aidants. Enfin, de manière secondaire, et comme l'ont remarqué Trukeschitz *et al.* (2013), nos résultats montrent que les personnes effectuant moins d'heures de soin n'étaient pas les moins stressées, ce qui appuie l'idée que le nombre d'heures de soin effectué n'est pas le meilleur indicateur ou le seul facteur explicatif des tensions vécues par les proches aidants.

Limites de la recherche

Comme toute recherche, la nôtre comporte des limites qu'il convient de mentionner. Premièrement, un devis de recherche impliquant une unité d'analyse dyadique entre organisme et membre proche-aidant aurait pu permettre d'augmenter la validité interne de cette étude; malheureusement, les travailleurs proches-aidants sont difficiles à recruter, notamment en raison du nombre important de tâches qu'ils doivent concilier. Ainsi, nous n'avons pas pu recueillir un nombre suffisant de répondants auprès des seuls organismes communautaires, ce qui rendait impossible une analyse dyadique. Deuxièmement, une minorité de répondants était retraitée ou en recherche d'emploi, ce qui a pu entraîner une distorsion dans la manière dont ils rapportaient leur expérience de conciliation entre travail et soins. Enfin, nos critères de mesure étaient la perception des personnes mêmes, ce qui peut toujours constituer un parti pris, surtout dans l'étude de l'offre de soutien social par opposition à l'étude du soutien perçu. Toutefois, la comparaison entre la vision des organismes et celle des proches aidants eux-mêmes apporte un éclairage original sur la question.

CONCLUSION

Notre étude contribue à la connaissance générale concernant le soutien offert aux Canadiens investis de responsabilités de proches aidants, en particulier à ceux qui combinent les soins avec une activité rémunérée. Dans un contexte de retrait de l'État vis-à-vis des responsabilités de soin et d'accent croissant mis sur le rôle du proche aidant dans le discours public, le milieu communautaire est un acteur de plus en plus important dans l'offre de soutien aux proches aidants. La vaste gamme de services et d'activités qu'il propose est à même de répondre à une multitude de besoins, allant du répit et de l'aide pour les tâches ménagères à la satisfaction de besoins émotionnels d'échange et de partage avec des pairs sur l'expérience de soins, souvent intense et éprouvante sous de multiples aspects.

Pourtant, comme nous l'avons vu, la lourdeur de certains besoins dépasse les capacités du milieu communautaire. De plus, l'emploi du temps au travail, la distance qui sépare l'organisme du domicile ou du lieu de travail de l'aidant ainsi que la résistance de la personne aidée à diverses interventions sont des facteurs qui

peuvent réduire la demande de services. Par ailleurs, le milieu communautaire ne saurait se résumer à une offre de ressources à bas prix prolongeant le service public, mais constituerait bien plutôt un acteur intermédiaire et complémentaire au réseau formel de la santé, ressortant en premier lieu d'un contact direct avec les citoyens et s'organisant autour de leurs besoins. Cependant, certains employés proches-aidants pour une multitude de raisons semblent manquer de cet aspect socioaffectif qui pourrait pourtant leur être bénéfique. S'il est vrai que les contraintes des proches-aidants, telles que le fait d'être à l'emploi, peuvent limiter leur accès aux ressources communautaires, celles-ci demeurent également méconnues du public et peu relayées par les réseaux de soutien formel.

En outre, il faut rappeler que, selon nos résultats, le rapport des employés proches-aidants au milieu communautaire est tel qu'il semble appuyer chez les organismes communautaires un rôle restreint de « co-production des services publics » plutôt qu'une mission avantageuse de « co-construction des politiques sociales » (Savard et Proulx, 2012). En abordant cette question, notre contribution ajoute une pierre à l'édifice des efforts dirigés vers une complémentarité accrue entre le secteur public et le secteur communautaire, tout en laissant à ce dernier sa gouvernance propre.

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IS THERE A CREDIT UNION DIFFERENCE?
COMPARING CANADIAN CREDIT UNION AND
BANK BRANCH LOCATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study of credit union and bank branch locations and neighbourhoods in Canada seeks to discover if there is a distinct credit union niche. We find that credit union branches are over-represented in rural areas, and under-represented in large population centres relative to bank branches. Additionally, credit unions are overrepresented in middle-income areas and underrepresented in high-income areas compared to bank branches both at the national level and in all provinces where differences are statistically significant. While both credit unions and banks cater to marginalized communities, the type of marginalized communities they cater to distinguishes them. Making use of the Canadian Marginalization Index, we find credit union branches in Canada to be overrepresented in communities marginalized along the dimensions of material deprivation and dependency, while bank branches are overrepresented in communities marginalized along the dimensions of residential instability and ethnic concentration.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude de l'emplacement des coopératives financières et des succursales bancaires dans divers quartiers au Canada cherche à découvrir s'il y a un créneau distinct pour les coopératives financières. Nous remarquons que, par rapport aux banques, les coopératives financières sont surreprésentées dans les milieux ruraux tandis qu'elles sont sous-représentées dans les grands centres urbains. Par surcroît, les coopératives financières par rapport aux banques sont surreprésentées dans les milieux à revenu moyen et sous-représentées dans les milieux à revenu élevé, tant au niveau national que dans toutes les provinces où les différences sont importantes sur le plan statistique. Les banques et les coopératives financières desservent toutes les deux les communautés marginalisées, mais le type de communauté que chacun dessert diffère. En effet, en nous fondant sur l'indice de marginalisation canadien, nous remarquons que les coopératives financières au Canada sont surreprésentées dans les communautés marginalisées par leur défavorisation et dépendance matérielle

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tandis que les banques sont surreprésentées dans les communautés marginalisées par leur instabilité résidentielle et concentrations ethniques.

KEYWORDS / MOTS CLÉS : Credit union; Bank; Canadian Marginalization Index; Rural/urban; Coopérative financière; Banque; Indice de marginalisation canadien; Rural/urbain

INTRODUCTION

As member-based associations and a form of co-operative, credit unions in Canada fulfill a social mission alongside the financial services they provide. In a Canadian financial landscape dominated by chartered banks, credit unions are finding themselves under increasing pressure to compete while at a disadvantage given that they cannot raise capital in the market in the same manner as banks. In addition, they no longer receive the tax benefits they enjoyed since 1972, as these were removed from the 2013 federal budget (Flaherty, 2013).

In this context, this study explores how credit unions distinguish themselves by exploring the communities they serve. Research studying credit unions in three U.S. states (Arizona, Wisconsin, and New Hampshire) found that credit union branches are predominantly located in urban centres, much like bank branches; however, they are overrepresented in lower-income areas as compared to banks (Mook, Maiorano, & Quarter, 2015). This finding was consistent with the credit union tradition of offering financial services to demographic groups in need. In a similar manner, this study explores if this phenomenon holds in Canada. That is, are credit unions in Canada overrepresented in lower-income or more marginalized communities as compared to banks?

CREDIT UNIONS IN CANADA

Credit unions in Canada are a form of co-operative with share capital that differs from that of a bank. In credit unions, share capital is not publicly traded on a stock market, and its value is not as tied to market forces. Voting rights in credit unions, like co-operatives in general, are associated with membership, with each member holding one vote and one membership share. For banks, voting rights are tied to shares representing ownership and influence can be associated with large blocks of capital.

While recent changes to federal tax policy have not favoured Canadian credit unions, recent changes to federal financial policy have supported credit union expansion and competitiveness. In 2012, following the credit crisis, the federal government adopted new legislation enabling credit unions to expand beyond their provincial borders as national financial institutions in order to promote their growth, their competitiveness with banks, and to enhance stability of the financial system (Flaherty, 2010; Government of Canada, 2012). Given challenges credit unions have faced in expanding nationally, the federal government has indicated it will propose legislative measures to smooth the expansion process for credit unions, and to provide protection for them against transitional risks (Morneau, 2016), including potential changes in deposit insurance associated with different provinces. Only one credit union in Canada, Uni Financial, has obtained a federal charter, in July 2016 (CCUA, 2016).

Credit unions have less stringent disclosure requirements than banks, which are federally regulated, making risks for banks easier to measure (Shecter, 2014). Credit unions are provincially regulated, and these agencies may have less capacity to monitor larger more complex credit unions (IMF, 2014). In this vein, the Bank of Canada has highlighted that smaller non-federally regulated institutions, entities such as credit unions, may be more vulnerable to economic downturns, potentially having adverse financial and economic spillover effects.

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Reasons for this vulnerability include that credit unions may have a higher portion of business and lending directed at riskier areas, and varying requirements on policy to mitigate these risks, such as higher capital positions and tighter supervision (Bank of Canada, 2014).

In our study of U.S. credit unions (Mook, Maiorano, & Quarter, 2015), we posit that credit union location was driven by at least two theoretical factors: the need to find a distinct niche that struck an appropriate balance between market forces and social mission and that separated credit unions from banks; and market accommodation, or the need to accommodate themselves to the market forces that all financial institutions must compete within. The current study analyzes Canadian credit union and bank branch locations along various geographic and demographic factors to explore if the social mission of credit unions is conveyed in the communities they serve. Overall, it asks the question, is there a distinct credit union niche in Canada?

A BRIEF HISTORY

The first credit union in Canada was founded in 1900 by Alphonse and Dormène Desjardins in Lévis, Québec, largely because loans from banks to ordinary citizens either were unavailable or available only at usurious rates of interest. The credit unions founded by the Desjardins have evolved into a huge corporate conglomerate that bears the founders' name (MacPherson, 1979, 1999, 2012). The first credit unions were developed in church parishes in rural Québec, before branching out from there into workplaces and community locations both in Québec and other parts of Canada. The Desjardins also founded the first U.S. credit union in 1909 in the St. Mary's parish of Manchester, New Hampshire (Pierce, 2011). The Desjardins Group is more extensive than credit unions (*caisses populaires* in Québec and other francophone areas in Canada) and involves a complex conglomerate that consists of insurance companies (including the Canadian assets of State Farm), a bank, brokerage, foundation, historical society, etc. (Desjardins, 2016a). In the first quarter of 2015, the Desjardins Group had assets of $254 billion, an operating income of $3.6 billion, and a surplus (referred to as a profit by conventional financial institutions) of $464 million (Desjardins, 2015). Desjardins had 45,966 employees, predominantly in Québec, about 4,800 elected officers or members who form the governance of the *caisses populaires*, and in its last complete financial year gave $82.3 million in financial support to local commuities through donations and sponsorships. For many communities in rural Québec, Desjardins *caisses populaires* are the only financial outlets (Desjardins, 2016b; Mook, Hann, & Quarter, 2012). This conglomerate would have been unimaginable to the pioneers who founded the first caisses populaires and were simply trying to make loans available to underserved populations. That was the social mission or value proposition that credit unions were founded on, and it has evolved in response to changing times (MacPherson, 2012).

In English Canada as a whole, credit unions do not have as strong a presence relative to the population size as in Québec, nor are they as centrally co-ordinated within one overarching organization. The umbrella organization is the Canadian Credit Union Association (CCUA) and its members consist of regional affiliates (excepting for Québec): Atlantic Central, Central 1 Credit Union (representing Ontario and British Columbia), Credit Union Central of Alberta, Credit Union Central of Manitoba, SaskCentral, and L'Alliance des caisses populaires de l'Ontario limitée (representing *caisses populaires* in Ontario that are not affiliated with Desjardins). These regional affiliates are second-tier co-operatives whose members are credit unions (not individuals) within the region that they represent. Although many credit unions were founded on a bond of association based on a workplace or ethnicity, the predominant bond in Canada and the U.S. is a community charter or a locale. A community charter allows credit unions to expand beyond a specific group and to compete more effectively with banks.

In combining all of the credit unions and *caisses populaires* in Canada, affiliated either with the Canadian Credit Union Association or Desjardins, there are 664 credit unions with a total of 2,953 branches, 10.1 million members (nearly 30 percent of the total population and 35 percent of those 18 and over), and $332.3 billion of assets (Canadian Credit Union Association, 2015a). There is a relatively equal division between credit unions affiliated with the Credit Union Central of Canada and Desjardins (predominantly Québec). There are 351 Desjardins affiliated credit unions with 1,197 branches, 4.7 million members and $158.8 billion of assets. There are four provinces in Canada in which credit union membership borders on half of the population: Manitoba, Québec, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia (Canadian Credit Union Association, 2016a).

In spite of its significant presence in Canada, the credit union system is secondary to the chartered banks. The total assets of the credit union system for all of Canada, including Québec, are about $80 billion less than the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), the fifth largest chartered bank (CIBC, 2016a). Although a credit union is the primary financial institution for many Canadians, for others it is a supplementary service. With the exception of Desjardins, which could be characterized as a co-operative bank, similar to those found in many European countries (European Association of Co-operative Banks, 2013), credit unions in Canada are relatively small for modern financial institutions. Vancity, which is the largest, has $18.4 billion of assets (Canadian Credit Union Association, 2015b). At the end of 2014, there were only 32 credit unions with at least one billion dollars of assets (Canadian Credit Union Association, 2015b). However, one difference between a credit union and a bank is that it is concentrated in a region rather than attempting to serve the entire country as well as participate in international markets. Desjardins *caisses populaires* have a very strong presence in Québec, with about 40 percent of deposits in that province (McNish, 2011), and Vancity has a strong presence in the lower mainland of British Columbia. As a system, credit unions serve all regions, but unlike banks each credit union is not simply a branch of a large corporation but rather an independently incorporated financial institution focused in a region or even more specifically, in a workplace.

Nevertheless, credit unions in Canada are consolidating, or expanding their community charter, and becoming more centralized in their operations, a pattern discussed by Ian MacPherson (2012) in referring to their stages of development. In a historical analysis of the credit union development in Canada, MacPherson (2012) argues:

> The Canadian credit union movement has gone through a series of periods or stages, particularly over the last eighty years, which can be understood as: formative, stabilizing, building, re-examining, and reformulating. The last two stages, re-examining and reformulating, are cyclical because credit unions are constantly buffeted by internal and external pressures and the need to adapt. The great challenge they face is how, amid those changes, they can retain their commitment to members, co-operative structures, community relations, developing appropriate government relations, and co-operative management. (p. 37)

This consolidation is also found in the U.S. (Mook et al., 2015). As noted, a distinctive feature of U.S. credit unions is that they are nonprofit corporations, and in the three states that we studied previously, their branches were over-represented relative to banks in lower-income areas. In Canada, it is unclear whether this same pattern of over-representation in lower-income areas is evident, as one might expect for organizations with the credit union history. In both countries, credit unions are consolidating, facilitated by their community charter, with larger credit unions taking over smaller ones, though retaining outlets where there were independent credit unions previously.

EXISTING RESEARCH ON CREDIT UNION DEMOGRAPHICS

There is a limited body of research specifically on credit union location. As electronic commerce has increased, it could be argued that location involving bricks and mortar is of lesser importance than in the past. In other words, people can use the services of a financial institution from afar just as easily as if there was a physical location. Nevertheless, credit unions do have physical locations and the choice of these locations, mostly branches, speaks to who the credit union wants to serve. While some services such as paying bills, depositing funds, and fund transfers can be done with ease electronically, electronic access facilities are not a universal norm and some sectors of the population may lack access for a variety of reasons, such as language in the case of recent immigrants, the cost or associated proficiency of appropriate technology, or physical limitations, as in the case of some seniors. In addition to basic financial services, credit unions, in the manner of financial institutions in general, are involved in more complex financial services, such as access to credit, and various forms of investment, including retirement savings. Having a physical location facilitates access to such services and having to travel a long distance reduces access.

An earlier study of credit unions, focusing on Québec and Atlantic Canada (Mook, Hann, & Quarter, 2012) found that credit union branches tended to be more rural relative to bank branches. In Québec, the relationship was very strong: *caisses populaires* were over-represented in rural areas relative to the population and relative to bank branches. For communities of fewer than 3,000 people, the relationship was striking: they contained about 36 percent of Desjardins branches but fewer than 2 percent of bank branches. In varying degree, credit union branches were over-represented in relation to the population in small towns and rural areas throughout Canada, suggesting that they may have a niche market in those areas.

Another Canadian study centred in Winnipeg, covering the period 1980 to 2009, focused on the geographic location of various forms of financial institutions (Brennan, McGregor, & Buckland, 2011). It not only included branches of banks and credit unions, but also payday lenders. In brief, this study, which is very comprehensive, found that bank branches experienced a sharp decline in the inner-city of Winnipeg; credit union branches experienced a slight decline; and payday lenders, which originated much later than either banks or credit unions, were by 2009 "disproportionately represented" relative to banks and credit unions, suggesting they have taken over a clientele of underserved citizens that credit unions were originally set up to serve. However, an important qualifier is that the payday lenders serve these clients at rates of interest that many in the public would view as exorbitant.

A similar finding about payday lenders locating in low-income areas and banks neglecting these areas was revealed in a study undertaken by Steven Graves (2003). That study focused on Illinois and Louisiana, but did not include credit unions. Nevertheless, both studies suggest that payday lenders are taking over a market that was originally the niche for credit unions.

A U.S. study of credit union and retail bank headquarters found that credit unions have distinct locations (Deller & Sundaram-Stukel, 2012). This study, building on earlier research by Robert M. Feinberg (2008), used central-place theory (Eaton & Lipsey, 1982; King, 1984) to determine whether credit unions followed the herd, so to speak, and were concentrated in the same locations as other financial institutions or whether they stayed true to their mission and focused on underserved areas. The research, nationwide, shows that credit unions tend to avoid areas that have higher concentration of banks. In fact, "if spatial geography can be viewed as an accurate measure of 'yardstick competition', then credit unions serve a distinct market share" (Feinberg, 2008, p. 442). That same study also indicated that credit unions were in areas of "higher concentration of civic-social organizations and labor unions" (Feinberg, 2008, p. 442).

There is one fundamental problem with the study by Steven Deller and Reka Sundaram-Stukel (2012): it does not include credit union and bank branches in the analysis, only head offices. With credit unions consolidating, branches are servicing communities previously serviced by independent credit unions. Our research in Arizona, Wisconsin, and New Hampshire, which uses the branch as the unit of analysis (Mook, Maiorano, & Quarter, 2015), produces different results to Deller and Sundaram-Stukel's (2012). As noted, our research shows that credit union branches in those three states are indeed heavily urban, even to a greater degree than bank branches, but to a significant degree they are more likely than bank branches to service lower-income communities. Therefore, the herd mentality that Deller and Sundaram-Stukel (2012) refer to is confirmed in part in that credit unions are navigating with the population and other financial institutions to urban centres, but they still have a niche, or at least a partial niche, consistent with the credit union tradition.

In the U.K., credit unions were slower to develop than either in Canada or the U.S., the first ones emerging in the 1960s and the movement never attaining the scale found in Canada and the U.S. (MacPherson, 1999). A comprehensive study of U.K. credit unions (Ward & McKillop, 2005) looked at success, utilizing the measures of payouts of patronage dividends and administrative efficiency. The research found that larger credit unions were the most successful as were those located primarily in wealthier areas. While this finding may not be surprising, it does beg the question of whether there is a distinct credit union niche and if this niche is serving underserved communities in line with co-operative principles, or if market principles acts as a stronger force. This is something the current study seeks to determine for Canadian credit unions.

METHODOLOGY

To address our research question of whether or not there is a distinct credit union niche and if this niche is serving underserved communities, we undertook three types of analysis: First, we looked at the representation of credit union and bank branches by rural/urban spatial characteristics. Second, we compared credit union and bank branches in areas by household income. Third, we compared branches using the Canadian Marginalization Index dimensions.

The addresses of all bank branches in Canada were collected in the spring of 2015 from the corporate websites of the five largest chartered banks: Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Royal Bank of Canada, and TD Canada Trust. Credit union branch addresses for all provinces but Québec were acquired from the Canadian Credit Union Association in the fall of 2014 and cross-checked with individual credit union websites. In Québec, credit union branches consist of all *caisse populaire* branches of Desjardins, the addresses of which were collected in the spring of 2015 from the Desjardins corporate website.

Geographic data and corresponding postal code data were collected from Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013a, 2013b). The 2011 Census and National Household Survey provided median household income (MHI) data for the study (Statistics Canada, 2014). These data were collected by census tract for postal codes within Census Metropolitan Areas or Census Agglomeration Areas, and census subdivision or forward sortation areas (FSA) for postal codes outside. The location of each branch was classified as either low-, middle- or high-income based on the ratio of the MHI of the census tract, subdivision, or FSA, to the larger census division in which the branch was located.

Our aim was to explore issues of marginalization or social disadvantage that extend beyond issues of material deprivation, such as income level. Individuals or social groups may be denied access to opportunities, resources, or social integration for reasons beyond income. Marginalization may be related to an individual or social group's ethno-racial identity, social class, education level, immigration status, or household composition.

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Sharon Collard (2007) outlines increased consequences for marginalized individuals and social groups of being financially excluded. It is more difficult to operate a household budget, more costly to borrow money from sub-prime lenders, more difficult to obtain investment or debt advice, and more difficult to be insured. The Canadian Marginalization Index is an area-based deprivation index that accounts for broader issues surrounding marginalization, beyond material deprivation (Matheson, Dunn, Smith, Moineddin, & Glazier, 2012a). Making use of theoretical perspectives on inequality and marginalization in Canada, the index is comprised of four factors or dimensions of marginalization: residential instability, material deprivation, dependency, and ethnic concentration (Matheson, Dunn, Smith, Moineddin, & Glazier, 2012b). The census variables that make up each of these four dimensions are listed in Table 1 below. All of Canada is divided into dissemination areas, small areas of dissemination blocks, with a population between 400 to 700 people (Statistics Canada, 2011). The marginalization level of the dissemination area of each dimension was sectioned into terciles, and assigned to each credit union and bank branch, allowing analysis throughout Canada.

Table 1: Canadian Marginalization Index

Dimension	Variables
Residential Instability	Proportion living alone Proportion who are non-youth (16+)* Reverse coding of average number of persons per dwelling* Proportion of dwellings that are apartment buildings Proportion of the population that are single/divorced/widowed* Proportion of dwellings that are not owned* Proportion who moved within the past five years
Material Deprivation	Proportion 20+ without certificate, diploma, or degree Proportion of lone-parent families Proportion receiving government transfer payments Proportion unemployment 15+ Proportion below low income cut-off Proportion of homes in need of major repair
Dependency	Proportion of seniors (65+) Dependency ratio (0–14 & 65+)/(15–64) Proportion not participating in labour force (15+)*
Ethnic Concentration	Proportion of five-year recent immigrants Proportion of visible minority

Source: Matheson, Dunn, Smith, Moineddin, & Glazier, 2012b.
* Derived by reverse coding original measures

Chi-square tests of homogeneity were used to test whether credit union and bank branches distributed over geographic areas of differing size, median household income level, and marginalization level for each of the four dimensions, are the same. Using Pearson's chi-squared test, we rejected the null hypothesis that branching of credit unions and banks are the same under the variable studied when *p* values were less than 0.05.

FINDINGS

Findings are presented next by rural/urban special characteristics, by median household income level, and by Canadian Marginalization Index dimensions.

By rural/urban spatial characteristics

The proportion of credit union and bank branches in Canada in rural and urban areas are provided in Table 2 below. We used the population centre size as assigned by Statistics Canada to postal codes. Small, medium, and large population centres have populations from 1,000 to 30,000; 30,000 to 100,000; and 100,000 or more, respectively. Areas in Canada not satisfying minimum population and population density levels are considered rural (Statistics Canada, 2013a). Census metropolitan areas (CMAs) or agglomeration areas (CAs) are "formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core)" (Statistics Canada, 2013a, p.37). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, with a core of at least 50,000 people, while a CA must have a "core" population of at least 10,000. Areas within a CMA or CA not classified as core or fringe are classified as rural. A third dimension identifies whether an area is located within or outside a CMA or CA. Areas "outside CMAs and CAs" are considered either small population centres or rural areas only. By combining statistical area classifications along these three dimensions: size, type, and relation to CMA or CA, the rural/urban spatial characteristics of each bank and credit union branch within a postal code was determined.

Table 2: Credit union and bank branches by rural/urban spatial characteristics

Province	# of Branches		Credit Unions						Banks						Statistical	
	Credit Union	Bank	Large	Medium	Small Inside CM/A	Small Outside CM/A	Rural Inside CM/A	Rural Outside CM/A	Large	Medium	Small Inside CM/A	Small Outside CM/A	Rural Inside CM/A	Rural Outside CM/A	Chi Squared (p value)	Effect Size
Québec	1,104	605	31%	6%	6%	14%	5%	38%	75%	9%	6%	6%	1%	3%	0.00	48%
Ontario	577	2,508	58%	11%	10%	12%	3%	7%	66%	8%	9%	12%	3%	3%	0.00	10%
British Columbia	363	733	56%	14%	7%	17%	1%	5%	62%	14%	10%	13%	0%	1%	0.00	16%
Saskatchewan	284	239	9%	2%	5%	29%	2%	54%	28%	5%	10%	35%	0%	22%	0.00	37%
Manitoba	211	201	31%	4%	6%	21%	4%	34%	48%	4%	6%	26%	1%	14%	0.00	26%
Alberta	208	638	32%	12%	12%	28%	2%	14%	54%	12%	13%	18%	0%	3%	0.00	28%
Nova Scotia	75	184	19%	5%	12%	19%	8%	37%	34%	3%	16%	28%	5%	14%	0.00	29%
Newfoundland	40	103	20%	0%	8%	35%	3%	35%	37%	0%	11%	33%	1%	18%		
New Brunswick	30	129	20%	27%	13%	23%		17%	12%	29%	21%	26%	2%	9%	0.32	
PEI	14	25		14%	7%	29%		50%	0%	40%	20%	20%		20%		
Yukon Territory	0	7							71%	0%				29%		
NWT	0	11							45%	55%						
Nunavut	0	5							0%	100%						
CANADA	2,906	5,388	37%	8%	7%	18%	4%	27%	59%	10%	10%	15%	2%	5%	0.00	34%

Nationally, credit unions have far greater representation in rural areas than banks. Almost one-third of credit union branches can be found in rural areas, while only six percent of bank branches are located in rural areas. Meanwhile, banks have far greater representation in large population centres as compared credit union branches (59 percent to 37 percent). This holds true for all the different regions of Canada with the exception of Atlantic Canada, where the data counts were too small to provide statistically reliable results. There were no credit union branches in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, or Nunavut.

The difference in branching distribution between large, medium, small, and rural areas are statistically significant at the national level with medium association, and in all provinces but New Brunswick. This branching difference is large in Québec, medium in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and Nova Scotia, and small in British Columbia and Ontario, as measured by effect size.

By household income level

We next analyzed credit union and bank branch locations by median household income level, classified as low, middle, and high (Table 3). Starting at the national level, we find credit union branches are overrepresented in middle-income areas, and underrepresented in high-income areas as compared to bank branches. This difference is statistically significant, although with small effect size. Analyzing by province, we find three that have statistically significant results: Québec, Nova Scotia, and Ontario.

Table 3: Comparison of income levels

Province	Credit Unions			Banks			Statistical	
	% low	% mid	% high	% low	% mid	% high	p value	Effect Size
Québec	15%	71%	14%	19%	56%	26%	0.00	0.17
Ontario	24%	60%	15%	21%	58%	21%	0.01	0.06
British Columbia	27%	59%	15%	29%	57%	14%	0.72	
Saskatchewan	18%	70%	12%	18%	74%	8%	0.37	
Manitoba	14%	64%	23%	18%	63%	19%	0.43	
Alberta	23%	66%	11%	23%	60%	17%	0.10	
Nova Scotia	11%	84%	5%	22%	70%	8%	0.05	0.15
Newfoundland	18%	63%	20%	14%	58%	28%	0.57	
New Brunswick	33%	63%	3%	29%	66%	5%	0.89	0.04
PEI	29%	64%	7%	24%	72%	4%	0.85	
Yukon Territory				14%	86%			
NWT					73%	27%		
Nunavut						100%		
CANADA	19%	67%	14%	22%	59%	19%	0.00	0.07

To delve further, we analyzed branching patterns along income levels by community size (Table 4). Nationally, differences between credit union and bank locations were statistically significant in rural and large population areas, although in opposite directions. In rural areas, bank branches were more likely to be located in low MHI areas. In large population centres, credit union branches were more likely to be located in low MHI areas. In small and medium population centres, the branching between credit unions and banks did not differ to a degree that is statistically significant.

Maiorano, Mook, & Quarter (2016)

Table 4: Branching pattern along income levels by community size

Province	Rural Credit Union low	mid	high	Rural Bank low	mid	high	Rural p value	Rural Effect size	Small Credit Union low	mid	high	Small Bank low	mid	high	Small p value	Small Effect size	Medium Credit Union low	mid	high	Medium Bank low	mid	high	Medium p value	Medium Effect size	Large Credit Union low	mid	high	Large Bank low	mid	high	Large p value	Large Effect size
Québec	11%	77%	12%	5%	70%	25%			7%	84%	9%	7%	89%	4%	0.36		21%	74%	5%	29%	68%	4%			24%	56%	20%	20%	48%	32%	0.00	0.14
Ontario	7%	78%	15%	11%	61%	27%	0.07		8%	81%	11%	11%	74%	16%	0.22		40%	60%	0%	31%	66%	3%			30%	50%	20%	24%	52%	24%	0.04	0.06
British Columbia	9%	87%	4%	17%	83%	0%			11%	75%	14%	11%	80%	10%	0.61		24%	62%	14%	28%	58%	14%	0.88		36%	48%	16%	36%	47%	16%	0.99	
Saskatchewan	17%	73%	9%	21%	74%	6%	0.61		16%	68%	16%	9%	86%	5%	0.01	0.22	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%			40%	44%	16%	31%	51%	18%	0.71	
Manitoba	10%	72%	19%	23%	68%	10%			9%	68%	23%	20%	69%	11%	0.07		0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%			24%	45%	30%	16%	54%	30%	0.42	
Alberta	12%	82%	6%	11%	84%	5%			8%	77%	14%	9%	79%	12%	0.82		20%	64%	16%	18%	75%	6%			48%	44%	8%	33%	44%	23%	0.01	0.16
Nova Scotia	3%	91%	6%	6%	85%	9%			13%	87%	0%	13%	87%	0%			0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%			29%	57%	14%	45%	35%	19%	0.32	
Newfoundland	27%	67%	7%	25%	70%	5%			6%	65%	29%	4%	71%	24%											25%	50%	25%	18%	37%	45%		
New Brunswick	33%	50%	17%	13%	87%	0%			20%	80%	0%	18%	79%	3%			38%	63%	0%	56%	33%	11%			50%	50%		31%	69%			
PEI	29%	71%	0%	50%	33%	17%			40%	60%	0%	33%	67%	0%			0%	50%	50%	0%	100%	0%										
CANADA	12%	76%	12%	15%	69%	16%	0.04	0.07	10%	78%	13%	11%	78%	12%	0.70		25%	68%	6%	28%	66%	6%	0.78		30%	51%	19%	26%	50%	24%	0.00	0.06

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By Canadian Marginalization Index (CMI) dimensions
Our final analysis used the Canadian Marginalization Index, with its four dimensions of residential instability, material deprivation, dependency, and ethnic concentration (see Table 1). The total number of credit union branches found in each tercile of marginalization under each dimension was compared against the totals for bank branches. Chi-squared testing was used to reject the null hypothesis that branching of credit unions and banks are the same under each of the dimensions of marginality when p values were less than 0.05. Analysis of the standardized residuals informed the underlying patterns of whether credit unions or banks cater to more marginalized areas for each dimension of marginalization. Table 5 below provides results of the analysis at the national and provincial levels for each dimension.

**Table 5: National and provincial comparison along
Canadian Marginalization Index dimensions**

Province	All Communities							
	Residential Instability		Material Deprivation		Dependency		Ethnic Concentration	
	p value	Effect Size	p value	Effect Size	p value	Effect Size	p value	Effect Size
Québec	0.00[b]	30%	0.00[c]	23%	0.00[c]	19%	0.00[b]	36%
Ontario	0.05[c]	4%	0.01[c]	5%	0.04[c]	5%	0.00[b]	9%
British Columbia	0.29		0.14		0.83		0.00[b]	12%
Saskatchewan	0.00[b]	32%	0.38		0.14		0.00[b]	17%
Manitoba	0.00[b]	23%	0.85		0.80		0.24	
Alberta	0.65		0.00[c]	17%	0.01[c]	11%	0.00[b]	17%
Nova Scotia	0.00[b]	21%	0.06[c]	15%	0.69		0.07[b]	14%
Newfoundland	0.31		0.30		0.84		0.80	
Canada	0.00[b]	12%	0.00[c]	15%	0.00[c]	13%	0.00[b]	24%

[b] Banks cater to more marginalized along variable
[c] Credit Unions cater to more marginalized along variables

Nationally, there were significant differences between credit union and bank branch locations along all four dimensions of the CMI. These findings hold true at the national level and in all provinces where the chi-square test was statistically significant, with the one exception of credit unions being overrepresented along the dimension of Residential Instability in Ontario.

Consistently throughout Canada we find that credit unions serve communities that are more marginalized on two specific dimensions: material deprivation and dependency. Banks on the other hand serve communities more marginalized on the dimensions of residential instability and ethnic concentration.

Credit union branches dominant in areas of material deprivation and dependency
The finding that credit union branches are overrepresented in areas of material deprivation and dependency holds true at the national level, and in all provinces with statistically significant count differences.

The material deprivation dimension is composed of traditional definitions of exclusion focused on issues of economic inequality, including the proportion of the population: below the low income cut-off, receiving government transfer payments, unemployed, lone-parent families, in homes needing repairs, and people without postsecondary education who are over 25 years old. The dependency dimension includes populations that may need a greater deal of social or economic support. This includes those that are out of the workforce, seniors, and children.

In many respects, the material deprivation and dependency dimensions represent individuals who would likely find it more challenging to get a loan or to access credit from a bank, given the dependence banks place on metrics of evaluation for loans, such as debt service ratio, and on a consistent source of income and job security.

Bank branches dominant in areas of residential instability and ethnic concentration
Banks are overrepresented along the dimensions of residential instability and ethnic concentration at the national level. This finding is generally consistent at the provincial level with the exception that credit unions are overrepresented in areas more marginalized along residential instability in Ontario.

Residential instability focuses on those marginalized because they are non-youth, single, alone, renters, apartment dwellers, or recently in transit. The characteristics of the people in these communities is not completely clear—the metrics may include communities with a high proportion of young urban professionals living alone, the elderly living alone, or areas with individuals that have become disenfranchised in some way. There seems little reason to deter banks from serving these areas, in fact they are likely areas with young urban professionals that would be targeted based on a market strategy.

The ethnic concentration dimension focuses on communities that face social or economic adversity because they comprise recent immigrants (within the last five years) or visible minorities. This finding is the most consistent, as banks are overrepresented in areas marginalized along this dimension nationally, in all provinces where the chi-square test is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The results of our research offer evidence of a credit union niche in Canada, but one that differs from the original niche for credit unions when they were in their pioneering period; between when they were founded through to their formative period (Macpherson, 2012). First, there is clear evidence that credit union branches are more likely to be located in Canada's rural and small towns than bank branches. This is true of all parts of Canada with the exception of New Brunswick. Next, by making use of the Canadian Marginalization Index, which draws on theoretical perspectives surrounding inequality and marginalization in Canada to create a set of indicators of marginalization, we found that credit unions and banks both serve marginalized communities. What distinguishes them is the type of marginalized communities they serve. Banks are more likely to serve ethnic communities with large immigrant and visible minority populations, and to a lesser extent, those communities composed of individuals that are isolated or alone. That is, banks are overrepresented in communities marginalized along the dimensions of ethnic concentration, and residential instability. Credit unions, however, are located in areas marginalized along the dimensions of material deprivation and dependency. Arguably, this finding offers some support that credit unions in Canada are being true to their founding social mission.

Banks being overrepresented in communities of recent immigrants would appear to be a reasonable market strategy as approximately 67 percent of Canada's current population growth comes from immigration, and that

proportion is projected to increase to more than 80 percent by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2012). Canadian banks offer unique programs and services to immigrants through the "Newcomer Package" at the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC, 2016), the "Welcome to Canada Package" at CIBC (CIBC, 2016b), the BMO "NewStart program" (Bank of Montreal, 2016a), the "StartRight Program" for landed immigrants (BNS, 2016) at Scotiabank, and the "New to Canada" package at TD Bank (TD, 2016). These programs offer discounted fees, loans, or mortgages despite little credit history, increased services, or opportunities to open bank accounts prior to arriving in Canada (Bank of Montreal, 2016b). Several of the programs also differentiate the type of immigrant, for example, offering more targeted services to international students or business owners and investors. To bolster clients through immigration networks and associations, one bank offered incentives to immigration consultants for each new client referred to a branch (Trichur, 2007). While credit unions are offering programs directed at recent immigrants in localities (Brown, 2015), they have only recently begun to investigate further methods to target immigrant communities (Cheung, Christian, & La Rose, 2013). As the dimension of ethnic concentration includes both proportion of immigrants arriving within the last five years, and the proportion of the population that identifies as a visible minority, one question for future research is to explore the degree to which immigration accounts for the overrepresentation by banks as compared visible minority status.

Credit unions serve those communities composed of individuals who are more likely to face obstacles getting a loan or securing credit from a bank; those communities marginalized due to material deprivation and dependency. Given the dependence banks place on metrics of evaluation for loans, such as debt service ratio, and on a consistent source of income and job security, this analysis does provide evidence to support the perception that credit unions fulfill a public purpose, as defined by Andrew Reschovsky (2010), by "providing access to credit markets for families, individuals and businesses that commercial banks do not lend to" (para. 16).

The data for median household income level are more equivocal. However, it appears that credit union branches are overrepresented in middle-income areas nationally, even more so than bank branches, and the pattern is most pronounced for Québec, Nova Scotia, and Alberta. Our data offer support for the supposition that credit union branches are more likely than bank branches to service low-income areas within large core population centres, and middle-income areas in rural areas. Overall, credit unions throughout Canada are underrepresented in higher-income areas as compared to banks, with few exceptions.

Although our study did not include payday lenders, the implication from our data is consistent with earlier research (Brennan et al., 2011) that credit unions are serving a different market than banks, and not the lower-income inner-city communities. In that respect, they seem to differ from the U.S. credit unions we studied in Wisconsin, Arizona, and New Hampshire (Mook, Maiorano, & Quarter, 2015). Perhaps this is because credit unions in the U.S. are nonprofit and credit unions in Canada are a form of co-operative with share capital. Possibly having the nonprofit status obliges U.S. credit unions to make a greater effort to locate in lower-income areas. This is a question that merits further research. The shift of credit union branches away from low-income communities suggests a difference from credit unions during the pioneering period.

With the exception of New Brunswick, the credit union market is much more rural than that of the banks. Along with the findings related to the different types of marginalized communities credit unions and banks serve, the rural difference is a very consistent and strong credit union difference. One could speculate on possible explanations. Credit union roots and their historic strength has been in agricultural communities, and even though they have shifted their business to urban centres in response to population shifts, they have not done this to the same extent as bank branches. A possible hindering factor for credit unions is that their board is elected by their members (credit union clients), and the members may have a vested interest in keeping the

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credit union in their community, even if it could earn more by shifting its business to major population centres. This explanation is speculative, but if it were accurate, one would expect credit union branches to become more urban and over time to assume a similar location pattern to bank branches.

An alternative explanation is that credit unions value having a distinct niche, and even though there may be greater market potential in shifting more business to urban centres, they are comfortable with their niche market and are unwilling to take the financial risks associated with reducing their rural niche. One could say that serving rural Canada is a credit union difference.

The findings in this article also align to some extent with the Bank of Canada's (2014) assessment of vulnerabilities and risks threatening financial stability in Canada, in its 2014 Financial System Review. In the review, the Bank of Canada suggests credit unions have a higher portion of business and lending directed at riskier areas. These areas, according to the report, may include smaller credit unions that offer mortgages to borrowers who do not qualify for insured mortgages. This includes low-income individuals, recent immigrants, rural residents with income that is more disposed to being volatile, and borrowers lacking income documentation. This risk to credit quality is especially significant in economic downturns (Bank of Canada, 2014). Given recent changes in federal tax and financial policy, an important concern in need of further research, is to explore how ongoing federal policy will attempt to mitigate financial vulnerabilities in the economic system, while not impeding the ability of credit unions to serve underserved communities, or to further exclude marginalized communities through financial exclusion (see Collard, 2007).

The elephant in the room with respect to rural markets is electronic banking. Will electronic banking and internet banking overtake place as the primary mode of operation, and will it threaten the credit union advantage in rural markets? The answer is uncertain, but it is a pattern that merits investigation. As the connection to local communities decreases, will credit unions retain a distinctiveness that speaks clearly to the credit union difference? This is another question that merits further research.

Credit unions have consolidated into larger units with more branches, and within the context of a highly competitive market, it is likely that this pattern will continue. For banks, consolidation is simply a business decision; for credit unions, it can challenge the credit union difference of independent entities that are governed by representatives from a local community. In an effort to create greater connection to a larger and more diverse membership, credit unions are creating more complex governances with regional representation (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, in press), a strategy advocated by Lou Hammond Ketilson and Kimberly Brown (2011). However, it remains to be seen whether this change in governance will be sufficient to overcome the challenges of serving a larger area and population in a way that is consistent with the expectations of democratic governance and a credit union difference.

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SYSTEM CHANGE AGENTS: A PROFILE OF POLICY-FOCUSED GRANTMAKING FOUNDATION ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study profiles the engagement of policy-focused Canadian grantmaking foundations in public policy. Policy-focused foundations now realize that downstream community issues are not isolated from upstream policy and regulatory practices. Foundation policy engagement has been measured across five policy streams: research and issue identification; policy entrepreneurship and convening; advocacy; implementation; and evaluation and impact. Themes emerging from this research include: 1) a migration from program into policy engagement; 2) the utilization of multiple soft and hard policy tools; 3) simultaneous engagement across multiple policy streams; 4) engagement with both systems and agents; 5) engagement in policy implementation; and 6) a long-term commitment to a focused policy issue. This research opens the door to a rich analysis of public policy engagement by grantmaking foundations.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude décrit la participation aux politiques publiques de la part de fondations subventionnaires canadiennes axées sur les politiques. On reconnaît de plus en plus que les questions communautaires en aval ne sont pas isolées des pratiques reliées aux politiques et aux réglementations en amont. Dans ce contexte, la participation a été mesurée par rapport à cinq domaines : la recherche sur les politiques et le repérage de problèmes; l'entreprenariat et la convocation en matière de politiques; la défense des politiques; l'application des politiques; l'évaluation et l'impact des politiques. Les thèmes soulevés dans cette recherche comprennent : 1) le passage d'une participation aux programmes vers une participation aux politiques; 2) l'utilisation de multiples instruments politiques durs et doux; 3) une participation simultanée dans divers champs politiques; 4) une participation à la fois avec des systèmes et des agents; 5) une participation dans l'application de politiques; 6) une participation à long terme vis-à-vis de problèmes politiques spécifiques. Cette recherche ouvre la voie à une riche analyse de la participation aux politiques publiques de la part de fondations subventionnaires.

KEYWORDS / MOTS CLÉS: Grant-making foundations; Public policy; Canada / Fondations subventionnaires; Politique publique; Canada

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INTRODUCTION

> If we are really interested in transformational change and systemic change then we can't bypass the public policy lever. Whether government or school boards—public policy broadly defined—we have to go to where policy is being made in order to change things.
> —Foundation 6

The very fact that foundations can operate independently of political parties, government, and public administration creates opportunities for the support of causes that mainstream politics will either bypass or be reluctant to embrace (Anheier, 2005). Others observers have been even more explicit: "The privacy of foundations is a privilege awarded to them because of their contribution to society, not an excuse to ignore the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society" (McIlnay, 1998, p. 101).

Within an ever-evolving philanthropic sector, Canadian grantmaking foundations are well positioned to effect societal change through innovative tools and strategies and a wide range of roles available to them. This includes the autonomy of foundations to address issues that are either controversial or peripheral to government policy (Frumkin, 2006). While program activities, both direct and indirect, naturally dominate the grantmaking landscape, there is a growing realization by public and private foundations alike that downstream community issues are not isolated from upstream policy and regulatory practices. For example, there is little doubt that policies in which foundations have played a part, such as the Registered Disability Savings Plan, carbon taxes, early childhood education, and social procurement policies, have made a contribution to the quality of life of Canadians.

Grantmaking foundations trying to leverage their influence and improve their impact are increasingly being urged by foundation sector leaders to embrace advocacy and public policy grantmaking as a way to substantially enhance their results and advance their missions (Cave, 2016; Northcott, 2016; Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2016). In fact, public policy grantmaking has been described as "one of the most powerful tools available to foundations for creating real change" (Alliance for Justice, 2004, p. 1; see also Coffman, 2008). For example, the Margaret & Wallace McCain Family Foundation and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation were both instrumental in supporting the movement for early childhood education in Ontario (Turgeon, 2014).

The purpose of this article is twofold: to present a theoretical framework that can speak to the question of the ways in which Canadian grantmaking foundations engage in public policy, and to present the findings of in-depth interviews with 13 of Canada's policy-focused grantmaking foundations with an active and sustained engagement in public policy. The article concludes with some preliminary observations about the state, scope, and impact of these policy activities. To do this, it draws on academic literature, foundation websites, reports, and in-depth interviews with policy-focused Canadian grantmaking foundations that are actively engaged in public policy.
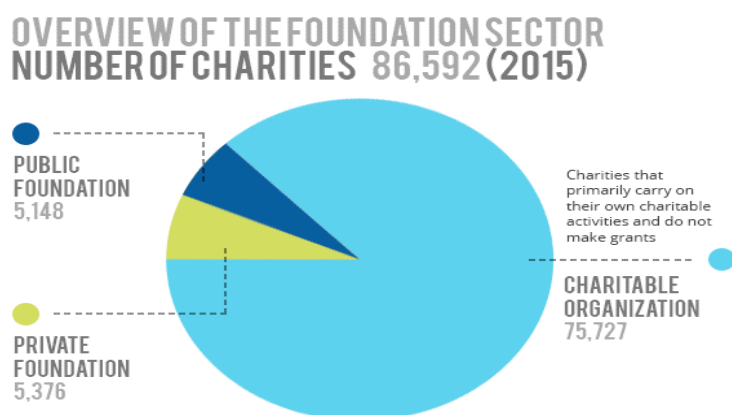
As this article will demonstrate, there is considerably more to the formulation and implementation of public policy than items that reach the front pages of newspapers or the back rooms of legislatures. There is, we posit, a wide range of roles that grantmaking foundations can play in the public policy process, from engaging or funding primary research to monitoring policy implementation and community impact. While the Canada Revenue Agency stipulates that as registered charities, 10 percent of a foundation's resources can be directed toward political activities, only a fraction of public policy activities can be considered political (Canada Revenue Agency, 2003). For example, under present law, a charity is not restricted from providing information and expressing its views in briefs to government to change laws or policies. Charitable activities (not advocacy) also include

distributing research to politicians or presenting a research report to a standing committee, and organizing or participating in policy development working groups (Carter & Man, 2010).

OVERVIEW OF CANADIAN GRANTMAKING FOUNDATIONS

Legally, registered charitable foundations in Canada include private foundations (e.g., the Lucie et André Chagnon Foundation, McConnell Foundation, Maytree Foundation, Suncor Foundation) and public foundations (e.g., United Ways, community foundations).[1] These two designations are split roughly fifty-fifty between the two categories and are distinguished from each other by their source of capital as well as the degree of independence that exists between foundation directors (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2015) (see Figure 1). Apart from their status as public or private foundations, foundations can, for analytical purposes, be subdivided into several types. As profiled in Table 1, public and private foundations share several characteristics, and are differentiated by the arms-length separation of members of the foundation board. This arms-length separation must be more than fifty percent in public foundations and may be less than fifty percent in private foundations (Canada Revenue Agency, 2017). These types include family foundations, independent foundations, corporate foundations, and community foundations. The focus here is on both private and public foundations and their engagement in the public policy process.

Figure 1: Overview of the foundation sector

Source: Canada Revenue Agency, 2016; Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2015

Table 1: Private and public foundations

Private Foundation	Public Foundation
Is established as a corporation or a trust	Is established as a corporation or a trust
Has exclusively charitable purposes	Has exclusively charitable purposes
Carries on its own charitable activities and/or funds other qualified donees (e.g., registered charities)	Generally gives more than 50 percent of its income annually to other qualified donees (e.g., registered charities), but it may carry out some of its own charitable activities
May have 50 percent or more of its governing officials not at arm's length with each other	More than 50 percent of its governing officials must be at arm's length with each other
Generally receives the majority of its funding from a donor or a group of donors that are not at arm's length	Generally receives its funding from a variety of arm's length donors
Its income cannot be used for the personal benefit of any of its members, shareholders, or governing officials	Its income cannot be used for the personal benefit of any of its members, shareholders, or governing officials

Legally, grantmaking foundations in Canada include private foundations (e.g., family foundations, corporate foundations, faith-based foundations) and public foundations (e.g., United Ways, community foundations). These two designations are split roughly fifty-fifty between the two categories and are distinguished from each other by their source of capital as well as the degree of independence that exists between foundation directors (Imagine Canada & Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2014). Apart from their legal status as public or private, foundations can be subdivided into several types, including primarily family foundations, faith-based foundations, corporate foundations, and community foundations. The focus here is on both private and public foundations and their engagement in the public policy process.

Existing research literature reviewed to date has revealed few references specific to the Canadian context. There are some published case studies (Barata & Murphy, 2011; Turgeon, 2014), and numerous reports, but little systematic research. The lack of any systematic exploration of Canadian foundations in the policy process is itself revealing and certainly speaks to the potential value of this research. There is, it seems, a chronic lack of information regarding either the collective or the individual impact of grantmaking foundations on public policy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Drawing on and blending two distinct models of policy analysis frame this article. The first is John Kingdon's (1995) "Three Stream" model of policy development and the second is Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian's (1979) *Advocacy Coalition Framework*, which focuses on policy implementation. In Table 2, the first three columns reflect Kingdon's policy development framework, and the last two address phases in policy implementation.

Table 2: Policy engagement framework

Problem/Issue Stream	Policy Stream	Political Stream	Implementation Stream	Impact Stream
Policy research and issue identification	Policy entrepreneurship and convening	Policy advocacy and issue resolution, political action	Policy implementation monitoring and reinforcement	Policy evaluation, impact, and renewal

Source: Kingdon, 1995; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979

It should be noted that while this model is based on different streams/stages in policy development, from initial issue identification to policy implementation and monitoring, these streams/stages overlap, and policy development is not a linear process. Additionally, we expect to find that foundations are more involved in the first two streams. Finally, the goal here is to list examples from foundations for each of these different stages, but in many cases, a foundation's activities may fit into more than one of these streams (e.g., policy research and implementation).

A five-stream model of policy engagement

John Kingdon's (1995) "multiple streams" approach to framing policy development provides a means to explore the interrelationship of three "largely independent streams": problems, policies, and politics (see Table 2). The dynamic associated with these three streams, and the extent to which they are synergistically linked at the point when a policy window opens, determines whether advocates or policy entrepreneurs are in a position to press their positions and to succeed in effecting change (Kingdon, 1995).

The Problem Stream. The problem stream addresses the issue of why and how particular problems come to occupy the policy agenda. Included here are focusing events such as crises and disasters, feedback from current program operations, and the availability of indicator data.

Foundations have made a significant contribution in supporting community groups, academic researchers, and others in identifying the nature, scope, and extent of societal issues. Examples of such issues include child poverty, toxic soil, housing for single mothers, First Nations education, food security, social justice, and environmental and climate change impact. Producing sound statistical evidence regarding the extent of a problem helps to legitimize it as a "real" issue that warrants further attention by communities or policymakers, while human stories concerning the impact of such issues are equally important for balancing the statistical narrative. Having the right data is only the first step, albeit an important one. It is the interpretation of this data, not the statistics themselves (Kendall, 2000), and their relationship to existing or pending policy and political developments that will ultimately determine their policy impact (Kingdon, 1995).

The Policy Stream. The policy stream, in which policy alternatives are generated and championed by advocates, has been likened by Kingdon (1995) to a policy primordial soup in which a variety of combinations and permutations of ideas float around until the right combination of 1) technical feasibility, 2) congruence with community values, and 3) anticipation of future constraints, is reached. Some of these policy streams are predictable, such as budget consultations, a pending throne speech, or an election cycle, but they can also be triggered by media attention to an issue (e.g., outstanding health and support payments to thalidomide survivors) (Chase & Peritz, 2015).

This stream often features the work of "policy entrepreneurs": those who work to propose a particular policy option and advocate for its adoption. A proposed carbon tax, zoning bylaw changes, the preservation of green space, equitable and affordable access to sports, housing, and healthy foods are a few areas where several policy options, incremental or otherwise, can be under consideration at any given time. Any policy option, or steps to support its development, including convening groups, is considered a charitable activity as long as the position is reasoned and takes alternative options into account. If the decision-makers are also considering alternative solutions, then analyzing the alternatives is an important contribution to any debate.

The Political Stream. The political stream, independent of problem recognition or policy proposals, flows with its own dynamics and rules. Pending retirements, leadership changes, provincial and/or federal elections, and external socioeconomic pressures can all foster a political climate that is conducive to change or retrenchment (Kingdon, 1995). However, in a broader context, most of the factors that structure relationships in civil society are, and will likely continue to be, determined by historical and socio-cultural factors and the political dynamic within individual countries (Deakin, 2001). This speaks to the complex challenges associated with sustained policy change.

While the political stream is only one of five policy development and implementation stages outlined here, it is no doubt the most contentious. Political activity[2] issues arise because a foundation or charity can be challenged not only for what it says, but also how it says it and how much it says. As outlined by charity lawyer Terry Carter (Carter & Rains, 2015) in a recent paper on separating fact from fiction regarding political activity by charities:

> Despite the stated importance of charities needing to be part of public policy debate in Canada, the federal government's unjustified allegations in recent years about charities purportedly misusing their statutory right to participate in political activities, fewer charities

are prepared to enter the risky arena of political activities. This is a regrettable development notwithstanding recent efforts at providing educational resources about what registered charities can do with regard to political activities. (p. 8)

Engagement in political activities is absolutely legal and necessary at points in the public policy process. That is not to diminish the advocacy "chill" that has descended on foundations since the 2012 federal budget with $13.4 million allocated to auditing charities (White, 2014). Yet foundations, more than any other registered charity, are independent of government favours and funding. As noted above, foundations, within their 10 percent allowance,[3] are able to engage in political activities. Not only are foundations able to engage in political activities, but it is important to people and communities in need and other registered charities that they do so.

The Implementation Stream. The policy implementation stream is the extension of the "Three Streams" model into the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) first introduced by Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian in 1979 (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979). While beyond the scope of this article, the ACF provides the opportunity to address the following four policy implementation issues: 1) the extent to which the actions of implementing officials and target groups are consistent with the objectives and procedures outlined in the policy decision; 2) the extent to which policy objectives were attained; 3) the principal factors affecting policy outcomes and impacts; and 4) how the policy was, or was not, reformulated. In addition, the ACF provides a conceptual framework to address policy implementation issues within a broader socioeconomic context.

According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979), the crucial role of implementation analysis is to identify the variables that affect the achievement of the policy objectives throughout the entire process. These variables can be divided into three broad categories: 1) the *material* variables associated with the problem(s) being addressed; 2) the *structural* dimensions that influence the implementation process; and 3) the net effect of a variety of *contextual* variables to support the policy (emphasis added). These three independent variables are applied by Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) to five stages of policy implementation. They have been consolidated across two streams in this expanded policy stream model, namely policy implementation or output and policy impact.

The Impact Stream. Beyond the material and structural aspect of policy implementation, a policy needs a periodic political boost to maintain its visibility and relevance in a changing socioeconomic climate. Policy objectives should not be undermined by the emergence of conflicting public policies. Further, changes in the resources and attitudes of external stakeholders play a role (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). Strong intermediary organizations need the membership, resources, and expertise to position themselves as legitimate and necessary participants in the policy implementation process.

Careful and ongoing monitoring of policy impact is critical to ensuring that policies are implemented as intended, unforeseen consequences are identified and addressed, and policy modifications are made in line with contextual changes to ensure ongoing compliance and implementation. Foundations can play an important role in supporting the independent and ongoing monitoring of successful policy implementation. This monitoring can be an important indicator of adequate funding levels, statutory compliance, bureaucratic consistency, political support, and sustained problem resolution. Examples include monitoring regulatory compliance and sustained budget and staffing allocations.

METHODOLOGY

The operational definition of policy used here draws on the work of Eugene Meehan (1985), namely that "policy is an actor's (institutional or individual) guide to the conduct of action, particularly collective action" (p. 293). Within this contextual definition, there is the expectation that the actor has the capacity to produce change, to project future outcomes, to establish indicators of that change, to select a preferred outcome among available options, to initiate a plan of action, to establish a monitoring and feedback/adjustment system, and has the capacity to operationalize the foregoing (Meehan, 1985). The policy-focused grantmaking foundations selected for this study meet this operational definition.

Fourteen policy-focused Canadian grantmaking foundations were interviewed over a period of five months. The foundations were selected as policy-focused grantmaking foundations with an active and sustained engagement in public policy on the basis of the following criteria: 1) as independently recognized leaders in a particular field of public policy; 2) an active and sustained engagement in public policy for at least five years; and 3) a commitment of significant resources to achieving a clear and explicit public policy objective. In two cases multiple respondents were interviewed from the same foundation, and in all but one case the president or chief executive officer (CEO) was interviewed.

A semi-structured interview process was used and transcripts were subsequently analyzed to identify common themes and consolidate responses (Yin, 2009). Following the interview process it was determined that one foundation did not meet the selection criteria and was excluded from the subsequent analysis. The interview information was then triangulated with an analysis of foundation websites, annual reports, documented policy statements, and T3010 data (Canada Revenue Agency, 2016).

The selected grantmaking foundations are engaged in children and youth policy, including early childhood education policy (4); poverty, social justice, and economic inclusion policy (5); environmental policy (2); and health policy, including mental health policy (2).

Ten of the thirteen foundations are based in Central Canada and three in Western Canada. Ten of the thirteen are private foundations (five family-based and one faith-based);[4] and three are public (community) foundations. Collectively, the selected foundations hold $3.6 billion (CDN) in assets and $98.7 million was disbursed to grantees in 2014. The thirteen foundations have a total of 191 staff members, with an average of 14.7 and a range of 4 to 51 employees. The policy-focused grantmaking foundations collectively have 154 board members—126 who operate at arm's length from their foundation and 28 who do not. Arm's length foundation board members provide a wide range of independent knowledge, expertise, perspectives, and networks. The size of foundation boards ranged from 5 to 20 with an average of 11 board members (Canada Revenue Agency, 2016). The average age of these policy-focused foundations is 47.4 years and the age range is 16 to 74 years.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the research findings revealed six policy engagement themes: 1) a migration from program into policy engagement; 2) the utilization of multiple soft and hard policy tools; 3) simultaneous engagement across multiple policy streams; 4) engagement with both systems and agents; 5) engagement in policy implementation; and 6) a long-term policy commitment. These themes will each be addressed in turn.

Migration into policy engagement

While there were some exceptions where a grantmaking foundation was explicitly established with a mandate to engage in public policy, most foundations reported that they migrated into public policy from a growing appreciation of the limitations of a singular focus on program funding.

Here is a typical story relayed by respondents:

> It would be fair to say that for most of the foundation's existence it has had no relationship to public policy, nor would it have considered it part of a charitable foundation's function.

The same respondent went on to say:

> We started to see that a lot of the work that our grantees were doing on the ground … had larger structural or systemic implications and in many cases the kind of work they were doing was either hampered, or not amplified as much as it could be, by the regulatory and policy frameworks they were working within. And the way we moved into the policy arena was to start to think about how to amplify what we saw on the ground.

And finally, following a strategic assessment of its role:

> We saw the function of the foundation as serving as a conduit between grassroots innovation/grassroots work and the larger [policy] frameworks that sat over top of it. And if the foundation could move as a conduit moving up and down that system; and the way we could best do it was to try to pull innovation, perspective, practice, up from the ground, and put it into a sort of framework or analysis that would enable a more conducive environment at a policy/regulatory level for that work. (Foundation 2)

Without exception, the boards of all the policy-focused foundations interviewed were fully supportive of an active and progressive engagement in public policy. In at least two cases the current CEO was explicitly recruited because of his or her policy experience, in order to continue, build, or lead a transition into the public policy arena:

> I think I would agree that part of the reason they hired me is that [policy] was something I was familiar with and so pretty much as I arrived the decision was that that would be a predominant focus for the organization—supporting policy research. (Foundation 12)

Another respondent explicitly called for board approval for a public policy orientation as a condition of their employment: "My one condition was that everyone on the board agreed that public policy would be the focus" (Foundation 5). Yet respondents were also clear that their foundations' investment in public policy was a way to support their program funding as well as achieve a difference in society that reached far beyond their particular sphere of influence. They also appear less interested in getting credit or profile from their work than they are in seeing a substantive policy change really take hold:

> One of the tricky things of course is really around attribution, so I do recall some conversations we had several years ago, where we really wanted to see if there would be uptake around the [strategic approach to issue] with [proposed issue solution] being the

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obvious one—but our conversations 3 or so years ago were that there's no way there's the political or public receptivity for a [proposed issue solution], we'll probably have to spend 3–5 years just building awareness, doing the research, getting people comfortable with the idea, and at that point maybe there'd be a point for [proposed issue solution] to be part of the conversation. And now we have 4 provinces and 85% of the population living in areas that are committed to [proposed issue solution]. We don't take credit for that, but I think that we've contributed to the confidence and technical understanding and public awareness around the importance of these things. (Foundation 12)

Another foundation realized that the courts, not just policymakers, are a legitimate arena to engage in public policy: "The right to an [issue] in the Charter; it's a long drawn-out process. Litigation's not sexy, but we see that as underpinning a lot of the struggles that the [issue] sector is having" (Foundation 4).

This same respondent reported that the foundation divides its funding into two categories, one that provides a quick reactive capacity, and the other that is dedicated to "long-term, solutions-oriented" funding relationships (Foundation 4). These policy-focused grantmaking foundations also fund comprehensive evaluations of their funding partners (i.e., grant recipients) and build a research component into long-term policy initiatives. Foundations do not have a license to print money and they are acutely aware of their limited resources and the need to make their investments count: "They [referring to another foundation] have few resources, but [they] are really, really focused on what kind of impact they can have with their limited resources" (Foundation 1).

There is a clear realization by all those interviewed that engagement in public policy is a tremendous opportunity to make a significant, lasting impact with limited resources: "So if you can use the limited money that the foundation has to influence the way the government spends its money better, that would give you more leverage than anything else you could do" (Foundation 5).

Utilization of both soft and hard policy tools
Foundations in Canada are in a position to impact societal change and foster social innovation through a variety of tools. These tools include research, surveys, coalition building, direct action, legitimizing and supporting enabling strategies, public campaigns, and a range of funding and policies and practices that are directed at the general public, policy influencers, and decision makers (Coffman, 2008). Soft tools in this context have been identified as reputation, independence, and legitimacy. Hard tools include convening, funding, quiet diplomacy, and collective advocacy. Foundations take advantage of both hard and soft tools as they see fit across the full spectrum of policy-stream engagement.

Reputation
Policy-focused grantmaking foundations are growing more confident about prudently utilizing their reputation to achieve desired policy outcomes:

I would say a) we're very conscious of political capital and using it wisely but somewhat sparingly in that you don't want to be the flavour of the month, b) we know that on levering money and credibility that often by going first we'll give governments political cover and/or room to do things they might not otherwise do. (Foundation 9)

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The same respondent used this example:

> We were very involved in that [policy] process, and then stepped up publicly saying that in order to assist the [jurisdiction], which had fiscal constraints, that we provide a match up to $600,000 over 3 years to help them get there more quickly. In doing that we knew that a) we'd make it easier for them financially, but b) we'd make it harder for them to not follow through. Unanimously.
>
> And I'd say it wasn't lost on a lot of observers that it never would've been unanimous had we not stepped up to the plate. And it may not have carried. So we're conscious that there are ways in which our reputation and some money can really affect the attitude and willingness to step up by others. (Foundation 9)

Independence
Policy engagement was typically crafted creatively, taking the full advantage of the degree of independence foundations enjoy:

> You're entirely independent in a way that very few institutions and organizations are. And because of that independence—it's advantageous strategically and tactically—but it also provides you with a unique position at these various tables and you're accorded a certain [degree of] legitimacy [too]. (Foundation 2)

These policy-focused foundations are acutely aware that with this freedom comes responsibility.

> One of the biggest tools and advantages of a private foundation is its independence. And that's huge. Government doesn't have that; organizations on the ground don't have that. Very few organizations in Canada have true independence and we do. And that makes a big difference. We have to use that well. (Foundation 7)

Legitimacy
Often the question of legitimacy came as a surprise:

> It took me by surprise a little bit, how the perception from various sectors is that if a foundation is involved in an issue it is seen as kind of benign and positive and constructive. The fact that we're given that kind of social license as a sector surprised me. I don't think there's something in the fact that because a foundation is a foundation that means that you've earned that [legitimacy], and yet we seem to be given that. So I see that as an enormous benefit because it means that people will often come if you invite them. (Foundation 2)

Another respondent had this to say, aware that legitimacy is a contentious issue in other jurisdictions: "It's an interesting one to figure out if we do have that legitimacy, but we certainly think we have credibility and experience" (Foundation 6).

Convening

Convening activities are widespread across all policy-focused grantmaking foundations interviewed in this study. They convene stakeholders themselves and actively encourage their grant-holders to do the same. Due to their legitimacy and convening power, they are able to bring together groups who might not otherwise connect in an atmosphere of candor and confidentiality.

> We have an initiative for engaging policymakers and we've done this for three years in a row. We convene senior provincial policymakers in [policy issue] for a day-long workshop and we present innovations that we think they could implement in their province to improve [policy issue]. What, we ask, are the interesting initiatives that can help them do their job better? We also realized that this was an incredible way to get some of our projects in front of these people, and to establish [better] relationships. And what we've done too is to get together a group of philanthropic organizations; so we invite the senior policymakers and we invite the philanthropic organizations. And we invite some speakers and we get the officials to participate as well. But that [initiative] was our big, overall policy engagement piece. (Foundation 11)

Foundations can create a unique opportunity for convening that is not available in government, and indeed is appreciated by policymakers.

> And another tool we're using is the role that we can play as conveners. So we're now meeting with different provincial ministries, and many of them have an appetite to get together. Not the politicians, but the policymakers. There's quite a bit of demand for us convening them—bringing them together maybe once/year, once/18 months. Something a foundation can do that others can't, behind closed doors; it's about understanding who's doing what. (Foundation 1)

Foundations fund others to initiate a convening process, but they also engage in it themselves.

> Grant recipient] also does their own convenings with their people, we also as a foundation independently do our own convenings, and a lot of ours are to help us understand what's going on and provide us with ideas so we've gathered together meetings that include former CEOs and deputy ministers, and others …. (Foundation 12)

Funding

These policy-focused foundations fund a variety of initiatives that build a vertical integration of policy initiatives. Local groups are supported to advance policy changes at a community level while, at the same time, provincial or national research campaigns receive support and lessons from one level are transferred to another.

> We are among the funders of population-wide type of data collection and studies like [name] a longitudinal study on the development of [issue group], and we are funding a number of other population-wide surveys and studies. We also support an observatory on [issue group] that brings together various data on the state of [issue group] in [province] and the environments in which they grow and we're going to use that as a starting point for dialogue with a number of stakeholders and the population on policy related issues. (Foundation 1)

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Funding in the public policy arena is not without challenges:

> We don't have an awful lot of money. But we do have a really strong board and staff and an organizational culture that is comfortable with risk and ambiguity. And [we are] able to move quite quickly. We see ourselves being most effective at the front-end of issues. (Foundation 1)

There are some foundation boards that struggle to differentiate between support for public policy engagement and the policy issue itself:

> I've tried to communicate to the board that just because we've funded a report doesn't mean we agree with the content. We're funding their right to participate in a political process…. (Foundation 3)

Another respondent was even more specific about their funding commitment to policy engagement:

> I'd say that probably 80% of all of the funding—a little over $2 million/year in direct grants—have [sic] gone toward public policy-oriented activities. And the classic example would be our funding of [policy issue], because it's a high profile national program that has an overall impact over tens of thousands of people for an unlimited amount of time. So our investment of $700,000 over a 3–4 year period, which now shows that there's well over $2 billion set aside by people who want to help [policy issue], would suggest that it's had a pretty significant impact.

> We're not saying in any way—and we're not naïve enough to think—that because we funded these things they happened. On that particular example—notwithstanding the good work that the work did, were it not for [politician] and his championing of it, we'd still be talking about it. (Foundation 5)

Quiet diplomacy

The visible features of advocacy and policy engagement receive a lot of attention, often out of proportion to their impact. Virtually all of the policy-focused grantmaking foundations interviewed for this study engage in quiet diplomacy. Some of their quiet diplomacy comes in the form of convening activities, often under Chatham House Rule (Chatham House, 2017), but where they have ready access to political leaders; they are not shy about making contact. More often though, they are fully aware that policy change will require a commitment that outlasts the tenure of any given politician and that the support of policymakers is critical.

> I think we really pick and choose how often we're out in front, deputing publicly, vs. how often we support others to do this, but we are quietly inside government. (Foundation 13)

> a lot of research that's been funded over the years (we work in the area of [policy issue]) and we have been a really quiet foundation, working behind the curtain. (Foundation 6)

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Collective advocacy

While all of these policy-focused foundations fund grassroots activists and coalitions, there is a new confidence among these policy-focused grantmaking foundations themselves that manifests itself in very public support for a policy issue. Here are two examples:

1. The first is an open letter published on March 11, 2015, in *Le Devoir* newspaper. Entitled, "Let's Not Lose Sight of the Impact of the Reforms on Social Inequality (Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon, 2015), it was signed by the directors of nine Québec-based foundations: the Fondation Béati, the Fondation Berthiaume-Du Tremblay, the Foundation of the YMCAs of Québec, the Fondation Dufresne et Gauthier, the Lea Roback Foundation, the Lucie et André Chagnon Foundation, the Fondation Solstice, the Women's Y Foundation, and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. The open letter in *Le Devoir* called for greater awareness by the provincial government of the impact of a proposed provincial austerity program on economic inequality. This public policy engagement was unprecedented and closely watched by other foundations across Canada.

2. The second example followed shortly afterward. Buoyed by the release of the first open letter in Québec, a second open letter was penned by eight foundations focusing on early childhood education. Entitled, "A Smart Investment in Our Future" (Early Child Development Funders Working Group, 2015), it was released on June 30, 2015, to the media and signed by the Muttart Foundation, the Lucie et André Chagnon Foundation, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Lawson Foundation, the Jimmy Pratt Foundation, the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, the Margaret & Wallace McCain Family Foundation, and the Atkinson Foundation.

According to interview respondents, this degree of public collaboration is the direct result of ongoing working relationships and the subsequent level of trust that has been built over a considerable period of time. There is also a need for alignment with not only the policy issue itself, but also with the intervention strategy and timing. This is not always the case. One foundation finds that policy partners do not always have the same degree of flexibility and responsiveness, and another withdrew from a long-term collaboration with a provincial government because it felt its policy objectives were being compromised.

This is how one foundation approaches its decision to go public:

> We have a process that we go through, a screening that's called eyes wide open that looks at the risks involved in staking a public position, and what are the stakes of doing nothing. And we're careful that we're not the flavour of the week, we don't do it every time there's a local controversy, but when they're significant issues that will affect the community, we've been fairly assertive. (Foundation 9)

In other cases foundations support external collective advocacy, providing the opportunity for indigenous and civic society leaders to have a voice. Respondents reported that this degree of community collaboration also helps the foundations to be more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the communities in which they have a presence (Foundation 8). In the words of one respondent, "we often think of advocacy as confrontation but actually, advocacy starts with collaboration" (Foundation 1).

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The appetite for collective advocacy and collaboration is growing:

> I think collaboration is becoming more common in the Canadian foundation effort than it was. [There are more] opportunities and active interest than there used to be. [There is] a growing realization among foundations who are interested in social change that their ambitions and aspirations far outstrip their resources. If they want to have the kind of impact they're seeking, they need to think about partnerships, alliances, [and] collaborations. (Foundation 2)

Simultaneous engagement across multiple policy streams

These policy-focused grantmaking foundations operate from an activist rather than a theoretical perspective. While they certainly take advantage of theories that may inform their practice, there is a much stronger orientation toward creating continuous feedback loops and experimenting to see what works in their policy context.

> That [funding partnership] created unlikely partnerships that ended up building out their reach to organizations they might not have worked with. [We have a] willingness to experiment. We make them a little uncomfortable, and we get right in there, and we really see ourselves and our role to actively engage in the work we're supporting. And to do whatever we can to ensure that they're reaching their full potential. (Foundation 4)

Rather than progressing in an orderly fashion through a policy development process, it is more likely that these policy-focused grantmaking foundations operate simultaneously across several policy streams. This, we posit, is because these policy-focused grantmaking foundations are addressing policy systems, and not a policy agenda in isolation of the systems in which policies either thrive or stagnate. These policy-focused foundations are as aware of plans and programs as they are of the processes that enable them to keep clarifying their intent and strengthening their connection with new people and new ideas. The result is an organization that is as "resilient and flexible as a spider's web" (Wheatley, 2006, p. 155).

> Our board understood the importance of public policy because our vision at that time was to see government about policies, programs and measures favourable to the prevention of [issue]. It was a learning process for us to see that vision and to see how to make it happen. (Foundation 1)

This same respondent went on to say:

> There's a huge transition with lots of unknowns and lots of tests. We're in a very testing type of phase. Moving targets and shifting ground. We're not blind, but we're on shifting ground. At the same time it's an exciting time. As much as change is disturbing, it's creating all kinds of opportunities. And it's true for policy engagement activities. (Foundation 1)

Another respondent confirmed this multi-strategy approach this way:

> I would characterize us as very creative and innovative in how we work—I think we look for where there are bases and policy openings—a very deliberate reason why we're

working in [issue]—is because that's where the majority of new money in this country is. Government is spending money in this area. And we think that we should be asking: for every public infrastructure dollar we're spending, how are we building community? (Foundation 13)

These policy-focused grantmaking foundations see public policy engagement in the context of complex adaptive systems rather than systematic progress, which is reflected in the model outlined at the outset of this article (Stacey, 1995, 2007). In the words of one respondent, "We have purposefully built a robust and multidimensional public policy program around seeking better outcomes for [people with issue] "(Foundation 3). While they keep their eye focused on the public policy outcome, they realize that a complex interaction of systems, knowledge, skill, and opportunity each play a role.

Engaging systems and agents

Consistent with the theme of simultaneously engaging in multiple policy streams, foundations exercise their own agency as policy advocates and support others to do the same.

I'm hoping to encourage the philanthropic community to see this as an important issue, at the same time my partner [i.e., funding grantee] is hoping to influence other [issue-related] agencies to become part of a cohesive response so they're all working together collectively to improve their chances of making real systems change. (Foundation 4)

In other cases the agent was not a coalition of organizations, but individual policy entrepreneurs:

But the most effective model for us was the [program]. [These funded individuals] are typically relationships that [Foundation 2] enters into often with a practitioner to write a very practical paper around an issue or a challenge or opportunity that we see in the sector where there's a way to create a bridge or transition between the kind of grassroots needs or practice, and policy innovation or change … There are two important parts of this [program]: 1) The production of papers, not as abstract papers but as opportunities for action. 2) The other important part is that fellows then become policy resources for the sector more generally … When we saw the impact that that relatively modest investment yielded, we broadened the program across all our program areas. (Foundation 2)

This foundation reflects a recommendation in social innovation literature that calls for support for people, particularly those with a strong and passionate sense of calling and an emphasis on changing the rules of interaction (Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2006).

These policy-focused grantmaking foundations are acutely aware of the systems in which they operate and the complex relationships that exist both within and between large systems (Waddell, Waddock, Cornell, Dentoni, McLachlan, & Meszoely, 2015).

I think the foundation has had a very good history of being part of system influence, or trying to deploy some of its resources to address root causes. So it's not a new thing, it's an extension of a legacy of many years. (Foundation 10)

This perspective was echoed by another foundation:

> Conceptually we've embraced the idea that you need to think about the long-term to solve complex issues. Where it's challenging for us is that we have to do that on spec/faith because we move into that space without long-term commitments from funders/donors. So we need to make sure we're not making commitments we can't live up to. We've had support from some long-term, major institutional funders that has helped … but overall it's a very iterative and nuanced exercise. (Foundation 8)

Engagement in policy implementation

Policy-focused grantmaking foundations tend to be more engaged in the policy development process, but the research also revealed examples of their engagement in monitoring and policy implementation. A foundation may reduce its own commitment once a public policy has moved from the margins and garnered broader acceptance, support, and additional funding from other foundations and stakeholders.

This is a sentiment shared by many of the respondents:

> We see our job as being early into areas and issues that require attention and resources. We're about enabling that issue to get some light and some people and ideas. But we're never going to be an operating funder, we've got no money and that's not where our real value is. The word catalyst is a good word. We're hoping we can catalyze issues early, and then create the connections, resources, etc. behind it to give it greater scale and weight where all sorts of other important actors [and foundations] are in that space. (Foundation 1)

At the same time, these policy-focused foundations see policy monitoring as a critical role and fund projects accordingly:

> The [funded project] will be a systematic illustration of that. It will track very specific indicators over time, to do awareness-raising and dialogue on this. We also fund and use population-wide data that are related to our mission and approaches. (Foundation 1)

Long-term policy commitment

For these policy-focused grantmaking foundations, a long-term strategic partnership is the rule, not the exception. They are not shy about engaging in long-term funding and policy strategy to ensure the best chances that a policy shift occurs:

> If we wanted to shift the parameters of how things are done—though not necessarily framed in terms of public policy—and want to bring to attention to various levels of government issues that we're passionate about, then we have to think in terms of a longer-term commitment, we have to shift how we do things, had to seek out partners that are prepared to go the distance with us. (Foundation 4)

These policy-focused grantmaking foundations are prepared to take decades, if necessary, to address deeply rooted societal issues and are aware of the resources, such as research and funding for networks. Here are two examples of the patience and perseverance required for long-term policy engagement:

> So if you're not prepared to be there for the long term, the chances of success are much lower. So we've decided that's the approach we'll take so that's one thing—just showing up for work every day and keeping at it. "Relentless incrementalism"—we use that term. (Foundation 7)

> We're not naïve, we know that this will take a lot of time. It's very incremental as you know. So I think the board understands that this isn't about changing things overnight, but it will take time, patience. (Foundation 6)

Two other features of a long-term policy commitment are focus and evaluation:

> Focus, absolutely—you can't be a strong policy interlocutor on 15 issues, you just don't have the credibility, its [sic] 1 or 2 areas. (Foundation 5)
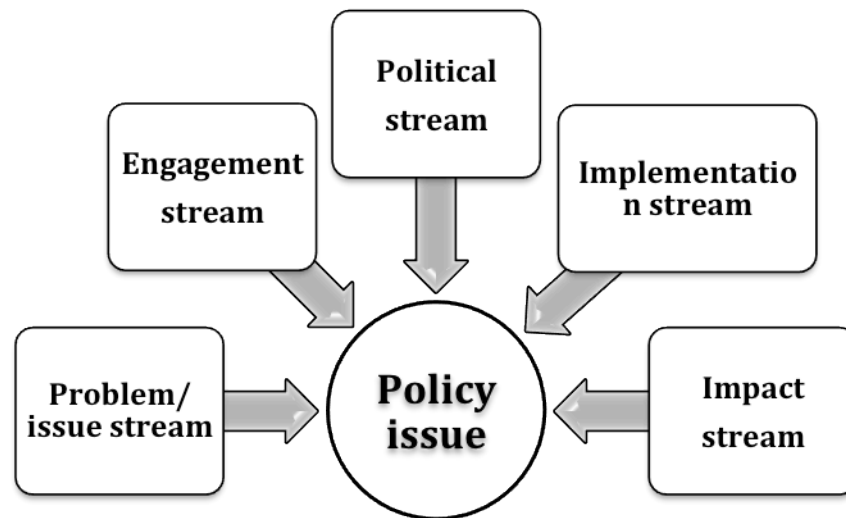
> Because it's a long-term commitment we're making, a decade or more starting in [target location], we know that as we begin to scale the interventions (things like parental involvement, extracurricular support, etc.) that we need to be able to rigorously evaluate. (Foundation 9)

While not exhaustive, these policy-focused grantmaking foundations have demonstrated, in addition to the aforementioned themes, that a long-term commitment to a public policy agenda takes strategic resource allocations, patience, perseverance, focus, and rigorous evaluation.

DISCUSSION

At the outset of this research, the intent was to identify and analyze the engagement of policy-focused grantmaking foundations in the context of a policy engagement framework. The result was much richer and complex than what was anticipated, and thankfully so. From a theoretical perspective the framework has been modified (see Figure 2) not in content, as that was indeed verified, but in design, as it was discovered that these policy-focused grantmaking foundations are simultaneously engaged across and within multiple policy streams. Their engagement is both direct and indirect. They step to the forefront of the public policy arena to be counted and to exercise their experience, knowledge, and reputation. At the same time they act indirectly through grant recipients, acting not unlike venture capitalists that train and support the evolution of an enterprising start-up, or by providing substantive and sustainable grants to individuals and organizations that actively engage in the public policy process. Within policy streams they often engage at multiple levels and across multiple jurisdictions. For example, engagement can take place at a local, regional, and provincial level with civil society actors, intermediary organizations, and policymakers.

Figure 2: Modified policy engagement framework

Policy engagement framework
The modified schematic (Figure 2) presents the range of policy interventions and process elements associated with public policy development and implementation. This revised framework, in our view, is a more accurate reflection of the nature of the engagement of policy-focused grantmaking foundations in public policy.

This study has focused on public policy engagement processes, rather than content. While some foundations were launched with a clear public policy mandate, most migrated into the public policy arena when they realized that it was either the best value for their investment of time and resources, or that their community program investments were being thwarted by public policies that hampered their full implementation.

Policy engagement tools
While there are a wide range of public policy engagement tools available to nonprofits, corporations, and charities alike (Coffman, 2008), these tools are often focused on their instrumental value to a particular public policy. This research revealed a number of policy engagement tools that we would associate with public policy system engagement. Funding, convening, and network building are clearly valuable and commonly used policy engagement tools and these foundations are no exception. However, they also include the following as public policy engagement tools: reputation, independence, legitimacy, quiet diplomacy, and collective advocacy.

Policy system engagement
The policy-focused grantmaking foundations studied here appreciate the interconnectedness of multiple systems. They are often working simultaneously at a municipal, regional, and a provincial level, particularly where a provincial policy may create a framework for action, but the real policy implementation occurs at a local level. If they are not engaging with these systems directly, they do so through their funding programs. This is where the high degree of policy focus becomes evident. They fund groups with the dedicated purpose of advancing a specific policy agenda, deliberately choosing organizations, or partners as some prefer to call them, that have the passion and capacity to engage in the public policy process. These organizations become long-term strategic partners rather than short-term fund recipients. Some foundations also establish a fund to

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provide long-term support to individual policy entrepreneurs with a clear alignment to the foundations' policy agenda.

While there is a significant investment in public policy by these policy-focused grantmaking organizations, they are indeed unique, likely representing less than 0.5 percent of all foundations. There is also a preference to play a catalytic role in policy formulation, rather than replace the work of broader stakeholder groups that have a vested interest in policy outputs and impacts. All the foundations interviewed for this study were engaged in the problem/issue, policy, and political streams. Contrary to our initial expectation that foundations would focus their attention on the first two policy streams, what distinguishes these foundations from many others is their investment in political engagement and policy implementation.

There is an opportunity in the future to explore, in depth, the engagement of particular foundations in public policy process over multiple election cycles; to identify specific indicators of policy impact; and to conduct a comparative analysis of policy impact with multiple actors in the policy process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to provide an analysis of how various policy-focused Canadian grantmaking foundations are engaged in different dimensions of the public policy process and to identify areas for future research. The policy-focused nature of their engagement in public policy was measured against independent recognition of their engagement, their sustained commitment to public policy engagement, and the significance of their investment of staff, social capital and financial resources.

This research provides an important insight into the complex systems associated with policy-focused grantmaking foundations and their engagement in public policy. While well recognized public policy engagement tools such as research, convening, funding, and coalition building were utilized by all these foundations, they were also prepared to put their reputation on the line; leverage their legitimacy, whether earned or awarded; engage in quiet diplomacy; and, where and when opportune, engage in collective advocacy. These policy-focused grantmaking foundations engage in public policy for the long-term, have the patience and perseverance to keep their eye on their policy objective while continually monitoring, assessing, and adjusting strategies as new information and opportunities come to light.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1. The word foundation is not restricted in Canada. Any organization can use the word foundation in its title. For example, a corporation could operate a foundation, but it could have no relationship to a public or private foundation as defined by Revenue Canada. For the purposes of this research only foundations designated as such by Revenue Canada will be studied.

2. The Canada Revenue Agency presumes that an activity is political if a charity explicitly communicates a call to political action (Canada Revenue Agency, 2003) (that is, encourages the public to contact an elected representative or public official and urges them to retain, oppose, or change the law, policy, or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country) (Canada Revenue Agency, 2003).

3. The ten percent rule is the constraint that only up to ten percent of the total of a charity's financial assets, as well as everything the charity can use to further its purposes, such as its staff, volunteers, directors, and its premises and equipment, can be allocated to political activity.

4. Family and faith-based foundations are not legal terms. Family foundations are private foundations where the funds are derived from members of a single family (Council on Foundations, 2017). Faith-based foundations are private foundations where the funds are derived from a faith-based source.

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Atkinson Charitable Foundation, http://atkinsonfoundation.ca/
Fondation Béati, http://www.fondationbeati.org/
Fondation Berthiaume-Du Tremblay, http://berthiaume-du-tremblay.com/
Fondation Dufresne et Gauthier, http://www.fdg.ca/en/
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Book Review
By Ashley Rostamian

Government-Nonprofit Relations in Times of Recession. *Edited by Rachel LaForest*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2013, 2016, pp. ISBN: 978553393276.

Government-Nonprofit Relations in Times of Recession seeks to illustrate the relationship fostered between governments and nonprofits prior to, during, and following the 2008 economic crisis. The edited collection effectively maps out and interrogates, both historically and contemporaneously, the relations between government and nonprofits. The book also investigates organizational trends both globally and in different national contexts.

The book consists of a series of essays emerging from the 10th Annual National Forum of the Public Policy and Third Sector Initiative conference, held in Toronto in 2011. Published in 2013, it is the sixth volume of the Public Policy and Third Sector Initiative series from the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. Previous books in the series have also addressed the role of the social economy in the wider policy landscape. By way of comparative illustration, *The New Federal Policy Agenda and the Voluntary Sector: On the Cutting Edge*, published in 2009 by the same editor, Rachel LaForest, examined the relationship between the government and social economy organizations during Stephan Harper's Conservative era. This earlier edited book differs from the editor's newer publication in both time and place. Whereas the first book understands changes in the government-social economy relationship through a Liberal versus Conservative lens, LaForest's second edited book in the series, *Government-Nonprofit Relations in Time of Recession*, approaches the dynamics of the relationship from a pre- and post-2008 recession perspective. Moreover, the former book considers policy issues in Canada, whereas the latter explores the policy climate in an array of national arenas. Given the impact of the 2008 crisis on the nonprofit sector on a global scale, this book is valuable for further understanding the implications of financial and administrative challenges and losses for nonprofits caused by the recession, while illustrating and proposing effective responses to these challenges.

LaForest's 2013 edited book can be treated as examining three dimensions applicable to government-nonprofit interactions: funding, workforce, and the ecology of the nonprofit and public sectors. First, the administration of funding is perhaps the most telling sign of the state of government-nonprofit relations, both historically and post-2008 recession. The chapters describe the variety of ways that funding losses may occur, how they consequently endanger the survival of nonprofits, and the ensuing responses of government. Second, the nonprofit labour pool is another dimension considered throughout the collection. In this regard, the chapters explore the ways in which the

nonprofit workforce has undergone structural and contextual changes as a result of the 2008 recession, how these changes challenge nonprofit organizations, and ultimately, how these changes challenge their relations with government. Third, and consistently examined throughout the chapters, is the effect of the 2008 recession on the wider network of government-nonprofit relations; that is, the "ecology" (including networks) that encompasses multiple levels of government and a wide array of nonprofit organizations. This macro-level dimension allows authors to delve into the ways that the 2008 recession has not only impacted relations *between* individual organizations and governments, but how the crisis has also had rippling effects *beyond* these relations, thus transforming the landscape in which all actors interact. Combined, these three dimensions lend the reader crucial insight into the far-reaching scope and nature of government-nonprofit relations. Although these three dimensions— funding, workforce, ecology/networks—normally exist in government-nonprofit relations by convention, attempts have been made to formalize these relations, leading to their institutionalization. However, as all of the authors note, even though the formalization of government-nonprofit interactions might be seen as an avenue for more cohesive social policy, there are complications and consequences that may arise in the institutionalization of these relations.

Although each chapter can be read as a stand-alone piece to illustrate the consequences of the 2008 recession on government-nonprofit interactions in a specific country, the collection in its entirety allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the three dimensions—funding, workforce, and ecology/networks—found in those interactions, making important contributions to the literature on government-nonprofit relations. For instance, the book taken as a whole underscores the complexities in government-nonprofit relations, and how nonprofits may successfully, or unsuccessfully, navigate political, social, and financial change in such unpredictable times. In response to the key question implicitly asked by each chapter of the book—what do recessions, cutbacks, and claw backs mean for social economy organizations and their interactions with government and other organizations?—the authors collectively conclude that the effects from the tightening of funds due to recession may prompt social economy organizations *to take both defensive and proactive steps* to counteract external rationalization efforts. Indeed, as Gemma Donnelly-Cox and John A. Healy explain in their chapter "Post-Partnership Ireland: Organizational Survival and Social Change Strategies in an Era of Economic Restraint" (p. 97), social economy organizations employ adaptation strategies to survive, both as a response to, and as an influence on, the environment. These strategies include: *economizing* to deal with situations where increased demand for services include declining income; *harmonizing* by focusing on local economic regeneration; *diversifying* to widen the funding base and acquire resources, and also by increasing the reach of activities to appeal to new groups and in new areas; and *monopolizing* to gain control of the field by merging to reduce the complexity of exchanges and increasing concentration of resources. Thus, Donnelly-Cox and Healy conclude—in an argument resonating in other chapters in the book—social economy organizations demonstrate a rather great degree of agency and pragmatism to adjust in, and to account for, less-than-ideal conditions.

One of the book's drawbacks is that, while it examines the relations between government and *nonprofit* organizations, most of the authors also spoke of other social economy businesses, such as civil society organizations and cooperatives, among others. The lack of clear distinctions between social economy organizations may mislead readers, or may cause misinterpretation. It would thus have been helpful to readers if the authors clarified which organizations are being referred to as "nonprofits." For example, is "nonprofit" used as an umbrella term for all social economy organizations? Are the organizations being referred to indeed strictly public or supported nonprofit organizations, or is the book also considering other types of social economy organizations, such as cooperatives or social enterprises where some degree of market activity is also engaged in? In short, it is not completely clear if, and when, the book is directly engaging with social economy organizations that are strictly nonprofits or merely legally structured as such. Framing the book along a typology of social economy organizations,

such as that offered by Jack Quarter, Laurie Mook, and Ann Armstrong's (2009) *Understanding the Social Economy: A Canadian Perspective*, may help to further situate nonprofits within a universe of social economy organizations. That is, a clearer distinction among the different social economy organizations could strengthen the argument that certain organizations faced more pronounced losses than others during recessionary times and in light of a plurality of revenue sources. Another drawback is the lack of diversity in countries used as case studies. For instance, there are no Asian countries, nor South American countries featured in the book, two regions where the social economy—and nonprofits in particular—have played an increasingly important role in development and rethinking government-community relations in recent years. However, as the collection is based on papers delivered at a conference, it is likely the selection of texts was constrained by what was presented.

Despite these drawbacks, this book is a valuable tool for more deeply understanding the nature of government-nonprofit relations with an eye to the situation faced by the social economy throughout the crisis caused by the 2008 recession. It first and foremost provides an overview of the nature and structure of the relations between government and social economy organizations, whether that is characterized as: diminishing (Chapter 2); transitional (Chapter 3); interdependent (Chapter 4); devaluing (Chapter 7); or otherwise. The book's chapters thus show that there are ample ways to interpret this interaction. Overall, the book underscores the multidimensional and complex interactions and interconnections within the greater arena of social policy governance. In sum, *Government-Nonprofit Relations in Times of Recession* provides readers with theoretical and empirical openings for critically inquiring about the state of affairs in the interaction between government and social economy organizations. The book is thus essential reading for any researcher, social economy practitioner, policy maker, or student seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the political, social, and economic realities faced by social economy organizations in relation to government in turbulent economic times.

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Book Review

By Karen Schmidt

Sustainable [R]evolution: Permaculture in Ecovillages, Urban Farms, and Communities Worldwide. *By Juliana Birnbaum and Louis Fox.* Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2014, 368 pp. ISBN: 9781583946480.

In a world where there are growing food and water shortages due to climate change and industrial farming, and where neoliberal politics are increasing the divide between the one percent and the other 99 percent, it is important to be reminded that there are alternative ways of living and thriving. In *Sustainable [R]evolution,* Juliana Birnbaum and Louis Fox provide myriad examples of places where people have taken control of their lives, their food, and their environments in order to reduce or eliminate their reliance on the global economic system. Through well-supported and researched profiles, the authors take the reader on a journey of hope and possibility, highlighting the way that permaculture principles are creating regenerative and sustainable farms, communities, and ecovillages.

Sustainable [R]evolution is a compilation of 60 permaculture endeavours from around the world, including individual property owners, ecovillages, urban farms, and intentional communities. Over 40 people contributed to the 60 profiles, with each profile ranging in length from two to six pages. The intent of the authors is to bring regenerative design strategies to a larger audience to encourage its use as a mainstream approach to community development. As the authors position the book: "*Sustainable Revolution* can be used as a catalogue, reference tool, and guide to the culture of regenerative design around the world" (p. 20). In a nutshell, the book is an introduction to permaculture as a cultural movement. The authors show that by coming together in community, the neoliberal economy can indeed be challenged. "The small brave acts of the many, collected together," the authors emphatically write, "can create the synergy needed for a cultural shift" (p. 14), underscoring how anyone can make these kinds of changes.

The book is a wealth of information and beautiful images perfect for anyone interested in learning more about how to live separately from the global economy. Due to the depth and breadth of the examples, it is inspiring and practical at the same time. The book includes examples of individual homesteaders through to communities of one thousand people. It shows how permaculture can be used in rural as well as urban areas; how permaculture can be effective in areas as small as a few hectares and with as few as a couple of people. Many of the profiles in the book particularly highlight how land that is barren, destroyed by chemicals, or experiencing extreme drought can be

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changed into an ecological haven of plant and wildlife using permaculture principles. Given the dire environmental situation today, this accessible and compelling book is a welcome contribution to the discourse on alternatives.

The way in which the book is written allows for an inviting exploration of the many ways permaculture can manifest itself in development. Not all of the profiled sites started with permaculture as a goal. In fact, at many of the sites, the people just needed somewhere to live and food to eat. But by embracing a more sustainable lifestyle, the authors argue, these people have found a way to either remove themselves from the global economy, or at least drastically reduce their dependence on it.

Although the authors share in reporting the book's information with over 40 different experts and practitioners, the authors did an admirable job in maintaining a consistent voice. The format of each profile was just different enough to keep things interesting and to highlight the unique things about each property. Between profiles there are one-to-two-page articles, which go into further depth about an issue or strategy. Examples include passive solar design, local currencies, social permaculture, and biochar (a process that creates a fine charcoal by converting waste for soil enhancement). As the articles are interspersed throughout the book, the reader might experience some frustration in that information is not always directly where you need it. It would be easier if information were presented with the first mention of a new topic. As well, it may have been beneficial to have had a few more articles explaining concepts such as swales or rocket stoves, which are mentioned many times but never fully explained. There is a certain assumption being made that the reader will already be familiar with these terms. Another shortcoming with the book is that challenges and failed projects are rarely mentioned. It would be interesting and useful, for instance, to know how many failed projects there are in relation to successful ones. The book makes permaculture seem almost magical and the reality might be a much different story.

Because permaculture is a series of principles, not a set of rules or actions, it can be difficult to imagine what it might look like, let alone what it might look like in very different climatic regions. *Sustainable [R]evolution* shows us what permaculture looks like at its best in five different climatic zones. Birnbaum and Fox have created an incredible reference for anyone who wants to know what permaculture is and what it can be. They have shown us just how broadly the concepts can be integrated and how permaculture is a very viable alternative to industrial farming.

Permaculture is a viable and efficacious tool that communities can use in their quest for independence from global markets and the neoliberal agenda. In many developing countries, industrial agriculture has destroyed natural ecosystems and left them unable to pay their national debts. By using permaculture principles and stepping outside of the neoliberal economy, communities are building social capital, securing food and water sources, and creating opportunities for growth and development. In this regard the book is an important contribution to the community economic development literature and debates. The book is also particularly relevant to social economy researchers and practitioners in that many of the featured groups can be considered social economy businesses.

We have already seen a shift in the economic practices of countries that can no longer afford to live in a neoliberal society. Unfortunately, as is the case with most change, it only happens when necessity dictates that it must. In *Sustainable [R]evolution,* the authors hope that "change will come through a global design re-evolution, not a bloody revolution" (p. 14). If more people live their lives through the principles of permaculture and sustainable living, we may just be able to avoid global conflict and finally find the peace we are looking for.

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