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EDITORIAL / ÉDITORIAL

The Role of Nonprofits and the Social Economy in the Achievement of Social and Environmental Justice / Le rôle des OSBL et de l'économie sociale pour une justice sociale et environnementale

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Welcome back to our readers! Our last regular issue came out at the end of 2021 as our societies were trying to make sense of the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional phenomenon of the ongoing climate change. Since then, we have also seen the start of war in Ukraine, and the resulting diaspora throughout Europe (mainly) and North America.

To understand the transformations that most postindustrial societies are experiencing, we believe that the concept of crisis is useful. However, a crisis is something very specific. Whereas catastrophes are clearly visible, crises are not as obvious. As Thom (1976, p. 34) writes, « Si, dans une crise, la "fonction" est

Bon retour à nos lecteurs et lectrices! Notre dernier numéro régulier a paru à la fin de 2021 au moment où nos sociétés essayaient de gérer les répercussions de la pandémie de la COVID-19, phénomène qui s'est ajouté aux enjeux déjà en cours liés aux changements climatiques. Depuis lors, nous avons été témoins de la guerre en Ukraine et de la diaspora qui en a découlé, principalement en Europe, mais aussi en Amérique du Nord.

Pour comprendre les transformations subies par la plupart des sociétés postindustrielles, nous croyons que le concept de crise est utile. Cependant, le concept de crise fait référence à des phénomènes bien précis. Si les catastrophes sont visibles, les crises, elles, le sont moins. Selon Thom, « Si dans une crise la "fonction" est

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fréquemment atteinte, la "structure" elle, demeure intacte » ("If, in a crisis, the 'function' is frequently affected, the 'structure' remains intact").

These phenomena (pandemics, wars, geopolitical tensions around the world, climate change and other environmental crises) can be framed in the context of the social, economic, and political transformations of the last four decades at least. However, in the last ten years, what has changed is the intensity of these phenomena and an increased awareness that the environment is at the heart of many societal challenges. For instance, it is now clear that the causes of the COVID-19 pandemic are at least in part connected to the environment and to the impact our societies are having on it and vice versa (i.e., COVID-19 is also having a strong impact on the environment).

More generally, environmental transformations such as the effect that the environment is having on migration processes, and the consequences of climate change on different species, their commercialization, and the communities dependent on them (Alberio & Soubirou, 2022), have played a role in reinforcing inequalities and vulnerabilities, exacerbating the effects of these transformations on the system and on the capacity of groups and individuals to deal with current changes. This capacity varies of course in relation to the social, economic, and geographic contexts. In effect, the issues that define collectives affected by various social and environmental vulnerabilities tend to intersect (Ford & Smit, 2004), converging toward a common aspiration of social and environmental justice.

Aspiration is indeed strongly connected to agency. If the emergence of crises is an ongoing issue, it is interesting, from a resilient and adaptative perspective, to focus on the countermeasures, defensive and offensive, to reverse the tendency and recover from these

fréquemment atteinte, la "structure", elle, demeure intacte » (1976, p. 34).

On peut interpréter les phénomènes actuels (pandémie, guerres, tensions géopolitiques autour du monde, changements climatiques et autres crises environnementales) dans le contexte des transformations sociales, économiques et politiques des quatre dernières décennies. Cependant, depuis dix ans, c'est l'intensité de ces phénomènes qui a changé, ainsi qu'une conscience accrue que l'environnement est au cœur de bon nombre de défis sociaux. Par exemple, il est maintenant clair que la COVID-19 a été causée, du moins en partie, par l'impact que nos sociétés sont en train d'avoir sur l'environnement et vice versa (c'est-à-dire que la COVID-19 est aussi en train d'avoir un impact prononcé sur l'environnement).

Plus généralement, les transformations environnementales, telles que l'effet de l'environnement sur la migration humaine et les conséquences des changements climatiques sur diverses espèces, leur commercialisation et les communautés qui dépendent d'elles (Alberio & Soubirou, 2022) ont joué un rôle dans le renforcement des inégalités et des vulnérabilités, accroissant les effets de ces transformations sur le système et sur la capacité des groupes et des individus à gérer les changements actuels. Évidemment, cette capacité varie en fonction du contexte social, économique et géographique. En effet, les défis qui se présentent aux collectivités éprouvant diverses vulnérabilités sociales et géographiques tendent à s'entrecroiser (Ford & Smit, 2004), convergeant vers une volonté partagée de justice sociale et environnementale.

Une telle volonté est fortement reliée à celle d'autonomie. Si le problème des crises en est un sans fin, c'est-à-dire qu'il y aura toujours des crises, il est pertinent, pour y résister et s'y adapter, de s'intéresser aux contremesures, tant défensives qu'offensives, pour renverser la ten-

crises. For this reason, we look at those innovative (social) initiatives and actions that have strong potential for social transformation at multiple levels. By social innovation we mean:

> A new combination and/or a new configuration of social practices in certain areas of action or social contexts, prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors in an intentional targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices. (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011, p. 210, cited in Alberio & Soubirou, 2022).

Social innovations tend indeed to respond to a social need or attempt to tackle a societal challenge. Some of these challenges include demographic change, poverty, the need to improve social inclusion and cohesion, and environmental issues including innovations in the fields of energy and transport (Howaldt et al., 2016). In addition, the phenomena at stake tend to cut across fields of interest. For example, an initiative might address poverty issues to increase a population's health and social condition, or inversely address health and social care issues to decrease problems related to poverty and exclusion. The main drivers or triggers of an initiative are thus manifold and complex.

In this perspective, the "social" dimension in social innovation is both analytical and normative (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011). Hence, social innovation calls for a "social" analysis of innovation processes through an examination of social relationships, organizational structures, power relations, etc. However, it also refers to a "social" ambition, namely the achievement of

dance et surmonter les crises. Pour cette raison, nous examinons les initiatives et actions sociales innovatrices qui ont un fort potentiel de transformation de la société à divers niveaux. D'autre part, par innovation sociale, nous entendons :

> Une nouvelle combinaison et/ou une nouvelle configuration de pratiques sociales dans certaines sphères d'action ou certains contextes sociaux, initiées par certains acteurs ou certaines constellations d'acteurs de manière intentionnelle et ciblée dans le but de mieux satisfaire ou répondre aux besoins et problèmes qu'on pourrait le faire en recourant aux pratiques établies (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011, p. 210, cité dans Alberio & Soubirou, 2022).

En effet, les innovations sociales sont généralement une réponse à un besoin social ou une tentative de surmonter un défi social. Parmi ces défis, il y a le changement démographique, la pauvreté, le besoin d'assurer l'inclusion et la cohésion sociales, et des questions environnementales, y compris les innovations en énergie et en transport (Howaldt et al., 2016). De surcroît, les problèmes à surmonter tendent à dépasser un seul champ d'intérêt. Par exemple, une initiative donnée pourrait se focaliser sur la pauvreté afin d'accroître la santé et la condition sociale d'une population ou, à l'inverse, elle pourrait se focaliser sur la santé et la condition sociale afin de minimiser les problèmes reliés à la pauvreté et à l'exclusion. Ainsi, les raisons de lancer une initiative sont multiples et complexes.

Selon cette perspective, la dimension « sociale » de l'innovation sociale est à la fois analytique et normative (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2011). De même, l'innovation sociale requiert une analyse qui soit bien « sociale » au moyen d'un examen des relations sociales, des structures organisationnelles, des rapports de pouvoir, etc. Le terme « innovation sociale » s'applique, en outre, dans le cas

a certain common good. In this perspective, social innovation should aim to achieve a common good. As far as analyzing dimensions of social innovation goes, Moulaert et al. (2005) conceptualized three of them. The first is the satisfaction of human needs that are not currently being satisfied by the market or the state because they are no longer (or not yet) perceived as important by these two actors. This dimension stands for the "product" of social innovation, which is the satisfaction of human needs. The other two are much more relational and concern the changes in social relations and the processes of individual and—most importantly—collective empowerment. Although quite classical, this vision of social innovation fits well, in our opinion, with the practice of and research into the nonprofit and social economy that our journal strives to highlight and promote, and reflects the variety of the contributions that we assembled for this issue.

The first research article, « L'innovation sociale émancipatrice : fondements théoriques néo-polanyiens » ("Emancipatory Social Innovation: Neo-Polanyian Theoretical Foundations") by **Philippe Dufort**, is a theoretical contribution to the concept of social innovation. We open our issue with this article mainly due to its theoretical and critical nature. The author highlights how the current ecological and social crises are shaking the foundations of society and invites a reflection on the capacity of social innovations to generate systemic transitions. For issues of social and environmental justice, the concept of transition is central. Starting from the concept of contemporary emancipatory social innovations, this article uses Nancy Fraser's neo-Polanyian critical theory to develop the concept of social effect as a means to better understand the complex dynamics at the root of current

d'un objectif social précis à atteindre, à savoir l'atteinte d'un bien commun donné. Dans cette optique, l'innovation sociale devrait viser à l'atteinte d'un bien commun. Quant aux dimensions de l'innovation sociale, Moulaert et al. (2005) en ont établi trois principales. La première est la satisfaction de besoins humains que le marché ou l'État ne satisfont pas parce que ces derniers ne les considèrent plus (ou pas encore) comme étant importants. Cette dimension se rapporte au « produit » de l'innovation sociale, qui est la satisfaction des besoins sociaux. Les deux autres dimensions sont relationnelles. Elles ont trait aux changements dans les rapports sociaux et aux processus d'autonomisation individuelle et—surtout—collective. À notre avis, cette vision de l'innovation sociale, bien qu'elle soit classique, correspond bien aux pratiques dans l'économie sociale et le secteur sans but lucratif et à la recherche sur celles-ci que notre revue s'efforce de souligner et promouvoir. De plus, cette vision reflète la diversité des contributions que nous avons incluses dans ce numéro.

Le premier article de recherche, « L'innovation sociale émancipatrice : fondements théoriques néopolanyiens » de **Philippe Dufort**, est une contribution théorique au concept d'innovation sociale. Nous commençons notre numéro par cet article principalement à cause de son caractère théorique et critique. L'auteur y souligne comment les crises écologiques et sociales actuelles sont en train d'ébranler les fondements de la société et invite à réfléchir sur la capacité des innovations sociales à entraîner une transition systémique. Pour ce qui est de la justice sociale et environnementale, cette idée de transition est centrale. À partir du concept d'une innovation sociale contemporaine qui soit émancipatrice, cet article a recours à la théorie critique néopolanyienne de Nancy Fraser pour développer le concept d'effet social afin de mieux comprendre les dynamiques complexes à la base des crises actuelles. L'auteur

crises. The author suggests that Fraser's theory, applied on the microsocial, mesosocial and macrosocial levels, can allow us to operationalize the issue of the paradoxes that the actors of social innovation generate and encounter every day. This article is a good synthesis of the concept of social innovation originating in emancipation which—in our opinion as editors of this journal—has traditionally been at the heart of research into social innovation and the social economy, although sometimes this concept has not been so clearly stated.

Next, **Caroline Shenaz Hossein** and **Kadasi Ceres**, in their article "Acknowledging Marxist Economist C.Y. Thomas' Legacy in Canada's Economic Development Sector," note the absence of the African diaspora's contribution to cooperative development literature and highlight the work of Afro-Guyanese economist C.Y. Thomas. Thomas' convergence theory (1974) informed the Neechi principles, formulated by an Indigenous workers' cooperative in Winnipeg's North End. In the coauthors' words, "Recognizing and validating the Black experience also means opening up the ways we use theory to think about the various ways that people build cooperatives."

The article written by **Francis Garon, Jean Michael Montsion**, and **Audrey Pyée** entitled "Toronto's Francophone Voluntary Sector Under Pressure: The Challenges of Immigrant Integration in a Linguistic Minority Context," offers some thoughtful insights into the reality that community actors experience. The authors focus on how Francophone communities in English-dominated provinces outside of Québec act and react to the neoliberalization of Canada's policies on immigration and the integration of immigrants. Their case study is the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The coauthors observe that the Francophone volun-

suggère que la théorie de Fraser, appliquée aux niveaux microsocial, mésosocial et macrosocial, peut nous permettre d'opérationnaliser la question des paradoxes que les acteurs de l'innovation sociale créent et croisent à chaque jour. Cet article offre une habile synthèse du concept d'innovation sociale née d'un désir d'émancipation, lequel désir—à notre avis en tant que directeurs de cette revue—a traditionnellement été au cœur de la recherche sur l'innovation sociale et sur l'économie sociale, bien que ce concept n'ait pas toujours été clairement exprimé.

Ensuite, **Caroline Shenaz Hossein** et **Kadasi Ceres**, dans leur article "Acknowledging Marxist Economist C.Y. Thomas' Legacy in Canada's Economic Development Sector" (« Reconnaître l'influence de l'économiste marxiste C.Y. Thomas dans le secteur du développement économique au Canada »), remarquent l'absence de la contribution faite par la diaspora africaine au développement coopératif et soulignent le travail de l'économiste afro-guyanien C.Y. Thomas. Sa théorie de la convergence (1974) a inspiré les principes Neechi formulés par une coopérative de travailleurs autochtones du North End de Winnipeg. Selon les auteurs, « Reconnaître et valider l'expérience des Noirs signifie aussi diversifier les manières dont on utilise la théorie pour réfléchir sur les moyens par lesquels les gens construisent des coopératives. »

L'article de **Francis Garon, Jean Michel Montsion** et **Audrey Pyée** intitulé "Toronto's Francophone Voluntary Sector Under Pressure : The Challenges of Immigrant Integration in a Linguistic Minority Context" (« Le secteur bénévole francophone à Toronto sous pression : les défis d'intégrer les immigrants dans un contexte de minorité linguistique ») offre des réflexions stimulantes sur la réalité vécue par les acteurs communautaires. Les auteurs se focalisent sur la manière dont les communautés francophones hors-Québec dans les provinces à prédominance anglophone agissent et réagissent par rapport à la néolibéralisation

tary sector in the GTA has been affected by a "community government" mindset that limits its ability to support the integration of Francophone newcomers into the local French-speaking community. To support their observation, the coauthors relied on public documents and interviews with the representatives of key Francophone community organizations. Although researched before the pandemic and the Russian attack on Ukraine, this article deals with some of the transformations that we have mentioned above: the reconfiguration of the State, of its role, and of its relations with other actors (mainly the market, families, and communities).

In the final article in this section, "Do Companies Really Care? Strategic Philanthropy and Imagine Canada's Caring Company Program," **Jack Showers** and **Tessa Hebb** explore the tensions in strategic corporate philanthropy between the needs of a company and the needs of society. The article is based on semi-structured interviews with a sample of corporate philanthropy managers at companies accredited through the Caring Company program, an initiative that recognizes Canadian companies that contribute at least one percent of their pre-tax profits to nonprofit organizations. Showers and Hebb, in addition to identifying the tensions between the desire to make a profit and the need to address social needs, discuss implications for the Caring Company program.

des politiques canadiennes en matière d'immigration et d'intégration des immigrés et immigrées. Leur étude de cas porte sur la Région du Grand Toronto (RGT). Les auteurs observent que le secteur bénévole francophone de la RGT a subi l'influence d'une mentalité de « gouvernement communautaire » qui limite sa capacité à intégrer les nouveaux arrivants francophones au sein de la communauté francophone locale. Pour appuyer leurs observations, les auteurs se basent sur des documents publics et des entretiens avec les représentants d'organismes communautaires francophones clés. Les auteurs, bien qu'ils aient effectué leur recherche avant la pandémie et l'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Russie, traitent de certaines des transformations que nous avons mentionnées au début de notre éditorial telles que la reconfiguration de l'État, de son rôle, et de ses rapports avec d'autres acteurs (principalement le marché, les familles et les communautés).

Dans le dernier article de cette section, "Do Companies Really Care? Strategic Philanthropy and Imagine Canada's Caring Company Program" (« Les entreprises se sentent-elles vraiment concernées? La philanthropie stratégique et le Programme des entreprises généreuses d'Imagine Canada »), **Jack Showers** et **Tessa Hebb** explorent les tensions, sous-tendant le mécénat d'entreprises, entre les besoins des entreprises et celles de la société. Cet article est basé sur des entrevues semi-structurées avec un échantillon de responsables du mécénat d'entreprise dans des compagnies accréditées par le Programme des entreprises généreuses, lequel récompense les entreprises canadiennes contribuant au moins un pour cent de leurs profits avant impôts à des organismes sans but lucratif. Showers et Hebb, en plus d'identifier les tensions entre le désir de réaliser un profit et celui de répondre à des besoins sociaux, discutent des implications de la situation actuelle pour le Programme des entreprises généreuses.

We then present two Research Notes, a new format for the journal.

The first contribution to this section, on Milton Parc and the « atelier de la décroissance » ("Workshop on Degrowth"), was written by **Yves-Marie Abraham** and **Ambre Fourrier**. The authors start from a recognition of the movement for a "sustainable" or "convivial" degrowth of the economy, showing how much this movement has gained traction over the last twenty years. Without setting limits on the description of the movement's principles, the authors ask themselves—and show the reader—how such a course of action can be implemented in practice. As is often the case with social innovations, the authors point out that it is less a question of inventing a new form of social life than it is one of rediscovering a form that, despite having been marginalized, has never ceased to exist. To illustrate their position, Abraham and Fourrier examine the Milton Parc community in Montreal, which has provided housing for 1,500 people for over thirty years in accordance with the principles of degrowth.

The second research note is by **Jasmine Alam, Mustapha Ibn Boamah, Donald MacMullen, Natasha R. Kochhar**, and **Rebecca Barrington.** It is entitled "In Search of the 'Benefits' in Certified B Corporations." This study reports on the different experiences of B Corp-certified businesses in Atlantic Canada in relation to the different impacts of being certified envisioned by the certification body B Lab: leading a movement, building relationships, attracting talent, improving impact, amplifying one's voice, and protecting one's mission (B Lab, 2022). The authors found that respondents were partially satisfied in these regards and that there was an opportunity for B Lab to increase public education and awareness of its brand.

Nous présentons ensuite deux Notes de recherche, laquelle est une nouvelle rubrique dans notre revue.

La première contribution à cette rubrique, sur Milton Parc et « l'atelier de la décroissance », est d'**Yves-Marie Abraham** et **Ambre Fourrier**. Les auteurs commencent par reconnaître le mouvement pour une décroissance « durable » ou « conviviale » de l'économie, soulignant à quel point ce mouvement a cru depuis les vingt dernières années. Sans imposer de limites à la description des principes propres à ce mouvement, les auteurs se demandent—et montrent à leurs lecteurs et lectrices—comment, en pratique, on peut mettre une telle approche en œuvre. Comme il est souvent le cas avec les innovations sociales, les auteurs indiquent qu'il est moins question d'inventer une nouvelle forme de vie sociale que de redécouvrir une forme qui, bien qu'elle ait été marginalisée, a toujours existé. Pour appuyer leur position, Abraham et Fourrier examinent la communauté Milton Parc à Montréal, laquelle a fourni des logements pour 1 500 personnes depuis plus de trente ans en accord avec les principes de la décroissance.

La seconde note de recherche est de **Jasmine Alam, Mustapha Ibn Boamah, Donald MacMullen, Natasha R. Kochhar,** et **Rebecca Barrington.** Elle s'intitule "In Search of the 'Benefits' in Certified B Corporations" (« À la recherche des "avantages" pour les entreprises certifiées "B Corp" »). Cette étude porte sur les diverses expériences de commerces au Canada atlantique ayant obtenu la certification « B Corp » par rapport aux différents effets de la certification envisagés par l'organisme de certification B Lab : mener un mouvement, bâtir des relations, attirer des gens talentueux, améliorer son impact, amplifier sa voix, et protéger sa mission (B Lab, 2022). Les auteurs ont conclu que les répondants étaient partiellement satisfaits à l'égard du service et qu'il se présentait une occasion pour B Lab d'accroître l'éducation du public et la connaissance de sa marque.

Maintaining a two-year-old tradition, we conclude with Perspectives for the Field, which in this issue is dedicated to the concept of the circular economy. We chose this topic because it is an emerging and interesting one on which a deep and precise reflection is needed both in practice and research—and most importantly at their juncture.

The first piece, "Synergizing Social Economy and Circular Economy" by **Marie-France Bellemare, Solen Martin-Déry, Rafael Ziegler, Martine Vézina, Emmanuel Benoît Raufflet,** and **Alex Walsh**, introduces the concepts of the social and circular economy and the implications of their intersection.

The second of the Perspectives, "The Search for Opportunity: Cooperatives and Circular Economy" by **Karen Flamand,** focuses specifically on the ability of cooperatives to advance the goals of the circular economy thanks to their singular focus on democracy, economic participation, and human dignity.

In « Écoscéno : création d'une entreprise sociale d'économie circulaire en culture » ("Écoscéno: The Creation of a Cultural Social Enterprise Based on the Circular Economy") by **Anne-Catherine Lebeau** and **Emmanuel Raufflet**, we are introduced to the social enterprise Écoscéno. The latter was founded in 2019 in Montreal to offer concrete solutions to the challenge of minimizing waste in the cultural sector. In their presentation of this organization, the authors use the circular economy framework.

We hope you enjoy these contributions!

En guise de conclusion, nous maintenons une tradition ancienne de deux ans, les Perspectives pour le terrain qui, dans ce numéro, portent sur le concept d'économie circulaire. Nous avons choisi ce sujet parce qu'il est intéressant et qu'il est en train de prendre de l'importance. Il est opportun de réfléchir sur celui-ci en profondeur et avec précision, tant dans la pratique que dans la recherche—et surtout dans le croisement des deux.

Le premier de trois articles, "Synergizing Social Economy and Circular Economy" (« Assurer la synergie entre l'économie sociale et l'économie circulaire ») de **Marie-France Bellemare, Solen Martin-Déry, Rafael Ziegler, Martine Vézina, Emmanuel Raufflet** et **Alex Walsh**, présente les concepts d'économie sociale et circulaire et les implications de leur enchevêtrement.

Le deuxième texte, "The Search for Opportunity: Cooperatives and Circular Economy" (« À la recherche d'opportunités : les coopératives et l'économie circulaire ») de **Karen Flamand,** porte spécifiquement sur la capacité des coopératives à faire avancer les objectifs de l'économie circulaire grâce à l'attention singulière qu'elles peuvent porter sur la démocratie, la participation économique et la dignité humaine.

Dans « Écoscéno : création d'une entreprise sociale d'économie circulaire en culture » d'**Anne-Catherine Lebeau** et **Emmanuel Raufflet**, on découvre l'entreprise sociale Écoscéno. Celle-ci a été fondée en 2019 à Montréal afin d'offrir des solutions concrètes pour minimiser les déchets dans le secteur culturel. Les auteurs, dans leur présentation de cet organisme, ont recours au concept d'économie circulaire.

Nous espérons que vous apprécierez ce numéro!

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L'innovation sociale émancipatrice : fondements théoriques néopolanyiens

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ABSTRACT

The current ecological and social crises are shaking the foundations of society and invite reflection on the capacity of social innovations to generate systemic transitions. As conceptualized by Erik Olin Wright, the trajectories of contemporary emancipatory social innovations are encountering blockages that limit their transformative potential. This article develops the concept of *social effect* to better understand the complex dynamics at the root of this problem by mobilizing Nancy Fraser's neo-Polanyian critical theory. This theory, applied to the microsocial, mesosocial and macrosocial scales, allows us to operationalize the issue of the paradoxes encountered and generated daily by the actors of social innovation. The resulting approach to emancipatory social innovation aims to better understand the hybridization of resources and the strategies adopted by organizations to develop the structural power necessary to effect a systemic socioecological transition. The approach also draws attention to the paradoxical social effects generated through the social innovation actors' daily practices.

RÉSUMÉ

Les crises sociales et écologiques actuelles ébranlent les fondements de la société et invitent à une réflexion sur la capacité des innovations sociales à engendrer des transitions systémiques. Toutefois, tel que conceptualisé par Erik Olin Wright, ces innovations rencontrent des blocages qui limitent leur potentiel transformateur. En mobilisant la théorie critique néopolanyienne de Nancy Fraser, cet article développe le concept d'*effet social* afin de mieux comprendre les dynamiques complexes qui engendrent ces blocages. La théorie de Fraser, appliquée aux échelles microsociale, mésosociale et macrosociale, nous permet d'opérationnaliser l'enjeu des paradoxes que rencontrent et génèrent au quotidien les acteur(-trice)s de l'innovation sociale. L'approche de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice qui en résulte se veut une approche pragmatique qui vise à mieux comprendre l'hybridation des ressources et les stratégies adoptées par les organisations afin de développer le pouvoir structurel nécessaire pour réussir une transition socioécologique systémique. Elle permet aussi de mettre en lumière les effets sociaux paradoxaux qu'engendrent les pratiques quotidiennes des acteur(-trice)s de l'innovation sociale.

Keywords / Mots clés : emancipatory social innovation, systemic transition, capitalism, organizations, strategic practices / innovation sociale émancipatrice, transition systémique, capitalisme, organisations, pratiques stratégiques

INTRODUCTION[1]

Notre époque est marquée par des crises si profondes, qu'elles soient climatiques, économiques, démocratiques ou sanitaires, que les approches en innovation sociale proposant la simple régulation ou le rééquilibrage des structures actuelles nous paraissent insuffisantes pour faire face à l'ampleur de ces défis. Afin de répondre à cette inadéquation, nous présentons ici une « refondation » de l'approche théorique de l'innovation sociale depuis la théorie critique néopolanyienne. Ces fondements théoriques renouvelés permettent de combler une lacune importante de la littérature actuelle : penser les pratiques stratégiques visant la mise à l'échelle d'une transition socioécologique.

D'abord, nous verrons que pour jeter les bases théoriques d'une vision émancipatrice de l'innovation sociale, il nous faut dépasser l'approche régulationniste adoptée notamment par le CRISES jusqu'en 2020. À partir de ce constat, nous mobiliserons les apports d'Erik Olin Wright (2016; 2019) sur les processus de transition systémique afin de définir les obstacles rencontrés par les praticien(ne)s à l'origine d'innovations sociales émancipatrices. Nous dégagerons ensuite de la pensée de l'économiste hongrois Karl Polanyi, telle que revisitée par la philosophe Nancy Fraser, un cadre conceptuel des pratiques stratégiques permettant aux praticien(ne)s de dépasser ces obstacles. C'est en suggérant le concept d'*effet social* que nous développerons l'approche de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice. Le concept d'effet social est la pierre d'assise d'une théorie en trois niveaux (micro, méso et macro) opérationnalisant les concepts d'hybridation des ressources, de paradoxe, de pouvoir structurel et d'enchevêtrement des structures. Finalement, nous amorcerons une réflexion sur le potentiel de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice pour déployer des stratégies concertées vers la transition socioécologique dans le territoire et les collectivités.

UNE LACUNE THÉORIQUE FONDAMENTALE ET LA PROBLÉMATIQUE DE LA « TRANSITION SYSTÉMIQUE »

L'innovation sociale a connu trois générations depuis les années 1960 selon le récit qu'en fait l'un des fondateurs du champ au Québec, Benoît Lévesque (Fossati, Degavre et Lévesque, 2018). Selon lui, nous connaîtrions, en ce moment, l'émergence d'une quatrième génération d'innovations sociales devant faire face à la crise écologique.

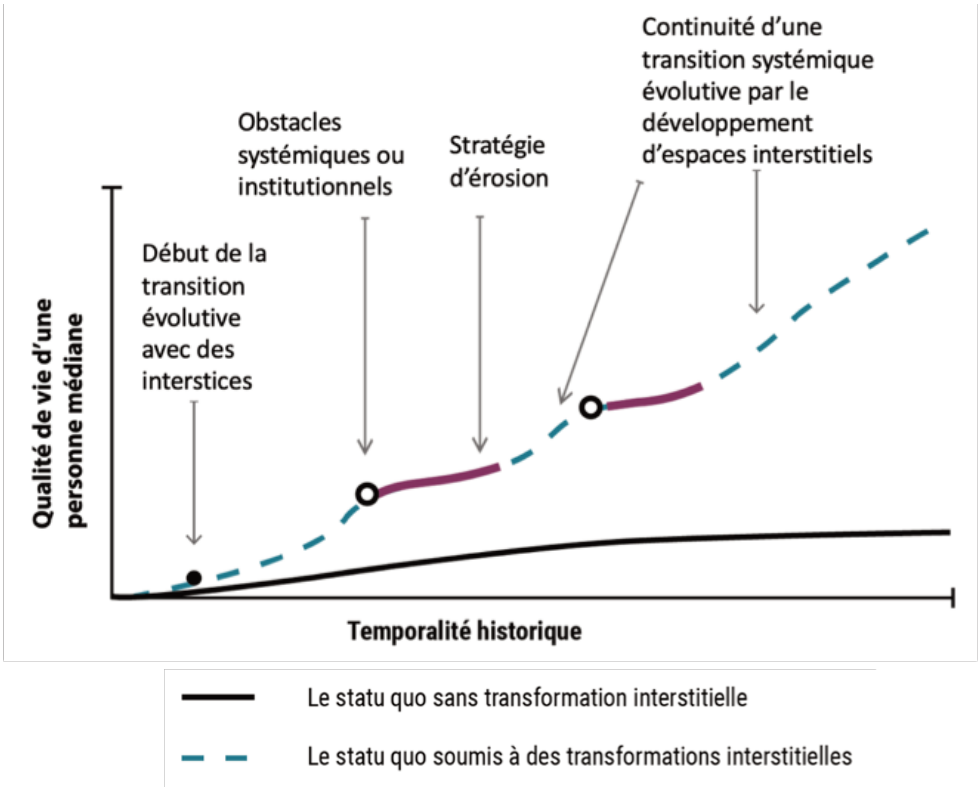
Cette crise et les crises sociales qui l'accompagnent sont d'une telle ampleur qu'il s'avère nécessaire de se questionner sur l'approche théorique régulationniste. Notre réflexion prend ainsi la forme d'un double constat. D'une part, les fondements offerts par l'école de la régulation auront enrichi la compréhension de l'histoire de l'innovation sociale au travers des mutations des régimes d'accumulation capitalistes. Toutefois, il n'est plus possible d'expliquer les crises générales de

l'écologie, de la démocratie et du capitalisme par la description d'un régime d'accumulation particulier tel que le fordisme dans les années 1980 (Fraser et Jaeggi, 2018). En effet, les enchevêtrements de crises lient discrimination raciale, risques sanitaires, contaminations, et pauvreté de manières inédites et spécifiques (Bambra, 2021; Laster Pirtle, 2021). D'autre part, les fondements régulationnistes sont également réductionnistes pour appréhender comment des initiatives d'innovation sociale visent à provoquer des transitions systémiques plutôt qu'à améliorer des systèmes existants. Si une grande diversité d'expérimentations collectives agissent déjà *au sein*, *contre* et *au-delà* des systèmes dominants et stimulent plusieurs recherches (Klein, 2019; Chatterton et Pickerill, 2010; Lachapelle, 2019), un renouvellement des fondations théoriques de l'innovation sociale demeure nécessaire afin d'appréhender la complexité des pratiques de transition systémique impliquées. Dans la même ligne d'idées, les défis qui occuperont la prochaine vague de chercheur(e)s nécessitent le développement de nouveaux fondements théoriques permettant de penser l'innovation sociale depuis la problématique de la transition socioécologique et des enchevêtrements systémiques qui en résulteront. S'inspirant des théories critiques, la tâche est donc de subvertir l'innovation sociale pour en faire un vecteur de remise en question et de dépassement des systèmes de pouvoir dominants tels que le patriarcat, le capitalisme, le colonialisme et la domination de l'humain sur le non-humain. C'est dans cet objectif que l'approche de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice est ici proposée.

En d'autres mots, une lacune théorique importante qui caractérise l'état actuel du champ de l'innovation sociale au Québec concerne la conceptualisation des blocages que rencontre la mise à l'échelle des innovations sociales dans leur trajectoire de transition systémique[2]. Afin de contribuer à combler cette lacune, cet article vise à conceptualiser les pratiques quotidiennes des acteur(-trice)s de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice—par le biais du concept d'effet social—en prenant en compte les stratégies que ceux-ci mobilisent face aux blocages systémiques. Cette perspective permet de définir une approche de l'innovation sociale depuis les grands processus de transition systémique et de renouer avec la théorie critique.

Nous l'avons dit, devant les défis que rencontrent les praticien(ne)s de l'innovation sociale aujourd'hui, une analyse centrée sur la régulation des systèmes n'est plus suffisante et des analyses orientées vers une transition systémique s'avèrent essentielles devant les diverses crises socioécologiques (Segers, 2018). En ce sens, la pensée du sociologue Erik Olin Wright (2016; 2019) permet d'identifier des blocages qui limitent la capacité des innovations sociales à générer une transition systémique. En s'intéressant aux grandes trajectoires de transition, Wright retient deux stratégies : la symbiose, qui consiste à envisager la transition en réformant l'État à titre de levier, et la stratégie interstitielle, qui implique la création de bulles agissant au-delà de la logique des systèmes d'oppression. Ces deux trajectoires graduelles impliquent que les interstices/réformes amélioreront la qualité de vie des collectivités jusqu'à un point de saturation. Sur ces bases, la population accepterait plus facilement d'engager et de poursuivre une rupture systémique. Wright souligne toutefois que la simple multiplication d'organisations alternatives et de réformes ne crée pas nécessairement les conditions gagnantes pour enclencher un processus de changement d'échelle généralisé. En effet, des blocages institutionnels et systémiques[3] limitent le potentiel de transition émancipatrice de ces trajectoires (voir la figure 1).

Figure 1. Blocages systémiques et trajectoires de transition par la stratégie d'érosion



Source: Wright 2019; Dufort 2019; modifié par l'auteur

C'est donc dans la combinaison des logiques d'action qui soutiennent les trajectoires réformiste et interstitielle qu'il est possible de concevoir des stratégies de « déblocage » permettant la continuation de ces transitions systémiques. C'est ce que Wright appelle la logique stratégique de l'érosion. Celle-ci permet d'articuler comment des blocages institutionnels pourraient être démantelés, menant ainsi à briser des blocages systémiques plus profonds. L'action collective peut ainsi se comprendre à l'image d'une espèce envahissante s'adaptant d'abord à un milieu distinct et hostile puis imposant progressivement ses propres règles jusqu'à devenir dominante (Wright, 2019). Ces stratégies permettent à la fois de jouer « avec le jeu » et « contre le jeu » (Lachapelle, 2019). Dans la pratique, l'érosion nécessite des mobilisations de ressources, des alliances et des stratégies qui peuvent paraître surprenantes. Nous croyons que pour mieux comprendre la portée des innovations sociales émancipatrices, nous devons nous pencher sur ces stratégies et leurs effets sociaux parfois paradoxaux.

LA NOTION D'EFFET SOCIAL

L'approche néopolanyienne développée par Nancy Fraser (2010; 2013) permet de saisir comment les innovations sociales émancipatrices érodent les blocages empêchant une transition systémique. Cette section expose l'adaptation que fait Fraser de l'œuvre maîtresse de Karl Polanyi, *La grande transformation* (2001 [1944]) et la mobilise pour ouvrir la porte à une refondation de l'innovation sociale sur des fondements théoriques aptes à appréhender les transitions systémiques. Plus spé-

cifiquement, nous définirons le concept d'*effet social* en nous appropriant le triptyque des trois courants néopolanyiens. Cette approche contribuera à mettre en lumière, d'une part, l'acquisition d'un *pouvoir structurel* permettant de provoquer une transition systémique qui passe par la mobilisation et, d'autre part, *l'hybridation* de divers types de ressources disponibles au sein des systèmes existants. Ces stratégies de mobilisation des ressources inciteront en outre des effets sociaux *paradoxaux,* car elles enchevêtrent les pratiques des organisations *au sein, contre* et *au-delà* des systèmes dominants.

Selon Fraser, les grands courants sociohistoriques ne se limiteraient pas uniquement à l'encastrement du marché (protection sociale) ou à son désencastrement (marchandisation) comme le propose Polanyi, mais comprendraient aussi une opposition entre émancipation et domination. Si Polanyi présente l'encastrement du marché comme orienté vers la protection de la société, Fraser évoque l'émancipation comme étant une réponse pour contrer les grands systèmes d'oppression tels que le racisme, le colonialisme et le patriarcat. Ce troisième pôle nous permet alors de sortir d'une perception normative et conservatrice de la société et de voir comment cette dernière repose aussi sur la domination de certains groupes (Fraser, 2013; 2018).

La lentille néopolanyienne nous est donc pertinente pour conceptualiser l'effet social que peuvent produire les innovations sociales. Nous utilisons ici la notion d'effet social car elle permet un recentrage des problématiques de recherche depuis la mesure de l'impact d'une innovation sociale vers la nature de l'effet que celle-ci engendre sur la société et ses structures profondes. En d'autres mots, l'effet social dirige notre attention vers les systèmes de pouvoir, leurs enchevêtrements structurels et leurs transformations plutôt que sur des résultats ponctuels et mesurables dans une situation précise.

Plus spécifiquement, nous entendons la notion d'effet social comme une transformation des structures macrosociales par une organisation s'inscrivant au sein d'un ou de plusieurs courants néopolanyiens. Chaque type d'effet social correspond ainsi au courant néopolanyien qu'il porte : marchandisation, protection sociale ou émancipation. Un effet social de marchandisation atomise la société et pose le marché comme médiateur du lien social et du lien avec la nature (par exemple, laisser au marché l'organisation des soins aux ainés alors que traditionnellement les familles se chargeaient de leurs parents). Un effet social de protection préserve la nature et le tissu social face à la marchandisation et construit les modalités permettant la solidarité, sans tenir compte des possibles dynamiques d'oppression sous-jacentes à cette solidarité (par exemple, la préservation des villages gaspésiens et des modes de vie traditionnels qui y sont associés). Par ailleurs, un effet social d'émancipation soumet tout lien social à la critique et vise à dissoudre ses structures oppressives, indépendamment des liens de solidarité affectés (par exemple, la critique de traditions villageoises en fonction de leurs contenus patriarcaux).

Le concept d'effet social devient donc la base à partir de laquelle il est possible d'appréhender la complexité des pratiques de ces organisations qui sont à l'origine des innovations sociales émancipatrices. Ces trois types d'effets sociaux causent des transformations dans les enchevêtrements de structures interdépendantes. Les organisations qui portent de telles innovations sociales combinent ainsi très souvent plusieurs types d'effets sociaux au sein de leurs pratiques quotidiennes.

Elles sont à la fois ancrées dans ces enchevêtrements entre les grands courants du triptyque et porteuses de celles-ci.

Si l'effet social est un concept permettant d'appréhender les transformations systémiques découlant de l'action des organisations, les praticien(ne)s conçoivent le plus souvent leurs actions à partir de *finalités sociopolitiques* particulières (par exemple, le principe des communs, les modes de vie égalitaires ou écologiques, etc.). Il est donc important de différencier clairement l'idée d'effet social de celle de la finalité sociopolitique des organisations. À cette fin, notons qu'une finalité sociopolitique est conjoncturelle et représente un objectif spécifique et limité. Notre proposition théorique contribue à saisir explicitement comment ces finalités sociopolitiques servent, au bout du compte, la poursuite d'un effet social plus fondamental en ligne avec les trois courants néopolanyiens.

Ainsi, *la finalité sociopolitique est un objectif conjoncturel entraînant un effet social.* Par exemple, un mouvement social ayant comme finalité de déréguler le commerce international à un moment donné alors qu'il vise la finalité de dissoudre les normes du travail ou de protection environnementale à un autre s'inscrit avec constance dans un effet social de marchandisation de la société. Un mouvement social ayant pour finalité de protéger certaines politiques sociales de l'État providence ou de lutter contre l'immigration dans la mesure où cette dernière est perçue comme une menace à la cohésion sociale a un effet social supportant le courant polanyien de protection sociale. Un mouvement social ayant pour finalité de combattre la discrimination raciale dans les usines de la *Rust Belt* pour ensuite combattre la discrimination sexiste au sein des organisations syndicales supporte par ces diverses finalités un effet social émancipateur. Il est à noter aussi que des organisations distinctes peuvent défendre la même finalité sociopolitique tout en visant un effet social différent. Par exemple, trois groupes qui se mobilisent contre un grand projet énergétique dans leur région pourraient défendre trois argumentaires très éloignés les uns des autres. Le premier pourrait s'opposer au projet, car celui-ci nuirait potentiellement à l'industrie touristique locale (marchandisation). Le second pourrait soutenir que ce projet risque de déstabiliser le tissu social de la communauté en raison de l'arrivée de travailleur(-euse)s de l'extérieur (protection sociale), tandis que le dernier pourrait souhaiter déconstruire une vision du développement misant sur l'exploitation des ressources naturelles par l'humain (émancipation).

En somme, la notion d'effet social permet de catégoriser les différentes finalités sociopolitiques des organisations selon les trois courants néopolanyiens et, en conséquence, de saisir sous quelles conditions ces organisations participeraient à provoquer une transition systémique dans un contexte donné. Cette perspective est particulièrement adaptée pour contextualiser les tentatives d'érosion des structures de pouvoir par des organisations de l'innovation sociale et ce, que ces dernières visent des transformations systémiques de genre, de race, de colonisation ou de classe. C'est sur cette base que nous pouvons opérationnaliser trois niveaux d'analyse structurant une théorie de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice.

THÉORIE MULTINIVEAU DE L'INNOVATION SOCIALE ÉMANCIPATRICE

Cette section propose une convergence théorique entre l'approche néopolanyienne et l'innovation sociale en opérationnalisant une théorie de l'innovation sociale émancipatrice en trois niveaux d'analyse : le niveau macrosocial, mésosocial et microsocial. Cette approche pragmatique suggère

d'aborder les innovations sociales en fonction de leurs stratégies pour transformer ou transcender les structures macrosociales plutôt qu'en fonction de leurs fondements sectoriels, politiques, normatifs, éthiques ou utopiques.

Premièrement, la conception du niveau macrosocial depuis le triptyque néopolanyien permet de renouer avec la grande théorie et de conceptualiser les enchevêtrements des structures de pouvoir caractérisant les contextes complexes dans lesquels les projets d'innovation sociale apparaissent et évoluent : le capitalisme, le patriarcat, le colonialisme, la domination de l'humain sur le non-humain, etc. La conjoncture au sein de laquelle une organisation évolue peut être comprise comme une manifestation située de l'enchevêtrement de ces structures. Elle se transforme au gré de grands processus sociohistoriques et de l'action d'organisations ayant un pouvoir structurel suffisant pour en orienter les grands courants néopolanyiens. C'est donc en développant un pouvoir suffisant que les organisations en innovation sociale peuvent déjouer les blocages et parvenir à engendrer des changements systémiques, donc à une échelle macro. De plus, comme l'araignée qui tire sur un fil de sa toile, chaque transformation sociale a des effets sur les structures de pouvoir des autres systèmes, et ce en fonction des configurations conjoncturelles dans leur contexte respectifs.

Fraser (2018) propose d'ailleurs une théorie de la forme globale que cet enchevêtrement prendrait à notre époque : le capitalisme comme ordre social institué. Selon cette théorie, le capitalisme serait dépendant de domaines non économiques pour perpétuer son existence : le travail de reproduction sociale, la nature et le politique. En ce sens, le capitalisme repose sur la domination des hommes sur les femmes, des humains sur la nature et la domination politique, notamment sous forme de colonialisme. Cette conception du niveau macrosocial entraîne une conséquence méthodologique importante : l'étude des enchevêtrements de ces différentes structures de pouvoir (et leurs symptômes en matière d'enjeux de justice sociale) caractérise le contexte où une innovation sociale apparaît et se déploie.

Deuxièmement, opérationnaliser le pendant microsocial du triptyque néopolanyien permet de conceptualiser les *hybridations* entre les ressources rendues disponibles par différentes structures. Dans la gestion quotidienne de leurs organisations, les acteur(-trice)s de l'innovation sociale génèrent des hybridations en puisant simultanément divers types de ressources depuis les trois courants néopolanyiens (marchandisation, protection sociale et émancipation). Selon les conjonctures, les ressources mobilisées sont de natures différentes : expertises, contacts, tactiques, identités, discours, représentations, moyens financiers, etc. Ces hybridations prennent soit la forme d'échanges entre différentes organisations au sein d'un même courant (hybridations intracourants) ou d'échanges entre organisations de différents courants (hybridations intercourants). Elles permettent d'être particulièrement adapté aux potentialités d'une conjoncture unique découlant de leur contexte macrosocial.

Toutefois, les hybridations viennent au prix du déploiement d'un effet social paradoxal et peuvent occasionner des défis de taille dans les organisations. En effet, pour les praticien(ne)s, cette réalité cause des casse-têtes éthiques, politiques et interpersonnels[4]. Tel que le relate Anna Kruzynski (2017), la question du financement pour les rénovations du Bâtiment 7 a entraîné des questionnements importants pour les militant(e)s. Si les prêts bancaires ou un investissement de promoteurs immobiliers ont été écartés dès le départ, la possibilité de bénéficier de subventions étatiques

a été considérée, mais avec une hésitation certaine. Se plier aux requêtes des organismes subventionnaires impliquerait de devoir adopter une structure hiérarchique pour leur organisation, ce qui aurait été contraire à leur volonté d'horizontalité. Ainsi, le triptyque néopolanyien met en lumière les enjeux de la mobilisation de ressources depuis le contexte microsocial d'une organisation.

Troisièmement, c'est au niveau mésosocial que peuvent prendre forme les stratégies de mise à l'échelle décrites plus tôt (Wright, 2016). Par des alliances circonstancielles et l'utilisation des ressources, les praticien(ne)s en innovation sociale peuvent développer un pouvoir structurel suffisant pour surmonter les blocages systémiques et institutionnels limitant la trajectoire de la transition systémique. À ce sujet, l'exemple du Bâtiment 7 est, encore une fois, évocateur. L'alliance des militant(e)s libertaires s'inscrivant dans un courant d'émancipation avec les groupes communautaires locaux concernés par la protection sociale a permis d'avoir un plus grand poids lors des négociations avec la Ville de Montréal dans le projet d'expropriation populaire du bâtiment (Kruzynski, 2017). Les ressources hybridées ici ne sont pas de nature monétaire ou marchande, mais plutôt de l'ordre des contacts, de la représentation et du répertoire des tactiques utilisées. Pendant que le regroupement libertaire mettait de l'avant des tactiques de l'ordre de l'action directe comme le *squat*, les organismes communautaires optaient pour une représentation politique. Il s'agit ici d'une illustration efficace d'une stratégie de mise à l'échelle permettant de jouer à la fois « dans le jeu » et « hors du jeu », pour reprendre les expressions utilisées par Lachapelle (2019).

Ces stratégies ont toutefois comme conséquence de générer un *effet social paradoxal* en raison de la cohabitation de finalités sociopolitiques liées à deux pôles différents du triptyque. En effet, si les organisations ont souvent une affiliation primaire avec un seul des courants néopolanyiens, les praticien(ne)s signalent que, dans leur quotidien, leurs pratiques s'inscrivent dans des enchevêtrements des courants de marchandisation, de protection sociale et d'émancipation tels qu'ils existent dans leurs contextes. Les effets sociaux paradoxaux des innovations sociales sont également vecteurs de transformation et de reproduction de ces enchevêtrements entre les courants néopolanyiens. Cette théorisation mésociale nous permet donc de transcender les condamnations normatives de la désarticulation sociale, du patronage ou du conservatisme pour mieux saisir les outils et les occasions stratégiques qu'offre l'hybridation des ressources pour les acteur(-trice)s cherchant à induire des transitions systémiques.

TYPOLOGIE DES EFFETS SOCIAUX PARADOXAUX

Pour les praticien(ne)s, les hybridations ne sont pas pensées à la lumière de leurs effets sociaux, mais plutôt comme des instruments stratégiques utilisés pour naviguer malgré les structures de pouvoir et les blocages qu'elles impliquent. Les hybridations permettent aux organisations de subvertir les ressources provenant majoritairement des systèmes dominants. Il s'agit le plus souvent de ressources financières provenant de la marchandisation (Loopmans et Kesteloot, 2019). Il est donc essentiel de reconnaître qu'il existe des rapports de force entre les différents pôles du triptyque et que ceux-ci peuvent mener à des dérives stratégiques. Nous pouvons parler d'une dérive stratégique lorsqu'une organisation s'engage dans des dynamiques propres à un effet social secondaire afin d'obtenir des ressources, mais que, progressivement, cet effet social secondaire devient, dans les faits, l'effet social primordial de l'organisation. En ce sens, les risques de marchandisation ou de

domestication de l'innovation sociale par les institutions (Bauler, Pel et Backhaus, 2017) peuvent également être analysés sur ces bases. Ces dérives représentent un risque constant dans le domaine de l'innovation sociale, spécialement dans des contextes intellectuels où praticien(ne)s et chercheur(e)s ne problématisent pas explicitement leurs effets sociaux.

Pour aider à comprendre comment ces hybridations et ces choix stratégiques agissent, nous proposons une typologie des effets sociaux depuis les enchevêtrements des courants néopolanyiens. Axer notre typologie des innovations sociales sur cette base permet de décentrer les problématiques de recherche des différentes finalités sociopolitiques afin de se concentrer sur les rouages des transformations à l'intérieur et au-delà des systèmes (Moore, Riddell et Vocisano, 2015). Ces rouages sont ici les diverses pratiques stratégiques permettant aux organisations d'acquérir un pouvoir structurel. Ils sont fondés dans les processus d'hybridation et considèrent les effets sociaux paradoxaux qui en découlent.

Suivant cette idée, le tableau 1 nous permet d'illustrer des exemples concrets d'organisations qui génèrent des effets sociaux paradoxaux (ou non) dans leurs pratiques. En se concentrant sur celles qui engendrent un effet social émancipateur, on peut davantage percevoir comment les ressources des systèmes dominants peuvent être réappropriées pour réussir à surmonter les blocages institutionnels et systémiques. Dans le cas des Opérations Dignité, cette typologie met la lumière sur la finalité sociopolitique initiale de sauver l'existence de communautés rurales—en passant d'ail-

Tableau 1 : Typologie des effets sociaux paradoxaux

		Effet social primordial		
		Marchandisation	Protection sociale	Émancipation
Effet social secondaire	Marchandisation	Effet social non paradoxal de ***marchandisation*** (ex., Institut économique de Montréal)	Effet social paradoxal de ***nationalisme économique*** (ex., Panier bleu)	Effet social paradoxal d'***émancipation marchandisante*** (ex., coopératives de femmes marginalisées)
	Protection sociale	Effet social paradoxal de ***conservation du marché*** (ex., Mouvement Desjardins)	Effet social non paradoxal de ***protection sociale*** (ex., communauté Amish)	Effet social paradoxal d'***émancipation solidaire*** (ex., Bâtiment 7)
	Émancipation	Effet social paradoxal d'***émancipation libérale*** (ex., une grande entreprise affichant son soutien à Black Lives Matter)	Effet social paradoxal de ***collectivisation émancipatrice*** (ex., Opération Dignité)	Effet social non paradoxal d'***émancipation*** (ex., Antifa)

leurs par des forces conservatrices comme l'Église catholique—tout en mobilisant un discours très critique de la domination capitaliste (Dufort, 1975). L'effet social qui en ressort est donc celle d'une collectivisation émancipatrice. L'exemple des coopératives de femmes marginalisées évoque aussi comment le marché peut être subverti pour servir un effet social primordial d'émancipation face à des systèmes d'oppression tels que le sexisme ou le racisme. En produisant un effet social non paradoxal d'émancipation, les militant(e)s du mouvement Antifa combattent les systèmes de do-

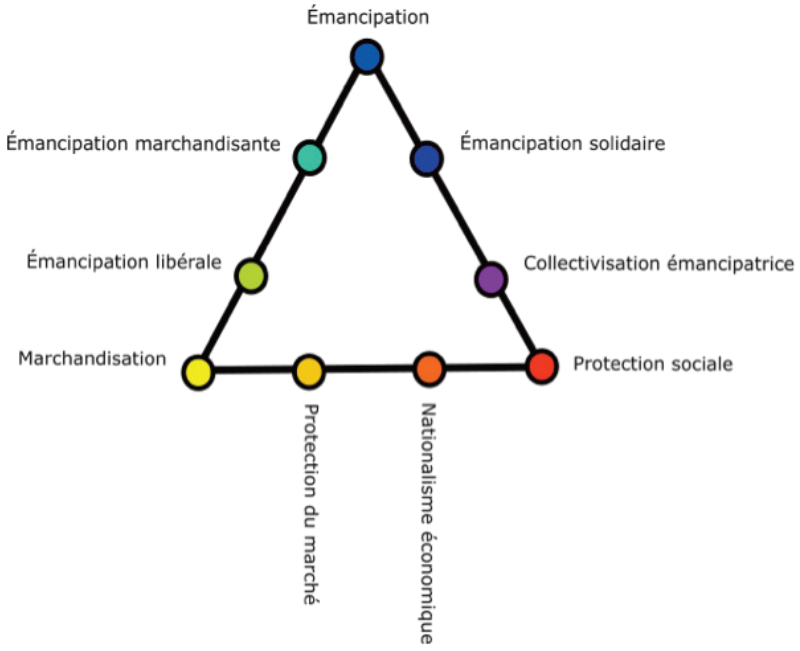
mination en ne s'inscrivant ni dans une communauté ni dans quelconque logique marchande. Cette manière d'appréhender les effets des innovations sociales vers l'un ou plusieurs pôles du triptyque néopolanyien nous paraît porteuse pour sortir d'une vision qui pourrait être réductionniste ou moralisatrice à l'excès quant à la réalité complexe des organisations.

Notons au passage que cette perspective n'est pas incompatible avec les typologies antérieures, dont celle de Vaillancourt et Laville (1998). En effet, si une innovation sociale a pour effet social primordial de participer à l'expansion et l'approfondissement du capitalisme (marchandisation), elle tombe au sein de la catégorie libérale. Si elle a l'effet social primordial inverse (protection sociale), elle tombe au sein de la catégorie sociale étatiste. Si, toutefois, elle contrecarre l'expansion et l'approfondissement de systèmes de pouvoir tels que le racisme, le colonialisme ou le patriarcat, il s'agit du type solidaire. L'effet social primordial d'une organisation en détermine le type, mais la notion de paradoxe passant par un effet social secondaire permet d'en dépasser la nature réductionniste.

À ce titre, revenons un instant au type *solidaire* chez Vaillancourt et Laville (1998). Celui-ci représente un premier regard non théorisé d'une innovation sociale émancipatrice. Les deux auteurs y perçoivent des potentialités telles que la démocratisation, l'autonomisation, la décentralisation, et la justice. En repensant cette problématique depuis l'idée d'effet social émancipateur, nous pouvons distinguer à partir du tableau 1 cinq types de pratiques stratégiques produisant un effet social d'émancipation. Le procédé peut sembler redondant, mais il permet de saisir des distinctions pertinentes.

Qui plus est, une schématisation triangulaire nous permet de saisir les effets sociaux des innovations sociales dans un prisme plus nuancé (voir la figure 2). Ainsi, si les courants néopolanyiens s'opposent (pôles du triptyque), les pratiques paradoxales les lient les uns aux autres (les arêtes du triangle). Il est alors possible de situer différentes innovations sociales dans des positions pré-

Figure 2 : Schématisation des effets sociaux paradoxaux



cises entre deux pôles selon l'importance que prend le paradoxe dans l'effet social qu'elles génèrent. De plus, selon les circonstances et les stratégies mises en place, l'effet social engendré par une innovation pourrait se déplacer vers un pôle ou l'autre, permettant ainsi de saisir une dérive potentielle. Notre typologie permet ainsi d'illustrer des idéaux-types d'effets sociaux paradoxaux bien que d'autres déclinaisons demeurent tout à fait possibles.

Le premier type d'effet social émancipateur découle d'une pratique stratégique articulée uniquement au pôle d'émancipation tel que théorisé par Fraser. Des intellectuel(le)s critiquant les structures oppressives dans leurs salles de cours en seraient un exemple. Les pratiques stratégiques façonnées sur cette base auraient, évidemment, un effet social de type « émancipateur ».

Le second type découle d'un processus d'hybridation entre un effet primordial d'émancipation et un effet secondaire de protection sociale. Des organisations visant primordialement à soutenir le pôle de l'émancipation peuvent ainsi converger avec les finalités associées à la protection sociale en embrassant les solidarités nécessaires à la construction et à la protection de collectivités non oppressives—par exemple, lorsque la finalité sociopolitique est la construction de *communs* (Dardot et Laval 2015) où le collectif travaille quotidiennement à construire des relations sociales non oppressives *au sein*, *contre* et *au-delà* des limites des structures de pouvoir oppressives. Les pratiques stratégiques façonnées sur ces bases auraient un effet social paradoxal de type « émancipateur solidaire ».

Le troisième type découle d'un processus d'hybridation entre un effet primordial d'émancipation et un effet secondaire de marchandisation. Ici, l'organisation visant primordialement l'émancipation peut notamment opter pour des pratiques stratégiques qui l'entraînent à instrumentaliser les forces du marché par la vente de divers produits afin d'obtenir des ressources marchandes facilitant les mobilisations de celles-ci. Les pratiques stratégiques façonnées sur ces bases auraient un effet social paradoxal de type « émancipation marchandisante ».

Le quatrième type découle d'un processus d'hybridation entre un effet primordial de marchandisation et un effet secondaire d'émancipation. Ici, l'organisation visant primordialement la marchandisation peut notamment opter pour des pratiques stratégiques qui entraîneraient les forces marchandisantes à instrumentaliser les discours d'émancipation—par exemple, en ciblant des sous-groupes par des produits désignés pour permettre l'affirmation de différences liées à la classe, la race, le genre ou la sexualité. Les pratiques stratégiques façonnées sur ces bases auraient un effet social paradoxal de type « émancipation libérale ».

Le cinquième type découle d'un processus d'hybridation entre un effet primordial de protection sociale et un effet secondaire d'émancipation. Ici, l'organisation visant primordialement la protection sociale peut opter pour des pratiques stratégiques qui mobilisent des théories radicales ou des discours idéalistes afin que sa communauté bénéficie de la solidarité d'activistes pro-émancipation. Par exemple, des paysans souhaitant résister à un projet d'une entreprise bouleversant leur mode de vie traditionnel peuvent cadrer leur discours en ligne avec une lutte altermondialiste. Les pratiques stratégiques façonnées sur ces bases auraient un effet social paradoxal de type « collectivisation émancipatrice ».

Le développement de ces distinctions entre différents types d'effets sociaux et les pratiques stratégiques qui les créent permet de mettre en lumière l'enchevêtrement complexe des structures de pouvoir dans lesquelles les organisations inscrivent leurs pratiques. Nous espérons que cette typologie permettra aux praticien(ne)s de l'innovation sociale de mettre un peu d'ordre dans les paradoxes de la gestion des organisations axées sur l'innovation sociale émancipatrice. Comme il s'agit de notre propos principal, nous nous sommes limités ici à distinguer les différentes pratiques stratégiques émancipatrices en fonction du type de leurs effets sociaux. Il serait toutefois possible d'étayer les effets sociaux paradoxaux découlant d'une articulation primordiale avec les deux autres pôles.

Notons à cet effet qu'il est aussi possible de mieux comprendre les *dérives stratégiques* des organisations. Nous pouvons parler d'une dérive stratégique lorsqu'une organisation s'engage dans des dynamiques propres à un effet social secondaire afin d'obtenir des ressources mais que, progressivement, cet effet social secondaire devient dans les faits l'effet social primordial de l'organisation. Les dérives représentent un risque constant dans le domaine de l'innovation sociale. Prenons un exemple : une organisation issue d'une innovation sociale émancipatrice acheminant des ressources marchandes à des fins de lutte contre la discrimination de genre peut devenir victime de son succès commercial et, en raison de diverses dynamiques internes, en venir à prioriser la finalité marchande. Par ailleurs, cette même organisation, si elle avait fait le choix de s'appuyer sur des formes de solidarité préexistantes telles que le nationalisme, peut au fil du temps développer des pratiques oppressives si des clivages identitaires protectionnistes en viennent à poser certaines femmes immigrantes comme une menace à la cohésion sociale locale. Ces deux exemples ne sont que deux possibilités de processus de dérive (d'aucuns y préféreront le terme cooptation) qu'un choix stratégique initial peut amener dans le temps. C'est là une autre façon par laquelle des fondements théoriques néopolanyiens permettent d'opérationnaliser des concepts traduisant des réalités complexes que les praticien(ne)s connaissent tacitement.

L'approche théorique néopolanyienne nous permet ainsi de comprendre les différents effets sociaux que peuvent avoir les organisations qui œuvrent en innovation sociale, sans se limiter aux jugements normatifs sur les effets sociaux paradoxaux qui peuvent émerger de ces décisions stratégiques. Cette conceptualisation a pour principal avantage pratique de permettre d'appréhender à la fois les occasions qu'offrent ces hybridations pour acquérir du pouvoir structurel et parvenir à un changement systémique, les casse-têtes éthiques qu'elles peuvent engendrer dans la pratique ainsi que les risques de dérives stratégiques. Elle ouvre également la porte pour étudier la fonction systémique des stratégies des acteur(-trice)s de l'innovation sociale depuis une perspective théorique d'agence-structure fondée dans la pratique quotidienne.

CONCLUSION

Nous espérons ainsi que ces distinctions stimuleront de nouvelles problématiques quant au potentiel de chacun de ces types à jouer des rôles synergiques dans les processus de transition systémiques.

Notons à cet effet que d'enchevêtrer paradoxalement des pôles du triptyque néopolanyien—souvent déployés en de simples oppositions dichotomiques—permet de faire apparaître, d'une part,

le type d'effet social de « protection du marché » propre à la mise en place et à la protection de l'arrangement institutionnel permettant une transition systémique vers le capitalisme et le fonctionnement du marché (Fraser et Jaeggi, 2018, pp. 66, 69, 109). Cet enchevêtrement permet, d'autre part, de tracer *le type d'effet social « instituant »* soutenant la dynamique systémique autodéstabilisante du capitalisme en constituant des identités et des mouvements sociaux qui s'y opposent en conséquence des contradictions internes au système (Fraser et Jaeggi, 2018, p. 59)[5]. Bien que tous les types d'effets sociaux et de pratiques stratégiques qui leur sont associées ont le potentiel d'impulser des transitions systémiques, ces deux derniers éléments annoncent déjà le potentiel de penser les liens complexes entre effets sociaux paradoxaux, pratiques stratégiques et transition systémique. Sur ces bases, les problématiques de recherche-action se concentrant sur l'effet social d'émancipation permettront, nous l'espérons, de mieux comprendre et penser les diverses trajectoires de changement d'échelle au sein desquelles les innovations sociales et les pratiques stratégiques émancipatrices s'inscrivent.

Fondamentalement, cette intégration théorique permet ainsi de lier conceptuellement comment l'action stratégique des organisations œuvrant pour une transition socioécologique s'inscrit dans une logique conflictuelle face à l'institution du marché et à sa déstabilisation.

En somme, les fondements néopolanyiens représentent une base fertile pour réinventer une théorisation de l'innovation sociale qui puisse supporter une pratique radicalement innovante. Sur le terrain, les synergies stratégiques autour de démantèlement de blocages institutionnels spécifiques à une conjoncture donnée deviennent ainsi le sujet de la concertation territoriale visant les transitions systémiques. Plus spécifiquement, la concertation prend la forme d'une mise en commun de ressources provenant des trois courants néopolanyiens que peuvent mobiliser les diver(se)s acteur(-trice)s engagé(e)s dans la transition socioécologique. Cette mise en commun ouvre des débats quant à la coconstruction de stratégies d'érosion des blocages institutionnels et systémiques à la transition. Ces débats sont donc loin d'être abstraits, puisqu'ils ciblent des « blocages » qui sont des formes concrètes de l'enchevêtrement des systèmes d'oppression dans un territoire donné : les acteur(-trice)s du statu quo, leur mainmise sur certaines ressources/institutions ou même des identités naturalisées. Une panoplie de problématiques découle de cette façon d'appréhender l'innovation sociale comme prémisse à des stratégies vers la transition socioécologique. Continuer à conceptualiser l'action stratégique en fonction de trajectoires de transition et de blocages permettra certainement d'expliciter les termes de la concertation locale et régionale des organisations visant à provoquer une transition socioécologique au sein de leurs territoires en mobilisant des ressources issues des courants de marchandisation, de protection sociale et d'émancipation.

NOTES

1. Cet article a été produit en collaboration avec Luce Lemieux-Huard (étudiante à la maîtrise en innovation sociale) et Alexandre Michaud (étudiant au baccalauréat en innovation sociale) à l'École d'innovation sociale Élisabeth-Bruyère de l'Université Saint-Paul. Il synthétise et revoit les propos de l'auteur initialement publiés dans un but pédagogique sous la forme d'une note de recherche avec le concours de nombreux collègues de l'École d'innovation sociale Élisabeth-Bruyère (Dufort, 2019).
2. La transition socioécologique implique une prise de conscience des interrelations entre les crises sociales et écologiques, les unes aggravant les autres (Laurent et Pochet, 2015). Nous considérons donc qu'une telle transition ne

peut qu'être systémique et ainsi remettre en question les grandes structures oppressives qui sont à l'origine des inégalités sociales. Dans cette logique, les innovations sociales émancipatrices impliquent forcément la remise en question de ces systèmes de domination.

3. Wright décrit la reproduction sociale comme étant « [les] obstacles auxquels se heurte toute transformation émancipatrice » (2016, p. 350). Ils sont soit le fruit d'un effort des institutions d'assurer la reproduction des systèmes (reproduction sociale active) ou le produit d'habitudes liées à la vie quotidienne (reproduction sociale passive). Ces obstacles que nous appelons « blocages » prennent des formes bien concrètes dans la pratique des acteur(-trice)s des innovations sociales : lois et sanctions, manque de financement, culture institutionnelle et procédures inflexibles, conservatisme et crainte du changement, etc.
4. Il n'y a pas que la littérature en innovation sociale qui peine à saisir les paradoxes de l'action sociale telle que vécue par ses praticien(ne)s. Cette difficulté marque également la littérature critique fondée sur diverses branches des théories pro-émancipation. Des penseurs des mouvances marxistes, féministes ou anticoloniales en viennent souvent à produire des condamnations simplificatrices de certaines formes de protection sociale ou de marchandisation mobilisées stratégiquement par des organisations à visées émancipatrices, mais navigant les paradoxes de pratiques stratégiques complexes.
5. Il est d'abord nécessaire de revenir aux conditions de possibilité de l'ordre social institué dominant. Pour Fraser, suivant Polanyi, le capitalisme repose sur trois conditions de possibilité—des éléments fondamentaux que le capitalisme n'est pas en mesure de produire par lui-même et desquels il dépend—avec lesquels se noue une relation de marchandisation : la nature, la reproduction sociale (famille, travail de soin, vie humaine) et l'existence d'institutions politiques. Fraser décrit ce triple mouvement comme un « conflit de frontières » (Fraser et Jaeggi, 2018, p. 54), où des forces sociales s'affrontent dans l'approfondissement, la limitation ou l'émancipation de la frontière marchande de chacune des conditions naturelle, sociale et politique du capitalisme. Le tableau en neuf types d'actions de la section précédente traduit les effets sociaux parfois paradoxaux dont la nature, le social et le politique sont les objets. L'originalité du propos de Fraser est de démontrer la relation pathologique qu'entretient la dynamique d'accumulation capitaliste avec ses trois conditions de possibilité, de sorte que le capitalisme laissé à lui-même sans aucune opposition de type protection ou émancipation en vient à détruire ses propres fondements—la crise écologique, la crise de reproduction sociale et la crise politico-économique en témoignent. Fraser représente le tout avec la métaphore du chien qui mange sa propre queue (2016, 103). Si certaines combinaisons de stratégies d'émancipation et de protection préservent le capitalisme de sa propre irrationalité et participent bien malgré eux à sa viabilité, d'autres cherchent à le dépasser.

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Acknowledging Marxist Economist C.Y. Thomas' Legacy in Canada's Economic Development Sector

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ABSTRACT

Canada's community economic development sector has benefited from the knowledge making and practice of the African diaspora but much of it is erased and goes unnoticed. Afro-Guyanese economist C.Y. Thomas (1974) has influenced cooperative economies in Canada, but little is known about this contribution. Thomas's convergence theory assisted in the development of the Neechi principles, which were developed by an Indigenous workers' cooperative in north Winnipeg, Manitoba. Those writing on cooperatives in Canada and elsewhere should be taking convergence theory into account because it was the first to push for a convergence of needs and production, and how to make new inclusive economies. Just as Thomas' theory is an important contribution on knowledge making in the community economic development sector, banking cooperatives known as rotating savings and credit associations have also contributed to the cooperative sector in Canada. However, there is a need within the cooperative sector to include perspectives from the Black diaspora.

RÉSUMÉ

Le développement économique communautaire au Canada a bénéficié des connaissances et pratiques de la diaspora africaine sans que cela se sache réellement. Par exemple, l'économiste afro-guyanais C.Y. Thomas (1974) a influencé les économies coopératives au Canada, mais peu de chercheurs sont au courant de ses contributions. Pourtant, la théorie de la convergence de Thomas a contribué à l'élaboration des principes Neechi, lesquels ont été développés par une coopérative de travailleurs autochtones du nord de Winnipeg au Manitoba. Ceux et celles qui écrivent sur les coopératives au Canada et ailleurs devraient tenir compte de la théorie de la convergence, surtout que celle-ci a été la première à recommander la convergence des besoins et de la production et à montrer comment établir de nouvelles économies inclusives. La théorie de Thomas est une contribution importante au savoir dans le secteur du développement économique communautaire; de même, les coopératives bancaires connues sous le nom d'associations rotatives d'épargne et de crédit (AREC) ont aussi contribué au secteur coopératif canadien. À ce titre, il est pertinent d'inclure les points de vue de la diaspora noire au sein du secteur coopératif.

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INTRODUCTION

Co-operatives are voluntary member focused organizations usually born out of a crisis. They often exist to fill a need in business and society when mainstream systems are exclusionary. These co-op organizations are democratic (guided by constitutions), and their rules are determined by the founding members (see International Co-operative Alliance [ICA], n.d.). The more co-operatives and solidarity economies are studied, the clearer it becomes that people around the world are engaged in formal and informal co-operatives. Globally, more than 1.2 billion people belong to co-operatives. Many co-operatives are also informal and grassroots. The ICA (n.d.) has defined co-operatives as "people-centred enterprises owned, controlled and run by and for their members to realise their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations" (website 2021). This definition, along with the seven internationally agreed upon co-operative principles, suggests that these groups should be spreading the co-operative movement, which does not exclude anyone based on identity and race.

The African diaspora's contributions to co-operative development are often erased or not acknowledged. For example, the ICA has a regional manager for Africa, located in the Nairobi office, that oversees African co-operatives, but no office for the distinct experience of the African diaspora. According to the ICA (n.d.), co-operatives are collective, member-owned institutions organized by groups of people who are filling a gap in society and business, a situation the African diaspora finds itself doing, even as an excluded minority in many places. The current understanding of co-operatives, while applicable to any group using solidarity and self-help to address market failure, ignores and omits the contributions of the Black diaspora outside of continental Africa. A preoccupation with formally registered co-operatives has led to the exclusion of many people in the African diaspora who have established informal co-operatives, such as rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs).

In general, the co-operative literature fails to include how the African diaspora has contributed to the development of co-operativism, a fact that Caroline Shenaz Hossein (2018, 2020) has discussed in her body of work. Co-operatives are defined here as both informal and formal voluntary organizations managed by their members. Afro-Guyanese economist C.Y. Thomas (1974) has influenced co-operative economic development in Canada through his theory on convergence. This article argues that Canadian scholars and practitioners need to recognize and credit Thomas' theory of convergence and its impact on local economic development. This has not been widely done, except by one renowned Canadian economist: the late John Loxley (2008). Recognizing Thomas' theory (1974) would acknowledge the Black diaspora's contribution to economic development programs. Moreover, it would be an important way to include the Black perspective in community development.

To better capture the importance and impact of co-operatives among a variety of communities and peoples in Canada, the definition of co-operatives should include informal and formal co-operatives carried out in the African diaspora. The role of co-operatives and their group action may be an example of what C.Y. Thomas envisioned in his convergence theory, where he stressed looking away from individual needs and toward household needs instead.

Biased knowledge making in the co-operative sector

The history of co-operative development follows primarily Eurocentric theories. In Canada, there has been little to no mention of Black co-operators and what they contribute to co-operative economics in scholarly books and articles (Hossein, 2020). In fact, theories by Black Canadian scholars are largely absent from the co-operative and social economy sector. The dominant discourse about co-operatives stems from the English Protestant and French-Canadian stories told by mostly white scholars.

The ICA (n.d.) notes that many co-operatives started as small grassroots organisations. However, only industrialized regions such as Western Europe, North America, and Japan are sourced as points of origin for these organizations. The ICA (n.d.) refers, for example, to the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers that began in England in 1844 as the prototype for co-operatives and states that it contributed to the development of a set of co-operative values. The Raiffeisen worker banks of Germany are referenced for establishing the credit union model with its ability to address financial exclusion (Guinnane, 2001). The ICA names the Fenwick Weavers' Society, which was established in 1761 and saw the people of Scotland selling basic foodstuff as a way to bypass commercial factories, as the first co-operative. There is no mention of African or Asian co-operative experiences.

In English speaking Canada, white versions of co-operative development are remembered and prioritized. The Antigonish Movement in Nova Scotia in the 1930s, led by Reverend Dr. Moses Coady and Reverend Jimmy Tompkins, drew on Catholic social teaching to develop agricultural extension services and adult education. They held "kitchen table meetings" with the intention of raising the consciousness of the fisher folk to protest against the commercialization of the fisheries (MacAulay, 2002; Welton, 2003). The documentary film *Yes You Can Do It: The Story of the Antigonish Movement* (Murphy, 2009) is a white working-class preoccupation that reveals that fisher folk wanted fair prices for their goods. While the film fails to include the Black Canadian experience, it does travel to an Ethiopian co-operative, Just Coffee, to show how the white Canadian co-operative movement continues to "support" the Global South, even with no mention of the local co-op systems of Equub, Idir, and Wenfel.

Another prominent narrative of the Canadian co-operative experience is the French-Canadian *économie sociale* in the province of Québec. The struggle of class politics preoccupies the social economy, and as in English Canada, racial bias is ignored in this discourse. Desjardins which was founded in Lévis, Québec, is revered globally as a leading co-operative. In 1900, Alphonse Desjardins and his wife Dorimene learned about the German worker co-operatives led by Friedrich Raiffeisen and Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch and believed a *caisse populaire* (credit union) would meet the needs of a French speaking minority in Quebec (Mendell 2009). The Desjardins *caisses populaires* movement dominates the understanding of Québec's social economy (Mendell, 2009).

The idea of collectivity and coming together is not new in Canada's economic history. The Underground Railroad, a co-operative economy that faced danger to move people to freedom, is left out of the political economy of Canada. For Black people, fleeing slavery took resources and co-operation. Once people settled in Canada, they needed money and support, which were offered through True Bands**,** rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs); and the pooling of goods.

NOTING THE CO-OPERATIVE PRACTICE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Co-operatives are truly international; they are practiced around the globe. It is difficult, however, to determine the actual beginnings of co-operatives, where they originated. Richard C. Williams (2007) has found that some of the earliest forms come from the Global South: places such as India and China, where self-help groups were common. Thomas Davies (2018), in his exploration of the historical development of NGOs, argues that the world's NGOs and community organizations were first created in non-Western locations. Chancellor Williams (1993) argues that "the economic basis of African life was originally co-operative" (p. 151). These findings, however, are rarely acknowledged in scholarly writings about co-operatives, which often only note important co-operative movements from the European context.

In carrying out research in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, in the fall of 2018, academics and leaders in community development argued that the Habesha peoples were the first in the world to create the idea of collectivity through their systems of Equub and Idir (Kedir & Ibrahim, 2011), which are informal group systems of credit and savings (Bekerie, 2003, 2008). Given that Abyssinia (now Ethiopia) is revered as the land of human origins, this theory is plausible. India has an ancient system of Chits, co-operative businesses that assist groups to access funds. Laws regulating Chit funds date back to the 1800s, before colonization (Sethi, 1996). India's Chit system and other self-help groups are some of the oldest co-operatives in the world (Datta, 2000). In fact, India leads the world in the number of co-operatives, and the very first meeting for the ICA was held in India to mark this achievement and acknowledge the country's co-operative expertise (Williams, 2007). As noted, many places have had their own indigenous systems of co-operative. Mary Njeri Kinyanjui (2019) has detailed that the Ubuntu concept of "I am because you are" has been the driving philosophy of Kenyan people, and that colonizers did not create co-operative systems for Africans. African systems of collectivity have sustained the diaspora through enslavement and life under racial capitalism.

In the Caribbean diaspora context, Hossein (2013, 2017, 2018) notes the importance of studying Black women's informal and formal use of the social and solidarity economy through organizing mutual aid and money pooling groups known as Susu to not to only meet economic survival but also one's self-sufficiency, co-operation, and political control. The mainstream literature on co-operatives at best marginalizes, and usually ignores, the purposefully informal co-operatives that Black people engage in. Furthermore, nowhere does the literature address why this is the case. In fact, co-operative literature largely misses counting informal co-operatives as part of the system. (For an example of inclusion, see Lundahl's [1983] work on Haiti.)

In the Global South, co-operatives are pervasive, embedded in people's way of life. Because of their informal nature, however, they are often relegated to the sidelines. Interestingly, Richard C. Williams (2007) notes that co-operatives are in gradual decline, especially in the Global North. Therefore,

acknowledging the Black diaspora's expertise in co-operativism can only help the sector, because Black people coming from Africa and the Caribbean bring knowledge about self-help groups, collectives, mutual aid, and ROSCAs, which are all co-operative forms. It is likely that African people's collective and co-operative systems predate most systems in the world (see Williams, 1993).

In the United States and Canada, much work has been done to detail the many forms and practices of co-operativism and community organization by Black people (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Haynes, 2019, 2010; Hossein, 2020; Kitossa, Lawson, & Howard, 2019; Stewart, 1984; Sullivan, 1969). African American scholar William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1907) referred to the Underground Railroad of the 1790–1800s as a co-operative movement, wherein people made both economic and social commitments to risk their lives to move enslaved people into freedom.[1] DuBois documented many examples of African-American mutual aid, and John Curl (2012, p. 2) concludes that in the U.S., "the history documents how co-operatives were an integral part of numerous American communities in many time periods, and how the working people of this country turned time and again to co-operation for both personal liberation, and as a strategy for achieving larger social goals" starting in the 1830s.

Economist Jessica Gordon Nembhard (2014) has similarly found that to understand the traditions and legacies of solidarity, mutual aid, and co-operativism among African Americans, it is important to study diverse examples of economic co-operation, not just formally incorporated co-operative businesses. In 2020, a co-operative in the Boston area, Ujima, organized a number of workshops examining Black investing. A Susu, a form of ROSCA, is an example of mutual aid and collectivity within Black diaspora groups.

METHODS AND APPROACH

Scholarly ideas by the African diaspora and those in the Global South have been obscured for far too long. The 2020 Black Lives Matter protests brought awareness to institutions concerned about the solidarity and co-operative economy; yet academics still hold all-white "manels" (all-men panels). Many academic and practitioner organizations still have largely white boards, keynotes, and editorships using theories to extrapolate and to "educate" why European theories should not be considered in line with other relevant theory reflective of the very people being studied. They will have special series on "diversity" and "inclusion" but have an all-white group of editors making calls for papers—and then they get the credit for being the authors of the very series on "diversity."

This work is critical analysis in that material is being reread with the intention of acknowledging what work is being made absent. In the *Review of Black Political Economy*, Hossein (2019) explained that there is so much productivity in political economy by the African diaspora and it is being overlooked. Some scholars seem to suggest that Black political economy has been ignored for very political reasons (Haynes, 2019; Stewart, 1984). Researchers in critical economics who value co-operative development should also see a gaping hole when it comes to acknowledging the writing of Black scholars, especially those academics residing outside of the West who study the social economy, solidarities, and co-operatives.

A recent *New York Times* article cited economist Nina Banks explaining that publishing in academic journals is a frustrating experience because of gatekeepers who decide what knowledge is produced and what methods matter for scientific inquiry (Nelson, 2021). In our view it is this act of deciding on what knowledge is produced that Black's women work has been put down and sidelined. In doing this gatekeeping means that no economic value is accorded to actual community work and the benefits this work brings to the economy and society (Banks 2020). Business professors Leon C. Prieto and Simone T.A. Phipps (2021) show that African American business expertise has been erased from business school curriculums, and they are now doing the work to repair business histories (MacLellan, 2020). Similarly, Black diasporic academics who write on Black women as co-operators are having their work obscured as academic research in the disciplines of economics and political science (Banks, 2020; Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Hossein, 2013).

For this study, the research assistant carried out a sweep of the social economy and co-operative sectors—locating obscure sources and writing annotated reviews—to provide an idea about the ways Black people in the diaspora organize. There is a long overdue need to insert the African diaspora in the co-operative sector. The literature review in this article emphasizes the ways that Black diasporic people are engaged in the co-operative sector.

C.Y. THOMAS ON TRANSFORMATION

The COVID-19 lockdown has been a time for reflection about what we are collectively building as we try to correct the inequities in the system. During the stay-at-home order during the pandemic, we started to discuss the need to return to the work of Guyanese Marxist economist C.Y. Thomas (1974, 1988), less known outside of the Caribbean, to understand his early ideas on transformation. As a heterodox economist, his ultimate goal was to change society to ensure equity by listening to and understanding local voices. Thomas has written extensively on transformation and matters of economic inequality from a critical Black perspective.

Thomas' research on small Caribbean countries was squarely situated in dependency theory, and he analyzed the macroeconomics of how global systems disadvantaged former colonies. Thomas' (1988) most enriching work by far is the *Poor and the Powerless*, in which he examined world systems and the racially tiered, classed pyramid system in the Caribbean that resulted from enslavement and colonization. He outlined quite effectively the bias in the economic system because of the colour pyramid, where people of African origins would be at the base and the most disadvantaged, while the local white/ened elites would be at the pinnacle. The colour pyramid has had a major impact on the research in terms of understanding Caribbean political economy. Tony Weis and Thomas Singh (2016) argued that Thomas' major contribution to economic development is his ethical stand—he defends those who are most vulnerable.

Thomas' early work (1974), *Dependence and Transformation: The Economics of the Transition to Socialism*, was written when he was living in Tanzania in 1972 under President Julius Nyerere's collectivization experiment (Thomas, 1978). Given this experience and his first-hand knowledge of the Guyanese context of "Box hand" (banking co-operative systems), he pushed for local consumption to be prioritized over production for export. The countries of the Global South were stuck in a world system that focused on the development of European countries through the extraction of precious

raw materials from the Caribbean region (Weis & Singh, 2016). George Danns and Paget Henry (2016) remind us that Thomas was very much aware that the capitalist world system has made so many countries where Black people live succumb to Western policies (see also Thomas, 2004). These biased Western policies stymied sustainable options for countries such as Guyana; Thomas (2004) recognized that community-based alternatives were the way to counteract this, and he called establishing these alternatives the "task ahead" of us in terms of sustainable development.

Even though he was a macroeconomist, Thomas' (1978) work has pointers for micro-level work. These macroeconomic ideas matter for local development because Thomas' work: a) situates colonial history as a precursor of identity politics that skews the economic system in favour of whiteness; and b) clarifies that local people could thwart the macroeconomic political process if they focused on local needs and self-sufficiency. Moreover, Thomas (1974) argued that ownership and capital accumulation should meet the needs of everyday people—that the focus should be on people's well-being and producing what they need locally not benefiting external interests. This is what is known as convergence theory. Thomas' (1974) theory of convergence argued that small, developing economies could achieve transformation and break away from poverty if the needs and demand were to converge. Swedish economist Mats Lundahl (2016) pointed out that demand is an expression of purchasing power, and that this concept does not take into account the resource availability and the cultural needs of citizens. This set-up would leave Black people in the colonies dependent on imported foodstuff from the West for the foreseeable future.[2]

Thomas' convergency theory is relevant to community development because of his views that private consumption must be supplemented with collective consumption, that is, with the provision of goods that satisfy the needs of the community as a whole (Lundahl 2016). Thomas (1974) referred to "divergence" as a negative outcome when countries worked against their own interests within a world system that would not help Black people (Thomas, 2004). In other words, small economies were being forced into the export demands of the rich instead of responding to local needs (Weis & Singh, 2016). Convergence theory—when people come together in carefully mediated ways to pool resources and to produce what they need based on their own cultural preferences (Weis & Singh, 2016)—is also about emphasizing an approach to local economic development where everyday people concerned about their own consumption needs decide how resources get reinvested locally into production for local usage.

The racism of the plantation economy—and how that has tiered an economic system—is aligned with the experience of Thomas' (1988) own country, Guyana. This racism in the global economy was not by accident; it was by design. Fundamentalist capitalism was born to ensure that the slave trade and other inhumane activities led to awesome riches for white people (Rodney, 1982; Williams, 1944). The concept of "inclusive markets" using neoliberal ideas is essentially a unicorn, as detailed in Cedric Robinson's (1983) *Black Marxism*, because of the project of racial capitalism to alienate Black people. Robinson (1983) located the alienating capitalist tendencies in Europe and argued that privileged social forces used a racist tactic to exploit the labour of Black people for white people's prosperity. Thomas' body of work (1974, 1977, 1978, 1988, 2004), along with many others, found that the neoliberal capitalist firm was disingenuous from the very start.

NOTING THOMAS' OWN LIVED EXPERIENCE

Clive Yolande (known as "C.Y.") Thomas was born on February 6, 1936, and raised in Georgetown, Guyana, where he still lives today (Weis & Singh, 2016). Thomas was the first of seven children of Clementine Semple and Basil Thomas and grew up in a modest environment where education was valued, since it allowed Afro-Guyanese to improve their socio-economic condition. Thomas studied at the University of Guyana and obtained his doctorate in 1964 at the University of London (Weis & Singh, 2016).

After teaching as a lecturer at the University of West Indies at the Mona campus in Jamaica, he returned to the University of Guyana as a professor. Weis and Singh (2016) made it clear that Thomas' academic pursuits were tied to his activism. He was an active member of the Working People's Alliance, a political party, and formed Ratoon, a group of activist scholars who carried out research to help workers in the sugar and bauxite mining sectors.

The life of Thomas is known by both authors who knew him and who worked and were mentored by him. Kadasi Ceres works with Thomas at the University of Guyana and Caroline Shenaz Hossein first met Thomas in person in 2010 while carrying out her doctoral field work in country (see Figure 1). Thomas was interested in community financial co-operatives such as Box hand because of their possibility as a local alternative that macro-economic theory simply misses.

Figure 1: Hossein at the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Guyana with Professor C.Y. Thomas in 2010

The Canadian economist John Loxley (1985, 2008), who had a great deal of experience with community economic development in Manitoba, cited Thomas' work as the basis for the Neechi principles, an important nod to his contributions. These principles, developed by a now-defunct Indigenous co-operative, show how organizations can become economically self-sufficient (see Neechi principles, n.d.)[3] The 11 Neechi principles were conceived to ensure Indigenous self-reliance and community building from within: 1) the use of locally produced goods and services; 2) the production of goods and services for local use; 3) the local re-investment of profits; 4) the long-term employment of local residents; 5) local skill development; 6) local decision-making; 7) public health; 8) physical environment; 9) neighbourhood stability; 10) human dignity; and 11) support for other CED initiatives (see Canadian Community Economic Development Network, n.d.).

The Manitoba provincial government followed the Neechi principles in its community economic development policies. They are also endorsed by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (n.d.) and guide the Canadian economic development sector on how to promote grassroots development across the country (Olaniyan, Ero, Hay, & Berge, 2016).

The Caribbean people's focus on what they need and their investment in self-sufficiency has had an impact on economic co-operation in Canada. Thomas' (1974) convergency theory is important

because it speaks to self-sufficiency and economic co-operation, which has always made sense to the Caribbean diaspora. This Afro-Guyanese economics scholar has had significant influence, albeit unacknowledged, on Canada's community economic development. In conversations with many people, we discovered that with the exception of John Loxley, no one knew of Thomas' impact on the Canadian co-operative and economic development sector. In fact, one Guyanese economist said he would not have guessed this because of Thomas' emphasis on macroeconomic analysis in development issues.[4]

It is during this period of rethinking co-operatives and advancing the inclusion of the Black experience that Thomas' work on local economic needs and working together has shown new meaning. Thomas' (1974) work also shows that Black perspectives have shaped Canadian ideas on how to collectively organize economic goods (Rebel Sky Media, 2018). Thomas' ideas of exclusion in a colour-tiered economy and the need to produce based on local needs resonated with those in the Neechi co-operative because it shows how local people can determine what goods are needed and how to share those goods (Olaniyan et al., 2016). Hossein's (2020) work, which resurrects the contributions of Black co-operators in Canada and the diaspora, is important because it shows that self-help on one's own terms is not bootstrap development but rather a way of redefining how to do business.

ACTIVISM, CO-OPERATIVES, AND INFLUENCES FROM THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Most people who are familiar with Manitoba's community economic development programs know that the Neechi principles are foundational approaches that build sustainable and locally owned community economic development initiatives that are rooted in self-sufficiency. Neechi was an Indigenous worker co-operative (1990s–2018) in the north end of Winnipeg, Manitoba, that made a significant contribution to the definition of community economics (Grant, Love, & Corcoran, 2018). Neechi's approach to self-sufficiency—producing what you can consume and taking an internal focus—is built on the early thinking of Guyanese economist C.Y. Thomas (Loxley, 2008).[5] The idea of remaking community economic development in Canada draws on ideas of the African diaspora in the Global South.

While it cannot be claimed that Thomas was thinking about Box hand, as ROSCAs are called in Guyana, the practice of Box hand is about self-sufficiency. Lundahl (2016) has helped to locate the very essence of Thomas' (1974) convergence theory, demonstrating that it emphasizes that people's local needs and ability to participate in discussions is what is needed for local development to take root. The late Canadian economist John Loxley (2008) has also noted that Thomas' work on self-sufficiency as a means to counter external demands has been key for changing the ethics of economic development in Canada. Hossein's (2018) decades-long research found that Black women who use ROSCAs are saying yes to their own development. They are not accepting the dominance of an imported model but are looking inside the community to live well.

Growing up in Guyana under decades of racial tension between Indian and African Guyanese, Thomas noted the need for people to tap into their social networks to meet their livelihood needs. In the eighth International Conference of the Institute for International Co-operation report for Ottawa, Thomas (1977) wrote that "indigenizing innovation" meant taking the needs of the community into consideration. Without doubt, his work to indigenize innovation resonated with Indigenous Canadians in Manitoba, who saw the value of local sufficiency efforts to stymie com-

mercialized business as the only model. Self-help and co-operative practices were culturally relevant and made sense for the Neechi worker co-op. However, existing co-ops are not culturally diversified to meet the needs of newcomers, and established and mostly white co-operatives should put more effort into assisting these groups. Given that so many Canadian Caribbean people are excluded in business, they too have found the need for self-sufficiency in their own communities.

For example, the Toronto United Negro Credit Union, which was formed in the 1920s by members of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (Lewis, 1987; Toney, 2010), tried to meet a need by providing banking services to Black Canadians. The Toronto United Negro Association, in turn, formed a credit union in the 1940s (Gooden, 2019). Another credit union was formed through Canada's first Black union, the Order of Sleeping Car Porters, as early as 1937 in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Chateauvert, 1997; Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Mathieu, 2001). These associations were helpful during those difficult years of overt racism and discrimination.

More recently the Black diaspora has tried to create its own credit unions. A first effort was made by the Jamaican Canadian Association (n.d.) in 1963 in Toronto, but it folded because of management issues. The Seaview Credit Union was created in 1969 in response to racism in the historical Black Canadian town of Africville, Nova Scotia. This bank did not last, however, because members did not repay loans, signalling that the credit union did not have the support needed to develop its capacity (Clairmont & Magill, 1999). These results amplify the failure of the established co-operative system to assist other co-operatives, which is a core co-operative principle (ICA, n.d.). There was another attempt to create a Black credit union in 1993, when the Caribbean African Canadian Credit Union was launched by the Jamaican Canadian Association in Toronto (Hemeon, 1993). It closed down, however, due to a lack of community support, infighting, and the withdrawal of state funding after a change in government (Haliechuk, 1993). Getachew Mequanent (1996) was one of the first scholars to document the role of Equub in the lives of Ethiopian-Canadians to help them settle and adjust in Toronto and Ottawa, and that as immigrants epople relied on Equub for livelihood needs e.g. to buy taxi cabs and to start restaurants.

While these attempts to create co-operatives among the diaspora have ended in failure, they show that Black people want co-operatives and know the value of being co-operators but have not received the necessary support. The cases also raise the question of whether established credit unions have adhered to the ICA co-operative principles of aiding co-operative development. In the United States, many Black co-operatives have been violently destroyed by "white competitors (who) used slander, violence, murder, physical destruction, and economic sabotage" (Gordon Nembhard, 2014, p. 29). There seems to be no shortage of documentation that speaks to failed co-operative experiences among the diaspora, but only limited knowledge on co-operatives that work for Black and racialized people. Negative media reports of co-operatives that have failed do not contextualize these experiences within the racism and challenges Black and racialized diaspora people encounter when trying to form co-operatives.

Credit unions that serve African Americans are reaching a group of people alienated by the formal financial sector. Curtis Haynes' (2018) work highlights Du Bois' thinking about "the condition of Black America" (p. 130), which called for Blacks to create their own economic means. A "racial iso-

lation," Haynes argues, "transcended all other social differences" (p. 130) and underpinned Du Bois' ideas of racial co-operation. Haynes (2019) hypothesizes that collective action by Black American communities is a means by which to respond to harsh socio-economic conditions. The fact that there are no Black or South Asian credit unions or co-operatives in Canada exemplifies the lack of support these groups receive in creating these institutions, not that they do not understand or know about cooperatives.

The *Toronto Star* recently reported on the efforts of African Canadian organizations to create a Pan-African Credit Union as an alternative to mainstream banking for Black Canadians (Miller, 2020). In July 2020, the Pan-African Credit Union had a steering committee meeting via Zoom to discuss some of the market study findings about what Black Canadians want in terms of financial services. It was evident that having a Black-led financial institution is long overdue. It is too early to tell if there will be support to develop a new Pan-African Credit Union, especially in terms of raising the required $5 million in capitalization.

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

Henry Louis Gates' (2018) *Africa's Great Civilizations,* a six-hour series on PBS, documented the business and development expertise of the people of African countries in ancient times, recounting how they centred their economic efforts on improving society. What we saw is that these efforts to build were largely cooperative (Begashaw 1978). Noting exact dates is not possible, but it does not mean that these places were not vested in cooperation. Du Bois (1907) documented the communal and co-operative businesses of Ghana and southern Africa. Fritz Bouman (1995) who has studied ROSCAs for a long time has argued that it is impossible to know the origins of these ancient informal rotating savings systems that help build societies. Mary Njeri Kinyanjui (2019) has said many times that co-operative businesses have always been a part of local life in Kenya, it is immemorial. The Susu co-operative system is so well established in Ghana that the state has regulated aspects of its operations (Aryeetey & Steel, 1994).

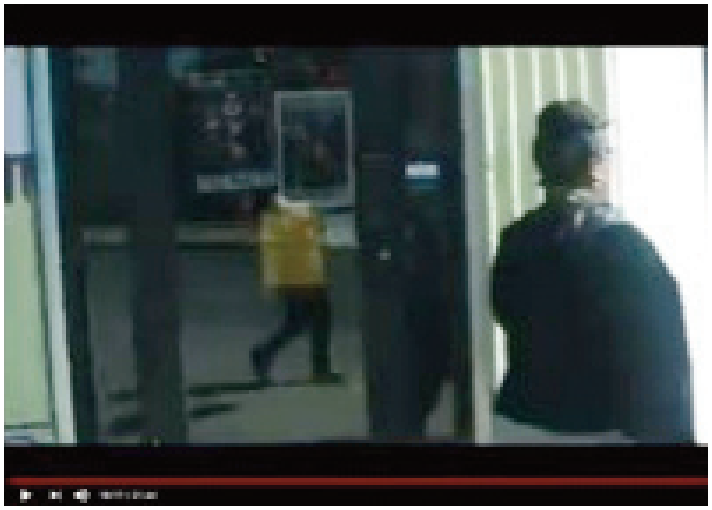
It is hard to pinpoint the exact beginnings of formally structured co-operatives among the Black diaspora. The Hornsey Co-operative Credit Union in England was formally registered by West Indian immigrants in 1962 and merged with the London Capital Credit Union in 2013 (Greaves, n.d.; O'Connell, 2009). Caribbean immigrants in the United Kingdom were successful mainly because they had local knowledge of building ROSCAs. In the United States, African Americans use Black credit unions, many of which began as informal groups before they were legally registered (Haynes & Gordon Nembhard, 1999; Rothschild, 2009).

BANKER CO-OPERATIVES ORGANIZED BY BLACK DIASPORIC WOMEN

Banker co-operatives known as ROSCAs are a deliberate form of economic co-operation. They are not simply underdeveloped co-operatives or credit unions. ROSCA members join voluntarily and work together to control the organization, stressing the values of democracy, voice, and participation. It is a myth that the African diaspora does not know about co-operatives. Black women have been organizing mutual-aid groups called ROSCAs for as long as they have been in the diaspora. Since at least the 1800s, True Bands and many other forms of economic co-operation have been secretly carried out among Black minorities due to fear of reprisal.

Black Canadian women hide their ROSCAs because they are routinely discriminated against and treated as inferior (Hossein, 2020). A number of scholars have also found that informal co-operatives are not recognized (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Smets, 1998). The documentary *The Banker Ladies* (Mondesir, 2021, see Films for Action) shows how Black Canadian women participate in various forms of banking co-operatives to counteract being excluded from business and society. See Figure 2, a clip from the film. For centuries, Black women in the Caribbean and Canada collectively mobilized resources in their low-income communities (Ardener & Burman, 1996; Hossein, 2017, 2018). Sidney Mintz (2010) documented the use of a *sistem pratik* that Haitian women relied on collectives such as Sol, formed by the local sellers (*madam saras*) to create a vibrant marketplace. Pratik is usually the relation between an individual buyer and an individual seller. In the Sol system, people came together through practical experience to pool monies and take turns sharing the lump sum of money.

Figure 2: A scene from Banker Ladies (Mondesir, 2021)



Source: Photo by Hossein

Gordon Nembhard (2014) has found that African American women in Alabama created the Freedom Quilting Bee Cooperative to feed, shelter, and help their families; help their communities meet their needs; and mitigate the harms of white supremacy. Feminist economists Deborah Figart (2014) and Ngina Chiteji (2002) also show how ROSCAs in the United States prove to be cost-effective forms of financing for marginalized and racialized Americans.

CONCLUSION: ACKNOWLEDGING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

The African diaspora has been leading co-operatives for a very long time (Gordon Nembhard, 2014; Hossein, 2020; St. Pierre, 1999; Stewart, 1984). C.Y. Thomas' convergence theory was key in helping the Neechi principles take hold in Canada because of its emphasis on self-sufficiency and provisioning goods for local needs. The community economic development sector in Canada, especially within the co-operative sector, needs to start seeing and reading the contributions of the Black diaspora, not only in terms of organizing ROSCAs but also to influence ideas on economic development. Black expertise through theorists and practitioners leading informal banker co-ops and mutual aid is missing.

The Underground Railroad and True Bands are examples of co-operation that need to feature prominently in the co-operative narrative—and not only during events for Black History Month. Knowledge of the work of True Bands is carried through oral history and includes many details about how these co-operatives helped slaves to settle into their new-found freedom. Today, Banker Ladies who organize ROSCAs are obscured, and they receive no support from formal co-operative associations. Black Canadian women operate their ROSCAs outside the public view because they fear being arrested, having their funds confiscated, or being stigmatized (Mondesir, 2021).

Recognizing and validating the Black experience also means opening up the ways we use theory, to think about the various ways that people build co-operatives. It also means that we need to include the scholarship and practice by the Black diaspora in co-operative development. The omission of informal co-operatives in research is counterproductive. By ignoring the work of the African diaspora, the co-operative movement misses out on spreading the benefits of how Black people engage in co-operative efforts to disrupt an unequal and exclusionary capitalist business system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

1. See the Harriet Tubman Historical Society (2021) for more about the Underground Railway.
2. Caroline Shenaz Hossein, one of the authors of this article, was mentored by C.Y. Thomas when she was a doctoral researcher during her field work in 2010 and 2011, and as a visiting fellow at the Institute of International Development.
3. The Neechi co-operative existed for thirty years. See more in the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (2018).
4. Personal communications with Dr. Thomas B. Singh of the University of Guyana in January 2021.
5. The late economist John Loxley (2008), who lived in Tanzania and worked in South Africa, was attentive to the contributions of Black scholars (*Winnipeg Free Press*, 2020).

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Toronto's Francophone Voluntary Sector Under Pressure: The Challenges of Immigrant Integration in a Linguistic Minority Context

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ABSTRACT
The neoliberalization of Canada's immigration and immigrant integration policies has impacted how Francophone communities in English dominated provinces outside of Québec can develop and thrive. This article examines the challenges faced by Francophone community organizations in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in their efforts to successfully integrate Francophone immigrants. The GTA's Francophone voluntary sector has been affected by a "community government" mindset, which limits its ability to support the integration of Francophone newcomers into the local French-speaking community. We use public documents and interviews with representatives of key Francophone community organizations to document these challenges.

RÉSUMÉ:
Le néolibéralisme croissant des politiques canadiennes sur l'immigration et sur l'intégration des immigrants a eu un impact sur la manière dont les communautés francophones hors Québec dominées par l'anglais ont pu se développer et prospérer. Cet article examine les défis auxquels font face les organismes communautaires francophones de la Région du Grand Toronto (RGT) dans leurs efforts d'effectuer une intégration réussie des immigrants francophones. Le secteur bénévole francophone de la RGT a subi les effets d'une mentalité de « gouvernement communautaire » qui limite sa capacité à appuyer l'intégration de nouveaux venus francophones au sein de la communauté francophone locale. Afin de recenser ces défis, cet article utilise des documents publics et des entrevues avec les représentants d'organismes communautaires francophones clés.

Keywords / Mots clés : community government, Francophonie, immigration, Toronto, voluntary organizations / gouvernement communautaire, Francophonie, immigration, Toronto, organismes bénévoles

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INTRODUCTION

Canada is a bilingual, multicultural, and multinational state that has protected minority linguistic groups through constitutional provisions and legislative measures since the country's creation (Cardinal & Denault, 2007). These minority groups—Francophones outside Québec and Anglophones within Québec—enjoy formal protection through a rights-based approach. For instance, Section 41 of the 1988 *Official Languages Act* makes explicit Canada's obligation to promote the development of Francophone communities, notably by "enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development" (Canada, 1988, 41 (1) (a)). However, this framework has not prevented Francophone linguistic minority groups from struggling in their efforts to function in French within English speaking Canadian provinces, which has led scholars such as Nicole Gallant (2016) to observe that "language policy in Canada is not designed in a way that recognizes Francophone minorities as communities" (p. 177). As Gallant notes, this creates significant problems for integrating Francophone immigrants in these communities, as they depend heavily on social support provided by the voluntary sector. That is especially the case for groups such as Black Francophone immigrants, who face additional integration issues pertaining to racism and for those needing access to specific services in French, particularly healthcare (de Moissac & Bowen, 2019; Gaudet & Clément, 2005; Maddibo, 2006).

With its emphasis on "individualism, commodification and marketization" (Smith, 2005, p. 15), neoliberalism, as a political rationale, impacts how the Canadian state relates to linguistic minority groups, immigration, and the community sector. Within a neoliberal framework, the governance of issues related to linguistic minority communities has been reframed through the commodification of languages, making the ability to speak French an asset whose value is determined by its usefulness to the private sector (da Silva & Heller, 2009). This mindset is consistent with the impact of neoliberalism on Canadian immigration policy, which is increasingly structured through the "responsibilization" of "entrepreneurial and autonomous" (Walsh, 2011, p. 611) immigrants and the reframing of the community sector as almost exclusively providers of services that immigrants cannot access through the private sector (Evans, Richmond, & Shields, 2005).[1] In this view, Francophone immigrants are increasingly seen as linguistically competitive workers, supported in their integration through local community organizations. This framing is problematic not only because it limits how Francophone immigrants can contribute to Canadian society but also because of how it reduces the voluntary sector's ability to support their integration needs beyond helping them access the labour market.

This article questions these assumptions by examining the challenges faced by the community sector, which supports Francophone immigrant integration in a linguistic minority context. In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), this sector has been affected by a "community government" approach to social programming, that is, a neoliberal framework of devolving public responsibilities to the community sector, but in ways that limit immigrants' integration into the local Francophone community (Ilcan & Basok, 2004). The GTA's Francophone voluntary sector has had limited success in this regard because of the need to tap into French and English networks for immigrants' successful integration into Canadian society, the geographical distance between where newcomers[2] live and where services are offered, and competition with English speaking community organizations in recruiting

Francophone clients. The neoliberal mindset impacts public policy, particularly in restricting its ability to cope with these challenges. It also limits the impact of the Francophone voluntary sector's efforts to support the integration of Francophone immigrants into the GTA, thereby also limiting the impact on local community development.

After a brief methodological note, this article discusses how to frame the role of Canada's voluntary sector in support of immigrant integration through a community government lens. It then zeroes in on the Francophone community sector in the GTA and documents three main challenges in the organizations' ability to support Francophone immigrant integration and scrutinize how neoliberal policy approaches, agendas, and landscapes limit the impact of their work.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Publicly available policy documents and community reports from 2011–2021, a period of continuous funding cuts to voluntary organizations that support immigrant integration in Ontario (Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2016), were gathered and analyzed. Federal, provincial, municipal, and community sources from three distinct but intersecting public policy angles—immigration and settlement, Francophone community development in a minority context, and community service delivery—were examined. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted within the GTA's Francophone community sector between February and September 2019. These professionals were identified through a website search based on their experience with immigrant integration, service delivery, and volunteer management. They were invited by email to participate in one semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1 for an anonymized list of participants and Appendix 2 for the interview guide).

Due to the small number of interviews and the small size of the community, interviews were used heuristically to understand these organizations' perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing the Francophone voluntary sector in assisting Francophone immigrants. Unfortunately, interviews were not secured from all current Francophone organizations in the GTA, and the representatives who were interviewed specialized mostly in only one aspect of this study, such as immigrant integration, service delivery, or volunteer management. Their insights guided the analysis of the public documents, academic sources, statistics, and grey literature, notably by sharing how key statistics, policies, and directives frame their work, shape how they see the mandate and activities of their organization, and offer a way to assess their achievements. Answers to the first two questions of the interview guide (see Appendix 2) were heavily relied on, as these insights directly addressed the information found in the various documents and provided a sound basis for comparison among organizations. This combination of methods was helpful to reveal productive intersections between the challenges experienced by the Francophone voluntary sector and Francophone communities in the GTA.

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INTO CANADIAN SOCIETY: A VOLUNTARY APPROACH

The quality of the voluntary sector's operations is often evaluated by how the targeted audience utilizes its services and how these services align with the sector's goals and expectations (Behnia,

2012). In this section, the concept of community government is used to discuss how the purpose and activities of Canada's voluntary sector, including related responsibilities for Francophone minority communities, have shifted in response to neoliberal pressure (Halseth & Ryser, 2007; Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Isin, 2000; Rose, 1999a). Specifically, this section explores the neoliberalization of the voluntary sector in immigrant integration as it intersects with changes in immigration policy and the delegation of responsibilities to voluntary organizations.

Voluntary organizations and the community sector

Key to the development of Western liberal societies, the voluntary sector is "a set of private organizations providing a wide variety of information, advocacy and services" (Salomon & Anheier, 1992, p. 130). This sector evolves locally to alleviate social problems not addressed by government organizations but often with government support and funding (Tarling, 2000). As Bourdillon explained more than half a century ago, "a voluntary organisation properly speaking is an organisation which, whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control" (quoted in Brown & Osborne, 2012, p. 12), and even if it "undertake(s) work on behalf of a statutory authority" (quoted in Brown & Osborne, 2012, p. 12), it must remain independent in determining its activities and operations. The pressures to adapt to governmental demands is an essential feature of the struggles of such organizations, especially as neoliberal policies become more prominent and the welfare state more eroded (Dean, 2015; Mulé, 2011).

Neoliberal policies of privatization, decentralization, and withdrawal from direct social programming mark a shift in Canadian society away from the welfare state, with direct consequences for the voluntary sector (Jenson, 1997). As Wanda Vrasti (2010) argues, "[n]eoliberal government is not about less government, but about governing more efficiently with other rationalities, programs, and means" (p. 5). Shifting government priorities and strategies require voluntary organizations to take responsibility for the regulation of everyday life. Understood as "government through community," de-responsibilizing state structures means turning to individuals and voluntary organizations to address complex societal questions, such as how to reduce unemployment and how to better integrate immigrants (see Isin, 2000; Rose, 1999b). In this view, community government describes the relationship through which governments "define, shape, and orient communities" to socialize and "responsibilize certain groups of citizens for particular purposes and ends" (Ilcan & Basok, 2004, p. 130). Voluntary organizations have become transmission belts for individuals to learn the skills necessary to contribute to society within a neoliberal mindset. These same individuals are often asked to volunteer to contribute to the work of voluntary organizations (Wilson, 2013). Put differently, voluntary organizations perform two equally important functions: they "provide social services to disadvantaged individuals and simultaneously train community members to assume their moral duties" (Ilcan & Basok, 2004, p. 130).

Immigrant integration in neoliberal Canada

In Canada, the neoliberal turn to immigrant settlement and integration started in the 1990s with the formal offloading of federal responsibilities, the need to balance the federal budget, and a federal interest in closely monitoring the use of public funds (Abu Laban & Gabriel, 2002). Since the 2000s, the emphasis has been on improving results, which translated into additional planning and reporting mechanisms for any public investments in the voluntary sector, including settlement and

integration services. As Rebecca Pero (2017) notes about a 2008 federal government initiative, entitled Local Immigration Partnership, "CIC [Citizenship and Immigration Canada, now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)] established a 'modernized approach to settlement programming,' to augment settlement outcomes for immigrants through 'greater flexibility, results-oriented programming with improved accountability, and better planning and coordination'" (p. 51). Through such initiatives, the federal government requires the voluntary sector to be more flexible, accountable, and efficient in delivering increasing services to newcomers, based on an understanding that the more power given to localized service providers, the better the integration experience (Pero, 2017).

As Suzan Ilcan and Tanya Basok (2004) indicate, "the Canadian voluntary sector has [evolved into] a 'community of service providers'" (p. 129), systematically attached to government priorities and procedures through funding received from governments. The authors note a significant shift in the operations and nature of voluntary organizations in Canadian society, especially the increasing neoliberal trends of privatization, decentralization, and state withdrawal from public and especially social affairs. The voluntary sector takes on tasks that are deprioritized by government agencies, and the dominant funding model is increasingly characterized by programmatic, contractual, and fiscally short-term relationships (Ilcan & Basok, 2004). This raises significant questions as to the sustainability of community work. As Laura Marie Ryser and Greg Halseth (2014) explain, such a model reduces "the ability of voluntary groups to secure stable resources for staff" (p. 45). This logic is particularly detrimental for organizations catering to marginalized groups, which not only operate "in under-resourced environments in terms of funding, personnel, volunteers, and time" (Mulé, 2011, p. 7) but also face additional challenges in raising awareness and funds and growing their clientele.

Community organizations both assist with the integration of immigrants and rely on those same immigrants for volunteer work, as a substitute for paid work, to provide these services. As a clientele, immigrants in Canada face many challenges related to the recognition and transferability of their skills because of the lack of foreign credential recognition and other biases against foreign accreditation and work experience (Guo, 2007). In 1999, when the federal government granted that volunteer experience could count as a form of work that immigrants could do to qualify for permanent residence (Vrasti & Montsion, 2014), community organizations gained a new option in how to reconcile their staffing needs and increasing responsibilities amid a more challenging funding environment. The federal approach is premised on the notion that immigrants needing integration services can volunteer to support the integration of their peers and reap benefits for their own permanent immigration status in Canada. Over the last 20 years, this rationale has been adopted by many actors, including governments, media, voluntary organizations, and newcomers, who see volunteering "as an effective strategy for immigrants to increase the market value of their human capital and gain valuable Canadian experience" (Wilson-Forsberg & Sethi, 2015, p. 95).

Voluntary organizations in Ontario

As Canada's most populous province, which also hosts the country's largest immigrant population, Ontario underwent a "common-sense" revolution in the mid-1990s that matched the neoliberalization of Canadian public policy, starting with the federal government's cutting of funds for provincial social programs (Phillips & Levasseur, 2004). In this new sharing of responsibilities, provincial

governments were given more responsibility but did not receive increased financial transfers, which led to precarious service provision, especially in cities such as Toronto that are popular with newcomers (Pero, 2017; Simich, 2000). The federal cuts resulted in increased fiscal responsibilities for Ontario municipalities in integration matters. The Local Service Realignment program created a new provincial settlement program with less than half the funding available under the previous program, while "cutting the core funding of some settlement programs and switching others to less stable project-based funding" (Tolley, Biles, Andrew, Esses, & Burstein, 2012, p. 5).

This neoliberal mindset led to many social policy reforms, including Ontario Works, which was launched in 1997. Designed by the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris, this reform led to increased suspicion by provincial agencies of the beneficiaries of social assistance (Peck, 2001). Groups who benefited the most from social welfare, such as women, poor and racialized people, had their motivations for requesting such assistance increasingly questioned and their claims monitored. As Jacinthe Michaud (2004) explains, workfare policies were put in place to address what was perceived as "an 'out of control' increase in the number of welfare recipients in categories such as youths and teenage mothers, mainly among immigrant women and/or among black women" (p. 138). By redefining these groups' access to and eligibility for social assistance, these reforms worsened the quality of life for various groups and disproportionally affected immigrant women, among others (Evans, 2007).

These reforms also initiated a change in Ontario's voluntary sector by creating a "competitive contract culture" (White, 2012, p. 202) to access government funding. Some organizations that were unable to get funding in this new environment simply disappeared. For "those that survived, no support was available for their traditional advocacy and capacity-building activities, which they had either to abandon or to maintain by taking on more volunteers, a strategy that was itself over-burdening" (White, 2012, p. 211). Agnes Meinhard, Lucia Lo, and Ilene Hyman (2016) call this environment "coercive isomorphism," as organizations converge in following a path set out by the government, including the same rules and expectations related to funding, accountability, and overall efficiency. The Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI, 2016), an umbrella organization representing most immigrant-serving organizations, indicates that its members have experienced, on average, a 20 to 30 percent decrease of their funding in recent years. Since 2010, some have been completely defunded, whereas others had to reduce their number of employees, cut salaries, decrease working hours, or cut services (OCASI, 2016).

In line with the federal approach of recognizing volunteer work as the Canadian work experience of immigrants, the provincial government proposed that community organizations rely more on volunteers for service delivery, as it allows them to get the human resources needed to maintain their service offerings while also "strengthening" the community ties to immigrants. In its Partnership Grant Program 2016–2018, the then-Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration speculated that, in the near future, not-for-profit organizations will be able to rely efficiently on volunteers to help meet their mandate, while at the same time providing these volunteers with a valuable experience (Ontario, 2016). Such pressures on voluntary organizations to depend on unpaid labour to achieve short-term objectives reiterates a government approach based on a neoliberal logic of public disinvestment in community services.

Such a logic pits the perspective of funders against the perspective of voluntary organizations regarding what constitutes social integration, especially for linguistic minority communities. Whereas funders are concerned with short-term economic integration, voluntary organizations are interested in successful integration over the long term and in a more holistic way (Meinhard et al., 2016). The neoliberalization of immigration policy in Ontario, with its emphasis on tightening financial control and making immigrants "responsible" agents, has had lasting negative impacts on the province's Francophone communities due to their particular dependence on the voluntary sector for local community development.

FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF TORONTO

In 2012, the Government of Ontario adopted *A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy*, a strategic plan explicitly aimed at reaching five percent Francophone immigration province-wide. However, since this policy was adopted, Francophone immigration has fallen short: 2.5 percent in 2013, 2.2 percent in 2014, 1.9 percent in 2015, and 2.4 percent in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Between 2008 and 2017, Ontario received 13,295 Francophone immigrants, with approximately 60 percent of them settling in the GTA. For the *Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO, 2017), an interest group dedicated to Francophones in Ontario, the main obstacle for Francophone immigrants is a disjointed, incomplete, and bilingual settlement process, which includes inadequate frontline services in French, including in the GTA.

This need for adequate services becomes clear when looking at the economic and geographic profile of Francophone immigrants in Ontario. Statistics Canada's (2021) Longitudinal Immigration Database shows significant differences between Francophone and Anglophone immigrants that settled in Ontario between 2008 and 2017. Refugees make up the largest share of Francophone immigrants to Ontario, while they comprise the smallest category among Anglophone newcomers (see Figures 1 and 2). Inversely, there are more Anglophone than Francophone immigrants as principal applicants in the economic immigrant category. These figures reflect other economic indicators. Francophone immigrants consistently have incomes lower than those of Anglophone newcomers, whether after one or many years post-arrival (see Tables 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Categories of immigration, percentage total from 2008–2017, Francophones

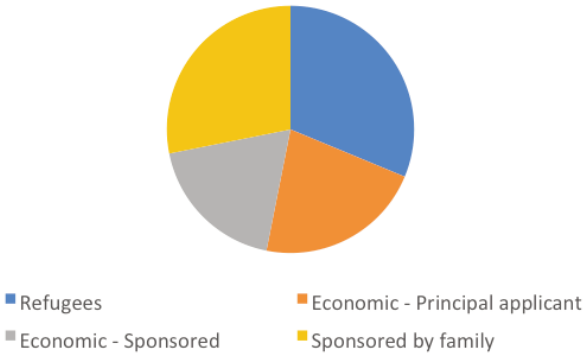
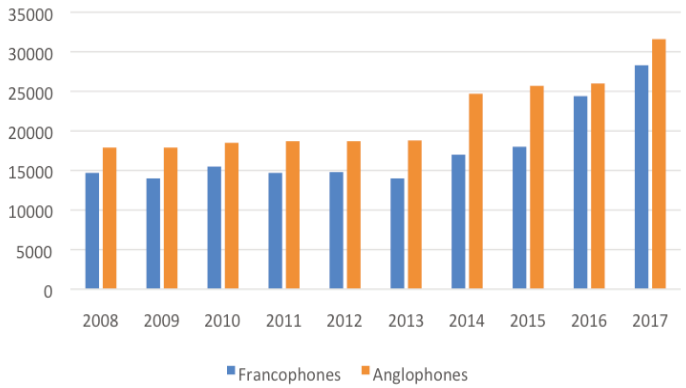


Table 1: Median income after one year of arrival



Moreover, the chances that an immigrant will require social assistance are significantly higher for Francophones than for Anglophones (see Table 3).

Figure 2: Categories of immigration, percentage total from 2008–2017, Anglophones

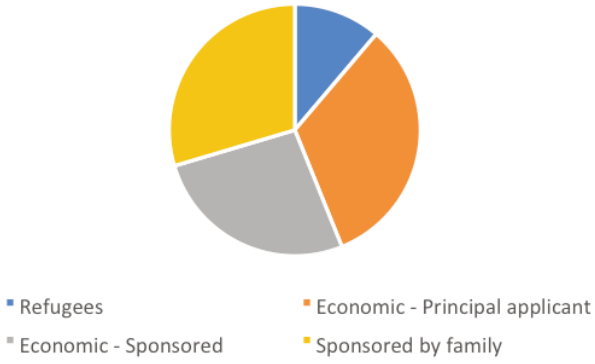
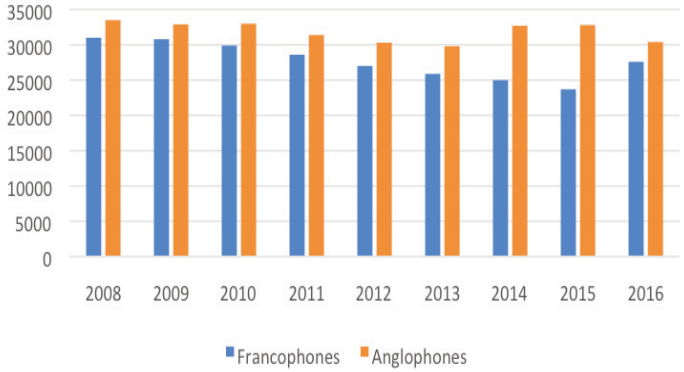
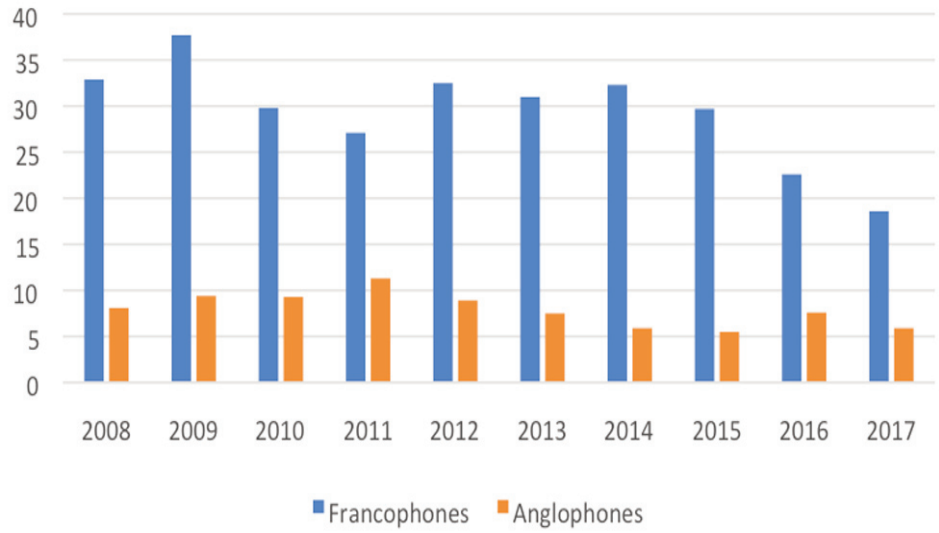


Table 2: Median income after multiple years of arrival (2008 after 10 years)



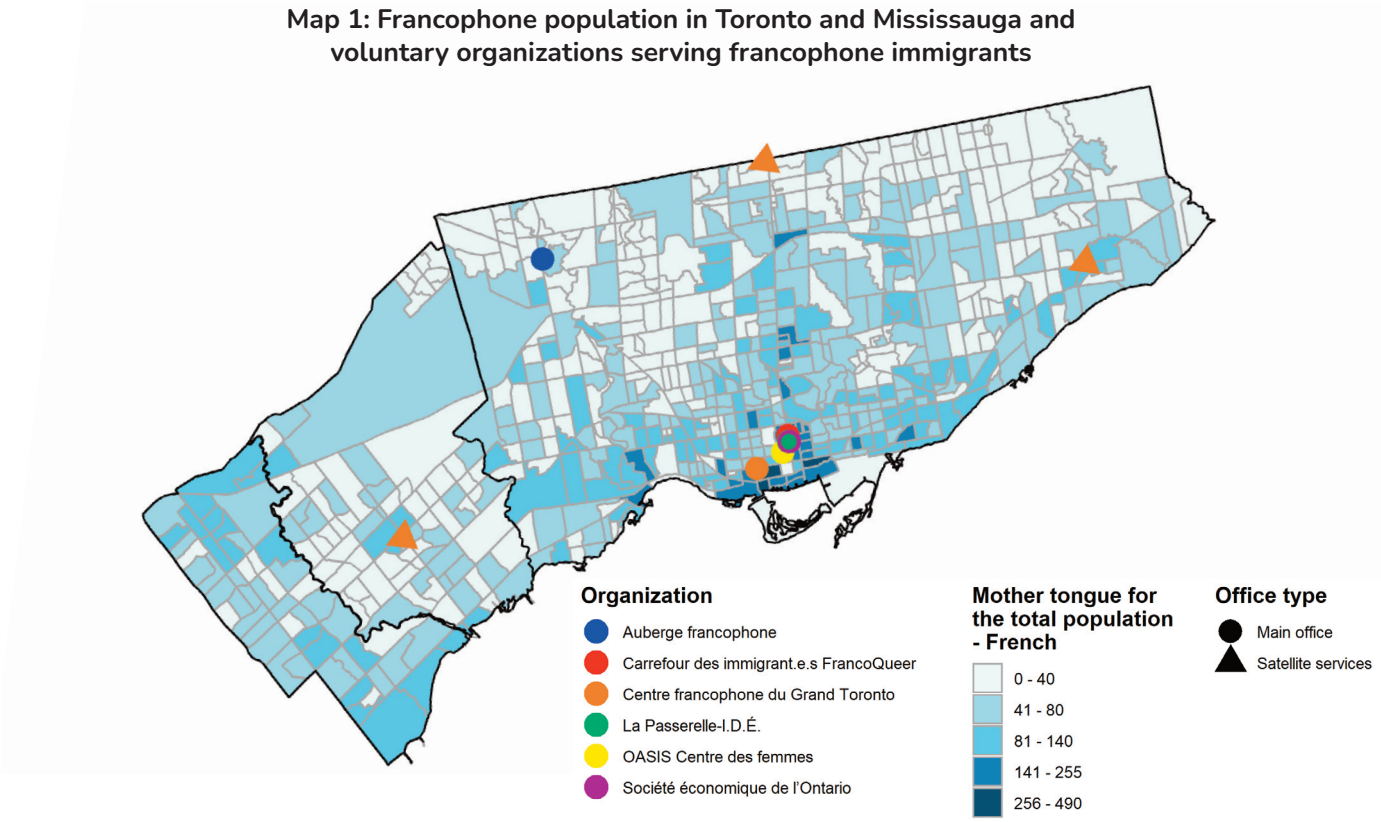
In sum, Francophone newcomers to Ontario are in a more precarious situation than their Anglophone counterparts; thus, they are likely to have a greater need for community services and assistance.

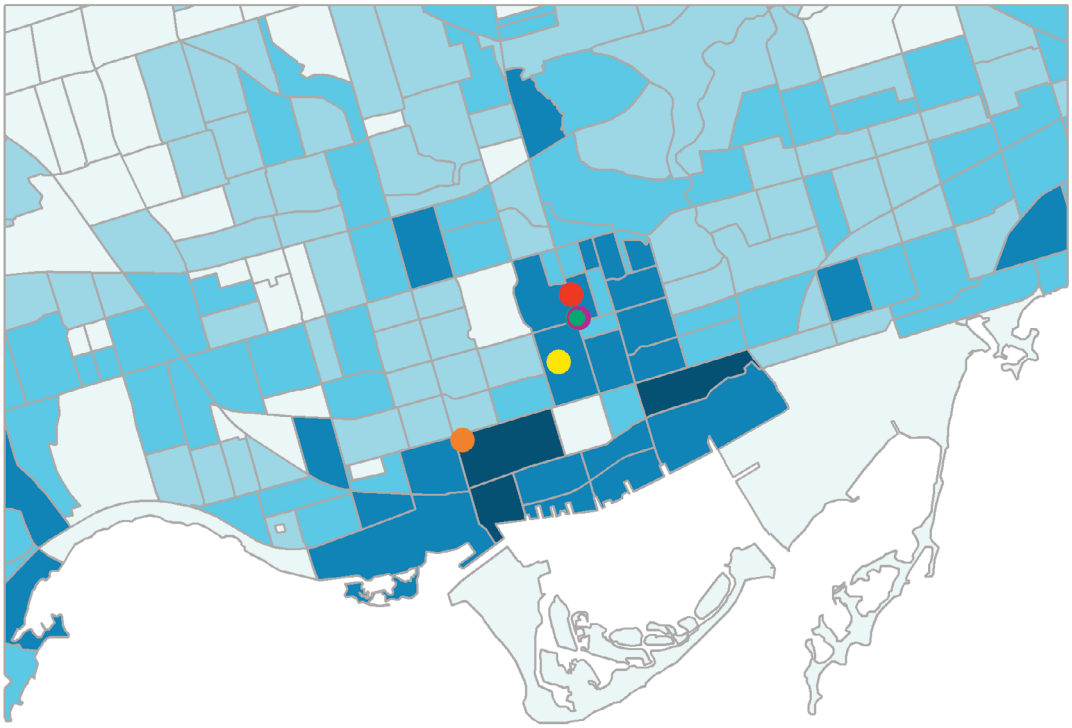
Table 3: Incidence of social assistance; percentage of chances to need social assistance



Supporting the integration of Francophone immigrants in the GTA is a complex task, in large part due to the particular demographic trends and geographic realities of the province's Francophone newcomers and their settlement preferences. While 63.5 percent of all Francophone immigrants in Ontario are visible minorities, the number is 78.2 percent for new immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2016). This marks a significant shift over the recent decades, as only 33 percent of Toronto's Francophone population were visible minorities as of 2001 (Frenette, 2014). Such increased diversity is lived differently throughout the GTA. Since the 1970s, Francophone communities have been scattered across the GTA, and this pattern continues today. The 2016 Canadian census shows that Francophones live in small concentrations across Toronto and Mississauga, whereas the main Francophone organizations providing integration services are located in Toronto's downtown core (see Map 1). Despite the efforts by one main organization, le Centre francophone du Grand Toronto, to disperse its services geographically, large areas where Francophones live are not in proximity to Francophone voluntary organizations, especially in poorer areas of the north and northwest GTA. This problem is partly explained by the diverse settlement preferences of Francophones and recent urban trends, including the rising cost of living in this region.

Map 1: Francophone population in Toronto and Mississauga and voluntary organizations serving francophone immigrants





Notes: Organizations depicted in Map 1 were selected due to their local importance in French speaking integration services for newcomers. There is no automatic link to be made between this list and the organizations where participants work or have worked. *Source:* Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population

An overview of the Francophone voluntary sector in the GTA

In the GTA, there is a relatively small and dispersed constellation of Francophone organizations that support the local community, including newcomers. Among the more than 200 OCASI (2021) members throughout Ontario, 19 operate in French, with 10 of them operating in the GTA. This section provides a brief overview of six organizations that are significant in terms of the integration and settlement services for Francophone immigrants in the GTA.

The Centre francophone du Grand Toronto (2021) is the largest of these organizations. It presents itself as "the main gateway for all Francophones living or coming to settling in Toronto" (para. 1). Its newcomer services support newcomers throughout the integration cycle, starting with access to settlement counsellors upon arrival at Toronto Pearson Airport. The organization also assists with school, housing, and employment needs, and it offers services such as legal aid and interpretation. It is the only organization that provides fully funded settlement services, including multiple services for many Francophone immigrant groups through various service nodes.[3]

Other organizations are smaller and more specialized. They often focus on providing information on other services available, but have relatively limited resources, as compared to the Centre francophone. Moreover, none of these smaller organizations provide fully funded settlement services. For instance, the Société économique de l'Ontario (2021) offers newcomers information about the local labour market, professional guidance, skill development initiatives, and a professional mentoring program. As employment is seen as key for successful and rapid integration, it specializes in this aspect of immigrant integration, guiding newcomers even before they arrive in the GTA. Similarly, La Passerelle – Intégration et Développement économique (2021) is dedicated to supporting the entrepreneurship of Francophone immigrants in the GTA, with an emphasis on the opportunities for racialized newcomers and the challenges they face. Its main programs include leadership training and intercultural integration workshops, as well as financial competency and access to justice. Similar to the Société économique, it does not offer settlement services, but newcomers are directed to publicly available resources.

There are also organizations that support key demographics with particular integration and settlement challenges. For instance, Oasis Centre des femmes (2020), an organization dedicated to female survivors of domestic violence or abuse, offers counselling and family law services as well as transitional housing assistance. Any woman can access their services and resources. Specifically, it assists immigrant women with gaining access to social services and addressing their housing needs. Another organization is the Auberge francophone (2021), which specializes in helping racialized newcomers, particularly Francophone, Black, and refugee newcomers. It offers specific workplace-related and family law services, access to career orientation and networking initiatives, and information on existing settlement services. It also provides volunteering opportunities so that newcomers can acquire work experience (Muller, 2011). Finally, Carrefour des immigrants is an initiative of FrancoQueer (2020), a local organization that supports Francophone asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants, undocumented migrants, and temporary workers self-identifying as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) community. It provides limited settlement services in the form of professional and peer support activities, legal aid and support for asylum claims, medical services, and English language training.

Among these organizations, the Centre francophone's importance as the main service provider is noteworthy. Unlike smaller, specialized organizations, Centre francophone's centrality is partly explained by the fact that its immigrant services are fully funded by the IRCC and other government programs, including at the provincial and municipal levels. The Centre francophone's access to these funds comes with additional accountability requirements, but this reporting takes time away from advocacy work, engaging in policy deliberations, and defending the rights of clients. For smaller organizations, the main challenge is one of maintaining long-term capacity in delivering specific programs, especially if they support populations considered vulnerable who do not fit the eligibility criteria of the main government funding programs. For these niche organizations, current funds do not really cover the advocacy work needed to demonstrate the importance of the services they offer or the expansion of their services.

Francophone newcomer integration in an English dominated context

One of the key challenges facing Francophone voluntary organizations is that immigrants in the GTA need to learn English to fully integrate into society. Given the emphasis on the economic aspects of immigration, organizations recommend that immigrants improve all the skills necessary to find employment, including language skills. While this is not surprising, participant #1 clearly mentioned how English proficiency remains a significant and immediate challenge for Francophone immigrants:

> [New immigrants] often arrive in Canada with the idea that it's a bilingual country, and then it's really a shock, even when they arrive at the airport and all the services are just offered in English. … Work in French in Toronto is also very rare. … There are the Francophone schoolboards, the Centre francophone, and a few other community organizations, but when all the positions are filled … bilingual positions exist, but you need to be bilingual, you need to speak English. … If your English is not that good, it's going to be hard to integrate into the labour market.

This observation echoes the insights of this study's other participants, as well as the literature on the topic (Edwards, 2020; Sall, 2019). As participant #4 confirmed: "A tip that I share with all newcomers: we can't settle in Toronto and limit ourselves to the Francophone community and remain solely within Franco-Ontarian circles. That's a big mistake."

For the Francophone voluntary sector, this additional requirement has resulted in the need to collaborate with community organizations operating in English. As this participant explained, Francophone organizations need to adapt to this reality to best support their clientele's efforts to integrate into Canadian society. Participant #4 indicated: "They also need to work with Anglophone organizations, especially for English courses [and] for offering volunteering experience. … They should send the newcomers in Anglophone organizations to volunteer, so [the newcomers] can speak [English]." While Francophone community organizations can provide primary services to Francophone immigrants in French, they realize that successful integration requires English proficiency. As such, some Francophone organizations offer French-English discussion groups while others hold English language courses. Adding language-specific services complicates the integration process, as they contribute to reducing the connections between immigrants and the local Francophone community. By providing services to better integrate immigrants into an English dom-

inated society, these organizations create and maintain a distance between their clients and local Francophone networks.

This tension was unacknowledged in conversations with participants. The need to integrate immigrants into the Francophone community is part of these organizations' mandates, but it is subordinated to the goal of successful individual integration. The language barrier is a significant issue for the integration of Francophone newcomers and is framed as a matter of individual immigrants' employability. It is not seen as a matter related to the reproduction of the local Francophone community. Such organizations are mandated to contribute to the vitality of the local Francophone community, but their support of immigrant integration is narrowly constructed as integrating individuals into English dominated labour markets.

In line with the goals of a community government approach to service delivery and immigrant integration, Francophone voluntary organizations are, therefore, left with the responsibility of producing bilingual citizens. Limited by a neoliberal mindset in which economic integration is a necessary step to a successful social integration, language acquisition is mainly framed as a skill valued by employers. Bilingualism becomes the main path for Francophone immigrants' integration into the GTA, which results in a paradoxical situation for the Francophone voluntary sector. Even if these organizations are not mandated with socially integrating bilingual individuals, the requirements of the local labour market in English dominated contexts in Canada compel them to address this situation so newcomers can become self-reliant agents. In order to be successful in supporting Francophone immigrants' integration, these organizations have to evolve in ways that are at odds with local Francophone community development.

The dispersion of clients and services

Francophone organizations and their clienteles are often geographically distant. This reality adds complexity to issues of visibility and access to community services, especially for a diverse Francophone clientele in specific social conditions. Simply reaching out to and being known by Francophone immigrants is challenging in such a wide territory. Participant #3 observed: "There are people who have been in Toronto for two or three years without knowing that [we exist]. So, we try to get these people and say we're here, we exist, and we provide services." This issue of visibility is exacerbated by the geographical dispersion of a small client pool across the GTA. As participant #1 explained further:

> Francophone immigration in Toronto is relatively small in terms of community organizations that provide services. It's not like on the Anglophone side, where there are plenty of services that are provided through a neighborhood approach instead of at the city level.

While Anglophone organizations are embedded in the localities and neighbourhoods of their clienteles throughout the GTA, Francophone organizations deliver services at the regional level, which adds to the difficulties of connecting clients with services.

In recent years, some Francophone organizations, such as the Centre francophone and l'Auberge francophone, have tried to decentralize their services across the GTA to better serve newcomers in their neighbourhoods. Such efforts remain limited due to the lack of resources available to cope

with the specialized demand in specific neighbourhoods and, notably, in the suburbs, where there is a need for childcare, family services, and employment training. Participant #1 observed:

> Most services remain in the downtown offices. … [Services to] newcomers and youth are decentralized … [but] it would be better if all services would be decentralized, so then everybody in a specific region could have access. In the north of the city, there are no services at all for newcomers. There are Francophone schools in that area who called [us] … but we couldn't help them because it's not in our mandate, like doing workshops, meeting with parents, and so forth.

In addition to questions about being able to meet specialized demand in particular locations, dispersion interacts with various forms of oppression. The lack of physical access to services in one's neighbourhood builds on gendered, class-based, and racialized hierarchies, deepens structural inequities, and encourages further marginalization (Gingrich, 2003; Wilson-Forsberg & Sethi, 2015).

The lack of proximity is especially challenging for organizations catering to a segment of Francophone immigrants that is considered vulnerable, and such a spatial dispersion can exacerbate marginalization and social exclusion. For instance, FrancoQueer has difficulties in reaching and supporting immigrants and refugees self-identifying as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Participant #3 indicated:

> The problem of FrancoQueer is the lack of visibility … community partners-apart from lawyers-don't really refer clients to [the organization] … some clients are not necessarily at ease with their sexual orientation or gender identity, so they won't tell either the Centre francophone or the other organizations … this clientele does not [necessarily] live in downtown Toronto because of the price of housing. Clients may live with roommates in the city, but they are dispersed. They are kind of everywhere.

The geographical distance between FrancoQueer and its clientele adds to the difficulty of doing outreach with members of the LGBTQIA+ community, which includes safety and confidentiality concerns (Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights, 2015). Bearing in mind the challenges of supporting members of the LGBTQIA+ community, the inability to deliver services in neighbourhoods where several Francophone newcomers settle contributes to the invisibility of LGBTQIA+ realities outside of the downtown core (Bain, Podmore, & Rosenberg, 2020).

While some Francophone organizations such as the Centre francophone recognize the need to decentralize their services across the GTA, there are significant financial limitations to achieving geographical reach. The current funding model, based on short-term and programmatic objectives, does not take into consideration the geographical and socio-economic diversity of Francophone immigrants, which means that community organizations cannot adapt to this widely recognized situation. A neoliberal mindset maintains an artificial gap between how the objectives of these organizations are designed and how the funds are allocated and the diverse backgrounds and dispersed locations of Francophone immigrants in the region. This gap leads to a key limitation in applying a community government approach to service delivery: the responsibility lies with Francophone immigrants themselves to find and access the services they need. A community gov-

ernment approach, which greatly reduces the ability of Francophone community organizations to proactively recruit newcomers, does not allow them to consider aspects other than language in their service delivery, especially not the geographical and socio-economic and cultural diversity of their clientele. This results in highly differential experiences and coverage for Francophone immigrants in the GTA, making the most vulnerable, especially poor immigrants living in suburbs far from the downtown core, even more marginalized and excluded from accessing services in French.

Competition within the voluntary sector

In line with a neoliberal approach to funding, Francophone organizations also compete for funding with Anglophone organizations that see Francophone immigrants as a potentially attractive pool of new clients. The fact that Francophone immigrants are not systematically directed to Francophone organizations to access integration services has been documented (AFO, 2017; OCASI, 2016). Francophone immigrant women coming to the GTA often use the services of shelters run by Anglophone organizations to escape domestic violence or homelessness, for instance, while interpreters are used to connect with newcomers in different languages, including French. Participant #1 noted:

> First, we need to really be able to get to all Francophone newcomers in Toronto. We lose some in the shelters, we lose some at the arrival, and we lose a lot [to Anglophone organizations]. We need to be able to demonstrate that there are more Francophone immigrants to show that we need more services. … Francophone immigrants have the services, but not all the services, and they're not all accessible near their homes, and if they're not close to home, well, they'll go to Anglophone organizations, that's for sure. They'll come once or twice, but then they'll say, "no, I'll find another way."

Reliance on Anglophone organizations facilitates a more sustained integration of these Francophone immigrants into an Anglophone mainstream society.

The competitive mindset of the voluntary sector as a whole has led Anglophone organizations to consider Francophone newcomers as clients, allowing them to access more public funds in exchange for a minimal adaptation, namely, providing some services in French. Participant #4 explained:

> Anglophone organizations are saying, "we, too, can provide services in French in our organization," but Francophone [organizations] are fighting so that all French speaking services are delivered by Francophone organizations. It's always a fight.

The local Francophone clientele is a new market for Anglophone associations, but this transfer threatens the holistic integration of Francophone immigrants and weakens the role of Francophone organizations as connectors to the local community. Although they offer limited services in French, such as interpretation services for access to healthcare, Anglophone organizations do not meet the other needs of Francophone immigrants, including access to social networks, cultural resources, and economic opportunities in French. A lack of access to support and connections in these areas makes Francophone clients collateral damage in organizations' competition for funding while also weakening Francophone organizations' position in the voluntary sector landscape. Within a neoliberal mindset, however, it is advantageous for Anglophone organizations to extend their services

to Francophones, even if it is to the detriment of Francophone organizations and overall community development.

This reality is further enabled by the lack of collaboration among Francophone organizations. While some bigger multi-dimensional service organizations routinely refer clients to smaller niche organizations, the ways public funds are allocated under neoliberal governance have led to a short-term and turf mentality, fuelled by the anxiety of losing funding. Participant #1 observed:

> In Francophone organizations, we know it, everybody fears that the other will take away from them, so it creates small, pointless fights because of the government funding … everybody fights to get each client, even if they don't offer the same services. … If these organizations work together, we could fill existing service gaps.

Such collaborative solutions are obscured by a neoliberal competitive funding environment, which favours institutional siloing (Evans, Richmond, & Shields, 2005). By setting up a process through which each organization needs to compete for funding to survive, collaboration for the betterment of the local Francophone community remains secondary. In fact, a community organization may strive to access more funds by framing its services as broadly as possible. This is more economically advantageous than sharing funding with other organizations, but it encourages siloing and a turf mentality. Some Francophone organizations, such as the Centre francophone, have maintained their market share against Anglophone organizations by developing a broader approach to service delivery. In a context of limited public funds, however, it is unrealistic for all organizations in the Francophone voluntary sector to aspire to such a model, even if a neoliberal mindset presents it as the best option to survive.

CONCLUSION

The neoliberalization of immigration and integration policies, coupled with additional challenges experienced by the voluntary sector in a linguistic minority context, has created an environment in which the work of Francophone community organizations that support the integration of Francophone immigrants in the GTA has limited impact on local community development. This is seen through the ways in which the Centre francophone is offering settlement services, while smaller organizations focus mainly on newcomers' immediate needs and their integration into the labour market. Voluntary organizations are caught in a neoliberal paradox of having to provide services in French to Francophone immigrants, as per their mandate and funding agreements, while directing these migrants to English speaking networks in order to ensure their successful integration. Working in collaboration and coexistence with the Anglophone voluntary sector in supporting Francophone immigrants is a necessity that derives from the geographical dispersion and demographic diversity of the Francophonie in the GTA, but the neoliberal environment increases the competition between these organizations. It works to the advantage of the Anglophone voluntary sector, as Francophone organizations are smaller, more dependent on funding, and have fewer incentives to collaborate. The Anglophone sector also benefits from a neoliberal understanding of successful immigrant integration, as the emphasis on both the newcomer's economic contributions and French language as a competitive advantage centres integration to the English dominated society. In this view, a systematic study of the structural inequities and relationships between Anglophone and

Francophone organizations in the local voluntary sector landscape could illuminate such dynamics further, if only to map and assess the most effective service pathways for Francophone immigrants.

The challenges facing Francophone community organizations in the GTA signal some changes that can be made by municipal, provincial, and federal governments for more effective support of communities in a linguistic minority context. As it now stands, the integration of Francophone newcomers in the GTA is framed in ways that juxtapose their integration into mainstream society, notably for employment purposes, against their potential contributions to the local Francophone community. Rather than being framed as an epiphenomenon of immigrant integration, community development can be relocated at the core of program design, funding schemes, and services offered to Francophone immigrants. To ensure that Francophone immigrants are not indirectly and unintentionally integrated into English dominated contexts, French must be conceived as a cultural and identity marker rather than just a linguistic right. Governments can assess the multidimensional positive impact of supporting the immigration to Francophone communities as part of their support for community development in a linguistic minority context and provide funding accordingly. To support Francophone communities, they can prioritize community development and resilience over employment. Integration into the local labour market is a necessity, but this goal can be the result of a model in which community development is the core mandate of the Francophone voluntary sector. Smaller Francophone organizations do not provide IRCC-funded settlement services and are often excluded from the eligibility criteria of existing programs, even though their support for vulnerable Francophone newcomers is essential. One solution is to return to a core funding model, in which Francophone organizations are funded as a whole rather than receiving funds for specific activities. Core funding gives organizations discretion and flexibility in addressing the needs of their clientele and achieving their mandates while reducing the workload associated with reporting on each activity or program.

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NOTES

1. A neoliberal mindset refers to a specific form of political rationality for how societal realities are interpreted, agendas and policies are determined, and solutions are limited (see Brodie, 2010). This notion highlights how key ideological principles, such as the preference for technicalizing societal questions, are experienced, adopted, and contested by various individuals and voluntary organizations.
2. For the purposes of this article, immigrant and newcomer are used interchangeably, as their respective meanings are similar enough to be treated as such (see Chui & Chow, 2021).
3. The Centre francophone is the only service provider among these organizations that is required to ensure that all of their clients meet IRCC's criteria before accessing settlement services (see Canada, 2019).

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant #1, former director of a Francophone community organization in the GTA. Interview in Toronto on February 13, 2019.

Participant #2, project manager at a Francophone community organization in GTA. Interview in Toronto on May 6, 2019.

Participant #3, project manager at a Francophone community organization in GTA. Interview in Toronto on September 4, 2019.

Participant #4, director of a Francophone community organization in GTA. Interview in Toronto on May 21, 2019.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Please tell me about your organization and the position you hold. When was the organization created and for what purposes? What are some the best features of what you offer Francophone newcomers to Toronto (or the GTA), and what are some of the most important challenges in facilitating their integration? What could be done to improve the services and resources offered?
2. What are the specific challenges in supporting the Francophone community in Toronto (or the GTA)? How do the unique features of this community allow or limit your ability to reach out and support specific groups within the community? How do you advocate on behalf of this community and their needs?
3. How does work experience (paid or unpaid) play in the integration process of Francophone newcomers to Toronto (or the GTA)? How do you support them in getting work experience? Do you or have you ever hire(d) or ask(ed) assistance from some of the newcomers coming to you as clients to host events and deliver services? How so? Under what circumstances? What are some of the benefits and challenges of such practice?
4. What are the relations between your organization and other community organizations, including institutions like faith groups and schools, and public officials at all three levels of government? How are these relationships organized and when to you interact with them? How do they facilitate the integration of Francophone newcomers?

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Do Companies Really Care? Strategic Philanthropy and Imagine Canada's Caring Company Program

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ABSTRACT
First launched in 1988, Imagine Canada's Caring Company program recognizes Canadian companies that contribute at least one percent of their pre-tax profit to nonprofit organizations within their employees' communities. Broadly speaking, the program sets a standard for corporate strategic philanthropy. However, the program is vulnerable to the same tensions that underlie the broader practice of strategic philanthropy; namely, a blurring of the line between profit-seeking activity and addressing social need.

RÉSUMÉ
Lancé en 1988, le Programme des entreprises généreuses d'Imagine Canada reconnaît les entreprises canadiennes qui versent au moins un pour cent de leurs bénéfices avant impôts à des organismes sans but lucratif au sein des communautés de leurs employés. Le programme établit ainsi une norme pour la philanthropie stratégique des entreprises. Cependant, il est vulnérable aux mêmes tensions que celles qui sous-tendent une pratique plus large de la philanthropie stratégique, la tentation de ne pas tenir compte de la distinction entre quête de profits et appui aux besoins sociaux.

Keywords / Mots clés : corporate strategic philanthropy, CSR, Imagine Canada, Caring Company program / philanthropie stratégique d'entreprise, RSE, Imagine Canada, programme des entreprises généreuses

INTRODUCTION
Increasingly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is seen as a key attribute of well-managed companies (Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019; Carroll, 1991; Rangan, Chase, & Karim, 2015), with philanthropy, and in particular strategic philanthropy, central to CSR (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Elkington, 2001; Porter & Kramer, 2011). This article explores the tensions present within strategic philanthropy and accordingly highlights both the capabilities and limitations of Imagine Canada's Caring Company program. We argue that, while the program may be a reasonable means to en-

courage corporate giving broadly, it does not uphold a rigorous standard by which to gauge the merits of a company's strategic philanthropy.

The article provides evidence of the tensions present within the program drawn from semi-structured interviews conducted in the summer of 2020 with corporate philanthropy managers from "Caring Companies." The findings highlight that although the Caring Company program provides some benefits for companies and the nonprofit sector, Imagine Canada limits the program's effectiveness by maintaining inconsistent standards and omitting third-party certification. Moving forward, we suggest that Imagine Canada could strengthen the program by further promoting employee giving, standardizing its requirements, and implementing a third-party audit that ensures the program's rigor.

Corporate philanthropy has progressed in remarkable ways over the past century (Ricks & Williams, 2005), evolving from CEOs simply writing checks for their favourite charities to a much more sophisticated practice. Companies are increasingly integrating philanthropy into their core business strategies (Dennis, Buchholtz, & Butts, 2009; Maas & Liket, 2011). This type of giving is better understood as *strategic* corporate philanthropy: the "Giving of corporate resources to address non-business community issues that also benefit the firm's strategic position and, ultimately, its bottom line" (Saiia, Carroll, & Buchholtz, 2013, p. 170). Crucial to corporate philanthropy's evolution, companies strive for social and economic returns that are measurable and identifiable within specific periods (Ricks & Williams, 2005). Through strategic corporate philanthropy, companies have improved their brand reputations and increased the motivation and loyalty of their employees, all while benefiting the communities where they operate (Kubíčková, 2018). In today's strategic corporate philanthropy landscape, the line separating the needs of society and the needs of for-profit firms is becoming increasingly blurred (McGoey, 2012).

While strategic philanthropy can significantly benefit recipients and benefactors, there are also deep-rooted tensions within the practice. For companies, the aspiration to generate positive social outcomes can conflict with the goal of maximizing the financial returns of philanthropy (McGoey, 2012). Further, as companies refine their philanthropic practices, they increasingly give in ways that maximize the efficiency of their programs while neglecting society's actual needs (Edwards, 2008). Corporate philanthropy is also perceived as a hallmark of neoliberalism, especially as corporations become more invested in public service provision (Eikenberry, 2017). Given the evolving role of companies in society, there is a need for effective leadership within the corporate philanthropy landscape.

In Canada, Imagine Canada has emerged as a leader within the corporate philanthropy accreditation field. Imagine Canada is a national charitable organization that seeks to strengthen and support Canadian charities and nonprofits[1] (Imagine Canada, 2015). Imagine Canada provides various programs and services to ensure that the sector is well governed, well educated, well connected, and well-funded (Imagine Canada, 2015). Accordingly, Imagine Canada has been operating its Caring Company program since 1988 to promote corporate giving (Ayer, 2018). For an annual program fee, Imagine Canada designates participating companies as "Caring Companies": companies that

"contribute at least 1% of their pre-tax profit to the communities where their employees live and work" (Ayer, 2019, p. 15).

Imagine Canada contends that companies do not have to sacrifice their profits to give back to their communities; in fact, "when done right, the benefits to the business are clear" (Ayer, 2019, p. 5). Steven Ayer (2018), author of Imagine Canada's corporate giving report, demonstrates that Caring Companies can more effectively retain top talent because of their philanthropic activities. Moreover, strategic philanthropy seems to be so valuable for Canadian companies that, as individual donations are declining, Caring Companies plan to increase their support level: "43% of companies reported plans to increase their philanthropic budgets compared to only 10% who planned to decrease" (Ayer, 2019, p. 4).

As one might expect, the program provides various social benefits that directly impact the nonprofit sector. Chief among them, charities and nonprofits receive significant funding from Caring Companies (Ayer, 2018). Imagine Canada's 2019 survey finds that employees of Caring Companies are more likely to donate to charities and nonprofits than those who do not work for Caring Companies. Stimulating employee giving is especially important for the nonprofit sector as general donation rates among Canadians are steadily declining[2] (Ayer, 2019). Further, charities and nonprofits can develop strong relationships with their Caring Company partners and draw upon corporate strategies and technologies to aid their social missions. Although the program appears to present a win–win proposition, the tensions that underlie strategic philanthropy also limit the program's effectiveness.

This article explores the conflicted practice of strategic philanthropy, and by extension, the Caring Company program. Through a review of the strategic philanthropy literature, we explore the core tensions of the practice. We find that the desire to achieve efficient corporate philanthropy limits the practice's overall effectiveness. We demonstrate that this tension is embedded in the Caring Company program. We provide evidence from a data set of Caring Companies and semi-structured interviews with corporate philanthropy managers from Caring Companies. The findings highlight the limitations and capabilities of the program. Specifically, while the program effectively provides Canadian companies with an accessible accreditation program that legitimizes corporate philanthropy, it is limited by the inconsistency of its standards and its lack of third-party assurance. This limitation has caused and could continue to cause top companies to exit the program, jeopardizing the value of the accreditation. We conclude with recommendations to strengthen the program so that it can continue to benefit the nonprofit sector.

UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

As indicated above, strategic corporate philanthropy is defined by integrating corporate giving into a company's overall strategy (Dennis et al., 2009) (see Table 1 for definitions of strategic philanthropy). It balances community stakeholders' needs with a company's skills and competencies to create a mutually beneficial practice (Bruch & Walter, 2005). Interestingly, authors tend to adopt extreme positions within the strategic philanthropy literature. While some authors believe that strategic philanthropy is the solution to all of the world's problems (Porter & Kramer, 2011), others argue that it marks the end of democracy as we know it (Edwards, 2008). We suggest that the dialectical tension between these positions reveals the need for a more balanced approach to strategic

philanthropy. Strategic philanthropy can be a valuable tool for economic and social progress, but it must be better understood and used with caution to be effective.

Table 1: Definitions of strategic philanthropy

Reference	Term	Definition
Emerson, J. (2003). The Blended Value Proposition: Integrating Social and Financial Returns. *California Management Review, 45*(4).	Strategic Philanthropy	"A wide variety of philanthropic practices, many of which build upon traditional approaches to charitable giving ... . In general terms, what distinguishes [strategic philanthropy] is its commitment to viewing philanthropy not as an approach to charitable giving, but rather to investing in the creation of social value" (p. 49).
Saiia, D., Carroll, A., & Buchholtz, A. (2003). Philanthropy as Strategy: When Corporate Charity "Begins at Home." *Business & Society, 42*(2).	Corporate Philanthropy	"Giving of corporate resources to address nonbusiness community issues that also benefit the firm's strategic position and, ultimately, its bottom line" (p. 170).
Kubíčková, K. (2018). Strategic Philanthropy: Literature Review. *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia, 26*(3).	Strategic Corporate Philanthropy	"This linking of [corporate] philanthropy to strategic business outcomes ... designed to create a measurable benefit in an identifiable time period" (p. 75).

First, it is essential to understand the conceptual linkages between strategic philanthropy and corporate philanthropy. Strategic philanthropy has evolved out of corporate philanthropy, as corporations have embraced a more calculated form of charitable giving. We must underline that corporations, like strategic philanthropists, are not social purpose agencies, i.e., organizations mandated by the government or a board of directors to benefit society. Companies are constantly in the process of buying, selling, or trading resources to benefit their shareholders, while charitable giving is very much an optional practice (Gan, 2006). Like a billionaire who can decide when, where, and how they give, a corporation has the right to donate its resources however it wants (Gan, 2006). Logically, with this optionality comes the question, "What's in it for me?"

It appears that corporations have made the most of their choice to give and, in turn, embraced a form of philanthropy that is strategic (Mescon & Tilson, 1987; Kubičková, 2018). Corporations have developed narrow and calculated philanthropic focuses while engaging in measurement and evaluation tactics that promote efficiency within their giving (Dennis et al., 2009; Maas & Liket, 2011). These changes have allowed corporations to maximize their returns on community investments while ensuring that they have a significant social impact (Emerson, 2003; Epstein, 1989; Porter & Kramer, 2011). However, this form of philanthropy is a conflicted process that delicately balances the requirements of corporations with the needs of communities (Edwards, 2008). As one would imagine, this form of philanthropy has garnered its fair share of criticism.

Milton Friedman, an early critic of corporate social responsibility, claimed that the only social responsibility that corporations should have is to increase profits for their shareholders (Friedman, 1970). Hypothetically, corporate managers who spend their company's resources on social causes would be irresponsible, as they are using their shareholders' funds to pursue arbitrary social objectives (Friedman, 1970). However, what Friedman misunderstood within his critique was that social benefit

and financial benefit are not mutually exclusive. Importantly, it has been demonstrated that investment in charitable causes can generate significant value for shareholders. Through philanthropic activities, companies can create more value for themselves and the communities they operate within, creating a dual strategic bottom-line (Epstein, 1989). This concept can also be understood as Porter and Kramer's (2011) principle of "shared value" or Emerson's (2003) "blended value."

However, in its early days, corporate philanthropy's benefits, both internally and externally, were unclear and unquantifiable (Kubíčková, 2018; Ricks & Williams, 2005). Yet, today's corporate philanthropy strives to move beyond enlightened self-interest and toward a form of giving where social outcomes and impacts can be measured and evaluated within an identifiable period (Maas & Liket, 2011). Additionally, it is suggested that effective strategic philanthropy promotes innovation (Maas & Liket, 2011). By integrating innovative business techniques, new technologies, and measurement tools into their giving, corporations can better understand if their giving will generate measurable social and financial returns (Dennis et al., 2009; Maas & Liket, 2011). While these strategies have traditionally been confined to business operations, companies can make their philanthropic ventures more efficient by integrating them (Ayer, 2019).

More broadly, the integration of business motivations, use of scale, and search for efficiency into the realm of civil society has been termed "philanthro-capitalism" (The Economist, 2006). In *Philanthro-capitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World*, Bishop and Green (2008) exemplify the potential of blended value ventures, presenting the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as the hallmark of strategic philanthropy. The foundation has significantly improved global health standards by using large-scale, metrics-driven methods developed at Microsoft (Bishop & Green, 2008; Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018). Operating as the foundation's sole trustees, Bill Gates, Melinda French Gates, and Warren Buffet dedicate billions of dollars to their main priority areas: global health, global agriculture, and U.S. education policy (McGoey, 2012). For Bishop and Green (2008) and many others, the Gates Foundation demonstrates that the maximization of individual wealth can be parlayed into immense social value, exemplifying that private capital and social benefit interact harmoniously.

However, enthusiastic support for strategic philanthropy, such as Bishop and Green's (2008), has garnered equally vociferous opposition. With *Just Another Emperor? The Myths and Realities of Philanthrocapitalism*, Michael Edwards (2008) provides a foundational critique of both philanthrocapitalism[3] and strategic philanthropy by calling attention to these practices' problematic principles. Edwards contends that the beliefs underlying philanthrocapitalism are fundamentally flawed. Philanthrocapitalism's tenets suggest that "methods drawn from business can solve social problems and are superior to the other methods in use in the public sector and in civil society" and "these methods can achieve the transformation of society, rather than increased access to socially beneficial goods and services" (Edwards, 2008, p. 32). For Edwards, philanthrocapitalism's beliefs are misplaced and dangerous. He suggests that significant social change must come from civil society, not wealthy individuals or companies. He also finds an inherent conflict embedded within corporate philanthropy and, by extension, corporate accreditation systems: "Much that goes by the name of corporate social responsibility seems more public relations than social transformation, leaving the impression that business is using CSR as a screen to avoid more serious reform" (Edwards, 2008,

p. 25). For many companies, philanthropy is a much more favourable social responsibility mechanism when compared to options like increasing employee wages or discontinuing offshore accounting (Edwards, 2008). As Edwards demonstrates, strategic philanthropy is a convergence of for-profit and nonprofit values that remains an inherently conflicted practice.

Furthermore, many suggest that the growing popularity of strategic philanthropy is a hallmark of neoliberalism: "through public–private partnerships, contracting out, co-production, or cutting back altogether, the state has increasingly looked to voluntary and nongovernmental efforts as the means for addressing all types of collective problems in society" (Eikenberry, 2017, p. 41). In recent years, Canada's nonprofit sector has felt a shift toward a neoliberal operating environment with increased social responsibility being placed upon private entities (Evans, Richmond, & Shields, 2005). Many researchers contend that this shift presents a significant danger to Canadian civil society (Evans, Richmond, & Shields, 2005; Woolford & Curran, 2011). Increasing the amount of influence that companies have on social funding threatens the democratic values of Canadian society: "Such responsibility cannot be turned over to an unelected class of corporate chieftains (even well-intentioned ones) no matter how grateful we may be for their generosity" (Jenkins, 2011, p. 817). If there is less democratic input into the distribution of social services, then social services will not effectively mirror public needs (Jenkins, 2011).

Some authors and academics go so far as to claim that within a neoliberal governmental structure, a state-regulated nonprofit sector can never be a force of true change for historically marginalized communities (Gilmore, 2017). Studying the history of the nonprofit sector, Munshi and Willse (2017) identify that, "The cumulative effects of decades of neoliberal reform have been a massive exacerbation of the inequalities of racial capitalism and its gendered division of labour" (p. 166). Ultimately, many authors opposing strategic philanthropy take issue with the role of government in equitable public service provision (Jenkins, 2011). For these authors, there must be significant policy reforms to ensure that the need for corporate philanthropy and nonprofit work is minimized in the first place (Edwards, 2008). After all, companies and nonprofits can only do so much to uplift communities neglected by their governments.

Given the significant inconsistencies within the practice of strategic philanthropy, should we toss it aside? Not necessarily. Although strategic philanthropy is inherently conflicted, this conflict is a condition of creating shared value. Although critical of strategic philanthropy, McGoey (2012) notes that shared value is foundational to modern economics. As far back as Adam Smith, academics have claimed that self-interest naturally brings about social benefits (McGoey, 2012). Within a capitalist structure, the pursuit of private capital also generates wealth for various other associated individuals and institutions. Philanthropy naturally yields personal returns for the philanthropist: "gift exchanges are often rooted in diverse social and economic objectives, such as bolstering the reputation of community leaders or expanding territorial jurisdiction" (Mauss as quoted in McGoey, 2012, p. 193). Thus, the tensions in corporate philanthropy already exist within other forms of gift-giving and within the fundamental interaction between economic and societal structures. However, this point also reinforces the importance of ensuring a balance in corporate philanthropy. Within a given corporate and nonprofit partnership, the nonprofit can face challenges due to an uneven power dynamic dominated by the corporate partner (McGoey, 2012). Often, as previously suggested,

within a blended value relationship, the needs of the businesses seem to take precedence over the needs of society (Edwards, 2008; McGoey, 2015).

While strategic philanthropy can yield significant returns for society and business, there are limitations and threats embedded within the practice. Therefore, effective monitoring is needed to ensure that strategic philanthropy evolves in a way that continues to benefit business while also maintaining the health of the nonprofit sector and Canadian society.

IMAGINE CANADA'S CARING COMPANY PROGRAM

Imagine Canada is a national charitable organization that works to strengthen Canada's nonprofit sector. In 1988, Imagine Canada launched the Caring Company program to certify Canadian companies that donate at least one percent of their pre-tax profit to their employees' communities. Currently, the program certifies 65 companies, including some of the largest companies (measured by annual profit) in Canada. Imagine Canada suggests that the program provides tangible benefits for partnering corporations and the nonprofit sector. Findings indicate that strategic philanthropy provides companies with an opportunity to attract and retain employees, effectively cutting input costs related to employee turnover (Ayer, 2019; Seifert, Morris, & Bartkus, 2003). Ayer (2019) notes, "54% of people who worked at Caring Companies reported that their current employer's reputation for charitable work in the community influenced them 'a lot' before accepting their current job, compared to only 13% of other respondents" (Ayer, 2019, p. 14). Moreover, "66% of people who reported awareness of the program indicated they would take a pay decrease to work for a firm more involved in the community, compared to only 23% of those who did not" (Ayer, 2019, p. 14). Thus, companies gain greater control over their external staffing costs through strategic philanthropy and reduce overall expenditures. Additionally, corporate philanthropy has the potential to enrich a company's resources in the form of improved brand recognition, which may attract additional customers and increase customer loyalty (Seifert et al., 2003).

But on closer examination, the program's promise of broad social benefit appears to be muddied by its tendency to uphold corporate inclusivity over establishing higher standards. Imagine Canada's recent publication by Ayer (2019), *Profit, Purpose, and Talent: Trends and Motivations in Corporate Giving and Volunteering*, contends that the Caring Company program provides social value for the direct recipients of corporate philanthropy and Canada's nonprofit sector at large. Further, this report suggests that corporations will play a significant role in reducing Canada's looming social deficit (Ayer, 2019). Imagine Canada's Chief Economist, Brian Emmet, contends that the deficit will result in the nonprofit sector's inability to meet increasing service demands while revenue growth slows. Ultimately, by 2026, the sector could see a $25 billion shortfall in its ability to meet service demands (Emmet, 2018).

Ayer (2019) suggests that corporations will significantly reduce Canada's social deficit for two main reasons. First, while individual donation rates are declining, corporate donation rates are increasing (Ayer, 2019). As a result, corporations will become a greater revenue source for nonprofits and charities. Second, the report suggests that workplaces will become increasingly influential in stimulating individual employee charitable giving. For example, as Canada's demographics are rapidly changing, young people today are much less likely to attend religious services, which have historically been crucial for soliciting donations and spreading charitable information (Ayer, 2019; Ipsos Reid, 2020).

Substantiating this claim, Imagine Canada's report highlights employees of companies with various donation programs are more likely to donate to charities than employees of companies without such programs (Ayer, 2019). With these points, the report articulates how workplaces could become increasingly effective sites to encourage charitable activity. However, though companies *could be* important sites for charitable activity, this does not necessarily reduce the social deficit.

Additionally, community investment within the Caring Company program can take three forms: cash and in-kind contributions, volunteerism during work hours, and management costs (Imagine Canada, n.d.). Importantly, forms of employee-giving do not count towards a Caring Company's one percent total (Imagine Canada, n.d.). Moreover, Imagine Canada claims that its standards are in accordance with the LBG International framework, as represented by LBG Canada (Imagine Canada, n.d.). However, LBG Canada includes payroll giving and other forms of employee giving as valid philanthropic outputs in its framework (LBG Canada, n.d.). While Imagine Canada broadly adopts the LBG Canada framework, it doesn't explicitly incentivize parts of the framework, such as stimulating or matching employee contributions, which could reduce the social deficit.

Currently, there is a lack of evidence linking corporate philanthropy to broad social impacts (Edwards, 2008). The lack of such evidence is compounded by the fact that the Caring Company program does not require nor measure the corporate behavior that would theoretically reduce the looming social deficit.

To better understand the tensions in the Caring Company program and, by extension, strategic philanthropy, in the next section we detail findings from eight semi-structured interviews with managers of corporate philanthropy, drawn from a subset of the largest Caring Companies.

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

This research operates under the assumption that companies and individuals who compose them are empirical objects that can be observed and measured (Gaudet & Robert, 2018). Companies can be experienced and sensed in various ways: by stepping into a lobby, being hired, or reading an annual corporate report.

This study uses qualitative methods to explore the complex and contextually situated nature of Caring Companies. This article draws on a set of semi-structured interviews with company officials to gain deeper insight into the relationship between the Caring Company program and the strategic philanthropy initiatives at some of Canada's largest companies.

As previously indicated, Caring Companies accredited by Imagine Canada "contribute at least 1% of their pre-tax profit to the communities where their employees live and work" (Ayer, 2019, p. 15). To develop our subset of companies for interviews from the full set of Caring Companies, we ranked the Caring Companies by annual revenue or net profits[4] to determine the amount these companies donate to nonprofits and charities (see Table 2 for more detail). From this list, we selected the 12 largest Caring Companies using their annual revenue or net profits as reported in the Report on Business (ROB) annual company listing.

Interviewees were selected from this subset of 12 Caring Companies based on their seniority in the company and knowledge of their company's philanthropic work and the Caring Company program (see Table 3 for a list of those interviewed). Of the 12 companies, eight provided participants

Table 2: Donations to nonprofits and charities

Company name	2019 total giving $M	2018 total giving $M	2017 total giving $M	Main philanthropic focusses
TD Bank Group	126.00	116.00	107.00	Financial security, connected communities, vibrant planet, and better health
RBC	111.40	100.70	86.20	Youth, arts, and the environment
CIBC	58.00	60.00	45.00	Children, natural disasters, disability inclusion, breast cancer, financial literacy
Telus[1]	55.00	150.00	45.00	Healthcare, education for children and youth, the digital economy, inclusive and equitable communities, the environment, and online security
Power Corporation of Canada[2]	48.30	47.70	48.00	Poverty, empowerment of women, environmental stewardship, health, education, social entrepreneurship, and arts and culture
Manulife Financial	22.70	22.60	21.90	Heart health, financial inclusion, and local initiatives
Canada Life	12.80	3.30	13.50	Mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing, financial wellbeing, and the environment
The Co-operators[3]	0.52	0.55	0.58	Marginalized youth, mental health, and youth mental health

Notes: This table presents total donations (millions) made from 2017–2019 by the Caring Companies interviewed. This table also includes the company's main philanthropic focusses, but does not include employee donations or the value of employee volunteer hours unless otherwise noted. [1]Telus's figures also include contributions from employees and retirees. For example, in 2017, $4.45 million was contributed by staff and retirees. These contributions were enabled by Telus' donation matching program, in which Telus matches donations up to $2,500 per person. [2]Power Corporation's donation total includes its subsidiaries: Power Financial, Great-West Lifeco, and IGM Financial. Notably, Canada Life is a subsidiary of Power Corporation. [3]The Co-operators' donation total includes community contributions made from two funds: Co-operators Fiftieth Anniversary Community Fund, which supports registered charities exclusively; and the Co-operators Community Economic Development Fund, which supports nonprofit organizations, charities, social enterprises, and co-operatives. Notably, this donation total includes contributions to entities other than nonprofits.

for in-depth interviews in the summer of 2020. The interviewees agreed to acknowledge their participation, allowing the research to showcase the companies that were studied. However, as part of an effort to encourage open and honest responses, the quotes and opinions featured in the study findings are not attributed to specific individuals. Hour-long telephone interviews were conducted over the summer of 2020. During those interviews, participants were asked about the reasoning for particular donations and the social impact of those donations. Detailed notes were taken throughout the interviews and coded to reveal patterns and outliers in the responses.

The interviewees discussed their philanthropy programs and their relationship to the Caring Company program. The companies interviewed for this study are some of Canada's largest companies and operate at a national and international level. Additionally, these companies represent a significant amount of philanthropic activity from various fields: banking, insurance, co-operative insurance, financial services, telecommunications, and international management and holdings. These

Table 3: List of interviewees

Company	Name	Position
TELUS	Christi Cruz	Senior Manager, National Community Investment, Team Lead
The Co-operators	Greg Elliott	Senior Citizenship Advisor
Power Corporation of Canada	Paul Genest	Senior Vice President
Canada Life	Marian Jones	Senior Program Manager, Community Relations
TD Bank Group	Farah Kurji	Senior Manager and Head of Canadian Philanthropy, Global Corporate Citizenship
Manulife	Adrienne Maniezzo	Manager, Corporate Donations
CIBC	Elizabeth Morningstar Pottinger	Manager, Corporate Giving
RBC	Mike Ronchka	Senior Manager, Impact Measurement, Corporate Citizenship
CIBC	Nathalia Santana	Director, Community Relationships

Notes: The interviewees were managers at major companies featured on the *Globe and Mail*'s Top 1000 Canadian Companies list. The companies featured on the list, except for The Co-operators, were ranked by their annual profit. The Co-operators was featured on the list ranked by revenue, as profit information was not available for privately traded companies. Additionally, two interviewees from CIBC chose to be interviewed together.

companies give to a vast collection of causes: youth, arts, environment, financial security, physical and mental health, cancer treatment and prevention, disability inclusion, poverty, and various other community development initiatives. Two of the companies interviewed had withdrawn from the Caring Company program in 2020, each for different reasons.

Drawing on the experiences of managers of corporate philanthropy programs within Caring Companies, this research aims to bring additional context to the philanthropic data of those companies and explore the tensions inherent in the program. Through this process, the value of the Caring Company program and the relationships between Imagine Canada and the Caring Companies were examined.

FINDINGS

The strategy spectrum

As previously stated, what makes strategic philanthropy "strategic" is the integration of business interests, innovative business techniques, and measurement tools into philanthropic practices (Maas & Liket, 2011). Using these methods, corporations can better measure their philanthropy's social and financial returns (Maas & Liket, 2011). However, the interviewed companies demonstrated varying levels of strategy within their giving.

For some, the value of their philanthropy was solely dependent on the positive impacts they created within the communities to which they gave. For example, one manager from a major Canadian company noted that their philanthropy was not necessarily positioned to be strategic but to genuinely give back to the community in an inclusive and meaningful way. This manager indicated that their company gave to a wide variety of causes, not choosing to focus their philanthropy within a select few areas: "The needs are diverse … and for a vibrant society, it's many different areas that need to be strong." Additionally, this manager highlighted that their company does not coordinate efforts to track their social or financial impacts. Further, the manager noted that because their giving is so broad and their donations are so numerous, it would be nearly impossible to track the specific impact that their philanthropy creates. Regarding their financial returns, the manager contended that the intangible and intrinsic value of their generosity benefited the company. The manager also mentioned that philanthropy yields secondary benefits for the company: a more favourable reputation, sponsorship opportunities, and the ability to attract and retain shareholders. However, the manager noted, "It's not so much about sponsorship: it's about giving, ultimately."

At the other end of the strategy spectrum, a manager from a major bank stressed the importance of data collection and technology within their company's philanthropy. This manager described that their grantees have access to an online platform of social impact measurement tools that allows the grantees to track the effectiveness of their programs based on a variety of metrics. This manager also stressed the importance of detailed performance management over surface-level impact measurement:

> You can't manage what you can't measure. If you're giving away millions of dollars and you don't know how effective it's being, then there is no way for you to ever improve the effectiveness of the program you're supporting, and there's no way for you to even know if it is working.

Further, this manager noted that their company is preparing a longitudinal study to measure the social impact that one of their main programs will have on a significantly sized youth population. This study is a uniquely sophisticated endeavor, especially compared with the majority of the other companies interviewed. These companies noted that their social impact measurement was primarily confined to tracking outputs rather than long-term impacts.

Another manager from a major financial services company noted that their company could measure a range of corporate benefits that arise from philanthropy. This company uses a return on investment (ROI) calculation that analyzes qualitative and quantitative indicators to determine the corporate benefits of charitable giving. Furthermore, it measures the impact that the company's philanthropy has on the brand awareness of its employees, customers, and potential customers. Additionally, it measures the market share that the company holds within those three populations. Compared with the other companies interviewed, this corporate benefit measurement system is quite advanced, as most of the others noted that the main advantage of their philanthropy was related to intangible rather than observable branding benefits.

Similar to the spectrum of strategies noted above, there were varying levels of transparency among the managers interviewed. While many managers expressed their desire to talk openly about specific details of their philanthropy programs, many refused to elaborate on the exact numbers or per-

centages associated with their programs. Moreover, many of the managers provided the "company line" as a response to specific questions. For example, many repeatedly insisted that there was no relation between their philanthropy and their company's marketing. In contrast, others emphasized that philanthropy was essential for their companies' brand awareness. One manager from a major bank spoke about measuring this function of philanthropy:

> There's a couple metrics like brand sentiment and brand consideration … we measure those specifically tied to some of our big programs because we know that that's where we have a lot of reach and engagement in the market.

These differences in transparency may represent a stark difference in strategic orientation; however, it is more likely caused by a variance in willingness to disclose sensitive proprietary information.

Evolving philanthropic programs

Almost all of the managers interviewed noted that their giving programs were in a period of transition or that they had made significant changes to their programs in the last two years. Notably, the majority of these changes were centered around refining philanthropic activity to become more strategic. For example, a few managers noted that they intended to increasingly focus their giving within specific areas to gain a more significant "market share." One manager from a major financial institution indicated that their company would be concentrating their giving within one broad area in the future. Accordingly, this manager noted that their company would be refining its key performance indicators to reflect its new platform. This company strives to unify its global philanthropy operations under one platform to better understand its philanthropic impact. A different manager stated, referring to the importance of philanthropic impact measurement, that "It's nice that 10 people went to a workshop. But what we want to see is, is there a measurement of either demonstrated change or intended change?" Almost all managers noted that they were striving for more sophisticated social impact measurement systems; however, most of the companies interviewed also noted the difficulty in measuring the true impact of their donations.

Additionally, all the managers interviewed suggested that their giving programs had become more flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic. A few managers noted that the pandemic had allowed them to reflect on their company's giving behavior and consider giving in ways that better meet emergent community needs. Specifically, a manager from a major bank described how their company had begun to donate more broadly during the pandemic. This manager explained how their company contributed to various organizations working on the front line to combat the effects of the pandemic. Many companies also allowed their donees to treat donations as unrestricted funds and cease measuring their social impact to reduce additional resource drain.

One manager from a major bank said that the pandemic has allowed them to appreciate three main benefits of investing in online services for its own charitable programs dedicated to youth career development. First, the bank's young beneficiaries expect consistent meetings to facilitate their career growth and skill development. Moving these meetings online has allowed the bank's programs to become more accessible as they are less expensive to attend and available to individuals regardless of location. Second, the bank's programs can be far more cost-effective. For example, online networking opportunities allow the company to reach more young people at a lower

cost than face-to-face programs. Last, having digital programming prepared for the future will enable the bank to have more resilient philanthropic programs if another crisis period causes them to alter their operations.

The pandemic has also influenced how companies measure the corporate benefits of philanthropy. A few companies mentioned that they have more effectively captured their philanthropy's influence on their brand awareness because their philanthropy transitioned onto digital platforms. Regarding the pandemic, a manager from a major financial institution noted, "That was a really good opportunity for us to do a lot of measurement around social media traction and press traction and to really see how we could start to put metrics in place around that." Most respondents noted that the pandemic had motivated them to reflect on how they give and consider new ways to improve their philanthropy's social and financial impact.

Relationship with the Caring Company program

The managers interviewed had differing relationships with the Caring Company program. Some were directly involved with the program, as their companies were major funders of Imagine Canada. However, some managers noted that they had little contact with Imagine Canada and indicated that they were not significantly involved or informed about their company's relationship with Imagine Canada. Further, most managers interviewed noted that the value of being a Caring Company came from knowing and signaling that they were one of the top philanthropic companies. Specifically, a manager from a major bank noted that "the advantage is that we get to call ourselves a Caring Company as well as use the . . . Trustmark that we display in our annual report, so I guess the advantage is additional transparency." Most of the other managers gave similar responses, noting that the advantage of being a Caring Company is the ability to signal a high level of social responsibility to stakeholders. Additionally, a few managers pointed out that the Caring Company program allows them to access a valuable network of other corporate philanthropy professionals.

While these respondents felt optimistic about the Caring Company program, a few managers were more critical. One manager contended that the main advantage of being a Caring Company is to justify the budget of their philanthropy department internally. Further, the one percent benchmark set by Imagine Canada allows philanthropy departments to rationalise the level of funding they receive. However, this manager noted that their department began experiencing difficulty using the Caring Company program to justify their budget because the program lacked third-party assurance. This manager claimed that the program is the only major corporate responsibility accreditation program without a third-party audit. As a result, this manager felt that the program lacked legitimacy because its self-reporting measures allow companies to inflate the value of their contributions.

Moreover, this manager's company found that very few consumers even knew what the accreditation meant. Ultimately, this major Canadian company felt they were holding up a one-sided relationship; the company's association with the program was providing more legitimacy to the program than the program was to the company. Three other managers interviewed agreed that a third-party audit would increase the program's rigor. One of these managers also noted that, since the program's inception in 1988, the program had loosened the specificity of its standards to guarantee it is more accessible. Additionally, on the Caring Company FAQs webpage, in response to the question,

"Can Imagine Canada help us qualify to be a Caring Company?", Imagine Canada answered, "If your giving or profit margin fluctuates from year to year, we can work with you to apply a multi-year average which recognizes your commitment, and qualifies your company" (Imagine Canada, n.d.). Although this generous spirit will likely attract more companies to the program, it can also dampen the overall meaningfulness of the accreditation.

Implications for the Caring Company program

A manager from a major Canadian company firmly believed that corporate philanthropy is purely a marketing function. For this interviewee, corporate philanthropy, like any other business tool, must be refined and used in a way that maximizes shareholder value. Moreover, we found that the overwhelming majority of managers interviewed are continually refining their philanthropic practices to optimize the efficiency of their programs. At the same time, companies are striving to develop more sophisticated ways of communicating the impact of their philanthropy to deepen the bond of trust they share with their communities. One manager even went so far as to ask, could there be a future in which companies no longer need nonprofits to demonstrate their social impact? Herein lies the tension at the heart of strategic philanthropy.

The Edelman Trust Barometer provides a window into the future relationship between nonprofits and companies (Edelman, 2020). The Edelman Trust Barometer is an annual global study that measures how different populations trust institutions globally and within specific countries (Edelman, 2020). For example, in 2011, there was a 22 percent difference in the degree to which the informed Canadian public trusted companies and non-government organizations (NGOs), with 50 percent of the population trusting companies and 72 percent trusting NGOs (Edelman, 2012). However, by 2020 this difference decreased to 11 percent, with 64 percent of the informed public trusting companies and 72 percent trusting NGOs (Edelman, 2020). In light of the shrinking gap between trust in companies and nonprofits, it could be argued that corporations are beginning to no longer need nonprofits and accreditation systems like the Caring Company program to improve confidence in their brand. In short, if companies are becoming as trustworthy as nonprofits, why do companies need to partner with nonprofits to bolster their social reputation?

This question is more pertinent considering a few of the interviewed managers noted that they had begun investing more in their in-house programs rather than nonprofit programs. Therefore, Imagine Canada may need to consider ways to ensure that the Caring Company program better encourages corporate giving to nonprofits. A change to the program would be critical to Imagine Canada's mission of ensuring that Canada's charities and nonprofits are well funded. Further, without explicitly motivating corporate giving to nonprofits, the Caring Company program may completely succumb to the tensions of strategic philanthropy and evolve into a program dedicated to signaling corporate benevolence rather than supporting nonprofit work.

Given that one of the primary benefits of corporate philanthropy is the positive impact it has on employees (Raub, 2017), one such way to strengthen the program may be to incentivize and coherently measure employee volunteering, employee giving, and employee matching programs. By motivating employee engagement to a greater degree, Imagine Canada could promote a more democratic form of philanthropy where corporate funds are donated to a larger base of nonprofits dictated by em-

ployees. As a result, this strategy would ease some of the tensions of corporate philanthropy by maximizing employee contributions to nonprofits and increasing the corporate benefits of employee engagement.

Additionally, as companies continue to evolve their corporate giving programs, they may begin to feel that they provide more legitimacy to the program than the program offers them. For example, a few interviewed managers noted that the program had loosened its standards over time while their companies have continued to refine their philanthropy. Further, it will become increasingly unclear if the program is promoting giving to nonprofits or simply accrediting companies that would be participating in philanthropy regardless of the program. However, by introducing stricter guidelines surrounding what counts toward a company's one percent donation total, Imagine Canada can provide more value to Caring Companies and partnering nonprofits. Next, introducing a third-party audit for the accreditation would provide Caring Companies with the opportunity to be associated with a more rigorous program and more meaningfully showcase their philanthropic efforts. As one interviewee mentioned, the Caring Company program is one of the only accreditation systems without a third-party audit. Ultimately, introducing stricter standards and a third-party audit would ease some of the tensions of corporate philanthropy by increasing the symbolic value of Imagine Canada's Trustmark for companies while holding them to a higher standard of giving to nonprofits.

Ultimately, Imagine Canada must consider the tensions that lie at the heart of strategic corporate philanthropy. Although companies provide great opportunities for the nonprofit sector, companies will always consider their needs before the needs of society (Edwards, 2008). This reality remains true, even when the needs of society and businesses overlap and interact. Accordingly, Imagine Canada must continue to find more ways to prioritize the nonprofits involved in the Caring Company program. Ultimately, to preserve the legitimacy of their program and maintain the health of the nonprofit sector, Imagine Canada must encourage more employee giving, implement stricter standards, and introduce a third-party audit.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated within the strategic corporate philanthropy literature, strategic philanthropy has the power to influence both society and business positively. However, due to the tensions embedded in strategic philanthropy, the financial needs of a company often dictate and eclipse the social objectives of its philanthropic efforts. Further, with the ever-increasing efficiency of corporate philanthropy, led by the popularization of measurement and evaluation techniques, companies can better prioritize their needs above their community partners (Edwards, 2008). Moreover, many theorists contend that strategic philanthropy is an expression of neoliberalism: a shift toward private entities taking on increased responsibility for social needs, to the detriment of democratic social service provision (Edwards, 2008; Jenkins 2011).

It seems to be the case that Imagine Canada's Caring Company program is vulnerable to the same tensions that exist within strategic philanthropy. Within the program, these tensions take the form of inclusive yet imprecise standard setting for Caring Companies that neglects the true needs of partnering organizations. In the long run, these tensions could cause significant consequences for

the program. For example, as companies continue to refine their philanthropic efforts, they may begin to outgrow the need to be accredited by a program that encourages a standard of giving beneath what they already perform. This issue also coincides with an emerging trend in strategic philanthropy: companies no longer need nonprofits to communicate their social responsibility.

Future research is needed to examine these tensions fully and provide a more comprehensive and statistically significant investigation of strategic philanthropy in Canada and its relation to the Caring Company program. Future researchers may also need to consider tactics designed to combat the unwillingness of interviewees to talk about their philanthropic programs openly. While in-person interviews might reduce obfuscation, there may also be a need for greater mandatory and voluntary disclosure in corporate philanthropic programs. Additionally, future research should investigate the effectiveness of accreditation programs that rate companies based on their social responsibility more broadly. For example, researchers could investigate how effectively accreditation programs encourage corporations to perform actions like compensating employees fairly, discontinuing offshore accounting, and paying their fair share of taxes.

Future researchers should also develop an updated understanding of the social and corporate benefits associated with the Caring Company accreditation. This study drew on Imagine Canada's 2019 report, but a newer, third-party led inquiry would provide more relevant insights into the program's true value (Ayer, 2019). Broadly, researchers should also focus on creating a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Canadian public, companies, and nonprofits. As highlighted by the Edelman Trust Barometer, the Canadian public seems to increasingly trust companies and nonprofits to the same degree (Edelman, 2019).

Imagine Canada, an organization dedicated to the health and success of the nonprofit sector, should reinforce its program's legitimacy by further encouraging employee engagement, better specifying its program's requirements, and introducing third-party auditing. These changes would ensure greater trust in the program and the Caring Companies involved. Most importantly, these changes would be a welcomed result for both the corporate and nonprofit sectors.

NOTES

1. Registered charities and nonprofit organizations are different entities. Nonprofits are associations, clubs, or societies operated for any purpose except profit (Government of Canada, 2016). Alternatively, registered charities are organizations that must use their resources to pursue charitable activities pre-specified by the Federal Government (Government of Canada, 2016). Charities have additional reporting, spending, and registration requirements. However, charities can issue donation receipts for donor income tax purposes and are exempt from paying various taxes (Government of Canada, 2016). Regarding Imagine Canada's Caring Company program, companies may give to nonprofits or charities to reach their 1% contribution threshold.
2. "Between 1997 and 2017, the percentage of Canadians who reported a donation on their tax return decreased from 26% to 20%, with much of the decline occurring in the last decade." (Ayer, 2019, p. 3).
3. Upon performing an extensive literature review on the topic, Haydon, Jung, and Russell (2021) define philanthrocapitalism as "The integration of market motifs, motives and methods with philanthropy, especially by HNWIs [High-Net-Worth Individuals] and their institutions" (p. 371). Within this article, "philanthrocapitalism" can be considered a broad term that encompasses the specific "strategic corporate philanthropy."
4. Cases were selected using the *Globe and Mail*'s Top 1000 Canadian Companies list, ranked by profit for publicly traded companies and revenue for private companies (see Appendix B for more detail).

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Milton Parc, atelier de la décroissance

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ABSTRACT
The movement for a "sustainable" or "convivial" degrowth of the economy in our societies has been gaining momentum for almost twenty years. This movement, in addition to criticizing the pursuit of economic growth, espouses three key principles: produce less, share more, and decide together (Abraham, 2019). But how can such a course of action be implemented in practice? One way, according to the "growth objectors," is to try to organize our subsistence within the framework of the commons. Accomplishing this objective is less a question of inventing a new form of social life than of rediscovering one that, despite having been marginalized, has never ceased to exist. For this purpose, we can draw inspiration from remarkable initiatives like the Milton Parc community in Montreal, which for over thirty years has provided housing for 1,500 people in a way that is entirely consistent with the principles of degrowth.

RÉSUMÉ
Le mouvement en faveur d'une décroissance « soutenable » ou « solidaire » de l'économie dans nos sociétés prend de l'ampleur depuis bientôt vingt ans. Au-delà de la critique de la course à la croissance économique, ce mouvement formule une triple revendication : produire moins, partager plus et décider ensemble (Abraham, 2019). Mais comment concrètement mettre en œuvre de tels principes? Notamment en tentant d'organiser notre subsistance dans le cadre de « communs », suggèrent les « objecteurs de croissance ». Pour ce faire, il s'agit moins d'inventer que de redécouvrir une forme de vie sociale qui n'a en fait jamais cessé d'exister, même lorsqu'elle a été marginalisée. Et l'on peut s'inspirer d'initiatives remarquables telles que celle de la Communauté Milton Parc à Montréal, qui depuis plus de trente ans maintenant permet à 1 500 personnes de se loger d'une manière tout à fait cohérente avec les principes de la décroissance.

Keywords / Mots clés : sustainable degrowth, commons, housing cooperatives, community land trusts / décroissance soutenable, communs, coopératives d'habitation, fiducies foncières communautaires

INTRODUCTION

« Mais que proposez-vous? » Telle est souvent la première question que l'on pose aux « objecteurs de croissance »[1]. La réponse est assez simple : des manières de vivre ensemble qui soient soutenables sur le plan écologique, justes sur le plan social, réellement démocratiques sur le plan politique. Évidemment, nous en sommes loin. Cependant, tout n'est pas à réinventer. Bien des humains, ici comme ailleurs, parviennent à satisfaire certaines de leurs aspirations essentielles d'une manière conforme à ces principes. C'est le cas de celles et ceux qui ont bâti Milton Parc, la plus grande communauté de coopératives d'habitation au Canada. Avant de tenter de le montrer, nous présenterons d'abord dans les pages qui suivent les grandes lignes de l'idéologie décroissanciste, puis l'historique de la création de cette innovation sociale remarquable en matière de logement qu'est Milton Parc. Nous conclurons sur les limites d'une telle expérimentation et sur les conditions qui pourraient permettre de les dépasser.

QU'EST-CE QUE LA DÉCROISSANCE?

La décroissance a d'abord été un slogan provocateur lancé au début des années 2000 contre l'idée que la croissance économique serait la condition *sine qua non* du bonheur de l'humanité. C'est aujourd'hui un courant de pensée et un mouvement politique fort dynamiques, qui appellent à rompre au plus vite avec cette course illimitée à la production de marchandises, pour au moins trois raisons (Abraham, 2019; Kallis, 2018; Latouche, 2019)[2].

Une course jugée destructrice, injuste et aliénante

La première de ces raisons est la plus évidente : la course à la croissance est insoutenable du point de vue écologique. Comment en effet prétendre croître à l'infini dans un monde fini? Certes l'univers est immense, mais notre espèce n'a pas d'autre endroit pour vivre que la Terre, au moins pour le moment. Dès lors, et sauf à nier les lois de la physique ou à entretenir une croyance aveugle dans les progrès de la technique, il n'est pas raisonnable de vouloir produire toujours plus de marchandises. En tout cas, toutes les études scientifiques dont nous disposons à l'heure actuelle concernant les impacts écologiques de la hausse du PIB montrent que nous n'avons jamais été capables de générer une « croissance verte » ou « soutenable » (Parrique et al., 2019; Hickel & Kallis, 2020)[3]. En poursuivant dans cette direction, et compte tenu du fait que cette course à la production de marchandises bute déjà sur certaines limites biophysiques planétaires (Boutaud & Gondran, 2020), nous risquons de subir les conséquences très désagréables d'une décroissance involontaire, par épuisement de ressources cruciales et/ou par excès de déchets en tous genres. À la limite, c'est l'espèce humaine qui pourrait s'en trouver menacée.

Cela dit, même si la croissance pouvait encore durer, serait-elle souhaitable? Rien n'est moins sûr, aux yeux des objecteurs de croissance. Force est de constater qu'au cours des dernières décennies la croissance économique s'est accompagnée, partout sur la planète, d'un creusement des inégalités socioéconomiques, alors même que le PIB mondial a très fortement cru depuis les années 1950. Outre les travaux décisifs de Thomas Piketty sur la question (Piketty, 2013), on peut citer également à l'appui de ce constat un récent rapport du Programme des Nations unies pour le développement, qui se concluait en ces termes : « Le monde est plus inégalitaire aujourd'hui qu'il ne l'a jamais été depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale » (PNUD, 2013). À cette injustice intragénéra-

tionnelle s'ajoute une injustice intergénérationnelle, puisque les humains du futur vont devoir subir les conséquences des dégradations profondes et durables que nous infligeons à notre habitat terrestre. Enfin, notre productivisme a aussi des effets désastreux sur les conditions d'existence des autres êtres vivants, notamment les animaux. Outre la faune sauvage dont nos activités économiques réduisent sans cesse les possibilités de vivre, l'élevage industriel impose des souffrances effroyables à des millions d'animaux domestiques chaque année. La quête de croissance est donc en plus synonyme d'injustice inter-espèces.

Par ailleurs, quiconque n'est pas « productif », c'est-à-dire ne contribue pas au PIB, doit se contenter d'une position marginale et dominée dans nos sociétés (Friot, 2012). C'est le cas des enfants, des retraités, des femmes au foyer et bien sûr des chômeurs. Pour éviter cette marginalité, il faut avoir « une job », quitte à ce que celle-ci n'ait aucun intérêt, excepté celui de récolter de l'argent; quitte à s'y épuiser au point de sombrer dans la dépression ou l'épuisement professionnel, comme c'est si souvent le cas aujourd'hui. La discipline que nous impose à toutes et à tous la course à la croissance dans laquelle nos sociétés sont engagées a donc quelque chose de profondément aliénant; elle nous rend étrangers à nous-mêmes (Jappe, 2003; Marion, 2015). Robert Kennedy l'avait dit avec force quelques mois avant son assassinat, en 1968 :

> Le produit national brut ne tient pas compte de la santé de nos enfants, de la qualité de leur éducation et du bonheur de leur jeu. Il ne considère pas la beauté de notre poésie ou la solidité de nos mariages, l'intelligence de nos discussions publiques ou l'intégrité de nos magistrats. Il ne mesure ni notre esprit, ni notre courage, ni notre sagesse, ni notre connaissance, ni notre compassion, ni notre dévotion à notre pays. En clair, il mesure tout sauf ce qui rend la vie vraiment digne d'être vécue.

S'ajoute à cela le fait que l'énorme croissance économique des deux derniers siècles n'a été possible qu'au prix d'une prolifération des machines dans nos vies, aussi bien professionnelles que personnelles, et que s'est constitué ainsi peu à peu un vaste « système technicien » (Ellul, 2012) dont le bon fonctionnement s'avère si contraignant que nous tendons à devenir les « outils de nos outils », comme le craignait déjà Thoreau il y a 150 ans, ou de simples rouages d'une « mégamachine » sur laquelle nous n'avons plus aucun contrôle (Anders, 2002; Marion, 2015).

Produire moins, partager plus, décider ensemble

Par respect pour la vie, par souci de justice et par amour pour la liberté, il faut donc faire « objection de croissance ». Il faut refuser cette course à la production de marchandises, ce qui ne peut s'accomplir que collectivement. Tel est l'essentiel du mot d'ordre que font passer les promoteurs de la décroissance depuis presque vingt ans à présent. Évidemment, il ne s'agit pas de s'engager dans une décroissance infinie, qui n'aurait pas plus de sens que l'objectif opposé. Le moment de la décroissance est conçu comme un moment de transition vers des sociétés humaines plus soutenables sur le plan écologique, plus égalitaires et plus émancipatrices. À défaut d'un plan prédéfini, trois grands principes se retrouvent généralement au fondement des projets décroissancistes : produire moins, partager plus, décider ensemble (Abraham, 2019).

Pour arrêter le désastre écologique en cours, il ne s'agit pas seulement de produire mieux, comme le proposent les partisans d'un développement durable ou d'un Green New Deal. Les stratégies

mises en œuvre dans cette perspective butent sur des limites biophysiques, économiques et politiques. Si nous voulons vraiment mettre un terme à la destruction de la Nature, si nous voulons respecter les limites écologiques planétaires, il va falloir *produire moins*, et fixer des limites à ce que nous produisons. Telle est la première des propositions formulées habituellement par les objecteurs de croissance (Parrique, 2020 ; Hickel & Kallis, 2020).

Fixer des limites à la production, donc à la consommation, dans un monde profondément inégalitaire, au sein duquel une grande partie de l'humanité n'a pas de quoi vivre décemment, est indéfendable moralement et suicidaire politiquement. Cette humanité déjà malmenée par les effets de la course à la croissance finira bien par se rebeller, comme l'a montré par exemple la « révolte des Gilets Jaunes » en France. Il faut donc, dans le même mouvement, *partager plus* nos moyens d'existence, au nom de l'idéal d'égalité sur lequel se fonde en principe notre civilisation. Cela passe entre autres par une remise une question de la propriété lucrative ou des échanges inégaux entre le Nord et le Sud (Tanuro, 2010; Hickel, 2017).

Pour fixer des limites à ce qui est produit et partager nos moyens de vivre, il faut en décider ensemble, au regard de l'idéal de liberté qui est le nôtre. Deux conceptions de la liberté s'opposent ici : d'une part, la liberté libérale, celle qui consiste à « faire ce qui me plaît »; d'autre part, la liberté de choisir les normes et les lois auxquelles nous allons nous soumettre (Berlan, 2021). C'est la seconde liberté qu'il s'agit de défendre et de reconquérir, en imposant des limites à la première. Cela suppose non seulement de démocratiser radicalement nos institutions politiques, soulignent les objecteurs de croissance, mais aussi de se « débrancher » des macrosystèmes économiques et techniques dont nous dépendons pour vivre et qui nous imposent leurs logiques propres, celles de la rentabilité et de l'efficacité (Anders, 2002; Ellul, 2012; Gras, 1997).

Mettre en œuvre ces trois principes impliquerait forcément une *relocalisation* de l'essentiel des activités qui nous permettent de vivre, tout en permettant aux humains qui le souhaitent et aux idées de circuler plus librement qu'aujourd'hui. Autant que faire se peut, ces activités devraient prendre appui sur des *basses technologies*, c'est-à-dire des techniques moins puissantes que celles qui sont majoritairement utilisées actuellement, mais soutenables sur le plan écologique, accessibles au plus grand nombre et contrôlables par leurs utilisateurs (Bihouix, 2014). Sur le plan institutionnel, ces activités s'accompliraient essentiellement au sein de *communs*, plutôt que dans des entreprises privées fondées sur le salariat (Akbulut, 2017; Dardot & Laval, 2014; Mies, 2014; Ostrom, 2010).

Nous définissons le *commun* comme une forme de vie sociale reposant sur l'autoproduction, la communalisation, la démocratisation et la coopération :

1. Il s'agit d'un collectif humain s'efforçant de satisfaire par lui-même et pour lui-même une ou plusieurs aspirations (refus de la marchandise);
2. Ce collectif est responsable des moyens nécessaires aux activités mises en œuvre pour satisfaire son ou ses aspirations, sans en être pleinement propriétaire (refus de la propriété privée et de la propriété publique);
3. Les décisions concernant les activités de ce collectif sont partagées de manière rigoureusement démocratique (refus de la décision hiérarchique);

4. Les rapports privilégiés au sein de ce collectif sont des rapports de réciprocité et d'entraide (refus de la compétition et des rapports d'exploitation tels que le salariat). (Abraham, 2019).

Enfin, ce sont des *municipalités démocratiques* qui, via l'assemblée des citoyens et citoyennes du village ou du quartier, constitueraient l'instance politique fondamentale de ces sociétés post-croissance qu'il s'agit de faire advenir. Ces municipalités, pour régler les questions concernant plusieurs d'entre elles, travailleraient de concert au sein d'assemblées fédérales, en prenant appui sur des délégués révocables, conformément aux principes du municipalisme libertaire formulés par Murray Bookchin (Bookchin, 2003; Durand-Folco, 2017).

Voilà pour les grandes lignes du projet décroissanciste. Comment le lancer? Dans le prolongement de ce que les marxistes ont appelé le « socialisme utopique », les objecteurs de croissance ne visent pas à prendre le pouvoir politique dans nos sociétés pour les transformer « par le haut ». Ils parient d'abord sur la combinaison de trois types d'action :

1. Commencer à bâtir des alternatives concrètes respectant les principes du commun;
2. Militer contre la poursuite de la croissance économique;
3. Imaginer les bases d'un mode post-croissance à la fois réalisable et désirable. (Lepesant, 2013)

Autrement dit, c'est une stratégie de type « interstitiel » qui est privilégiée, pour reprendre les termes d'Erik Olin Wright : plutôt que de tenter d'affronter l'ordre en place (« rupture ») ou de passer des compromis avec celui-ci (« symbiose »), il s'agit d'essayer de faire proliférer dans ses marges d'autres manières de vivre ensemble, pour « non seulement changer la vie des gens, mais constituer potentiellement un élément fondamental permettant d'étendre une visée transformatrice à l'ensemble de la société » (Wright, 2017, p. 488). Toutefois, il reste entendu que, pour aboutir à la transformation sociale voulue, cette démarche devra très probablement être combinée, selon les circonstances, avec des stratégies « symbiotiques » et des stratégies « de rupture » (Baschet, 2018; Wright, 2017).

Pas question donc d'attendre le « Grand Soir » de la révolution pour commencer à bâtir des sociétés post-croissance. Pas question non plus de tout réinventer. À bien des égards, on peut considérer que les communs constituent, à l'échelle de l'histoire de l'humanité, la forme de vie sociale la plus pratiquée par les membres de notre espèce. En outre, il existe d'ores et déjà de nombreuses initiatives concrètes qui, sans se réclamer explicitement d'une stratégie de « décroissance soutenable », incarnent fort bien ce communalisme préconisé généralement par les objecteurs de croissance. C'est le cas par exemple de la Communauté Milton Parc à Montréal, ainsi que nous voudrions le mettre en évidence à présent.

MILTON PARC, UN PROJET DÉCROISSANCISTE?

Étonnamment, la Communauté Milton Parc (CMP) reste assez mal connue, non seulement au Québec, mais même à Montréal, où elle se situe. Pour quiconque s'intéresse à des manières de vivre débarrassées du règne de la marchandise, il s'agit pourtant d'une institution particulièrement remarquable, tant par son histoire que par ses principes de fonctionnement et son ampleur. Sous

plusieurs aspects, ce syndicat de propriété regroupant des coopératives d'habitation et des organismes communautaires dans un quartier central de la métropole québécoise constitue une forme de commun plutôt réussie en matière de logement[4].

Un succès improbable

Rappelons d'abord les faits. Au cours de la deuxième moitié du XX[e] siècle, le quartier Milton Parc, situé entre les rues Hutchison et Sainte-Famille sur l'axe est-ouest, et entre l'avenue des Pins et la rue Milton sur l'axe nord-sud, est peu à peu délaissé par les familles bourgeoises qui y résidaient jusque-là. À partir du milieu des années 1960, un groupe de promoteurs immobiliers amis rachète discrètement les vieilles bâtisses de cette zone résidentielle jouxtant l'Université McGill. En 1968, pour un total de 18 millions de dollars, ce groupe informel détient pratiquement tous les immeubles du quartier et devient officiellement Concordia Estates Ltd. Son intention est de raser ces maisons patrimoniales et de construire à leur place quinze grandes tours de bureaux et d'espaces commerciaux. Le maire de l'époque, Jean Drapeau, soutient ce vaste projet de béton, qui correspond à sa vision de la modernisation de Montréal.

Menacés d'expulsion, les résidents s'organisent pour tenter de préserver leur lieu de vie, notamment avec l'aide de travailleurs sociaux qui ont mis au jour le stratagème des promoteurs. C'est dans cette perspective qu'est créé tout d'abord le Comité des citoyen(ne)s de Milton Parc. Dorénavant, la lutte contre le projet immobilier de Concordia Estates Ltd va rassembler de plus en plus d'habitants du quartier autour de deux objectifs : préserver le patrimoine immobilier et maintenir des loyers abordables. Le mouvement citoyen impulse en outre la mise en place de coopératives d'achats, d'activités communautaires, de services de soins pour les habitants, ainsi que la création d'un partenariat avec les étudiants en architecture de l'Université McGill pour proposer un nouveau projet d'aménagement urbain plus convivial. Malgré cela, les démolitions débutent, et avec elles les premières expulsions …

Mais en 1973, premier coup de chance : le choc pétrolier entraîne une forte inflation qui diminue la rentabilité du projet. Les travaux sont interrompus. La lutte citoyenne semble en outre avoir découragé l'un des bailleurs de fonds, la Fondation Ford. Deuxième circonstance fortuite : en 1976, l'arrivée au pouvoir du Parti québécois, vue d'un mauvais œil par les financiers, convainc les promoteurs de revendre leur domaine. C'est la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL)[5], sur la base d'une étude effectuée par Héritage Montréal[6], qui rachète les bâtiments en vue de créer une coopérative d'habitation. La Société d'amélioration Milton Parc (SAMP) est alors créée pour superviser les travaux de rénovation financés par la SCHL. Cependant, ces travaux, s'ils permettent de conserver le patrimoine intact, ne garantissent pas des loyers abordables : ces derniers restent alignés sur le marché.

Le mouvement citoyen, de mieux en mieux organisé, décide donc de poursuivre sa lutte afin d'obtenir un gel des loyers. La SCHL, pressée par le gouvernement fédéral, lui donne rapidement gain de cause. L'objectif semble être d'atténuer les tensions sociales au Québec, alors exacerbées par la tenue du référendum sur l'indépendance de 1980. Les loyers sont gelés avec la garantie que les résidents ne seront pas expulsés en cas d'augmentation, même modeste. L'idée est que les habitants se constituent en coopératives d'habitation, pour ensuite racheter à la SCHL leurs loge-

ments. Au total, quinze coopératives sont ainsi créées à partir du début des années 1980, de même que six organismes sans but lucratif (OSBL), destinés à prendre en charge des projets immobiliers particuliers à finalité sociale (par exemple, maison de chambres pour personnes seules).

Le processus de rachat à la SCHL s'étend de 1979 à 1987. 600 logements répartis en 135 immeubles sont concernés. Le coût total de la réappropriation de Milton Parc par sa communauté s'élève à 30,7 M$. La SCHL, la Ville de Montréal et le Gouvernement du Québec participent à hauteur de 6 M$ en subventions de capital. Le reste est financé à l'aide d'un prêt hypothécaire contracté sur 35 ans par les organismes membres de la toute nouvelle Communauté Milton Parc (CMP), un syndicat de propriété dont l'originalité est d'être constitué uniquement de personnes morales, en l'occurrence les coops et les OSBL créés par les habitants du quartier.

La SCHL garantit et subventionne ces prêts de façon à maintenir le taux d'intérêt à 2%, sous réserve de certaines conditions, telles que le maintien des immeubles en bon état et le respect des normes en vigueur en matière de santé et sécurité. Pour ce faire, les propriétaires sont tenus d'alimenter annuellement un fond de remplacement. De plus, un minimum de 15% des logements doivent être attribués à des bénéficiaires de l'Aide au contrôle des revenus (AACR)[7], en échange d'une subvention sociale versée par la SCHL qui permet aux personnes éligibles de payer un loyer dont le montant n'excède pas 25% de leurs revenus mensuels. Enfin, la CMP doit rendre des comptes à la SCHL sur son fonctionnement interne.

Aujourd'hui, plus de cinquante ans après le début de cette aventure, la Communauté Milton Parc loge plus de 1 500 personnes dans 616 logements. Elle regroupe 146 immeubles résidentiels et deux immeubles commerciaux. Les copropriétaires actuels sont rassemblés dans seize coopératives d'habitation, six sociétés d'habitation, deux organismes à vocation communautaire et deux autres organismes à vocation commerciale.

LA DÉCROISSANCE EN ACTES

En s'engageant contre le projet de construction de hautes tours afin de préserver son quartier et son patrimoine, le Comité des citoyen(ne)s de Milton Parc a contesté le paradigme productiviste dominant, destructeur pour l'environnement, et la marchandisation de nos conditions d'existence. Il s'est inscrit ainsi, sans le savoir et avant l'heure, dans la perspective de la décroissance.

En ce qui concerne la « démarchandisation » du patrimoine immobilier, la CMP l'a obtenue tout simplement en n'accordant des baux qu'aux occupants réels des logements, les habitants-bénéficiaires. Libres d'utiliser leurs appartements comme ils le souhaitent, ceux-ci ne peuvent cependant ni les vendre ni les louer dans le but de réaliser un profit. Il s'agit donc d'une forme de propriété restreinte, réduite pour l'essentiel à un droit d'usage (l'*usus*), alors que la propriété privée inclut également le droit de tirer profit de son bien (le *fructus*) et le droit de le vendre, de le donner ou de le détruire (l'*abusus*).

La structure juridique sur laquelle s'appuie l'organisation est tout à fait originale, puisqu'elle a fait l'objet d'un projet de loi privé adopté par l'Assemblée nationale du Québec le 12 juin 1987. Cette structure se rapproche en fait de la fiducie foncière communautaire (FFC)[8]. Il s'agit d'un instrument qui permet d'affecter un logement ou un terrain à un usage précis (protection contre la dégradation,

habitation à loyer modique, etc.), et ce, pour une durée qui peut être indéterminée. Les immeubles placés sous ce régime ne sont plus la propriété de qui que ce soit et ne peuvent donc être revendus sur le marché ou simplement détruits. L'organisme qui les gère est là pour s'en assurer. Bien que Milton Parc n'ait pas utilisé ce véhicule (il n'a été inclus dans le Code civil qu'en 1994), ses règles d'attribution des logements s'en rapprochent grandement. En ce sens, la CMP a fait œuvre pionnière!

Par ailleurs, le projet Milton Parc correspond bien à la vieille maxime socialiste que nombre de décroissants reprennent à leur compte aujourd'hui : « À chacun selon ses capacités, à chacun selon ses besoins. » Les logements sont attribués en fonction des revenus de leurs occupants. Ces derniers sont classés en trois catégories : A, B et C. Les plus modestes sont bénéficiaires de l'AACR, les plus nantis appartiennent à ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la classe moyenne. Au sein de chaque coopérative, la répartition suivante doit être respectée : « Pour chaque tranche de 5 unités, il faut qu'au moins deux (2) unités soient allouées aux personnes de Catégorie A; que pas plus de deux (2) unités soient allouées aux personnes de Catégorie B; que pas plus d'une (1) unité soit allouée aux personnes de Catégorie C[9]. »

Au bail est inscrit le prix du marché avec une note spécifiant le prix membre, qui peut parfois être inférieur de moitié. Ces loyers varient selon les organismes; ils dépendent notamment des décisions en matière de rénovation, décisions qui font l'objet d'un vote démocratique. En outre, les OBNL offrent deux maisons de chambres et deux studios destinés aux personnes itinérantes ou en situation de grande précarité. Ce mode de fonctionnement contribue à assurer un minimum de mixité sociale dans Milton Parc et à réduire l'embourgeoisement du quartier.

Ajoutons que la déclaration de copropriété du syndicat Milton Parc fait office de « constitution »; elle cimente les principes fondateurs de la communauté et garantit leur pérennité. Ainsi, un organisme membre ne peut pas décider de vendre une partie de ce qu'il possède au prix du marché. Il ne peut le faire qu'à un prix fixe : soit équivalent à « l'ensemble du coût des loyers sur une année », soit correspondant à la valeur de la moitié de l'hypothèque « restante ». Les autres membres de la CMP ont la priorité sur l'achat de ces immeubles.

Protégés, au moins en ce qui concerne leur logement, des fluctuations de prix, donc de la « tyrannie de la valeur », et organisés en coopératives, les habitants de Milton Parc jouissent en somme d'une autonomie enviable en matière d'habitation. La structure organisationnelle du projet leur permet de participer à toutes les décisions concernant non seulement leur logement mais aussi l'ensemble du quartier. Chaque organisme est représenté par un délégué élu au syndicat de copropriété de Milton Parc. Les espaces communs ne peuvent être modifiés sans un accord collectif des membres du syndicat.

Tout ceci a certainement favorisé « l'écologisation » du quartier. Sur la base d'un fort engagement communautaire, la CMP a notamment aménagé des toits verts, installé des panneaux solaires et milité pour la préservation du parc Oxygène, qui fut finalement détruit en 2014. Enfin, elle s'investit au-delà de la communauté puisqu'elle est à l'origine du Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal, dont la mission est de « développer et proposer des pratiques et des politiques urbaines pour contribuer à créer des villes écologiques, démocratiques et en santé », ce qui rejoint là encore la perspective de la décroissance.

Produire moins, partager plus, décider ensemble : tel est, on l'a dit, l'essentiel du projet décroissanciste. À l'évidence, la CMP s'inscrit pleinement dans cette perspective, puisqu'elle a contribué à la préservation d'un patrimoine immobilier existant, contre un projet de construction de grande ampleur, tout en imposant un partage plutôt équitable de plus de 600 logements dans un quartier central de Montréal et en permettant aux habitants de ces logements de reconquérir au moins une certaine autonomie vis-à-vis de la logique marchande.

En outre, la CMP présente l'essentiel des caractéristiques de ce qu'est un commun, puisqu'il s'agit d'un collectif qui a démarchandisé son habitat (autoproduction) sans en être pleinement propriétaire (communalisation), fonctionnant de manière démocratique (démocratisation) et sur la base de rapports d'entraide entre membres (coopération).

Un modèle à étendre

Tout à fait exemplaire en ce qui concerne une approche décroissanciste de l'habitat en milieu urbain, le projet Milton Parc ne peut toutefois être envisagé comme un modèle réplicable tel quel dans un autre contexte. Il convient de garder à l'esprit tout d'abord qu'il est le fruit de contingences historiques très particulières (crise pétrolière, arrivée du PQ au pouvoir), dont les héros de cette histoire ont su tirer parti avec intelligence.

Par ailleurs, la création de la CMP n'aurait pu aboutir sans les liens de solidarité qui se sont tissés au sein de ce quartier au cours des années 1960, en partie semble-t-il grâce à l'action de travailleurs sociaux et d'organisateurs communautaires remarquablement impliqués. L'émergence d'un commun n'a généralement rien de miraculeux. En bien des occurrences, l'existence préalable d'une riche vie collective et militante semble être l'une de ses conditions de possibilité, comme on peut le constater aussi par exemple dans le cas d'un autre commun montréalais important, le Bâtiment 7 à Pointe-Saint-Charles.

Il ne s'agit pas non plus, évidemment, d'un modèle parfait. Sa structure juridique complexe ralentit la prise de décision. L'autonomie des différentes coopératives crée parfois de la disparité au niveau des loyers, et donc de possibles inégalités. Et puis, les copropriétaires ne partagent évidemment pas toujours les mêmes intérêts, opinions et visions concernant le projet dans son ensemble. L'un des fondateurs de la CMP, Dimitri Roussopoulos, précise d'ailleurs : « Je ne veux pas décrire cette expérience comme étant utopique, parce qu'à l'intérieur, il y a des colères, des désaccords, des démissions, des déceptions; il y a tous les problèmes de la société en général » (Messier, 2008). Cela dit, Roussopoulos ajoute également : « Cela pourrait fonctionner encore mieux, si ce n'était pas aussi exceptionnel pour notre société » (Messier, 2008). Autrement dit, le projet souffre de sa marginalité. En outre, ses membres n'échappent au « règne de la marchandise » qu'en ce qui concerne leur logement. Pour le reste, leurs vies demeurent soumises aux contraintes de la « cage d'acier » du capitalisme.

Il faudrait donc pousser plus loin l'aventure, par exemple en s'inspirant de la Coopérative intégrale catalane (CIC) située en plein cœur de Barcelone[10]. Créé en 2010, le projet tente d'étendre le modèle coopératif à toutes les sphères de la vie quotidienne : habitat, éducation, alimentation, transport, santé, etc. Les services offerts sont autogérés par les 2 500 membres et le réseau a même créé sa propre monnaie, l'« éco ». La raison d'être de cette association de communs à l'échelle régionale : « Prouver que nous pouvons vivre sans le capitalisme » (Daniel, 2015).

Telle est bien la direction à prendre dans une perspective de décroissance. Pour qu'une initiative concrète comme celle de Milton Parc donne le meilleur d'elle-même, elle devrait être associée directement avec d'autres communs, comme il en existe déjà beaucoup à Montréal : jardins collectifs; cuisines collectives; ateliers collectifs; bibliothèques d'outils; épiceries, cafés et bars constitués en coopératives de solidarité; université populaire; cliniques de santé autogérée, etc. Et il conviendrait bien sûr que la même dynamique s'instaure dans le reste de la ville.

Tout cela suppose un travail militant, que ce soit au sein de mouvements sociaux ou de partis politiques, en faveur du développement de ces réseaux de communs, et contre la marchandisation de nos moyens d'existence, mais aussi contre leur étatisation. L'un des enjeux majeurs de cette action politique serait d'obtenir le soutien des autorités politiques en place, quitte à intégrer les instances décisionnelles existantes et à œuvrer à leur démocratisation. Quant au contenu de ce soutien, il pourrait être direct, comme lors de l'adoption de la « constitution » de Milton Parc par l'Assemblée nationale québécoise, ou indirect, en prenant la forme par exemple de la mise en place d'un revenu inconditionnel d'existence ou d'une réduction du temps de travail, deux politiques publiques permettant à leurs bénéficiaires de reconquérir du temps, donc du pouvoir d'agir.

Il resterait à rencontrer les circonstances propices à une telle communalisation de nos manières de vivre. La constitution d'un commun comme Milton Parc est généralement le fruit d'une lutte, en particulier contre « l'entreprisation du monde » (Solé, 2009), et cette lutte souvent n'aboutit qu'à la faveur d'événements plus ou moins inattendus, dont réussissent à tirer parti ceux et celles qui la mènent. De tels événements ne vont sans doute pas manquer dans les années qui viennent, tant la dynamique capitaliste s'avère chaque jour plus destructrice sur le plan écologique et plus injuste sur le plan social. Les crises à venir, bien qu'on ne veuille pas les souhaiter, seront autant de brèches dans lesquelles pourraient tenter de s'engouffrer les partisans d'une décroissance soutenable et de cette révolution communaliste amorcée par les résidents de Milton Parc il y a maintenant cinquante ans.

CONCLUSION

Il est fréquemment reproché à l'idéologie de la décroissance soutenable de ne proposer qu'une critique—qui de plus est trop radicale—de notre modèle de société. En réalité, les objecteurs de croissance mettent de l'avant un programme à la fois simple et cohérent : pour arrêter le désastre écologique en cours et le creusement des inégalités entre les humains, il faut avant tout produire moins que nous ne le faisons actuellement, partager davantage nos moyens d'existence, et décider de tout cela ensemble, autant que faire se peut. Un tel programme ne pourra évidemment s'accomplir sans que ses promoteurs mènent des luttes diverses et variées. Toutefois, sa mise en œuvre ne requiert pas forcément de passer d'abord par le « Grand Soir ». La décroissance est déjà en marche dans la réalisation d'un projet comme celui de Milton Parc et dans les tentatives communalistes du même genre. Il reste à soutenir la floraison de ces initiatives nombreuses, à la fois en y participant, en s'engageant en leur faveur dans le débat politique et en approfondissant la critique des « sociétés de croissance ». Telle est pour l'essentiel la stratégie privilégiée par les objecteurs de croissance, et que l'aventure de Milton Parc illustre assez justement dans l'ensemble. L'avenir dira si cette stratégie permettra ou non de faire émerger des sociétés « post-croissance ».

NOTES

1. À l'origine, la décroissance est avant tout un refus de la course à la croissance économique. Elle ne désigne aucun modèle de société clé en main, ni aucun programme politique unifié. Il s'agit de laisser le champ libre à la conception d'une pluralité de sociétés post-croissance. C'est ce qu'ont voulu souligner les partisans de cette idée en choisissant de s'auto-désigner par l'expression « objecteurs de croissance ».
2. La présentation de la décroissance qui suit s'appuie sur la synthèse publiée par l'un d'entre nous en 2019 (Abraham, 2019). Cette synthèse a été élaborée dans le cadre d'un séminaire de deuxième cycle offert à HEC Montréal depuis l'automne 2013 sous le titre « La décroissance soutenable : théorie et pratiques ». Elle est elle-même le fruit d'un travail de réflexion amorcé en 2007 au sein du Mouvement québécois pour une décroissance conviviale (MQDC), sous l'influence notable du philosophe Louis Marion (Marion, 2015). Par rapport aux différentes approches de la décroissance qui ont émergé ces dernières années en Occident, et en particulier par rapport à celle qui s'est imposée à Barcelone, principal foyer de la recherche universitaire sur la décroissance actuellement, la perspective « montréalaise » dénonce la course à la croissance non seulement à cause de ses effets destructeurs sur le plan écologique et injustes sur le plan social, mais aussi du fait de son caractère profondément aliénant. Cette critique s'inspire entre autres d'un courant néomarxiste contemporain portant le nom de « critique de la valeur » ou « critique de la valeur-dissociation » (Robert Kurz, Anselm Jappe, Roswitha Scholz…), ainsi que d'une série de travaux développant une critique radicale des technosciences et de la civilisation industrielle (Jacques Ellul, Bernard Charbonneau, Ivan Illich, Lewis Mumford, Gunther Anders, Jorge Semprun…).
3. Plusieurs méta-analyses ont été publiées au cours des dernières années sur la question du « découplage ». Ce terme désigne la possibilité de générer une croissance économique qui ne se traduirait plus par une dégradation de la situation sur le plan écologique. Autrement dit, il s'agit de savoir si nous sommes ou pas en mesure de générer une « croissance verte ». Dans leur très grande majorité, ces méta-analyses concluent que nous n'avons jamais observé de « croissance verte » et que la probabilité que nous puissions l'observer à l'avenir est proche de zéro. Le travail le plus clair sur cette question reste celui de Parrique et ses collègues économistes (Parrique et al., 2019).
4. Pour établir cet historique et la description qui suit nous avons réalisé deux entretiens semi-directifs approfondis (90 minutes chacun) avec la direction de la CMP, l'un en 2017, l'autre en 2021. L'un d'entre nous a pu par ailleurs consulter les archives de la CMP, dans les bureaux de cet organisme, pendant une demi-journée, en plus de prendre appui sur une étude interne portant sur l'histoire de la CMP (Kowaluk & Piché-Burton, 2012). Enfin, nous avons eu de multiples conversations informelles avec des membres de la CMP au cours des dernières années, dans le cadre de différents ateliers de travail et d'événements militants.
5. La Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL) est un organisme fédéral responsable de l'habitation au Canada. Elle collabore avec les organismes communautaires, le secteur privé et tous les paliers du gouvernement afin de trouver des solutions novatrices aux problèmes en matière d'habitation.
6. Héritage Montréal est un organisme né en 1976 qui vise à protéger le patrimoine historique de Montréal. Il participa à la conception du projet Milton Parc.
7. L'AACR est « une subvention fédérale versée par la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement sous forme d'enveloppe à la coopérative qui doit répartir la somme reçue parmi ceux de ses membres qui consacrent une fraction trop importante de leur revenu au coût du loyer » [http://fechimm.coop/fr/programmes-subventions].
8. Sur les fiducies foncières communautaires, voir en particulier le chapitre 4 de Davis, 2014. La Communauté Milton Parc a en fait utilisé le cadre juridique de copropriété classique en le détournant quelque peu puisque les copropriétaires ne sont pas des membres individuels mais des coopératives.
9. La catégorie A correspond aux personnes sur l'aide sociale, la catégorie B aux personnes à revenu modeste et la catégorie C aux personnes ayant un revenu inférieur au revenu moyen défini par Statistique Canada (Syndicat de la copropriété Communauté Milton Parc, 2015).
10. Sur la CIC, voir Dafermos, 2017.

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In Search of the "Benefits" in Certified B Corporations

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ABSTRACT
This article focuses on certified B Corporations in Atlantic Canada and attempts to understand the benefits in being certified. Telephone interviews and a questionnaire were used to solicit recipients' feedback on the delivery of their brand promises and overall satisfaction of the benefits to being certified. The study finds that the main motivation behind being certified is validation in the market that the business is adhering to certain social and environmental standards. Interviewees view certification as a strategy to demonstrate that their corporate social responsibility activities are being performed as promised. This article shows how organizations that have opted in to holding the certification as a unique differentiator distinguish themselves from other companies in the marketplace.

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article porte sur les entreprises du Canada atlantique ayant obtenu la certification « B Corp ». Il cherche à comprendre les avantages de celle-ci. Des entrevues téléphoniques et un questionnaire ont été utilisés pour solliciter les commentaires de représentants d'organismes certifiés sur la réalisation des promesses de la certification « B Corp » et leur satisfaction globale relative à celle-ci. L'étude montre que la principale motivation pour obtenir la certification est de se faire reconnaître sur le marché comme une entreprise qui adhère à certaines normes sociales et environnementales. Les personnes interrogées considèrent la certification comme une stratégie visant à démontrer que leurs entreprises réalisent leurs activités de responsabilité sociale comme promis. Cet article montre comment les organisations qui ont choisi de détenir la certification comme un facteur de différenciation unique se distinguent des autres entreprises sur le marché.

Keywords / Mots clés : B Corporation, B Lab, environmental standards, social standards, corporate social responsibility / B Corporation, B Lab, normes environnementales, normes sociales, responsabilité sociale de l'entreprise

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INTRODUCTION

B Corporations have recently emerged in the global market economy as a way for businesses to proclaim their commitment to social and environmental goals. B Corporations are companies that are certified through B Lab, a non-profit organization. The "B" in B Corp stands for "beneficial" (BDC, 2020); they are for-profit entities that are certified based on meeting certain social and environmental performance standards.

The purpose of this study is to understand certified B Corporations more deeply, specifically if companies are finding value in being certified. We will look at B Lab's brand promise and the benefits it markets for certification, which have not been well studied in the literature. This article concludes with avenues for future research in this new and emerging field of study.

Defining B Corporations

A certified B Corporation, or a B Corp, is a for-profit company that is committed to social and environmental objectives. According to the B Lab website, B Corporations are purpose-driven and defined as, "businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy" (B Lab, 2019). B Corps are also defined as "a community of leaders, driving a global movement of people using business as a force for good" (Marquis, 2020b). There are currently more than 2,500 B Corps across the world representing over 150 industries (B Lab, 2019). In 2019, B Lab reported it had certified 264 B Corps in Canada.

The ascent of B Corporations started on July 5, 2006, a date the B Lab Community calls "Interdependence Day" (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017), when Jay Coen Gilbert, Bart Houlahan, and Andrew Kassoy founded B Lab. B Lab is a nonprofit organization that is funded through several foundations, a board of directors, wealthy individuals, private sector companies, as well as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Magdaluyo, 2012). As B Lab notes, the vision is to "use business as a force for good" in a way that all companies "compete not just to be the best in the world, but to be the best for the world" (Stubbs, 2016, p. 334).

Today, businesses are making efforts to be more socially responsible or practice some form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and being a certified B Corp is potentially one way to pursue this endeavor. The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), a certified B Corp defines CSR as "a company's commitment to managing the social, environmental and economic effect of its operations responsibly and in line with public expectations" (Business Development Corporation, 2019). As large firms have increased CSR, smaller firms that have always committed to social and environmental issues are sometimes using B Corp certification to stand out "in the midst of a greenwash revolution" to help their customers distinguish who is truly socially and environmentally responsible (Kim, et al., 2017). Traditional green and ethical businesses are uniting to claim their authentic difference and better communicate their commitment to environmental and social values (Kim et al., 2017).

The process

B Corps must complete a rigorous certification process through B Lab. The certification assessment process through B Lab is known as B Impact. B Impact is a free tool that assesses companies who

are seeking B Corp certification by looking at their community impact, customer relations, employee relations, environmental impact, and governance. The B Impact Assessment (BIA) process is available publicly and the recurring assessment process helps keep companies focused while highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses and helping them to understand and manage their company better (Marquis, 2020a). The holistic assessment of governance, workers, community, environment, and consumers requires a minimum score of 80 points out of 200 and recertification is required every three years. It measures the ability to generate returns returns but also how value is created for its customers, employees, community, and the environment. The assessment used is dependent on the industry, size, and geography. Questions are weighted according to targeting specific outcomes. As of 2020, there were about 200 questions, and the BIA is on its sixth iteration. The online platform allows users to compare their impact among peers and to learn from other solutions for improving their impact. Reaching likeminded companies helps to share ideas and solve challenges with collective resolutions as a community and focus on promoting larger change in the world (Marquis, 2020a). All certified B corporations are eligible for a random on-site audit every two years. One in five corporations are selected for an audit as a way for B Lab to verify the accuracy of the BIA. Companies are informed about the review months in advance and provided with guidelines for this process (Magdaluyo, 2012).

As noted by B Lab, B Impact focuses on the way community impact, customer relations, employee relations, environmental impact, and governance are handled by an organization. Regarding community, certified B Corps must engage with their community at a local level. This includes the way in which a company's policies are community-driven, for instance, if the company participates in charitable giving, or if their product or service aims to resolve a social or environmental issue (B Lab, 2019). Customer assessment looks at if a B Corp certified organization sells a product or service that promotes public benefit and/or serves to benefit underrepresented populations (B Lab, 2019). Also measured in the customer assessment is whether a company's product is solving an environmental or social issue. B Impact assessment of worker relations looks at the way that a company upholds a relationship with its workforce. This includes the way that a company treats its employees in terms of compensation, training opportunities, benefits, as well as the overall occupational environment of the firm (B Lab, 2019). As one of its main values, B Lab measures environmental impact focusing on overall environmental performance in every aspect of business operations, including the product supply chain, whether a company's product or service has the intent to solve an environmental issue or educates on environmental issues in some way (B Lab, 2019). Governance, as noted by B Lab, is an important element and B Impact assesses whether or not there is employee access to the organization mission, financial information, and to the board itself as well as whether a company allows customers to provide feedback and information on the overall diversity of the governing board or structure (B Lab, 2019).

In 2015, most certified B corporations were small and medium sized businesses, and it was that year that B Lab began to develop ways to certify companies with more than $5 billion in annual revenue with more rigorous standards to match the larger companies' environmental and social impacts. In 2019, new certification requirements included an additional pre-screening process to demonstrate that the company has conducted a materiality assessment (used to identify the most

material issues within the firm's operations), to ensure that its management strategies included specific and aspirational goals for identified issues, to ensure that it had issued public statements regarding its approach to government affairs and tax philosophy, to articulate a human rights policy, and to ensure the board of directors is monitoring all of these requirements while also publicly publishing annual impact reports. B Lab carefully reviews the company's structure and management to determine the number of BIAs that must be completed for each of their subsidiaries and operations so that the BIA score reflects all the business units. At least 95 percent of overall operations must pass the BIA for a company to become certified (Marquis, 2020b). Danone was certified in 2018 and since that time, more multinational companies have been interested in engaging in the certification process, which lead to the B Movement Builders program to assist such companies.

The Declaration of Interdependence must be signed to join, immediately beginning with the BIA process. A minimum of three goals related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be set. Danone has already done this by describing its focus of SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and tying these to its corporate mission to "bring health through food to as many people as possible" (Danone, 2021). To create a wider impact, B Movement Builders must work with their peers and attend corporate leadership sessions and roundtables. Once a company is B Corp certified, the business is required to pay a certification fee as outlined in the B Corp agreement. According to the B Lab website, annual fees are determined based on a company's annual sales and range from $2,000 up to $50,000. Companies over $1B in annual sales are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Brand promise and benefits

Stakeholders cognitively categorize businesses according to their similarities and differences. Alam, et al. (2018) demonstrate how categorization can take place in the social economy. In the market economy, a distinction such as B Corp certification helps a business assert its place in the market economy but also reveals its values and objectives. Displaying the universal B logo also shows the customer that the business is socially conscience.

A study conducted in 2017 found that alignmment with an organization's pre-existing mission, purpose, value, or identity was the most common reason for pursuing the certification. Interviewees also stated that B Corp membership provided external validation and legitimation of its sustainability commitments, and the assessment process yielded innovations and practice improvements. Belonging to the B Corp community enables companies to learn from and interact with other B Corporations while validating their identities (Gehman & Grimes, 2017). Another study conducted by Kim et al. (2017) found that businesses pursued B Corp certification for two main reasons: to differentiate themselves from the increasing volume of companies boasting broad corporate social responsibility efforts and to "join the movement of creating a new economy with a new set of rules" and "redefine the way people perceive success in the business world" (Kim et al., 2017). Interestingly, Park found no subjects report an increase in sales as the result of certification (2018). While many of these studies make notable contributions, none have investigated whether B Corps are able to deliver on their promise, from the perspective of the individual business, which poses a gap in the literature.

This study attempts to understand if B Lab can deliver on the following areas as outlined on the B Lab website:

1. *To Lead a Movement:* B Corps set the gold standard for good business and inspire a race to the top, creating performance standards and legal structures being used by thousands of other businesses around the world.
2. *To Build Relationships:* When your company certifies as a B Corporation, you join a community of business leaders who share your belief that business can solve social and environmental problems. Connect online, meet in person at events, or build client and vendor relationships within a powerful community of practice.
3. *To Attract Talent:* More and more of the workforce makes decisions about where to work based on the positive impact their work creates and how well an employer treats their team. There's no better way to attract and engage mission-aligned talent than to verify your values with B Corp Certification.
4. *To Improve Impact:* Maintaining B Corp Certification through the B Impact Assessment is a powerful mechanism to help your company set goals for improvement, create more positive social and environmental impact, and track performance over time.
5. *To Amplify Their Voice:* The third-party validation that comes with B Corp Certification helps your company stand out and stand by your mission. The B Corp seal on a product, website, sales materials or business card instantly communicates that a company is a verified leader when it comes to positive impact and empowers individuals to confidently vote with their dollars.
6. *To Protect Their Mission:* Make sure your company is built on a solid legal foundation for the long term. The B Corp legal framework helps you protect your mission through capital raises and leadership changes and gives you more flexibility when evaluating potential sale and liquidity options.

Our approach is to use these six categories outlined by B Lab to understand if companies in Atlantic Canada are finding any benefit in these areas.

METHODS

For this research, all certified B Corporations in Atlantic Canada were contacted. A survey questionnaire was distributed to management level staff. The survey items addressed various aspects of the business as it related to the certification including marketing, documentation, benefits, and investments. The sample size consisted of $n = 8$. The online survey (questionnaire is available upon request) consisted of 32 multiple-choice questions and respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement to the questions.

B Lab provides a search tool to identify certified B Corporations based on geography and industry type (see notes). Using this resource, certified B Corporations were identified for the provinces of

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. There were no certified companies in Newfoundland at the time of this research. The identified certified B Corporations were as follows:

1. Nova Scotia:
   - Made With Local, www.madewithlocal.com
   - Trufaux Films Inc., www.trufaux.ca
   - Ocean Sonics, www.oceansonics.com
   - Wired Flair Inc., www.wiredflair.com
   - Ecoadvisers, www.ecoadvisers.org
   - Common Good Solutions, www.commongoodsolutions.ca
2. New Brunswick:
   - Rise Home Improvement, Education, Marketing, https://www.buildwithrise.com/
   - NBTA Credit Union, https://www.nbtacu.nb.ca/
   - Assomption Vie, https://www.assomption.ca/fr/Home
   - OMISTA Credit Union, https://www.omista.com/Home/
   - Simplicity Designs, https://symplicity.ca/
   - Adams Green Consulting, http://adamsgreen.ca/
   - Hemmings House, https://hemmingshouse.com/
   - WICKEDIDEAS, https://wickedideas.ca/
3. Prince Edward Island:
   - Upstreet Craft Brewing, www.upstreet.ca

Telephone interviews were also conducted with senior management of eight B Corps in Atlantic Canada. The telephone interviews focused on the six categories outlined by B Lab above.

FINDINGS

When asked to elaborate on category 1 (*Lead a Movement*), while many interviewees agreed certification was the future of business and was necessary to move the business forward "for good," one respondent stated the movement was more on a local level but that there was still a lack of awareness of the B Corp movement in Atlantic Canada. While the majority of respondents felt they were part of something "bigger than their company," one respondent felt the movement was slowing down in momentum. The respondent also stated "when it first started, we were all excited and enthusiastic, so we pursued the certification. After some time, it slowed down, perhaps because we weren't really organized as a group in Atlantic Canada."

Regarding category 2, *Building Relationships*, all respondents felt they were part of a B Corp community. Two respondents mentioned the conferences and meetings allowed us to "meet likeminded entrepreneurs and share best practices." One interviewee stated that the certification allowed them to become a known brand in the B Corp community in the United States, which has led to some more work in that country, enough to make an argument that the certification has paid for itself

several times over. The respondent also mentioned they would like to see more of this, stating that there are "definitely benefits to a network of companies that want to support each other." On the contrary, another respondent expressed disappointment: "I have been disappointed with the way B Lab has not been able to grow the community faster and the way they have been unable to foster business opportunities within the community. There is much to be gained from simply having other B Corps grow together."

For the category *Attract Talent*, most respondents stated that while it has not helped to attract talent, it has attracted new customers. One respondent also mentioned "our prospective employees do not apply because of the certification directly, but it does promote our values to them." Another respondent mentioned that "employees are really not aware until they join our company" and that "there is no talk about this in the job interviews." Two respondents did state that employees "joined us because we follow CSR principles and treat our employees well" but did not feel the B Corp certification was part of the decision making to take a position at the company.

In terms of *Improve Impact*, all respondents stated that the certification did help shape the goals, mission, and vision of the company moving forward, thereby improving impact. Many stated that it did help them to track performance and progress across time, but one respondent discussed the difficulty in doing so: "The certification process was lengthy, we hired an external consultant who has taken other companies through the assessment tool." Another respondent stated there were difficulties because of the company's organizational form: "We provide a mostly intangible service so some of the questions/metrics were awkward to answer as we didn't really fit in their scales in some ways." Another respondent echoed this statement and mentioned that processes were still being adapted to Canada and some were also designed for more traditional corporate forms and companies that provide tangible services.

In category 5, *Amplify Their Voice*, many respondents stated the certification did help to amplify the company's mission which aligns with the certification. All the companies interviewed market themselves as B Corp certified in some way; five out of eight respondents market via their website and two respondents use their storefront windows. One interviewee said, "the certification is not really beneficial for marketing, we have not expanded our client base because of the certification," while another said, "we had our strategic meeting yesterday and most of us I think have it [the logo] on our email signature, but none of us have it on our business cards and I thought we did." All respondents discussed validity of "place" in the market, stating "it allows customers and our partners to see who we are and what we stand for." One respondent also stated, "we are happy that a certifier exists so we can exemplify who we are truthfully and make good on those promises." More than one respondent mentioned that they have activities they would pursue in any case (the measures needed to pass the BIA tool), but that "it was nice to get recognized for it." Another point mentioned is that customers may be attracted to a business because of the outcomes of being B Corp certified, but they might not recognize that the certification is the reason for these outcomes. Moreover, the pressure to re-certify generally comes from within the business and not from customers. In any case, the certification reinforces that the companies are making a real commitment. The certification gave one respondent a sense of purpose and helped them understand new language surrounding CSR type businesses, as well as educate their team about how to do business better.

B Lab's mission often meshed with respondents' personal values and provided a framework to ensure companies are doing what's best for the company and employees, which encouraged certification. In understanding if the certification allowed companies to *Protect Their Mission*, category 6, all respondents stated they were not sure at this point, but five respondents believed it would in the future. One respondent mentioned they did not develop their businesses to obtain B Corp certification but rather sought certification as a way of legitimizing the CSR work that they claimed they were already doing and to protect their mission. One respondent also mentioned that the B Lab guidelines "act as a guiding light, helping them decide what projects to do, where to focus, it guides their employee benefits and compensation program and, helps to steer them towards working with other companies that are aligned with their mission."

The final question was open-ended, asking respondents for their thoughts on the future of business. Many respondents discussed the legal classification, stating that it would be an excellent step for Atlantic Canada; noting that the Atlantic Canada region has a shared value set of work ethic, family, and community. Building Benefit Corporation legislation, as one respondent mentioned, "would be a way to bring the business community even closer together and could act as a growth accelerator." Another respondent mentioned that they would like to see formal government recognition for the CSR work, acknowledging how these types of businesses are different.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study outlined the different experiences of B Corp certified companies in Atlantic Canada. The purpose was to understand if companies are finding some value or benefit in being certified by mapping their responses against the six categories B Lab attempts to deliver value on. Many of the businesses interviewed in Atlantic Canada were not built with B Corp certification in mind; however, they did pursue the certification to define their business in the market economy and to be part of a growing movement.

The B Lab lists the following values associated with being a certified B Corporation: leading a movement, building relationships, attracting talent, improving impact, amplifying their voice, and protecting mission (B Lab, 2021). Respondents were partially satisfied in this regard. Indeed, companies felt that B Lab could do more to offer support and connect them with other certified companies. There are resources available on the B Lab website such as the BIA tool to compare impact with that of their peers but according to the anonymous interviews, most companies are unaware of this tool. It is recommended that a mentorship program that matches established B Corp certified companies with newly certified companies would provide much-needed guidance on how to maximize B Lab resources. If businesses felt that B Lab was going above and beyond to support and assist them, they could be more inclined to recommend the certification to others.

From the interviews conducted, the main motivation behind being certified is the validation that the business is adhering to certain social and environmental standards and is accountable to these publicly. Interviewees view certification as a strategy to verify that their CSR activities are being performed as promised/reported. The B Lab website states that "the third-party validation that comes with B Corp Certification helps your company stand out and stand by your mission. The B Corp seal on a product, website, sales materials, or business card instantly communicates that a

company is a verified leader when it comes to positive impact and empowers individuals to confidently vote with their dollars," but interestingly only five of the eight respondents consistently use the B Corp logo in their advertising materials or website. Without public awareness of the B Lab virtual brand, the strategic relevance may not be communicated as intended and the use of the B Lab logo will not offer a competitive advantage. A campaign by B Lab to increase public education and awareness of its virtual brand is also recommended to attract more companies to the certification but also consumers. As mentioned by Marquis (2021) many consumers do not know about B Corporations or B Lab.

While industry research and mission development are the responsibility of the entrepreneur, there is an opportunity for B Lab to educate entrepreneurs during the start-up phase. For instance, information about the B Lab certification process could be provided during business registration and it could also be a part of the toolbox offered by provincial governments to those starting a business. This may encourage businesses to incorporate as a certified B Corporation while in the start-up phase instead of pursuing this later, especially for founders who are committed to the triple bottom line. The triple bottom line is defined as "a business concept that posits firms should commit to measuring their social and environmental impact—in addition to their financial performance" (Miller, 2020).

FUTURE RESEARCH

As new forms of organizations arise in the next 20 years, future research could explore the potential of Benefit Corporation classification from a legal perspective to support these companies. Some respondents pointed to this. In Canada, efforts are currently underway for legislation as evidenced in the bill that was introduced in British Columbia, allowing for companies to incorporate as Benefit Companies (B Lab, 2019).

A point worth noting is that more than 100,000 companies are using the BIA to measure their impact but only around 3,000 of those are certified B Corps (Marquis, 2020a). Future research could also help discover why this conversion rate is so low and if the availability of a legal certification in areas where none is currently available would encourage conversion to formal certification. As a greater number of investors and stakeholders are redefining success with triple bottom line standards, a legal option to prove that a company is enforcing its ethical practices could be a positive step forward.

NOTE

1. Search tool available at https://bcorporation.net/directory.

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Synergizing Social Economy and Circular Economy

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ABSTRACT
Both social economy and circular economy have received much attention recently. Yet, the relationship between the two remains under explored. While social economy primarily refers to economic democratization, collective enterprise, and the quest for common good, circular economy tends to focus on environmental sustainability. This article examines the overlap between the two.

RÉSUMÉ
L'économie sociale et l'économie circulaire ont récemment fait l'objet de beaucoup d'attention. Pourtant, la relation entre les deux reste sous-explorée. Alors que l'économie sociale se réfère principalement à la démocratisation économique, à l'entreprise collective et à la quête du bien commun, l'économie circulaire tend à se concentrer sur la durabilité environnementale. Cet article examine le chevauchement entre les deux.

Keywords / Mots clés : circular economy, social economy / économie circulaire, économie sociale

INTRODUCTION
Both the social economy and the circular economy are now being mobilized to address the increasingly urgent social and environmental crisises. Section 1 of this article introduces the rationale for building a social economy. Section 2 introduces the concept of circular economy and shows that while there is a growing body of literature on circular economy, the "social" aspect of circular economy needs more investigation. Section 3 explores the intersections and synergies between social economy and circular economy.

SOCIAL ECONOMY

Social economy is a socio-economic movement that puts people and planet before profits. It relies on collective democratically organized enterprises such as cooperatives, non-profit organizations, and mutual societies that participate in market activities with a social rather than profit-driven function (Moreau et al., 2017). The social economy model rests upon the principles of equity, inclusion, and diversity, sustainability, economic democracy, and new models of local and shared prosperity. The overall objective of the social economy enterprise is to produce for the common good with a focus on the needs of citizens and groups in localized places and regions.

The social economy tradition is notably embodied by cooperatives, a participatory model of the workplace. In this tradition, participatory governance is a constitutive feature of social enterprise More specifically in Quebec, the social economy incorporates in its bylaws and operating procedures a process of democratic decision-making that includes users and workers (Bouchard, 2011); despite pressures towards less participatory approaches such as social business and entrepreneurial associations which may lead to "businessification" (Michaud & Audebrand, 2021).

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Circular economy is based on the idea that rethinking and rebuilding all aspects of the value chain from production to consumption can foster a decoupling of economic activity from its environmental impacts. There is a growing body of research on circular economy from both the natural and the social sciences. A private think tank has influentially fostered the interest of business enterprises in circular economy (Ellen McArthur Foundation, 2014), and national governments and regions (such as the European Union) have developed circular economy action plans. In Quebec, a threeyear long cross-sectoral, co-construction process facilitated by the Institut de l'Environnement, Développement Durable et Économie Circulaire (IEDDEC) has coined the definition of circular economy along four strategic areas (IEDDEC 2018; Figure 1):

1. Rethinking production, i.e., what kind of products are or are not needed? How can products and services be designed to reduce resource use and prevent pollution?
2. Improving the frequency of product use via sharing and collaborative economy.
3. Improving the durability of product life via maintenance and repair and focusing on services rather than on products.
4. Recycling and restoring "waste" from production and consumption as input in the production process or other value chains that may make use of the waste.

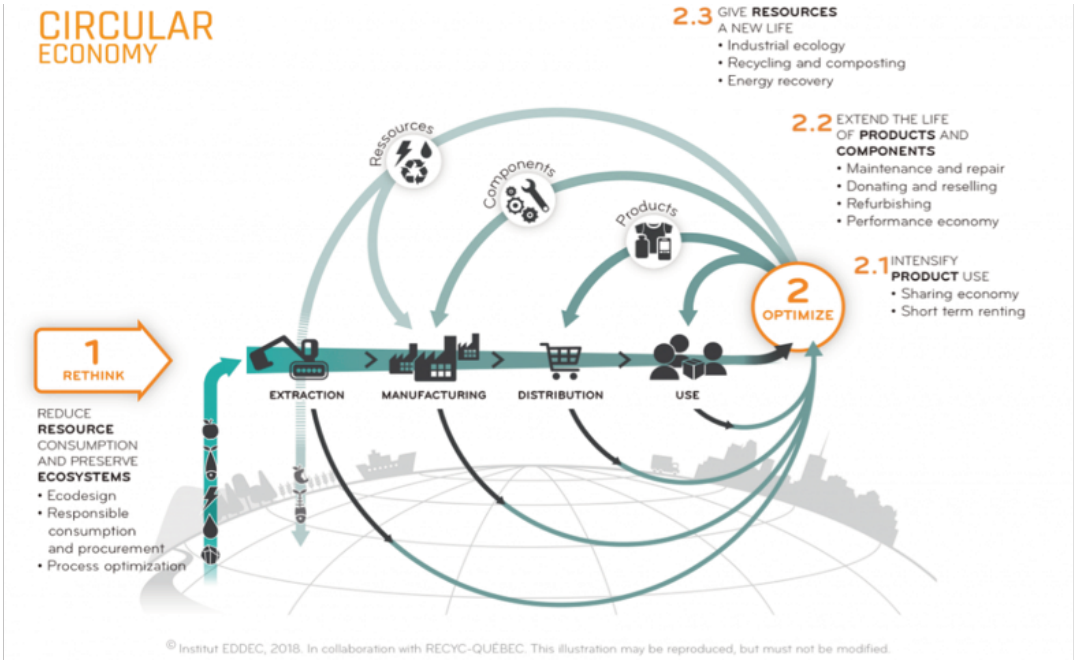
While there is no canonical definition of circular economy, according to a comprehensive definition recommended in a survey of over 114 circular economy definitions (Kirchherr, Reike, & Hekkert, 2017), circular economy is widely defined as:

> Reducing the consumption of raw materials, designing products in such a manner that they can easily be taken apart and reused (eco-design), prolonging the lifespan of products through maintenance and repair, and the use of recyclables in products and recovering raw materials from waste flows. A circular economy aims for the creation of economic value (the economic value of materials or products increases), the creation of social value

(minimization of social value destruction throughout the entire system, such as the prevention of unhealthy working conditions in the extraction of raw materials and reuse) as well as value creation in terms of the environment (resilience of natural resources). (van Buren, Demmers, van der Heijden, & Witlox, 2016)

Thus, while the production-oriented focus of circular economy strategies may suggest a focus on efficiency and engineering, the definition emphasizes a social dimension.

Figure 1. Circular economy strategies



Source: IEDDEC, 20218

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY: INTERSECTIONS

On a conceptual level, both social and circular economies have a transformative vision for society: social economy seeks to democratize the economy and therefore move beyond capitalist shareholder-driven enterprises, whereas circular economy seeks to decouple a growth-addicted economy from unsustainable resource demands. These transformative ideas are expressed in many variants and nuances, ranging from reformism via post-growth to degrowth. But they all acknowledge the need to shift from the current unstainable status quo to achieve societal transformation.

These two ideals also have significant differences. On the one hand, circular economy emerged from a critique of linear models of economy and growth, as notably developed by ecological economists (Raufflet, Boiteux, Lonca, Chaves, Genois-Lefrançois, & Beaudoin, 2019), as well as from production and consumption-centered solutions such as eco-design, industrial ecology, and the functional economy. On the other hand, the intellectual roots of social economy can be traced back, via the cooperative, to Robert Owen and early ideas of a democratic socialist way of organizing the economy (Boddice, 2009). In practical terms, these differences unfold via national and regional uptake, such as the marginalization of the transformative force of cooperatives in the welfare states

of the 20th century (Quilley, 2012), or the more recent adoption of circular economy in circular economy strategies.

Overall, four main discussion topics emerge from synergizing social economy and the circular economy: 1) a broader conception of economy, 2) the social dimension of circular economy, 3) alternative economics as a political project, and 4) localizing economy within a global perspective. First, both social economy and circular economy offer an alternative economic model focused on design, manufacturing, and collaboration of citizens. These models work as an invitation to move beyond top-down, business-as-usual economics and exchange markets of capitalist economies. The communal and self-provision aspects of circular economy can exist alongside, in cooperation with, and frequently also in tension with markets (Ziegler, 2020). This thinking shifts the focus from a circular economy—centered on production and consumption—to a circular society, which would include the care, wellbeing, and justice of the people (Calisto Friant, Vermeulen, & Salomone, 2020).

Second, synergizing social and circular economy challenges the image of circular economy as an efficiency-oriented production–function model. A social circular economy considers who controls the means of production if we rethink products in terms of reusability and extended life.

Third, both circular and social economies contribute to a sustainable, democratic, and just society. These initiatives incite public and political support for their emphasis on eco-wise economies and values-driven vision for society.\Finally, in practice, within social economy and circular economies, there also exists a common interest in local production and participation, including communities and regions that may not be attractive for private business. Calisto Friant et al. (2020) argue that there is a transformational circular economy discourse that draws on local cooperatives and collaborative economic structures for a more equal distribution of power, wealth, knowledge, and technology in society. Social economy points to arguments for social structures that validate and enable workers' concern for the environment and the need to adapt value chains towards a circular economy.

CONCLUSION

This article has outlined several areas of interest between social economy and circular economy. In general, social economy supports circular economy in important ways. The four main points revealed in this general introduction and synergizing Notably, social economy challenges us to think about circular economy in a broader sense: not only in terms of who has a say but also who can participate and who is included. Doing so, synergizing the social economy with the circular economy provides the opportunity to conceive and implement an inclusive and participatory circular economy, as well as of including environmental dimensions in both the theory and practice of social economy.

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The Search for Opportunity: Co-Operatives and Circular Economy

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ABSTRACT
This article discusses the search for opportunities related to the intersection between co-operatives and the circular economy.

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article traite de la recherche d'occasions liées au croisement des coopératives et de l'économie circulaire.

Keywords / Mots clés : co-operatives, circular economy / coopératives, économie circulaire

THE BURNING PLATFORM
We are facing significant social and environmental challenges, with the COVID-19 pandemic as one example. In response to COVID-19, the United Nations states:

> Once the health crisis is over, we cannot have business-as-usual practices that increase emissions and other environmental externalities like pressure on wildlife and biodiversity. A mutually beneficial symbiotic relation between humans and their surrounding ecosystems is the answer to more resilient economies and societies. Securing the global environmental commons requires living within planetary boundaries and conserving and sustainably managing globally shared resources and ecosystems. (2020, p. 4)

At the onset of the industrial revolution, Earth entered the Anthropocene, the unofficial geological epoch in which humans are the primary agents of damaging change on a planetary scale (Braje & Erlandson, 2014; Chin, Simon, Anthamatten, Kelsey, Crawford, & Weaver, 2020; Fullerton, 2014). The global economy, clearance of land surfaces, overfishing and pollution of the oceans, unlimited extraction of planetary resources, and boundless greenhouse (GHG) emissions are all caused by human activities with detrimental impacts to the Earth (Braje & Erlandson, 2014; European Commission [EC], 2015; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021; Victor, 2014). Financialization and globalization of our economy have led to insatiable consumption supported by

a "cradle-to-grave" linear economy, with enormous environmental impacts, social injustice, and economic inequity (Korhonen, Honkasalo, & Seppälä, 2017; Novkovic, 2018; Raworth, 2017; Rees, 2014). According to the United Nations, over 1.3 billion people live in multi-dimensional poverty, and two-thirds of those people live in middle-income countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2019, p. 2). To significantly alter the course, humanity must re-think capitalism to reduce GHG emissions to 45% of 2010 levels by 2030, with the imperative to be net zero by 2050 (International Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2018a, p. 12). Otherwise, humanity's survival is placed in jeopardy with lack of food security and water supply, reduction in livelihoods and jobs, increased morbidity and mortality from diseases, and severe economic disparity (IPCC, 2018a).

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Research by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), a thought leader in circularity, asserts that a circular economy would progress the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) across the entire economic system by creating an economy that is regenerative by design (EMF, 2019). The circular economy focuses on product effectiveness through a cradle-to-cradle approach, which significantly reduces use of resources and diminishes waste disposal, bringing the economic and environmental sub-systems within the planetary boundaries (Arup, 2016; Korhonen et al., 2017; Novkovic, 2018; EMF, 2019; Raworth, 2017; UNEP, 2021). The three foundational principles of the circular economy are shown in Figure 1.

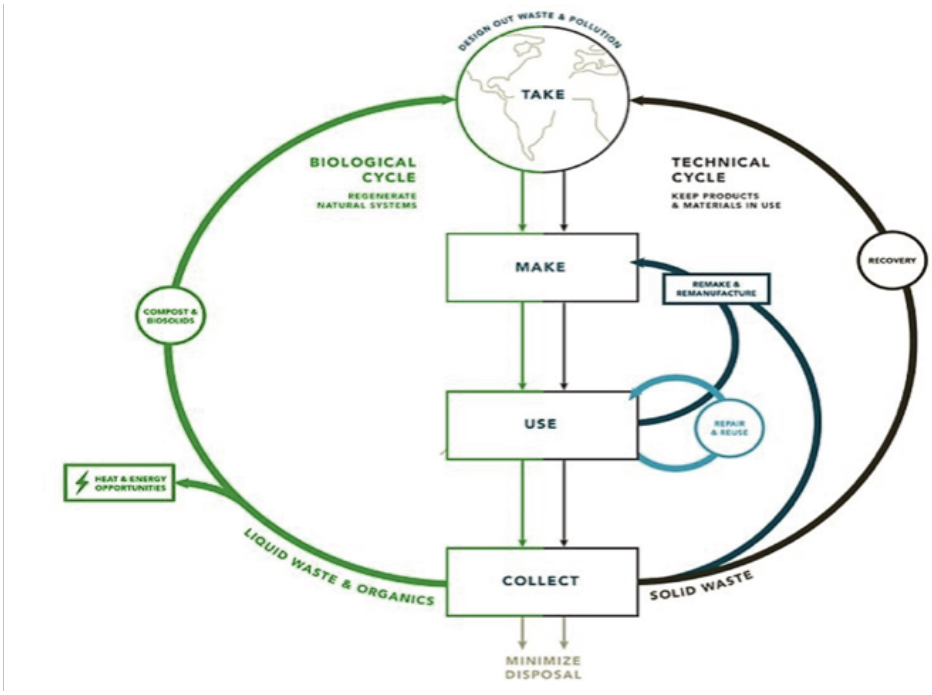
Figure 1. The Three Foundational Principles of the Circular Economy

Source: EMF, n.d.

The circular economy considers the life cycle of products and materials from designing long-lasting products with less resources, to extending the life of products while in use and returning the products to the value chain through regeneration. There is no end of life, but rather, there is value placed in reuse, remanufacturing, and refurbishment first, and raw material utilization, combustion for energy,

and landfill disposal are considered only later. The circular economy changes the economy from a linear to a cyclical system of resource use, production, and consumption, shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Circular Economy



Source: National Zero Waste Council, 2021

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's research shows that the world must adopt comprehensive sustainable development to alter its course (2019). A circular economy can fill this need because it decouples economic growth from resource consumption to deliver sustainable development with a balance between the social, economic, and environmental spheres (Adams, Osmani, Thorpe, & Thornback, 2017; Arup, 2016; EC, 2015; EMF, 2019; Ghisellini, Cialani & Ulgiati, 2016). A circular economy is predicted to significantly reduce the use of resources, decrease the amount of waste, shrink humanity's carbon footprint, and provide $2.6 trillion dollars (in Europe alone) to benefit people, communities, and businesses (Adams et al., 2017; EC, 2015; EMF, 2019).

The top barriers to advancing sustainability and a circular economy are:

1. the fragmented supply chains and a lack of designing out waste in products;
2. a lack of secondary markets to increase the value of products at end of life;
3. a scarcity of reverse logistics to return the products to the value chain;
4. and an absence of a systems approach that enables circularity (Adams et al., 2017; Arup, 2016; Hart, Adams, Giesekam, Tingley, & Pomponi, 2019; Korhonen et al., 2017; Raworth, 2017).

A circular economy alone does not guarantee a sustainable outcome because to achieve net global sustainability, economic growth and consumption must have physical limits (Korhonen et al., 2017; Raworth, 2017). There are concerns that the efficiency of a circular economy will produce more

goods, thereby increasing consumption and lowering its benefits significantly—a concept termed the "circular economy rebound" (Ghisellini et al., 2014, p. 24; Korhonen et al., 2017, p. 43). De-commodifying people, communities, resources, and ecosystems, and re-orienting the world's understanding of co-creating value are critical to delivering sustainable development (Bollier, 2015; Ghisellini et al., 2016; Novkovic, 2018; Raworth, 2017; Rees, 2014). Within a sustainable world, the economy is a sub-system with finite boundaries, working within our society and the environment, rather than the current paradigm where humanity and the planet are subservient to the economy (Bollier, 2015; Fullerton, 2014; Raworth, 2017). For these reasons, a circular economy must also deliver system-wide stability, provide new employment opportunities, build a greater sense of community and co-operation, allow democratic participation in the economy, and advance ecological economics (EMF, 2020; Ghisellini et al., 2016; Korhonen et al., 2017; Novkovic, 2018; Raworth 2017).

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND CO-OPERATIVES

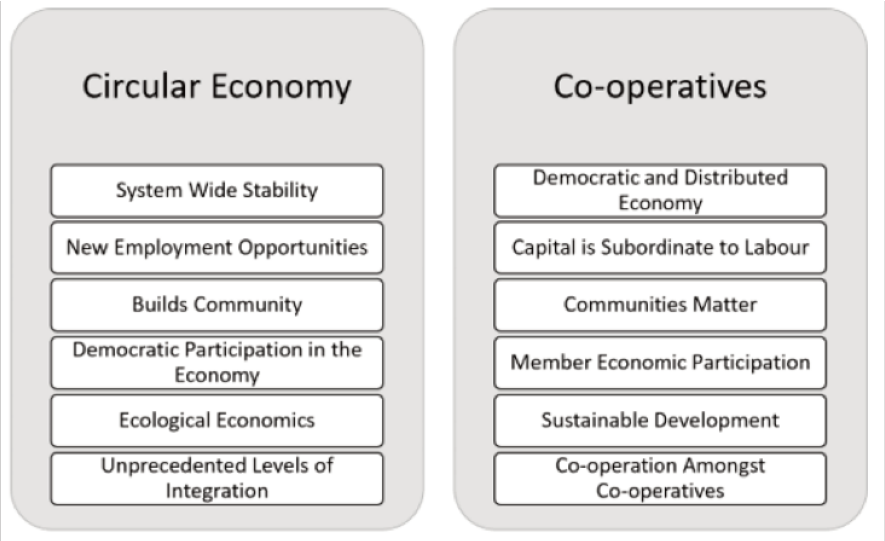
It is recognized by all stakeholders that the key enablers to overcome these barriers are collaboration, partnerships, and networking across the economy (Adams et al., 2017; EMF, 2020; EC, 2015; Korhonen et al., 2017; Novkovic, 2018). Achieving sustainability and a circular economy will require unprecedent levels of co-operation, with businesses and processes that operate singly and together as whole systems, for trade and regeneration (Ghisellini et al., 2017; Hart et al., 2019; Korhonen et al., 2017). For example, imagine designing homes where the components are built with sustainable materials that can be disassembled for re-use later to avoid landfills. A circular economy requires unprecedented levels of collaboration and exchange platforms across communities, sectors, businesses, organizations, and governments.

Co-operatives are "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs, and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-control enterprise" (International Co-operative Alliance [ICA], n.d.). Co-operatives are founded on the values of democracy, equity, equality, and solidarity, where actions and decisions are guided by co-operative principles (ICA, n.d.). A co-operative is not free to pursue financial gain at the expense of the community or the environment. The sixth co-operative principle of "co-operation amongst co-operatives" provides the means to build cross-sector interaction at a large scale (Bollier, 2015; Novkovic, 2018; Rees, 2014). This type of networking is achievable as shown by the successful co-operative networks and federations in Spain and Italy (Bollier, 2015; Menzani & Zamagni, 2010; Novkovic, 2018). This networking allows for integrated pools of capital, adaptive systems, decentralized flexibility, and innovative learning organizations which are needed in the fast-changing marketplaces where co-operatives compete (Novkovic & Holm, 2012). Inter-cooperation is the natural systems approach needed for creating a circular economy and the catalyst for generating wealth and equity, where wealth is welfare, jobs, equality, training, and education (Korhonen et al., 2018; Novkovic, 2018; Rees, 2014).

With a unique identity that focuses on democracy, economic participation, and human dignity, advancing the de-commodification of life and resources is inherent to the co-operative model (Bollier, 2015; Novkovic, 2018; Rees, 2014). Co-operatives deliver a human space where communities and values matter, because capital is subordinate to labour and its democratized ownership does not

require rapid growth or huge profit (Bollier, 2015; Fullerton, 2014; Novkovic, 2018). The UN recognized the advantages of the co-operative model to global sustainability by stating: "As global attention focuses on the challenge of sustainable development, co-operatives can and must play a key role as creative enterprises expanding into new and innovative areas" (Ryder, 2013, as cited in Dale, Duguid, Lamarca, Hough, Tyson, Food, Newell, & Herbert, 2013, p. 1). The co-operative identity is thought to be a natural fit for "providing people with know-how, inputs, finance, and markets at fair prices with low environmental impacts" (Dale et al., 2013, p. 1). Thus, the co-operative movement has an opportunity to transform the future, because there is a natural convergence between the circular economy and co-operatives, shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The Natural Convergence of the Circular Economy and Co-operatives



CONCLUSION

Our world is at a tipping point where we must alter the course of recurring environmental damage to the Earth caused by human activity. When a circular economy is delivered by a co-operative organization, net global sustainability and sustainable development can be achieved to deliver social equality, economic equity, and planetary protection. Further, a circular economy is a remarkable opportunity for growth of the co-operative movement through developing inter-cooperation, integrating pools of capital, building adaptive systems, and collaborating to co-create shared value.

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Écoscéno : création d'une entreprise sociale d'économie circulaire en culture

Anne-Catherine Lebeau
Ecoscéno

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ABSTRACT
Écoscéno was founded in 2019 in Montreal to offer concrete solutions to problems related to waste generation in the cultural industry. The mission of this non-profit social economy enterprise is to reduce the ecological footprint of the cultural field by putting circular-economy strategies into action.

RÉSUMÉ
Écoscéno a été fondée en 2019 à Montréal afin d'offrir des solutions concrètes à la problématique de déchets dans le secteur des arts. Cette entreprise d'économie sociale sans but lucratif a pour mission de réduire l'empreinte écologique du domaine culturel en mettant en action des stratégies d'économie circulaire.

Keywords / Mots clés : sustainable development, circular economy, Écoscéno, cultural sector, recycling / développement durable, économie circulaire, Écoscéno, secteur culturel, recyclage

L'ENJEU : DES MILLIERS DE TONNES DE DÉCHETS LIÉS AUX DÉCORS

Chaque année à Montréal, plus de 30 000 tonnes de déchets sont générés par le secteur culturel. Des centaines de milliers de dollars sont investis dans des décors de publicités, de cinéma, de théâtre ou d'expositions pour ensuite être jetés après quelques minutes, heures ou semaines d'utilisation. Des sommes considérables sont ainsi dépensées dans l'industrie des déchets puisqu'il en coûte environ 500 $ par conteneur de 36 mètres pour envoyer les matériaux vers les sites d'enfouissement. Un tournage moyen aura recours à une dizaine de conteneurs pour vider entièrement le studio à la fin du tournage, soit l'équivalent d'un budget de 5 000 $ à 10 000 $ pour jeter l'ensemble des décors.

Photo 1. Un conteneur avec les matériaux d'un tournage

Source : Anne-Catherine Lebeau.

Le gaspillage généré par le secteur culturel reflète celui de la population canadienne en général. En 2014, « les Canadiens représentent 0,5 pour cent de la population mondiale, mais produisent environ 2 pour cent de tous les déchets générés mondialement », ce qui en fait la population produisant le plus de déchets per capita au monde, devant les Danois et les Américains (Canada's Ecofiscal Commission, 2018).

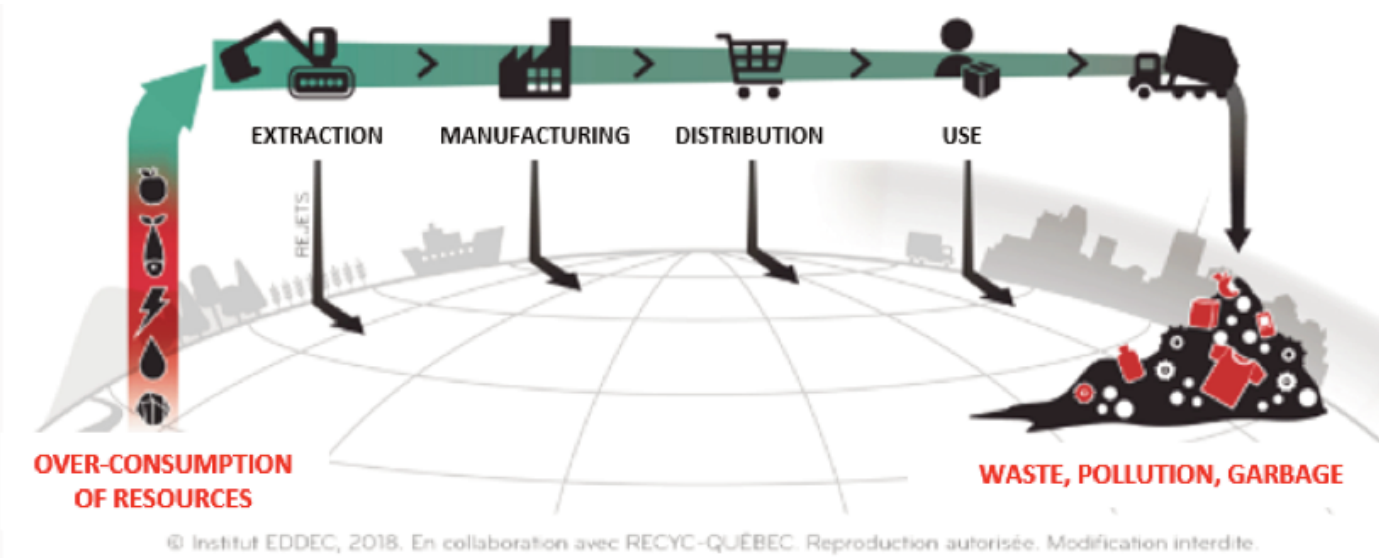
Les matériaux utilisés comme décors sont souvent difficiles à recycler puisqu'ils sont amalgamés (ils ont été collés, peints, cloués) et ignifugés (enduits d'une substance toxique qui ralentit le feu, une pratique imposée par les normes des services d'incendie). Ces matériaux prennent donc directement le chemin de l'enfouissement. Or, les sites d'enfouissement de Montréal et des environs débordent déjà (Léveillé, 2019) et les matériaux produisent des quantités importantes de gaz à effet de serre (GES) en se décomposant[1] : « Les sites d'enfouissement du pays génèrent à eux seuls pas moins de 20 pour cent des GES associés aux émissions de méthane au Canada, un gaz 25 fois plus nocif que le CO_2 pour le réchauffement climatique » (Paré, 2018).

C'est un problème de société important. Le nouveau Plan directeur de gestion des matières résiduelles 2020-2025 de l'agglomération de Montréal vise désormais un objectif zéro déchet d'ici 2030. Le Plan Montréal durable vise quant à lui une réduction de GES de 90 pour cent entre 2019 et 2050. Enfin, la Ville de Montréal a adopté un plan climat en 2020 avec pour cible une réduction de 55 pour cent de GES pour 2033 et de 100 pour cent pour 2050.

LE SECTEUR DE LA CULTURE : UNE ÉCONOMIE LINÉAIRE

Les industries et organismes culturels produisent présentement dans une logique d'économie linéaire (voir figure 1). Chaque nouvelle production culturelle s'approvisionne en matériaux neufs, fraîchement extraits des ressources planétaires, les transforme aux fins du film ou de la pièce de théâtre et en dispose dans les sites d'enfouissement une fois le projet terminé, parfois après deux jours seulement d'utilisation.

Figure 1. Modèle linéaire de production culturelle



Source : Institut EDDEC, 2018

Par exemple, pour produire une publicité de Noël se déroulant dans un chalet, le décor est construit en studio avec 70 panneaux de 4' x 8' recouverts de véritables rondins de bois, un plancher flottant et un faux foyer. Le tournage dure deux jours et le producteur doit ensuite rapidement libérer le studio pour éviter de payer des frais supplémentaires liés à la location. La pratique la plus répandue est de commander des conteneurs afin de faire disparaître les matériaux dans les sites d'enfouissement. Les matériaux enfouis se décomposent dans les sites d'enfouissement sur des décennies et émettent des gaz à effet de serre.

Photo 2. Un décor en bois ignifugé

Source : Anne-Catherine Lebeau

Les matériaux ne sont pas jetés parce qu'ils sont usés ou brisés, mais plutôt parce que leur vie utile est terminée aux fins du spectacle ou du tournage. Pourtant, leur potentiel de réemploi est souvent très élevé. Le défi est : comment transformer ces matériaux perçus comme des déchets en ressources pour d'autres productions ou d'autres usages?

ÉCOSCÉNO : UNE JEUNE ENTREPRISE POUR RÉPONDRE À CETTE PROBLÉMATIQUE

Écoscéno a été fondée en 2019 à Montréal afin d'offrir des solutions concrètes à cette problématique. Cette entreprise d'économie sociale (qui est aussi un organisme sans but lucratif ou OSBL) a pour mission de réduire l'empreinte écologique du domaine culturel en mettant en action des stratégies d'économie circulaire. L'offre de service d'Écoscéno gravite autour de deux pôles de services, le pôle Écoconception et le pôle Réemploi.

Le pôle Écoconception comprend deux services, « Formations » et « Accompagnement en écoconception ». Le volet Formations propose des cours afin que les professionnels du secteur culturel se familiarisent avec l'écoconception et comprennent comment adopter des pratiques plus écoresponsables. Le volet Accompagnement est un service-conseil qui soutient les créateurs et producteurs du tout début du processus de création jusqu'au démontage afin de placer l'impact environnemental au cœur du processus décisionnel. L'accompagnement est offert sur la base de forfaits en heures incluant le partage de meilleures pratiques et la recherche de matériaux réutilisables. Le service d'accompagnement en écoconception vise à changer la perception des producteurs, qui seront incités à se procurer des matériaux locaux de meilleure qualité plus réemployables. Cet accompagnement sème donc l'idée, dès le début de la production, qu'on doit tenir compte du fait que les matériaux sont trop précieux pour être jetés. Par exemple, pour remplacer des panneaux de lauan[2] qui parcourent 20 600 km de la Malaisie jusqu'à Montréal, l'entreprise suggère de construire avec du contreplaqué mince qui est plus facile à réutiliser. D'autre part, plutôt que d'aller couper des arbres pour en faire un décor de forêt, Écoscéno trouve des arbres qui ont déjà fait partie de décors et qui sont donc déjà secs et ignifugés. Ce service d'accompagnement vise à réduire l'empreinte environnementale des productions culturelles en conseillant un meilleur choix de matériaux et de méthodes de construction des décors. De nouvelles normes d'écoresponsabilité commencent à émerger en Angleterre avec le Theatre Green Book (https://theatregreenbook.com/). On propose de concevoir un décor comprenant 50 pour cent de matériaux issus du réemploi et de s'assurer que 65 pour cent des matériaux pourront être réutilisés à la suite du projet.

Le pôle Réemploi comprend un service de vente de matériaux usagés et un service de collecte. Le service de vente propose des matériaux usagés issus du domaine culturel via une boutique en ligne et sur place à son entrepôt-boutique de 3 000 pi^2 situé non loin du centre-ville. Le service de collecte est une alternative écoresponsable aux conteneurs pour les producteurs. L'équipe d'Écoscéno se présente au démontage ou lorsqu'il est temps de vider l'entrepôt du producteur et récupère tous les matériaux et le mobilier ayant un potentiel de réemploi.

L'entreprise collective a été fondée par quatre femmes qui, après vingt ans de carrière dans différents secteurs artistiques (cirque, théâtre, design numérique, festivals), ont trop souvent constaté le gaspillage de ressources et ont souhaité mettre en place un système permettant d'opérer une transition vers une gestion écoresponsable de la création. Leur ancrage dans le milieu culturel ainsi que leur engagement écoresponsable contribuent à leur avantage concurrentiel.

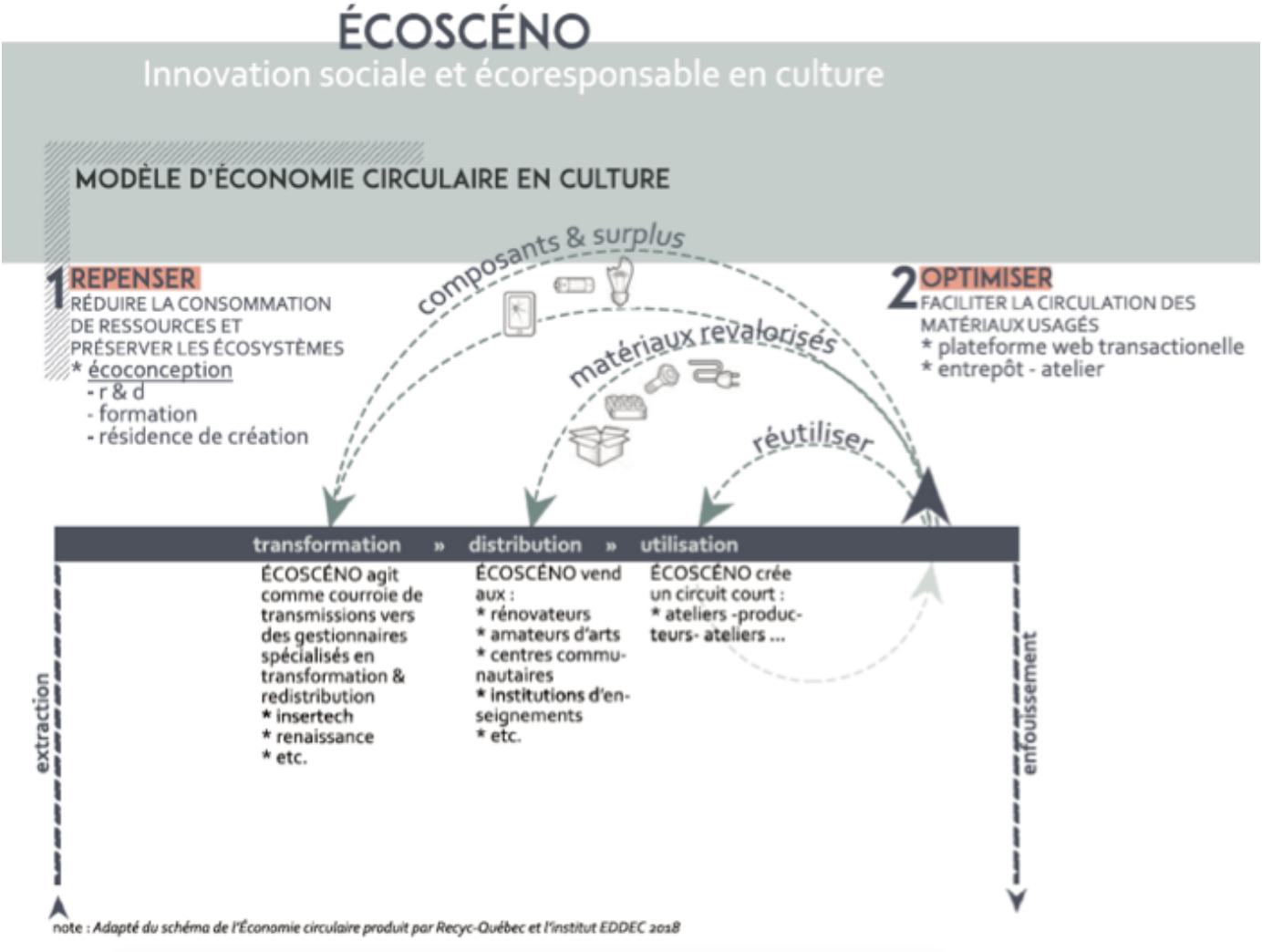
TRANSITION VERS UNE SOLUTION DURABLE : L'ÉCONOMIE CIRCULAIRE

Lors de l'élaboration de leur plan d'affaires, les entrepreneures d'Écoscéno se sont approprié le modèle de l'économie circulaire. Celui-ci propose plusieurs stratégies permettant de mettre en

place un « système de production, d'échange et de consommation visant à optimiser l'utilisation de ressources à toutes les étapes du cycle de vie d'un bien ou d'un service, dans une logique circulaire, tout en réduisant l'empreinte environnementale et en contribuant au bien-être des individus et des collectivités » (définition co-construite par l'institut EDDEC et une quinzaine d'acteurs stratégiques au Québec).

La transition vers l'économie circulaire a le potentiel de dynamiser la circulation des biens. Le milieu culturel, qui souhaite souvent se positionner à l'avant-garde des questions sociales, constitue un terreau fertile pour enclencher une transition vers l'économie circulaire. Écoscéno pose l'hypothèse que le volume de matériaux actuellement utilisés et stockés par le domaine culturel montréalais est assez important pour enclencher cette circulation et limiter dès maintenant à la fois l'extraction de matières premières et le recours à l'enfouissement. La figure 2 montre comment les stratégies d'économie circulaire s'adaptent au modèle d'affaires d'Écoscéno.

Figure 2. Modèle d'économie circulaire adapté à Écoscéno



Source : Anne-Catherine Lebeau, 2022

LE MODÈLE D'AFFAIRES D'ÉCOSCÉNO

Écoscéno attire en premier lieu les producteurs les plus préoccupés par l'environnement. En effet, ils sont suffisamment sensibilisés à réduire leur empreinte de carbone pour faire la transition vers l'offre de services écoresponsables d'Écoscéno.

Le pôle Réemploi dévie de l'enfouissement et remet en circulation plus de cent tonnes de matériaux par année depuis le début des activités d'Écoscéno. Ces résultats ont été obtenus pendant deux années de pandémie (2020 et 2021) qui ont mis plusieurs fois le secteur culturel à l'arrêt. La boutique en ligne est visitée par environ 2 000 visiteurs par mois, témoignant d'un intérêt marqué pour les matériaux culturels usagés.

Le service d'accompagnement suit la formule suivante : Écoscéno conseille les équipes de production et de création afin de tenir compte non seulement des limites budgétaires des projets, mais aussi des limites planétaires. Le choix des matériaux et des techniques d'assemblage doit favoriser le réemploi. Par exemple, il est généralement préférable de visser les matériaux plutôt que de les clouer ou de les coller pour faciliter le désassemblage et la réutilisation.

La synergie des différents services d'Écoscéno multiplie les impacts positifs et accélère la transition vers des modes de création et de production plus écoresponsables. En effet, les clients ont différentes portes d'entrée, débutant parfois en suivant une formation, parfois en recevant un accompagnement en écoconception, parfois en achetant des matériaux usagés chez Écoscéno pour construire leurs décors. On constate une tendance des clients à utiliser plus d'un service et à augmenter leur engagement au fil du temps dans l'objectif d'améliorer leurs impacts environnementaux et sociaux.

CONCURRENCE

Les principaux concurrents sont les services de conteneurs offerts par les compagnies de recyclage qui débarrassent le producteur de tout le matériel et n'offre aucune garantie de traçabilité. Pour la revente des matériaux, il existe très peu de compétiteurs et ceux-ci utilisent principalement les plateformes Kijiji et Marketplace, qui ne sont pas adaptées pour le commerce électronique interentreprises.

CADRE RÉGLEMENTAIRE ACTUEL

Dans un contexte où il n'existe aucun cadre réglementaire contraignant, la proposition de valeur d'une nouvelle entreprise souhaitant changer de façon systémique les pratiques de l'industrie doit être particulièrement forte. En effet, les clients (producteurs culturels) souhaitent conserver un accès efficace et rapide aux matériaux et veulent se débarrasser rapidement des décors lorsque ceux-ci ont perdu leur utilité.

La Producers Guild of America incite les équipes de production cinématographique à produire un rapport d'écoresponsabilité. Cela exerce une certaine pression sur le milieu du cinéma à Montréal puisqu'il doit désormais développer une offre permettant de réaliser des films ici en minimisant l'empreinte carbone produite par le tournage. Cela a incité le Bureau du cinéma et de la télévision du Québec (le BCTQ) à lancer, en collaboration avec Québecor et le Conseil québécois des événements écoresponsables, le plan d'action *On tourne vert*.

NOTES

1. Une tonne de débris enfouis = 1 tonne et demie de GES (Paradis Bolduc, 2020). Compenser l'impact environnemental d'une tonne et demie de déchets enfouis nécessite la plantation de 250 arbres qui devront capter les émanations sur une période de dix ans (EPA, 2022).
2. Un panneau de lauan est un panneau contreplaqué de bois de méranti fréquemment utilisé dans la fabrication de meubles.

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