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EDITORIAL / ÉDITORIAL

Laurie Mook, Arizona State University
Marco Alberio, Università di Bologna & Université du Québec à Rimouski

Welcome to issue *15*(1) of the *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*. In this issue, we present six research articles, two "Perspectives for the Field," and a book review.

Before outlining the content of this issue, we would like to thank outgoing editorial board members Ray Dart, Corinne Gendron, Michael Hall, Roger Lohmann, and Vic Murray for their continued support and service to the journal. It is also our pleasure to welcome new editorial board members Laura Berardi, Mario Coscarello, Barbara Giullari, and Sonia Tello-Rozas.

Our research articles start with a provocative study, "The Limits of the Community Nonprofit Sector Resilience: Evidence from Canadian Nonprofit Sector Surveys During the Pandemic." Authors **John Shields, Meghan Joy,** and **Siu Mee Chen** analyzed the tension between precarity and resilience of community nonprofits[1] during COVID-19 and found that the sector was clearly under stress as it was expected to do more than fill in gaps in the social security net. The authors argue that the community nonprofit sector is in crisis and its resilience is limited. They call for a new

Bienvenue au numéro *15*(1) de la *Revue canadienne de recherche sur les OSBL et l'économie sociale* (ReCROES). Dans ce numéro, nous présentons six articles de recherche, deux « Perspectives sur le terrain », et une critique de livre.

Avant de présenter le contenu de ce numéro, nous tenons à remercier les membres de notre comité éditorial qui viennent de nous quitter, Ray Dart, Corinne Gendron, Michael Hall, Roger Lohmann, et Vic Murray, pour leur appui indéfectible et leurs services envers la revue. D'autre part, nous sommes heureux d'accueillir les nouveaux membres : Laura Berardi, Mario Coscarello, Barbara Giullari, et Sonia Tello-Rozan.

Le premier de nos articles de recherche s'intitule « Les limites de la résilience du secteur communautaire sans but lucratif : analyse de données basée sur des sondages effectués dans le secteur sans but lucratif canadien pendant la pandémie ». Les auteurs **John Shields, Meghan Joy,** et **Siu Mee Chen** ont analysé la tension entre la précarité et la résilience d'OSBL communautaires[1] pendant la COVID-19. Ils observent que le secteur a éprouvé beaucoup de stress à cause des pressions qu'il subissait pour accomplir davantage de tâches afin de mieux répondre aux trous du filet de sécurité sociale. Les auteurs estiment que le secteur commu-

equitable partnership model between the state and the nonprofit sector, with stable funding, true partnerships, and a focus on social justice missions.

Next, in "Social Enterprise as a Pathway to Work, Wellness, and Social Inclusion for Canadians with Mental Illnesses and/or Substance Use Disorders," **Rosemary Lysaght, Kelley Packalen, Terry Krupa, Lori Ross, Agnieszka Fecica, Michael Roy,** and **Kathy Brock** present findings of their five-year study of workforces of individuals experiencing mental illness and/or substance use disorders in work integration social enterprises (WISEs). The study provides detailed insights into the nonlinear employment trajectories of these workers, and the organizational features that influence worker outcomes. It also highlights the challenges to organizational sustainability faced by these organizations. Notably, the authors emphasize "an urgent need for ongoing research to identify ways to increase the resiliency and success of WISEs themselves" (this issue, p. 30).

Following this article is "An Upside-Down Approach to Social Innovation at Institutions of Higher Education" by **Maryam Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ross VeLure Roholt, Jennifer M. Catalano,** and **Sean Geobey**. In this article, the authors present a case study of a student-initiated and -led social innovation organization, exploring how students drove structural change and innovation at a university in Pakistan. The authors analyze the data through the lenses of complex systems theory and rigidity traps, which incentivize systems to work in the ways they have always worked and make change difficult. The insights gained from the case study are informative for

nautaire sans but lucratif est en crise et sa résilience limitée. Ils recommandent un nouveau modèle de collaboration équitable entre l'État et le secteur à but non lucratif qui inclurait un financement stable, des partenariats « authentiques », et le développement d'une mission basée sur la justice sociale.

Ensuite, dans « L'entreprise sociale comme piste vers l'emploi, le bien-être et l'inclusion sociale des Canadiens atteints problèmes de santé mentale et/ou de consommation de substances psychoactives », **Rosemary Lysaght, Kelley Packalen, Terry Krupa, Lori Ross, Agnieszka Fecica, Michael Roy,** et **Kathy Brock** présentent les conclusions de leur étude menée sur cinq ans d'une main-d'œuvre éprouvant des problèmes de santé mentale et/ou de consommation de substances psychoactives dans des entreprises sociales d'insertion par le travail (ESIT). Cette étude offre un compte rendu détaillé des trajectoires d'emploi non linéaires de cette main-d'œuvre, ainsi que des caractéristiques organisationnelles influençant le rendement de celle-ci. L'étude souligne en outre les défis auxquels ces organisations font face et qui menacent leur durabilité. Les auteurs mettent notamment l'accent sur « le besoin urgent pour la recherche d'identifier des façons d'augmenter la résilience et le succès des ESIT » (ce numéro, p. 30).

Il s'ensuit l'article intitulé « Une approche inversée envers l'innovation sociale dans des institutions d'enseignement supérieur » par **Maryam Mohiuddin Ahmed, Ross VeLure Roholt, Jennifer M. Catalano,** et **Sean Geobey**. Dans cet article, les auteurs présentent une étude de cas sur une organisation créée et dirigée par des étudiants qui se caractérisant par l'innovation sociale; ils explorent comment les étudiants ont encouragé des changements et des innovations structurelles dans une université au Pakistan. Pour analyser les données, les auteurs recourent à la théorie des systèmes complexes et à l'idée du piège de la rigidité qui motiverait les systèmes à fonctionner comme ils l'ont toujours fait, ce qui rend les chan-

anyone wanting to initiate change within institutional bureaucracies.

Our next article, "New Avenues for Public Value Management and the Role of Nonprofit Policy Innovation Labs: Co-Experience and Social Media," by **Adam Wellstead, Rowen Schmidt, Angie Carter,** and **Anat Gofen**, examines the Twitter (now X) activity of over 40 U.S.-based nonprofit policy innovation labs (PILs) during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the lens of public value management, the authors found the PILs were highly active in promoting co-design and co-experience, differentiating them from think tanks and consulting organizations.

In "Social Innovation and Nonprofit Resource Provision: A Discourse Analysis," **Aaron Turpin** and **Micheal L. Shier** study the conceptualization of social innovation and the resulting impact on resource distribution. The authors undertake organizational discourse and text coverage analyses of foundations and recipients, providing a deep understanding of the relationship between how social innovation has been understood and how resources have been distributed. The novel analytical approach in this article will interest those studying the role of language and power dynamics among stakeholder groups.

In the last research article, « Étude comparative Canada / États-Unis sur la philanthropie subventionnaire fondée sur le lieu » ["Canada-U.S. Comparative Study of Place-Based Grantmaking Philanthropy"], **Jean-Marc Fontan, Nancy Pole, Joshua Newton, Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell,**

gements difficiles. Les observations résultant de cette étude de cas peuvent être utiles à toute personne voulant initier des changements au sein de bureaucraties institutionnelles.

L'article suivant, « De nouvelles avenues pour la gestion de la valeur publique et le rôle de laboratoires sans but lucratif axés sur l'innovation politique : expérience partagée et médias sociaux » écrit par **Adam Wellstead, Rowen Schmidt, Angie Carter,** et **Anat Gofen**, examine les activités sur Twitter (maintenant X) de plus de quarante laboratoires d'innovation politique (LIP) œuvrant aux États-Unis à l'apogée de la pandémie de COVID-19. En s'inspirant de la gestion de la valeur publique, les auteurs concluent que les LIP étaient très actifs dans la promotion d'une co-création et expérience partagée, ce qui aurait contribué à différencier ces LIP des groupes de réflexion et des sociétés de conseil.

Dans « Innovation sociale et prestation de ressources sans but lucratif : une analyse de discours », **Aaron Turpin** et **Micheal L. Shier** étudient la conceptualisation de l'innovation sociale et son impact sur la distribution des ressources. Les auteurs conduisent des analyses de discours organisationnels et de compréhension d'un vocabulaire axées sur les fondations et leurs donataires; ils peuvent ainsi offrir une explication approfondie du rapport entre la manière dont on comprend l'innovation sociale et la manière dont on distribue les ressources. L'approche analytique innovatrice suivie dans cet article intéressera certainement toute personne intéressée à en apprendre davantage sur le rôle du langage et des dynamiques de pouvoir pour les bailleurs de fond.

Dans le dernier des articles de recherche, « Étude comparative Canada / États-Unis sur la philanthropie subventionnaire fondée sur le lieu », **Jean-Marc Fontan, Nancy Pole, Joshua Newton, Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell,** et **Maria Martinez-Cosio** présentent une analyse comparative de dix fonda-

and **Maria Martinez-Cosio** present a comparative analysis of ten placed-based grant-making foundations. Although well-intentioned, the foundations, rather than fostering transformative systemic change, have tended to focus on isolated projects. The authors call for a shift from private actions to a common framework, advocating for collective intelligence and ecosystemic approaches to effectively address global crises and societal injustices.

In the *Perspectives for the Field* section, **Roberta Paltinieri** identifies the need for greater awareness and sustainable support for heritage communities in Italy in « L'application de la Convention de Faro en Italie : les communautés patrimoniales, le rôle du troisième secteur et la participation aux activités relatives au patrimoine culturel » ["The Application of the Faro Convention in Italy: Heritage Communities, the Role of the Third Sector, and Participation in Cultural Heritage Activities"]. As for **Ainsley Schaap** and **Katherine McGowan**, in their article "Systems Thinking in Practice in a Circular Economy" they highlight the importance of "adjacent possibles"—incremental innovations that challenge existing practices without completely overhauling systems—as a practical approach to developing circular economy initiatives.

We conclude with a review of D.W. Livingstone's book *Tipping Point for Advanced Capitalism: Class, Class Consciousness and Activism in the "Knowledge Economy,"* published by Fernwood Publishing in 2023. The authors of this review are **Manual Larrabure, Simone Billera,** and **Selim Guadagni**.

We hope you enjoy this issue and will share it through your social media channels. We also look forward to receiving your articles, re-

tions subventionnaires fondées sur les lieux. Ces fondations, bien qu'ils aient des bonnes intentions à la base, tendent à se concentrer sur des projets de manière isolée, au lieu d'appuyer des changements systémiques de vraie transformation sociale. Les auteurs suggèrent que ces fondations passent d'actions distinctes à un cadre commun; ils proposent qu'elles participent à la gestion des crises mondiales et des injustices sociales en partageant un savoir commun et une approche écosystémique.

Dans la section « Perspectives sur le terrain », **Roberta Paltinieri** identifie, dans « L'application de la Convention de Faro en Italie : les communautés patrimoniales, le rôle du troisième secteur et la participation aux activités relatives au patrimoine culturel », le besoin d'une meilleure prise de conscience et d'un appui durable envers les communautés patrimoniales en Italie. Quant à **Ainsley Schaap** et **Katherine McGowan**, celles-ci soulignent, dans « La pensée systémique mise en pratique dans une économie circulaire », l'importance du « possible adjacent » c'est-à-dire d'innovations incrémentales qui mettent en question les pratiques existantes sans complètement transformer les systèmes—comme approche pratique pour développer des initiatives dans l'économie circulaire.

Nous concluons par une critique du livre de D.W. Livingstone, Tipping Point for Advanced Capitalism: Class, Class Consciousness and Activism in the "Knowledge Economy" [Point de bascule pour le capitalisme avancé : classe, conscience de classe et militantisme dans « l'économie du savoir »], publié par Fernwood Publishing en 2023. Les auteurs de cette critique sont **Manual Larrabure, Simone Billera, et Selim Guadagni.**

En espèrent que ce numéro puisse vous plaire, nous vous invitons à le partager sur vos réseaux sociaux et à planifier de nous envoyer vos articles,

search notes, perspective pieces, and book reviews for upcoming issues.

We thank you for your support and interest in this journal!

NOTE

1. "Community nonprofit organizations … encompass nonprofit organizations that provide goods and services to individuals, households, and communities, such as those related to food security, social services, housing, employment, health, newcomer settlement, recreation, sport, and religion" (Shields, Joy, & Chen, this issue, p. 9).

notes de recherche, ou critiques de livres pour les prochains numéros.

En vous saluant, nous vous remercions chaleureusement de votre appui et de votre intérêt envers cette revue.

NOTE

1. « Les organismes communautaires sans but lucratif … incluent les organismes sans but lucratif qui offrent aux individus, aux ménages et aux communautés des biens et services tels que ceux relatifs à la sécurité alimentaire, aux services sociaux, au logement, à l'emploi, à la santé, à l'établissement de nouveaux arrivants, aux loisirs, aux sports, et à la religion » (Shields, Joy, et Chen, ce numéro, p. 9).

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The Limits of the Community Nonprofit Sector Resilience: Evidence from Canadian Nonprofit Sector Surveys During the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic has illustrated the need to examine the vital role of the community nonprofit sector. While the nonprofit sector is known for innovatively responding to societal needs—to be resilient—it is also under-resourced and precariously situated. The hollowing out of social welfare under neoliberalism shifted service responsibility onto nonprofit providers, justified through the framing that precarity drives resilience. With the magnification of need during the pandemic, the "response resilience" of the sector was put to the test. This article studies Canadian reports on surveys of the community nonprofit sector during the pandemic to assess the state of the sector and to examine tensions between precarity and resilience. Evidence illustrates a community nonprofit sector in crisis and the limits of neoliberal resilience.

RÉSUMÉ

La pandémie illustre le besoin d'examiner le rôle vital du secteur à but non lucratif communautaire. Bien que l'on sache que ce secteur répond de manière innovante aux besoins sociaux—celui-ci est résilient—il manque de ressources et se retrouve dans une situation précaire. Le néolibéralisme a miné les services sociaux, imposant la responsabilité de ceux-ci aux organismes sans but lucratif avec comme justification l'idée que la précarité accroît la résilience. Par surcroît, l'augmentation des besoins pendant la pandémie a mis la résilience du secteur à l'épreuve. Cet article étudie des rapports canadiens sur le secteur à but non lucratif communautaire pendant la pandémie afin d'évaluer l'état de celui-ci et d'examiner toute tension qui puisse sévir entre précarité et résilience. La recherche montre d'une part un secteur communautaire à but non lucratif en état de crise et d'autre part les limites de la résilience néolibérale.

Keywords / Mots clés : COVID-19 pandemic, nonprofit sector, resilience, precarity, neoliberalism / pandémie de la COVID-19, secteur à but non lucratif, résilience, précarité, néolibéralisme

Shields, J., Joy, M., & Cheng, S.M. The Limits of the Community Nonprofit Sector Resilience: Evidence from Canadian Nonprofit Sector Surveys During the Pandemic. ©2024 *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research 15*(1), 9–29. doi:10.29173/cjnser661

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic put tremendous strain on Canadian society, with much public, political, and policy focus on how hospitals and long-term care residences struggled to meet the needs of those most vulnerable and marginalized. Less attention was placed on how other nonprofits provided vital social, human, health, and other services and supports to residents throughout the waves of the pandemic. This involved the storefront closures of many community nonprofit organizations for direct service delivery and the struggle to shapeshift to online service delivery and hybrid delivery forms. Community nonprofits were suddenly propelled into a state of crisis (Buckner, 2020). This article argues that any reading of how a political community in Canada fared during the pandemic requires a spotlight on the role of the community component of the nonprofit sector. Such an analysis offers vital insights on both the state of the nonprofit sector going into the public health crisis as well as indications of its socio-political role in a "post-pandemic" period. Moreover, this state of the sector analysis presents crucial knowledge on the ways in which we have constructed a political economy that is resilient enough to offer care through a crisis.

This article uses existing reports and surveys of the nonprofit sector during the pandemic period from 2020 to 2022 to assess the state of the community nonprofit organizations in Canada. While varied, these studies focus on community centred nonprofits excluding para public charities such as hospitals, colleges, and universities. The authors pay particular attention to community nonprofits that provided social, human, and health services connected to social welfare roles in society.

The findings suggest that much of Canada's nonprofit sector was in a state of constructed precarity or crisis prior to the pandemic due to decades of neoliberal policymaking that challenged its ability to meet rising societal needs. While the community nonprofit sector is known for its innovative abilities to creatively respond to emerging societal needs—in other words, to be resilient—it is also the case that community nonprofits are chronically under-resourced, and hence, precariously situated. The hollowing out of the social welfare state under neoliberalism has shifted responsibility downward on to community nonprofit providers to fill growing service gaps and act as a residual protective safety net. Under the neoliberal model, precarity is believed to drive resilience and this has been applied to the nonprofit sector. The demand for nonprofit services expanded exponentially during the pandemic and the "response resilience" of the sector was put to the test. While various organizations of the Canadian state awoke to their reliance on nonprofit organizations and provided emergency funds to enable service provision during the pandemic, findings suggest that this support was inadequate and is likely to dwindle in the post-pandemic period. The community nonprofit sector is currently facing unprecedented and unsustainable financial and human resource challenges when need is at an all-time high.

This situation allows us to draw policy lessons regarding the capacity limits of the community nonprofit sector and to question the legitimacy of neoliberal claims regarding the ability of the sector to replace much of the state's social welfare role through forced precarity. The pandemic crisis has demonstrated the limits of the community nonprofit sector in addressing societal needs through a model of neoliberalism and the necessity of re-activating the state (bringing the state "back in"). "Building-back-better" must include public policies directed to maintaining the resilience of Canada's community nonprofit sector in an amplified and transformed social welfare system. The article concludes with insights as to what such a policy agenda might look like.

DEFINING THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

The Canadian nonprofit sector is substantive in size and scope. The diversity of organizations within the sector and the lack of accurate data on many nonprofit organizations make it challenging to define and measure. Many nonprofits are small, not incorporated as charities, and primarily voluntary; hence, they fly under the radar. Statistics Canada has established a satellite account of nonprofit organizations and voluntary work, offering the most comprehensive statistical portrait available. Statistics Canada classifies nonprofit organizations into three categories:

1. Business nonprofit organizations, which include chambers of commerce and various other business associations.
2. Community nonprofit organizations that encompass nonprofit organizations that provide goods and services to individuals, households, and communities, such as those related to food security, social services, housing, employment, health, newcomer settlement, recreation, sport, and religion.
3. Government nonprofits that are self-governing and formally independent of government but remain "heavily influenced by it" (Statistics Canada, 2022a, p. 4). These organizations include hospitals, colleges, and universities.

According to Statistics Canada, the overall nonprofit sector in 2020 accounted for nine percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) at a $185 billion net value. Government nonprofits made up 75 percent of this total share. Business nonprofits constituted the smallest element at 0.8 percent of GDP. Community nonprofits are valued at $16.4 billion or 1.4 percent of GDP (Statistics Canada, 2022a), although the "data deficit" related especially to this part of the nonprofit sector likely undervalues its size and impact (Barr, 2021).

Statistics Canada data from 2020 indicates that community nonprofits account for 24.5 percent of jobs (some 388,000 positions[1]) within the overall nonprofit sector (2022a). Women occupied 76.9 percent of these jobs (2022a). The community nonprofit workforce is increasingly racially diverse and most of the employees are college or university educated (2022a). For community nonprofits in 2020, government provided 37.9 percent of their revenue, with 25.5 percent derived from donations from households (2022a). However, given the diverse range of organizations that make up community nonprofits, the revenue sources between organizations varies considerably.

Community nonprofits exist in multiple policy realms, operate at different geographic scales, and have varying degrees of professionalization. Many community nonprofits are guided by social justice-oriented missions. In doing so, these agencies offer opportunities for mutual care, solidarity, identity formation, and political advocacy, often for communities that have been marginalized by existing socio-political and economic systems (Richmond & Shields, 2024).

Community nonprofits form a core component of public social welfare systems. They were the prime source for alternative service delivery of welfare state services by governments in neoliberal efforts to shrink the state (Shields & Evans, 1998), and as such, community nonprofits illustrate the tensions, problems, and potentials of Canada's socio-political economy. Despite this unique vantage point on the frontlines of public policy, community nonprofits receive scant attention in the academic

fields of public policy and political science. The authors argue that this is to the detriment of these disciplines. We cannot fully comprehend how the state and public policy support and marginalize residents without an intricate research agenda on nonprofit organizations.

Joy and Shields, 2020, offer a broad scope historical political economy analysis of Canada's nonprofit sector, situating its role within dominant models of classical liberalism, social liberalism, and neoliberalism. Each of these periods illustrates a different relationship between the state and nonprofits, which has reoriented the roles of both sectors. During the era of classical liberalism, limited state social welfare and laissez faire capitalism saw growing social problems that were "morally regulated" through religious charities and philanthropy, sometimes to prevent state intervention and redistributive taxation. The post-war era of social liberalism was characterized by welfare state building and regulated capitalism, which led to the prevalence of "junior partnerships" between nonprofits and the state. This included core funding relationships to fill social service gaps for marginalized population groups and, to a limited extent, to inform policy to address the roots of this marginalization.

The neoliberal era fundamentally changed the welfare state social contract because the state was no longer considered to be the steward of social wellbeing. Public efforts to build society were eschewed in favour of individual entrepreneurialism and self-investment, privatized and marketized solutions to individual "problems," and tax cuts. In the neoliberal model, nonprofits were treated much like private sector enterprises, situated as alternative service delivery agents in the state's effort to privatize and marketize its social welfare role. Funding to the sector, and especially to support core operations and advocacy, was cut and agencies had to compete for service contracts that were short-term and required incessant reporting requirements to prove value for money. These are the key elements of new public management (NPM), an administrative business model, which was to guide government funding of contracted nonprofit providers and, in so doing, impel them to operate like a private business (Evans & Shields, 2018). To survive, the sector had to raise its own source revenue through membership fees, social enterprises, donations, and private funding.

Prior to the pandemic, an era of communitarian neoliberalism prevailed, where competitive project-based funding came with additional requirements for nonprofits to measure their social impact or how their programs could "solve" social problems and thus save the state money. This is exemplified in the trend to fund the sector through social impact bonds, where private investors receive public payout when the nonprofit statistically proves that it has saved the state money by "saving" struggling people (see Joy & Shields, 2018). While this approach is sold as innovative, it includes a morality and elitist politics devoid of systemic context that returns to some of the core tenets of classical liberalism. While the shift to social impact includes a communitarian recognition of the important role of community nonprofit service approaches, the pressure to "fix" individuals struggling in deeply marginalizing systems is highly problematic and unrealistic. This approach also fails to learn from the sector and the ways in which its unique way of working and providing opportunities for care and solidarity could be expanded and supported. We use the concepts of resilience and precarity to assess this further as we examine the pandemic as a historical period that has the potential to reorient the relationship between the state and the community nonprofit sector once again.

RESILIENCE AND PRECARITY AS CONCEPTUAL THEMES

In conceptually framing this article, the authors draw upon the contrasts and dynamics between resilience and precarity in a policy environment and era dominated by neoliberalism. Resilience has been defined as the ability of entities to withstand, adapt, and recover from periods of difficulty, sudden shocks, and crises. The COVID-19 pandemic is a prime example of such a disruptive occurrence, one that profoundly challenged the ability of the nonprofit sector to respond, adjust, and adapt (Brunnermeier, 2021). We posit that adaptation was made more difficult than necessary for many nonprofits because of decades of neoliberal restructuring that forced precarity onto the sector. Precarity is about insecurity, uncertainty, and manufactured vulnerability. Nonprofit organizations are precariously positioned in neoliberalism because their financial foundations generally rest on insecure and inadequate financial sources, their workforce is composed of precariously employed and voluntary labour, and they often provide their services to the most precariously situated populations in society (Shields et al., 2017).

Paradoxically, while the community nonprofit sector is precariously situated, it is also known for being highly resilient organizationally and innovative in its programming. Neoliberalism's position on this paradox is that precarity drives resilience, as in the private market, and the community nonprofit sector is celebrated for its lean way of doing business—a characterization that is often contrasted with a bloated state. The sector has been expected by neoliberal policymakers to be able to "resiliently endure" (Leary, 2018, p. 151), adapt to hardships, and to continuously "do more with less." Neoliberal policy has relied upon such uses of everyday nonprofit sector resilience in its restructuring of state-societal relations, where the state shrinks in size and where individuals, families, and the nonprofit sector are expected to assume greater responsibility for the state's social welfare roles—a process of downloading and responsibilization. Nonprofits are made to continuously compete with other nonprofit agencies, as well as with the public and private sectors, for service contracts. The neoliberal model does not conceptualize a difference between these three sectors as they each operate through a similar business-oriented NPM approach to service delivery. The nonprofit competitive edge is often rooted in its lean approach that operates on the back of precarious and voluntary labour. While neoliberal resilience has been utilized to restructure society, its approach attempts to camouflage this process as an apolitical one (Golubchikov & DeVerteuil, 2021). Neoliberalism normalizes its imposition of restructuring and austerity through the downloading of adjustment costs onto the everyday efforts of bodies such as those in the nonprofit sector, whose work is often invisible.

The reliance by funders on everyday nonprofit resilience through a neoliberal model has manufactured the problem of nonprofit precarity, as the sector is squeezed to become ever more efficient by reducing costs, increasing so-called nonprofit self-sufficiency, and assuming more responsibility to address expanding societal needs resulting from a shrinking state and expanding societal polarization. The increasing precariousness found within the nonprofit sector has compelled organizations to operate under continuous stress. Neoliberal approaches to resilience raise questions regarding its sustainability and its inherently conservative/regressive character as requiring precarity (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2013). The state of the community nonprofit sector in the pandemic context enables an assessment of neoliberal claims regarding the ability of the sector to replace

much of the state's social welfare role in society. This is significant since it raises the question of whether the community nonprofit sector has been structurally weakened by the pandemic in combination with the negative impacts of years of operating under everyday neoliberal resilience, compromising the ongoing capacity of the community nonprofit sector in fulfilling its service roles and missions. When deeper crises emerge, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, how is the community nonprofit sector, already stretched through its everyday neoliberal resilience practices, impacted, and what is its ability to respond going forward? What has been the impact on the ongoing response resilience of the nonprofit sector?

It is important to note that resilience is not just about the ability to rebound to a pre-crisis position but also about the sustainability of this adaptability over the longer term (Brunnermeier, 2021). The concept and practice of resilience comes in various forms (Preston et al., 2022), with the neoliberal version being particularly limited and narrow. Resilience is not just about "bouncing back" to same old versions of (neo)liberalism post crisis but can also be about "bouncing forward" into a new policy paradigm and practice (Golubchikov & DeVerteuil, 2021), and one that expands the project of social liberalism into more progressive directions. As we saw with the COVID-19 pandemic, a politics of possibility (Golubchikov & DeVerteuil, 2021) emerged with the promise of building-back-better. The question of whose politics of resilience and needs would be recognized and prioritized in the process of recovery and rebuilding (Meerow & Newell, 2019; Abu Alrob & Shields, 2022) is critical. The role of the state, the community nonprofit sector, and the relationship between them is central. Progressive notions of resilience are rooted in collective forms of support and solidarity captured in the idea of social resilience (Preston et al., 2022). For the community nonprofit sector, progressive social resilience must be constructed upon a stable and fair funding base, true partnerships with the state that respects sector autonomy, and a recognition and respect for the social justice missions of nonprofit organizations that informs public policy in myriad domains to address the roots of oppression.

METHODOLOGY

This article uses existing reports on surveys of the nonprofits during the pandemic period from 2020 to 2022 to assess the state of the sector in Canada and to examine the tensions between resilience and precarity and what this illustrates about neoliberal resilience, progressive resilience, and building back post-pandemic. To accomplish this task, a grey literature search was undertaken using the Google search engine to identify reports and summaries of COVID-19 surveys that were administered in the nonprofit sector in Canada. The research scope included all nonprofit organizations providing services in the social, human, and health areas. The surveys excluded government nonprofits and were focused on community nonprofits. A total of 45 Canadian surveys and reports, including media stories, that included information on nonprofit surveys during the pandemic were used for the study. Pattern matching was used to identify common themes on the impact of the pandemic in the various nonprofit sector studies using inductive analysis. Data was categorized under common themes, including finance and fundraising, human resources, programs and services, operations, and clients. The assessment of nonprofit organization impacts from the first wave of the pandemic provides thematic foundations, while survey findings from subsequent waves of the pandemic are used to assess long-term implications on the community nonprofit sector.

The thematic analysis is based on information from surveys and reports that are national, provincial, and regional and by nonprofit subsectors, in scope. The sample sizes vary widely and may not be statistically representative of the overall populations being surveyed. The effects of the pandemic forced the full closure of many nonprofit organizations, and the surveys do not adequately capture this impact on the community nonprofit sector. There is no reliable data on this number in Canada, but a U.S.-based analysis estimated in 2020 that an additional seven percent of nonprofit organizations over normal circumstances would close due to the pandemic and that this figure could be considerably higher (Harold, 2020). Consequently, the numbers revealed in this analysis should be interpreted as indicative of sector impacts rather than as hard facts. Nonetheless, the survey data and report findings provide an important overview on the effects of the pandemic on community nonprofit organizations in Canada.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON THE CANADIAN NONPROFIT SECTOR

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada in March 2020 presented the nonprofit sector with the "triple threat" of "revenue loss, office closures and service cancellations, and human resource challenges" (The Philanthropist, 2020). This added to what the Canadian Senate already identified as a "slowly intensifying crisis" due to the highly inadequate resourcing of the sector (Omidvar & Pearson, 2020). The following sections outline the core intersecting effects of the pandemic on the capabilities and operations of the community nonprofit sector in Canada: human resource challenges, unsustainable working conditions, financial instability, unclear government supports, and increased service demand.

Human resource challenges

The nature of the services provided in the community nonprofit sector means that organizations rely heavily on human resources; the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted organizations in this realm. Staffing levels were most immediately and negatively affected with forced office closures to comply with pandemic protocols and layoffs due to revenue losses and health concerns. Job losses were the most acute during the first wave of the pandemic. Before the development and distribution of vaccines, the restaffing of offices for frontline direct service remained, for most organizations, limited and problematic due to health risks, logistics, and a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE).

A national survey on charitable organizations by Imagine Canada found that 37,000 full-time and 46,400 part-time staff were laid off during the first wave of the pandemic (Lasby, 2020). These figures do not capture job losses caused by organizations permanently closing due to the pandemic, because those organizations were not represented in the survey responses. Imagine Canada projected that almost 200,000 charitable sector jobs could be lost over a further six-month period due to pandemic lockdowns without additional supports to the sector (Mathieu, 2020). By May 2020, some 37 percent of social service nonprofits reported job losses and another 52 percent indicated that there could be more in the future (Lasby, 2020). Seventy-one percent of childcare centres by May 2020 reported that some or all their staff, except for the executive, had lost their employment (Macdonald & Friendly, 2021). At the local level, 50 percent of nonprofits in Vancouver, B.C. reported having laid off staff (City of Vancouver, 2020). Workforce layoffs eased in later waves of the pan-

demic and some organizations began rehiring, illustrating the precarity of employment for many during this time. Recruitment and retention, however, was a challenge as many laid-off workers declined to return and qualified workers were in short supply (especially those with skills related to working online). The issue of worker shortages would become a major challenge for the community nonprofit sector by 2023 when most COVID-19 restrictions ended (Statistics Canada, 2023).

Besides outright layoffs, staff absence was an issue. In March 2020, 30 percent of Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) member organizations reported staff absences (2020). As the first wave continued, several sub-sectors of the ONN membership began experiencing more significant staff absences, including 45 percent of the social services organizations and 67 percent of employment centre organizations (ONN, 2020). Some of the reasons for staff absences included fears over the risk of infection due to lacking PPE and the inability to physically distance. The lack of access to childcare supports and school closures also contributed to staff absences (Alberta Nonprofit Network, 2020). Numerous cases of nonprofit staff refusing to work under COVID-19 conditions were reported (Region of Peel, 2020). Hence, direct layoffs and regular workplace absences contributed to staffing challenges among the community nonprofit paid labour force. While these eased in subsequent COVID-19 waves, staffing did not return to pre-pandemic levels. The disruption of school schedules, childcare gaps, and the need to care for vulnerable family members (especially older adults) continued to be factors resulting in work absences and many women workers deciding to leave employment due to care responsibilities. Women's labour force participation rates steeply declined during the pandemic to contemporary historic lows (Shin, 2021). This hit the community nonprofit sector particularly hard as women make up over 75 percent of the paid workforce (Statistics Canada, 2022a).

In addition to shifting paid staffing levels, volunteer capacity also changed dramatically during the pandemic (Food Banks Canada, 2021; Colliers Not-For-Profit Advisory Group, 2020; ONN, 2020). In Ontario, an ONN and Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) survey reported that 52 percent of nonprofit organizations experienced reductions in volunteers (ONN & AFO, 2020). A 2020 national survey of volunteers reported that 39 percent had stopped volunteering due to COVID-19, particularly older volunteers (Volunteer Canada, Ipsos, & Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada, 2020). A 2022 Volunteer Toronto report indicated a further 20 percent drop in volunteers from the year before (Jabakhanji, 2022). A 2021 Imagine Canada survey also reported the difficulty in securing volunteers, a situation that hindered service provision and placed added work stress on paid staff (Lasby & Barr, 2021). A Statistics Canada November 2022 report tells us that 66.6 percent of community nonprofits intending to recruit volunteers were experiencing shortages (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Organizations like Meals on Wheels faced an acute volunteer shortage for food delivery and social contact visits (Chiu, 2020). Volunteer losses were linked to fears over COVID-19 infection, lack of access to PPE, and the inability to engage in physical distancing, and a lack of access to childcare support (ONN, 2020). The challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteers has persisted throughout the pandemic and beyond. It appears that the pandemic accelerated an already present trend in the nonprofit sector of declining rates of volunteerism related to demographic changes and shifts in civic activity among younger cohorts (Fish, 2014).

Unsustainable working conditions

Working conditions for staff and volunteers were significantly altered during the pandemic. The

biggest shift was the transition to remote work, including for service delivery. Over the course of the pandemic, most organizations retooled to move the bulk of their services to online and hybrid forms of delivery, although it took some organizations longer than others to achieve this goal. During the first wave of the pandemic, Imagine Canada reported that 54 percent of social service organizations and 69 percent of health organizations were able to move programs online (Lasby, 2020). There were challenges for community nonprofit organization in making this shift to online and hybrid service delivery as policies needed to be developed, training provided to staff, and equipment acquired for undertaking distance work, all while addressing health and safety issues and concerns. Continuous change and adaptation were the operating reality for these organizations, but they demonstrated considerable operational resilience in making the transition to online services.

Some services for vulnerable and marginalized populations necessitated face-to-face contact such as settlement services, housing and food services, and mental health supports. Some face-to-face services was limited, due to health restrictions and this work not being considered essential by governments and thus allowed to stay open; although, more frontline service delivery resumed with the passage of time. Those organizations that continued to provide frontline services also needed to be adaptive to how these were done given safety protocols and the changing situations of their membership, straining the capacities of many organizations (Lasby & Barr, 2021).

Nonprofit workers and leadership had varying experiences of adapting to working under pandemic conditions. A qualitative survey from the Toronto area (North York Community House, Department of Imaginary Affairs, & Marco Campana, 2020) early in the pandemic suggested that overall workers and management were resilient and adapted as best as they could under the circumstances and, in many cases, with great success. Most were happy to be able to continue to work, carry out the mission of their organizations, and serve their membership, whose needs had changed and increased. Still, the report highlighted a lot of uncertainty and stress associated with their work. The pandemic created a great increase in workload. An unattributed saying in the nonprofit sector during the pandemic was that "it is not business as usual; it is more business than usual." This raised the problem of burnout and mental health challenges for staff, issues that remain in the post-pandemic period. There were also issues raised about whether all workers were able to work from home; did they have the proper technology and access to a workspace to be able to conduct their work from a distance (Campana, 2020)? Issues of work-home separation and work-life balance were increasing concerns with growing levels of virtual forms of working. Stress and mental health challenges were consistently raised in the surveys and nonprofits devoted time and resources to mitigate these threats to staff.

Financial instability

The pandemic had an immediate negative impact on the finances of nonprofit organizations, considerably deeper than that experienced during the 2008/2009 financial crisis (Lasby, 2020). Imagine Canada's survey of charitable organizations released in May 2020 noted that revenues had declined an average of 30.6 percent since the onset of the pandemic, with 69 percent reporting decreased revenues (Lasby, 2020). Similar results were noted in Ontario, with seven out of ten nonprofits reporting financial losses with an average loss of $121,229 in the first wave, equating to revenue declines of approximately 25 percent (ONN & AFO, 2020). In the Christian charities sector, across

small, medium, and large ministries, revenues declined by 71 percent, 67 percent, and 65 percent, respectively (Waybase, 2020).

Financial declines were the result of losses from several sources of revenue: earned income, including events-based revenue, membership revenue, service fees, sales of goods and services; loss of grants, loss of government funding, and lower investment income (Lasby, 2020; Waybase, 2020; Alberta Nonprofit Network, 2020; ONN & AFO, 2020; Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia, 2020; Friendly, Forer, Vickerson, & Mohamed, 2020). Non-contract revenues were some of the steepest losses of funds. This was particularly challenging as non-contract sources of revenue typically offer the greatest level of discretionary use and can be more easily strategically deployed during a crisis. Given the lean funding profiles of most nonprofits, it is not surprising that most organizations did not have deep financial reserves, with most having only a few months worth of reserve operating capacity (ONN & AFO, 2020).

As human resource intensive organizations, salaries/wages were generally the biggest financial cost to service provision, resulting in layoffs, as previously discussed. This also included cutting hours of work and cutting pay rates in some instances (Alberta Nonprofit Network, 2020; Friendly et al., 2020). While revenues were decreasing, expenditures for many items were increasing. The highest increase in expenditures was reported in the subsectors of nonprofit health (46%), housing (35%), and social services (33%) (ONN & AFO, 2020). Nonprofits had major increases in costs in areas such as supports for program adaptations, technology for program delivery and remote work, enhanced health and safety measures, and PPE (Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, 2020; City of Vancouver, 2020). The financial situation of community nonprofit service providers stabilized over the course of the pandemic. Many nonprofits, however, were greatly weakened by the initial financial shock and have not been able to fully restore their financial position to pre-COVID-19 levels. With rising service demands and necessary pandemic-related costs, they have been financially stressed and stretched. The ONN's *2023 State of the Sector* report suggested that it was a sector "at a tipping point" (ONN, 2023, p. 1).

UNCLEAR GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS

Government funding constitutes an important portion of community nonprofit revenue sources, on average making up 37.9 percent of their total funding (Statistics Canada 2022a). However, for some community social, human and health services nonprofits government funding can reach 80 percent or more of their funding revenues, as is the case for many immigrant settlement service agencies (Joy & Shields, 2020, p. 224). Organizations such as foodbanks and shelters have different funding profiles, relying more heavily on volunteer labour and donations, and childcare services are primarily fees-based organizations. Hence, there is a diverse range of community nonprofit organizations in this field and significant variation in funding sources. The heavy government-funding of some of these service nonprofits, a profile that in the past was viewed as a weakness with considerable pressure on these organizations to diversify their funding base and become less government funding dependent, turned into an asset during the pandemic. This is because government funding to contracted service providers during the pandemic were generally stable or even increasing (Lasby, 2020; Shaath et al., 2022). Government commitments to honour contracts even if organizations

were not able to meet all their contractual commitments because of the pandemic was a major factor in keeping nonprofit organizations operating and providing many of them with the flexibility to shift services online.

Aside from the key role that continuing government contracts played in supporting many community nonprofits during the pandemic, governments developed other financial supports that nonprofit organizations could benefit from during COVID-19. These include the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), a financial subsidy for qualifying employers to address negatively impacted workplaces by providing up to a 75 percent wage subsidy capped at $734 per week per employee for job retention (Finance Canada, 2020b). This was the most impactful measure overall for nonprofits valued at between $3.7 and $4.1 billion by the fall of 2021 (Barr & Johnson, 2021).

In addition, the Canada Business Emergency Account (CEBA) offered interest-free loans up to $40,000 for small businesses, including nonprofits with a 25 percent payment forgiveness if repaid on time (Finance Canada, 2020a). Other measures included rent relief through the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program, but this required the participation of landlords, which increased the complexity of the program. These measures were designed with for-profit businesses in mind and although nonprofit organizations were eligible to apply, they were not explicitly targeted in the program design. Still, such programs did provide uneven but valuable supports to many nonprofits.

In contrast, Friendly et al. (2020) report that only 12 percent of child day centre respondents indicated that they applied for CEWS, while 28 percent of ONN/AFO June 2020 survey respondents benefited from CEWS (ONN & AFO, 2020). Only 14 percent of daycare centres received CEBA (Friendly et al., 2020), while 31 percent of ONN members had received CEBA, according to the ONN/AFO survey (2020). Imagine Canada, however, using a national survey of charities taking advantage of federal pandemic supports, found higher levels of uptake (Lasby, 2021).

Depressed levels of nonprofit use of government pandemic supports were because some nonprofits were unaware that they were eligible for these programs, some failed the eligibility requirements, and others found the administrative requirements for applying too difficult given the demand on staff during the pandemic (YWCA Canada, 2020). Additionally, nonprofits that were purely voluntary in nature were generally outside the scope of supports and this constituted a significant portion of community nonprofits.

The Canadian Government did establish a $350 million Community Services Recovery Support Fund targeted to nonprofits. The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants called this important, but only a "down-payment" (Douglas, 2020). It was available only to needy community service nonprofits in the later stages of the pandemic.

Increasing service demand

The clients and communities served by nonprofit providers were negatively affected by the disruption of services provided by community nonprofits during the pandemic. Many frontline service closures shrank availability until online services were available. Health concerns also kept many clients away from nonprofit organizations, depressing demand. With the development of vaccines, the

widespread use of PPE, and the availability of online programing alternatives, there was a steady upswing in service usage. In 2021, Imagine Canada reported that nearly half of its survey respondents noted increases in service demand (Lasby & Barr, 2021). The trend in service use continued to grow as time passed. This put pressure on many nonprofits whose service capacities had been compromised by the crisis.

While the development of online services offered flexibility and access for many during the crisis, it is also the case that others fell through the pandemic cracks and were not able to access digital services (Campana, 2020). For the most vulnerable populations, the digital divide proved to be a formidable barrier to service acquisition (Mike, 2022). As will be discussed, in the post-pandemic period, with the return to more normal conditions along with the creation of hybrid forms of services, there was more growth in service demand. This has tested the capacity of many community nonprofit providers.

One service area that calls for special attention is food banks. The pandemic created an immediate and massive increase in demand for this service as food insecurity expanded. Some seven in 10 foodbanks reported a doubling in demand in 2020 (Food Banks Canada, 2021). In Ontario, there was a reported 26 percent increase in first-time visitors between March and June 2020 and food support inquiries to the 211 Ontario service line increased by 1307 percent between the first week of March and second week of April (Feed Ontario, 2020). The problem of food insecurity reached even higher to record breaking levels in 2022 as inflation grew (Ovoid, 2022). Food bank usage has continued to grow in the post-pandemic period, placing added stress on this segment of the nonprofit sector (Hayes, 2023).

DISCUSSION

While the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to reverberate within Canadian society and its nonprofit sector, the World Health Organization's declaration of the end to the pandemic stage of the virus provides an opportunity to ask the question: how well was the community nonprofit sector able to manage the crisis, and what does this say about the sector's overall resilience and capacities in the future? In this regard, the first thing to note is that community nonprofits, especially those in the social, human, and health areas clearly demonstrated dedication to their missions and showed considerable resilience under stress in their ability to perform their service mandates in large part by shifting to virtual forms of delivery. This was made possible, in most cases, by governments providing continuing funding for programing and a general easing of NPM accountability measures during the pandemic. The overall stability of government funding already held by many community nonprofit service providers was essential to the ability of these agencies to continue to operate. The case of immigrant settlement services is a prime example of this situation (Shields & Abu Alrob, 2020). Organizations without regular government funding, like many food banks, were placed in a more challenging position. While government funding support helped stabilize much of the social, human, and health parts of the community service nonprofit sector, the pre-existing precariousness of nonprofit providers was evident and amplified by the pandemic, demonstrating the limitations of the community nonprofit sector to address the immediate needs of Canadians, let alone more transformational desires associated with building-back-better.

The COVID-19 pandemic represented the biggest crisis since the Great Depression. What became clear was that the scale of the crisis required immediate state intervention. Governments at all levels in Canada acted and cooperated to address health protection and safety issues and embraced a wide-ranging set of measures to mitigate social and economic dislocations. Trust in government rose sharply, restoring faith in the state's ability to be a positive force in people's lives and the necessity for it to take leadership and action in an emergency (Shields & Abu Alrob, 2020). The breadth of actions undertaken by the state at the various levels of government in Canada was substantive (see Norton Rose Fulbright, 2020, for a full listing of federal, provincial, and territorial government actions). While there is no question that community nonprofit service organizations needed government support as the pandemic progressed (Speer & Dijkema, 2020) and that measures introduced were of assistance to some organizations in the sector, the general lack of identification of the specific nature and needs of the sector by policymakers in Canada hindered the development of a more comprehensive support response. Greater simplification of support programs, direct outreach to the community nonprofit sector to increase awareness, and more assistance in the application process would have greatly aided in the impact of the programs for the sector.

The larger question is whether crisis-based state activism illustrates "emergency welfarism" (Webb, 2022, p. 3) that ebbs away after the pandemic with a restoration of austerity neoliberalism or a promise of building-back-better with a goal of broader social justice as the path forward. Expectations about the robustness of a building-back-better approach in Canada have been dampened as the federal, provincial, and local governments turn to deficit and debt reduction to get their fiscal houses in order post-pandemic (Hillel, 2022). There is thus a concern that neoliberal resilience will return. Evidence suggests that this is an unsustainable and irresponsible way forward.

As the post-pandemic period begins to take shape, the Canadian nonprofit sector is confronted by numerous capacity challenges. These include:

1. *A pressing shortage of paid nonprofit personnel.* The Canadian labour market is experiencing widespread vacancies and unemployment rates are at very low levels. For workers, it is a seller's market (Crawley, 2023), which could offer the opportunity for improved bargaining power. This situation is challenging for the community nonprofit sector because of comparatively lower wages and weaker benefits. The financial constraints on the sector make it difficult to compete with the public and private sectors for employee recruitment. The labour shortage is found at all levels of community nonprofit organizations, with particular challenges hiring workers with specialized skills in technology and to fill senior personnel vacancies. The generally flat organizational structure of most community nonprofits (many are smaller organizations with lean workforces) means that upward mobility is limited. The large number of workers leaving the sector for better opportunities has been labelled the "great resignation" or "great reshuffle" (Rodney, 2023a). The combination of the loss of workers to employers offering better opportunities and the effects of COVID-19-burnout and retirements has created a human resource crisis in the community nonprofit sector. Post-pandemic, remaining staff are left to address increasing service demands and risk further burnout (CanadaHelps, 2023). This could limit the capacity of organizations

to offer mutual care based on notions of solidarity, which takes time as it involves building relationships, understanding the complexities of marginalization, and informing and advocating for socially just policy.

2. *An acute shortage of volunteers.* The challenge with volunteer recruitment experienced during the pandemic has persisted into the post-pandemic period. The continued unease among older volunteers about the health risks associated with volunteering remains. An older demographic may have less interest in, experience with, access to, and/or comfort with virtual forms of volunteering, though it is important not to generalize and further research on this is needed. Older cohorts of volunteers have historically contributed far greater hours of volunteering than younger cohorts. The loss of older volunteers has thus contributed to a large volunteer gap, deepening the human resource challenges for the nonprofit sector (Jensen, 2023; Rodney, 2023b; CBC, 2023; Andrews, 2022).
3. *An inflationary shock.* As the Canadian economy continues to recover from the pandemic, the problem of high levels of inflation persists and has been worsened by the Russia-Ukraine war. Inflation peaked at over eight percent in the summer of 2022 and remained above six percent going into 2023, threatening the risk of a recession (Armstrong, 2023). For nonprofit service providers, inflation poses a serious problem (Jensen, 2023). Eighty percent of charities reported that inflation was negatively impacting their delivery costs (CanadaHelps, 2023). As part of this inflationary shock, the nonprofit sector has been hit with massive insurance premium rate increases (Barr & Jensen, 2023; Saba, 2023). Along with increased costs, insurance firms are increasing restrictions on what is eligible to be covered by insurance premiums. As nonprofit costs of operations and risk increase, additional stress is applied to financially constrained organizations. Funders have not adjusted their contracts to cover the full costs of these increases (CanadaHelps, 2023), hence these costs must be absorbed into the providers' budgets. The pressure to increase spending on overhead is compounded as nonprofits need to invest in technology, software, and staff training to meet the challenges of hybrid service delivery (Altamimi & Liu, 2022). While operating costs increase, so does service demand for core needs such as shelter and food as inflationary pressures place added strains on society (Barr & Jensen, 2022).
4. *Rapidly increasing service demands on an already overstretched sector.* A 2023 CanadaHelps survey reported that 40 percent of charities were experiencing higher levels of demand for their services than before the pandemic, and 57 percent noted that they were not able to meet this current demand (CanadaHelps, 2023). Additionally, an Ipsos survey released in November 2022 found that 22 percent of Canadians would need to make use of essential charitable services such as food, clothing, and shelter, a figure that jumped from 14 percent earlier in 2022 (Jiang, 2022; Swadden, 2022). The demand for food services alone rose by 300 percent (Jiang, 2022). Duke Chang, head of CanadaHelps, stated that it was "abundantly clear that many Canadian charities are beginning to buckle under the strain of increased demand for services and stalled revenues, and we are now at the point where the majority of charities cannot

meet demand" (CanadaHelps, 2023, paragraph 10). In 2018, Imagine Canada warned that there would be an emerging "social deficit" of $26 billion by 2026 facing the nonprofit sector to address increasing service demands. It noted that the sector would need to raise twice the amount of funds in 2026 than it did in 2018 to address these growing unmet needs (Imagine Canada, 2018). The impact of the pandemic has only enhanced the societal need for nonprofit services and the social deficit continues to grow. The community nonprofit sector cannot meet such needs without more state support and intervention.

5. *Funding levels and funding models for the nonprofit sector are inadequate and ill suited to the service role they have been expected to perform*. Based on late 2022 survey data, fewer than half of nonprofits (45%) reported that funding levels were equivalent to pre-pandemic levels, and 31 percent said their funding was below these levels (CanadaHelps, 2023). Most nonprofits reported a drop in donations, coinciding with a continuing shrinkage in the overall doner base. Fifty-four percent of Canadians in 2022 reported decreasing their charitable donations because of rising household costs (Barr & Jensen, 2022). Imagine Canada's CEO, Bruce MacDonald, made note of what he labels the "triple whammy" on the nonprofit sector coming with the end of 1) COVID-19 supports, 2) high inflation, and 3) the ongoing loss of funding sources. The result in his words is that "many organizations are still in a place of 'How are we going to survive?'" (Riley, 2023). This is in a context where the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario recently reported that the province has over $20 billion in unspent public funding dollars aimed at social services (2023).

The general model of funding for community service nonprofits continues to be constructed around neoliberal principles and practices of NPM based on "lean financing," competitive contracting, and strict accountability measures (Lowe et al., 2017). During the pandemic, government funders eased the rules guiding precarity-oriented NPM financing, enabling stable and flexible funding for many nonprofit service providers. This reinforced the community nonprofit sector capacities during the crisis (Shaath et al., 2022). Since the end of the pandemic, there has been a return to past precarity practices, a rigid model that promotes competition between agencies and works against nonprofit organizations' ability to build up the resources necessary to address unexpected crises and to plan for the future (McKnight & Gouweloos, 2021; ONN & AFO, 2022). This NPM model also makes it difficult for nonprofits to adapt to the rapid change they are currently experiencing due to lean funding starving them of resources (Altamimi & Liu, 2022). Furthermore, the widespread adoption of online service delivery has intensified competition between nonprofit service providers as agencies can outreach beyond their traditional geographical catchment areas.

CONCLUSION

The situation of community nonprofits in Canada post-pandemic is complex, but it is clearly a sector under stress with ever growing pressures to address increasing service demands in a society marked by expanding social and economic polarization. This research suggests that the community nonprofit sector does more than fill gaps in the social safety net but has become ever more central

to the functioning of the social welfare system; without the services provided by this sector during the pandemic, lives and social functioning more broadly were at stake. The community nonprofit sector is locked into a pattern of neoliberal resilience, doing with less and unable to build reserve capacity to innovate to anticipate and minimize the impact of the next crisis. This is an unsustainable form of resilience and is falling on the backs of labour that is more precarious and, thus, dwindling. Neoliberal resilience poorly positions nonprofits to be much more than reactive in responding to growing needs and the evidence from sector surveys illustrates that they are unable to respond to needs adequately. The pandemic demonstrated that the community nonprofit sector is not able to replace the social welfare role of the state. While state funding assisted the sector to be resilient during the pandemic crisis, albeit in an insufficient and ad hoc way, there seems to be an assumption that things can return to "normal," and the structural weakness of nonprofit service providers has not been addressed by the state post-pandemic. The increasing service demands on the community nonprofit sector illustrates that peoples' basic needs for survival are not being met in essential areas such as food, shelter, childcare, older adult-care, and income support. This reflects the current paradigm that community nonprofits are playing a "nice-to-have" role rather than an "essential service role" in the provision of public goods. Ignoring the basic needs of the population and the needs of nonprofit agencies attempting to meet them is illustrative of state failure.

We argue that a new equitable partnership model is needed between the state and the community nonprofit sector that expands social liberalism towards more progressive and egalitarian directions. Progressive taxation is needed to build and fund public programming that meets essential population needs in the areas of income support, food security, affordable housing, childcare, older adult care, and services for women and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ population and that does not rely on privatization and marketization. Such programming must be designed in a way that directly addresses institutionalized oppressions in such realms as ableism, colonialism and white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. It is in such realms that partnerships between the state and the community nonprofit sector can flourish, such as agencies working with and representing refugees, folks living with autism spectrum condition, individuals and families who are precariously housed, Indigenous women, or members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who could be funded to support the state to design and fund public housing initiatives that directly meet the needs of community members. Such funding would support core missions, including space and electronic needs, and employ people with good working conditions. This funding would adapt to inflation and shifting insurance trends. Flexible and noncompetitive project funding would compliment and not replace core funding, supporting resilience-based programing where a nonprofit seeks to innovate an aspect of their work to meet changing needs and wants. The community nonprofit and state sectors can thus partner to create security and safety that enhances quality of life for the full diversity of the Canadian population. This secure and strong foundation of material and social welfare for all, rather than neoliberalism's manufactured precarity and scarcity that benefits the few, is essential to building-back-better.

NOTE

1. Raw numbers calculated from Statistics Canada (2022, p. 6).

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Social Enterprise as a Pathway to Work, Wellness, and Social Inclusion for Canadians with Mental Illnesses and/or Substance Use Disorders

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ABSTRACT

People with serious and persistent mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders are among the most economically and socially disenfranchised populations in Canada, and often present with long histories of labour market detachment and underemployment. Work engagement has the potential to improve social determinants of health while also harnessing productive capacity. This article reports on a five-year study examining the social, economic, and health impacts of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) in the mental health sector in Ontario, Canada. The findings shed light on the population that works in WISEs, its levels of social and labour market integration, and organizational features that influence worker outcomes. Results highlight both the importance of WISEs as a means of supporting employment, and challenges to organizational sustainability.

RÉSUMÉ

Les personnes atteintes de troubles mentaux graves et persistants et/ou de troubles liés à l'usage de substances psychoactives font partie des populations les plus défavorisées économiquement et socialement au Canada et présentent souvent de longs antécédents de sous-emploi et de décrochage par rapport au marché du travail. L'engagement au travail a pourtant le potentiel d'améliorer les déterminants sociaux de la santé tout en augmentant la capacité productive. Cet article rend compte d'une étude de cinq ans examinant les impacts sociaux, économiques et sanitaires des entreprises sociales d'insertion par le travail (ESIT) dans le secteur de la santé mentale en Ontario (Canada). Les résultats jettent de la lumière sur la population qui travaille dans les ESIT, y compris son niveau d'intégration en société et au travail, et sur les caractéristiques organisationnelles influençant le rendement de ces travailleurs. Les résultats soulignent à la fois l'importance des ESIT pour soutenir l'emploi et les défis liés à la durabilité organisationnelle.

Lysaght, R., Packalen, K., Krupa, T, Ross, L., Fecica, A., Roy, M., & Brock, K. Social Enterprise as a Pathway to Work, Wellness, and Social Inclusion for Canadians with Mental Illnesses and/or Substance Use Disorders. ©2024 *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research 15*(1), 30–51. doi:10.29173/cjnser635

Keyword / Mots clés : employment, work integration social enterprise (WISE); psychiatric illness, longitudinal studies, mixed methods / emploi, entreprise sociale d'insertion par le travail (WISEE-SIT), maladie psychiatrique, études longitudinales, méthodes mixtes

People with serious and persistent mental illnesses[1] and/or substance use disorders often experience recurrent periods of labour market detachment and exceptionally high rates of unemployment (Luciano & Meara, 2014). The health challenges they experience typically appear early in adult life, are of long duration, and impact social functioning (Zumstein & Riese, 2020). The episodic nature of these conditions often produces intermittent work capacity (Emsley, Chiliza, Asmal & Harvey, 2013), making job retention challenging.

Employment can promote recovery for people with serious mental illness (Dunn, Wewiorski, & Rogers, 2008). The work to which they are often relegated, however, tends toward low-quality and high-pressure service industry work, which many find to be insecure, stressful, conflict-laden, and meaningless (Saavedra, López, Gonzáles, & Cubero, 2016; Gewurtz, Harlos, Tompa, Oldfield, Lysaght, Moll, Kirsh, Sultan-Taïeb Cook, & Rueda, 2022). Moreover, they are regularly subject to workplace stigma based on a range of negative assumptions about their suitability as employees (Krupa, Kirsh, Cockburn, & Gewurtz, 2009). From an employer perspective, worker retention can be difficult due to the uncertainty that emerges in relation to unpredictable work availability and capacity (Lysaght, Krupa, & Gregory, 2022).

Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) offer an alternative employment model to conventional work options and overcome some of these obstacles. They are commercial entities that produce goods and/or services for the broader community and have a mandate to employ work-challenged populations, such as persons experiencing addiction, ill-health, significant periods of homelessness, incarceration, and/or hospitalization (Vidal, 2005). WISEs are designed to offer a more supportive and responsive employment option than the inflexible and stressful work conditions typically found in conventional workplaces (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Gewurtz et al., 2022). In addition, WISEs can increase the diversity of the broader labour economy, reduce stigma related to marginalized populations, and contribute to poverty reduction (Roy, Donaldson, Baker, & Kerr, 2014). Despite their growing prevalence, however, relatively little research has examined outcomes for WISE workers. To address this gap, the authors examined the work and socio-economic outcomes experienced by WISE employees with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders. The authors also investigated the evolving structure of WISEs within the Ontario mental health sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of WISEs in the mental health sector originated in response to the historic exclusion of persons with mental illness and addictions from employment (Elmes, 2019; Gidron, 2017; Pache & Santos, 2013). Specific advantages of WISEs for these populations identified in past research include enhanced social integration and reduced stigma (Krupa, Sabetti, & Lysaght, 2019; Lysaght, Jakobsen, & Granhaug, 2012; Villotti, Zaniboni, Corbière, Guay, & Fraccaroli, 2018); improved incomes and social position (Elmes, 2019); improved work behaviours (Chan, Ryan, & Quarter, 2017); enhanced social connections (Hartley, Yeowell, & Powell, 2019); improved self-confidence (Chan

et al., 2017; Villotti et al., 2018); and improved mental health (Martinelli, Bonetto, Bonora, Cristofalo, Killaspy, & Ruggeri, 2022). More specifically, Roy, Baker, and Kerr (2017) identified seven ways in which working in WISEs can contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of vulnerable workers: 1) engaging people in meaningful work; 2) engendering a supportive and safe work environment; 3) improving knowledge and skills; 4) expanding social networks; 5) enabling access to information and welfare; 6) raising public awareness; and 7) building self-worth.

Research to date on individual outcomes has generally been qualitative, primarily in the form of single or multiple case studies, with some small-sample quantitative studies. Organization-level studies have included social return-on-investment studies of enterprises (e.g., Akingbola, Phaetthayanan, & Brown, 2015; Vieta, Schatz, & Kasparian, 2015), descriptive case studies (e.g., Pizarro Escribano & Miranda González, 2023; Sacchetti, 2023), and those based on extant government data (e.g. Battilana, Sengul, Pache, & Model, 2015).

Although multiple studies speak to the potential contributions of WISEs, some studies raise questions as to whether WISEs can deliver on their goals of improving incomes (Chan et al., 2017) and mental health (Saavedra et al., 2016) for the populations they serve. Further, the WISEs model can be difficult to deliver due to a number of challenges inherent to the hybrid model they function within (Battilana, 2018). In the inevitable struggle to serve both the demands of operating a sustainable business and the humanitarian mandate that is their reason for existence, WISEs risk taking actions that threaten success on both ends (Sparviero, 2019). In particular, to avoid the high rates of business failure (Roumpi, Magrizos, & Nicolopoulou, 2020), these businesses may inadvertently resort to practices that reinforce the very workforce factors that have historically contributed to the exclusion of workers with mental illnesses, such as isolating workers from the general public, favouring those who are stronger performers, stigmatizing the workforce by positioning them as recipients of charity rather than legitimate workers, and providing little opportunity for career advancement (Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2014; Krupa et al., 2019). Success requires balancing the business and social mandates with adherence to sound business practices, ensuring fair and culturally responsive employment practices, and creating opportunities for worker growth and development (Bull, 2007; Lysaght, Roy, Rendall, Krupa, Ball, & Davis, 2018).

CONTEXT FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

Work Integration Social Enterprises in the mental health sector developed along two tracks in Ontario starting in the early 1990s. One group of WISEs was developed by psychiatric consumers/survivors. They were funded under local government grants and operated as co-operatives (see, for example, Trainor & Tremblay, 1992). The second form of WISE was developed by hospitals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (mostly mental health agencies) as a means of creating employment and job training opportunities for their clients (see Krupa, Lagarde, & Carmichael, 2003). In the 2020s, WISEs in the mental health sector include businesses of various sizes and operational models, offering an optimal context to investigate their impact and operational structures.

METHODS

The project used a multiphase mixed-methods longitudinal design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017)

to build in-depth knowledge concerning WISE as it is applied within the mental health sector. The multiple case study approach provided the opportunity to investigate different WISE models and the outcomes for the workers they employ (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2017).

Study partners and participants

Table 1 provides an overview of the seven Southern Ontario WISEs that joined the research study as partners. All the organizations provide goods and services to the public, employ individuals who experience serious and persistent mental illness and/or substance use disorders as a primary employment barrier, adhere to provincial employment regulations, including minimum wage requirements, and are financially viable.

Table 1: Demographic profiles of WISEs at intake in 2017

Name	Partner/Parent organization	FY2017 oversight organization revenue	FY2017 social enterprise revenue	Social enterprises operated (*N*)	Primary areas of business	Employees (*N*)
Causeway	Non-government organization	$3,609,582	$728,197	5	Food Services, Bicycle Repair, Landscaping, Janitorial	57
Fresh Start	Consumer/ survivor operated	$1,304,132	$1,304,132	1	Janitorial, Landscaping	100
Goodwill	Non-government organization	$26,060,579[1]	n/a	4	Food Services, Retail, Light Manufacturing	700
Impact Junk	Non-government organization	$21,489,722	$265,014	1	Waste Removal, Cleaning Services	25
Rainbow's End	Healthcare facility	$593,778,144[2]	$590,850	6	Food Services, Landscaping, Sewing, Janitorial	76
JobWell[3]	Healthcare facility	$27,388,766[4]	$589,246	6	Carwash, Food Services, Janitorial	75
Working for Change	Consumer/ survivor operated	$2,392,382	$2,392,382	5	Food Services, Landscaping, Research	96

Notes: Information obtained from WISE and partner/parent organization annual reports, Section D of the T3010 Registered Charity Information Return filed with the Canadian Revenue Agency and intake interviews with WISE administrators. [1] Includes revenue from social enterprise sales, job training, corporate donations, and other sources [2] Includes all organizational revenues, including healthcare system transfers from provincial government. [3] Formerly operated as Voices, Opportunities and Choices Employment Club (VOCEC). [4] Includes revenues for only the facility unit responsible for social enterprise operations.

The following groups of individuals served as primary data sources:

0. 16 WISE administrators: structured intake and exit interviews with one to two administrators from each WISE in fall 2017 and spring 2022. Administrative turnover resulted in four of the interviewees being different at follow-up than intake.
1. 106 WISE workers: 43 had ongoing WISE employment of two years or more, and 63 were recruited upon hiring ("new hires").
    - All 106 workers participated in the Time 1 (T1) quantitative interview between fall 2017 and spring 2019.

- 86 workers completed the Time 2 (T2) quantitative interview approximately 18 months after their T1 quantitative interview.
- 78 workers completed the Time 3 (T3) quantitative interview approximately three years after their T1 quantitative interview.
- 22 purposively selected workers participated in a qualitative interview concerning their WISE working experience between July and December 2020.
- WISE front-line supervisors: 14 supervises participated in individual interviews between April and May 2021.

Data collection and measures

Quantitative data collection tools

A 188-question interview protocol was administered to each worker three times at approximately 18-month intervals. Table 2 provides an overview of the health, wellness, work, and income-related measures gathered in addition to standard demographic variables.

Table 2: Overview of Health, Wellness and Income Measures

Measure of scale	Source	Cronbach's alpha		Notes
		T1	T2	
Health- and wellness-related measures				
The RAND 36-Item Short Form Survey Instrument (SF-36)	McHorney, Ware, Lu & Sherbourne, (1994)			All scores are reported out of 100 with higher scores representing fewer limitations.
Limitations in physical activities due to health problems		0.86	0.93	
Limitations in usual activities due to physical health problems		0.83	0.89	
Limitations in activities due to energy levels		0.79	0.79	
Limitations due to general mental health and psychological distress		0.87	0.87	
Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)	World Health Organization (2002)	n/a	n/a	Diagnostic tool for practitioners to identify risk for abusing a variety of substances. We report on the risk scores for tobacco, alcohol and cannabis. For alcohol, 0-10 is classified as lower risk, between 11–26 as moderate risk and 27+ as higher risk. For all other substances the ranges are 0-3, 4-26 and 27+, respectively.
Satisfaction with Life Scale	Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985	0.89	0.89	Five-item scale scored using a 7-point Likert scale with a higher average score indicating greater overall satisfaction with life

Table 2 (continued)

Measure of scale	Source	Cronbach's alpha		Notes
		T1	T2	
Work- and income-related measures				
Work Intention Inventory Short Form	Nimon & Zigarmi, 2015			All scores are reported out of 100 with higher scores representing fewer limitations.
• Intent to endorse their current employer		0.78	0.79	
• Intent to stay at their current employer		0.78	0.88	
Monthly income from employment	Self-report	n/a	n/a	
Monthly income from all source	Self-report	n/a	n/a	Includes e.g. employment, social assistance (e.g. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)), other family members
Below low-income cut-off level	Statistics Canada (2023)	n/a	n/a	Scored as 1 if a participant's monthly pre-tax income from all sources multiplied by 12 was at or below the low-income cut-off (LICO) level value associated with the year in which they were interviewed, size of city of residence, and the number of individuals reported as dependent on their income. For 2022 because LICO levels were not released we calculated approximate levels by adding the average yearly increase for the previous 5-year period to 2021 LICO values.

Qualitative data collection tools

Administrative interviews concerning each WISE's mission, vision, and operations followed a semi-structured guide (Lysaght et al., 2018) that included a checklist prompting reflections on three dimensions: employment practices, business structure and practices, and worker growth and development. End-of-study interviews documented changes that occurred in WISE functioning since intake and explored trends observed in the study findings for the individual WISEs.

The qualitative interviews used semi-structured guides. For workers, the guide probed the pathway of the worker to WISE employment, their experiences in the WISEs, why they left (if applicable), personal employment motivations, and future goals. Supervisor interviews focused on employment practices and support structures within the WISEs, and supervisor impressions of best practices.

Data analysis

Quantitative measures

Worker quantitative measures were analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistics (both parametric and non-parametric, as appropriate) to profile the population characteristics, identify changes in participant status over time, and to compare sub-components of the population (i.e.,

those who at T3 were working in WISEs, those who had shifted to other conventional employment, and those who had dropped out of the workforce). Differences in average scores per group (including the group of those who did not interview at T3) were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis equality-of-population rank $\chi^2(3)$ with ties test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952). This test indicates significant differences among the groups but does not identify between which specific group(s) the differences lie. Thus, the authors also used Dunn's (1964) test (with a Bonferroni adjustment)**]** for stochastic dominance among multiple pairwise comparisons to determine which pairs of groups were significantly different from one another. The exception to this was for the T3 comparisons of work-related variables for which the two-sample Wilcoxon rank-sum (Mann-Whitney) test was used (Wilcoxon, 1945; Mann & Whitney, 1947). The authors also compared within-group changes over time using *t*-tests. Significant results are noted as applicable in these analyses.

Qualitative data

Worker qualitative interviews were analyzed by five members of the project team using an analytical approach consistent with Yin's case study methodology (2014). Interview transcripts were imported into nVIVO software and team members reviewed them independently, looking for data patterns. The team discussed observations and initial codes until a provisional coding framework was established. Each team member then re-reviewed a set of transcripts until all interviews had been coded in detail by at least two members. Files were combined and emerging central themes were reviewed. Researchers then examined a matrix that contained demographic and other baseline quantitative details for each participant. This information provided additional context and contributed to explanation building across cases (Yin, 2014).

Administrator interviews analysis included calculating descriptive statistics on responses to scaled interview items as well as creating qualitative summaries of responses to open-ended questions.

Frontline supervisor qualitative interviews were analyzed by five team members using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and a team-based approach.

Finally, as part of the knowledge translation process, findings were presented to a mixed forum of 17 workers and staff from participating WISEs and subjected to small- and large-group interpretation and discussion. This process helped integrate findings across measures and data sources and highlighted key points for reporting and future action.

FINDINGS

Worker characteristics and outcomes

Population characteristics

Table 3 provides information on key demographic population features for both the entire sample and the three main comparison groups—those in conventional employment at the time of their third interview, those still working in a WISE, and those who were unemployed. As can be seen in Table 3, the average worker at intake was a single, 40-year-old, white, heterosexual male with no dependents and a high-school diploma who had been hospitalized at least once in the past for reasons related to mental health. Significant demographic differences between the three main comparison groups are explored in more depth below.

Table 3: Demographics by full sample (*n* = 106) and outcome employment status at Time 3

Variable	Employment status at Time 3[a]				
	Full sample (*n* = 106)	Conventional (*n* = 11)	WISE (*n* = 35)	Unemployed (*n* = 26)	No interview at T3 (*n* = 28)
Average age (at interview 1)	40 years	37 years	44 years	35 years	41 years
Identify as female	40%	36%	43%	42%	32%
Identify as heterosexual	84%	82%	89%	81%	86%
Cultural identity					
Caucasian	64%	63%	77%	69%	54%
Indigenous	8%	0%	0%	19%	11%
Other	27%	36%	23%	12%	36%
Visible minority	25%	27%	17%	19%	29%
Marital status					
Single	76%	63%	71%	77%	89%
Married/Common-law	16%	27%	20%	15%	7%
Status changes during study	8%	9%	9%	8%	4%
Dependents					
Yes	5%	0%	0%	4%	11%
No	86%	100%	89%	81%	89%
Changes during study	9%	0%	11%	15%	0%
At least some college &/or university	29%	64%	31%	19%	29%
Primary work prior to T1[b]					
Conventional employment	25%	64%	9%	31%	29%
WISE (long-term employee)	41%	18%	63%	35%	32%
Unemployed	23%	9%	20%	15%	36%
Other (e.g., job program, school)	11%	9%	9%	19%	4%
Self-reported diagnosis[c]					
Psychosis (e.g., BPD, Schizophrenia)	30%	9%	43%	46%	11%
Anxiety/Depression	40%	73%	40%	50%	18%
Substance use disorder	14%	18%	9%	27%	7%
No diagnosis disclosed	32%	9%	20%	15%	71%
Past mental health hospitalization	58%	36%	60%	65%	60%

Notes: Demographic questions were repeated at each interview. When a participant responded inconsistently to what are typically stable demographic features (e.g., visible minority) such discrepancies were noted and the more marginalized status is reported in this table; [a] Six individuals were not included as part of T3 comparison groups as they had retired (*n* =3) or were in school (*n* =3); [b] Participants were asked to provide a five-year work history. We used this information to identify an individual's primary employment status prior to entering the study. WISE employment were the long-term employees recruited to participate in the study; individuals were categorized as having entered WISE employment from conventional employment if they had held an outside job on a part-time or full-time basis in the six months leading up to their WISE employment. Workers were categorized as unemployed if there was no form of community employment and no alternative productivity-related activity (e.g., childcare, education, participation in a job program). [c] This self-report question was introduced at Time 2. Responses were grouped into three non-exclusive categories. The high percentage of no diagnosis disclosed among the group who did not interview at T3 reflects the fact that 10 of the 28 individuals in this group also did not interview at T2.

Table 4 profiles quantitative health, wellness, and work-related indicators for the 78 workers who interviewed at both T1 and T3. Inclusion of the additional 28 individuals who were not interviewed at T3 does not meaningfully change overall baseline levels; thus, for ease of comparison between

T1 and T3, only those who interviewed at both time points are included. By way of comparison, the T1 RAND SF-36 measures all fell within one standard deviation below the mean values for Canadians in the 35–44 and 45–54 age categories, which were 90.9 for limitations in physical activities due to health problems, 83.4 for limitations in usual activities due to physical health problems, 66.1 for limitations in activities due to energy levels, and 83.2 for limitations due to general mental health and psychological distress (Hopman, Towheed, Anastassiades, Tenenhouse, Poliquin, Berger, et al., 2000). The highest substance-use risk score was for tobacco, followed by alcohol and cannabis, and overall, mean scores fell within the lower risk range. The mean satisfaction with life score was in the mid-range ("slightly satisfied"), while worker intention to endorse their employer and to stay at the WISE were both above the scale mid-range ("moderately positive").

Table 4: Health, wellness, and work-related measures by outcome employment status at Time 3

Variable	All T3 participants (*n* = 78)	Employment status at Time 3[a]			
		Conventional (*n* = 11)	WISE (*n* = 35)	Unemployed (*n* = 26)	$\chi^2(3)$ with ties[c]
Time 1 Measures					
RAND-36 Health Measures (0-100)					
• Physical functioning limitations	85.87	94.55	85.57	85.10	3.47
• Role limitations due to physical health	74.68	88.64	79.29	67.31	5.15†
• Activity limitations due to low energy	53.72	55.45	57.29	46.73	4.70†
• General emotional well being	68.31	66.18	70.97	64.00	2.12
ASSIST					
• Risk score for tobacco (0-31)	10.68	4.90	7.37	17.42	14.43**
• Risk score for alcohol (0-39)	5.67	7.00	3.14	9.36	15.11**
• Risk score for cannabis (0-39)	5.54	6.60	3.40	8.84	8.05*
Satisfaction with Life Scale (1-7)	4.36	3.71	4.87	3.98	6.57*
Work Intention Inventory (1-6)					
• Intent to endorse	5.03	5.00	5.07	5.10	0.40
• Intent to stay	4.41	3.61	4.73	4.32	6.58*
Monthly income from work (median)	$672.00	$810.00	$864.00	$400.00	6.76*
Monthly income from all sources (median)	$1510.60	$1585.19	$1600.00	$1466.50	2.43
Hours worked last week (median)	16	16	17	13	1.31
ODSP recipient	51%	56%	54%	50%	0.12
At or below pre-tax low-income cut-off level	81%	73%	74%	88%	2.12
Time 3 Measures[b]					
RAND-36 Health Measures (0-100)					
• Physical functioning limitations	75.88	79.90	85.29	65.00	6.90*
• Role limitations due to physical health	70.83	63.64	77.14	58.65	4.05
• Activity limitations due to low energy	53.91	45.45	55.71	52.31	1.45
• General emotional well being	64.92	58.18	70.97	58.31	6.77*
ASSIST					
• Risk score for tobacco (0-31)	8.63	6.00	7.00	11.54	4.51
• Risk score for alcohol (0-39)	6.46	11.91	3.43	8.35	15.06**
• Risk score for cannabis (0-39)	5.59	7.18	3.54	8.27	6.87*

Table 4 (continued)

Variable	All T3 participants (n = 78)	Employment status at Time 3[a]			
		Conventional (n = 11)	WISE (n = 35)	Unemployed (n = 26)	$\chi^2(3)$ with ties[c]
Satisfaction with Life Scale (1-7)	4.47	3.95	4.75	4.25	2.66
Work Intention Inventory (1-6) • Intent to endorse • Intent to stay	 4.93 4.63	 4.18 3.61	 5.18 4.97		 -2.65** -3.05**
Monthly income from work (median)	$850.00	$1351.68	$790.00		1.86†
Monthly income from all sources (median)	$1536.00	$2500.00	$1700.00	$1134.50	12.14**
Hours worked last week (median)	16.75	35.00	14.00		3.48**
ODSP recipient	54%	27%	60%	62%	4.16
At or below pre-tax low-income cut-off level	77%	36%	86%	85%	12.71**

Notes: [a] Six individuals were not included as part of T3 comparison groups as they had retired (n = 3) or were in school (n = 3). [b] N = 46 for work-related variables, as the unemployed, retired & those in school did not answer these questions. [c] For the Time 3 comparisons of work-related variables we used the two-sample Wilcoxon rank-sum (Mann-Whitney) test (Wilcoxon 1945; Mann & Whitney 1947) instead of the Kruskal-Wallis equality-of-population rank $\chi 2(3)$ with ties test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952, 1953). † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

At $18,127, the median annual income of the workers in the sample falls within the bottom decile of Canadian's 2017 after-tax income (Statistics Canada, 2019). Seventy-two percent of the workers in the sample accessed one or more of the following government income supports: Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) (51%), Ontario Works (19%), and/or the Canadian Pension Program–Disability supplement (CPP-D) (7%). For many workers, these forms of social assistance made up a substantial proportion of their total income differing sharply from the average Canadian, who in 2017 received approximately 13 percent of their total income from government transfers (Statistics Canada, 2019). Finally, 81 percent were at or below the low-income cut-off (LICO) level compared with approximately 12 percent of Canadians who, based on a similar measure to LICO, were living in poverty in 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Differences in health, wellness, and work-related measures based on employment status at T3

Eleven participants were *employed in the conventional labour market* at T3. For seven, this represented a return to the type of employment they held prior to WISE work. Two of the remaining four individuals had transitioned to conventional employment after working in a WISE for at least six years, one had been unemployed, and one had entered the WISE through a job program.

As Table 3 highlights, those who transitioned to conventional employment were younger than those remaining in WISEs, were more educated than those who remained in WISEs ($p < .1$) or became unemployed ($p < .05$), were more likely to have previously been in a conventional sector job than those who remained in WISEs ($p < .01$) or did not interview ($p < .1$), were less likely to self-report psychosis than either of the other groups ($p < .10$), and were less likely to have been hospitalized for mental health reasons prior to the study.

Turning to Table 4, analysis of substance use risk revealed those who transitioned to conventional employment had lower tobacco use than those unemployed at the end of the study ($p < .01$) and higher alcohol use than those in WISEs ($p < .01$). Finally, conventional workers at T3 earned more at baseline than those who became unemployed, reported lower intentions to stay (in the WISE) than all respondents other than those who were lost to follow-up, and had satisfaction with life scores at baseline that were lower than for those who stayed in WISEs ($p < .10$).

The second half of Table 4 highlights how the conventional employee group had changed approximately 36 months after intake. Noteworthy within-group changes (i.e., from T1 to T3) included decreased physical functioning ($p < .05$) and increased role limitations ($p < .10$) due to physical health and a decrease in alcohol risk scores ($p < .05$). The hours worked in the previous week increased over time ($p < .05$), and accordingly, the percentage of persons who were below low-income cut-offs decreased ($p < .05$).

Of the 35 workers *who remained employed at a WISE at T3*, Table 3 highlights that 22 (68%) had been working in WISEs for at least three years prior to study intake, seven had been unemployed, and three had been in conventional employment. The mean age of this group was higher than those unemployed at T3 ($p < .05$) and they had lower levels of post-secondary education than those who eventually moved to conventional employment ($p < .10$). This group was more likely to report having psychosis than those who were in conventional employment at T3 ($p < .10$) and less likely to report anxiety or depression as a primary diagnosis ($p < .10$).

As Table 4 shows, those who remained WISE workers were less likely than unemployed workers at T3 to report a substance use disorder ($p < .10$), and their initial substance use risk scores were lower for tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis than the unemployed group (all $p < .05$). T1 satisfaction with life scores were higher than both those who migrated to conventional employment ($p < .05$) and those who became unemployed ($p < .10$).

Comparing the T1 and T3 measures in Table 4, there were no significant changes in health, wellness, and work-related functioning for WISE workers after 36 months, other than a reduction in hours worked in the previous week ($p < .05$). Monthly employment income, while less than those in conventional employment ($p < .01$), was higher than the unemployed group ($p < .05$). The overall finding is that in general, a meaningful benefit of continued WISE employment was stability with respect to multiple measures of wellness. This stability in wellness measures is in contrast not only to those who were unemployed at T3 but also relative to those who had moved to conventional employment.

The *unemployed participants at T3* ($n = 26$) had the most diverse backgrounds prior to entering the study, with eight coming from conventional employment, nine from long-term WISE employment, and the rest from situations such as unemployment, job programs, or "other" (e.g., stay-at-home parent).

Overall, 10 of the unemployed individuals reported factors related to COVID-19 as having impacted their employment. Among the 10, eight said they were choosing not to return to work due to physical health concerns or other circumstances they related to the pandemic (e.g., childcare responsibilities, anxiety, perceived lack of available opportunities). Two had been laid off at some point during the pandemic and had not returned for personal reasons.

Nine of the unemployed participants reported they were not working at 36 months because their mental health or substance use impacted their ability to maintain steady employment. These individuals had been in hospital at least once during the study period, experienced debilitating medication side effects, and/or had substantial cognitive challenges. Individuals among this group of nine reported they valued being connected to a WISE that would allow them time off when unwell and welcome them back when they were ready for work.

Demographically, as highlighted in Table 3, the group unemployed at 36 months was younger ($p < .05$) and more likely to be Indigenous ($p < .05$) than participants who ended the study employed in WISE. They were less likely to have completed post-secondary education than participants who were in conventional employment at T3 ($p < .05$).

In terms of health and wellness measures, Table 4 shows that the unemployed group had lower physical functioning than people who moved to conventional employment ($p < .10$) and lower energy than those who remained in WISEs ($p < .05$). Their tobacco use risk scores were higher than both other groups ($p < .01$) and they had higher alcohol ($p < .01$) and cannabis risk scores ($p < .05$) at the outset than those who remained in WISEs. Workers who became unemployed had lower satisfaction with life scores at T1 than those who remained in WISEs ($p < .10$), and their monthly income through employment at the outset (i.e., at T1 when they were working in a WISE) was less than the WISE ($p < .05$) or conventional employment ($p < .05$) groups.

Comparing the T1 and T3 measures in Table 4, the group unemployed at T3 showed a decrease in physical functioning ($p < .01$), and a decrease in tobacco use risk scores ($p < .01$) over their three-year study involvement. Because they were now unemployed, this group also showed decreases between T1 and T3 in hours worked last week ($p < .01$), monthly income from employment ($p < .01$), and total monthly income ($p < .05$).

PERCEPTIONS OF WISE EMPLOYMENT

The 22 worker qualitative interviews offered a range of perspectives on the experience of working within a WISE and why workers remain or move on. The main incentive for most entering a WISE was to obtain paid employment, with some workers not knowing in advance that the job they were starting was in a social enterprise. Some saw WISE as a place for ongoing, supportive employment, while for others it was a place to re-group, build confidence, and position oneself for a return to the conventional labour market.

Although the qualitative interview participants had been selected to represent the three main outcome categories of interest (conventional employment, continued WISE employment, unemployed), it was clear that there was no definitive pathway through WISE to any of these results. Several interviewees spoke of moving in and out of WISE employment, with periods in-between either spent in the conventional labour market or unemployed due to deteriorated mental health or other employment barriers (e.g., lack of childcare).

Reported benefits and challenges of WISE employment

The primary recurrent benefit raised by participants was the strong support structure available within

WISEs. Support came from both supervisors and co-workers, and was often embedded in the administrative practices of the WISE (e.g., flexible hours, allowance for performance errors without job loss, connections to healthcare support). As one worker described it, "There was a couple of times that I had my anxiety attacks and stuff like that, and they were just like overall so supporting and stuff like, and yeah, like just kind of gave me like options … they would say, 'take a break, do that,' and then yeah, overall just very supportive" (W18). Even workers who left WISE employment often reported that the WISE provided supports that made employment more tenable and sustainable.

Workers also described a positive organizational culture within WISE. It was seen as a work option that values "people over profits." One worker stated, "I'm not sure if it's part of a mission statement or if it's just part of the organization structure, but it's sort of like not a 'get in and get out,' but it's a 'come in, get trained, and then blossom out into the community' kind of atmosphere for clients to work in" (W3). There was a sense that people are treated with more consideration than in the conventional labour market, and that workers are valued for what they can contribute versus a focus on their deficiencies.

The WISE experience for many served as a venue for skill development. Employment in the WISE provided the opportunity to either acquire new work skills or build the resiliency needed to sustain employment. As one worker who ultimately moved to conventional employment stated, "I had to also learn—like marketing and communication skills were not good. And I felt I was constantly going like upstairs to say, hey can you help me, like talk to this person or how do I approach this person and things like that" (W1). This evolution in work capacity was also attributed to developing confidence in one's skills. One worker noted, "I also have trust that my work skills, like my ability to work well, are not dependant on my mental health, and that this is a healthy place for me" (W8), while another stated, "It gave me back some normalcy and peace of mind, mindfulness, confidence. So, you know, all important skills that create a strong foundation for someone. Like I said I think it's part of the recovery mix" (W21).

A final key benefit was the presence of a stigma-free environment within WISEs. Workers who remained in or returned to a WISE discussed the value of a work environment where there was openness and acceptance of mental illness, such that illness-related needs could be accommodated, and disclosure of mental illness was not a concern. One worker stated, "I mean like with [supervisor] I could totally be myself. If I was having an issue, all I needed to do was to call him up, explain to him what was going on, and I knew that I would not be judged. I knew that I would still be valued as a good employee" (W12).

Some participants described challenges in working within their WISE. For example, many participants who moved to conventional employment did so due to dissatisfaction with their WISE earnings (either wages or hours available). One noted this frustration, stating, "It's a good place to work, you know its good people. It's just it's hard to work so hard and get paid crap for it" (W7). Other reasons for moving to conventional employment included desire for upward or lateral mobility (i.e., a perceived lack of growth opportunities within the WISE), frustration with a supervisor or co-worker, a poor match between their work tolerances and the type of work available (e.g., contracts where work triggered mental health symptoms), or purely logistical reasons (e.g., transportation issues). One worker noted that the WISE employment culture may even have been too different

from what one finds in conventional employment: "I think what I liked about them was that they were very accommodating, but I guess to find a way to kind of mirror a regular workforce while still being supportive might be beneficial to people who are transitioning into the workforce" (W22).

Organizational elements

Information on how the structure of a WISE can influence the WISE experience was also gleaned by analyzing salient organizational features through the administrator and supervisor interviews or organizational documents.

Administrative structure

As summarized in Table 1, at intake in 2017, the seven WISEs in this study were vastly different in terms of size (ranging from one to seven businesses within a WISE), annual revenue, number of workers (25 to 700), and areas of commercial engagement. Administrator titles ranged from Executive Director (for stand-alone WISEs) to Operations Lead for a small WISE operated by a non-profit organization. All the administrators reported to a Board of Directors and had authority to make operational decisions within an approved budget. All led entrepreneurial planning, partner outreach, and marketing, and three of the seven noted they regularly contributed hands-on work alongside crew members and supervisors. The role of supervisor also varied based on the size and commercial activity of the WISEs; however, all performed a wide array of duties that included training, social support, and engaging in work alongside their employees. For some, scheduling and product/service innovation were also job expectations. These differences in scale and operational structure seemed to influence some of the work and support options available to workers, as noted in the following section.

Career development opportunities for WISE workers

Opportunity for career and personal advancement differed based on the size of the WISE or if the nature of the work available created participation barriers based on sex, age, or physical capacity (e.g., physically demanding work). Some WISEs presented limited opportunity to move into a supervisory position, particularly if such roles were paid through the partner/parent organization. Other WISEs, however, had examples of a few workers who had been promoted and assumed a supervisory or administrative role within a business or the broader administrative structure, and this was particularly true of consumer-led businesses. Most WISEs were working to create a broader range of options for their workers by attempting to create administrative work options, developing a range of businesses to allow for transfers within, growing their product lines, and/or through pivots (e.g., from private catering to ongoing meal preparation contracts with NGOs) and/or partnerships that developed during the pandemic. Some WISEs reported they provided basic workplace safety and first-aid certification for workers, and the larger WISEs had opportunities for focused skill enhancement in job-related skills (e.g., deep cleaning, cash transactions) but little to no scaffolding to further education was evident.

Challenges to WISE operation in the mental health sector

The hybrid mission of WISE necessitates attention to both the social goal of promoting employment

within the target population but also the core necessity of operating a successful business. For most, the social mission predominated, this being their reason for existence. One administrator stated that they help people find a path toward not only employment, but life, breaking a cycle of failures in the process. Another commented, "For some, not working magnifies their identity as a mental health patient. They can now say to others they have a job. Even if you are only working four hours, you can look forward to it all week. If every day is a Saturday, then Saturdays aren't special" (A6).

That said, all the WISE administrators and most supervisors spoke to the challenge of honouring the hybrid mission of employing a work-challenged population, while striving to satisfy customer needs and meet industry quality and production standards. One solution was to increase the hours and level of responsibility for workers who were strong producers. This allowed them to retain workers with more severe work capacity challenges, albeit with a limited number of hours and shifts, ensuring that the more productive workers were present to provide expected service or product quality and output.

Most participating WISEs had witnessed changes in their worker populations in recent years, particularly since the COVID-19 disruption. As in the general labour market, older workers had retired and some who experienced increased social or mental health disruption during COVID-19 or established alternate life patterns chose not to return to work. With increasingly low unemployment rates in the general labour market, some administrators had noticed it was the more employment-barriered workers who were arriving at and staying in a WISE. One stated, "[They are]" much, much more unwell. … The people who are coming through our doors are mostly referrals from ODSP or Ontario Works, mental health and regional health centres, the incarceration stream—they're harder to employ people, which is exactly what [WISE name] should be doing (A3).

Another administrator noted that increased competitiveness in the market has led them to turn away job applicants who proved unable to adequately perform basic job duties during the screening process.

Supports needed to remain solvent

Work Integration Social Enterprises that were heavily subsidized by municipal and/or provincial funds noted the need for this support to continue, whereas WISEs with secure internal funding believed that additional supports—by way of funding for social service workers or connections to community supports—would make a critical difference in their ability to support workers through to sustained workforce attachment. As one administrator noted, "it's not about simply 'finding them a job'—it's about providing the supports needed to get through challenging times and transitioning to a job that is a good fit" (A1). Inadequate incomes were raised by another administrator, who noted that it is difficult for people living in poverty to work, and is advocating for improved OSDP pension allocations.

DISCUSSION

Contributions of WISE to workforce participation

The multiple methods used in this case study provided the opportunity to gain new insights into both WISEs and their workers. All data sources spoke to the importance of WISE in the mental

health sector. Administrators suggested that without WISE, many of their workers would simply drop out of the labour market. Quantitative findings supported this notion of enhanced employment attachment, with the majority of T3 participants being engaged in productive work, either in a WISE (45%) or in conventional employment (11%). This finding is also consistent with previous research where WISE employment was perceived to contribute to mental health recovery through improved self perception and an enhanced sense of capability and identity as a worker (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Krupa & Lysaght, 2016). A unique contribution of this longitudinal study is the non-linearity of the employment trajectory for these workers. As noted earlier, there was evidence of several participants who moved seamlessly in and out of WISE, the conventional labour market, and periods of unemployment, demonstrating dynamic work histories and fluid relations with the conventional labour market. The findings also suggest that in general, there is a population of highly vulnerable workers (e.g., those who are older, less educated, and with a history of psychosis) for whom WISE remains an important employment option, and one that produced the highest life satisfaction ratings.

Many of the study participants, including workers and administrators, identified skills gaps in incoming workers as an employment barrier. This is a common finding with this population due to the age of onset of many major mental illnesses, which frequently results in fractured educational histories (O'Shea & Salzer, 2019; Seabury, Axeen, Pauley, Tysinger, Schlosser, Hernandz, et al., 2019). Despite limited evidence of formal education participation by WISE workers, the confidence and work behaviours gained through WISE employment led to many workers retaining their jobs, even if working for a limited number of hours. For some, the very existence of a position that they could maintain without expectation of increased demand or work hours was what helped them remain employed.

That said, both quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that WISE employment is not for everyone in this population. In particular, those with substance use concerns were more likely to be unemployed after three years. This is not unexpected, as substance use has been demonstrated to present a significant barrier to employment success (Huang, Evans, Hara, Weiss, & Hser, 2011) and may require specialized services not currently available in the WISEs studied. Some industries that are prone to high levels of substance use among employees, such as the food and beverage and automotive industries, build in options for treatment as part of employee assistance programs (Lysaght et al., 2022), which are services that smaller organizations such as the WISEs in the sample may be unable to afford. These and other findings speak to the need identified by some administrators for greater access to social supports, external to usual work supervision, to help workers deal with these and other social issues, which commonly derail work commitments.

Even for participants still working after three years, most incomes remained below the poverty line. Since the time when data were collected, changes have been implemented to the ODSP, which are intended to improve overall income levels by allowing for higher levels of earned income. Changes to minimum wage law, which have been ongoing in Ontario and other jurisdictions, have had mixed impact (Banks, Blundell, & Emmerson, 2015; Vance, 2016). Clearly, WISE wage rates are unlikely to rise meaningfully given the nature of the jobs, but some wages within this study exceeded minimum wage levels. There may be opportunity to develop positions that lead to more lucrative work in WISEs in employment sectors that are less typical, or to build career counselling into the WISE framework as part of an enhanced employee assistance system.

Impact of WISE on individual wellbeing

While individual gains were noted, this study did not identify significant change in most health and wellbeing measures for workers. It is notable that there was no significant decline observed in most wellbeing indices over three years, particularly for those who remained in a WISE. The fact that workers in conventional jobs and those who were unemployed showed significantly lower life satisfaction scores than those in WISEs suggests that WISE workers may find improved work-life balance in a more supportive work environment, and through finding the "just-right fit" of work demand. Other research has identified challenges associated with conventional employment for persons with mental health and/or substance use disorders, many of them inherent in the types of workplaces many find themselves in due to interrupted career trajectories (Gewurtz et al., 2021).

Factors impacting the sector

Small businesses in general have high rates of failure. Thus, the environment in which WISEs exist is precarious, and it is perhaps remarkable that most of the WISEs in this study have had such long histories. All operate with some level of subsidy, however, and described struggles with survival from a business perspective. The financial struggles facing social enterprises have been widely documented (e.g., Battilana et al., 2015; Gidron, 2017; Horrocks, 2015; Mustafa, Khan, & Grecco, 2020); within this study, although all have survived, changing market conditions forced the businesses to innovate and seek partnerships but also required them to frequently seek additional sources of funding. Well-developed employee assistance programs (providing services such as counselling, therapeutic services, addiction management, etc.) are not available to these organizations, and this was identified as a factor that could help increase employment success rates for workers.

Key points of consideration for sector development and sustainability

Work Integration Social Enterprises employment emerged in this study as an important bridge to employment for workers experiencing loss of work capacity due to mental illness and/or substance use disorders, and a source of supportive work. Stakeholders within this study raised several points to be considered by policymakers to ensure sustainability.

Funding approaches. Survival is feasible for WISEs given prudent business management. As Cooney (2016) notes, modern social enterprises typically work with declining levels of public assistance, while serving clients with high levels of social disadvantage, placing them in a high level of risk. It is clear that publicly sourced financial subsidy is required to underwrite the high costs of worker support and other challenges to human resource management (e.g., managing a largely part-time workforce, frequent sick/wellness leaves) and to build in employee assistance strategies to address challenges associated with financial and social maintenance. Any requirements for ongoing accountability should be streamlined such that administrative time to maintain supports is not excessive. Resources to support grant writing and donation solicitation and outcomes evaluation would be particularly helpful for smaller organizations.

Communication between government policy-planning departments. Government departments responsible for WISE, working together with provincial disability benefit providers, can develop thoughtful approaches to ensure that monthly earnings do not place benefits payments in jeopardy.

Worker choices concerning when and how much to work should not imperil receipt of disability benefits, and increased work involvement should be supported with appropriate compensation. The goals of WISE overall can best be enhanced by a flexible disability support program that allows quick reinstatement of benefits as needed and incentives to work to maximal capacity.

WISE resource development. Resources to foster business success might include business guides and templates, tax guides, and WISE-specific educational resources. From a human resource perspective, supporting government agencies could provide templates for employee standards and responses in the case of injuries, illness, and other emergencies, and protocols for promoting employee career development. Networking and knowledge exchange opportunities for WISE administrators and staff could help build strength and innovation within the sector. Importantly, many small WISEs require ready access to external social supports to draw on when employees are in need.

LIMITATIONS

The relatively small sample size and the differences in group size across outcome categories limited the flexibility of the statistical analysis. The study also lacked comparative data for adults with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders who did not enter a WISE; therefore, the benefit of WISE relative to alternatives cannot be determined.

Another major limitation is the challenge the authors faced in determining outcome status of the study participants. As noted, the analysis of worker status at each time point did not always reveal a linear trajectory from unemployed to a WISE to conventional employment. Rather, some in the sample moved back and forth between employment types (e.g., WISE to conventional to WISE). Thus, the "outcome" status at any point is only that: a snapshot of where individuals were positioned relative to the job market at the time of interviewing. A longer longitudinal study of worker employment might serve to capture these fluctuations and identify patterns, but it would likely be fraught with even more loss to follow-up. In addition, there was overlap between statuses for a portion of the population. For example, half of those who were officially unemployed at T3 reported "informal" income. Similarly, a quarter of those employed in WISEs earned income elsewhere, whether through a conventional job, informally, or at another WISE outside this study sample.

The authors anticipate that higher numbers of workers would have been employed after 36 months in the absence of COVID-19-related layoffs in spring 2020, COVID-19-related changes in personal and life circumstances, and other factors, such as the availability of the Canada Emergency Relief Benefit, which may have reduced the financial urgency for some to return to work. The pandemic-associated disruption in livelihoods and work limited the authors' ability to draw causal conclusions on changes in measures over time.

Outcome data may be skewed in favour of those who remained in a WISE due to the relative ease of finding these individuals for follow-up interviews. Income-level data were limited by inconsistencies associated with self-reporting and the multiplicity of income sources possible for each participant. Respondents had difficulty in identifying specific data within each income category, and although they had been encouraged to bring relevant pay stubs to the interview, most did not. Thus, financial reporting here represents gross estimates at best.

The mental health challenges experienced by WISE workers were self-reported, and it is likely that certain mental illnesses, such as psychosis and substance use disorders, were underreported. While participants did report on how mental health challenges presented in the workplace, it may be that participant reporting was shaped by social and self-stigma, or reflected the mental health experiences that impacted them the most in their day-to-day lives.

Lastly, the authors had hoped to draw linkages between WISE organizational structures and operational practices and population characteristics (e.g., fit between WISE models and workers of varying capabilities, interests, etc.) and worker outcomes. It was discovered, however, that despite major differences between participating WISEs "on paper," it was impossible to identify discernable patterns or typologies amongst them. As Wilton and Evans (2018) note, WISEs tend to be organized and delivered under diverse and constantly evolving models, and thus a larger sample would be necessary to begin to identify broader patterns of difference.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study offers important contributions to our understanding of the role of WISEs in the mental health sector. The demographic profile of the population with mental illnesses and substance use disorders who work in WISE adds insights concerning this group, including distinct worker pathways within WISE. Additional research should address the experience of persons who struggle to maintain employment despite WISE intervention, notably workers with substance use disorders and Indigenous persons, with consideration given to ways that their WISE experience can be maximized.

This study highlighted the role WISE plays in maintaining workforce attachment for a highly vulnerable population. Future research should consider ways to maximize work and lifestyle benefits for workers within WISEs, including career development strategies, connections to outside sources of health and wellness support, and ways to improve the incomes of this population. The latter will require focused exploration of the interplay between financial support systems and WISE wages, and innovative ways to raise workers to above poverty-line income levels. Particular areas for investigation in this sector include point-in-time comparisons between WISE workers and workers with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in conventional employment. This study revealed a multidirectional flow of workers between conventional and WISE employment, which suggests that these should not be considered distinct and rival outcomes, but rather an array of options.

Finally, this study highlighted the urgent need for ongoing research to identify ways to increase the resiliency and success of WISEs themselves. Ongoing evaluation can be achieved through partnerships and/or mentoring with academics and evaluation specialists. Research could also examine working conditions in conventional work settings with a view to replicating WISE accommodation strategies and organizational culture.

NOTE

1. We acknowledge that use of this terminology risks medicalizing the health situation of these workers, and that preferred terminology continues to evolve over time. We use this term to indicate that the health situations of most WISE workers differ from what are referred to as "common mental disorders."

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An Upside-Down Approach to Social Innovation at Institutions of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Experts commonly assert that social innovation is best taught outside of higher education, given that higher education institutions are prone to rigidity traps. Opposing research suggests that social innovation can flourish *within* institutions of higher education when they embrace new ways of teaching and learning. Using a student-initiated and led Social Innovation Organization (SIO) at a university in South Asia as a case study, this article considers how social innovation education might emerge from and take root within institutions of higher education and what the consequences are for social relations, power structures, and institutional practices.

RÉSUMÉ

Les experts affirment généralement qu'il est préférable d'enseigner l'innovation sociale en dehors des établissements d'enseignement supérieur, étant donné que ceux-ci sont sujets à des pièges de rigidité. Des recherches opposées suggèrent que l'innovation sociale peut prospérer au sein des établissements d'enseignement supérieur lorsque ces derniers adoptent de nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. En utilisant comme étude de cas une organisation d'innovation sociale (OIS) lancée et dirigée par les étudiants d'une université en Asie du Sud, cet article examine comment l'éducation à l'innovation sociale pourrait émerger et s'enraciner dans des établissements d'enseignement supérieur, et quelles en seraient les conséquences sur le plan des rapports sociaux, des structures de pouvoir et des pratiques institutionnelles.

Keywords / Mots clés : social innovation, higher education, decolonial pedagogy, community-based participatory approaches / innovation sociale, enseignement supérieur, pédagogie décoloniale, approches participatives communautaires

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars and practitioners believe that social innovation is best taught outside of higher education (Wilson, 2016), given their propensity to rigidity traps (McGowan, Kennedy, El-Hussein, & Chief 2020; Tidball, 2016; Rogers, 2013; Butler & Goldstein, 2010; Carpenter & Brock, 2008). Others argue that social innovation education can flourish within institutions of higher education, but this suggests the embrace of new ways of teaching and learning (Wagner, 2012). In the authors' experience, social innovation education outside of institutions of higher education has advantages: the education can be flexible, include participants from a wide variety of backgrounds, and allow student entrepreneurs to move quickly from ideation to pilot. The case study described in this article indicates that placing social innovation frameworks within institutions of higher education has value. The social innovation curriculum can receive institutional stability, benefit from the university's material resources (in-kind donations), the curriculum can tap into a wider ecosystem of learning, and institutional bureaucracy can provide levels of transparency and accountability that external funders often value.

This article shares a case study of the student-initiated and led Social Innovation Organization (SIO) at a university in South Asia between 2010 and 2012. Stories of innovation and institutional change within higher education are often told from the perspective of the institution or faculty. This case study shares a story of how students can also drive change and innovation at universities, highlighting the conditions, process, and implications of an impetus to structural change within the institution that originates from the "bottom" or grassroots of the institutional system, rather than from the top down. For this reason, this article refers to the SIO's curricular structure and pedagogical leanings as an "upside-down approach" to social innovation education. The authors explore how this approach fundamentally gestured towards decoloniality (Andreotti, 2021) through a centring of land-based, community-centred approaches rooted in traditional and indigenous wisdoms (Coomaraswamy, 1943; Panikkar, 1993). In its attempts to navigate the rigidity traps inherent in modern colonial (Andreotti, 2021) institutions of higher education (McGowan et al., 2020), the SIO created a pathway for students to both take curricular leadership around social innovation and to design and pilot test social innovations.

POSITIONALITY AND DECOLONIAL LENS

This research and case study arise from over 10 years of relationship and friendship between the first three authors rooted in participatory, land-based, and wisdom-centric (Coomaraswamy, 1943; Panikkar, 1993) leanings to systems change work. In their work together, the authors have unlearned, (re)discovered, and strengthened their commitment to decolonizing their lenses, methods, and ways of being, knowing, and doing. Each of the four authors brings overlapping and distinct lived experiences to inform and guide this collaborative work.

The first three authors met through a joint project. Maryam was the co-founder of the SIO, which was eventually funded by the Mastercard Foundation in partnership with Tufts University, where Jennifer served as the Project Lead. Ross was contracted as part of the project evaluation team. Sean was brought into the mix given his deep relationality with the first two authors and expertise in social innovation.

Maryam Mohiuddin Ahmed grew up in Pakistan and completed her studies in law and human rights in Lahore, Pakistan and Berkeley, United States. She brings over 15 years of experience in human rights, social justice, youth leadership, social innovation, and entrepreneurship. Maryam is currently completing her doctoral work and teaching at the University of Waterloo in Canada. She is a decolonial scholar and wisdom practitioner based in the Haldimand Tract (colonially known as Waterloo, ON).

Ross VeLure Roholt grew up in the Midwest of the United States and completed his undergraduate studies in political science and international relations, his master's in social work, and his doctorate in education at the University of Minnesota. He is a publicly engaged scholar with over two decades of experience and active research partnerships in the United States, Northern Ireland, and Croatia.

Jennifer Catalano grew up on the East Coast of the United States. She completed her undergraduate studies in international relations at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a master's degree in international affairs at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. She has 20 years of experience as a practitioner in the field of global social change.

Sean Geobey is a first-generation post-secondary student who grew up in Southern Ontario and is now a publicly engaged scholar with over 20 years of experience as a social innovation practitioner based at the University of Waterloo on the Haldimand Tract where he directs the interdisciplinary Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation (WICI). He completed undergraduate studies in economics and political science at Wilfrid Laurier University. He received a master's degree in economics at Queen's University, and a PhD in environment and resource studies at the University of Waterloo.

The authors are united by their commitment to decolonial, participatory, and liberatory education practice and scholarship. They bring unique perspectives on decolonial studies given their different upbringings and education.

METHODOLOGY

Data on the SIO first emerged during a wider, multi-site study on the role of higher education in supporting youth economic futures (VeLure Roholt, Carrier, Furco, DeJaghre, & Fink, 2016). The project was initially designed around innovations within higher education that created pathways from degree to career. After a competitive process to select eight university partners, the focus shifted slightly as all finalists focused on entrepreneurship education, and several of the eight program sites included social entrepreneurship as a priority in addition to standard entrepreneurship. Funded by the Mastercard Foundation, this larger action research project provided data on and documented impacts from the teaching and learning initiated by the SIO.

This article draws from a larger study that includes mixed methods, with the researchers gathering survey, observational, and interview data over a three-year period with yearly visits to each of the eight sites. Data from both the larger project, joint gatherings, historical document review, and informal conversations and formal interviews with leadership and designers of the SIO informs and shapes this description (VeLure Roholt et al., 2016).

This article focuses on the data collected from one of these eight partner program sites, the Social Innovation Lab (SIL), where the SIO originated. The overall methodology of the project was conceived as a learning partnership (Magolda, 2012; VeLure Roholt, Fink, & Ahmed, 2023), with the researcher and site-partner team working together to develop and prioritize evaluation and research questions as well as gather data, analyze it, and report on the findings. The learning partner methodology draws from participatory, liberatory, and decolonial approaches to knowledge (VeLure Roholt et al., 2023). The authors sought to craft a study grounded in cultural ways of knowing (Chilisa & Mertens, 2021), spending several days talking about and coming to an understanding of how to design the evaluation and action research to align with local values and include culturally responsive methods. The study incorporated storytelling, dialogic interviewing, and participatory observation as important elements to gather data. The authors discussed the emerging data and the ideas they understood were important to illuminate. The learnings were shared initially in conversations with the community. The learning partners took the ideas explored in conversation with the community and drafted reports and other documents to share what was learned. All documents were returned to the partner for review and comment. Reports were finalized when all involved agreed with the overall story in the report.

Through this process, the SIO emerged as a significant piece of the overall story within one university site of how social innovation education moved from the margins to the mainstream. To understand the multiple pathways universities can take to support and extend teaching and learning around social innovation, the authors directly focused on understanding the origins, early challenges, and practices of this SIO.

FRAMING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PROMISES AND PITFALLS

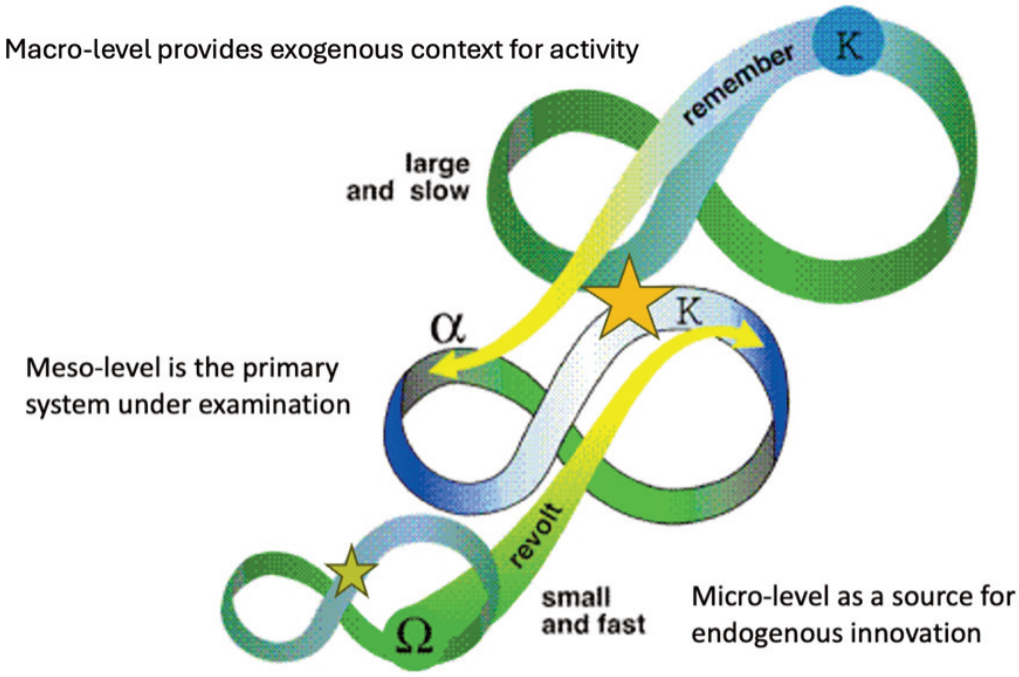
Currently, researchers and practitioners around the globe are working to expand and embed social innovation teaching and learning within higher education (Hazenberg, Ryu, & Giroletti, 2020). Many of these efforts are designed to support sustainable development and address pressing social issues both locally and globally (Hazenberg et al., 2020). The expansion of these efforts is shining a light on the promises and pitfalls of locating social innovation teaching and learning within institutions of higher education. This section begins with a definition of social innovation, then describes three promising movements in higher education that support social innovation teaching and learning, and three pitfalls that have to be reconciled for it to advance. This brief review frames the context for the case study on the SIO that follows.

Writing about social innovation poses challenges—an agreed upon definition does not yet exist, nor do universally accepted metrics to measure it effectively (Bund, Gerhard, Hoelscher, & Mildenberger, 2015). This article does not attempt to synthesize all the possible definitions, and instead focuses on those that have informed this work. The authors' understanding of social innovation recognizes a multitude of scholars and definitions. The variety of definitions often illuminate the social over the individual, a process toward a product or outcome, while constantly questioning the forms, uses, and possibilities of power (Bund et al., 2015; Westley & Antadze, 2013). The authors embrace the inclusion of students involved in social innovation education and how they come to understand what they are learning.

Fradette Whitney (2018) interviewed students who defined social innovation as "designing new solutions to make the world a better place" (p. 157). This definition includes two assertions about the meaning of the term *social innovation* that are worth unpacking: 1) that it involves something novel (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014), and 2) that it produces a benefit that is social in nature (rather than purely economic) (Bergman, Markusson, Connor, Middlemiss, & Ricci, 2010). The multiple truths in defining social innovation quickly emerge when one explores the literature. One group of scholars advocate for a definition of social innovation as being fundamentally concerned with the production of social benefit, many disagree with the idea that social innovation must be novel, while some disagree that it produces benefit (Hochgerner, 2011; Westley and Antadze, 2013). For example, social innovation might encompass processes that require decolonization (Kalema, 2019), regenerative design and development (Hardman, 2012; Wahl & Baxter, 2008; Wahl, 2016), and repair ideas, bringing forward old ideas to illustrate both how current problems have come to be and how historically others have worked to both prevent and now solve these social problems (Ahmed, Ayub, & Khan, 2012). By contrast, the historical approach taken by Westley, McGowan, Tjörnbo, and others (2017) also applies the social innovation lens to system changes that can be seen as having quite destructive social and environmental impacts, including intelligence tests, residential schools, and the global derivatives market. We are inclined to agree with those that describe social innovation as innovations that are social in both ends and means (Nicholls, Simon, & Gabriel, 2015), with a focus that extends beyond products and looks more toward transformations in social systems. Bringing together these ideas, contradictions, and themes, Bund et al. (2015) describe social innovation as having three dimensions: a product/service, a process, and attention to power. Social innovations simultaneously address a human need (product/service), work in ways that are inclusive and participatory (a process), and challenge or change existing power relationships within society (Bund et al., 2015). Our working definition of social innovations is a collective creative process that addresses a perceived social need.

Alongside this, the approach to social innovation taken here is grounded within complex adaptive systems theory (Westley & Antadze, 2013). In this vein, social innovation can also be described, depending on the scope and scale of its efforts, as either working within nested systems (Walloth, 2016) or by its propensity to cultivate the "new emergence" (p. 15) of systems. This multi-level lens is well-grounded in complex systems theory (e.g., Ahl & Allen, 1996; Gunderson & Holling, 2002) and connected to autopoietic (self-organizing) emergent behaviour (Maturana & Varela, 1991). When social innovation emerges within higher education, it illuminates higher education as a complex system, composed of nested systems and various propensities, all interacting to create an ecology of knowledge production, teaching, and learning. This article takes a multi-level systems perspective on innovation (Ahl & Allen, 1996; Holling & Allen, 2002; Holling & Gunderson, 2002), with the student-led efforts emerging from the micro-level within the university, the university itself as a meso-level site of interest for adoption of a potential social innovation, and the macro-level representing the economic, cultural, and political constraints faced by academic institutions in the region (see Figure 1). This framework for multi-level systems analysis has the strength of being able to show how different levels within the system work at different speeds through the dynamic process of exploration, exploitation, conservation, and collapse at different scales, with the innovative micro level generally moving quickest and the macro level changing slowly.

Figure 1. Multi-level dynamic system



Source: Adapted from Holling & Gunderson, 2002

In recent years, more Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have added language about social innovation, social entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship to their mission statements, moving beyond an implicit agreement that their teaching should benefit society to a more explicit agreement that they should teach and develop social innovators and even directly launch social innovations (Giesecke, Lassnigg, Steiner, Schartinger, Leitner, Vogtenhuber, & Kalcik, 2020). Over the last 20 years, we have seen promising movements that create fertile space for social innovation teaching. This article will focus on three such movements. First, HEIs often have major elements that support social innovation, including knowledge production, material resources, human resources, and curricular resources (Hazenberg et al., 2020). Second, HEIs are expressing a commitment to public engagement and community engagement in progressively significant numbers (Boyer, 1990). This is increasingly understood to be part of their role rather than optional (although in practice it still is optional). Finally, more and more HEIs are leaning into grand challenges and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a focus for their scholarship and curriculum (Popowitz & Dorgelo, 2018).

Promising movements supporting social innovation education

Social innovation teaching and learning requires resources. Wagner (2012) describes three critical factors to teaching social innovation: expert knowledge, creative thinking, and personal motivation. As anchor institutions (Garton, 2021) in their communities, HEIs have resources that they can often easily share to support social innovation, including material and human resources. Material resources are abundant on college campuses, including space, technology infrastructure, libraries, and common spaces that can be used to support social innovation teaching and learning. They also have human resources—faculty, staff, legal representation, community partnerships, and alumni—that can be invited to support social innovation teaching and learning. Finally, many HEIs already

offer curricular options that support social innovation teaching and learning (Hazenberg et al., 2020; Monteiro, Isusi-Fagoaga, Almeida, & García-Aracil, 2021). HEIs have resources and expert knowledge that can be directed toward supporting social innovation.

Many HEIs stated public commitments to community engaged work also offer a promising window of opportunity for innovative social innovation teaching and learning. Building off discontent within higher education and what many perceived as its failed mission to serve the broader public, Boyer (1990) called on HEIs to consider scholarship beyond discovery. This report expanded the community engaged and public engaged movements on campuses globally, providing a rationale and framework to understand scholarship as discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Community-engaged scholarship aims to redesign basic university functions to support reciprocal relationships between HEI faculty, staff, students, and communities, however defined (Da Cruz, 2018). These partnerships create connections between "the intellectual assets of the institution (i.e., faculty expertise) to public issues such as community, social, cultural, human, and economic development" (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010, p.15), which are consistent with promising social innovation pedagogies.

A final promising movement for social innovation teaching and learning in HEIs emerged with the increasing focus on grand challenges in both new curricular offerings and research agendas (Popowitz & Dorgelo, 2018). The purpose of grand challenge initiatives is to bring together multiple disciplines to respond to local and global problems with an emphasis on multi-disciplinary research and student-led innovation efforts (Popowitz & Dorgelo, 2018). These initiatives have been joined by other orientating efforts to address global problems through aligning HEI teaching and research efforts to the current Sustainable Development Goals (Ravazzoli & Varelo, 2020). Some HEI networks, such as Aurora in Europe, are forming to support interdisciplinary collaborations across HEIs to encourage innovative responses that impact these goals. While notable, all these movements in higher education continue the trend of top-down innovation, rather than the upside-down approach explored later in this article.

Persistent pitfalls for social innovation education

The rise of the promising movements in HEIs supportive of social innovation education is matched by the enduring pitfalls within HEIs that challenge and resist this form of education. This article focuses on three pitfalls: prioritization of the individual, "banking" knowledge consumption (Freire, 2000), and cultures of exclusion. Each of these create challenges for social innovation education to fully flourish beyond a set of courses or a degree program students complete.

HEIs are geared toward individual accomplishment and production. These attitudes have been further reinforced in higher education with the ongoing neoliberal global education reform movement (Adamson, Astrand, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). This reform strengthens competition and standardization at the expense of public engagement and further reinforces education as a personal commodity to be consumed, rather than a public good. This can be seen across HEIs predominantly in the Global North (and increasingly in the Global South as well) with the added emphasis on individual accomplishment and the mundane focus on individual assessments (del Cerro Santamaría, 2019). Social innovation education has a different foundation, one that emphasizes collaboration and knowledge sharing as the basis for changemaking (Alden Rivers, Armellini, Maxwell, Allen, &

Durkin, 2015; Wagner, 2012). In practice, social innovation frameworks can also support a focus on individual accomplishment and hero discourses (Martin, 2003; Nicholls & Murdock, 2012), but this is misleading. While stories of successful social innovation often create a hero narrative of a lone individual who struggled to surmount enormous challenges to bring their social innovation into the world (Young & Lecy, 2014), further questioning usually reveals the networks of support and effort that truly came together for the innovation to work (Nicholls & Murdock, 2012). A good idea alone does not make a social innovation. Even though it has been said often, it is worth repeating here: "social innovation is not a solo endeavor" (Fradette Whitney, 2018, p. 197).

The neoliberal movement in HEIs further strengthens the social roles and social processes around knowledge and its production as extractive, individualistic, and competitive (Morgan, 2022; Saunders, 2007), and intentionally or unintentionally have contributed to epistemicide —the killing of knowledge systems (Hall & Tandon, 2017). Current social processes and socio-structural arrangements create an environment where knowledge is evaluated through economic utility (Morgan, 2022; Saunders, 2007). This one-way process of knowledge production, shaped by the epistemological norms of settler-colonialism (Andreotti, 2021; Kalema, 2019; Mamdani, 2015), creates another barrier to social innovation education given that social innovation often envisions students as the primary producers of knowledge in partnership with communities—taking responsibility for their own learning and creating connections between what is known and what must be done to address pressing social problems (Giesecke et al., 2020). Students bring knowledge that is contextual, place-based, and rooted in their lived experiences. Within social innovation education, students develop comfort with not-knowing, as they wade through complex adaptive problems that have no instruction manual. Cooperative peer-to-peer learning, where students are both knowledge consumers and producers, remains central to social innovation education (Wagner, 2012). Typical pedagogical approaches in social innovation teaching and learning include community engagement whereas more critical approaches (Kalema, 2019) encourage radical collaboration (Tamm & Luyet, 2004) with communities. They promote reflective and reflexive activities to recognize the value of their communities', other communities', and their own wisdom and knowledge. Finally, they encourage co-production and co-design, whereby students become partners in what is learned and designed (Elliott, Robson, & Dudau, 2021), sharing it with others so that together they can address public issues they personally care about.

A final pitfall for social innovation education in HEIs is the issue of diversity and inclusivity. In the universities we have worked in, diversity is promoted even while the system continues to operate according to a logic of exclusivity—of students, faculty, and curriculum (Rosinger, Sarita Ford, & Choy, 2020; Saunders, 2007). This poses a critical challenge for the role of HEIs in education for social innovation. We know that people who have a deep understanding of a social issue also have ideas for how to solve them (Wilson, 2016). Yet, HEIs participate in epistemicide (Hall & Tandon, 2017), have a poor record of increasing diversity among students (Rosinger et al., 2021; Saunders, 2007), and function as exclusive spaces (Hall & Tandon, 2017), making community engagement challenging (Farner, 2019). For social innovation education to flourish within HEIs, engaging a wide range of stakeholders is often described as critical (Martin, 2003; Nicholls & Murdock, 2012). An exclusive HEI environment can create a persistent challenge to social innovation teaching and learning.

HEIs have increasingly focused on social innovation as an institutional strategic goal, research focus, and educational programmatic area. In many ways, HEIs have much to offer social innovation education. At the same time, current structures, cultures, and power dynamics in HEIs create real and significant barriers for the necessary learning processes within social innovation education.

The debate as to whether HEIs *should* support social innovation education for us comes down to a question of pedagogy and power. As we explored the promises and pitfalls of teaching social innovation in HEIs, we began to ask: how can higher education invite students to be innovative so that it lives up to its promise while avoiding the pitfalls? This article dives into one example of social innovation teaching and learning to understand how higher education can support social innovation teaching and learning. In our analysis, this case study offers an example that illuminates how social innovation education can exist within HEIs by inviting unexpected leaders and working through an upside-down approach. This example offers a strategy for HEIs to support social innovation that amplifies their promises and works hard to avoid the pitfalls.

RIGIDITY TRAPS AS A CONCEPTUAL BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This case study is grounded in the concept of rigidity traps in higher education, as discussed by McGowan et al. (2020). In line with the framing of a HEI as a complex system, wherein social innovation emerges as a nested system (see Walloth, 2016), rigidity traps provide an important frame to understand the features and actions of the enclosing system.

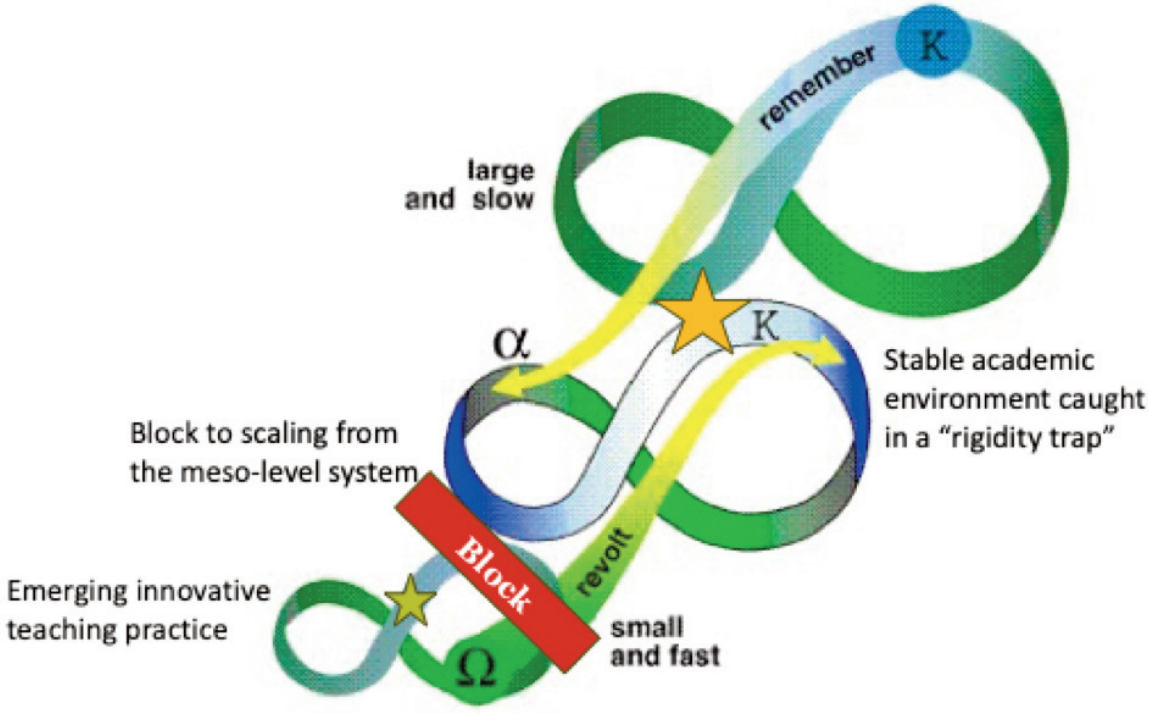
Rigidity traps occur "when a system becomes locked into a pathway that leads to a densely networked, self-reinforcing and inflexible set of arrangements—and power and profitability are mutually reinforcing, making change unattractive for those within the system" (McGowan et al, 2020, p. 307). Rigidity traps create incentives to continue working in the ways the system has always worked. These reinforce the pitfalls and challenge the promises of social innovation education in institutions of higher education. In other words, without rigidity traps, there would be no pitfalls.

Rigidity traps provide a nuanced understanding of this case study. As with most HEI's, there existed a power structure sustained by academic and management pursuits of an international scholarly agenda at the university, creating an environment where the SIO could flourish initially, because it was perceived as politically protected, less important, and non-threatening. The power structures within a HEI are themselves structured within the constraints offered by their broader social, political, cultural, and economic contexts. Senior leadership within HEIs can be expected to view the navigation of this wider contexts as amongst their core responsibilities.

The case study also draws on McGowan et al.'s (2020) framing of "dominionization," a process in which "the ownership of expertise" is "expressed primarily by those schooled and working in traditional Western higher education organizations" (p. 307). This dominionization can lead to "institutional path dependence on colonial and extractive practices and ethos," reinforcing rigidity traps. The SIO's work was aligned with decolonial principles, implicitly challenging colonial and neoliberal logics present in higher education institutions. This alignment created tensions as its work advanced.

The SIO's approach to social innovation education challenged the status quo, acting as a "systems-disrupting" force within the university. The concept of dominionization is reflected in this case, where the SIO's work challenged the dominance of one kind of knowledge within the institution. Challenging a fundamental epistemological underpinning of a system that perceives itself as being successful in its given context can spur a protective response limiting the growth of emergent social innovations that can simultaneously disrupt the status quo in the immediate term, while also adding to the long-term resilience of the system were it to be adopted (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Blocked innovation in a multi-level dynamic academic system



Source: Adapted from Holling & Gunderson, 2002

As evidenced in the following case study, an upside-down approach to social innovation education, combined with implicit wisdom-centric decolonization efforts (Coomaraswamy, 1943, Panikkar, 1993), offered a potential workaround to existing rigidity traps in this higher education institution. By scaling deep instead of up to begin with, and focusing on engaging in non-formal activities, the SIO managed to navigate around the rigidity traps until the scale-up brought new challenges. This study highlights the importance of navigating prevailing power structures and adopting innovative approaches to foster social innovation education in higher education institutions. It offers an answer to the question "How can an upside-down approach to social innovation training and education provide a case for addressing rigidity traps?"

THE SOCIAL INNOVATION ORGANIZATION (SIO): A CASE STUDY IN THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL INNOVATION EDUCATION

This case does not follow a top-down pathway. Instead, it started with a group of students who

had an interest, time, and ideas of how they could introduce and create social innovation teaching and learning with their peers.

The SIO adopted an upside-down approach to social innovation education, eschewing formal coursework and instead focusing on extracurricular learning and non-formal training. This approach allowed the SIO to create opportunities for students to learn about social innovation without directly challenging the prevailing rigidity traps at X University. The SIO's story invites HEIs to imagine possibilities for supporting social innovation teaching and learning by creating partnerships, networks, and opportunities that displace a banking model of education (Freire, 2000) and invite a participatory, collaborative, and inclusive methodology for teaching social innovation. When viewed as a propensity within the Panarchy framework (Gunderson & Holling, 2002), an upside-down approach acts as "ever-new emergence," leading to a nesting of a wisdom-centric, decolonial approach to social innovation within the complex system of higher education. Some key learnings from this approach are summarized as follows:

1. The SIO case provides a model of how universities can create the space and opportunity for students to lead. In essence, an upside-down approach to social innovation education in HEI ought to be based on the premise that everyone can lead.
2. The SIO case serves as an excellent example of the value of fostering partnerships between the university and the community. In essence, it allows for the (seemingly upside-down) recognition of the community as educators.
3. The SIO case further illustrates that innovation is not a "classroom." It is an ecology around space, which was exemplified in the experience of the organization. This leads us to the realization that innovation happens in the in-between spaces, not simply in classrooms, but most often in networks.
4. As the students behind the SIO went on to write the foundational handbook on social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the country, it became clear that, sometimes, documentation is the intervention. Through this publication where they added narrative to the stories they heard from the community, the SIO team garnered subject matter expertise, and therefore some degree of formal authority.
5. Given the SIO's decolonial lens to this work, one of the key learnings for the team was that truly upside-down approaches tend to be a social innovation in their own right. As such, community-based learning is social innovation.

An upside-down approach: Designing from the ground-up[1]

As one of the founding members of the SIO in 2011, reflecting on our upside-down approach to social impact work reaffirms the fundamental idea that to produce different results, we also need to be doing things differently. Some of the "upside-down" nature of our work had to do with our reality at the time: the SIO was the product of a student movement (Literaty[2]) that had very little formal authority at the university. Important context here is that the university can be considered a premier neo-liberal institute of higher education; it is often referred to as the "Harvard (University)" of the country (Tavernise, 2019), and hosts the country's top business school. It has also received numerous accolades and international awards for its innovative approaches and emphasis on in-

clusion and access through its various scholarship programs. Given this framing, any new initiatives coming out of the Literaty movement were bound to take a bottom-up approach.

A great deal of our upside-down approach, however, also had to do with the culture and context we were steeped in. Our physical locus being a country in South Asia—a former-colony turned nation-state that was the result of decades of anti-colonial struggles and founded on theological principles—meant that faith and local indigenous wisdom traditions ended up informing our actions at a deeper level. This translated to an inherent decolonial foundation and a fundamental focus on individual transformation and looking inward, which was rooted in Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Zoroastrian, and other indigenous wisdom traditions (Coomaraswamy, 1943; Panikkar, 1993) native to the land that now constitutes this country in South Asia. As we journeyed within and upward from the grassroots (and therefore upside-down, in all senses) is how we started our social innovation work at the SIO.

At the start, the SIO aimed to create opportunities for social innovation learning. It quickly became more than that and created pathways for student leadership, community engagement, and networking. This was also reflected in the way we were viewed by our champions in positions of authority.

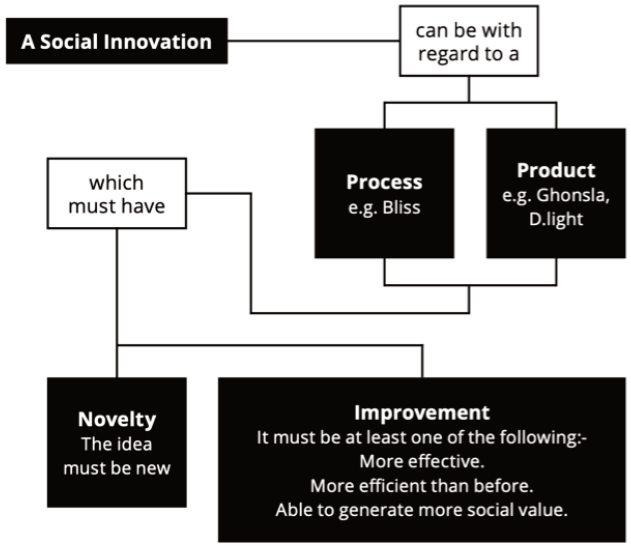
Everyone can lead: The sio continued a student movement

Dean A, our sponsor for the SIO, expressed the following in a letter to a funder:

> The typical relationship between an endorser and an endorsee is a hierarchical one—it is considered an honor for the latter to be endorsed by the former. This case is an exception—it is an honor for the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law [at the University] to be asked for an endorsement by Literaty.
>
> The School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law is proud to be associated with Literaty and to claim ownership of a product to which it has contributed indirectly, at best. The most we can claim is that this partnership is the result of staying connected with our students, of seeking out talent and of encouraging, nurturing, and guiding it to the best of our abilities. (Dean A, letter to Tufts University, 2012)

At first glance, the SIO was a physical space in the Dean's office where a group of students gathered and worked on ways to bring the practice of social innovation, entrepreneurship, and impact work into mainstream academia and the job market. The SIO's core work entailed organizing informal workshops, training, and extracurricular events around social innovation, social entrepreneurship, and community-based research. It partnered with student societies and

Figure 3. Criteria for defining a Social Innovation Organization



Source: Adapted from Ahmed, Ayub, & Khan, 2012, p. 34

organizations around the country and internationally (where a South Asian student body was present) to organize workshops and introductory sessions around the *Handbook for Social Enterprise …* (Ahmed, Ayub, & Khan, 2012), which was written by its founding team. As part of this publication, the SIO team became part of a global conversation on the definition and implications of social innovation. Figure 3 illustrates the definition SIO chose to inform its work.

Most of this work was voluntary, and although students were able to use departmental facilities such as official meeting rooms, telephone lines, and stationary, and have a formal office address, the students did not receive compensation for their efforts in the beginning.

It was taken for granted that the SIO was in its "startup" phase and needed to "bootstrap." Over time, however, the social capital of being situated in the dean's office allowed the SIO team to rally networks and put together grant proposals in partnership with the University, whereby SIO took on the role of the implementing partner and the university became its fiscal sponsor. The proximity to the dean's office also resulted in interesting research roles for the students, which did lead to a paycheck. This way, the students were able to continue working on the SIO's goals while also building up their professional profiles through research assistantship opportunities.[3]

To carry out this work effectively, SIO leadership (comprised entirely of students) took an all-hands-on-deck approach, garnering faculty support, setting up student chapters across major local and international universities to replicate the Literaty model, and producing case studies and workshops on successful local and international social innovation and entrepreneurship models. To lock in faculty support, the SIO team found ways to align their research interests with community-based projects the students could undertake with faculty supervision. The SIO also encouraged faculty to become part of its advisory board and engaged them as mentors for its various projects and initiatives. In addition to this, the SIO team established student chapters of the Literaty movement both locally in other universities in the country and in diaspora communities in the United States and Canada. These student chapters shared stories of local social innovations from the country and established global networks and collaborations in unlikely places, such as the Muslim Jewish conference,[4] an international youth-led organization looking to foster peace building and harmony amongst inter-faith communities. All these combined enabled SIO to strengthen the case for its existence, providing the dean's office continued rationale for its ongoing support.

A prominent challenge worth noting for the students' leadership was gender and age bias. Not only was the SIO team a group of students with next to no formal credentials to support their leading a new curricular opportunity within a university, it was also majority female-led. This combination triggered a rigidity trap (McGowan et. al., 2020; Butler & Goldstein, 2010), as well as a microcosm of the gendered power dynamics (Martin, 2004; Meyerson & Tompkins, 2007) endemic to the global HEI space over the last several decades. The inclusion of young women in university discussions on innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialization of research alongside doctoral degree bearing, grey-haired men often made for interesting and uncomfortable environments for all parties involved. Often, female team members would be expected to capture and circulate high-level meeting minutes or other community building tasks. They were seen as subordinate and therefore assumed to be responsible for subordinate tasks. Interestingly, the gendered power dynamics

were not specific to older, male faculty and staff members at the university, but also ended up surfacing within the SIO team, with younger, male students and team members sometimes feeling threatened by their female counterparts. They too often assumed the female staff would be responsible for the community building tasks. This, however, did not hold back the young women in the SIO team, who instead of seeing it as a "gendered role," leveraged their relational prowess, and ended up creating buffer spaces in unimaginably difficult rigidity traps.

This is a theme we saw carried forward in the management and operation of the SIO's successor SIL as well, with the majority of the SIL team being women, and the entire entity being woman-led. However, as noted before, this was possible in these rigid, gendered spaces, with the additional support of powerful male allies such as the dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, or later on, the vice chancellor of the university. In some instances, the female team members' deeper level of relationality and mutual trust with champions such as the dean and vice chancellor eventually led to professional differences and rivalry with mid-level management and faculty heads. For instance, when the SIO transitioned to SIL and was allotted a bigger space on the university campus, the female executive director had to make a strong case to maintain control of prime real estate against the head of the Department of Economics, the most profitable program at the school.

Documentation is intervention: Scaling deep

Once it had garnered support at the university, and in the larger social impact space locally, the SIO team set out to become a thought leader in the social innovation space by researching and showcasing successful case studies of social innovation models that had been implemented in the country using the entrepreneurship route. This led to the SIO publishing the first ever handbook for social enterprise in the country (Ahmed, Ayub, & Khan, 2012). This handbook provided an accessible working definition of social innovation, and showed how it can be used to create sustainable change through social entrepreneurship. It also synthesized the SIO model and supported both scaling deep and scaling up (Tulloch, 2018).

The publication of this handbook opened a new set of doors for the SIO team. With the handbook, the SIO team designed workshops, training sessions, and a draft curriculum, which outlined what it takes to use a social innovation approach to addressing wicked problems, and how social entrepreneurship can help co-create and test the right solutions. The handbook for social enterprise ended with a questionnaire in it for aspiring social innovators and entrepreneurs. It was added in there as something comparable to the likes of the "I'm feeling lucky" button on Google. Little did we know that this form would be the ultimate product-market fit test for the need and eventual creation of the country's first social enterprise incubator, the Hatchery, just two years later. As the SIO team went around showcasing and distributing its *Handbook for Social Enterprise …* (Ahmed, Ayub, & Khan, 2012), they started receiving calls from all over the country with eager, aspiring change-makers asking for support in their social innovation journeys and a route to sustainability through social enterprise models.

The SIO talked about and worked on social justice issues, with an emphasis on poverty, through social enterprise incubation and advocacy. It did so by showcasing success stories of existing social enterprises and supporting nascent social entrepreneurs with strategy and outreach (film, online,

and print). The SIO also advocated the need for the creation of even more scalable and sustainable social enterprises across different domains and audiences, including the youth, academia, government, non-government organizations, corporate foundations, and philanthropists.

A primary activity of the SIO entailed documenting student-led social innovation processes and the resulting innovative products and services. This documentation as intervention illustrated the subject and process expertise of the student leaders and provided a framework for the design of workshops and eventually a social innovation space within the university. Through the stories of innovation, the SIO began to create a space for social innovation, one that occupied "in-between" spaces to teach about social innovation.

Innovation happens in the in-between spaces

One of its greatest assets, yet the source of a consistent challenge faced by the SIO, was its interstitial, in-between existence. Legally, the SIO was a project of the private entity and former student movement Literaty, and not formally part of the institution. This arrangement was loosely held together by Dean A's "upside-down" endorsement and continued support and nurturing. His support created possibilities within the university in what could otherwise be seen as an environment wrought with rigidity traps and a profound aversion to innovation and change (McGowan et al., 2020; Tidball, 2016; Rogers, 2013; Butler & Goldstein, 2010; Carpenter & Brock, 2008).

While the SIO was not a program, department, or major at the university, in many ways, it was all three. The SIO offered specialized training in an emergent field, allowed students to gain firsthand community-based research experience, and even started training them in how to turn solutions into potential entrepreneurial ventures. Given that it was not part of the university, the students did not have to worry about institutional liability or intellectual property disputes, or consider accounting for institutional overheads for any funding they received to create innovations around their ideas. This was also true for any independent projects the SIO's successor SIL ventured into. At the outset, the funds and benefits to the SIO and its student team were so marginal that they went unnoticed and therefore unhindered. As the team became skilled in writing funding proposals and the award amounts the SIO received started to increase, it began to receive more attention. University personnel, who had not paid much attention to the SIO at the beginning, now began to express concern and raise questions about the ability of students to effectively administer larger grant awards.

What provided some measure of protection to the SIO was its structural in-between-ness. The SIO was able to remain nested within an institute of higher education whilst existing legally independently of it. This allowed the SIO to create its own content and knowledge products, and essentially run a parallel knowledge economy and continue to control grant awards, even when the university served as the fiscal agent. This shadow stream of knowing and learning differently broke barriers and hierarchies, let unusual suspects "in," and created the space for a co-creation of solutions to deeply entrenched problems, in service of and in partnership with the communities that faced them every day.

Community members are our educators

This upside-down approach meant that knowledge keepers and seekers were no longer exclusively

highly credentialed faculty and staff or economically well-off students. Teachers were also the guards and gatekeepers at the entrances to the Ivory tower, the rickshaw drivers lined up outside to take students to and from the university, the janitorial staff tasked to clean up after the dorm residents and day visitors. They helped the students understand their context in unparalleled ways, giving them access to entirely new planes of perception (Mulder, 1979) and allowing for true place-based learning. In engaging the guards, the janitorial staff and the rickshaw drivers, the students had direct access to the lived experience of the majority of the country's populace and the key challenges facing them: from access to finance to inadequate healthcare and insurance.

Using social innovation as their go-to toolkit, the students and community co-created solutions and micro-movements that enabled better access to health insurance, fair wages, and decent work conditions for the janitors, guards, and rickshaw drivers in the microcosm that was the university. The SIO recognized, acknowledged, and centred the wisdom of the community and saw in them teachers, who are always present but often invisible in HEI settings. Whereas in HEIs, knowledge comes from books, credentialed faculty, and systems, the SIO in its decolonial approach saw the inherent wisdom (Panikkar, 1993) in community, making space for other ways of knowing, doing, and being.

If knowledge is power, the upside-down approach meant everyone had it, and this was unacceptable to various parts of the system, a classic case of the rigidity trap (McGowan et al., 2020; Butler & Goldstein, 2010). What continued to energize us to meet and address this challenge was the knowledge that emerged from the world surrounding the university as well as from within it. Our in-between spaces provided both challenges and possibilities. The SIO became an in-between space for knowledge creation, construction, and production, but not necessarily in the ways understood by the institution.

Community-based learning is social innovation

The other challenge that emerged as the SIO moved into the domain of knowledge creation was its wisdom-centric (Coomaraswamy, 1943, Panikkar, 1993), decolonial, pedagogical approach. Not only were the sources of data, information, and, subsequently, knowledge, different, the SIO's entire model was premised on sharing, articulating, and embodying this knowledge differently. In the research, teaching, and dissemination of social innovation cases, all aspects from data collection to writing and publication were done using a community-based, participatory lens (Reason, 1994; Khan, 1998; Khan, 2009). Instead of looking for proof of a phenomenon in peer-reviewed journals, the SIO team were recording oral histories from the community and sieving out patterns that were then put together into stories, images, illustrations, short videos, and easy-to-read narratives for consumption by other young people like themselves. These same students would then visit universities and colleges across the major hubs of the country and present those case studies to their peers, inviting them to imagine their collective futures differently.

The SIO's connections with other universities and successful efforts facilitated the advancement of the work. Initially, the dean's support and non-confrontational nature of the SIO's work allowed the organization to function smoothly. Writing a book and framing issues as being of public importance enhanced the SIO's credibility. Mentorship and partnerships with faculty further boosted its reputation. Additional training modules were developed, leading to the dream of expanding the in-

itiative into the SIO's successor, the SIL that housed the country's first social enterprise incubator. However, as the scale increased, the rigidity traps resurfaced as the practice creeped into domains relating to profit and power.

We experienced that our work was initially not taken seriously given the lack of credentials of the young, bright-eyed team of dreamers implementing them. We also noticed a small minority trying to shut down the organization's initiatives, deeming them unnecessary and a so-called "waste of students' precious time." For these reasons, the SIO's outreach arms, the Literaty student chapters across various universities, often had to work under the radar and avoid garnering too much attention so as to save the SIO's larger body of work from subsequent scrutiny. Over time, however, it became clear that there was a growing appetite amongst young people to explore new avenues altogether after their studies were complete. In addition, by the time the SIO's successor SIL became established as a thought-leader in the social innovation field, the government, egged on by international development agencies, started introducing new supports for entrepreneurship with a social bent, and some of the SIO & SIL's decolonial pedagogy ended up being recognized and valued in a new light. Some of this entailed international awards and recognition of the SIO's innovative model in the HEI realm, other examples included partnerships with other HEIs in the country to help them set up their own versions of the SIOs and SILs.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the SIO became institutionalized as the SIL, the South Asian university in question became a more inclusive space. Learning from their example, to address the pitfall of lack of diversity and inclusivity, HEIs can benefit from noting the importance of "scaling *down*" and "scaling deep" (Tulloch, 2018) in the diffusion of innovation education in various domains. The work by social innovators at the SIO eventually reached outward and invited marginalized voices **in the university** to enter, "hang out," and collaborate on projects. Before it ended, the SIO's next iteration, SIL, became a resource for community social innovators without college degrees as well. Community members found ways to connect to this movement in the university and found a receptive listener and collaborator in the SIO. The partnerships that formed addressed real issues in the community in meaningful ways, by expanding sources of knowledge and wisdom around issues, problems, needs, and solutions. The SIO sponsored a way of working that fed socially innovative products and, more notable, a socially innovative process. It worked with community members, listening, learning, and jointly acting on the wellspring of knowledge and wisdom to address community issues. It made social innovation relevant to local communities around local issues e.g., class justice, the housing crisis, and climate change. It became a centre for community-engaged teaching and learning as well.

Supporting an "upside-down" approach to social innovation in HEIs entails creating interstitial spaces with the support of champions with formal authority. From the SIO's example, it is clear that young people, when given the right tools, opportunities, and nurturing, can surface wisdom-centric (Coomaraswamy, 1943, Panikkar, 1993), decolonial approaches that move beyond the paradigm of "reform" (Andreotti, 2021) and tap into other ways of knowing, doing, and being in the world. The recognition of the value of other kinds of data and knowledge sources comes from cultures and contexts where relationality and connection reign supreme. It was therefore precisely in this

South Asian country, a multi-faith, multi-ethnic, incompletely modernized place, or as Coomaraswamy (1943) puts it, an "uttermost part of the earth" where traditional wisdom "is still remembered" (p. 363), that the fast-eroding, centuries-old, paradigm of relationality and belonging, is what allowed for the eruption of an "upside-down" approach to social innovation.

For HEIs across the world to practice their own versions of "upside-down" approaches to social innovation, it is crucial that they create cultures and sheltered spaces that invite and support student leadership, innovation, and engagement. Furthermore, they must create the nutrients for expanded curricular offerings and opportunities, valuing different kinds of knowledges and wisdoms that may come from unusual, and often, un(der)-credentialed sources.

The SIO case study shows that HEIs have a low overhead, high-impact opportunity to mainstream social innovation in their local communities by inviting students to lead. Ceding power and inviting student leadership and energy into the mix can, and very likely will, help HEIs to have a transformative impact on the grand challenges facing humanity today.

NOTES

1. This section of the case study is written in first-person by the first author as she reflects on her time as one of the co-founders of the SIO.
2. Literaty was a student initiative that worked to inculcate a sense of positivity, confidence, and responsibility in the youth of this South Asian country. On a macro level, it aimed to do justice to the global image and reputation of the country and worked to shed light on all that is worth appreciating and being inspired by. In a sense, it aimed to increase "positive sensationalism," which was much needed in our context at the time (and probably still is). The cornerstones of this initiative included promoting cultural revival and tourism, critical thinking, and social innovation. The students achieved their goals with the help of a biannual publication by the same name (which was spearheaded by students and academics from the university and others) and on-ground events (conferences, workshops, movements, and drives) that supplemented the literature they disseminated.
3. In 2013, the SIO received multi-year funding, which enabled it to hire a formal team and transition into the SIL, which housed the country's first social enterprise incubator. The incubator graduated over a hundred social enterprises over the course of four years until 2017, and the lab became an extraordinary example of what a successful partnership between an HEI and youth-led initiative could look like.
4. The Muslim Jewish Conference (MJC) is a dialogue-based leadership and educational non-profit based in Vienna, Austria. For over a decade, the MJC has brought together students, civil society workers, and other young leaders aged 18–35 from around the world for an immersive, multi-day interfaith experience. The MJC took place annually between 2010 and 2020 in European locations including Paris, Sarajevo, Vienna, and Berlin, welcoming 50–150 participants for approximately five days of thematic presentations, skill-building workshops, capacity-building brainstorming, and informal discussions under the slogan, "we talk to each other, not about each other." It equipped participants with tools to engage in effective communication, to retain volunteers in their organizations, and to secure funding for their work." Read more at: https://mjconference.org/mjc/muslim-jewish-conference-2022/
5. The names of the student organization, the university, and the country have been anonymized for this study.

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New Avenues for Public Value Management and the Role of Nonprofit Policy Innovation Labs: Co-Experience and Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The past decade has witnessed the global rise of policy innovation labs (PILs), many of which are nonprofit organizations. Policymakers have promoted PILs as a novel approach to addressing pressing economic and social issues. Concurrent with the growing importance of PILs has been the shift to public value management (PVM), which focuses on policy outcomes that benefit the public and the needs and problems in society. One relatively new process raised in the public management literature is co-experience, which considers stakeholders' engagement with public policies or programs within the broader context of life experience. This, the authors argue, is an important contribution to public value creation. Social media platforms such as Twitter (now X) are one tool that PILs can employ to assess and develop stakeholder co-experience. The authors analyzed 13,009 Twitter messages largely generated by stakeholders relating to 42 U.S.-based PILs.

RÉSUMÉ

La dernière décennie a vu l'essor mondial des laboratoires d'innovation politique (LIP), dont plusieurs sont des organismes sans but lucratif. Les décideurs politiques ont présenté les LIP comme une approche nouvelle pour résoudre des problèmes économiques et sociaux urgents. Parallèlement à l'importance croissante des LIP, on a assisté à une transition vers une gestion de la valeur publique qui se concentre sur des résultats politiques pouvant profiter au public en s'adressant aux besoins et problèmes de la société. Dans un tel contexte, la co-expérience, un processus relativement nouveau évoqué dans la littérature sur la gestion publique, tient compte de l'engagement des parties prenantes dans les politiques ou programmes publics dans un contexte plus large d'expérience de vie. Selon les auteurs, il s'agit là d'une contribution importante à la création de valeur publique. Les plateformes de médias sociaux telles que Twitter (maintenant X) sont un outil que les LIP peuvent utiliser pour évaluer et développer la co-expérience des parties prenantes. Les auteurs ont analysé 13 009 messages Twitter générés dans une grande mesure par des parties prenantes associées à 42 LIP basés aux États-Unis.

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Keywords / Mots clés : nonprofit policy innovation labs, co-experience, stakeholder engagement, Twitter, public value management / laboratoires d'innovation politique sans but lucratif, co-expérience, engagement des parties prenantes, Twitter, gestion de la valeur publique

INTRODUCTION

Many nonprofit organizations have enthusiastically employed social media as a method of day-to-day engagement, which has inspired increased scholarship on the topic (Guo & Saxton, 2014; Svensson, Mahoney, & Hambrick, 2015; Campbell & Lambright, 2019; Xu & Saxton, 2019; Halpin, Fraussen, & Ackland, 2021; Wallace & Rutherford, 2021; Taylor, 2022). To this growing area of scholarship, this article makes three significant contributions. First, it describes the trend of how U.S. nonprofit organizations have taken on the role of becoming policy innovation labs (PILs). Policy innovation labs are organizations and spaces often touted as a novel approach to addressing pressing policy issues and stakeholder engagement (McGann, Blomkamp, & Lewis, 2018; Olejniczak, Borkowska-Waszak, & Domaradzka-Widta, 2020). They are engaged in policy design, public sector reform, and program delivery. In each, a well-established co-design approach plays a central role. Second, and central to this analysis, is assessing how co-experience manifests through Twitter-based[1] stakeholder engagement. We argue that this recently introduced mode of engagement in the public management literature captures individuals' expressive acts and statements by considering stakeholders' engagement within a digital public sphere (Yanow, 1996). Third, PILs and their co-design activities have contributed to public value management (McGann et al., 2018; Hansen & Fuglsang, 2020; Cole, 2022; Kim, Wellstead, & Heikkila, 2023). Broadly defined, public value management (PVM) refers to the value generated by the government through services, laws, and policies that benefit the public and contribute to the common good (Moore, 1995) and contrasts with the older "new public management" paradigm and its focus on efficiency, competition, and performance management (O'Flynn, 2007). Social media-based co-experience *vis-à-vis* PILs also contributes to PVM, which is the focus of this article.

The literature review below borrows from various perspectives, beginning by chronicling the rise of policy innovation labs (PILs), in which nonprofit organizations play a leading role. Then, the public value management literature is introduced, providing the larger framework for this analysis. Finally, the authors describe co-design and co-experience, followed by an overview of how social media qualifies as a co-experience activity and contributes to public value. The data and methods section details the method of collecting and analyzing over 67,000 tweets from 42 U.S.-based PILs actively engaged in Twitter activity. Co-experience was based on three criteria. First, the authors measured PILs' social media interaction by examining the intensity of the tweets. Second, the types of tweets (retweets, mentions, and mentions in retweets), which indicate the interaction between the PIL and stakeholders, were analyzed. Finally, from the nonprofit literature, the authors employ Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) and Guo and Saxton's (2014) "action, community, and information" categories to assess Twitter content. This article summarizes how nonprofit organizations contribute to PVM through co-design and co-experience activities. First, the context for this article is provided, as well as how Twitter contributed to the larger public sphere.

Context: The turbulent events of 2020

2020 was unprecedented in terms of Twitter usage and represented an excellent opportunity to examine PIL's Twitter activity and how users responded to the four highlighted events and activities. First, COVID-19 started to spread at the end of 2019 and became an issue of concern in the United States early in 2020. In mid-March, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and the reality of the deadly virus was causing schools and businesses to shut down in-person operations. By April 2020, in the United States 6.6 million people had filed for unemployment (History, 2020). Daily life had changed dramatically by June when data collection started, including high unemployment levels, shifts from the physical to virtual work and school environments, and mask mandates ("What a year," 2020).This all prompted much discussion on Twitter around the issue of COVID-19 as a public health concern, data collection and modelling, the policies to address the situation, and community-level solutions to problems caused or influenced by COVID-19. There was considerable Twitter-related COVID-19 research (see Dalili & Dastani's 2020 overview of Twitter-related activity related to COVID-19).

At the same time, there was a series of high-profile murders of Black Americans, including at the hands of police officers. This issue started to gather widespread attention in February 2020 with the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, followed by Breonna Taylor and Daniel Prude in March, leading up to George Floyd's murder in May ("What a year", 2020). The murder of George Floyd and the viral video account of the incident sparked protests against police brutality and for Black lives. The protests started in Minneapolis and spread nationally and internationally through May and June and prompted discussion on Twitter around structural racism, policing, and the responses of corporations, businesses, and schools to public sentiments regarding police behaviours and discussions on race. Nguyen, Criss, Michaels, Cross, Michaels, Dwivedi et al. (2021) found that Twitter traffic increased public awareness of structural racism and a desire for social change.

2020 was also tied as the hottest year on record, and began with bushfires that burned millions of acres in Australia (NASA, 2021). There were above-average occurrences of tropical storms and more intense droughts and monsoons throughout the globe (Blunden & Boyer, 2021). August, the end of the collection period, marked the beginning of the wildfires on the West Coast of the United States, which had fire emissions "almost three times higher than the ten-year mean" (Blunden & Boyer, 2021, p. 4). On Twitter, climate change-related events prompted discussions and the work PILs and other organizations could do to address its causes and impacts.

National politics also took center stage in the United States. First, the presidential election combined President Trump's active use of Twitter and spreading conspiracy theories and disinformation about COVID-19. In May, Twitter labelled one of his tweets as misleading for the first time, though he was allowed to remain on the platform until 2021 ("What a year", 2020). These actions prompted political discussions on Twitter, which sometimes centered on fake news and disinformation, in addition to the political campaign messages and updates about government actions (Lewandowsky, Jetter, & Ecker, 2020). Unsurprisingly, many scholarly contributions linked Twitter, the Presidential election, and former President Trump (Fuentes & Peterson, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

What are policy innovation labs?

Policy innovation labs (PILs), which often include nonprofits, engage in many fields of work (Wellstead, Gofen, & Carter, 2021). A commonality across types of PILs is that they typically use innovation and co-design methods to address complex public policy problems (Lewis, 2021). They are "arenas for experimentation," which can be added to an organization and function independently (Criado, Dias, Sano, RojasMartín, Silvan, & Filho, 2020, p. 1). They often break down hierarchies and encourage creative thinking to develop possible solutions to address key public problems, often by employing collaborative methods to create user-centred designs (Bellefontaine, 2012).

The "labification" approach to public policy encourages citizen engagement to improve public outcomes (Williamson, 2015; Criado et al., 2020). The growing popularity of PILs "can be seen as one of the elements in the ongoing public-sector innovation discourse and related reform attempts," as governments are facing new challenges in the current era of complex policymaking (Tõnurist, Kattel, & Lember, 2017, p. 1456). There are now an estimated 475 PILs across the globe (Villa Alvarez, Auricchio, & Mortati, 2022) and well over 100 in the United States (Wellstead & Nguyen, 2020), indicating their growing popularity. Key features that distinguish PILs include organizational structure, focus area, methods, and collaboration (Lindquist & Buttazzoni, 2021). Policy innovation labs operate at various levels of autonomy within and outside the public sector (Olejniczak et al., 2020) in setting their targets and working methods (Tõnurist et al., 2017), allowing them to be more open and agile than traditional hierarchically-based government policy units (Lewis, 2021).

Policy labs: Purveyors of public value management

Public value, a public management concept, was first introduced in 1995 by Mark Moore as an approach for public managers to realize "the outcomes that citizens want from government achieved in a way that is consistent with their values and expectations" (Moore, 1995, p. 5). Central to his framework is that public managers need to meet three tests to ensure that the public's strategies meet three specific conditions to create public value. They include a value that is "substantively valuable," "legitimate and politically sustainable," and "operationally and administratively feasible" (Moore, 1995, p. 23). This approach contrasts with new public management's focus on efficiency, competition, and performance management. Subsequent developments in the public value literature have expanded beyond the actions of public managers and now include multi-actor level and organizational public value creation (Bryson et al., 2017; Jarman, Luna-Reyes, & Zhang, 2016; Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Kelly, Mulgan, & Muers, 2002; Meynhardt, 2009). In short, when analyzing the work of policy labs, we should bear in mind that public value(s) can be generated through the workings of the policy processes (trust and legitimacy) rather than exclusively in the output (service delivery and efficiency) itself. Recent scholarship suggests that policy labs are public value vanguards emphasizing adding value to the public sphere (McGann et al., 2018; Cole, 2022; Kim et al., 2023).

Policy lab processes: Co-design and co-experience

Policy innovation labs generally employ various co-design approaches and tools emphasizing stakeholders' involvement and engagement in policy design, public sector reform, and program delivery.

Co-design activity has received considerable empirical coverage (see Evans & Terrey, 2016; Whicher & Crick, 2019; Olejniczak et al., 2020; Ferrarezi, Brandalise, & Lemos, 2021; Komatsu, Salgado, Deserti, & Rizzo, 2021). Einfield and Blomkamp (2021) define co-design as "an iterative, participatory and action-oriented process to address public problems [and] puts the people affected by an issue … at the heart of a creative process" (p. 2). They and Schwoerer, Keppeler, Mussagulova, and Puello (2021) point to how co-design draws heavily on design thinking and human-centred design. Inspired by commercial product design, the co-design process is a series of stages that aims to understand a complex issue or problem from multiple perspectives, followed by designing new approaches and solutions that include initiating, designing, and testing user-centred solutions (Bellefontaine, 2012). Critical to co-design is the active collaboration with affected stakeholders, including members from the key groups of practitioners, community, and researchers (Schwoerer et al., 2021). By engaging with "a more diverse range of voices and inputs into the policy process that resonates with principles of network governance," an accurate representation of citizens and their opinions can be achieved (McGann et al., 2018, p. 252).

In their study of PILs, Wellstead, Howlett, and & Chakrabarty (2022) found that nearly half (47.8%) of PILs in their sample primarily employed a co-design approach. A recent contribution by Osborne, Nasi, and Powell (2021) raises the importance of other "co-" related activities that engage stakeholders in public service activities, including co-production (managing and delivering public services), co-construction (evaluating the lived experience of a public service), and co-experience. Co-experience focuses on stakeholders' engagement with public policies or programs within the context of their broader life experiences (Osborne et al., 2021; Strokosch & Osborne, 2020). Battarbee and Koskinen (2004) further clarify, arguing that experiencing is a constructive activity created in social interaction and is a seamless blend of user experience of products and social interaction. Notably, they add that the experience, while essentially created by the users, would only be the same or even possible with the presence of the product and the possibilities for an experience it provides.

In their study of online professional networks on Twitter, Talip and Narayan (2020) found that co-experience occurs in social contexts, where experiences are created together or shared. Like Osborne et al. (2021), they argue that co-experience "emerge[s] serendipitously when an individual posts updates, and when others share their stories or experiences related to the topic or post" (Taplip & Narayan, 2020, p.1). In pre-Twitter research, Forlizzi and Battarbee (2004) argue that co-experience creates meaning and emotion through product use (i.e., social media), considering an experience in a social context. Critically, they state [c]o-experience reveals how the experiences an individual has and the interpretations that are made of them are influenced by the physical or virtual presence of others" (Forlizzi & Battarbee, 2004, p. 263).

Co-experience, social media, and public value

Xu and Saxton (2019) argue that social media is important for enhancing stakeholder engagement by nonprofits and can improve social capital. Nonprofit organizations generally use social media for "cost reductions, improvements in customer relations, and enhanced accessibility of information" (Tajudeen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2018, p. 310). Svensson, Mahoney, and Hambrick (2015) also confirm

that Twitter is used primarily for sharing information but less as a mobilization tool. Despite its potential, Young (2017) found that many nonprofit organizations reported using social media only as a medium for passively providing information. This shortcoming supports Waters and Jamal's (2011) finding that many nonprofits tended to use Twitter for only one-way announcements, thus not taking advantage of their co-experience possibilities.

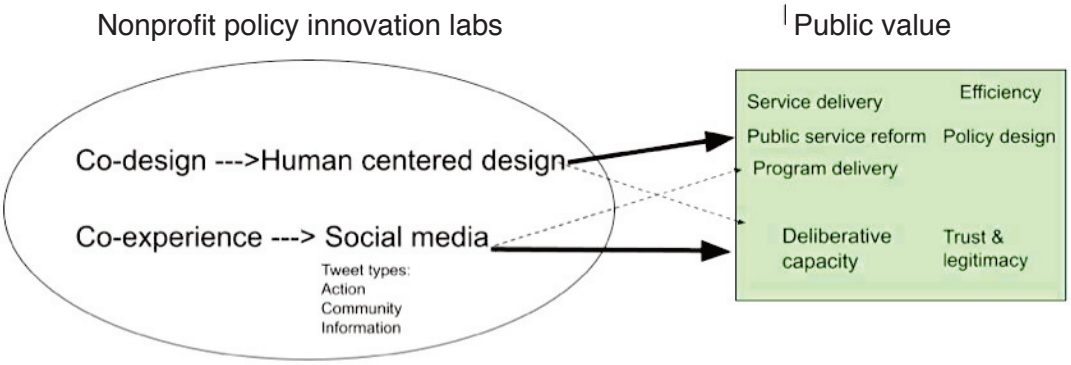
Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) highly cited article examining the tweets of 100 U.S. Twitter-active nonprofit organizations provides a basis for analyzing the content of PILs' co-experience activities. They identified three essential functions of microblogging updates that correspond to Coleman's argument that policy often is "shaped, announced, and evaluated," namely, action, communication, and information (2012, p. 151).

Action-based tweets aim to mobilize followers to take concrete actions such as participating in a promoted event, volunteering, engaging in lobbying and advocacy, donating, buying a product, learning how to help, and joining another site or voting for an organization (Saxton & Lovejoy, 2012). In relation to this call for action, Gupta, Ripberger, & Wehde (2018) found that Twitter was increasingly becoming an important tool for nonprofits to bring attention to and promote their organizational goals.

Nonprofits use Twitter to interact, share, and converse with stakeholders in a way that facilitates an identifiable online community. Community-based tweets, representing 26.4 percent of all tweets studied by Saxton and Lovejoy (2012), were helpful in building relationships, networks, and online communities. Saxton and Lovejoy (2012) identify two important types of community tweets. The first type describes tweets that initiate interactive conversations and dialogue between organizations and stakeholders. The second type of community tweet announces something to strengthen the community without involving an expectation of interactive conversation. Finally, information-based tweets, which were the most prominent type of tweet (58.6%) in their study, involve broadcasting organization's activities or highlighting their events, news, and reports that are of potential interest to followers (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). By sharing information, these types of tweets promote transparency, accountability, and public trust. Campbell, Lambright, and Wells (2014) also found that information-based tweets dominated their study of local government agencies and nonprofits in New York State.

Much of the nonprofit Twitter analysis has focused on the one-way transmission from the organization to its followers. However, stakeholder reciprocal tweeting is also a critical function for co-experience activity. Wang and Yang (2020) found that some organizations use Twitter to establish dialogic relationships with their public, specifically through users retweeting messages or sharing the organization's tweets with others. This open communication, they found, often motivates intense and meaningful stakeholder interactions (Tajudeen et al., 2018). The current analysis accounts for this critical two-way interaction by adapting Lovejoy and Saxton's functional approach. Naidoo & Holtzhausen (2020) identified similar themes in their study of how social media contributed to public value in South Africa. Figure 1 summarizes the themes introduced in the above review into a conceptual framework linking the co-design and co-experience activities with public value. It provides the context for this study of Twitter activity by U.S.-based PILs at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1. Co-design and co-experience public value framework



DATA AND METHODS

This section summarizes Twitter data collection via NodeXL and the coding procedures used in the NVivo content analysis. It then provides an overview of the types and content of tweets, the data collection, and a description of the data analysis.

Types of tweets

Twitter (now X) is a popular micro-blogging platform with 330 million active users who can interact with short messages of 280 characters. At the time of the study, any individual could create an account for their personal or organizational use. In 2019, the Pew Research Center found that 22 percent (52 million) of U.S. adults used Twitter (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). Compared with the public, users younger than 50 tended to be overrepresented, especially those in the 30–49 age range, and those over 50 were underrepresented, with a sharp drop off in those users aged 65 and older (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019). Users with a college degree, with a higher income, and who identify as Democrats were also overrepresented among U.S. Twitter users (Wojcik & Hughes, 2019).

The PILs' Twitter audience can be generally categorized as their stakeholders. Due to Twitter's public nature, an exact audience is challenging to quantify since any user on Twitter can access a PIL's profile and contribute messages. However, PILs tend to actively target specific audiences with their messages, focusing on well-defined topics or promoting events related to the PIL's activities.

In addition to direct tweets originating from PIL, stakeholders can reciprocate through retweets, mentions, mentions in a retweet, and replies. Table 1 provides examples from one of the PILs in this study, the GovLab, a nonprofit organization located in New York, NY.

Table 1. Examples of tweets, retweets, mentions, mentions in retweets, and replies from and to GovLab

Tweet type	Description	Example
Tweet	A message containing up to 280 characters that a user posts to their own profile.	"Three months ago, The GovLab put forth a Call for Action to develop the data infrastructure needed to address the #COVID19 pandemic."
Retweet	A message where one user shares another user's tweet on their profile.	Five other users retweet the same tweet above.

Table 1 (continued)

Tweet type	Description	Example
Mention	A message that contains another user's username.	"We have important work to do, urgently." #MakingBetterWork #Data4Good #CivicTech @urbaninstitute @DataDotOrg @TheGovLab @BennettInst @BrookingsEcon https://t.co/COlq6OfAK6 https://t.co/3YTNdHiowV
Mention in a retweet	A message that contains another user's username while retweeting one of their messages.	The same mention is retweeted to other users.
Reply to	A message in response to another user's tweet.	

Twitter content

The content of a Twitter message was a second feature of co-experience, which the authors operationalized by applying and adapting Lovejoy and Saxton's (2012) "action," "community," and "information" Twitter classification scheme. As illustrated in Tables 2 to 4, each tweet was coded with at least one code from these three categories,[2] based upon the content of the message. Each message was only coded once per week. To analyze the engagement of users with the messages, and not just the content of the messages themselves, some messages were coded more than once under certain conditions.[3]

Table 2. Action code categories

Category names	Example
Lab holds/ participates in an event	August 13: Results4America "Which states are leading the nation using #evidence and #data for COVID response? Find out tomorrow at 1 PM ET with @Results4America launch event for the 2020 #StateStandard of Excellence."
Job posting/ sharing	August 5: @ImmigrationLab "Want to join us in advancing immigration policy worldwide? IPL is looking for an executive director for our branch at ETH Zurich."
Lab reaches out/ requests	June 16: NRPA_news "Within the next few days, the US Senate is expected to consider the Great American Outdoors Act, which would fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Tell your Senator to vote YES on S.3422 and #FundLWCF."
Lab work/ research sharing	June 16: GlobalDevLab "The increased use of #digital technology during #COVID19 is posing risks to women and girls. In this new post, @GlobalDevLab shares key considerations and several resources for applying a gender lens to digital development."
Other shared information	July 21: TheLab_DC "Good thread on the Georgia map of Covid-19 cases by former @TheLab_DC colleague."

Data collection and analysis[4]

A catalog of 116 U.S.-based PILs was the initial source of the PILs examined in this study (Wellstead & Nguyen, 2020). In addition to this catalog, the authors conducted an online search for PILs and identified an additional nine formed after 2020. Of these, 57 had no Twitter account or their Twitter

account was inactive (not in use for 12 months or more), and 25 were infrequent Twitter users during the 11-week study period, June 1, 2020, to August 13, 2020. Of the 42 active PILs, 14 were nonprofits, 15 were located within government-based agencies, and 13 were based in universities.

Table 3. Community code categories

Category names	Category example
Awards/ props/ thanks	June 30: UChiUrbanLabs "Choose2Change provides trauma therapy and mentorship, proven to deter youth involvement with crime and the justice system. Thank you to @chicagosmayor for the ongoing support of this important initiative."
Lab says a statement	July 28: NRPA_news "Parks and public spaces must remake themselves as sanctuaries for all and become places where black people and all people can celebrate, heal, and breathe."
Responses/ conversations	Helpful example: Aug 5: CIERP_Fletcher "Agreed. To further your call for real climate action, I'm highlighting reforestation. Check it out, and please spread the word!" Unhelpful example: August 13: Results4America "We live here, and we have seen firsthand how terrible your handling of this crisis has been. From having an incompetent staff to not taking decisive action on measures to curtail the spread, to leaving our school restart in chaos. You should be ashamed of yourself."
Others call on lab	June 30: NRPA_news "Any movement on opening water fountains?"

Table 4. Information code categories

Information	Categories
COVID	Businesses/activities
	Cases/testing
	Data/science/information
	Masks/social distancing
	Medical aspects
	Regulations/policy
	Societal issues/recovery
Development	
Education	Education
	Covid school (in person)
	Extracurriculars
	Remote learning
	Reopening schools
Environment	Environment
	Clean energy
	Climate change
Food insecurity	
Government	
Health/hospitals	
Housing	
Immigration	
Jobs	
Museums	
Outside - Parks	
Police	Police – General
	Crimes/prison
	Defund the police
	Gun violence
	Police violence
Race	Race
	Black Lives Matter
	Equity actions
Research	
Technology	Technology – General
	Data
	Internet
Transportation	
Voting/elections	

Twitter activity was analyzed using NodeXL, a Microsoft Excel-supported network analysis and visualization software package that analyzes social media data. The NodeXL Twitter Search "network data collector" started by performing a query on the Twitter Search service at http://search.twitter.com. Searches can be performed for any string of characters, including Boolean operators such as "AND" or "OR." The authors searched for the 42 Twitter user handles over the 11-week collection period. A NodeXL search can analyze up to 18,000 tweets over seven days of activity. NodeXL displays the results on an Excel worksheet labelled "edges." Each "edge" represents a relationship between two users who interacted with each other. In the case of Twitter, these interactions (edges) include tweets, replies, retweets, mentions, and mentions in retweets (Table 1). The data collection included the weekly tweets and responses on the 42 PILs' profiles, regardless of whether the tweet originated from the PIL or the stakeholders in the form of retweets, mentions, and mentions in retweets. Researchers created a unique file for each week of data collection, for a total of 462 files. In the NVivo content analysis program, individual messages were coded into two categories based on tweet types and content codes. Once all the messages were assigned a tweet type (tweet, retweet, mention, mention in a retweet) and a tweet content code (action, community, information), four different types of NVivo queries were performed. They formed the basis of the results (Table 5).[5]

Table 5. Twitter queries

Query	
1. Tweets per PIL	Calculates the distribution of tweets for each message on a PIL's Twitter page for each week the data was collected. Each week, different types of activity occur on the PIL's Twitter profile. Split between Lab tweets and stakeholder tweets. Depending on the PIL, some weeks have more or fewer messages from each tweet type.
2. Weekly tweets by all PILs	Compares the distribution of tweet types for each PIL present in a specific collection week. Shows how the tweet type distribution varies between different PILs within a specific week.
3. Weekly codes for all PILs	Shows the distribution of codes for each PIL present in a specific week and the distribution between different labs within a defined week. A weekly code distribution table was produced.
4. Codes by tweet type	Calculates the distribution of codes in each tweet type for a specific week.

RESULTS

Analysis of Twitter activity illustrates how 42 PILs facilitate the co-experience process with their stakeholder users via message intensity, type, and content. Beginning with the intensity of Twitter activity, as illustrated in Figure 2 (Query type 1), the coding is cumulatively divided by whether tweets originated from the PILs or the stakeholders during the 11-week collection period. The detailed individual-level PIL data can be found in Appendix A.[6] There was an overall average of 104.9 PIL tweets and 1,426.6 stakeholder-based tweets per PIL. As shown in Figure 2, there is a general

trend in which the more messages a PIL publishes on its Twitter profile, the more other users will interact with its retweets, mentions, and mentions in retweets.

Figure 2. Lab tweets versus stakeholder tweets

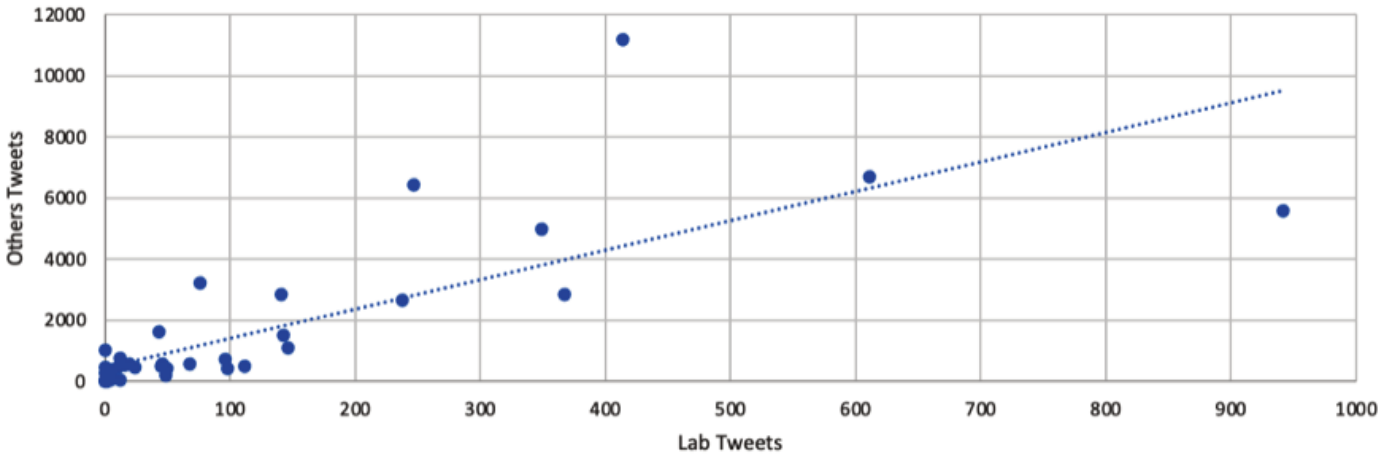
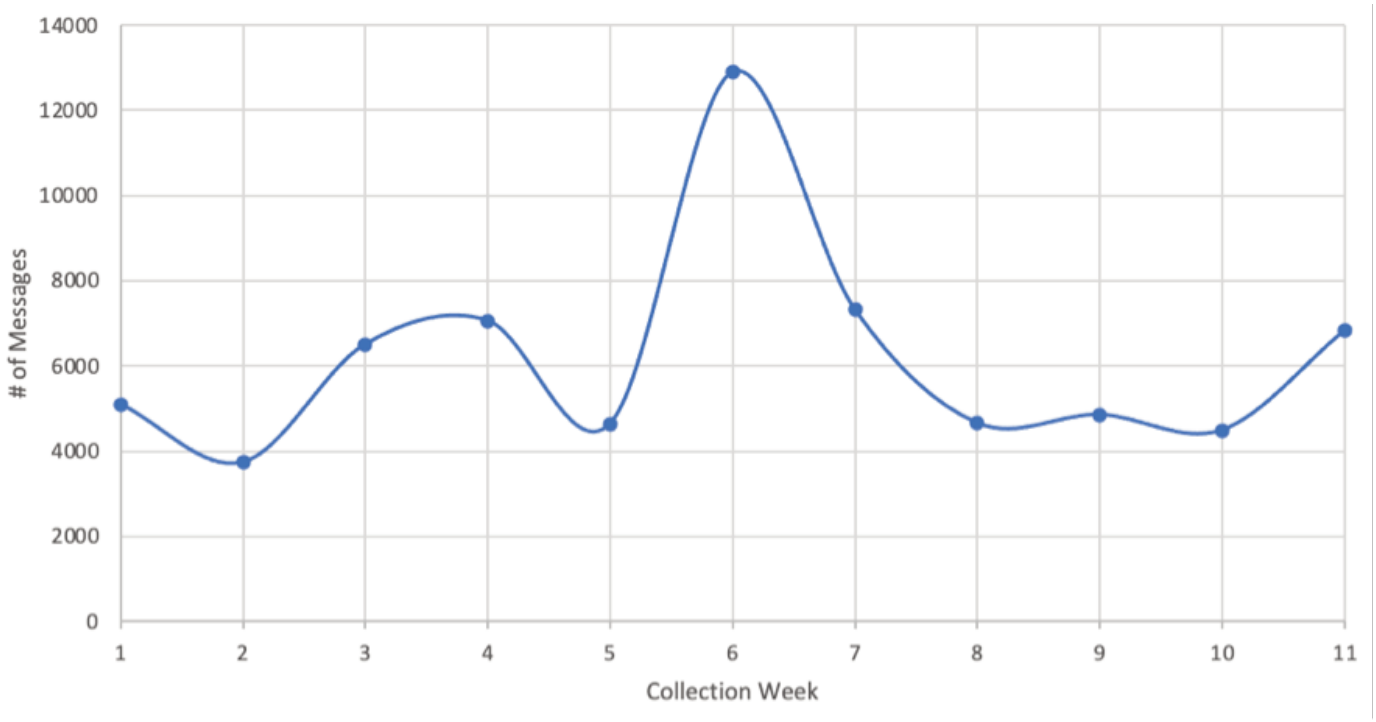


Figure 3 presents each collection week's cumulative weekly tweets (Query 2). Except for Week 6, discussed below, the intensity of message activity remained steady (4000–8000 messages per week).

Figure 3. Total Tweets per week



While the overall intensity of the Twitter activity remained consistent, a two-step cluster analysis of stakeholder Twitter activity identified different variances of intensity levels by PILs. Using SPSS 28.0, five distinct clusters of total tweeting level activities were found (Table 6). The most significant plurality (17) of PILs experienced an average Twitter activity of less than 390 tweets during the

study period. This was followed by 17 PILs, which registered a moderate activity level. The three remaining distinct clusters reported high levels of stakeholder engagement by eight PILs, all non-profit organizations. These results indicate that nonprofit-based PILs were among the most active Twitter users.

Table 6. Stakeholder tweeting activity

Cluster	Stakeholder Tweet range (Total)	Number of labs	Breakdown
1	1–390 tweets	17	The federal government (2) State government (1) Municipal government (6) Not-for-profit (3) University (5)
2	412–1623 tweets	16	Municipal government (4) Not-for-profit (4) University (8)
3	2623–3230 tweets	4	Not-for-profit (2) Municipal government (2)
4	4980–6711 tweets	4	Not-for-profit (4)
5	11,201 tweets	1	Not-for-profit (1)

A critical aspect of the PIL co-experience is the type of interaction of stakeholders with the policy labs and each other. Twitter differentiates these interactions, and the most used tweet types were mentions and mentions in retweets for both PIL and stakeholders, suggesting that discussions have gone beyond the initial tweet or stakeholders have retweeted and engaged others (Figures 4 and 5). The reply to tweet function was infrequently used by the PILs and stakeholders, suggesting the minimal use of direct conversations. The mean scores were compared between the nonprofit-based PILs with the government and university-based PILS using a *t*-test for independent samples for each type of interaction. The authors found *no statistical difference in the scores between the two groups.*

Figure 4. Total PIL tweets per tweet type per week

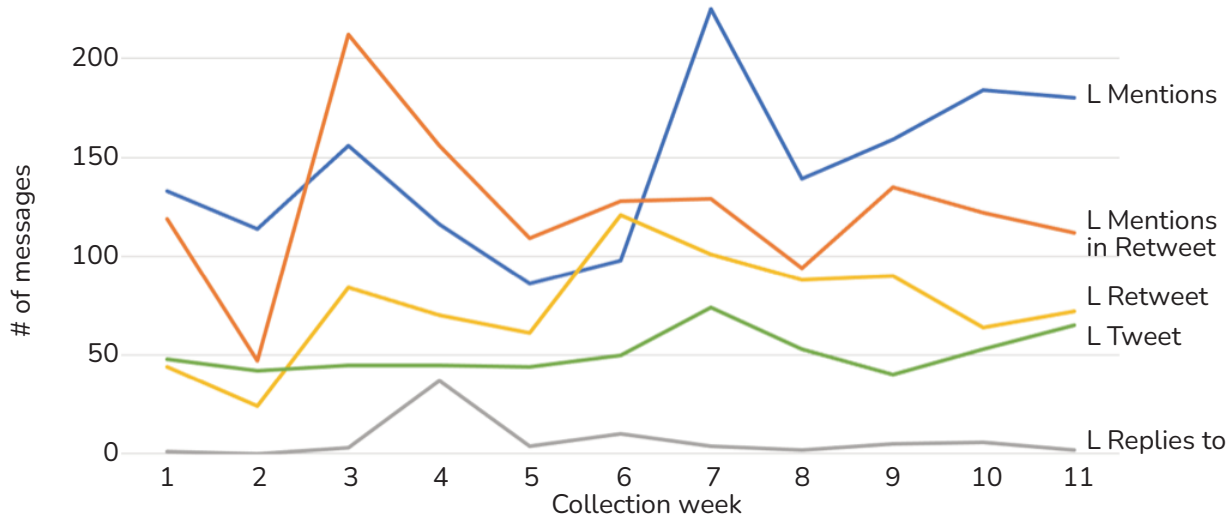
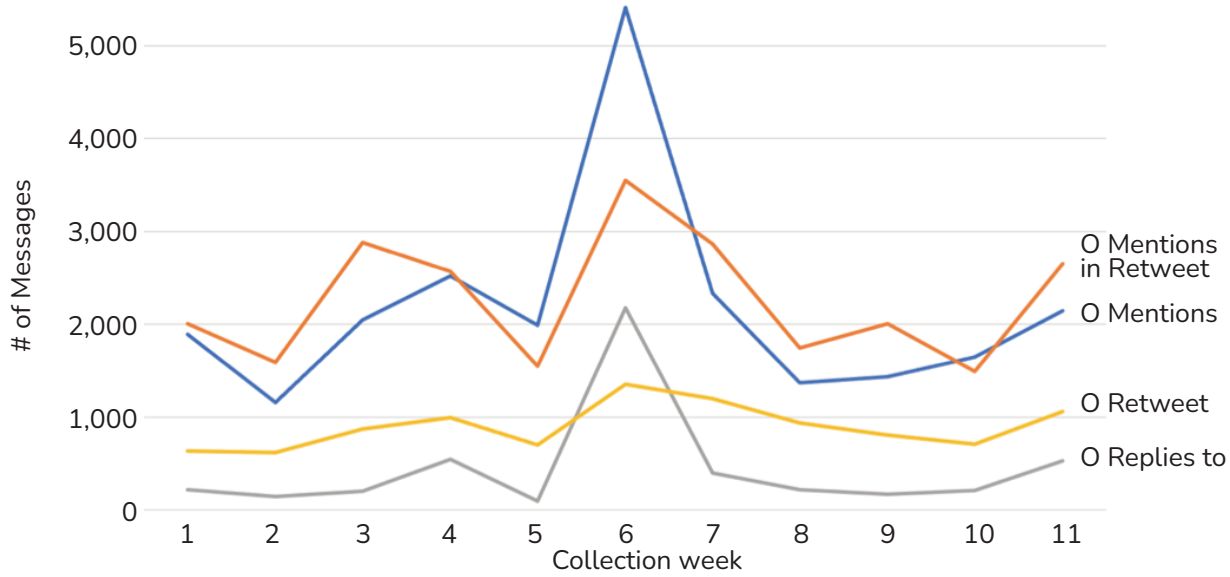


Figure 5. Total stakeholder tweets per tweet type per week



Weekly content codes for cumulative policy innovation labs

The weekly codes for all PILs (Query #3) present the number of times co-experience was present in the content of the tweets.[7] This temporal overview found that the most used codes for action co-experience were tweets about the lab's work or research activity and other shared information (Figure 6). For community-based co-experience (Figure 7), responses and conversations generated by stakeholders were the most frequently mentioned topics. The details of these tweets are discussed below. Of note in Figure 6 is the almost 1000 message peak of stakeholder tweets. This occurred when one lab was repeatedly mentioned in retweets concerning the demands for the resignation of Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan due to her response to law enforcement's handling of the George Floyd protests in the city's Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (Baker, 2020). The most consistently discussed information co-experience topics were COVID-19 and technology, followed by

Figure 6. Messages per action code per week

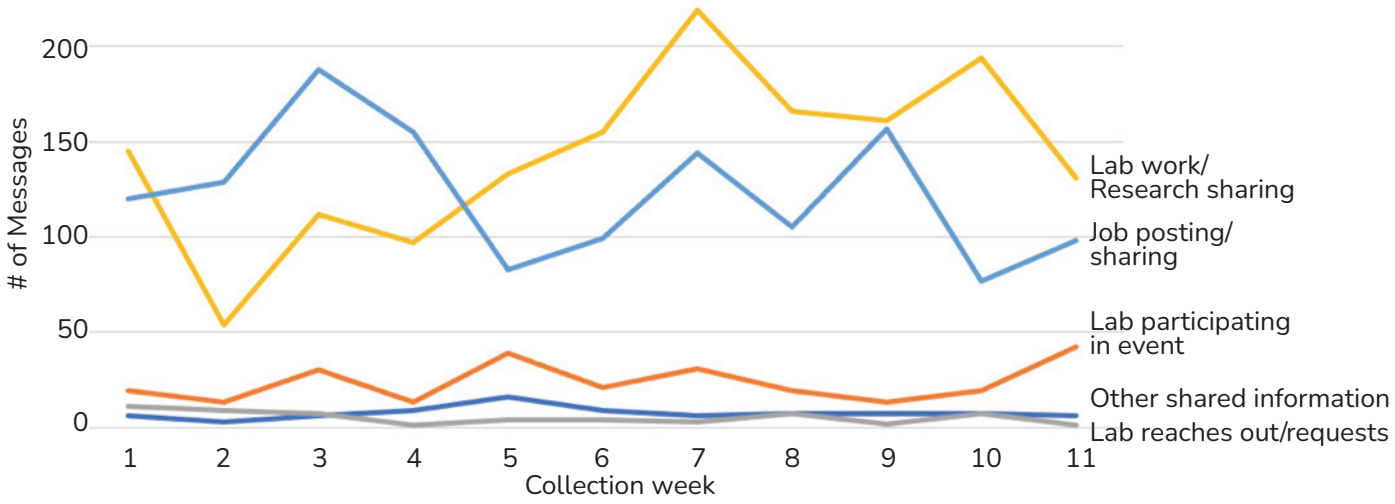
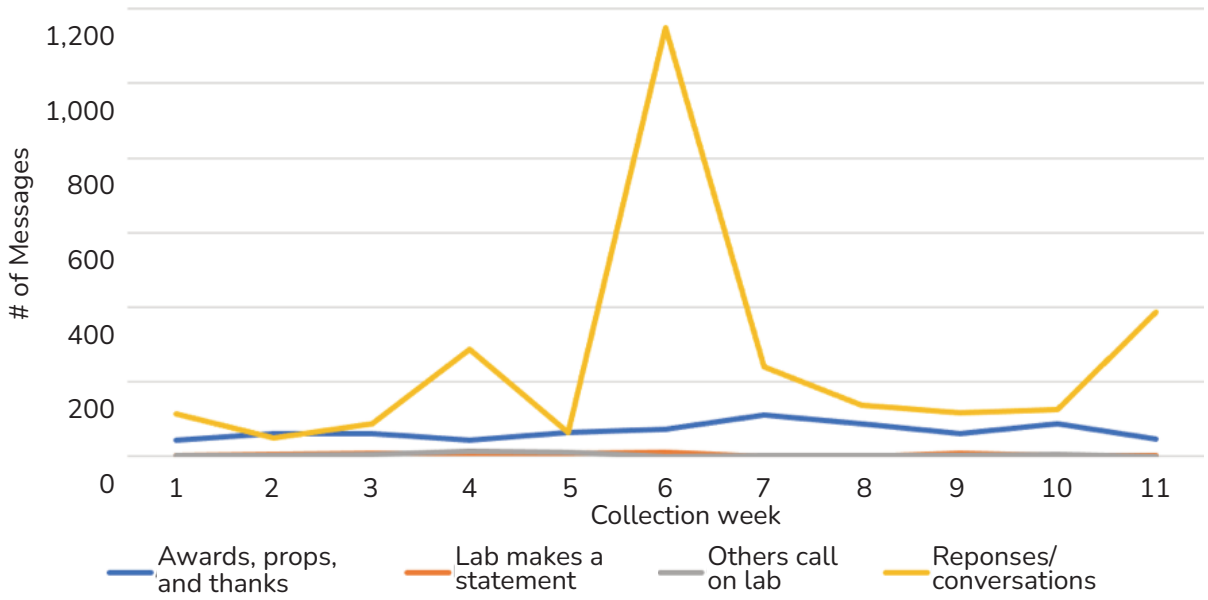
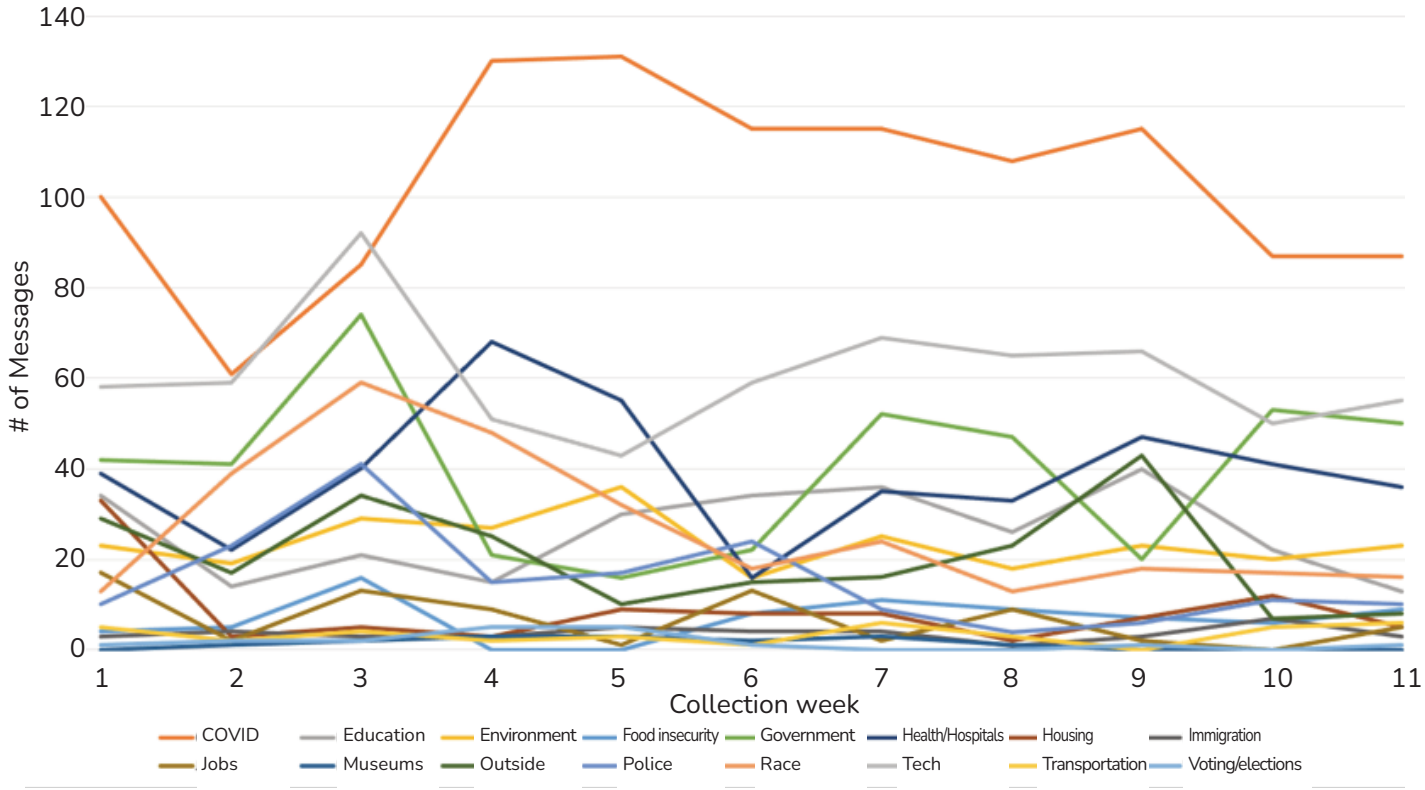


Figure 7. Messages per community code per week



health and government (Figure 8). Most of these discussions lasted the entire collection period. However, race inequality and police brutality were frequently raised at the end of June during the George Floyd demonstrations held across the United States.

Figure 8. Messages per Information Code per week



The aggregate results for the content of the three types of co-experiences by tweet type (Query 4) are identified in Table 7.[8] More detailed tables are listed in Appendix B. There was nearly an equal distribution of total Twitter activity (13,080 unique tweets) between the action (4534), community (4234), and information codes (4313). The two most prevalent action-related tweets were sharing PIL-generated research or information (*n* = 1851) and research and information from stakeholders (*n* = 1832). In both cases, tweets tended to be mentions and mentions in retweets by those who may not have been following the PIL, thus illustrating the PILs long-term influence. Events sponsored by PILs generated stakeholder engagement, especially with many mentioning their events. Job postings generated only a minimal amount of discussion. Most of the community-based tweets (*n* = 2929) were stakeholder responses and conversations. These tweets often amounted to chatter that could not be categorized in the action or information categories.

Table 7. Summary of tweet content

	Lab						Stakeholder					
	Tweet	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply to	Total lab tweets	Retweet	Mention	Mention in retweet	Reply	Total Stakeholder Tweets	**Total**
Action	71	61	174	103	5	414	955	1500	1618	47	4120	**4534**
Community	8	13	37	24	3	85	248	2716	805	393	4162	**4247**
Information	77	21	132	57	1	288	657	1627	1667	73	4024	**4312**
Total	**156**	**95**	**343**	**184**	**9**	**787**	**1860**	**5843**	**4090**	**513**	**12,306**	**13,093**

While this Twitter activity was not necessarily focused on the PILs' business, it indicates an important sense of community. Very few tweets originated from PILs (*n* = 85), suggesting the importance of stakeholder-led interactions. Tweets acknowledging the work of the PILs were also prevalent. In contrast to the ambiguity of the community tweets, the authors categorized the information-based tweets into distinct categories and, in some cases, sub-categories. Nearly a quarter of the information tweets (*n* = 1029) were about the COVID-19 pandemic and covered issues such as business closings, case numbers, testing, scientific reports, masking, and social distancing. Secondly, there were information tweets about technological issues (e.g., artificial intelligence, algorithms, Big Data, the internet) (*n* = 707), followed by tweets about government (*n* = 443) and healthcare (*n* = 429). Given that the study period occurred during the police murder of George Floyd and the subsequent nationwide protests, there were many information-based tweets about race (*n* = 267) and the police (*n* = 166). As in the case of COVID-19, specific sub-categories were identified. Finally, categories were identified in information-based tweets about the environment, including clean energy and climate change.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC VALUE MANAGEMENT

Across the United States, many nonprofit organizations have branded themselves as policy innovation labs with the goal of improving public policy effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness by adopting more experimental and iterative approaches. They seek to bridge the gap between policy design and implementation by promoting a more collaborative, agile, and evidence-based approach to policymaking. Recent research found that co-design and, by extension, engaging stakeholders is central to many PILs achieving this goal (Wellstead & Howlett, 2022). Another type of stakeholder engagement recently identified in the public management literature is co-experience. The current analysis of PILs' and their stakeholders' use of Twitter demonstrates how the internet can be a discursive space that "engender[s] and coordinate[s] forms of experimentally and framed deliberation" (Coleman, 2012, p. 149), which can promote multivocal narratives, policy networking, and online deliberation—all central features of co-experience. As such, social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, are ideal forums for monitoring stakeholder co-experience (Talip & Narayan, 2020). They are inexpensive to maintain and have the potential to attract many followers. Social media has promised free and open channels between policy experts and affected actors (Healy, 1986).

This research focused on descriptively measuring U.S.-based PILs' Twitter activity during a historical time, namely the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was born out of necessity because social media activity was one of the few channels of communication available to research PIL activity during the height of the pandemic due to lockdowns and travel restrictions for the authors. Still, it provided valuable insights into how these organizations operated and engaged stakeholders using social media.

Being active Twitter users paid off for the 42 active PILs on social media. They attracted stakeholder engagement, which led to co-experience responses. Through Twitter, PILs and their stakeholders engage in dialogue focusing on PILs' activities and provide a platform for stakeholders to share experiences about external events. These organizations employ Twitter to promote co-experience in three ways: intensity, content, and type. Critical to understanding co-experience were criteria initially developed in the nonprofit sector by Saxton and Lovejoy (2012) to map the content of tweets—action, community, and information. Additionally, three types of tweets—retweets, mentions, and mentions in retweets—originating from stakeholders illustrate differences in deliberation. Retweets usually represented a direct response to a PIL's tweet. Mentions indicated that stakeholders were bringing others into the discussion. Finally, mentions-in-retweets were "digital storytelling" that extended outside the PIL's direct Twitter network, often leading to other discussions.

These findings contribute a new perspective to nonprofit social media research by applying the public management concept of co-experience and its role in public value management to studying PILs' more prevalent co-design activities. As outlined in Table 8, these complementary approaches are distinct in their timeline, type of engagement, tools, focus, motive, public value outcome, and policy relevance. The ongoing, open nature of social media engagement via Twitter contributes to a PIL's public value. Those with active Twitter accounts communicate beyond their existing networks and programs to reach and engage potential new audiences by providing a discursive space for stakeholder engagement.

Table 8. Comparison of co-design and co-experience

	Co-design	Co-experience
Timeline	Specific often project-based	Ongoing
Stakeholder engagement	Selective, limited, focus	Open, many, unspecified
Tools	Human-centred design	Social media (e.g., Twitter)
Focus	Organizations Networks	Mini-publics
Motive	Implicit	Externality
Public value outcome	Service delivery and efficiency	Trust & legitimacy Adding value to the public sphere and deliberative capacity
Policy relevance	Policy formulation Program delivery Improved policy design	Agenda setting

Further research is planned to determine the motivations for PIL Twitter use. This will involve engaging two study populations through key informant interviews: those responsible for managing social media accounts in highly active PILs and the managers of PILs with little or no social media activity. In aggregation, the authors found that PILs' content was evenly split between action, community, and information. The study design did not include an analysis of the impact of the co-experience activity; however, a future case study could identify PILs' motivations for each of these strategies and stakeholder impact. Such a future study could ascertain whether PILs know the direct and indirect impacts of their Twitter activity, mainly through mentions and mentions in retweets. Do PILs perceive themselves as promoting deliberative democracy via social media? Informing stakeholders about COVID-19-related issues was an important role played by PILs during the summer of 2020. An important finding was that nonprofit-based PILs were the most active Twitter users, which raises further questions about their motivation for engaging in social media activity. Replicating this research would identify if PILs continue to inform stakeholders about other pressing issues. Another critical issue for PILs active on Twitter was Elon Musk's October 2022 acquisition of the company and renaming of it to "X" in July 2023. In response, many users closed their accounts, curtailed their activity, or migrated to similar platforms such as BlueSky or Mastodon. However, eight in 10 active adult Twitter users (between January 1 and April 14, 2022) remain active users (Chapekis & Smith, 2023). Subsequent analysis found that Twitter/X activity in the United States remains higher in 2024 than during the pandemic, with 126 million active users representing 42.3 percent of all internet users. Central to this analysis was the importance of the high repost-to-post ratio (Global Statistics, 2024). According to Kidambi (2024), these ratios have been higher than in past years. Crucially, Fiesler (2023) found that users migrating to other platforms will likely face content loss, fragmented communities, broken social networks, and shifted community norms. Thus, despite what are unsettling changes to some, the rebranded X will remain, for the foreseeable future, the platform where users can engage with nonprofit organizations.

These findings provide a starting point for developing hypotheses about the inactivity of PILs with minimal or no social media presence. Further research may find that social media activity is a valu-

able indicator of differentiating self-identifying PILs that may function more like think tanks, consulting organizations, or research institutes than genuine PILs.

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NOTES

1. The platform changed ownership in July 2023, and is now known as "X." Given that this study predates its change in ownership and renaming, the authors refer to this social media platform as "Twitter" throughout this article.
2. Further coding details are provided in Appendix A and provide detailed distribution of messages that are present in the action, community, and information codes. The files represent each individual collection week for a specific PIL. For example, there were a total of 82 job posting messages, which occurred throughout the entire study, and these were present in 54 files of PIL collection weeks.
3. If there were repetitions of the same message, which often happened due to multiple Twitter users retweeting the same message, the first occurrence was coded. If there was a duplicate message in more than one collection week, the message was not coded again in all weeks it was present.
4. The data was collected by Wellstead and the coding was undertaken by Schmidt and Wellstead to ensure intercoder reliability.
5. Queries are a set of search functions in NVIVO that allow the user to cross-reference their data using different attributes of the data set and allow for multiple analyses to be run on the same data set with different sets of attributes or smaller sections of the data.
6. During the data collection period, six PILs did not tweet. However, they did have a presence from the stakeholder Twitter activity (retweets, mentions, and mentions in a retweet) on their Twitter profiles.
7. Appendix A shares the data for each unique code.
8. The data for each individual code is available in Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A
TOTAL NUMBERS OF TWEETS

Lab	1-Jun	9-Jun	16-Jun	23-Jun	30-Jun	7-Jul	14-Jul	21-Jul	28-Jul	5-Aug	13-Aug	Lab total
Beta NYC	28	286	1204	293	407	263	122	36	68	65	109	2,881
CA Policy Lab	79	22	139	36	15	46	88	101				526
CIERP Fletcher	57	57	40	9	7	7	210	51	45	100	44	627
CITRIS Policy Lab	5		38	25	53	36	67	116	6	42	74	462
Civic Impact jhu	13	69	9	13	89	119	469					781
CO Health Inst	30	49	74	52	54							259
Duke CPIGH	24	101	143	80	95	155	71	131	251	154	25	1,230
Global Dev Lab	88	225	217	272	444	185	379	249	335	279	798	3,471
Gov Lab PH	48											48
Green Harvard	12	19	50	8	12	9	67	125	196	62	19	579
HHSCTO office	130	57	123	245	183	14	95	182	206	196	228	1,659
Immigration Lab	147	8	48	76	3	36		2	6	20	182	528
Innovate RI	237	58	111	54	74	80						614
LA Innovates	2			4								6
Lab OPM	5							2	9	8		24
MIT CoLab	95	9	50	102	130	91	345			18		840
Nebraska OCIO			110	45	11	31	39	16				252
NRPA news	378	303	1236	290	375	631	1052	897	959	429	239	6,789
NYC CTO	337	305	284	1251	1146	1554	577	80	565	116	122	6,337
NYC Opportuity	121	15	125	81	36	43	107					528
Policy Lab CHOP	338	101		1983			469	790	663	731	254	5,329
Policy Sciences							121					121
Public Policy Lab	13	2	36		36	159	124	12	12			394
Research LSU	25							5				30
Results 4 America	168	126	582	319	212	684	981	419	412	456	2543	6,902
Rutgers EOAS	25	79	102	33	25	60	63	72	72	16	47	594
SACOG	48	4	20	1	17	36	6	14	19	53	5	223
SF Human Services	865	226	86	169	57	288	216	187	183	606	109	2,992
SF MOCI			13	5								18
SILC at CU	168	163	41	2	71	20						465
Sun Foundation	128	188	119	217	17	12	116	127	84	49	609	1,666
sustain ILLINOIS	16	39	63	81	107	21	11	2	1	140	74	555
sustainable pdx	8			7								15
Tech Policy Lab	56	4	8	1	7	2	10	10	3	86	271	458
the gov lab	1087	876	965	1	545	459	415	569	542	469	585	6,513
The Lab DC	9	15	4	1				3	13	74	2	121
Tigers Go Green	34	25										59
Uchi Urban Labs	32	83	136	43	162	111	89	103	78	61	116	1,014
UMN Sustain			6	1				11	21	16	42	97
What Works Cities	128	222	330	341	349	7749	1023	426	112	603	333	11,616
Youth Policy Lab	116		17									133
Week total	5,100	3,736	6,529	6,141	4,739	12,901	7,332	4,738	4,861	4,849	6,830	67,756

APPENDIX B

Table 1. Detailed summary of action-based tweets

	Lab						Stakeholder					
Action Code	Tweet	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply to	Total Lab Tweets	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply	Total Stake-holder Tweets	Total
Job posting/sharing	2	1	2	10	0	15	68	82	46	4	200	**215**
Lab participates in an event	8	7	12	12	0	39	119	227	192	0	538	**577**
Lab says a statement	2	0	2	1	1	6	20	12	20	0	52	**58**
Lab work/research sharing	18	43	90	38	4	193	386	969	815	28	1658	**1851**
Other shared action-related information	41	10	68	42	0	161	362	750	545	15	1672	**1833**
Total	**71**	**61**	**174**	**103**	**5**	**414**	**955**	**1500**	**1618**	**47**	**4120**	**4534**

Table 2. Detailed summary of community-based tweets

	Lab						Stakeholder					
Community Code	Tweet	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply to	Lab Total	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply	Stake-holder Total	Total
Awards, props, and thanks	4	11	28	20	1	64	172	596	286	47	1101	**1165**
Lab says a statement	3	1	3	2	1	10	28	14	18	1	61	**71**
Others call on lab	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	30	33	15	82	**82**
Responses/conversations	1	1	6	2	1	11	44	2076	468	330	2918	**2929**
Total	**8**	**13**	**37**	**24**	**3**	**85**	**248**	**2716**	**805**	**393**	**4162**	**4247**

Table 3. Detailed summary of information-based tweets

	Lab						Stakeholder					
Information Code	Tweet	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply to	Total Lab	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply	Stake-holder Total	Total
COVID	11	7	27	16	0	61	143	381	441	11	976	**1037**
Businesses/activities	0	2	3	0	0	5	5	44	38	0	87	**92**
Cases/testing	3	0	3	0	0	6	19	52	66	3	140	**146**
Data/science/information	1	1	7	7	0	16	38	77	108	1	224	**240**
Masks/social distancing	1	0	4	0	0	5	15	51	42	1	109	**114**
Medical aspects	1	1	0	0	0	2	6	16	26	1	49	**51**
Regulations/policy	2	1	2	0	0	5	12	26	33	2	73	**78**
Societal issues/recovery	3	2	8	9	0	22	48	115	128	3	294	**316**
Development	8	1	6	3	0	18	25	26	25	8	84	**102**
Education	2	1	9	3	0	15	40	80	144	2	266	**281**
Education	1	1	3	2	0	7	21	28	48	1	98	**105**
COVID (in person)	0	0	3	0	0	3	6	23	60	0	89	**92**
Extracurriculars	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	5	10	0	18	**20**
Remote learning	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	12	8	0	22	**24**
Reopening schools	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	12	18	1	39	**40**

Table 3. (continued)

	Lab						Stakeholder					
Information Code	**Tweet**	**Retweet**	**Mention**	**Mention in Retweet**	**Reply to**	**Total Lab**	**Retweet**	**Mention**	**Mention in Retweet**	**Reply**	**Stake-holder Total**	**Total**
Environment	17	1	18	4	1	41	43	70	87	17	217	**258**
Environment	11	1	11	2	1	26	26	58	59	11	154	**180**
Clean energy	2	0	2	1	0	5	3	4	6	2	15	**20**
Climate change	4	0	5	1	0	10	14	8	22	4	48	**58**
Food insecurity	1	0	2	0	0	3	30	18	23	1	72	**75**
Government	3	1	17	4	0	25	60	153	202	3	418	**443**
Health/hospitals	5	3	16	5	0	29	75	173	147	5	400	**429**
Housing*	0	0	3	0	0	3	5	52	31	0	88	**91**
Immigration	0	0	0	1	0	1	6	13	21	0	40	**41**
Jobs	1	2	1	2	0	6	12	37	15	1	65	**71**
Museums*	0	0	3	1	0	4	0	6	5	0	11	**15**
Outside	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	23	20	0	44	**46**
Parks	1	0	2	1	0	4	30	99	46	1	176	**180**
Police	1	1	2	2	0	6	14	93	52	1	160	**166**
Police	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	39	28	0	75	**75**

Table 3. (continued)

	Lab						Stakeholder					
Information Code	Tweet	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply to	Total Lab	Retweet	Mention	Mention in Retweet	Reply	Stake-holder Total	Total
Crimes/prison	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	19	10	0	29	**31**
Defund the police	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	19	7	0	29	**31**
Gun violence	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	5	2	0	8	**9**
Police violence	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	11	5	1	19	**20**
Race	6	2	6	5	0	19	57	94	91	6	248	**267**
Race	1	0	2	0	0	3	14	14	21	1	50	**53**
Black Lives Matter	0	0	1	1	0	2	9	23	18	0	50	**52**
Equity actions	5	2	3	4	0	14	34	57	52	5	148	**162**
Research	0	0	1	1	0	2	6	15	18	0	39	**41**
Technology	18	2	19	7	0	46	102	273	272	14	661	**707**
Technology (general)	8	0	9	2	0	19	31	97	107	8	243	**262**
Data	10	2	10	4	0	26	70	162	149	6	387	**413**
Internet	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	14	16	0	31	**32**
Transportation	2	0	0	0	0	2	7	14	14	2	37	**39**
Voting/elections	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	13	1	22	**23**
Total	**77**	**21**	**132**	**57**	**1**	**288**	**657**	**1627**	**1667**	**73**	**4024**	**4312**

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Social Innovation and Nonprofit Resource Provision: A Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research adopts a resource dependency approach to support the process of social innovation application within the context of nonprofit resource procurement using a comparative sample of resource-providing organizations (n = 8) and nonprofit resource recipients (n = 10). An organizational discourse analysis was adopted to explore concepts of power and legitimacy across groups revealing several ways that social innovation is employed and challenged by both resource recipients and providers. Further, a text coverage analysis revealed several discrepancies with the use of terminology between sub-samples. Together, these novel analytical approaches provide a narrative regarding the ways in which social innovation is co-conceptualized within nonprofit resource provision, including examining the role of language and power between stakeholder groups.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette recherche adopte une approche axée sur la dépendance envers les ressources pour examiner l'application de l'innovation sociale dans l'approvisionnement en ressources à but non lucratif. Pour réaliser cet objectif, la recherche recourt à un échantillon comparatif d'organisations fournissant des ressources d'une part (n = 8) et de bénéficiaires de ressources à but non lucratif de l'autre (n = 10). Par surcroît, une analyse du discours organisationnel a été adoptée pour explorer les concepts de pouvoir et de légitimité au sein de ces groupes, démontrant plusieurs façons dont l'innovation sociale est utilisée et contestée autant par les fournisseurs de ressources que par les bénéficiaires. De plus, une analyse textuelle a révélé plusieurs divergences de terminologie entre les sous-échantillons. Ensemble, ces diverses approches analytiques permettent, par l'examen du rôle du langage et du pouvoir entre groupes de parties prenantes, d'élaborer une narration sur la manière dont l'innovation sociale est co-conceptualisée dans la fourniture de ressources à but non lucratif.

Keywords: social innovation, nonprofit organizations, foundations, resource provision / innovation sociale, organismes sans but lucratif, fondations, fourniture de ressources

INTRODUCTION

Driving the development of new social service programs in the nonprofit sector is an emphasis on social innovation (Shier & Handy, 2019; Bruneel, Clarysse, Staessens, & Weemaes, 2020); however, despite the value of socially innovative efforts in leading a new era of human service delivery, little is known about how human-service organizations and their resource providing partners may contribute to the mutual understanding and implementation of this concept. More research on the implementation of social innovation is needed for organizations to effectively identify opportunities to engage in related activities (do Adro & Fernandes, 2019).

Recently, the term "innovation" has received broad attention by funding bodies (Jaskyte, Amato, & Sperber, 2018) and has been commonly incorporated as evaluation criteria for the distribution of human service resources (Toepler, 2018). Use of the term "social innovation" within this context remains poorly understood, yet it defines which organizations receive vital support as potential recipients attempt to conceptualize social innovation through a method of synthesis (understanding how the term is commonly defined) and re-processing (re-conceptualizing the term within the specific organizational context) (Jansson, Benoit, Casey, Phillips, & Burns, 2010). How dynamics between funders and organizations contribute to the development of social innovation at an organizational level is unknown and occupies an understudied yet vital branch of nonprofit research. The following study addresses this gap by employing an organizational discourse analysis design and collecting qualitative data to address the research question: *How do interactions with funders contribute to the conceptualization of social innovation within nonprofit human service organizations?*

To answer this question, authors conducted semi-structured interviews with nonprofit resource providers (foundations) and resource recipients. Foundations were selected as key actors in the distribution of grant monies in Canada and include both private and public sub-types, both of which are established as a corporation or trust and engage exclusively in charitable activities. Private foundations may engage in their own charitable activities and/or fund other registered charities, while public foundations typically give more than 50 percent of their funding to other registered charities. Board composition also differentiates foundations in Canada; whereas private foundation board members are usually not at arms length and often include major donors, public foundation boards include arms-length members (Lefèvre & Fontan, 2017).

Both sub-samples provided rich data regarding the conceptualization of social innovation within the context of resource distribution. An organizational discourse analysis (which is a type of critical discourse analysis) identified main themes contributing to the meaning-making of social innovation, including ways in which providers and recipients of resources agree and differ on specific terms and ideas. A textual analysis provided another layer of analysis by focusing on terminology use within the dataset.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social innovation

Social innovation has been broadly defined to encapsulate activities that are new and focus on creating social good through addressing unmet needs and expanding the number of options available to a specific social group (Shier & Handy, 2015a; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017). Two general

areas of focus have emerged in conceptualizing social innovation: social innovation as a *process* and social innovation as an *outcome* (Nicholls & Ziegler, 2017). Examples of social innovation as a process include Dawson and Daniel's (2010) conceptualization as a "process of collective idea generation, selection and implementation by people who participate collaboratively to meet social challenges" (p. 16). Conversely, Pol and Ville (2009) focus on the outcomes of social innovation, viewing it as "any new idea with the potential to improve either the macro-quality of life or the quantity of life" (p. 882) for a group of people.

Importantly, most definitions of social innovation incorporate an element of "change in social relationships, systems, or structures" (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016, p. 1932), highlighting the *social* in social innovation. Social innovation has also been organized into factors and characteristics describing associated activities within human-service organizations. Based on interviews with executive directors of nonprofits in the province of Alberta, Canada, Shier and Handy (2015a) identify three types of social innovations: socially transformative social innovations, product-based social innovations, and process-based social innovations. Socially transformative social innovations primarily generate public awareness on an issue or influence policy directions, whereas product-based social innovations are focused on creating new programs or new organizations, or adapting existing programming to meet emerging social needs, and process-based social innovations adapt organizational processes, practices, and structures to support social change (Shier & Handy, 2015a, 2016b). Nicholls and Ziegler (2017) also identify three categories of social innovation along a spectrum, which are incremental innovations, institutional innovations, and radical innovations. Incremental innovations seek to promote more efficient use of goods and services, whereas institutional innovations may adapt existing structures, and radical innovations create new products and services, or generate new groups or movements to change social relations for the benefit of marginalized communities (Nicholls & Ziegler, 2017).

Resource dependency theory in human service nonprofits

Resource dependency theory focuses on the importance of resources to the organization and the extent to which required resources are controlled by other organizations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thompson, 1967). "Resources" are defined as anything an organization may need to mobilize effort and pursue its goals (McCarthy & Zald, 1973). Types of resources may include *moral* (support, validation, and external endorsement), *informational* (knowledge relevant to conducting services), *material* (money and other items needed to carry out services), and *human* (labour or leadership) resources (Cress & Snow, 1996). These resources are handled and exchanged in a variety of ways within an organizational environment, and organizations measure the importance of a given resource by assessing how much it can be accounted for in the outcome/service it produces (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Resource dependency asserts that resources are fundamental aspects of organizational survival (Cress & Snow, 1996), and that predictable, consistent inflows of resources are key in the quest for program sustainability (Benson, 1975; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). However, problems can occur when the environment is not dependable, leading to unforeseen changes in resource availability (Nienhuser, 2008). Financial resources are crucial components supporting the adoption and sustainability of social innovations in nonprofits (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2016; Stefani et al., 2020), with a lack of funds often contributing to a delay in adopting related programs (Akuffo &

Soop, 2020; Martins et al., 2020). Nonprofit direct-service organizations are generally understood as "resource receiving" and rely on consistent inflows of financial and other resources to sustain programming and to engage in social impact (Clayton et al., 2016).

Through the lens of resource dependency theory, the role of social innovation is both a contingency for resource procurement, and a vehicle for organizational legitimacy. Organizational legitimacy is closely tied to power as an important determinizing factor of resource distribution. Power itself can be distributed through influence, politics, and socialization (Burns, 1978) within an organizational environment in the form of control over resources and, by extension, other organizations (Benson, 1975; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Relatedly, organizations with power can attempt to change their environments by exerting control over other organizations who may depend on particular resources, forcing them to conform to specific structures, such as social innovation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Benson, 1975; Nienhuser, 2008; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Nonprofits achieve legitimacy by aligning their goals and operations with the environment, which is determined by social norms and values (Maurer, 1971). When an environment shifts, organizations change accordingly to remain legitimate and generate and/or sustain social support (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Recently, social innovation has become a primary requirement for resource distribution in the nonprofit environment, as dictated by those who hold resources and power (Bruneel et al., 2020). Though several options for funding social innovations exist, procurement of grants provided by foundations is a primary source for many human service nonprofits (Cecere et al., 2018; Dinnie & Holstead, 2018). These actors can be described as "resource-providing" organizations. In Canada, foundations can be registered as either private, public, or charitable, and all share a commitment to redistributing resources to social causes, be it within their own programming, or that of other nonprofit organizations. Foundations often provide the parameters by which nonprofits achieve and maintain legitimacy through conforming to or co-developing conceptualizations of social innovation.

Political dimensions

Research has also focused on the political dimensions of social innovation, highlighting how related terminology communicates a set of underlying values that are latent in the operationalization of the concept. Studies have focused on the inherent tension between the use of social innovation as both an extension of neoliberal capitalist discourse and as a possible emancipatory pathway for human-service organizations to escape oppressive resourcing frameworks (Lachapelle, 2021; Montgomery, 2016). In the latter, social innovation is framed as a catalyst for social change that follows other widespread social movements that challenge dominant structures (Moulaert & MacCallum, 2019). For example, in a case study by Tello-Rozas (2016), innovative social organizing between a group of local residents and organizations in La Victoria, Peru, successfully responded to and alleviated a waste management issue perpetrated by varying levels of government. In contrast, Lachapelle (2021) proposes social innovation is applied as a performative concept in human-service organizations, where use of the term is meant to signal specific value-laden orientations, such as responding to grand challenges or contributing to organizational efficiency. Though each paradigm has been nested within the concept of social innovation, it has been argued that further research focusing on contextualized applications of this term will provide clarity regarding its real-world manifestations (Montgomery, 2016).

Foundations play a key role in accelerating innovations by filling gaps in government services (Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015; Finchum-Mason, Husted, & Suárez, 2020;), but have been found to be more apt to support programs that provide incremental improvements to social problems rather than funding social innovations that disrupt existing structures and challenge systemic issues (Giloth, 2017; Leslie, Khayatzadeh-Mahani, Birdsell, Forest, Henderson, Gray et al., 2020). One possible explanation for this trend may be how foundations define innovation (or more precisely, how funders' definition of social innovation differs from more widely held conceptions adopted by direct-service nonprofits). Supporting this notion, Jaskyte, Amato, and Sperber (2018) found that foundations in the United States often failed to provide a clear definition for innovation, and could benefit by meeting as a group to reach a mutually agreed interpretation of the term, including its breadth and scope for enacting social change. The funding of incremental innovations also contrasts with the perceived role of foundations as change agents and risk takers (Toepler, 2018). There is an observed need for foundations to shift their funding priorities to achieve their mandates of supporting innovation and promoting new initiatives (Aggarwala & Frasch, 2017; Clifford, 2017). The openness and willingness to invest in new ideas and innovation often require funders to place their trust in community partners (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019), and research has found that funders willing to work directly with grantees to better understand impacted communities and recognize the most important needs are more successful in supporting social impact (Bettis & Pepin, 2019).

The following study seeks to clarify and bolster the funding of social innovations by examining ways in which foundations and resource recipients perceive and define associated concepts. This includes identifying discrepancies in how social innovation is applied, while seeking opportunities to enhance mutual understanding of the concept within the context of resource allocation.

METHODS

Procedure

This study follows a pragmatic qualitative design utilizing organizational discourse analysis, which is a sub-branch of critical discourse analysis (Leitch & Palmer, 2010). Two main samples were developed for a comparative analysis: management staff in nonprofit human-service organizations that work directly with funding and resource acquisition (i.e., resource recipients) and staff of foundations that provide resources to nonprofits (i.e., resource providers). Data were collected from both groups utilizing semi-structured interviews that concentrated on processes of discourse and meaning making surrounding the term "social innovation," focusing on how dynamics between organizations that provide and exchange resources contribute to this process. This follows a resource dependency perspective, where key guidelines (i.e., social innovation) provided by resource providers contribute to actions adopted by resource recipients as they conform to these guidelines and seek legitimacy. A thematic analysis of qualitative data identified general and specific aspects of how organizations interpret and conceptualize social innovation through ongoing processes of engagement between resource providers and recipients. Prior to data collection, ethics approval was obtained from the University of Toronto Human Research Ethics Board.

Sample and recruitment

There are two main respondent groups in this study, including managerial staff of direct-service nonprofits who are responsible for attracting funding and related resources (such as fundraising coordinators, project managers, executive directors, and funding account managers), and respondents representing foundations (public and private) that provide funding and resources to nonprofit human services. Respondents occupying these positions have unique insight of the relationships developed between resource providing and resource-recipient organizations. A main tenet of their work is focused on engaging in discursive correspondence, either written, verbally, or both, with the expressed purpose of resource distribution. As such, respondents can reflect on the exchange of language, power, and coded meaning, which is laden in the relationship between resource provider and resource recipient in nonprofit human services. Respondents also occupy positions that allow them to uniquely reflect on organizational dynamics impacting resource distribution or procurement, and therefore justify the organization as a unit of analysis. Capturing this dynamic from both angles, including those making decisions regarding resource provision as well as those vying for said resources, supports an analysis of discursive dynamics.

Respondents were recruited from a purposive sample generated from the United Way list of affiliated nonprofit organizations in Canada, which provides one of the most comprehensive national databases of registered human service organizations. This ensured that authors were sampling from a diverse set of stakeholders. Authors reviewed this list for organizations that were providing services directly to a community, and reviewed website content to select nonprofits that described their programs as "innovative," or used related terms (such as "socially entrepreneurial" or "transformational"). Then, contact information for an executive staff working directly with resource procurement were gleaned. For resource-providing organizations, authors sought foundations that utilized similar language on organizational websites and supported local human service nonprofits. Emails stating the purpose of the study and a brief introduction of the authors, as well as the ethics protocol, were sent to prospective respondents, and a follow-up email was distributed two weeks after initial contact. The final sample consisted of resource providers (n = 8) and resource recipients (n = 12).

Data collection

After agreeing to be interviewed and providing informed consent, respondents participated in open ended one-to-one interviews conducted over phone or video call by the primary author. Semi-structured interview guides were created for each respondent group. For members of nonprofit human-service organizations receiving resources, a set of specific questions was generated following a review of the literature. Questions began by asking the respondent to explain the nature of their engagement with organizations currently or potentially providing resources, before guiding them to discuss social innovation within this context. The interview guide identified the process of developing proposals specifically, following research on this topic (Haddad, Ayala, Uriona Maldonado, Forcellini, & Lezana, 2016; Hammond, Lê, Novotny, Caligiuri, Pierce, & Wade, 2017). Further, some questions sought a rough definition of social innovation from respondents while identifying characteristics associated with the term that can be embedded in organizational practice. This strategy follows other studies conducting critical discourse analysis in nonprofit settings (Gonsalves & McGannon, 2020; Nairn & Guinibert, 2020). The guide concluded by asking the respondent to com-

pare this definition with the organizational mission, further embedding the term in its organizational context and reflecting similar strategies from Khadka (2014).

A second interview guide was developed for respondents representing foundations that provide resources to nonprofit human services after consulting previous research. Similarly, respondents were asked to describe the nature of their engagement with nonprofits before exploring how social innovation is defined and integrated within this context. Questions were designed to elicit information about the use and application of this term, and how the respondents perceive dynamics of power as influencing this process. This approach is directly borrowed from similar studies (Clayton et al., 2015; Bakko, 2019). The final questions were intended to elicit examples from respondents of demonstrations of social innovation; these data provided rich accounts of the how texts are transformed into practice through discourse—a critical aspect of critical discourse analysis studies (Fairclough, 1995).

Analysis

Guiding the process of data collection and analysis was the implementation of organizational discourse analysis, which follows an adapted version of critical discourse analysis for organizational research, created by Leitch and Palmer (2010) and further honed by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010). Generally, critical discourse analysis focuses on social problems and related power dynamics (Mumby & Clair, 1997), with an emphasis on how text (including subjects and knowledge) is produced and reproduced through discourse, then operationalized in practice (Fairclough, 1995). Texts are therefore manifestations of discourse and are provided meaning through processes of power and influence (Fairclough, 1995). A focus on discourse reveals the effects of resource dependency from the perspective of power-holding resource providers and resource-dependent stakeholders. To achieve this analytical procedure, authors completed the thematic analysis as well as a content analysis of text coverage and identified commonly used terminology within the dataset. Analysis was supported by Nvivo12 qualitative data analysis software (2020).

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to text files for analysis. Transcribed qualitative interviews were analysed utilizing a thematic qualitative approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2009). The generation of themes began first with authors independently identifying "micro-discourse" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000) within the data, which involves a selection of detailed language followed by application to a specific context (i.e., the conceptualization of social innovation between resourcing-providing and resource-receiving organizations). These micro-discourses reflected ways in which respondents understood the role of social innovation within their specific job domains, as well as how it was then applied to the practice of resource distribution. Authors searched for "systematic patterns" (Budd, Kelsey, Mueller, & Whittle, 2018) in the conceptualization of social innovation to frame findings, seeking common discourse shared between respondents to qualify a micro-discourse. Findings were treated as unique to each sub-sample for the purpose of highlighting the idiosyncrasies of resource-providing and resource-receiving organizations. Once micro-discourses were identified independently by authors, findings were compared and discrepancies were addressed by revisiting corresponding data and discussing its interpretation, which reflects a "constant comparison" approach (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). This resulted in a final list of micro-discourses, which author 1 (AT) then transformed into themes by refining terminology to reflect concepts that were espoused in the data. Author 2 (MS) then reviewed

these themes to ensure they adequately represented the systematic patterns identified at the beginning of the analytical process. This approach borrows from Gee's (1999) recommendations for discourse analysis, and studies adopting similar methodology (Greckhamer & Cilesiz, 2022).

FINDINGS

Thematic analysis

Resource recipients

Four emergent themes were identified capturing the application of social innovation within the context of nonprofit resource procurement for direct-service organizations: *newness bias*, *emphasis on growth*, *communicating impact*, and *evidence paradox*. Each theme is further described in the following sections.

A general bias toward new projects was identified by resource-recipient respondents to be of critical importance when considering successful resource procurement for social innovations. Organizations were found to highlight the novelty of services in various ways, including providing data or research about the broader service environment. Respondents commented on the uniqueness of specific interventions, and how it contributed to descriptions of innovativeness to potential funders. One respondent identified the use of environmental scans to illustrate newness within the service environment. Other respondents emphasized continuous improvement within granting proposals as a reflection of fostering new and innovative approaches to service delivery. Conversely, several respondents criticized what was perceived to be an overall bias for newness displayed by resource providers. Respondents feared that a newness bias might ignore community needs by concentrating solely on projects that were deemed novel. For example, one respondent stated, "The program itself is the same as it was six months ago, and they [funders] need it to be … brand new … the newest and best thing, but their definition of 'best' mismatches with community need" (NP-03). Similarly, some respondents cautioned that the focus on novelty by resource providers was often too strong and eliminated the potential for other programs to receive resource supports.

Respondents representing resource-receiving organizations discussed how they characterized social innovations to resource providers by emphasizing programmatic and organizational growth. An *emphasis on growth* included diverse ways in which resource recipients described the development of organizational programming, including the contributions of social innovations to growth across services. For example, two respondents discussed positive resourcing support for piloting innovative programs as a way of facilitating growth: "We actually do have a clear understanding of what our innovation process is … So we're able to tell people 'this is where we are in the cycle and this idea. We're at the rapid and iterative very small pilot stage'" (NP-07). Two other respondents commented on the role of partnership development as a highly effective method of demonstrating organizational growth to resource providers.

Respondents identified several ways in which they *communicated social innovation impact* to resource providers as a strategy for resource procurement. One important focus for respondents was the articulation of localized innovation by demonstrating how a specific project provides a new option for a specific community, despite it possibly being widely integrated elsewhere. This was bolstered by emphasizing strong community connections and relationship building with stakeholders. Two re-

spondents focused specifically on the role of community consultation as a method of generating social innovations, which can then be communicated to resource providers. Related activities supported the measurement of change within a service provider group or community, leading to more formalized monitoring and evaluation frameworks. One respondent captured this theme: "I think that's the kind of thing that funders want to see. They want to see change, they want to see people experiencing opportunities that they didn't have before, helping them to learn skills" (NP-07).

Finally, respondents described an *evidence paradox* characterized by contradictory guidelines provided by resource providers that emphasized innovation and evidence concurrently. These were not perceived to be synonymous by resource recipients, who struggled to articulate the innovativeness of a project while also providing an evidence-base for its effectiveness. For example, one respondent stated, "it's kind of interesting, because there is also a huge desire to make everything evidence-based, so that kind of contradicts being innovative" (NP-01). Many respondents commented on the need for resource providers to support transformative and disruptive social innovations, which reflect widespread change. However, these same providers were also requesting that organizations show proof-of-concept. This was sometimes accomplished by adopting an approach or program that had been successfully implemented within a different geographical context or service user group and showing evidence of impact.

Resource providers

Data from providers of resources to nonprofits were analyzed and generated four main themes: *conceptual clarity*, *project differentiation*, *proof of sustainability*, and *supporting multidisciplinarity*. Themes are described in the following sections.

Respondents representing foundations indicated difficulty in developing *conceptual clarity* regarding social innovation, despite many actively using this terminology to set requirements for resource provision. Many respondents encountered difficulty in identifying a clear definition of the term, and openly discussed its ambiguous use and application within the context of resource provision. The need for a universal definition of social innovation that is understandable and clear was emphasized by many respondents. Several respondents, such as the one quoted above, identified challenges associated with employing social innovation as a metric for distributing resources when the term is not widely understood or defined. This included poor alignment between resource providers and recipients, use of language that may distract from building strong resourcing partnerships, and the arbitrary use of terminology that may have conflicting definitions. Still, respondents struggled to meaningfully describe social innovation; one respondent commented, "I sometimes feel like I recognize it when I see it, but I'm not sure that I would be able to give you my own definition" (RP-06). Such an approach to applying social innovation in practice may not be helpful to organizations seeking to assess whether their own programming efforts fit the parameters (however vague) outlined by those in charge of distributing resources.

Discussion on the importance of *project differentiation* as a fundamental aspect of social innovation was also a common theme provided by resource providers. Respondents described how successful resource recipients were able to clearly demonstrate their comparative uniqueness within the overall service environment. Similar data reveals how project differentiation was often treated as a re-

placement for determining the innovativeness of resource recipients. Resource providers were therefore more likely to fund early-stage projects that incorporated a new idea or adapting an existing program for a new community. However, respondents also engaged in some debate regarding the role of novelty and its necessity to innovation. For example, one respondent stated, "I also get confused myself over whether something can be innovative if a lot of people are doing it, right? Does it kind of counteract the definition of innovation?" (RP-03). Deliberation within the respondent subsample reinforces how language related to social innovation is fluent and often ungrounded, leading to perplexation by resource providers when seeking to formulate definitional parameters.

Respondents also highlighted the need for *proof of sustainability*, where potential resource recipients could determine how social innovations contribute to long-term impact and success at a service-delivery level. Further, it was incumbent that social innovations could be scaled and integrated as core components of an organization. Resource providers summarized related activities as supporting service delivery efficiency. For example, one respondent stated, "[resource recipients] are making everything more efficient, they are saving money, they are giving more work and opportunity to be creative … to me it is an innovation" (RP-05). Some respondents commented on the adoption of specific implementation methodologies to guide sustainability. For example, one respondent cited design thinking as an important component sought in grant applications. Conversely, other respondents commented on the misalignment between program sustainability and social innovation, noting that once a project achieved sustainability, it may no longer be considered social innovation as it is no longer new.

The final theme, *supporting multidisciplinarity*, reflects ways in which resource providers support social innovations that include collaborative efforts from multiple stakeholders of varying backgrounds. This included the blending of different knowledge bases by combining diverse professional skillsets on a single project or program. One respondent commented, "they are asked to describe their project in a whole bunch of terms, you know, risk-taking, does it demonstrate collaboration and partnership? Is it innovative? It is provocative?" (RP-05). This was supported by resource providing organizations that actively fostered multidisciplinary networks across sectors and providers to create opportunities for blending approaches.

Table 1: Data coverage of themes

Group	Theme	Coverage *n* (%)
Resource Recipients		65 (59.6)
	Newness Bias	23 (35.4)
	Emphasis on Growth	20 (30.1)
	Communicating Impact	12 (18.5)
	Evidence Paradox	10 (15.4)
Resource Providers		44 (40.4)
	Conceptual Clarity	21 (47.7)
	Project Differentiation	9 (20.4)
	Proof of Sustainability	8 (18.9)
	Supporting Multidisciplinarity	6 (13.6)

While seeking partnership-based projects was not new for resource-providing organizations, the integration of social innovation within this scope was a recent and ongoing development. Table 1 provides a summary of data coverage across all themes from each sub-sample.

Text coverage

To assess frequency of terms within data, a text coverage analysis was conducted for both sub-samples, including the number of occurrences for each word (*n*), as well as overall coverage (%), measured by the appearance of the term across multiple respondents. The top fifteen terms (including stemmed words) are summarized in Table 2. There are several discrepancies when comparing data from within and between sub-samples. For example, while "new/newness" had the highest total occurrences within both resource recipients and providers, it was concentrated to fewer respondents, as indicated by a lower relative coverage for each group. While a smaller number of respondents mentioned newness as an important aspect of social innovation, they tended to emphasize this concept strongly by repeating the term more often. Conversely, the terms with the highest coverage also tended to have high overall occurrences. For example, the terms "program(s)/ programming" and "different/differently" had the highest coverage within resource recipients at 52 percent ($n = 25$) and 51 percent ($n = 21$), respectively. Over half of resource recipients mentioned these terms when discussing social innovation, while the terms "different(ly)" (22%) and "project(s)" (21%), were highest among resource providers. While both groups emphasized differentiation as a key component of social innovation, resource providers tended to also discuss project-based work, while resource recipients used the terms "program(s)/programming." Other notable discrepancies included the term "community(ies)," which was mentioned by almost half (49%) of resource recipients, but only 5 percent of resource providers. In other words, resource recipients included the scope of community at a significantly higher rate compared with resource providers, where the term was virtually absent in their data. Similar findings appeared for the terms "approach," "evidence/evidence-based/evidence-informed," and "relationship(s)," which were all more prevalent within the resource-recipient sub-sample. Overall, distribution of terms across respondents was higher in the resource-recipient sub-sample.

Table 2: Text coverage

Term	Resource recipients *n* (%)	Resource providers *n* (%)
New/ness	27 (23)	23 (18)
Program/s/ming	25 (52)	8 (15)
Different/ly	21 (51)	9 (22)
Community/ies	20 (49)	2 (5)
Approach	16 (34)	1 (2)
Interesting/ed	12 (32)	5 (14)
Project/s	12 (23)	11 (21)
Evidence/-based/-informed	9 (19)	1 (2)
Process/ed/es	9 (18)	4 (9)
Impact/ed/s	9 (15)	3 (5)
Relationship/s	8 (27)	0 (0)
Research/er	7 (15)	1 (2)
Consultation	6 (19)	1 (2)
Opportunity/ies	6 (19)	1 (2)
Population/s	6 (17)	4 (11)

To visually represent term frequency, word clouds were created for resource recipients (Figure 1) and resource providers (Figure 2). Terms that appear larger and closer to the center of the cloud have higher frequencies within the sub-sample, while terms that appear smaller and on the periphery of the word cloud have lower frequencies.

Figure 1: Word cloud for resource recipients

Figure 2: Word cloud for resource providers

DISCUSSION

Social innovation has received considerable empirical attention over the past 10 years (do Adro & Fernandes, 2019; Bayuo, Chaminade, & Göransson, 2020); however, examinations of how the term is operationalized at a practice level, especially within the context of nonprofit resource procurement and dependency, remains sparse. This research adopted an organizational discourse analysis approach to develop a better understanding of the ways in which nonprofit resource recipients and resource providers of foundations apply and define social innovation as a key factor influencing the way in which resources are distributed. A resource dependency perspective was applied to guide the study approach and analysis. In thematic analysis, resource recipients conceptualized social innovation as including a *newness bias* and *emphasis on growth*, while highlighting the role of *communicating impact* and an *evidence paradox*. Resource providers focused on *conceptual clarity*, *project differentiation*, *proof of sustainability*, and *supporting multidisciplinarity*. Similar text coverage between sub-samples was found for *new/newness*, *different(ly)*, *project(s)*, *program(s)/programming*, *interesting/interested*, and *population(s)*, while discrepancies (i.e., higher occurrences within resource recipients) were found for *community(ies)*, *approach*, *evidence/evidence-based/evidence-informed*, *process(ed)(es)*, *impact(ed)(s)*, *relationship(s)*, *research(er)*, *consultation*, and *opportunity(ies)*. Findings have several repercussions for the practical use of social innovation, alignment between foundations and resource recipients, and the resource provision process.

Similarities in findings between resource providers and recipients identified core concepts and values shared across both groups. For example, both sub-samples applied a future-oriented perspective when discussing social innovation. Resource recipients emphasized the role of demonstrating growth within programs as a tactic for procuring resources, while resource providers commented on similar factors related to project sustainability. Related findings align with specific perspectives regarding the utility of social innovation within the context of implementation; namely, leading scholars argue that innovations are not possible until they have been meaningfully incorporated and adequately diffused into organizations (Zucker, 1987; Rogers, 2003). Respondents in this study largely agree that any social innovation must prove longevity before deemed successful, and this was an important part of the resource procurement process.

Another similarity between sub-samples was the contested role of novelty in supporting social innovation. For resource recipients, *newness bias* reflected the perceived tendency for resource providers to favour projects that were contemporary and had not been done before. Similarly, a strong theme for resource providers included *project differentiation*, which was discussed as ways in which direct-service nonprofits articulate socially innovative activities by highlighting originality when compared with similar organizations within the same environment. While resource recipients focused on overall novelty, resource providers adopted a comparative perspective as a method of ascertaining the distinctness of social innovations. A concentration on novelty is also common in research seeking to conceptualize social innovation (Shier & Handy, 2015a, 2015b; Solis-Navarrete, Bucio-Mendoza, & Paneque-Gálvez, 2021), and is often cited as a necessity for this work (Hunt & Ortiz-Hunt, 2017; Portales, 2019). While novelty cannot be disentangled from the core conceptualization of social innovation, respondents from both sub-samples in this study debated the extent to which an activity required exclusivity to be deemed socially innovative. This included questioning what makes something "new," while considering factors such as service user group and geograph-

ical location. This has repercussions on the relationships between resource providers and recipients, as an emphasis on new projects may limit and organization's ability to capture long-term funding. It may be incumbent upon resource receiving organizations to consistently frame their programs as "new" to meet related qualifications. This may distract from ensuring longevity of interventions addressing social inequities by shifting organizational focus to new programs or new adaptations to pre-existing programs, which may or may not be needed.

Despite some agreement regarding factors associated with social innovation, both respondent groups struggled with locating a meaningful definition. This may be unsurprising for resource recipients, given that research has shown how resource providers often fail to adequately define key factors related to funding decisions (Carcedo, Davis, Folkerth, Grubstein, & Kabel, 2020; Piatak & Pettijohn, 2021). However, this finding is particularly problematic for resource providers representing foundations, which are often tasked with providing sets of parameters and requirements for funding. According to resource dependency theory, organizations with resource control often hold power over establishing the parameters for distribution. However, in this study, while resource providers agreed that social innovation was an important aspect of funding decisions (some even used this language as evaluation criteria), they also found it difficult to elaborate on this concept meaningfully. Similar conceptual underdevelopment may lead to arbitrary use of the term (given how subjective its definition may be) and would explain why resource recipients were so challenged by its ambiguity. It is important to note that resource providers normally hold power when defining related concepts, which then dictates the ways in which resource recipients can respond in the form of funding proposals and fit their own programs and organization within the given parameters. Therefore, poor definitional constructs can place undue burden on resource recipients to fill in knowledge gaps. This may lead to a dilemma in identifying the party responsible for establishing a clear and accessible definition of social innovation: is it incumbent that resource providers set firm guidelines, given they adopt similar language, or should resource recipients champion their own interpretation as the organization serving community? Regardless, it was clear from the data that poor conceptual understanding contributed to a loss in meaningfulness and "innovation fatigue" experienced by resource recipients. These findings highlight a serious theory-practice gap as related research (which has adequately defined social innovation) is clearly not being employed within the context of nonprofit resource provision.

Supporting thematic analysis were several divergent findings from text coverage analysis. Overall, variance in term use was higher in resource recipients (even after considering differences in sample size), indicating that more respondents from this group used similar terms compared with resource providers, where terms were more isolated to a smaller number of individuals. This could indicate that language pertaining to social innovation resource provision is highly localized and differentiated among resource providers, whereas resource recipients are in greater agreement about what social innovation is. Other discrepancies pertaining to specific terminology were found when comparing sub-samples. Words such as "community(ies)," "impact(ed)(s)," "consultation," and "relationship(s)" were more common in the resource-recipient group, reflecting an emphasis on localization and human-centredness that was not found in resource-provider data. The absence of related terms in resource provider data is concerning and indicates potential neglect of a community-focused lens.

Integrating community and human factors is critical when considering equity-based outcomes associated with social innovation and must be a substantial component of how foundations select projects to support. Similarly, words such as "approach" and "process(ed)(es)" were also largely missing from resource provider data, despite appearing across many responses from resource recipients. This may reflect a focus on implementation and integration of social innovations adopted by resource recipients that is not equally harnessed by resource providers.

The theme "evidence paradox" offers insight regarding how resource recipients can struggle to achieve legitimacy when funding parameters are unclear. Resource recipients were quick to voice frustrations regarding what was described as incongruent funding guidelines when asked by resource providers and foundations to demonstrate innovativeness and an evidence base concurrently. An emphasis on evidence use was also prevalent for resource recipients in text coverage analysis; however, a similar frequency was not prevalent within resource providers, who neglected to identify this factor in any meaningful way. A comparison of data between respondent groups shows a gap between what is deemed important by resource recipients and resource providers. It could be that resource providers perceive the use of evidence as ancillary to social innovations, while resource recipients interpret this factor as a key aspect of how resources are distributed, thereby being a necessity to achieve organizational legitimacy. Further, providing evidence may be a factor common across all decisions made by foundations (regardless as to whether it involves a social innovation or not), and is therefore not a unique aspect of their interpretations of social innovations, resulting in low prevalence within the data. Conversely, use of evidence may not be as important to resource providers as resource recipients believe. However, this explanation is less likely to be the case as it does not align with previous literature, which tends to highlight the importance of evidence use in funding decisions (Lambert, Carter, Burgess, & Haji Ali Afzali, 2018; Greenhalgh & Montgomery, 2020). Overall, the discrepancy of evidence-related language between groups offers another way in which resource providers use their power as decision-makers. In this case, guidelines for funding were interpreted as paradoxical, where resource recipients pointed to the challenges of proposing a program that was both innovative and evidence based. However, resource providers can continue to offer unclear requirements because they hold power in their authority to distribute vital funding.

Given the relevance to practice-based development of social innovation within the context of nonprofit resource provision between foundations and direct-service organizations, suggestions for both resource providers and recipients may be offered because of this study. Firstly, it is important for resource providers to couple the use of complex terminology with clear, concrete, and understandable definitions that are widely recognized and rooted in practice and research. Findings from this study show how poor conceptual development can cause major barriers to both resource providers and recipients when engaging in the process of funding and granting distribution. To avoid confusion, social innovation must be given well-developed guidelines and boundaries that are co-developed by foundations and community stakeholders, such as potential grant-receiving organizations and their service users. Such guidelines can then be articulated to resource recipients in a way that can be easily followed in granting applications. In this way, foundations can function as "organizational field" builders, where the selection of resource recipients can serve to shape or restructure a particular domain (i.e., social innovation) in a way that most benefits community (Bartley, 2007).

To promote the use of social innovation as an autonomous and practical concept, the term must be used by all groups purposively to avoid employing it as a catch-all phrase to describe supported programs. One way of achieving this may include enhanced co-operation between resource providers and recipients to develop a mutual understanding of social innovation that is both rooted in evidence and reflective of community work. This may include the implementation of specific collaborative bodies, such as community advisory boards or governance tables, that include representation from human-service organizations, community members, and funding institutions. Such interdisciplinary models may transgress the power imbalance between resource providers and recipients by providing opportunities for community voices to be positioned at the centre of the social innovation discussion. This may lead to more equitable funding structures, such as the development of social innovation-focused grants and funds, which can direct resources into specialized activities considered innovative. Related approaches reflect a "trust-based" philanthropy approach, where resource recipients are provided with increased ability to use funding dollars in a way that is most responsive to unique community-based needs (Taddy-Sandino, Ammann Howard, & Nascimento, 2023), and can include streamlining processes, reducing reporting imperatives, incorporating ongoing feedback loops, and enhancing implementation supports (Powell, Evans, Bednar, Oladipupo, & Sidibe, 2023).

Likewise, resource-recipient organizations should consider their own autonomy in the process of resource provision for social innovations. It is imperative to incorporate intentionality when seeking resources, such as funding and grants, to support socially innovative programs and projects. For example, resource recipients may be selective by limiting grant-seeking activities to funds that reflect community voices by creating their own definition of social innovation that reflects evidence but also incorporates community needs, and using this definition as a compass when selecting which funds they may submit to. Supporting this process, resource recipients may leverage preexisting interorganizational networks (such as professional societies, service frameworks, and partnerships) to advocate for more transparent granting practices, including the incorporation of a community lens and a clear definition of social innovation. However, it must also be acknowledged that resource-constrained organizations may lack the opportunity to engage in related activities due to the urgency of resource needs. Such resource precarity can make organizations more vulnerable to the sometimes strict or unclear guidelines espoused by foundations (Power, Hall, Kaley, & Macpherson, 2021). Consequently, human-service organizations may commit "mission drift," where to capture funding to keep programs running, activities within that organization stray from the organization's fundamental vision and values in order to fit into stringent funding requirements (Simatele & Dlamini, 2020). Changes to the way in which foundations approach distribution, including the suggestions above, may help prevent this. Finally, findings from this study support the adoption of specific methods when seeking resources for social innovations. This includes focusing on project differentiation (i.e., the articulation of uniqueness and community need within the service environment) rather than solely describing newness. Further, resource recipients should ensure that social innovations are both sustainable over long-term service periods and include a multidisciplinary approach.

Sampling and methodological procedures contribute to some limitations for the current study. Difficulty in recruitment due to the small number of personnel occupying resource-provision roles, as well as restrictions to availability for respondents (who are typically coping with high workload demands), contributed to an overall sample size (n = 20) that was average when compared with similar studies (e.g., Reid, 2018; Bergfeld, Plagmann, & Lutz, 2020). Demographic information of respondents was not collected to protect confidentiality. The qualitative nature of this research also limits the generalizability of findings, and the absence of quantitative inferential analysis precludes the identification of any causal relationships in the data. Finally, due to sample size and study scope, an analysis across foundation sub-types (i.e., private vs public) was not possible for this research. While there are similarities across the types of activities engaged in by all foundations, operational and programmatic differences may have produced different findings between types. This study was unable to capture potential differences.

CONCLUSION

The current study offers insight regarding relationships between nonprofit resource providers and recipients in a way that is rarely reflected in research on human services. Specifically, the study sought to generate a deeper understanding of how the term "social innovation" informs how resources are distributed to direct service nonprofits by foundations in an era where related language occupies popular rhetoric within the sector. Resource dependency theory informed an organizational discourse analysis approach to evaluating definitions and contestations between and within subsamples (of resource providers of foundations and recipients). Outcomes from this study can be used to inform foundation resource provision practices that are attuned to community needs while contributing to partnerships with resource recipients that are founded on common values and perceptions of the social innovation process. Specific practices aimed at achieving these outcomes should be sought, such as collaborations between resource providers and recipients to co-conceive conceptualizations regarding social innovation that are community informed and accessible to direct-service organizations. Judicial use of a broad social innovation evidence base should also be consulted when seeking common conceptual grounds. Future research can support this process by identifying models of engagement supporting effective collaborations between foundations and human-service nonprofits, while also aiming to measure the impact of these activities on community groups receiving services.

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Étude comparative Canada / États-Unis sur la philanthropie subventionnaire fondée sur le lieu

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RÉSUMÉ

L'objet du présent article est de présenter les principaux résultats d'une démarche de recherche réalisée entre 2019 et 2022 avec l'appui du Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH). La recherche portait sur l'étude comparative de dix fondations subventionnaires ayant adopté une posture d'intervention fondée sur le lieu (*place-based philanthropy*). Notre texte est divisé en trois grandes sections. La première se penche sur la philanthropie moderne. La deuxième présente le résultat de la méta-analyse qui a été réalisée au début de l'étude comparative. La troisième section expose les résultats de l'analyse comparative effectuée. Avant de conclure par un appel à l'action fondée sur le lieu, nous présentons les questions qui ont guidé notre collecte de données et validons ou invalidons nos hypothèses de travail.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present the main findings of a research project conducted between 2019 and 2022 with the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The research involved a comparative study of ten grant-giving foundations that adopted a place-based philanthropic approach. Our text is divided into three main sections. The first looks at contemporary philanthropy. The second presents the results of the meta-analysis carried out at the start of the comparative study. The third section presents the results of the comparative analysis. Before concluding with a place-based call to action, we present the questions that guided our data collection and validate or invalidate our working hypotheses.

Mots clés / Keywords : Canada, États-Unis, étude comparative, lieu, philanthropie / Canada, comparative study, place, philanthropy, United States

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INTRODUCTION

L'objet du présent article est de présenter les principaux éléments d'analyse découlant d'une démarche de recherche réalisée entre 2019 et 2022 et menée avec l'appui du Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH).[1] La recherche, dirigée par une équipe multidisciplinaire, portait sur l'étude comparative de projets développés par dix fondations subventionnaires ayant adopté une approche d'intervention fondée sur le lieu (*place-based philanthropy*) (Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Cartographie des 10 cas sélectionnés

Nom de la fondation et emplacement	Type/Année/ Dons annuels*	Projet·s considéré·s dans l'étude	Visée du ou des projets	Territoire ciblé
Blandin Foundation *Grand Rapids, MN, USA*	Fondation familiale/ 1941/15M$	Programme de leadership communautaire	Développement du leadership communautaire	Itasca County, Minnesota
Centraide du Grand Montréal (PIC) *Montréal, QC, Canada*	Collaboration entre fondations/ 2015/41 M$	Projet « impact collectif »	Engagement à l'échelle communautaire et réduction de la pauvreté	Île de Montréal
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust *Vancouver Island, Canada*	Fondation communautaire/ 2000/400 K$	Tous les programmes de la fondation	Développement durable, biodiversité, conservation et réconciliation	Clayoquot Sound Biosphere, Île de Vancouver
East Lake Foundation *Atlanta, GA, USA*	Fondation familiale/ 1995/4.5 M$	Habitat communautaire	Revitalisation territoriale par l'approche communautaire	Atlanta, Georgia, puis villes de 15 états
Gordon Foundation *Yellowknife, NT, Canada*	Fondation familiale/ 1965/426 K$	Cinq projets de la fondation	Politiques environnementales et communautés autochtones	Nord du Canada
Greater New Orleans Foundation *New Orleans, LA, USA*	Fondation communautaire/ 1983/37 M$	Fonds de revitalisation communautaire et fonds pour répondre aux urgences climatiques	Philanthropie de l'urgence	Région de la Grande Nouvelle-Orléans, Louisiane
Liberty Hill Foundation *Los Angeles, CA, USA*	Fondation publique/ 1976/18 M$	Coalition « Moi, mes fils, mes frères » et formation de commissions	Développement des capacités	Comté de Los Angeles, Californie
McConnell Foundation *Montréal, QC, Canada*	Fondation familiale/ 1937/15 MS	Villes pour le monde	Innovations sociales et urbaines	Échelle canadienne
Metcalf Foundation *Toronto, ON, Canada*	Fondation familiale/ 1960/6 MS	Économies locales inclusives	Réduction de la pauvreté	Le Grand Toronto
The California Endowment *Los Angeles, CA, USA*	Fondation privée/ 1996/126 M$	Construire des communautés viables et le programme *Beyond 2020*	Iniquité en santé pour les communautés non desservies	État de la Californie

Note: * Les montants indiqués sont ceux de la dernière année financière complétée au moment de l'étude. En fonction des fondations et du moment de réalisation de l'étude de cas, la période indiquée se situe entre 2019 et 2021.

Pour mener à bien cette étude comparative, nous avons utilisé une méthode partagée entre une réflexion théorique, une étude empirique et une analyse comparative des données d'enquête. Pour effectuer cette étude, nous avons procédé à une recension d'écrits sur la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu, consulté les sites internet des dix organisations retenues et procédé à une quinzaine d'entrevues exploratoires semi-dirigées auprès de représentant·e·s des fondations sélectionnées.

Dans un premier temps, nous avons revisité les théories portant sur le don et la philanthropie. Nous entendions bonifier notre compréhension du rôle joué par le lieu dans les constructions théoriques sur le don. Ce travail nous a permis de formuler une théorie de la philanthropie territoriale.[2] Cette démarche a été complétée par une méta-analyse des écrits récents, principalement américains, portant sur la *place-based philanthropy*.

Dans un deuxième temps, nous avons recensé et présenté une synthèse de dix projets soutenus par des fondations canadiennes (n = 5) et américaines (n = 5).[3] De courtes monographies ont été réalisées sur les projets et les fondations concernées à l'aide de l'information disponible sur les sites web, de rapports provenant des organisations concernées, d'articles portant sur les fondations à l'étude, et, enfin, d'entretiens semi-dirigés. Les dix projets ont été sélectionnés à partir d'une liste de 150 fondations qui avaient été répertoriées au moyen de critères de sélection spécifiques.[4]

Les informations recueillies lors des entretiens portaient sur cinq types de rapport. À chaque type était associé une question guide utilisée lors des entretiens que nous avons réalisés. Ces rapports étaient :

1. Rapport au territoire : comment était défini le rapport au lieu dans chacun des projets?
2. Rapport inter-organisationnel : quels types de collaborations ou de partenariats ont été développés?
3. Rapport à l'évaluation : comment les fondations ont-elles évalué l'impact du projet étudié?
4. Rapport à une éthique sociale en matière de justice : quelle importance ont eu les enjeux liés à l'équité, à la justice sociale et à la justice environnementale dans les interventions mises de l'avant dans les projets?
5. Rapport à la transformation systémique : en quoi le fonctionnement ou la stratégie de travail de la fondation, à partir du projet sélectionné, étaient innovants et en mesure d'avoir un impact transformateur sur les systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels en place?

Les données recueillies nous ont permis de développer une analyse, présentée dans une section ultérieure, en fonction de ces cinq rapports.

Notre texte est divisé en trois grandes parties. La première consiste en un survol de la philanthropie moderne. Celui-ci nous permet de caractériser l'agir philanthropique moderne, tel qu'il s'est déployé en Amérique du Nord à partir du début du 20e siècle. La deuxième partie présente le résultat d'une analyse documentaire portant sur la philanthropie basée sur le lieu. La troisième expose les principaux résultats analytiques de notre démarche de recherche et présente un point de vue critique sur les effets réels découlant des interventions d'organisations philanthropiques qui situent le lieu et la confiance au cœur de leur approche interventionnelle.

LA PHILANTHROPIE MODERNE

De nos jours, la philanthropie moderne englobe des activités à portée caritative, de bienfaisance ou de mécénat. Les finalités de ces activités s'inscrivent dans un répertoire d'actions que nous catégorisons selon trois postures. Une première posture, que nous qualifions d'*hégémonique*, est centrée sur la préservation du système sociétal dominant. Les actions des fondations s'y rapportant permettent à ce système d'évoluer et de se transformer afin de reproduire, de bonifier ou de renouveler les mécanismes de domination. Une deuxième posture, à vocation *contre-hégémonique*, regroupe une diversité de stratégies de lutte contre toute forme de domination et de marginalisation. Cette voie d'action est la moins empruntée par les fondations philanthropiques. Une troisième posture, empruntant la voie de la médiation ou de la *mitigation ciblée*, propose un réformisme de bon aloi. Les actions développées par les fondations entendent réformer la texture dominatrice du système hégémonique en place sans vouloir recomposer ou révolutionner les mentalités, les pratiques et les structures institutionnelles. Cette dernière posture, bien que plus présente que la voie contre-hégémonique, est bien moins adoptée que celle à vocation hégémonique.

Les pratiques philanthropiques canadiennes et américaines que nous avons étudiées s'inscrivent très bien dans la troisième posture d'action. Concrètement, elles endossent les grands principes de l'épistémè moderne dans la mesure où elles s'inscrivent dans un des grands champs organisationnels et institutionnels d'action, à savoir celui de la société civile. Elles mobilisent des avoirs financiers à partir de la plus-value économique générée par une économie de marché mondialisée. Elles sont dotées d'une licence sociale de bienfaisance définie en complémentarité ou en soutien des actions de l'État. Enfin, elles ont adopté les modalités organisationnelles et institutionnelles promues par les économies libérales et sociales tout en tenant compte de préceptes de rigueur, d'efficience et d'efficacité promus par la technoscience.

La philanthropie nord-américaine au début du 20e siècle[5]

Avant tout, il s'agit de pratiques philanthropiques qui se cristallisent autour d'un ensemble d'initiatives formelles et informelles. Aux pratiques d'entraide directe, spontanée et de nature artisanale se juxtaposent des activités philanthropiques instituées et instituantes. Dans cette philanthropie moderne, le don dispose d'une reconnaissance fiscale (retour sur impôt). Il doit répondre à des finalités relevant du bien public et il est soumis à une réglementation politique spécifique. Enfin, les pratiques philanthropiques modernes mobilisent des ressources financières, humaines et territoriales de petite ou de grande envergure. Cette philanthropie se décline en trois types d'organisation : les organismes sans but lucratif (OSBL), les œuvres de bienfaisance (donataires dits qualifiés car reconnus par l'État) et les fondations subventionnaires ou opérationnelles.

L'ensemble des organisations philanthropiques formelles canadiennes ou américaines doivent respecter un cadre juridique défini par leurs législateurs respectifs. En ce sens, les organisations philanthropiques sont appelées à se doter d'une double identité : à la fois juridique (statuts d'incorporation) et sociale (mission, vision à réaliser, posture gestionnaire et objectifs à atteindre). Sur le plan financier, deux grandes sources de financement soutiennent les capacités d'action des organisations philanthropiques canadiennes et américaines. Le fonctionnement de ces organisations compte sur des sources plurielles de financement issues de collectes de dons (campagnes

de financement, sociofinancement), d'activités commerciales (vente de biens ou services) ou de subventions provenant d'organismes publics ou de fondations subventionnaires.

Au niveau des modalités de fonctionnement des fondations, nous trouvons des fondations opérationnelles ou subventionnaires. Les fondations opérationnelles gèrent elles-mêmes les projets philanthropiques qu'elles développent alors que les fondations subventionnaires accordent autant des dons à des donataires « qualifiés »[6] qu'à des donataires non qualifiés. Notons que les capitaux légués dans une fondation sont placés sur les marchés financiers afin que les revenus alimentent ses activités philanthropiques. De façon spécifique, les fondations dites communautaires accueillent des dons dédiés et les gèrent au nom de fiduciaires.

La philanthropie moderne fondée sur le lieu : recension des écrits

Éléments d'histoire

La philanthropie fondée sur le lieu regroupe différentes expressions utilisées pour qualifier l'essence de leur approche interventionnelle. Émergente aux États-Unis au début du 20e siècle,[7] la *place-based philanthropy* peut être considérée comme une variante de la *community philanthropy* (Doan, 2019). L'approche *place-based philanthropy* est aujourd'hui fortement associée aux actions de 900 fondations communautaires américaines et de 191 canadiennes. La plus ancienne fondation communautaire canadienne—la Vancouver Community Foundation—a été créée en 1921, soit sept ans après la création de la première fondation communautaire aux États-Unis en 1914 (la Cleveland Foundation). Toutes les fondations communautaires canadiennes sont membres de Fondations communautaires Canada. Au début des années 1960, la posture philanthropique communautaire a connu un important essor en lien avec une variété de programmes ou de mesures déployées par le gouvernement fédéral américain.[8]

Du côté britannique, l'expression « *place-based funding* » est apparue à la fin des années 1960 en lien avec certaines initiatives gouvernementales.[9] La première fondation communautaire en Grande-Bretagne a été créée en 1975 à Wiltshire et le pays comptait 46 fondations communautaires dès 2020. Dernièrement, cette stratégie d'intervention a connu un regain de vitalité, comme en témoigne une courte étude de positionnement stratégique réalisée en 2015 par l'Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR).

En France, les expressions « philanthropie territoriale » et « fondations territoriales » sont devenues communes au cours des dernières décennies. (Pour de plus amples informations sur ce sujet, voir le document de présentation intitulé *Fondations territoriales, pour une philanthropie de proximité* réalisé par le Centre français des fonds et des fondations [CFF, 2013].) L'approche envers le lieu à la française associe étroitement les interventions philanthropiques à la notion de territoire. Somme toute, dans la présentation des fondations territoriales faite par le CFF, un lien clair est établi entre ces dernières et les principes promus par les *community foundations* canadiennes et américaines. Selon le Durfort-Ilutiu Conseil,

> La Fondation territoriale est une adaptation du concept de *community foundation*, apparu en 1914 aux États-Unis avec la création de la Cleveland Foundation. Il s'agit d'une organisation philanthropique créée par et pour une *community*, définie comme un groupe d'ha-

> bitants d'un même territoire aux profils diversifiés mais tous animés par le sentiment de partager un destin commun. (Durfort-Ilutiu Conseil, 2013, p. 9)

À l'échelle internationale, la *place-based philanthropy*, répertoriée par le Global Fund Community Foundation en 2014, recensait 1 876 fondations communautaires dans le monde. Elles étaient principalement localisées en Amérique du Nord (55 %) et en Europe (35 %). À partir des années 1980, la mise sur pied de fondations communautaires a connu un développement très important (un peu plus de 60 % des fondations communautaires ont été créées depuis 1985). (À ce sujet, voir l'Atlas des fondations communautaires. Veuillez noter d'autre part que Fondations communautaires Canada compte parmi ses membres dix fondations communautaires québécoises. La plus ancienne est la Fondation Québec Philanthrope, créée en 1988.)

Au Québec, les traditions américaine et canadienne-anglaise liées au lieu ou à la communauté s'inscrivent dans une philanthropie de bienfaisance, locale ou régionale, laquelle associe étroitement les dimensions territoriale, communautaire et sectorielle autour de grands enjeux (éducation, santé, culture…). Cependant, cette combinaison n'a pas donné lieu à un terme spécifique ou à une expression particulière (Alalouf-Hall et al., 2022).

Définition et principes

Pour qualifier ce que nous entendons par philanthropie fondée sur le lieu, nous retenons la définition proposée par Taylor, Buckley et Hennessy (2017, p. 5, notre traduction) :

> Le terme « local », en relation avec les fondations ou les organismes gouvernementaux nationaux, est actuellement utilisé pour décrire une série d'approches, allant de l'octroi de subventions dans une zone à des partenariats de collaboration à long terme et à multiples facettes visant à réaliser des changements significatifs. Dans la plupart des cas, il ne s'agit pas seulement d'un terme décrivant le lieu cible du financement; il décrit également un style et une philosophie d'approche qui cherchent à réaliser des changements systémiques « conjoints ».

Selon le Movement Strategy Center (2013), toute approche effective d'une philanthropie fondée sur le lieu doit viser le développement du pouvoir d'agir de communautés marginalisées. L'efficacité, l'efficience et la pertinence d'une telle approche supposent l'application d'un ensemble de principes clés présentés et résumés dans la Figure 2.

Figure 2 : Principes pour développer des lieux de pouvoir

1) Clarté : Dès le début d'une initiative, la clarté—auprès des acteurs en place concernant les intentions, les objectifs, les attentes et les autres facteurs d'une fondation—est essentielle à la réussite de tout travail.

2) Transparence : La transparence du processus décisionnel des fondations est également un facteur de réussite; le processus peut être très participatif, mais en fin de compte, qui prend la décision finale sur la manière dont les choses doivent se dérouler?

3) Évaluation précise : Il est essentiel de mettre en relation les personnes qui possèdent la sagesse sur les lieux où nous travaillons afin d'évaluer avec précision la communauté, son leadership, ses défis et les possibilités de changement : les fondations nationales apprennent des locaux et reçoivent des conseils de la part de bénéficiaires de longue date qui sont bien respectés au sein des communautés que nous soutenons.

Figure 2 (suite)

4) Comprendre le pouvoir : La compréhension du pouvoir, tant du point de vue du poids d'une institution particulière que du point de vue de l'attention portée à la modification de la dynamique du pouvoir dans un lieu donné, est essentielle pour obtenir les résultats nécessaires au sein d'une communauté.

5) Partenariat : Les partenariats étroits et intentionnels avec la communauté locale, dans lesquels l'échange, le dialogue et les relations réelles sont cultivés, constituent un atout majeur pour la réussite de l'octroi de subventions envers un lieu donné. La philanthropie catalytique devrait être une voie vers un partenariat véritable et vers la durabilité. Il est essentiel d'équilibrer la puissance d'un partenariat véritable au sein de la communauté entre celle-ci et la philanthropie.

6) Leadership communautaire : Investir dans la construction d'un leadership communautaire renforce la capacité au niveau local et a le pouvoir d'abolir les silos, de créer des connexions puissantes et d'effectuer un changement réel.

7) Construction de capacités communautaires : Il est fortement recommandé de tenir compte de l'initiative de la communauté pour savoir qui sont les constructeurs de capacités et les fournisseurs d'assistance technique appropriés et quels types de capacité doivent être construits.

8) Communication à long terme : Le changement sur place est un marathon plutôt qu'un sprint.

9) Lier les systèmes et les lieux : S'il faut créer une capacité locale pour transformer les lieux, il faut aussi envisager et concevoir simultanément un moyen de transformer des systèmes plus vastes à une grande échelle.

10) S'appuyer sur les stratégies de réseautage : La décentralisation de la planification et de l'initiative encourage une plus grande participation des partenaires de la fondation car elle permet d'instaurer un climat de confiance.

Source : Movement Strategy Center (2013, p. 5)

Mise en lumière de trois caractéristiques clés de la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu

La redécouverte du lieu en soutien au pouvoir d'agir des communautés

Entre le milieu des années 1960 (États-Unis) et le début des années 1970 (Canada), la littérature pertinente rend compte d'une redécouverte de l'importance accordée au territoire local. L'idée que le lieu compte et que les communautés locales doivent activement participer à son épanouissement prend de l'ampleur et se traduit tant par l'implantation d'une variété d'initiatives locales à portée communautaire que par l'établissement de nouveaux programmes publics de financement.

À cette époque, les communautés territoriales sont perçues et présentées comme des espaces propices au développement d'innovations sociales. On considère ces innovations comme étant indispensables à la revitalisation territoriale (Phillips et al., 2011). Ce nouveau positionnement en faveur du local bénéficie de processus de décentralisation et de déconcentration de l'action étatique, de la dévolution à des organismes tiers des responsabilités publiques en matière de développement socioéconomique, et, enfin, de l'application de nouvelles modalités de gouvernance de projets publics impliquant une coordination des interventions par des réseaux intersectoriels (Perry et Mazany, 2014).

Cette mouvance autour du développement local et communautaire se voit renforcée par l'action de plusieurs facteurs (Oosterlynck et al., 2013; IVAR, 2015; Phillips et Scaife, 2017) :

- La reconnaissance que les disparités économiques et sociales sont concentrées et différenciées par le lieu, que ce soit la région, la ville ou le quartier;

- La prise de conscience que les questions sociales sont multidimensionnelles et multisectorielles et qu'elles nécessitent une approche holistique et globale, en particulier dans les zones les plus dévitalisées;
- L'incapacité récurrente des interventions de nature publique à répondre aux besoins portés par des groupes marginalisés et des territoires dévitalisés;
- Les effets disproportionnés des mesures d'austérité gouvernementales sur les communautés mal desservies ou les territoires mal développés.

Maintenant, comment définir le lieu? Pour être considéré comme une unité potentielle de changement, le lieu doit être d'une dimension suffisante pour agir de façon significative sur les systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels à l'origine des problèmes observés (Markey, 2010). Pour Williamson et al. (2021), le lieu peut se définir comme :

- Une entité géographiquement délimitée (quartier, ville, région);
- Un espace relationnel physique ou virtuel où l'on travaille de façon concertée et collaborative;
- Un espace où l'engagement est motivé par l'attachement à un territoire, le partage de valeurs et un sentiment de coresponsabilité des parties prenantes dans des actions propices à une bonne vie commune.

Ces trois éléments ne sont pas mutuellement exclusifs et laissent entrevoir d'autres facteurs pour considérer le lieu comme une échelle appropriée pour l'action (Ferris et Hopkins, 2015a) :

- Le fait que les actions locales ne sont pas isolées : le lieu est une des composantes d'une écologie géographique marquée par l'interdépendance des échelles d'intervention (du local à l'international). Le lieu représente alors une porte d'entrée intéressante pour comprendre les dynamiques écosystémiques en jeu;
- Le constat qu'il est plus avantageux et efficace de tester des innovations ou des programmes publics à une échelle géographique réduite;
- La volonté d'établir des relations basées sur la confiance avec les bénéficiaires de subventions.

Des représentations nuancées et plurielles du lieu et l'engagement au territoire
Pour de nombreux auteurs, l'idée que les fondations communautaires et des fondations publiques, à l'image des Centraide/United Way, ont une approche promouvant le lieu est bien ancrée. En corollaire, l'approche des fondations privées ou familiales ne le serait pas du fait qu'elles sont moins insérées dans la ou les communautés concernées ou simplement parce qu'elles n'y sont pas localisées du tout (Harrow et al., 2016; Charities Aid Foundation, 2017; Phillips, 2018; Pill, 2019).

Dans les faits, ces affirmations sont à nuancer. On ne peut pas supposer que certains types de fondations endossent une approche fondée sur le lieu uniquement parce qu'elles sont localisées sur le territoire concerné. On ne peut pas non plus supposer que des fondations physiquement éloignées d'un territoire ne peuvent pas recourir à une approche fondée sur le lieu. Sur le plan factuel, nous observons que la pratique philanthropique fondée sur le lieu, telle que pratiquée par

des fondations communautaires, peut être limitée dans sa portée par le recours à d'autres stratégies d'intervention (la philanthropie stratégique, la philanthropie de mesure d'impact…), ou parce que des fondations mettent plus ou moins en pratique certains des principes défendus par cette approche (par exemple, les relations de pouvoir ou le financement de longue durée). Il y a donc des nuances dans les façons de s'approprier les fondements et de pratiquer la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu. En témoignent la variabilité et la pluralité des formes d'engagement des fondations communautaires ou publiques à l'égard du lieu.

Force est de constater que le niveau d'engagement des fondations envers le lieu est souvent guidé par des intérêts pluriels. Il dépend de divers éléments tels que les orientations propres à chaque fondation, leur histoire organisationnelle ou les tendances du jour (Taylor et Buckly, 2017). En ce sens, les écrits consultés font état d'un ensemble de facteurs qui prédisent ou conditionnent l'engagement de fondations dans leur approche fondée sur le lieu. Un premier facteur, dit *critique*, relève du contexte politique et du cadre interventif. En effet, le contexte politique peut stimuler, compléter ou entraver les initiatives axées sur le lieu (Phillips et Scaife, 2017; Taylor et Buckly, 2017). Un deuxième facteur, dit *relationnel*, relève de la présence d'organisations intermédiaires, telles que des réseaux de développement communautaire ou des agences quasi-gouvernementales qui soutiennent le développement local dans des zones défavorisées. Un troisième facteur, dit *conjoncturel*, relève du développement de nouvelles connaissances ou de la diffusion de nouvelles technologies ou d'innovations sociales. Un quatrième facteur, dit *systémique*, tient à la nature profonde des problèmes à résoudre, aux caractéristiques des communautés locales et aux capacités réelles d'engagement des acteurs (Karlström et al., 2007; Burns et Brown, 2012; IVAR, 2015). Un cinquième, dit *financier*, repose sur la nature, la diversité et la qualité des relations entre les bailleurs de fonds (publics, sociaux ou privés) actifs dans une zone géographique. Enfin, un dernier facteur, dit *écosystémique*, tient à la réalité multiscalaire du développement des sociétés. Il s'ensuit que la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu est immanquablement appelée à tenir compte d'autres d'échelles d'action.

Visée multiscalaire de la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu

Les recherches et les évaluations menées sur les approches axées sur le lieu ont révélé que des changements d'importance, en lien avec les grands enjeux sociaux et environnementaux, ne peuvent être réalisés uniquement à partir d'une échelle locale d'intervention. Ces études soulignent la nécessité de relier l'action locale aux politiques régionales et nationales, voire internationales (Taylor et Buckly, 2017).

Au cours des dix dernières années, la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu—promotrice d'un développement juste, décent et viable—s'est inspirée des apprentissages découlant du développement économique communautaire et des avancées réalisées par le secteur de l'économie sociale et solidaire ou des entreprises sociales. Elle en est donc venue à élargir son champ d'action pour englober plusieurs niveaux et échelles d'intervention. Cette approche considère le lieu comme un système ouvert, où le local demande à être aligné aux autres écosystèmes locaux ainsi qu'aux écosystèmes des territoires plus vastes que sont les métropoles, les régions et la nation (Ferris et Hopkins, 2015a).

À cet égard, pour que la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu agisse avec pertinence, efficience et efficacité sur les causes de la pauvreté et de la dévitalisation des quartiers, Markley et al. (2016) soutiennent qu'elle doit s'engager dans d'autres échelles d'action. Ceux-ci affirment que les fondations ayant une approche basée sur le lieu devraient déployer leurs outils et leurs ressources largement afin d'influencer la culture du développement socioéconomique dans leur territoire d'action ou même dans d'autres territoires. Markley et al. affirment que cet élargissement de l'agir territorial s'inscrit dans une posture visant un développement socioéconomique régional et national qui soit plus équitable, inclusif et durable. Dans cette perspective d'élargissement, la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu peut se doter d'objectifs multi-niveaux et multisectoriels afin de générer des changements systémiques à la hauteur des fins poursuivies.

À PARTIR DES DIX ÉTUDES DE CAS RÉALISÉES : ANALYSE DES CINQ RAPPORTS IDENTIFIÉS

Nous avons commencé cet article en identifiant cinq rapports que nous avons délimités grâce à une question centrale posée lors des entretiens. Ci-dessous, nous présentons une analyse-synthèse des éléments qui se dégagent des propos des personnes interviewées.

La relation au lieu et son ampleur géographique

La question centrale relative à ce premier rapport portait sur la façon dont les projets des fondations à l'étude considéraient leur relation au lieu et déterminaient l'ampleur spatiale de leur agir philanthropique. Nous avons constaté, sans surprise, que les approches à l'égard du lieu sont très variables. Pour la plupart des fondations, le lieu est défini par des relations à tisser autour de problèmes systémiques concentrés sur des espaces plus ou moins grands, plus ou moins proximaux. En d'autres mots, la relation se résume à être un lieu sur lequel travailler. Pour un nombre moins important de fondations, elles considèrent le lieu sous un angle identitaire en lien avec un attachement, un sentiment d'appartenance ou une identité (un lieu pour lequel il faut s'investir, se mobiliser).

La nature du travail « sur ou pour » le lieu est plurielle. Si les fondations qui concentrent leurs objectifs et leurs stratégies sur le renforcement des capacités sont nombreuses, d'autres estiment que la revitalisation physique des quartiers, le développement économique ou le changement des systèmes jouent un rôle clé pour construire de bons milieux de vie. Notons qu'une minorité des fondations étudiées ont adopté une approche globale ou holistique en s'intéressant simultanément à la durabilité sociale, économique, culturelle et environnementale desdits lieux.

Si l'ensemble des fondations étudiées accordait une importance centrale au lieu, elles l'ont fait sous des angles variés et avec des ampleurs différentes. Pour certaines, l'idée de susciter des changements à l'échelle locale était au cœur de leur mission : c'était le cas, par exemple, du California Endowment, avec son obligation d'investir dans des communautés californiennes, et de Liberty Hill, avec son mandat d'assurer un développement harmonieux de Los Angeles. Pour d'autres, comme les fondations Metcalf et Eastlake, pour qui le lieu était vecteur d'investissement dans les personnes, elles ont ciblé avec précision les zones les plus appropriées pour déployer leurs interventions. Un troisième registre était représenté par les deux initiatives autochtones de notre échantillon, la Gordon Foundation et le Clayoquot Biosphere Trust. Pour ces organisations, l'agir

philanthropique était un moyen de contourner les normes occidentales en matière de lieu et de considérer celui-ci comme un écosystème élargi englobant les systèmes humains et naturels.

L'importance et les formes de collaboration

Les réponses à la question relative aux collaborations et aux partenariats nous a permis de constater que les dix initiatives ont développé des collaborations ou des partenariats variés auprès de différents types d'acteurs sociaux. Ces relations se faisaient auprès d'autres fondations et organisations de la société civile comportant des représentant·e·s des communautés concernées, ou encore elles se faisaient de concert avec des organisations privées ou publiques.

Dans bon nombre de cas, les fondations jouaient le rôle d'organisations rassembleuses. Elles le faisaient à partir de collaborations établies avec un ou plusieurs types d'intervenant·e·s dans le but de catalyser les impacts des initiatives locales soutenues. C'était le cas, par exemple, de la fondation McConnell. Pour un petit nombre de fondations, dont la California Endowment, la Blandin Foundation et la Liberty Hill Foundation, elles ont concentré leurs interventions dans certaines communautés afin de renforcer les capacités de ces dernières. D'autres fondations, comme le Projet d'impact collectif (PIC) de Montréal, ont généré des résultats importants en établissant des liens étroits à plusieurs niveaux. Le PIC a recruté et influencé de nombreux bailleurs de fonds et a développé une approche basée sur le lieu et la confiance. Enfin, des fondations telles que Liberty Hill Foundation ont initié ou créé des formes de collaboration en lien avec des mécanismes ou des dispositifs de gouvernements municipaux.

Il est important de noter que les pratiques collaboratives observées pour la période concernée par notre étude n'étaient pas nécessairement statiques. Souvent, les collaborations évoluaient dans le temps en fonction du niveau de satisfaction atteint, du rythme des progrès (lent ou rapide) et de la réalisation ou non des objectifs poursuivis.

La dimension évaluative

Notre troisième question portait sur l'évaluation de l'impact des fondations sur les lieux et les communautés visés. Les dix études de cas témoignaient d'un recours à un large éventail d'approches en matière d'évaluation. En effet, les objectifs, les méthodes et la qualité de l'évaluation des projets soutenus par les fondations étaient aussi variés que leur portée, leur durée et la composition des parties prenantes impliquées. Les études de cas suggèrent que la taille et les ressources des fondations n'étaient pas nécessairement en corrélation avec l'énergie consacrée à l'évaluation. La Blandin Foundation, par exemple, disposait d'une dotation relativement modeste par rapport à d'autres. Cela ne l'a pas empêchée d'allouer des ressources importantes pour l'évaluation de ses interventions.

Quelques fondations, comme Metcalf et Eastlake, ont utilisé des données issues des communautés pour cerner les impacts de leurs interventions. D'autres fondations, comme Liberty Hill, ont lié l'évaluation d'impact au renforcement des capacités en présageant les résultats souhaités et en précisant les indicateurs de progrès à utiliser. Des fondations plus importantes, telles que la California Endowment et McConnell, dans le but d'apprendre et d'ajuster le travail de leur organisation, ont procédé à des évaluations qualitatives en continu. On parlait alors de processus d'éva-

luation amorcés dès les phases pilotes ou lancés rapidement après le début des projets soutenus. Enfin, d'autres organisations, comme le PIC à Montréal, ont laissé aux communautés le soin de définir et de mesurer leurs impacts.

Comme pour d'autres aspects, la transparence des intentions des fondations varie. Cet enjeu soulève des questions sur la responsabilité des fondations à l'égard des collectivités avec lesquelles elles ont établi des relations centrées ou non sur la confiance. Certaines fondations, comme Blandin, Gordon, Liberty Hill et Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, se sont engagées dans des démarches de co-apprentissage au moyen de pratiques innovatrices. À titre indicatif, elles ont mis l'accent sur l'apprentissage stratégique en utilisant des approches évaluatives respectueuses des intérêts de chacun.

Les enjeux liés à l'équité et à la justice sociale

La promotion de l'équité constituait une préoccupation centrale pour notre équipe de recherche. Elle correspondait à notre quatrième question de recherche. Nous avons postulé que les efforts déployés par les fondations pour appuyer le développement des communautés devaient favoriser l'équité et permettre des avancées en matière de justice sociale. Les résultats de notre étude nous indiquent que toutes les fondations étudiées ont tenté, dans une certaine mesure et en fonction de leurs capacités et ressources, de s'engager sur la voie de l'équité et de la justice sociale. Cependant, cette dimension variait sur un certain nombre de points, tant organisationnels que contextuels.

De nombreuses fondations, comme la Greater New Orleans Foundation, ont concentré leurs efforts sur la création de résultats équitables établis en fonction d'une analyse située géographiquement, d'une vision globale du monde, ou même, d'un événement traumatisant. D'autres fondations, comme Blandin, California Endowment, Gordon, PIC et Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, ont mis en œuvre une posture d'équité. Elles l'ont fait au moment de la mise en place des modalités de gouvernance : par le biais du renforcement des capacités; par le développement d'un leadership individuel et organisationnel; au moment de choisir des priorités d'action; ou encore, par l'augmentation de la capacité d'influence des membres des communautés visées et de leurs organisations.

Une des pratiques innovantes observée relève des efforts déployés par plusieurs des fondations pour générer, dans ou à partir de leur organisation, plus de justice sociale et d'équité. Ces fondations ont agi de façons différentes et diversifiées : sur leurs structures internes, sur leurs modalités d'engagement avec des collaborateurs et collaboratrices, sur les mécanismes d'évaluation et de suivi, et, surtout, elles l'ont fait en créant de véritables partenariats avec les communautés concernées. C'est ce que nous avons constaté en particulier avec Liberty Hill et California Endowment.

Des pratiques innovantes et leur impact sur les systèmes dominants

Notre cinquième et dernière question portait sur l'innovation et ses impacts transformateurs. Nous avons cherché à identifier des modes de fonctionnement uniques ou nouveaux dans la perspective où ces nouvelles modalités généreraient des changements significatifs. Nous avons constaté que toutes les fondations voulaient impacter les systèmes en place en innovant d'une façon ou d'une autre. Sur ce point, la plupart ont concentré leurs efforts sur la modification des pratiques ou des politiques dans des domaines spécifiques.

Cependant, aucune des fondations ne s'est donné pour objectif de transformer en profondeur les systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels en place. Certaines fondations, comme McConnell et le California Endowment, ont utilisé leur propre courbe d'apprentissage organisationnel comme substrat pour communiquer dans leur environnement, soit en diffusant leurs résultats au plus grand nombre, soit en entamant et développant des conversations et des projets avec d'autres fondations et acteurs sociaux.

QUE NOUS RÉVÈLE L'ANALYSE DES CINQ RAPPORTS RETENUS?

Notre étude montre que les fondations étudiées ont fait du lieu une dimension centrale à partir de laquelle elles ont soutenu des actions qui ont eu des impacts sociaux significatifs au niveau local bien que faibles au niveau environnemental. Ainsi, les interventions de ces fondations présentaient une performativité territorialement limitée dans la mitigation des grandes injustices sociales et écologiques. Les limites observées portaient moins sur la pertinence de l'approche par le lieu ou le soutien d'actions performantes que sur les capacités réelles des leaders des interventions à transformer en profondeur les systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels en place.

Notre étude a bien montré comment le travail collaboratif a été essentiel pour atteindre des résultats concrets et permettre une élévation des capacités d'agir des communautés marginalisées et des territoires dévitalisés. Notre étude montre aussi que le niveau de collaboration développé comporte des limites évidentes par rapport au lieu et à la confiance et surtout qu'il importe de penser le lieu de façon écosystémique, tant aux plans spatiaux que sectoriels, et qu'il importe d'élargir et de densifier le nombre et la qualité des alliances fondées sur la confiance.

Notre étude indique que les fondations étudiées agissent sur des causes non traditionnelles (telles que la santé, la culture, le sport, l'éducation…). Notre échantillon nous a permis de confirmer la qualité des projets mis de l'avant par les fondations retenues par rapport à des causes non traditionnelles liées entre autres à la pauvreté, aux iniquités identitaires et à l'exclusion sous toutes ses formes. Les impacts des dons, et principalement les actions que ceux-ci ont permises, ont généré des effets locaux pertinents mais n'ont pas tout à fait été en mesure d'inciter des changements systémiques à la hauteur des problèmes rencontrés.

Nous induisons de cette observation la nécessité d'accroître l'agir collectif sur les causes non traditionnelles et surtout d'augmenter le nombre de fondations subventionnaires ou opérationnelles fondées sur le lieu. Il importe aussi que ces fondations développent des alliances plus vastes avec d'autres acteurs sociaux qui soient fondées sur la confiance de la part des populations concernées. C'est seulement par le biais d'alliances élargies aux plans spatial et sectoriel et avec l'appui des populations concernées que les voix émanant de ces alliances seront entendues et potentiellement prises en considération par les dirigeant·e·s. Si les rapports de force sont établis adéquatement, ils et elles seront amené·e·s à agir avec diligence, pertinence, efficience et efficacité pour améliorer les grands systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels en place.

CONCLUSION : UN APPEL À L'ACTION FONDÉE SUR UNE « JURIDICITÉ DU COMMUN »

Au début de cet article, nous indiquions qu'un des objectifs clé de notre étude était de renouveler

notre compréhension de la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu. Nous avons sélectionné dix organisations philanthropiques qui mettaient en valeur des stratégies de lutte contre les disparités territoriales ou qui cherchaient à mitiger les injustices sociales ou environnementales. D'une certaine manière, parmi les dix cas étudiés, nous avons trouvé de nombreux exemples de pratiques réformistes bien intentionnées, performantes et décentes sur le plan relationnel, mais peu d'exemples probants qui soient vecteurs d'actions capables de transformer radicalement les systèmes organisationnels et institutionnels dominants.

Pourquoi en est-il ainsi? La réponse est relativement simple. Notre échantillon était composé d'organisations réformistes. Elles s'inscrivaient dans un réformisme grandement limité dans sa portée du fait que les projets décrits étaient fondamentalement isolés et anecdotiques. Ces projets étaient portés par des acteurs philanthropiques qui, malgré des collaborations et des partenariats, travaillaient sur la base d'une « juridicité privée » et non sur la base d'une « juridicité du commun ».

Chaque fondation, d'une part, et chacun des projets soutenus par ces fondations, d'autre part, même s'ils collaboraient avec un nombre important d'organisations, proposait une lecture orientée du travail à accomplir et une réponse singulière à celui-ci. Ce personnalisme par et dans « l'associationisme privé » rendait possible un pas en avant—ce qui représente une qualité indéniable. Cependant, il ne permettait pas le recul requis pour effectuer une réelle action collectivisée à portée transformatrice des systèmes institutionnels en place—ce qui représente une faiblesse. La majorité des organisations et projets mentionnés n'ont pas privilégié une lecture communale et écosystémique des problèmes à résoudre. Les projets étudiés se sont vus limités dans leur capacité de mobiliser les ressources et les pouvoirs requis par le niveau de subversivité qui était nécessaire pour réaliser des changements significatifs.

Les fondations et les projets ont aussi minimisé la force adaptative et récupératrice de l'État et du marché. Cette orientation n'a favorisé ni la production de consensus élargis sur un petit nombre de priorités d'action, ni le développement d'un ordre du jour commun, ni encore moins une division effective du travail et une saine et décente répartition des rôles et des responsabilités au sein des organisations progressistes de la société civile. Enfin, cela rendait très difficile une montée à l'échelle des expérimentations jugées exemplaires.

Le portrait analytique des dix fondations que nous avons étudiées se résume à une mosaïque présentant une division du travail qui s'avère individualisée, artisanale et spontanée. Cette mosaïque est orpheline sur plusieurs points. Elle est appauvrie par l'absence d'une conversation élargie. Elle est déficiente d'une planification centralisée. Il lui manque un mécanisme central d'enquête, au sens évoqué par les travaux de John Dewey (2006). Enfin, elle est déficiente d'une approche évaluative en continu et de modalités adéquates de montée à l'échelle.

En conclusion, l'approche fondée sur le lieu, telle qu'illustrée par les fondations sélectionnées et bien que pertinente, a été grandement limitée dans sa portée. Il ne suffit pas de consulter ou d'écouter les communautés, de les soutenir ou de partager du pouvoir et des ressources pour que les innovations soutenues financièrement renforcent réellement, au point de devenir subversives, les capacités et les pouvoirs d'agir des communautés. Il ne suffit pas non plus de financer des ex-

périmentations qui s'avèrent efficaces, efficientes et pertinentes en matière de lutte contre les injustices sociales et environnementales pour qu'elles puissent réellement, par leurs seules existence et démonstrations, transformer positivement les systèmes existants.

Bien que notre étude n'ait pas évalué de façon rigoureuse les impacts des projets des fondations sélectionnées, cela ne nous empêche pas de constater la présence d'un plafond de verre qui limite leur capacité de générer cette « nouvelle réalité » ou ce « nouvel imaginaire » à l'image de leurs espoirs. Si l'approche par le lieu a permis des avancées qui ont donné l'impression que le plafond de verre pouvait être franchi, ces avancées ne pouvaient empêcher la recomposition—néolibéralisme et financiarisation prédatrice obligent—des fractures sociales et territoriales. En d'autres mots, les modalités d'exclusion, de marginalisation et d'exploitation, d'une part, et de colonisation, d'autre part, ont été recomposées ou renouvelées en même temps que se déployaient les actions positives insufflées par des initiatives progressistes telles que celles mise en place par la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu ou par d'autres acteurs sociaux (les syndicats, les mouvements sociaux…).

Il importe donc de mobiliser la voie du « commun » (Laval et Dardot, 2014) tout en se recentrant sur le « sol » (Latour, 2017). Agir ainsi permettrait d'échapper à l'individualisme performatif et limité dans lequel prend place le travail des fondations philanthropiques fondées sur le lieu. Sortir du silo juridique de l'action privée implique d'aller au-delà des collaborations centrées sur des projets anecdotiques localisés et appelés tout au plus à colmater d'immenses brèches à l'aide de « diachylons personnalisés ».

Notre recherche a démontré que le lieu représente une échelle pertinente et légitime pour des actions à visée transformatrice. Cependant, cette pertinence et cette légitimité exigent de pouvoir s'émanciper de la posture singularisée induite par tout acte privé d'incorporation et de concevoir le lieu dans sa réalité écosystémique : reconnaissance de la diversité de ses composantes (humaines et non humaines); respect de la complexité des interactions entre ses composantes (flux énergétiques et cycles de vie); et interconnexion du lieu avec d'autres lieux en fonction d'un équilibre dynamique et d'une capacité de résilience, d'adaptation et d'évolution.

Il importe donc, pour les fondations et les forces progressistes, et ceci constitue notre appel conclusif, de voir les fondations viser l'éveil de l'intelligence collective envers un nouvel imaginaire sociétal, et de le faire par une mise en commun globale des ressources qui sont à leur disposition. Il s'agit ainsi de collaborer à une échelle supérieure pour mieux comprendre les contradictions inhérentes au grand projet modernisateur, de mieux appréhender la nature profonde des brèches et des crises, de se reconnecter écologiquement au sol, c'est-à-dire à un souci inclusif et respectueux des autres entités présentes sur ce dernier—le tout, dans la perspective du « commun », en concevant et testant des expérimentations en mesure d'apporter des réponses adéquates à la crise mondiale qui nous affecte.

Il faut donc répondre à la gravité de la situation. Là se situe l'ordre du jour pour un plan de travail collectivisé fondé sur le lieu afin de définir un nouveau récit, d'identifier un nouvel horizon (Fontan, Klein et Schendel, 2013), et de s'attaquer en profondeur et avec assurance aux injustices sociales et environnementales qui prévalent aujourd'hui.

NOTES

1. La période de collecte des données a été interrompue sur presque une année en raison de la crise sanitaire mondiale liée à la COVID-19.
2. Dans cet article, nous ne présenterons pas le travail de conceptualisation théorique que nous avons fait sur la philanthropie fondée sur le lieu. Pour une telle présentation, voir Fontan et al., 2024.
3. La présentation des dix études de cas a été publié dans Newton et al., 2024.
4. Appartenance à une des trois familles de fondations subventionnaires (privée, publique ou communautaire); variété dans la taille des dotations (de petite à grande fondation); approche fondée sur le lieu; programme philanthropique portant sur des enjeux de justice sociale ou environnementale; répartition géographique diffuse sur les territoires des deux pays; fondations rurales et urbaines.
5. Les pratiques philanthropiques nord-américaines combinent une philanthropie d'origine coloniale et des pratiques philanthropiques propres aux Premières Nations (voir Elson et al., 2017; Price et al., 2023).
6. Bien que la loi indique que les transferts sont des dons, généralement les fondations parlent plutôt de subventions. Les donataires qualifiés sont définis par les lois sur la bienfaisance (Canada) ou sur la philanthropie (États-Unis). Récemment, au Canada, la définition des donataires qualifiés a été élargie pour permettre plus de souplesse dans l'allocation de dons à des organisations sans but lucratif.
7. Le Council of Foundations compte environ 350 fondations communautaires américaines.
8. Selon Sarah B. Davies, « According to IVAR's research, the first recorded place-based initiative was developed in San Francisco in the 1950s led by a foundation and grasped by US government as a strategy from 1960s, with the War on Poverty (1964+) being one of the first and renowned initiatives in America. By 1973 discourse on "wicked problems" was beginning, particularly in the US: persistent local/social problems, immune to government interventions and at risk of policy failure – demanding new approaches. » (Davies, n.d., p. 4)
9. Selon Sarah B. Davies, « England appeared to have cottoned on to the government shift to place-based working with the first "Community development project" beginning in 1968—meaning there are over 40 years of place-based initiatives in UK. This change in approach led to initiatives in England such as: Enterprise zones in the 1980s; the Single Regeneration Budget and New Deal for Communities in 1990s; the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; Single Community programme; the development of the Sure Start programme, which emphasises the importance of "joined up services"; and Joseph Rowntree Foundation initiatives which gathered momentum in the late 1990s and 2000s. » (Davies, sans date, p.4)

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L'application de la Convention de Faro en Italie : les communautés patrimoniales, le rôle du troisième secteur et la participation aux activités relatives au patrimoine culturel

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RÉSUMÉ
Cet article porte sur l'application en Italie à partir de 2020 de la Convention de Faro, établie en 2005. En particulier, cette note propose à la communauté internationale un commentaire sur les données d'une recherche menée par le ministère de la Culture en Italie sur les communautés patrimoniales, leurs caractéristiques et le rôle fondamental du troisième secteur relatif au patrimoine culturel.

ABSTRACT
This article examines the application in Italy as of 2020 of the Faro Convention, created in 2005. In particular, it proposes to the international community a commentary on data from research carried out by the Italian Ministry of Culture on heritage communities, their characteristics and the fundamental role played by the third sector in the field of cultural heritage.

Mots clés / Keywords : Convention de Faro, action collective, nouvelle gouvernance publique, communautés patrimoniales / Faro Convention, collective action, new public governance, heritage communities

Une étude récente, menée par la Fondation Scuola Beni Attività Culturali du ministère italien de la Culture sur l'application de la Convention de Faro en Italie, a analysé l'étendue et les caractéristiques des communautés patrimoniales et démontré l'importance capitale du secteur tertiaire pour dynamiser ces communautés.

La Convention de Faro, convention cadre du Conseil de l'Europe sur la valeur du patrimoine culturel pour la société, met l'accent sur les aspects importants du patrimoine culturel qui sont liés aux droits de la personne et à la démocratie. La Convention promeut une compréhension plus large du patri-

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moine culturel et de sa relation avec les communautés ainsi qu'avec la société en général. Elle encourage la reconnaissance des objets et des lieux culturels non pas tant pour leur valeur intrinsèque que pour les significations et les usages que les gens leur attribuent et les valeurs qu'ils représentent. La Convention a été adoptée par le Comité des Ministres du Conseil d'Europe le 13 octobre 2005 et ouverte à la signature des États membres à Faro au Portugal le 27 octobre de la même année. Elle est entrée en vigueur le 1er juin 2011. À ce jour, vingt-quatre États membres du Conseil de l'Europe ont ratifié la Convention et cinq l'ont signée. L'Italie a ratifié la Convention en 2020.

Les principes généraux qui sous-tendent la Convention sont les suivants : développer la participation démocratique et la responsabilité sociale; améliorer le cadre et la qualité de vie; promouvoir la diversité culturelle et la compréhension mutuelle; et favoriser une plus grande cohésion sociale par la valorisation du patrimoine culturel. Le patrimoine culturel, tel qu'il est défini dans le texte de la Convention de Faro, est considéré comme

> Un ensemble de ressources héritées du passé que des personnes considèrent, par-delà le régime de propriété des biens, comme un reflet et une expression de leurs valeurs, croyances, savoirs et traditions en continuelle évolution. Cela inclut tous les aspects de l'environnement résultant de l'interaction dans le temps entre les personnes et les lieux.

La Convention encourage particulièrement la participation culturelle des citoyens, organisés ou non, en favorisant la création de communautés patrimoniales. La recherche présentée par le ministère italien définit les communautés patrimoniales comme

> Un groupe de personnes unies par les mêmes valeurs et les mêmes intérêts, regroupées de manière formelle ou informelle, qui valorisent des éléments particuliers et identifiables du patrimoine culturel, qui souhaitent être pris en compte et qui s'engagent, dans le cadre d'une action publique, à soutenir et à transmettre des éléments patrimoniaux aux générations futures. L'appartenance à une communauté est donc liée au fait que les personnes qui font partie de la communauté attribuent une valeur au patrimoine culturel qu'elles ont elles-mêmes contribué à faire connaître et à sauvegarder.

La recherche de la Fondation sur les communautés patrimoniales a clairement mis en évidence que leur fonction n'est pas exclusivement de préserver le « droit du patrimoine culturel », c'est-à-dire l'entretien et la conservation du patrimoine, mais bien de promouvoir le « droit *au* patrimoine culturel », c'est-à-dire la possibilité d'élargir l'action publique en promouvant la responsabilité sociale des communautés patrimoniales et de ceux qui les animent, la participation culturelle et la sauvegarde et la valorisation du patrimoine culturel, afin que les citoyens puissent profiter davantage des lieux, des espaces et des objets culturels. L'objectif de cette intervention est l'entretien des « biens communs », donc la restitution d'artefacts archéologiques, architecturaux ou urbains, ainsi que de jardins, de parcs et de zones rurales, aux territoires et aux personnes qui y vivent.

La recherche présentée et commentée ici, menée dans le contexte de la ratification italienne en 2021-2022, présente l'état de l'art en Italie en cartographiant les politiques et bonnes pratiques en matière de participation. La cartographie réalisée par la Fondation est la première recherche exploratoire sur les communautés patrimoniales en Italie, car il n'existe pas de sources ou de registres officiels. Il s'agit d'une première démarche de recherche qui a permis de faire un catalogue

des communautés patrimoniales italiennes et de comprendre quels sont leur statut juridique, leurs activités, les objectifs de leurs interventions et les problèmes importants auxquels elles sont confrontées dans le contexte italien. D'un point de vue théorique et systématique, il semble évident que les communautés patrimoniales ont pour but de renforcer la communauté grâce à des processus de mise en commun, de gérer le patrimoine culturel au sens large en incluant le paysage et l'environnement, et de promouvoir la participation sociale et culturelle.

Pour mener à bien cette recherche, la Fondation du ministère a lancé un appel à l'action intitulé « La carte des communautés: expériences de participation ». Cet appel a été diffusé par le biais des médias sociaux de la Fondation Scuola Beni Attività Culturali, de groupes Facebook qui s'intéressent à la participation, ainsi que du bulletin d'information mensuel de la Fondation. Après la première diffusion de l'appel à l'action, les communautés ont été invitées à remplir un bref questionnaire concernant leurs formes d'organisation et les types de biens qu'elles gèrent. En date du 4 mai 2023, 255 communautés ont répondu à cet appel. Elles constituent maintenant le groupe de référence de notre étude et composent ce que la Fondation a appelé la Carte des communautés patrimoniales en Italie.

Sur les 225 communautés cartographiées dans le cadre de l'appel, un comité scientifique a sélectionné un échantillon de 119 d'entre elles qui correspondent complètement à la définition de « communauté patrimoniale » mentionnée ci-dessus pour remplir un deuxième questionnaire qui portait sur : l'expérience de participation à la gestion du patrimoine culturel des communautés par l'analyse de leurs activités; leurs relations avec les institutions ou les acteurs de leurs territoires; les compétences et les mécanismes qui leur ont permis d'adopter de bonnes pratiques; et les enjeux importants auxquels elles font face. Enfin, des groupes de discussion en ligne ont été organisés réunissant les chercheurs de la Fondation et les communautés afin de comparer diverses réalités et identifier différents points de vue sur des thèmes spécifiques, et ainsi mieux comprendre les problèmes des participants eux-mêmes.

En ce qui concerne les expériences de participation, l'analyse des données de la recherche démontre l'importance du troisième secteur, qui représente à lui seul plus de 60 % de l'échantillon. En effet, 48 % des communautés patrimoniales sont des associations bénévoles, 12 % des coopératives et 8 % des fondations. Le secteur privé ne représente que 10 %, tandis qu'environ 15 % des communautés patrimoniales sont créées au sein d'organismes publics. Il est intéressant de noter qu'elles ont toutes vu le jour au cours des 25 dernières années, principalement après 2010, avec un sommet en 2015.

Sur le plan opérationnel, les communautés patrimoniales adoptent un modèle de gouvernance collaborative, basé sur la co-conception et une reconnaissance des réalités de leur quartier, mais aussi des réalités nationales et européennes. Parmi les dispositifs juridiques utilisés, 22 % des communautés interrogées privilégient les pactes de collaboration, 19 % les concessions, 5 % la reconnaissance de l'usage civique et 10 % d'autres pactes publics, auxquels on peut également ajouter l'utilisation de biens qui ne sont pas nécessairement privés. D'un point de vue territorial, environ 40 % des communautés patrimoniales étudiées sont situées dans le sud de l'Italie et dans les îles, en particulier dans les Pouilles et en Sicile, régions qui bénéficient de la majeure partie des fonds publics.

La majorité des communautés patrimoniales, soit 62 %, vivent uniquement des fonds fournis par le secteur public, le plus souvent se situant dans une fourchette allant de 5 000 € à 10 000 €. Quelques communautés patrimoniales disposent de fonds plus importants, dépassant même les 50 000 €. Ces communautés patrimoniales sont principalement concernées par la régénération urbaine. D'un point de vue temporel, toutes les communautés patrimoniales sont nées après 2000, avec des sommets en 2010 (après la crise de 2008) et en 2015. Il s'agit principalement de milieux qui vivent grâce à l'engagement de citoyens bénévoles qui consacrent leur temps à l'entretien des biens communs. Les expériences de ceux-ci tournent avant tout autour de lieux communautaires appartenant à l'État (palais, églises, bâtiments désaffectés, zones de fouilles, ruines, parcs et jardins) dans lesquels ils travaillent à la régénération, à la réutilisation et à la récupération, tant dans les zones urbaines que rurales, qui sont ensuite rendus à l'ensemble de la communauté. La recherche montre que ces communautés ont compris à quel point la participation, la gestion et la valorisation du patrimoine culturel ont un impact sur le territoire, surtout en ce qui concerne la promotion de l'éducation au patrimoine culturel.

Pour ce qui est des enjeux, le thème qui a émergé très clairement est la méconnaissance de la Convention de Faro en Italie. Bien que cette dernière remonte à 2005, plus de la moitié des communautés qui ont répondu au questionnaire, soit 52 %, fonctionnent selon les principes et présentent les spécificités qui caractérisent les communautés patrimoniales, même si elles ne se reconnaissent pas dans cette définition. La recherche menée par le ministère de la Culture pourrait, par conséquent, servir de levier pour lancer des pistes de réflexion pour le troisième secteur.

Les groupes de discussion ont ensuite révélé les difficultés que rencontrent les communautés patrimoniales à fonctionner dans les territoires de manière durable, notamment la précarité due à l'absence de certitude quant à leur financement continu et le recours au travail de bénévoles qui, dans le cadre d'une rotation inévitable, doivent être formés à chaque reprise. Ceux-ci n'ont pas les compétences nécessaires en matière d'organisation, de gestion et de planification. De plus, les administrations publiques n'écoutent pas attentivement leurs besoins de formations pour acquérir les compétences leur permettant de travailler pour le bien-être de la communauté dans laquelle ils s'activent.

En conclusion, les communautés patrimoniales représentent une occasion pour le secteur communautaire et les OSBL. La préservation ou la protection du patrimoine culturel ainsi que du paysage ne deviennent pas tant l'objectif de l'action collective que le dispositif pour favoriser de bonnes pratiques visant à promouvoir la participation à la connaissance et à la construction de parcours innovants d'identités collectives. Ces identités sont aussi importantes que la diffusion du patrimoine culturel en Italie, comme le démontre la reconnaissance de l'UNESCO. La Convention de Faro représente donc une occasion de choix pour le troisième secteur en Italie de devenir une référence internationale en matière d'actions visant à promouvoir les communautés patrimoniales. D'autre part, à mon avis, les communautés patrimoniales constituent un élément fondamental de l'insertion du droit à la culture dans le bien-être des communautés génératrices; ici, je me réfère spécifiquement au bien-être culturel qui a, entre autres, la vocation de créer une citoyenneté culturelle.

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Systems Thinking in Practice in a Circular Economy

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ABSTRACT

The Circular Economy (CE) is frequently touted as important for building sustainability. Despite growing interest in CE, few theories have provided effective on-the-ground tools for building circularity. This case study of an agricultural organization in Western Canada illustrates how the logic of complexity helps frame and sustain a CE. Interviewees embraced complexity to manage the messy, unpredictable work of CE. Although preliminary, this suggests the possibility that circular economy-like behaviour may be more complex than currently understood. Interviewees represented complex systems thinkers in the wild and could help others seeking to build their own CE initiatives.

RÉSUMÉ

L'économie circulaire (EC) est souvent présentée comme étant importante pour construire la durabilité. Malgré l'intérêt croissant pour l'EC, les nouvelles théories n'ont pas encore permis de créer de nombreux outils efficaces sur le terrain pour construire la circularité. Cependant, grâce à une étude de cas descriptive d'une multi-organisation dans l'agriculture de l'Ouest canadien, nous avons constaté que la logique de la complexité a aidé à encadrer et à soutenir leur travail de construction et de maintien d'une EC. Les personnes interrogées ont adopté la complexité dans le but de gérer le travail compliqué et imprévisible du CE. Bien que préliminaire, cela suggère la possibilité que les comportements de type économie circulaire soient plus tenaces qu'on ne le pense actuellement. Les personnes interrogées étaient de purs penseurs de systèmes complexes et pouvaient aider d'autres personnes cherchant à mettre en place leurs propres initiatives d'EC.

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

INTRODUCTION

The circular economy (CE) necessitates a wide range of actions, decisions, and structures at the firm level to achieve economic models that seek utility and value in waste products. Circular economy approaches shift us from a linear, one-use production line toward production loops, where we

both reduce the amount of farming/mining/felling and maximize the value we derive from the goods we use already (Korhonen, Honkasalo, & Seppälä, 2016). Because CE behaviours reduce and reuse what we need to keep economic activity going, CE is often associated with sustainability efforts across a wide range of industries; if we use less and reuse, we can help protect the planet's limited resources.

Despite the hope CE can help build sustainability and prosperity (Winans, Kendall, & Deng, 2017; Coscieme, Manshoven, Gillabel, Grossi, & Mortensen, 2022; Springle, Li, Soma, & Shulman, 2022), many practical obstacles remain, including the lack of consensus in defining and generally understanding CE and the development of robust networks/supply chains to support looping waste into value (Bressanelli, Perona, & Saccani, 2019).

On paper, successful CE relies on navigating complex adaptive systems, but does this work in practice or present another barrier? This student-led study explored if those working in CE engage with complexity, and whether we can bridge the divide between theory and on-the-ground practice. The authors wanted to understand if those currently working in CE employed a complex systems-informed approach, and what these practitioners could teach us about how to train the next generation of changemakers.

APPROACHES TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Circular economy requires a range of considerations, from the energy used (the quantity and sustainability of the source), to the materials used in production (types, amounts, and life cycles), with the goal of improving sustainability and reducing needless waste (Korhonen et al., 2016). One of the more important considerations is how to shift from using materials in a one-off, linear production process to repurposing, revaluing, and reusing materials; hence, a circular rather than linear process (Korhonen et al., 2016).

Factors such as conscientious consumerism, stricter legislation, environmental concerns, and technological innovations are driving interest in CE (Antikainen & Valkokari, 2016; Korhonen et al., 2016; Pieroni, McAloone, & Pigosso, 2019; Boons, Montavlo, Quist, & Wagner, 2013). However, Hvass and Pedersen (2019) explore the CE-based "take-back" initiative, which promotes circular sustainability practices among consumers, and conclude there are numerous challenges for brands considering CE, including "diverging perspectives of value, unclear success criteria, poor alignment with existing strategy, limited internal skills and competencies, and limited consumer interest" (p. 346). Bressanelli, Perona, and Saccani (2019) argue significant uncertainties in the quality, quantity, and timing of product outputs in circular supply chains undermine CE efforts. There are major discrepancies between the expected and actual outcomes of CE.

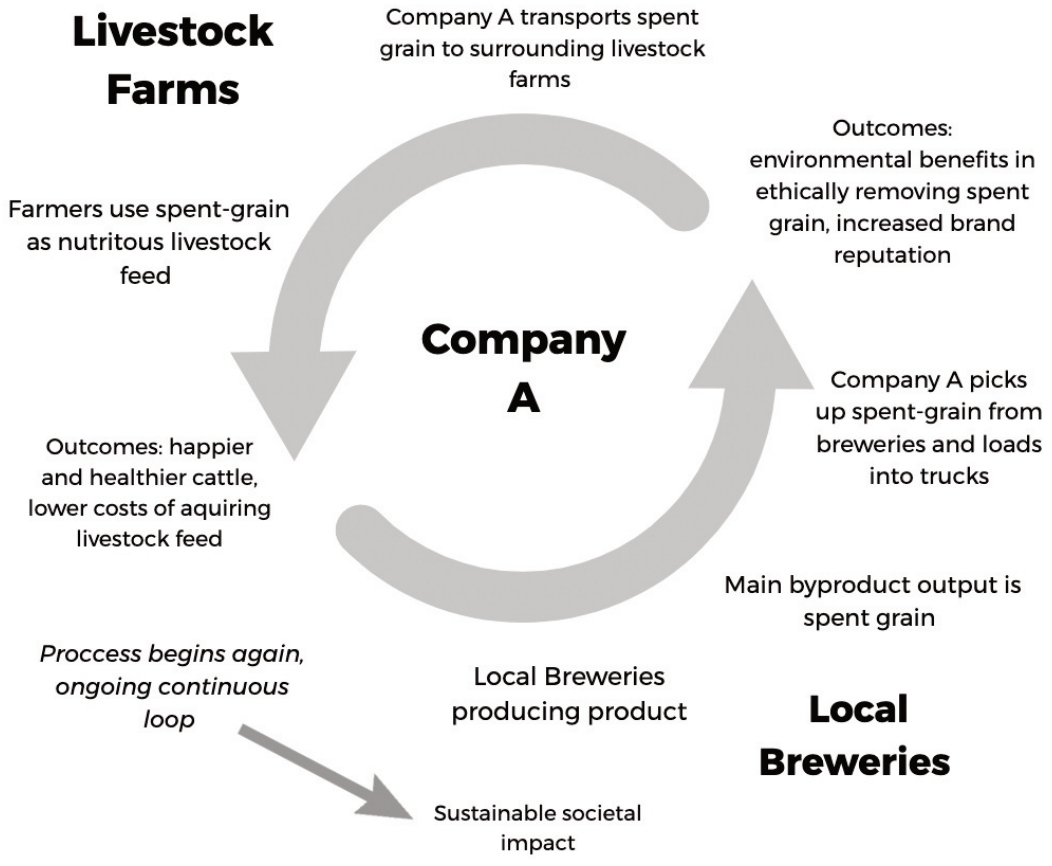
We see parallels between CE and discussions on complexity and complex systems, from the Club of Rome's emphasis on shifting away from linear consumption (Winans et al., 2017; Such, Fernandes, Kraus, Filter, & Sjorgren, 2021), to the World Economic Forum's definition of CE as a designed system that maximizes the value of inputs (as cited in Springle et al., 2022). Complex adaptive systems and CE share common language and concepts (McGowan et al, 2024; Choi, Dooley, & Rungtusanatham, 2001). The most prominent shared concepts are feedback loops, which basically

describes the circular quality of CE (Charter, 2018), and the interdependency and connection between seemingly disparate sectors and businesses (De Angelis, 2022; Springle et al., 2022; Such et al., 2021). Both areas explore the "wicked" problems (intractable, messy problems) and the adjacent possible (little changes that could lead to bigger ones) (Tsui, Chan, Harfitt, & Leung, 2020). Springle, Soma, and Schulman (2022) explicitly used systems thinking in their CE-focused social innovation lab (Laban et al., 2015, as cited in Springle et al., 2022). Yet labs, while useful, are contained spaces, suggesting the need to explore complexity in a more real-world context.

SITE OF EXPLORATION

To capture a real-world example of CE, the authors engaged in a descriptive case study of a Western Canadian social enterprise (Company A) that operates as a regenerative research ranch using a closed-loop business model (Figure 1). This article aims to answer the following question: how can CE be a critical component of an industry that is a core part of Western Canadian identity? Company A has three initiatives: 1) offering farm fresh foods to small local businesses, 2) removing brewers' spent grain (BSG) from local breweries, distilleries, and food processors, and 3) transforming BSG into livestock feed. Brewers' spent grain is a brewery by-product consisting of barley grain husks and seed coat layers, and accounts for 85 percent of total brewery waste, but is a significant source of nutrients for livestock (Sganzerla, Ampese, Mussatto, & Forster-Carniero, 2021). Brewers' spent grain can replace or supplement livestock feed for farmers (Sousa, Gil, & Calisto, 2020).

Figure 1: Company A's closed-loop system



METHODOLOGY

The authors performed five semi-structured interviews with six stakeholders of Company A in October 2022. The interview questions explored Company A's structure, supply chains, and closed-loop production. Interviewees received interview transcripts for review and approval prior to analysis. The interview responses were manually analyzed for emergent trends/themes independently and triangulated to check assumptions and develop themes. The themes are discussed below.

TRUST AND THINKING IN SYSTEMS

Interviewees discussed unpredictability and uncertainty in building a circular process and emphasized the need for strong trust in relationships and communication. But which comes first? Do you build trust via an effective circular supply chain or build a circular supply chain from a foundation of trust? A more careful reading of the interviews reveals that farmers' needs and rhythms are hard to predict outside broad parameters, presenting a significant obstacle to building a reliable supply chain. Yet, the trust between brewers and farmers, and the trust they both have in the process, increases predictability in the outcome. Understanding what others need and the externalities that may affect them can create flexibility.

The importance of trust suggests Company A's method of CE in practice may not appeal to other organizations especially because building relationships takes time. Yet interviewees appreciated the tensions they constantly manage, and the need to learn and be open to how the system moves around them; they are complex systems thinkers in the wild, engaged in real-time analysis and adjustments to feedback loops and information flows.

Interviewees acknowledged the farmers' wicked problems, and financial burdens that limit productivity and prosperity. Brewery waste presented an opportunity to collaborate. Company A explored the adjacent possible during its brainstorming pre-foundation period, questioning the current system's structure with a closed-loop network to repurpose Brewers' spent grain by-product into livestock feed for cattle calf farms. This navigation relied on rejecting/shifting the status quo. Interviewees acknowledged that this shift was particularly difficult for farmers considering the cultural and technical barriers to innovative agricultural practices (Vetroni Barros, Salvador, de Francisco, & Piekarski, 2020). Interviewees saw moving into this adjacent possible as more desirable than standing still, from business and sustainability perspectives. What is not immediately clear, however, is whether this perspective was a precursor to work in the CE, or a consequence of it.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

Company A is acting as a systems thinker in the wild. While this approach is consistent with the literature, we did not expect to see it this explicitly and comfortably used, which was an important lesson. Interviewees' use of complexity suggests a promising future for CE. While this may be a strategically beneficial partnership, members understood interdependence, exploring the adjacent possible and embracing emergence as a way of doing business.

What can we learn from Company A? First, exploring the adjacent possible does not need to mean reinventing the wheel or imagining a wholly new form of transportation. It is about exploring those

options one degree removed from what organizations are doing today—most of the tools or pieces already exist. Thinking across sectors rather than well into the future may be more important; similarly, learning from others can be an effective way to explore the adjacent possible. Using BSG for feedstock was not a novel choice, but it was novel for Company A, and it meant challenging cultures and practices. This is likely necessary in shifting production to greater sustainability and circularity, but it can be done by exploring the next step—not the next whole system.

Second, trust was the foundation for navigating the challenges of small-scale circularity. Trust helps prepare for surprising outcomes. It needs to be built and it needs to be based on communication. But Company A is one small organization; can trust survive growth or scaling? Only time will tell.

Last, understanding complexity has played a role in Company A's success. Those interested in CE may want to explore systems thinking as a set of tools to embrace the messiness, not to get rid of it. Similarly, emerging social entrepreneurs and those teaching them should explore how to see systems in the wild—and out of the classroom.

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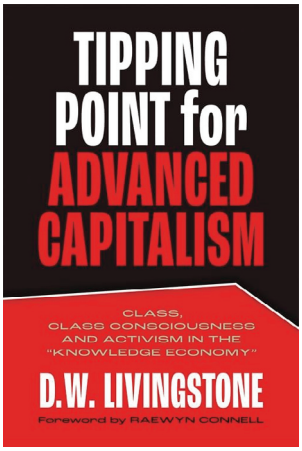
Book Review / Compte-rendu

Manuel Larrabure, Simone Billera, & Selim Guadagni, Bucknell University



Tipping Point for Advanced Capitalism: Class, Class Consciousness and Activism in the "Knowledge Economy." By D.W. Livingstone. Fernwood Publishing, 368 pp., 2023. ISBN 9781773636405.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent spread of global neoliberalism, engaging in class analysis based on classic Marxist concepts of exploitation and the labour theory of value progressively fell out of fashion in the social sciences. As capitalist social relations spread and deepened worldwide under the leadership of the United States, the social sciences, particularly in the advanced capitalist regions, increasingly fixated on an understanding of class based on income differentials and occupational stratification, mixed with identity-based analyses, focused on issues of gender, race, and sexuality, for example. In the cases where scholarship highlighted continuing dynamics of wealth inequality, it nevertheless appeared that class had taken a backseat, being understood, for better or worse, as one of several factors in a complex web of power. Indeed, it can be said that a great part of the social scientific scholarship in the last three decades largely took for granted the victory of capitalism, focusing on the system's more superficial features and excesses and how to ameliorate them.

D.W. Livingstone's new landmark book, *Tipping Point for Advanced Capitalism*, very much goes against the grain of mainstream scholarship, arguing for the continued relevance of a class analysis that is built on classical political economic concepts. Notably, by taking this path, Livingstone does not ignore many of the major changes brought forth by globalization that to some has made classical class analysis irrelevant. Key changes he focuses on are the decades-long decline of the industrial workforce and the rise of "knowledge workers," the subjective changes in the working class, the growing importance of climate change, and new patterns of social mobility. In addressing these changes, Livingstone attempts to answer the central questions of his inquiry, namely how class relations evolved through globalization and what conditions may exist for the transformation of capitalist social relations.

At the heart of Livingstone's central research questions lies a long-standing Marxian concern with the apparent ambiguity in the consciousness of modern working classes. As Livingstone notes in Chapter 2, citing Goldthorpe et al.'s (1969) study, British auto workers in the 1960s began to identify themselves more as middle class rather than working class and were found to be concerned with

consumption issues rather than labour relations. However, soon after the study was published, militant labour action broke out in precisely those same workplaces. Indeed, this subjective/objective relationship has been a long-standing concern for Marxists, including Marx himself, who in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) made the well-known distinction between "class in itself," the objective conditions and interests shared by the common positionality of workers, and "class for itself," a united collective consciousness that can actively organize and struggle against capital. Utilizing time series surveys, statistical data, and interviews, Livingstone addresses this identity ambiguity of modern working classes and argues that the class contradiction has evolved since the 1960s, placing the "knowledge worker" at its centre. As Livingstone argues, "Advanced capitalist countries are now 'knowledge societies' with much larger proportions of well-qualified people than their narrow 'knowledge economies' are able to utilise" (p. 147).

Chapter 4 expands on this concept of "knowledge societies." Data on employment and class structure in G7 and Nordic countries summarize the estimates of general class distribution of the employed labour force, comparing the numbers from 1992 to 2016. The data indicates that there has been a gradual decrease in industrial workers with a simultaneous increase of professional employees between these years. Through his research, Livingstone finds that, "Professional employees—the core 'knowledge workers'—have become a substantial part of the non-managerial hired labour force in emergent 'knowledge economies,' and they increasingly share deteriorating working conditions and pro-labour attitudes with other workers" (p. 7). This in turn, Livingstone emphasizes, has had a powerful impact on the class consciousness of the working classes in these countries, that is, the way workers think of themselves in regard to class relations as well as the extent to which they are inclined to act in accordance with their class interests. Livingstone defines three basic levels of contemporary analysis of class consciousness: class identity, oppositional class consciousness, and hegemonic (or revolutionary) class consciousness. Through these concepts, he suggests that there is a "much greater potential for mobilizing such dispositions for alternatives to capitalism than previously considered" (p. 224).

In addition, Livingstone's Canadian time series data, supplemented by International Labor Organization data on employment status and occupations in G7 and Nordic countries, show that employer classes remained very small, while middle managers grew along with professional employees, and non-managerial employees remained the majority in all countries. He uses this evidence to argue that classes are still present and that class divides are sharpening with the passing of time, demonstrating the continued relevance of a "Marxist model of current employment class structure grounded in production relations between owners and hired labour" (p. 100). He identifies the major classes in contemporary production relations, namely owners, non-managerial workers, and managerial employees. The same data show that despite a "substantial movement out of class of origin" (p.141), the "basic employment class distribution between owners of the means of production and non-managerial workers has otherwise changed only gradually over the past few generations" (p. 147). Furthermore, data on intergenerational class mobility in the employed labour force in Canada demonstrate that owners are over twice as likely to have an owner-parent than managers and non-managers. The central point Livingstone is trying to make through these findings is that despite an increase in social mobility, class differences continue to structure labour relations.

The evolution of the class structure, as the author argues in Chapters 5 and 6, is supported by the existence and development of key ideological pillars: individualism, materialism, and separation of economic and political power. Along with the general notions that the technological advances that come with capitalism increase overall welfare and improve social rights, Livingstone argues that these ideological tenets have become intertwined with contemporary neoliberal thought. As a result, he points out two major contradictions that, according to him, prevent any significant reforms to neoliberalism. First is that "inherent austerity pressures on social demand and consumer purchasing capacity diminish economic growth and sustained profits," and second is the "fixation on money market profits willfully ignores ecological limits to growth of capital" (p. 165). These contradictions are essential for Livingstone because they point to the potential of the non-managerial classes to envision a new post-capitalist society.

Livingstone then analyses class consciousness per se and connections with class positionality. His primary findings demonstrate that "identifying as middle class has not prevented development of pro-labour oppositional class consciousness among non-managerial workers," and that "pro-labour oppositional and revolutionary consciousness are more widespread among non-managerial workers than previously recognized and may be increasing" (p. 200). In addition, he finds that "excepting corporate capitalists, pro-capital oppositional consciousness is much less widespread and may be decreasing in most classes" (p. 228). Finally, Livingstone discusses the way in which class groups have distinct attitudes on specific political issues such as ending poverty and global warming. From this data, he gathers that employers and upper managers with hegemonic consciousness show much less support for action on these issues while non-managerial employees with revolutionary consciousness are much more likely to support them. Furthermore, he writes that "if these increasingly progressive views have not yet been translated into many actual policies, this should not be used to deny the existence of highly class-conscious workers or their potential to influence future social movements and public policies" (p. 270).

The growth of class consciousness demonstrated in the data leads the author to suggest that we are living in a time with a *potential* for "progressive transformation" (p. 276) of the capitalist system. This transformation would need to include three main ingredients: critique and protest, an alternative model, and strategic agency. Livingstone claims that transition from advanced capitalism to "whatever succeeds it" will be a global phenomenon with a finite timeline (p. 279). He argues that post-capitalist alternatives offer governments more options to deal with persistent social, political and economic problems, and that the COVID-19 pandemic, rise of social media, and "culture of protest" point in this direction. In short, the author believes that advanced capitalist regions are, as the title of the book suggests, indeed reaching a "tipping point," as both objective contradictions and class consciousness are sharpening.

In conclusion, the book's key strengths are providing a historically sensitive and empirically rich account of the evolution of class relations in advanced capitalist regions, providing a compelling argument that the class relation has not gone away, but rather has mutated into a battle centred increasingly on progressively dissatisfied knowledge workers and the private ownership of digital capital. Indeed, after reading this book, it would be hard to argue that globalization has made class differences obsolete. Most compelling perhaps is the evidence the author provides on how different

class positions do indeed have sharply contrasting views on a number of key issues, including unions, corporate profits, and climate change. At this level, there really is no doubt that class matters. Elites tend to defend their interests and workers tend to defend theirs. In addition, Livingstone debunks the popularly held myth that growing middle class identification means non-managerial workers no longer identify with class interests. Livingstone makes the compelling case that middle-class identification and progressive class consciousness can and do coincide.

There are some areas where Livingstone's work could be strengthened. First, at times Livingstone appears to assume that because the non-managerial classes tend to show class consciousness on a variety of issues, there exists at least a predisposition or degree of readiness to engage in class struggle. It would seem to us just as possible that critical perspectives on corporate profits, poverty, and climate change might never materialize into union drives, strikes, or participation in demonstrations, for example. This possibility is what makes Livingstone's notion of a likely tipping point in capitalism less convincing. Perhaps one way to address this possibility might be to craft surveys and interview questions that attempt to acquire knowledge of how class-conscious views do or do not materialize in the lives of the research participants. It would be useful to know, for example, if someone who shows sympathy for issues of poverty actually engages in activities such as participating in soup kitchens, donation drives, discussion groups, just to name a few possibilities. This line of questioning would be consistent with the Marxian commitment to praxis, that is, the dynamic relationship between thought and action.

Related to the above, it appears necessary to ask several questions: is it possible that contradictions in the capitalist system could be at least temporarily "resolved" via a new long wave of accumulation, similar to the 1990s digital boom? Could recent advancements in biotechnology and artificial intelligence provide the context for an extended period of expanded reproduction in the coming years? Undoubtedly, capitalism will not exist forever, but time and time again the system has proven capable of overcoming major crises, with the capitalist state playing a key role. The COVID-19 pandemic is one such recent example in which state capacities were massively expanded to revive the key pillars of neoliberalism. In other words, the pandemic, rather than representing a tipping point toward a more democratic and cooperative economy, ended up supporting the further centralization of capital. These dynamics are of course ongoing, and much is in the balance. Livingstone's work certainly provides a crucial point of reference for attempting to answer some of the most important questions in contemporary capitalist society.

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