

# **The Community and Social Economy Movement in Québec: Development and Recognition (1989-2003)**

**Jacques Caillouette**

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« **The Community and Social Economy Movement in Quebec : Development and Recognition (1989-2003)** »

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*Denis Harrisson*  
Directeur



## **AUTHOR**

Jacques CAILLOUETTE is a professor at the Social Work Department at the *Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Université de Sherbrooke, Québec.*



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## EXTRACT

*This Working Paper is the fruit of a collaboration between the Faculty of Social Work of the University of Toronto and the Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (CRISES), an interuniversity research centre that studies social innovations in the social economy, enterprise, and unions. The centre is located in Montreal at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).*

*In March 2004, I spent three weeks as a visiting scholar at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Social Work. In keeping with a policy adopted by the Faculty's teaching staff, in favour of developing contacts and knowledge about policy and social work in Quebec, Faculty Dean Jim Barber, Professor Adrienne Chambon and Master's Program Coordinator Malcolm Stewart asked me to contribute a working paper for use in the Faculty's policy course. At the same time, CRISES, which funded my stay, was looking forward to a paper resulting from this time spent in Toronto.*

*I would like to thank both the Faculty of Social Work of the University of Toronto and CRISES for making this publication possible. My thanks go also to Professor Adrienne Chambon at the University of Toronto, who put me in touch with colleagues in Toronto interested in community organization and helped me to fit in. Among them were Usha George, Izumi Sakamoto, and Susan McGrath of York University, and Ted Richmond of the Laidlaw Foundation, to name but a few.*

*Jacques Caillouette*



## INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the community movement in Quebec finds itself at a crossroads. The new Liberal government (which won the April 2003 election under Jean Charest) wants to break with the approach taken by earlier governments in the nineties. It presents itself as the instigator of an important re-engineering of the state, comparable to the Quiet Revolution of the sixties. The community movement will feel the effects of these changes. Community organizations will no longer operate within the same structures. Looking only at bills 25 and 34, adopted in December 2003, we see at both local and regional levels that community and social economy organizations have partially lost their recognition as civil society actors with a role to play in the organization of health and social services and in economic and social development planning structures. In the new context, community organizations are seen primarily as mere service providers and not as agents of civil society in a democratic framework.

Our working hypothesis in this paper is that the Charest government views social governance within a paradigm of market regulation (PMR), in which democracy is limited to its representative dimension. This way of viewing the social sphere and redefining it by new institutions is by the same token a will to break with a former paradigm, which we call the paradigm of partnership regulation (PPR). Rather than a merely representative democracy, the PPR saw the need for a new approach to governance involving social democracy, which here means a legitimate participation of civil society in the mechanisms of local, regional and provincial governance (Lévesque, 2002).

To illustrate this paradigm of partnership regulation – which implies the recognition of community organizations as legitimate actors in the political sphere at the local, regional and provincial levels, as well as in the structures involved in the planning and orientation of services – we will present different laws and policies that demonstrate how the community movement built itself in the nineties (1989-2003). We situate the beginning of this development in 1989 with the adoption of the mental health policy, and its end in 2003 with the coming to power of the Liberal party under Jean Charest. Here are the main milestones we will encounter along the way:

- **1989** Mental health policy
- **1991** Reform of health and social services
- **1996** Following on the Bread and Roses March in 1995, participation of the community sector in the 1996 Summit on the Economy and Employment
- **1997** Policy in support of local and regional development (and the social economy)
- **2001** Policy of recognition and support of autonomous community action
- **2002** Bill 112 : An act to combat poverty and social exclusion

We will begin by presenting a brief history of the movement before the 1990s. This will be followed by a survey of some of the events of that decade. We will look at the adoption of Bill 120 in 1991, the way civil society actors entered the social economy domain with the Bread and Roses March in 1995, their participation at the Summit on Economy and Employment in 1996 and the adoption of the policy in support of local and regional development in 1997. We will also examine how actors from Quebec's community organization and the social economy sector participated in the emerging international citizens' movement in the late nineties. After that, we will look at civil society involvement in the adoption of the policy of recognition and support of autonomous community action (2001), and in the passing of Bill 112 to combat poverty and social exclusion (2002).

With this background, we will be in a position to better articulate what we mean by a paradigm of partnership regulation (PPR) in the sphere of social and economic development.

Before beginning with the nineties, however, we should specify that the expression "community movement" is used here in its broadest sense. In fact, we understand this movement as a composite of many movements. We are thinking in particular of the autonomous community movement, but also of the social economy movement, which has points of connection with the autonomous community movement. A distinction is made by many authors – and even by the government, with its economist definition of the social economy, as D'amours (2002) and Vaillancourt (2003: 11-15) point out – between community action and social economy organizations. In accord with these authors, however, we believe (Caillouette, 2002) that separating these traditions of associative practices is unproductive in both analytic and strategic terms; on the contrary, the strength of Quebec's community and social economy movement springs from the linkages between its associative traditions.

The second thing we would like to do before embarking on our analysis of the nineties is to present the community movement in the light of the "generation" concept introduced by Bélanger and Lévesque (1992) and extended by Boucher (2003: 13-14). These authors see three generations of community organization in Quebec. The use of this term is not meant to imply that when a new generation comes on the scene, the preceding one is eclipsed, but simply that the new generation sets the tone for the period of time in which it appears.

The first generation, then, is the sixties, with the creation of citizens' committees in Montreal and the rural animation experience of the Eastern Quebec Development Office (BAEQ) in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé regions, which were encountering difficulties with their development. This was also a time of protest and demands for the building of the welfare state in Quebec.

The second generation, which began in the late seventies, was characterized by the emergence of popular service groups. While offering services, these groups saw themselves as an alternative to the technocratic state and the market sector. They sought to provide services that were better suited to the needs of the population. These groups were interested in experimenting with new types of

work and consumption relations, eliminating the hierarchical division of labour and striving to achieve a convivial relation with the service user (or group member).

The third was the partnership generation; that is to say, a generation of community groups open to partnerships with the state and certain players in the market economy. In the nineties, these groups spoke of a conflict/cooperation relation with public institutions. This approach paralleled that of the trade union movement, which was open to cooperation with employers and to the development of new working relationships, while not seeing the employer as sharing all of the workers' interests. This third generation emerged as a result of the gradual acquisition of political power by the service groups and the innovative strength they deployed, particularly at the local level, in developing new services.

This conceptualization of community organizations in terms of generations reveals the diversity of the action repertoire of the community movement. The linking and blending of these generations, and the occasional tensions between them, constitute the community movement. With this background in mind, we can start our analysis of the nineties by looking at Bill 120, adopted in 1991.



## 1. RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SECTOR

An important event for the community movement in the early nineties was the adoption by the ruling Liberals' of Bill 120 in 1991, which was in fact a reform of the health and social services. This law had been preceded by the mental health policy of 1989, in which the spirit of the later law was already present. Bill 120 explicitly recognized community organizations. The interpretation of this recognition raised fears among the community movement, who were anxious lest this prove to be the first step in making community organizations into a kind of shadow state, ultimately granting the state more power over the social sector. But at the same time, it was possible to see this move by the government as a response to community organizations' demands for recognition of their work and their mission in society. In fact, we would say now that it was a step towards rebuilding the welfare state on a new foundation, by giving more scope and legitimacy to civil society, both in the delivery of services and in the governance of the health and social services network. But we will see that throughout the nineties the community movement would have to defend its autonomy.

At the regional level, Law 120 created regional health and social service boards (*régies régionales*) in Quebec's 17 regions. These regional boards were responsible for the organization and coordination of services and the allocation of financial resources within their specific territories. One of their tools for this work was the regional plan for the organization of services (PROS), which they were responsible for developing in the various health and social service sectors under the Ministry's frame programs, and which then had to be approved by the Ministry. The law made it clear that community organizations must be involved in the drafting of these plans. True, the input of community organizations didn't necessarily have much impact, particularly on budget allocations in the health and social services network, but Bill 120 opened the door to a new governance of the network, in which community organizations were guaranteed a role. Law 120 stipulated that 20% of the seats on the boards of directors of the regional boards must be reserved for representatives of community organizations. This law formally recognized the status of community organizations as groups with the freedom to choose their orientation, policies, and approaches, and as a result of this law, community organizations were included in the consultative structures for planning and organizing services on their territories.

It is important to note that Bill 120 also promoted mobilization and better concertation between community organizations in the health and social services sector. In each region of Quebec, these community organizations were united under an intersectorial umbrella group, the regional council of community organizations (TROC). The TROCS are important stakeholders of the community movement as a whole. As umbrella groups, they generate an important dynamic between their members at the regional level. They provide a valuable space for thought, exchange and mobilization, enabling community organizations to face the regional boards as a collective body.

In the negotiations around Bill 120, community organizations in the health and social services sector also acquired an overarching association at the provincial level: the council of provincial

groups of community and volunteer organizations (TRPOCB). The TRPOCB is another space for mobilization, thought and analysis, where the various provincial umbrella groups of community organizations can jointly develop critical analyses that are useful to their members in the Quebec health and social services system.

What is important in looking back at Law 120 is that, at the dawn of the nineties, it marked a turning-point in the Québec government's policies with regard to community organizations and the community movement. The structures implemented by this law reveal the state's willingness to allow the community movement a certain influence in the governance of the health and social services network. To be sure, this inclusiveness also constituted a danger for the community groups, who ran the risk of losing their freedom for critical analysis and their claim to social movement status. Looking back after more than a decade, however, we can say that this inclusiveness gave the movement resources to build itself. The recognition of the community milieu afforded by Bill 120 becomes even more evident when the legislation is compared with Bill 25 (Québec, 2003b), adopted in December 2003, which reforms the organization of Quebec's health and social services.

Bill 25 abolishes the regional boards and the local community service centres (CLSCs), setting up local health and social service networks (RLSs). The activities of the community groups belonging to an RLS are to be coordinated under a service agreement with a local entity, the health and social service centre (CSSS). These CSSSs are generally the result of mergers between hospitals, CLSCs, and long-term care hospitals.

For community groups, social economy enterprises and private resources alike, the spirit of the reform seeks to integrate the activities of these resources within an RLS under contractual agreements with tight accountability mechanisms. While the organizations get access to basic funding, there is a danger that by being subjected to the principle of complementarity with the network's objectives, they may find themselves instrumentalized by the machinery of government and lose their ability to act as partners, rather than service providers, in their dealings with the CSSS.

The implementation of this reform, however, is a challenge that involves negotiations between the community sector and the MSSS, as well as within each region and RLS territory. Will the community groups have agreements imposed upon them? Or will they succeed in negotiating accords that allow them to remain agents of empowerment, to help their members and their communities develop their capacity for individual and collective action within society? The stakes are raised by the fact that accountability issues around the funding in the service agreements will foster a climate of competition between organizations. On the other hand, we should note that when Bill 120 was passed in the early 1990s, the community sector likewise faced threats of losing its identity or being instrumentalized, and the movement nonetheless succeeded in maintaining its capacity to intervene in, mobilize and influence Quebec society throughout the decade.

## 2. ENTRY INTO THE DOMAIN OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

An important point in the mobilization of Quebec's community movement during the 1990s came with the "Bread and Roses" march against women's poverty in 1995, organized by the Fédération des femmes du Québec [Quebec Women's Federation], then headed by Françoise David. This women's march marked the beginnings of the social economy in Quebec. One of the marchers' demands was that the state invests in Quebec's social infrastructure in order to meet a twofold objective. First, a massive increase (for instance) in early childhood day care would make it possible to meet the needs of parents, particularly women, who were not free to work without such services. Second, the development of socially useful services would create jobs for women: the social services, services for children and the elderly, and education services are all job sectors where women predominate. The march was a success in terms of mobilization (nearly 10,000 people) and also in the benefits that resulted.

This march, with its social infrastructure demands, signalled the launch of Quebec's social economy. As shown by D'Amours (2002), however, the government would tend to restrict this economy to strictly market-oriented regulations.

Following the Bread and Roses march, another significant event for an understanding of Quebec's community movement in the 1990s is the participation of community groups in the Summit on the Economy and Employment in 1996.

The construction of Quebec's community economy movement (subsequently renamed the social economy) began with the recession in 1982 (Favreau, 1989: 99), but with the Summit on the Economy and Employment it gained a governmental recognition it had not previously enjoyed.

In March 1996, during the preparations for the summit, a working group on the social economy, the *Groupe de travail sur l'économie sociale*, was established to assess the different employment potentials that should be developed in the framework of a socially-oriented economy. The group's mandate was subsequently extended, and in April 1999 it became the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* [Social Economy Project], an independent non-profit corporation working to promote and develop the social economy in Quebec.

Another reform in the 1990s that contributed to the recognition of the community and social economy sector as a legitimate agent of economic and social development was the *Politique de soutien au développement local et régional* [local and regional development support policy] (Québec, 1997). In particular, this policy established the local development centres (CLDs). The policy stipulated that the boards of directors of the CLDs must include community sector representatives. This constituted government recognition for these representatives as being among the local partners engaged in employment and economic development. Indeed, this policy made a place at the table for local players, particularly women and community organizations, which had previously been marginalized where economic development initiatives were concerned.

(Lachapelle, 2004a). The importance of this recognition is even more evident when we consider its disappearance in the new CLDs created six years later by the Liberal government with its Bill 34 (Québec, 2003a).

In 2000, taking stock of political recognition for Quebec's social economy, Vaillancourt and Favreau remark the following:

The introduction of 105 local development centres (CLDs) since 1998: Subsidized by the Quebec State and the municipalities, the CLDs are accountable to independent boards of directors and have development funds at their disposal, of which a part, the Social Economy Fund (FES), is specifically devoted to the social economy.

Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000: 14

In the area of local development, we should also note the establishment in the 1980s and 1990s of a network of 15 community economic development corporations (CDECs) and some thirty community development corporations (CDCs) (Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000: 14). These last corporations, which bring together community and social economy organizations from various intervention sectors, enable the organizations to develop common positions on local issues.

To understand the evolution of Quebec's community and social economy movement in the 1990s, it is also useful to see how this movement fits into the emerging international citizens' movement. Noteworthy, first, is the protest against economic globalization. In 1998 there were the demonstrations against the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI); in 2000, the World March of Women Against Poverty and Violence, underlined by local mobilizations in the various regions of Quebec. Finally, in 2001, we should mention the alterglobalist demonstrations in which community and social economy organizations took part during the Peoples' Summit of the Americas, held in parallel to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations.

Quebec's solidarity economy movement also participated in the development of international alterglobalist networks to promote and link economic initiatives offering alternatives to neoliberalism, in both the developed and the developing nations.

Following on a first meeting in Lima, Peru, in 1997, the second International Meeting on the Globalization of Solidarity was held in Québec in 2001. Over 400 people from 37 countries, 25 of them developing nations, took part in the meeting, which set up an International Liaison Commission (ILC) to improve intercontinental dialogue and prepare the third Meeting, planned for Dakar in November 2005.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, visit the website (French only) of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (INPSSE) <http://www.uqo.ca/ries2001/conference/Ripess/cil.html>

In the 1990s, then, as we can see, Quebec's community and social economy sector developed mechanisms that allowed it to be an increasingly prominent agent of economic and social development, both locally and internationally. In the fight against poverty and exclusion, Quebec in the 1990s was also notable for the birth of an anti-poverty movement which succeeded in gaining government recognition for its action.



## 2. BILL 112 : AN ACT TO COMBAT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The *Collectif pour une loi sur l'élimination de la pauvreté* [Collective for a Law on the Elimination of Poverty], representing a coalition of social organizations and labour unions, was created in 1998. The emergence of the Collectif effectively signals the birth of a citizens' anti-poverty movement with a presence in all Quebec regions, resulting in the adoption of Bill 112.

The object of this law, which was passed by Quebec's National Assembly on December 13, 2002, is to address the causes and consequences of poverty in order to "strive towards a poverty-free Quebec" (Chapter 1). This framework law to combat poverty and social exclusion marks a significant advance for the Quebec anti-poverty movement. The statute, which was initiated by deliberation processes within civil society, binds all political parties in the provincial arena, including the Liberals now in power under Jean Charest.

The act required the government to present an action plan within the following months, but the plan was not tabled until April 2, 2004, eleven months late. This action plan offers a very imperfect response to the stipulations of Bill 112, but nonetheless demonstrates the influence of the legislation on a government that started out totally opposed to investing in the fight against poverty. Over the next five years, the government will invest new money directly in increasing the income of people in situations of poverty, particularly minimum-wage families. The plan contradicts Bill 112 significantly, however, in that the government, without taking the workfare approach, gives priority to work incentive measures over the coverage of basic needs (Labrie, 2004).

Bill 112 is thus an important lever, but one that is insufficient to advance social policies and programs to combat poverty and exclusion. The fact that the Collectif had to pressure the government for the action plan (via a campaign called "*Au nom de la loi, sortez le plan d'action*" ["In the name of the law, issue the action plan"]) is a clear example of this, as are the mixed outcomes of the plan itself. This law is just a first step. Reaching the goal requires the presence in society of an active antipoverty movement. Still, the processes of mobilization and participation that resulted in the adoption of this law constitute progress on two fronts.

First, the mobilizations have laid the groundwork for an antipoverty movement in Quebec and led to the recognition of poverty as a political problem. Our analysis is that the antipoverty movement has gained enough power, credibility and legitimacy that the government is forced to deal with it. This movement's work approach avoided siding with any particular party (Noël, 2003). Its purpose was to advance the problem of poverty as a political question which all parties must recognize and address. And the great merit of Bill 112 lies in the Quebec parliament's implicit recognition that poverty is a political issue, not just an individual problem. The analysis of poverty as a social problem, which is inherent in the entire law, is a gain.

The second advance is that the mobilization of civil society which resulted in the adoption of this law introduced elements of social democracy into the legislative process, thereby enriching the action repertoire of Quebec's community movement. The exercise proved that it is possible for civil society to establish itself as a space for democratic deliberation, allowing for the grassroots development of citizen proposals that the legislature will be prepared to consider.

The process of getting Bill 112 passed gave, and continues to give, a voice to the poor. In its working approach, the Quebec anti-poverty coalition placed great emphasis on the participation of people in situations of poverty, encouraging them to express their views of what a law to fight poverty should look like. This way of approaching those involved, first by regarding them as citizens and then by placing them in a role — that of critics of a draft bill about poverty — in which they were actualizing that identity, is one of the most attractive features of this movement. Indeed, this principle was so important for the movement that we find it in the law adopted by the government. As Noel (2003: 14) points out, the strategy section of the law insists on participation and citizen action and stipulates that nothing may be done without the active involvement of people in situations of poverty.

For social workers, as noted by Ninacs (2003), the process leading up to this law displays an exemplary practice of empowerment and social action through community intervention :

... unlike other models of social action which focus, for example, on lobbying or political action, the community-based model adopted by the Collectif embodies a pattern of empowerment, both in the influence its members have over its intervention and because the Collectif considers this influence as a key component for the achievement of its objectives.

Ninacs, 2003: 11

The *Collectif's* actions in promoting a law on the elimination of poverty gave associations rooted in civil society forums from which to participate in the legislative process. As Noël (2003: 21) notes, referring to Godbout (1992) and Lesemann (2001), “this constitutes a step towards a more active, reflective society, liable to build viable shared projects anchored in the real world.”

In the context of this article, we can say that Bill 112, like other policies analyzed above, signals a willingness on the part of the Québec government of the 1990s to entertain initiatives put forward by civil society and social movements.

### **3. POLICY OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY ACTION (2001)**

In September 2001, the Québec government adopted its *Politique de reconnaissance et de support à l'action communautaire autonome* [Policy of recognition and support of autonomous community action] (Québec, 2001). This is another instance of a policy whose elaboration involved a mobilization of community organizations at the local, regional and provincial levels. The issues under negotiation were recognition of the specificity of autonomous community action, respect for the autonomy of community organizations, and the availability of core funding programs to support their mission.

Before being elected in 1994, the *Parti québécois* had promised a law to recognize and support community action. "The Québec government announced in April 1995 the creation of the Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action (SACA) and the elaboration of a policy of recognition and support of autonomous community action" (Laforest, 2003).

In 1996, the advisory committee to this Secretariat was created. The committee was a multisectorial coalition, set up at a national meeting of the autonomous community movement, with the mission of uniting and representing the movement. It had twenty members, chosen to represent various sectors of the movement: health and social services, immigrants and refugees, environment, communications, literacy, leisure, etc. (Québec, 2001: annexe 2), with links to some 4,000 autonomous community action organizations across Quebec. The Québec government recognized this committee as a special contact representing the autonomous community movement for the implementation of government policy and all matters related to autonomous community action (Comité aviseur, 2004).

In December 1999, in collaboration with the SACA, this committee produced a first discussion proposal to serve as an aid in designing the policy. After taking account of the critiques received, a second policy proposal was made public on April 5, 2000, and submitted for debate. In fact, the government appointed Gerald Larose, a former president of the CSN labour federation, to conduct a major consultation and chair a debate among the community organizations and their associations, as a way of advising the government on a law. Larose received 300 briefs. The policy does not necessarily correspond to the demands of the autonomous community organizations, which gave it conditional support. Still, as Laforest (2003: 15) observes, "through the SACA, an on-going dialogue between the autonomous community sector and the state was initiated concerning the content, design and implementation of such a policy".

The process by which the policy of recognition and support of autonomous community organizations in Quebec was drafted resembles the one that produced Bill 112 against poverty and exclusion. For the recognition policy, there was consultation in each region of Quebec, bringing together community organizations from different sectors to give them the opportunity to present themselves, saying who they are and what they stand for, as a whole. Like the law to combat

poverty and exclusion, the recognition policy must be understood as an intersectorial process and an articulation of the movement from the grass roots.

Incidentally, it is interesting that the SACA advisory committee presents community organizations as participants in an “autonomous social movement in the public interest” (Comité aviseur du SACA, 1996). This formula is typical of the way the community movement seeks to define itself in 1990s Quebec society. On the one hand, the organizations claim to embrace the logic of an autonomous social movement, i.e., of a space for citizens’ action, discussion, and reflection, belonging to the civil society, not the space of government and public services. On the other hand, they present themselves as being in “the public interest”, which in our view means that while they are autonomous and not linked to government, these organizations, like the movement they form, demand the support of the public authorities. Why ? Because their work to build solidarity, foster individual and collective responsabilization, and transform living conditions and social relationships is in the public interest. The view of democracy championed is that a government must provide concrete support for autonomous associative practices within civil society which bolster sociality, citizenship, and social cohesion. Lachapelle describes this contribution clearly when he writes of popular education being a constituent dimension of community organization practices, as :

... a process of individual and collective empowerment through processes rooted in daily life, which allow those who are disadvantaged and, often, excluded to become aware of their individual and collective abilities, ultimately strengthen the autonomy of the community and the solidarity of its members, and result in citizen action, including action in the political arena.

Lachapelle, 2004b: 6-7

#### 4. TOWARDS A REGULATION MODEL BASED ON SOLIDARITY

In his book on the Quebec development model, Bourque (2000) puts forward the analysis that in the early 1990s, Quebec felt the first stirrings of a more partnership-oriented, less hierarchical state, providing more impetus and guidance for employers, trade unionists, and community representatives. Our analysis situates the growth of Quebec's community movement in the 1990s within what we have called a partnership regulation paradigm (PRP), an idea which has been developed by a number of authors (Boucher, 2003; Bélanger and Lévesque, 2001; Lévesque, 2001b, 2003; Lesemann, 2001; Ulysse and Lesemann, 2004; Vaillancourt, 2003, 2001; Vaillancourt et al., 2002; Vaillancourt and Favreau, 2000).

We observe the presence of this paradigm during the 1990s and note signs of its disintegration in the early 2000s, particularly with the coming to power of the Liberal party in 2003 (Laforest, 2003). For instance, this government challenges the inclusion of civil society partners in local development bodies – whereas, in the 1990s, Quebec systematized the active presence of civil society representatives in the management structures of its corporations and in its policy-making bodies (Larose, 2002). In these partnerships, as the analysis of Laforest (2003) clearly shows, “community organizations had gained recognition as legitimate participants in the representation of interests and as valuable partners in economic and social development” (Laforest, 2003: 13).

The Québec government's recognition of community organizations in the 1990s is part of what Vaillancourt (2003) calls the emergence, fragile and tentative but nonetheless real, of a solidarity-based, partnership form of regulation in Quebec.

In this form of regulation, while the social economy is not placed in a symmetrical relationship with the state, it nonetheless has the capacity to influence the rules of the game that affect it. It is not restricted to the role of economic subcontractor (as in competitive regulation), nor to the role of “supplement” to the public service (as in tutelary regulation).

Vaillancourt, 2003: 18

It is also possible to discuss partnership regulation as a paradigm, i.e., a new way of analyzing and structuring social relationships which would affect the way the game is played by actors from all social sectors (René and Gervais, 2001). By partnership regulation paradigm (PRP), we mean that players from a social sphere are prepared to view development planning as a participatory process that must arise in part from the grassroots. We also use the term PRP in contrast to a system in which the relationships between players are based on market regulation processes (market regulation paradigm or MRP), so that the connection between players is no longer based on willingness to participate in the common good or in what we might call a plural community of intervention. From being partnership-based, the structuring of relationships becomes client-based and is grounded explicitly in the individual interests of the players present, introducing market and competition mechanisms into their relationships.

The PRP is characterized by an orientation of institutions and public funds that is open to influence from elements of civil society. In terms of democracy, representative democracy as embodied in the power of elected officials is supplemented by social democracy, allowing a voice in the negotiation process to collective interests and players working to promote concertation among the major social players (Lévesque, 2002). The PRP fits into a framework of global community empowerment, fostering the inclusion of representatives from community organizations and civil society in the negotiation process. Plural governance principles, with multiple voices in interaction, thus pave the way for innovative practices and shared projects.

The presence and strength of Quebec's social movements are important in accounting for the existence of this paradigm (rather than a purely neoliberal approach, for example) in the 1990s. As noted by Henderson (1993), citizens' movements on the global, national, and local levels are sources of innovation. Particularly in times of crisis, they stimulate new paradigms of economic and social action.

In the view of Boucher (2003: 19), "the specificity of a Quebec development model lies largely in the action of social movements." This author emphasizes how the cohesion of these movements in Quebec enables them to enter into the negotiation of institutional compromises, thereby playing a part in the establishment of new social and economic development configurations.

If elements of a PRP came to the fore in Quebec during the 1990s, this is largely a result of community and social economy organizations' ability to align themselves in the intersectorial sphere with social movement principles. Like Boucher (2003), Laforest stresses this point:

By 1990, networking between community groups had intensified to the point where the sector had developed an elaborate and intricate system of networks which brought together actors across all fields of activities. The constituent elements of the structure of representation are organized at multiple levels, from the local to the provincial.

Laforest, 2003: 7

Boucher (2003) and Laforest (2003) also cite alliances (even if these are sometimes strained) between the community movement and other social movements, in particular the union movement and the women's movement. These capacities for alliance enable the various components of these movements to innovate to establish new governance and regulation modes.

In essence, our analysis is that in the nineties, in Quebec, we have a community movement which experiences institutionalization but at the same time succeeds in preserving its autonomy. It succeeds because it is cohesive enough to negotiate with the government and create an institutional space in which its characteristics are respected and it is given access to more resources, strengthening its cohesion.

This paper makes two main points. The first is that the community movement in the 1990s and 2000s did not lose its power, despite experiencing institutionalization in the sense that it was increasingly recognized in the structure and politics of the state and perceived as an important player in the delivery of services to the population.

We would say that the fears, in the early nineties, of seeing the community movement become merely a part of the state, a kind of a shadow state, have not been realized. On the contrary, the community movement is becoming a force that the government must reckon with, alongside the unions. This is not to say that everything is fine and the community movement in Quebec has won the game. The defence of autonomy and the fight against instrumentalization went on throughout the nineties. What we are saying is that in many ways, this movement has proven it is able to mobilize and influence the political sphere to work towards a new arrangement that fosters the development of citizenship and democracy, what we have called here a PRP.

Second, we can wonder how successful the community and social economy movement will be, in the context of the 2000s, in pursuing the direction laid out in the 1990s. One can ask whether the new government does not view the structuring of social relations according to an MRP, leading to an entirely different reading of partnerships. Within such a paradigm, community and social economy organizations are recognized solely for their ability to deliver services more cheaply than the state or for-profit private enterprise. The whole issue of what Larose (2003) has named “the production of citizenship” is sidelined. State and associative sector are considered on the same footing, as service enterprises. Yet, as Vaillancourt (2003) stresses, social policies have as much to do with support for citizenship and empowerment of the individuals and communities concerned by social problems which they seek to combat or alleviate, as they do with redistribution of wealth and access to services. An MRP strips community action and the social economy of their citizenship and political aspect, retaining only the economic dimension (D’amours, 2002).



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