Shifting Alliances: The Trajectory of the Chagnon Foundation and Its Relations with the State and Community Sector in Quebec

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Abstract

Since the 1960s, the community sector in Quebec has generally been regarded as operating in a dynamic wherein it has only one counterpart, the state. Over the past ten years, however, a third actor has joined the equation: philanthropic foundations. This new dynamic has given rise to formal partnerships between the government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation. These partnership agreements have rekindled some of the tension surrounding the community sector's claim to autonomy. Moreover, at a time of fiscal austerity, foundations are also questioning the decline of the welfare state. This article offers a case study of the trajectory of one of Canada's largest foundations, the Chagnon Foundation, in order to highlight the changing relationships and the debates around the respective roles of the state, philanthropic foundations and community organizations.

Keywords: Quebec, community organization, foundation, public-philanthropic partnerships

Résumé

Depuis les années 1960, l'évolution du secteur communautaire au Québec est généralement analysée dans une dynamique où il n'a qu'un seul homologue, l'État. Cependant, depuis un peu plus de dix ans, un troisième acteur a rejoint l'équation : les fondations philanthropiques. Cette nouvelle dynamique a donné lieu, notamment, à des partenariats formels entre le gouvernement et la Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon. Ces ententes de partenariat ont ravivé certaines tensions entourant la revendication d'autonomie des milieux communautaires. De plus, à l'heure de l'austérité budgétaire, les fondations s'interrogent également sur le déclin de l'État-providence. Cet article propose une étude de cas de la trajectoire d'une des plus grandes fondations au Canada, la Fondation Chagnon, afin de mettre en lumière l'évolution des relations et les débats autour des rôles respectifs de l'État, des fondations philanthropiques et des organismes communautaires.

Mots clés : Québec, organisme communautaire, fondation, partenariats public-philanthropique

Researchers studying Quebec from a comparative perspective often refer to the specificities of the "Quebec model" for determining state policies.[1] In addition to its cultural particularities, this model, in comparison with those of Canada[2] and the United States, insists on the importance of the welfare state as well as the links between that state and the community sector. As a welfare state, Quebec is characterized by a higher level of taxation and more social protection which have accorded the province lower levels of poverty and inequality than those of its neighbours to the south and in the rest of Canada (Lefèvre, Dufour & Boismenu, 2014). Other distinctive features of Quebec are fewer financial donations made to charities, foundations or other non-profit causes, less powerful religious organizations, stronger trade unions and a much larger network of cooperatives and mutual aid organizations (Laforest, 2011). As well, there is a stronger linkage between the state and the community sector in Quebec, relative to the rest of Canada (Hamel & Jouve, 2018). Indeed, relations between the government and the community sector in Quebec are highly developed, as evidenced by fluctuating government funding. This relationship is far from easy; in fact, it has been described as a "conflictual cooperation" (J. Lamoureux, 1994) that has taken on several forms over the last few decades.

In Quebec, the turn of the 1960s ushered in a period called the "Quiet Revolution," which saw the establishment of public administration in health, recreation and education, following the three-term reign of the Conservative Duplessis government. While the provincial government was seeking to catch up with the implementation of industrial and social reforms inspired by other modern economies, the community sector was expanding rapidly alongside Catholic, recreational (Scouts, Girl Guides) and cultural action groups, which would eventually decrease in presence. Drawing on existing historical syntheses, Mayer, Lamoureux and Panet-Raymond (2008) divide community action of this period into four generations: citizens' committees (1960s); grassroots groups (1970s); a shift toward partnership (1980s); and, during the 1990s, a generation marked by the institutionalization of collaboration and partnership within the state and the community sector. Influenced by the political context at the time of implementation, each of these generations is distinguished by its approach to social problems and its relationship with the state. Since each new generation takes shape without necessarily replacing the previous generation, the groups overlap, which incites some groups to transform while also creating tension among community networks.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the implementation of various sectoral agreements in specific areas of intervention, such as mental health, employment integration and training for young people. In 2001, however, the government formally adopted a cross-sector policy to recognize and support community organizations.[3] While the idea of such a policy was initially of interest to a significant portion of the community group representatives, many of them criticized its final articulation (White, 2012). In particular, actors from the "old grassroots movement"—characterized by its politicized and

conflictual analysis of social problems—argue this policy is "facilitating the transition from public to private services" at the lowest cost (Greason, 2001). Following the adoption of this policy, the share of provincial funding in the budgets of community organizations increased, on average, by just under 20% (White et al., 2008). Thus, at the beginning of the 2010s, provincial funding was still the main source of funding (61%) in the average budget of community organizations in Quebec (Depelteau et al., 2013).

While this relationship has long played out solely between the state and community organizations, a third actor has become more visible over the past decade: philanthropic foundations.[4] As in many countries, the rise in power of these groups is linked at once to an increase in capital inequalities, to the willingness of actors in the market sector to participate in solving social problems, and to government incentives to facilitate the participation of these new actors (Lambelet, 2014). Like in other jurisdictions, these measures have included formal partnerships between the government and philanthropic foundations. In Quebec, important partnerships were formed with one philanthropic foundation in particular, the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation (FLAC). These partnerships, sometimes referred to as "social PPPs" (public-private partnerships, although the "private" character of this arrangement remains a matter of debate, as will be discussed later), have resulted in the creation of agencies funded and managed on a parity basis by both the provincial government and FLAC. They have deployed several hundred million dollars in funding to support community organizations involved in providing social services. An institutional triangle thus took shape, with each cluster maintaining complex relationships with the other two.

Our article aims to analyze these PPPs as a test of the institutional triangle between the state, philanthropic foundations and the community sector. Rather than discussing the meaning of this experiment and whether it constitutes what has been designated a "privatization of social policies" (or the unilateral takeover of philanthropic foundations), we will pay particular attention to the complex relationships between the three poles of our triangle, including the subtle games of influence, cooperation and opposition, and the occasional coalitions of two poles against a third.

To do this, we will first examine the origins of the partnerships between foundations and public authorities and then look at the oppositions that emerged, particularly those initiated by certain associative actors. Subsequently, drawing on our own investigations over the past seven years concerning the transformations related to the rise of philanthropic foundations in Quebec, we will analyze the most recent configuration, marked by the end of these partnerships and the mobilization of foundations in favour of a welfare state that is more assertive in the face of social inequalities. This survey of the field involves a series of interviews with leaders of foundations, including FLAC, and community organizations. Representatives of community groups and unions involved in a coalition against theses PPPs have also been

interviewed, and ethnographic observations were undertaken in public conferences, work meetings and debates in the community and philanthropic sectors. It is, therefore, the historical trajectory of the Chagnon Foundation that serves as a common thread in this article.

1. Public-philanthropy Partnerships: The convergence of reform efforts, strategic philanthropy and New Public Management

FLAC was created in the year 2000 with an endowment of $1.4 billion, which now exceeds $2 billion (Canada Revenue Agency, 2021). This capital came from the sale of a family business which has since become a major telecommunications company in Quebec (Vidéotron). At the time of its creation, FLAC was the wealthiest private foundation in Canada. It still remains among the largest foundations, although it is now well behind the Mastercard Foundation which in 2019 reported more than $35 billion in assets. According to the 2015 rankings, FLAC ranked second, while the next largest grantmaking foundation, the Azrieli Foundation, had over $1 billion in assets and each of the others in the top 150 largest foundations had under $1 billion (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2015).

FLAC's capital investments enable it to generate several tens of millions of dollars annually to invest in projects in Quebec. It plans to make total donations of at least $350 million and up to $500 million throughout the 2021–2025 period. Both in its actions and discourse—at least during its first decade of existence—FLAC resembles a model initiated by major foundations from the 1990s onwards, sometimes referred to as "philanthrocapitalism" (Bishop & Green, 2010). Aside from the connotations, positive or negative, what interests us here is the recurrence of two distinctive features of this type of philanthropic approach.

Firstly, philanthrocapitalism considers donations as investments, importing managerial and financial tools into the social sector (Letts et al., 1997). More precisely, it uses the logic of venture capitalism (venture philanthropy) and its focus on leverage in order to maximize impacts. This involves countering long-identified evils in the philanthropic sector: scattering logic, short-term projects, lack of funding for the mission, and no increase in capacity-building. Indeed, it even makes significant financial commitments over a medium-term period (five years) in hopes of producing structural change (Porter & Kramer, 1999). The monitoring of funded projects requires the construction of tools for accountability, evaluation and the establishment of specific objectives. The metaphor of investment here therefore refers less to waiting for the replication of a pilot project than to thinking about the upscaling of the project through precise institutional architectures, or even franchise systems, to be managed by social entrepreneurs (Frumkin, 2003).

The second feature of philanthrocapitalism is its promotion of the social investment perspective. It focuses on targeted action toward root causes (e.g., education

and early childhood) in order to prevent future societal problems whose scale, self-reproductive logic and structural dimensions could be much more difficult to address (e.g., health problems, poverty, violence). In this perspective of public action, universal measures are thus followed by increasingly precise targeting, while conditions of equality (to be realized in the future) will eventually give rise to equal opportunities. In Canada, this perspective became the key to distribution among the state, families and the market in the late 1990s, and became embodied in child-focused welfare state interventions. While these interventions are considered a "good investment" for the future, adults receiving assistance are seen to represent a "lost investment" and are increasingly treated as a pool of cheap labour to be integrated into the labour market, often through some form of workfare (Jenson, 2012).

In Quebec, a network of reformers (Topalov, 2015) is putting the development of young children on the agenda and bringing together – in conferences, local pilot projects and international knowledge networks – a series of academic actors, local associations, donors, elected officials, civil servants and public administrations. As illustrated in the section below, the diffusion of a child development agenda among Quebec social reformers is guided and supported by one philanthropic foundation.

Genesis of reform efforts: 1, 2, 3 GO!

In 1991, a report entitled "Un Québec fou de ses enfants" (A Quebec crazy about children) was commissioned by the province's health and social services department (Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec). The working group that produced this report was led by Camil Bouchard, a university researcher in community psychology who later became a member of parliament.[5] The report highlights the problems experienced by youth and proposes to concentrate on the prevention of risk factors and poverty reduction, privileging ecological analysis, an upstream focus on early childhood and a collaborative approach. In particular, it contributed to the creation, in 1997, under another government, of an accessible system of public daycare centres—the Centres de la petite enfance (CPE)—across Quebec. However, decades of budgetary restraint has taken its toll on the financing of such social services.

In the 1990s, Centraide[6], a public foundation (Quebec's version of the United Way) deployed a new strategy in Montreal. It imported the Success by Six initiative, developed by United Way in Minnesota, to promote environments that would enable children to develop to their full potential through the mobilization and collaboration of donors and public and private actors. In 1994, Centraide created a partners' council, bringing together representatives from the public (health, social, education), community, religious, union, municipal and private sectors. The 1, 2, 3 GO! project was launched in Montreal, following the lead of the Bouchard report.

A first five-year pilot project (1995–2000) was implemented in six neighbourhoods in the Greater Montreal Area. Intensive evaluation work was concurrently carried out by a university team, including Camil Bouchard, using a randomized approach and precise and quantitative indicators, in order to measure the impacts not only on children and their families but also on the mobilization of communities. The measured effects were low for the first group and higher for the second.

In 2000, the 1, 2, 3 GO! Centre was created, independent from Centraide, and it began to produce other initiatives. The creation of FLAC in 2000 was influenced by the 1, 2, 3 GO! principles, focusing both on early childhood education and on community awareness and involvement to increase the success of interventions. Moreover, the team of the 1, 2, 3 GO! Centre integrated FLAC within one of the agencies linked to the PPP: Avenir d'enfants (Brunet, 2014).

In essence, the rhetoric of social investment offers actors with very different agendas a point of convergence, attracting both those who believe the private sector has the key to solving public problems and those who want to reform social spending. It does this by no longer presenting such costs as a burden but, rather, as an investment—a key argument in the report "Un Québec fou de ses enfants !". It also offers a point of convergence between this strategic philanthropy, which would make use of managerial instruments (Lefèvre & Elson, 2020)[7], and the state, which had adopted the principles of New Public Management. In Quebec, the "réingénierie de l'État" (reengineering of the state) promoted by the Liberal government in the early 2000s took up the "modernizing" rhetoric of the first stage of the public action through managerial instruments such as performance management, outsourcing and performance-based pay, accountability, benchmarking and project logic (Fortier, 2010). This was also reflected in the centralization of decision-making functions within a few agencies, which have greater autonomy than the ministries, and the development of PPPs (Rouillard & Hudon, 2007).

In addition to the path of the reform efforts described above, this convergence, in substance and form, between strategic philanthropy and the state through "social investment" provides a better understanding of the very particular form of FLAC's strategy in the early 2000s. Indeed, while FLAC defines its mission as a fight against poverty, it approaches this struggle from a particular angle: that of preventing poverty and disease in Quebec by focusing on early childhood education. To define its best practices, the foundation developed strong scientific expertise and justified its choices not through a discourse of indignation or charitable compassion but through the use of statistical evidence (Ducharme & Lesemann, 2011). Its program architecture involved the establishment of four non-profit agencies in partnerships with the state and was

promulgated by ad hoc laws. Rather than a contract agreement between the state and FLAC, these agencies shared funding and governance equally. This implied that the two protagonists had an equal voice in program strategy and orientation which is different from the traditional arrangements which didn't formally accord philanthropic foundations as much involvement in public programs.

Table 1

Public-philanthropy partnerships between the state and FLAC

Name of partnership	Dates	Budget	Theme (based on partnerships' websites)
Québec en forme	2007–2017	$480 million ($240 FLAC, $240 Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux)	Physically active and healthy lifestyle habits, focusing on young Quebecers
Avenir d'enfants	2009–2020	$400 million ($250 FLAC, $150 Ministère de la Famille et des Ainés)	Early childhood development, focusing on children aged five and under living in poverty
Réunir Réussir	2009–2015	$100 million ($50 FLAC, $50 Secrétariat à la jeunesse)	Student retention
L'Appui	2009– …	$200 millions ($50 Sojecci II Ltée,[8] $150 Ministère de la Famille et des Ainés)	Quality of life of caregivers of seniors

One final element is common to the programs of all four agencies: the emphasis on community mobilization. Indeed, apart from its awareness-raising campaigns, FLAC does not act directly. Rather, it funds community organizations that operate in the field and which must, in turn, engage other actors (families, teachers, sports clubs, and so forth). This directive enjoys consensus across Quebec, especially since community organizations, and civil society actors in general (e.g., unions, education networks, the women's movement, the social and solidarity economy sector), mobilized very strongly in the late 1990s around the issue of poverty.[9] At the beginning of the 2000s, the terms and expressions used in community mobilization were also used and promoted by the Direction de la santé publique (Director of public health). However, the mobilization modalities imposed by FLAC were met with strong resistance, calling into question the legitimacy of these partnerships (Berthiaume, 2016).

2. Resistance from community organizations

In Quebec, various actors belonging to the community, labour and university sectors, expressed criticism of these social PPPs.[10] When it came time for the parliamentary reviews of the legislation that would approve the creation of the agencies, briefs were tabled, statements were sent to the media, and analyses were developed in the newsletters of the community networks.

In 2013, community organizations from different backgrounds, women's groups and unions created a coalition to publicly voice their opposition to PPPs. Entitled the *Coalition Non aux PPP sociaux* (Against social PPPs coalition), the group submitted a declaration to the Government of Quebec, signed by 364 organizations, asking it to commit to four main pledges: (1) Not to enter into new social PPPs; (2) Not to renew agreements already concluded; (3) To conduct a public debate on the Quebec government's responsibility with respect to social policy orientations; and (4) To reinvest the funds previously invested in mixed funds into public services and the core mission of community organizations. In keeping with the historical demands of the community sector, the signatory groups insisted on the importance of public funding for the mission in order to maintain their autonomy of action in relation to the state and, now, to this new philanthropy.

Different organizations issued different criticisms. In one interview, a case manager within a trade union involved in the *Coalition Non aux PPP sociaux* highlighted the democratic deficit when public funds are involved:

> What offends me the most about this whole situation is that for the past ten years there's been a foundation where some activities are financed half by the foundation's funds and half by the public. They can do what they want with their funds, but the other half is government money, and there is no department, no public consultations on how social policy is oriented in Quebec.[11]

An early criticism was that these partnerships were not the subject of any public debate, neither when the laws were enacted nor during election campaigns. Nor did the alternation between the Liberal party and the Parti Québécois call these partnerships into question.[12] This argument is also linked to a discourse on the privatization of social services. In fact, partnerships are forged within a political sequence of cuts to social budgets. In the eyes of community organizations, which are being denied an increase in their grants by their ministry, the choice to allocate public funds to social PPPs is difficult to accept. At the same time, it is difficult for community organizations to decline working with these new funding agencies because there is a lack of alternative funding. This puts the organizations, which cannot afford to alienate either philanthropic or public donor support, in a very precarious position. Neither does it facilitate a constructive, critical

public debate, namely because the organizations, being so tightly interwoven with their partnerships, are reluctant to adopt a position of their own.

The second criticism concerns infringement on the autonomy of community organizations as a result of the constraints imposed by these agencies. For instance, obtaining grants requires the organizations to take a demanding approach, which is impacted by the imperatives of New Public Management as much as with the imperatives of "community mobilization." A community organization cannot apply for a grant on its own. To be eligible, it must be part of a territorial structure in a multisectoral grouping, prepare a portrait of the neighbourhood and a strategic plan, and produce an account of its operations. Moreover, the donor's interference can be quite significant, such as insisting on the mandatory presence of a development agent and by imposing its definition of methodologies and frameworks for intervention. For organizations whose quest for autonomy from the state has been an ongoing struggle for decades, this problem is particularly acute:

> It was unprecedented! Donors are asking for accountability, that's normal. [...] But you don't sit down with the partner to write the action plan. There's no requirement to be a decision-maker on the action plan. We don't examine how things are done every day. It's clearly the Chagnon Foundation that brought that in. [...] One of the fundamental criticisms is that philanthropy is one thing and business philanthropy another. And what we call philanthrocapitalism and the fact that we want to give the community an effective method with which to support itself, a management method and a desire to transform the way things are done, is something that is totally different from before.[13]

Such criticisms have also led organizations to refuse to participate in these programs or not to renew their agreements, whether by choice or because they are unable to meet the required criteria.[14] To make their voices heard, community organizations have also decided to document their experiences of partnership with FLAC, emphasizing in particular how intrusive and time-consuming they can be (Bouchard, 2013).

The testimony quoted above also reflects the circulation of patterns and categories of analysis ("philanthrocapitalism") which are part of a counter-discourse produced by these organizations. The opposition of community networks has gradually influenced FLAC to rethink its approach. After having assumed a technocratic and top-down model, the Foundation has more explicitly recognized the specific expertise of community groups alongside the unique character of pre-existing territories and networks, and has thereby evolved into a more hybrid system, now defined as the "Quebec model" (Lesemann, 2011; Savard et al., 2015). These developments are due as much to the resistance of existing community organizations as to the learnings of a newly created foundation which has moved from a proactive approach to a more pragmatic

consideration of the institutional context. However, in order to understand the evolution of FLAC, one must focus on its relationship not only with community organizations but also with the state.

3. Foundations facing budgetary austerity: the sought-after welfare state?

Although some community organizations were aware of this as early as 2015, in early 2016, FLAC officially announced the non-renewal of three partnerships with the government: Québec en forme, Avenir d'enfants and Réunir Réussir. The reasons for this were not mentioned in any public communications by either FLAC or the government. Based on interviews with FLAC representatives, an analysis of recent governmental priorities and contribution of other researchers (Fontan et al., 2018), several hypotheses can nevertheless be made.

Firstly, difficulties may have arisen in terms of reconciling distinct agendas, strategies and organizational cultures between the Foundation and the different ministries involved. For example, FLAC's willingness to implement cross-cutting policies, beyond the usual administrative boundaries, has come up against resistance from state structures with clearly defined perimeters (housing, health, food, leisure, etc.).

Second, in the health field, there is a strong divergence between FLAC and the partnerships' emphasis on prevention on the one hand and, on the other, the "curative, even medical and hospital-centric shift made by the [Health and Social Services] network since the late 1990s" and taken even further in the late 2000s (Vaillancourt, 2017, p.65). Approaches in overall health and social development are sidelined in the Ministry's orientation which favours an individualized approach to care, both biomedical and clinical, with the hospital as the central producer of medical procedures.

The last hypothesis for divergence is the fiscal policies of austerity put in place by the Liberal party when it returned to power in 2014. These austerity measures were marked by significant cuts in the education, health and social policy networks (Fortin, 2018); a reduction of subsidies to community organizations, already in a precarious financial situation for about ten years (Depelteau et al., 2013); and the end of the funding of intermediary organizations that had been structuring the dialogue between community network representatives and local politicians. As shown in the figure below by Noël (2018), growth in mission spending (all spending except debt service), as well as spending on health and education, came to a virtual halt in 2015–2016, only to be revived in future years.

Figure 1

Annual percentage change in Quebec government spending, 2013–2020
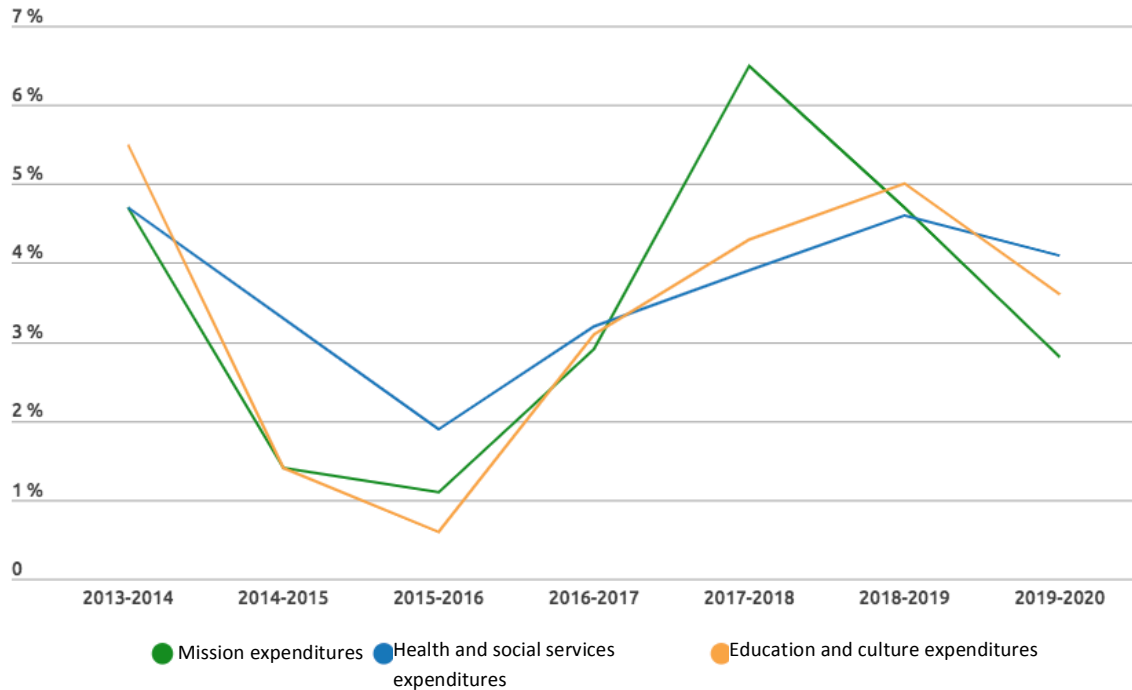
Note. The data for 2017–2018 and after are forecasts. From Noël (2018), our translation

These austerity measures place FLAC, like other foundations, in a delicate situation. Foundations are pressured not only by the organizations they support, who are financially suffocated by the cuts, but by the awareness of their own financial limitations in the face of increasing needs. Most foundations want to fund emerging initiatives, with the idea that the state will then institutionalize those that have proven their effectiveness and legitimacy. In a context where public funding no longer guarantees such support to organizations, what is the role of foundations? This question provokes a real identity crisis, especially for those, including FLAC, who have been candid that they don't want to replace the state. In the spring of 2015, the foundations' growing unease, propelled by the increasingly precarious community organizations they support, led them to mobilize. They signed a letter on "The risks of budget stringency " that was sent to the president of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Labour and published in the Quebec newspaper *Le Devoir* (Berthiaume & Lefèvre, 2020). For actors more accustomed to conducting their actions in a discreet manner, avoiding public spaces and politicized debates, this letter was a first.

"The Risks of Budget Stringency" (Excerpt from the open letter "Les risques de la rigueur budgétaire" signed by a dozen private foundations and published in the daily newspaper *Le Devoir*, March 11, 2015)[15]

For the first time, Quebec foundations are joining together to express their preoccupations and to echo the concerns of the individuals, families and communities they support. Today, as a number of government programs are being called into question and the tax system is under scrutiny, we wonder about the potential impacts of these changes on society.

We are especially concerned about their impact on social inequality, which is growing across the world and prompting calls for vigilance by the most credible economic organizations and, increasingly, by recognized political leaders. […] We wish to contribute constructively to the debate by inviting the Government of Quebec to take these concerns into account and to weigh the effects of its projects of reform on citizens and communities.

It is clear that public finances must be managed responsibly. It is equally important to make sure public services are effective and achieve their goals, and this is why they are periodically reviewed. We invite the government to make policy choices based on the effects they will have on social inequality, while still managing public funds responsibly. We propose that the government adopt the reduction of inequalities as a criterion for judging the merits of any given reform, or at least that it pledge not to exacerbate conditions further […]

Quebec is the most egalitarian society in North America. This enviable situation is a result of collective choices and constitutes a significant economic and societal asset. As experts from across the world have shown, inequalities are harmful to the economy, to society and to democracy. Our day-to-day actions on the ground throughout Quebec continue to testify to this fact. […]

And thus the time has come, today, to examine whether the means we have been using are still the most effective. At the same time, there is one principle that Quebecers will not call into question: the vision of a society that gives everyone a chance. It is important, in our view, to remember the Quebec-wide consensus illustrated, among other things, by the National Assembly's unanimous adoption, in 2002, of the *Act to combat poverty and social exclusion*.

The tone of this appeal is worth highlighting: rather than a politicized accusation of the government's previous choices, the letter uses a subdued tone, referring to a Quebec-wide consensus, and bears witness on behalf of the populations and environments concerned. But their aim is not to talk about poverty, the usual purview of foundations, but rather inequalities. Foundations do this by framing the discussion in

terms of the "cost of inequalities" for society as a whole and not only on the most vulnerable (Stiglitz, 2013) and by defending the Quebec model.

Following the publication of this letter – which was widely reported in the media –several foundations joined the initiative, participating in public events and submitting briefs during public consultations related to social inclusion and community intervention. In 2017, they published a second open letter. The symbolic power of this coalition of foundations of different sizes and areas of intervention cannot be underestimated. Their experience working with community groups gave them the expertise and credibility required for engaging meaningfully in public debate. Furthermore, by joining this initiative, they became associated with three distinguished foundations – the most powerful (FLAC), the oldest (McConnell Foundation, active since 1937), and one with the most significant ties in the community sector (Béati). It should be noted that FLAC played a leading role in this mobilization from the beginning, commencing with the publication of the first letter and during the renegotiation of partnerships with the government (Berthiaume & Lefèvre, 2020).

Finally, community networks, hitherto hostile to the role given to these philanthropic foundations, have welcomed the foundations' initiative. Not only did they feel some relief that the open letter against the stringency measures was receiving attention, but they were reassured that the Foundation had no intention of assuming the social prerogatives of the state. Mistrust also dissolved a few months later, in the summer of 2015, when representatives of various organizations, including the community sector, were approached to be part of the Foundation's *groupe des éclaireurs*, or scouting group. The latter became an important advisor in the thinking surrounding the Foundation's strategic repositioning (Fontan et al., 2018).

We may therefore be witnessing a new era in the triangular dynamic between state, foundations and community organizations. This distancing on the part of the Chagnon Foundation from PPPs, in which it had invested for more than ten years, has led it to transform its model quite profoundly since 2017. To summarize, it has moved from a directive, top-down approach, defined by experts and implemented in a standardized manner by community organizations, to a more comprehensive approach where the community organization is recognized for its expertise in carrying out a specific mission. This change in positioning has multiple consequences for the Foundation, be it with regard to its discourse, internal organization, choice of organizations supported, evaluation practices or use of financial capital apart from donations (Fontan et al., 2018). The Foundation's management supports the redefinition of its positioning as follows:

> We then articulated our unique role in a way that was clearly distinct from that of the government, focused on the people and organizations we support: to provide long-term support for organizations and associations that are actively developing their capacity for sustainable efforts aimed at

creating the conditions to ensure the educational success of all children, particularly in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. (…) What we want to stress is that if a foundation wants to truly live up to its motivation to give back and be a legitimate player, it must see itself—and be seen—as a collective tool for change. In other words, as serving a societal project that is greater than it is. (Chouinard & Lagarde, 2019)

This repositioning, at arm's length from the government and in support of organizations, was also embodied in a brief presented to the government in January 2020 at a consultation held for Quebec's *Plan d'action gouvernemental en matière d'action communautaire* (government action plan for community action) (Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon, 2020). In this document, the Foundation reiterates its desire to not replace the state and recommends that philanthropic funding not be considered as a means of reducing government funding. On the contrary, it emphasizes the need to support community organizations through public and multi-year funding for their missions. It also emphasizes the crucial role of community organizations, particularly their ability to defend social collective rights, and invites the various government departments to consult them in the development of public policies.

Conclusion: Shifting positions

The evolution of the Chagnon Foundation (see Appendix 1) over the past ten years can be summarized in three sequences. First, the Foundation was criticized by part of the community sector for being the driving force behind what they perceived as the privatization of policies through PPPs. In a second phase, FLAC, together with a collective of foundations, reminded the welfare state of its prerogatives in fighting social inequalities, including with fiscal instruments. And thirdly, the Foundation positions itself at a distance from the state while at the same time offering financial support to community organizations and assuming a political role in steering these organizations' relationships with the state.

This trajectory leads us to take a new look at the relationship between the state and the third sector. Until recently, the history of the Quebec community sector was thought of in terms of its relationship with the state. In a way, the organizations' claim to autonomy is a kind of paradox: on the one hand, organizations demand autonomy to define their mission, claims and approaches, and on the other hand, they look to the state to obtain the means to achieve this autonomy. However, when these funding agreements between the state and community groups were put in place, many criticized what they perceived as the "growing grip" of state bureaucracy (Hamel, 1983). The general mistrust of the philanthropic sector today is reminiscent of the mistrust in the 1980s of government administration. In the meantime, much has changed in terms of health and social services policies in Quebec. The welfare state no longer seems to want to

institutionalize successful community initiatives; rather, the perspective of social investment is promoted, with the help of foundations, or even social entrepreneurship, placing less emphasis on the democratic functioning of organizations and more on measuring their "social impact." Can this, then, be equated with the disengagement of the state or the privatization of social policies?

The discourse around the privatization of social policy should not obscure the fact that foundations, like community organizations, are also "not-for-profit charities" as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency,[16] and thus benefit from the collective support of social policy (through public funding, legal accommodations and tax exemptions, for example). For this reason, clean and tidy divisions (public-private, old-modern) are of limited use to researchers interested in a mechanism such as the PPPs we have described. For one thing, in the triangle between the state, philanthropic foundations and the community sector that we have analyzed, alliances and oppositions are more mobile and ambivalent than "social policy vs. private charity" or "private sector vs. community sector" cleavages suggest. The mobilization of private foundations in support of a welfare state that fights against inequalities is proof of this. Moreover, while we have offered a schematic overview of the configurations at play in the three clusters, it would be difficult to imagine that each of these is homogeneous and unified. On the contrary, divisions and divergences concerning what is public and private, or what is expected of foundations, the community sector or the state, also arise within each of the sectors (philanthropic, voluntary and public services). In each of these sectors, the governance activities and practices of some actors are closer to the traditional corporate world, while others are more embedded in horizontal or non-profit management. Furthermore, as we've seen with FLAC, a foundation can evolve. Initially defined by the momentum of actors in the business sector, over time it learned the importance of building stronger links with community organizations and recognizing their expertise on the field. Similarly, strong divergences may appear between community organizations in response to different conceptions of their role, their relationship to the state or the market, and the type of measures taken to evaluate the success of their intervention. These cleavages also exist among foundations: the evolution of the Chagnon Foundation that we have analyzed is very specific within the philanthropic field, while other major foundations have followed very different trajectories during the same period of time.

Within this triangle, not much is known about the divergences within the governmental sector, whether at the level of elected officials or in public administration, concerning the role of foundations. We have pointed out the lack of public debate between the various candidates at election time regarding PPPs, even though these public-private partnerships involve hundreds of millions of dollars through both direct public investment and tax credits linked to donations to charities. In recent years there has been a certain politicization of the debate on the role of foundations in their relationship to the state, particularly in terms of their fiscal privilege, their political

prerogatives and their contribution to combating (or reinforcing) inequalities, especially in the United States (McGoey, 2016; Reich, 2018; Giridharadas, 2019) but also in Canada (Elson et al., 2020). Future research could benefit from exploring the changing views of political staff and governments toward foundations to further enrich our understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between government, foundations and community organizations.

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[1] This article is an adapted and updated version of Lefèvre and Berthiaume (2017). Translation by Cathleen Poehler.

[2] As a province within a federal framework, Quebec benefits from significant privileges in the social sector. The provincial government is the central interlocutor for the voluntary sector. On the importance, for comparative analysis, of this framework within Quebec social policy, see Laforest (2011).

[3] Four criteria were endorsed by the government to define community action organizations: be non-profit; be rooted in the community; maintain an associative and democratic life; and be free to determine their mission, approaches, practices and orientations. To qualify as autonomous, they must meet four additional criteria: be based on the initiative of the people of the community; pursue a social mission that fosters social transformation; demonstrate civic practices and approaches that focus on the whole issue addressed; and, be governed by a board of directors that is independent from the public network. (Secrétariat de l'action communautaire autonome (SACA), 1996)

[4] While philanthropy "speaks to the altruistic act of giving with thankfulness and the act of reciprocity and selfless generosity," foundations are "an institutionalized, state-recognized and supported public or private means to redistribute public goods" (Lefèvre and Elson, 2020, 14).

[5] He was a Member of Parliament for the Parti Québécois from 2003 to 2010; yet it was the Liberal party that commissioned the report he coordinated.

[6] Centraide is the Quebec branch of the U.S.-American United Way, a network of public foundations funded by both mainstream workplace fundraising and major donors. Its action is territorialized and consists in selecting grantee organizations on the issue of poverty. In recent years, it has shifted from a grantmaker to a changemaker position by assuming a greater role in collective action.

[7] Historically, the charitable approach, with the weight of the Catholic Church, has had a major influence in Quebec. In this sense, the emergence of a philanthropy inspired by managerial principles in the 2000s marks a break with this culture of giving.

[8] L'Appui is not supported by FLAC but by a holding company, created in 2000, belonging to the Chagnon family. This partnership therefore has a specific status since it is the only one that does not focus on early childhood.

[9] On the mobilization of the collective "Pour un Québec sans pauvreté" and the promulgation of a framework law against poverty and exclusion in 2002, see Dufour (2004).

[10] At the same time, strong criticism was levelled at the more traditional PPPs set up by the Liberal government for the construction of infrastructure such as roads and hospitals. Criticisms focus mainly on the "liquidation of public services" and on the excessive costs of these procedures (Breton, 2005). This solution, after having been a central element of the Liberal platform, was gradually marginalized, following several financial setbacks.

[11] Interview with the author, June 19, 2013.

[12] The Liberal government, which had signed the agreements with FLAC, was defeated in the spring 2012 provincial election by the Parti Québécois. It returned to power in 2014.

[13] Interview with the author, June 20, 2013.

[14] While we cannot estimate the number of organizations that decided to not renew their agreements or refuse the presence of FLAC in their activities, it is worth mentioning that FLAC has, on a few occasions, bypassed its funding criteria in order to settle in neighborhoods where community groups were more resistant to their presence; see, for example, stories of Saint-Henri and Pointe-Saint-Charles neighbourhoods in Montreal. (Bouchard 2013)

[15] This open letter was signed by the directors of private foundations (with total assets declared during their last fiscal year (Canada Revenue Agency, 2021)): Béati Foundation ($13 million), Berthiaume-Du-Tremblay Foundation ($11 million), Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation ($12 million), Léa Roback Foundation ($289 907), Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation ($2 billion), The JW McConnell Family Foundation ($677 million), Montreal Women's Y foundation ($1.5 million), Solstice Foundation (3.3 million) and YMCAs of Quebec Foundation ($7.6 million).

[16] The Canada Revenue Agency considers there to be three sub-categories of charities: charitable organizations, public foundations and private foundations (Canada Revenue Agency, 2018).

Appendix

Evolution of FLAC: Alliances in reconfiguration (adapted from Fontan et al., 2018, p. 8)

Intervention model followed by FLAC	Key moments		Relations between FLAC and the community organizations
Intuitive and directive action (2000–2006)	2000	Creation of the Chagnon Foundation	For community action, the challenge of its autonomy revolves around its relationship with the state.
	2001	Adoption of the *Politique de reconnaissance et de soutien de l'action communautaire* by the Quebec government	
Partnership-based and functional action (2005–2015)	2007	Launch of the first PPP: Quebec en forme	Distrust on the part of community organizations of PPPs and their role in the "privatization" of policies
	2009	Launch of the PPPs Avenir d'enfants, Réunir Réussir and L'Appui	
	2013	Formation of the *Coalition Non aux PPP sociaux*	
Search for a new action model (2015–2016)	January–June 2015	Mobilizations against the austerity measures by community and union organizations	
	March 2015	First public action of Collectif des fondations with the publication of the open letter "The Risks of Budget Stringency"	Community organizations' appreciation of and interest in FLAC's repositioning
	2015	Set-up of the "Comité des éclaireurs" (scouting committee) at the Foundation, in which representatives of community sector take part	
	2015	End of first PPP: Réunir Réussir	
	2016	Official announcement of the end of PPPs by FLAC	
	2017	End of PPP Québec en forme	

Supportive and learning-oriented action (2017–present)	2017	Implementation of the Foundation's new positioning	Development of new alliances and projects to support community action
	2019	Official announcement of the strategic repositions of the Foundation	
	2020	End of the PPP Avenir d'enfants	