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## **Public Policies Enabling the Social and Solidarity Economy in the City of Montreal**

*Marguerite Mendell, Concordia University*

*Nancy Neamtan, Chantier de l'économie sociale and TIESS\**

*Hyuna Yi, C.I.T.I.E.S.\*\**

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UNRISD, Palais des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0)22 9173020  
[info.unrisd@un.org](mailto:info.unrisd@un.org)  
[www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org)



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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>CAD</b>    | Canadian Dollars   |
| <b>C.C.Q.</b> | Civil Code of Quebec   |
| <b>CDEC</b>   | <i>Corporation de développement économique communautaire</i><br>(Community Economic Development Corporation)   |
| <b>CDRQ</b>   | <i>Coopérative de développement régional du Québec</i><br>(Quebec regional development cooperative)  |
| <b>CESIM</b>  | <i>Conseil d'économie sociale de l'île de Montréal</i><br>(Social Economy Council of the Island of Montreal)   |
| <b>CITIES</b> | <i>Centre international de transfert d'innovations et de connaissances en économie sociale et solidaire</i><br>(International Center for the Transfer of Innovations and Knowledge in Social and Solidarity Economy) |
| <b>CLT</b>    | Community land trusts  |
| <b>CMHC</b>   | Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation  |
| <b>CQCM</b>   | <i>Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité</i><br>(Quebec Council for Cooperation and Mutuality)  |
| <b>ECPAR</b>  | <i>Espace concertée pour des politiques d'achats responsables</i><br>(Collaborative Space for Responsible Procurement Policy)  |
| <b>FDT</b>    | <i>Fonds de développement des territoires</i><br>(Territorial Development Fund)  |
| <b>FLS</b>    | <i>Fonds locaux de solidarité</i><br>(Local Solidarity Fund)   |
| <b>GDP</b>    | Gross domestic product   |
| <b>GSEF</b>   | Global Social Economy Forum  |
| <b>LIUM</b>   | <i>Laboratoire en innovation urbaine de Montréal</i><br>(Montreal Urban Innovation Laboratory)   |
| <b>MAMH</b>   | <i>Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation</i><br>(Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing)  |
| <b>MAMOT</b>  | <i>Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation des territoires</i><br>(Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Territorial Occupation)   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>MAMROT</b> | <i>Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire</i><br>(Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Regions, and Territorial Occupation) |
| <b>MEI</b>    | <i>Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation</i><br>(Ministry of Economy and Innovation)   |
| <b>MESI</b>   | <i>Ministère de l'Économie, de Science et de l'Innovation</i><br>(Ministry of Economy, Science, and Innovation)   |
| <b>MMAR</b>   | <i>Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions</i><br>(Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Regions)   |
| <b>MOU</b>    | Memorandum of understanding   |
| <b>MRC</b>    | <i>Municipalités régionales de comté</i><br>(Local and regional municipal counties)   |
| <b>PAGE</b>   | <i>Plan d'action gouvernemental en Entrepreneuriat</i><br>(Government Action Plan on Entrepreneurship)  |
| <b>PIEC</b>   | <i>Programme d'immobilisation en entrepreneuriat collectif</i><br>(Programme for Fixed Assets in Collective Entrepreneurship)                                   |
| <b>PraM</b>   | <i>Programme Réussir à Montréal</i><br>(Succeed in Montreal Programme)  |
| <b>RISQ</b>   | <i>Réseau d'investissement social du Québec</i><br>(Quebec Social Investment Network)   |
| <b>SAM</b>    | <i>Système alimentaire Montréal</i><br>(Montreal Food System)   |
| <b>SHDM</b>   | <i>Société d'Habitation et de Développement de Montréal</i><br>(Montreal Housing and Development Corporation)   |
| <b>SMEs</b>   | Small- and medium-sized enterprises   |
| <b>SSE</b>    | Social and solidarity economy   |
| <b>UTILE</b>  | <i>Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant</i><br>(Student Housing Development Work Unit)   |

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## Summary

The social economy has been intrinsic to the socioeconomic landscape of Montreal for more than one hundred years. Citizen mobilization, and the adoption of a place-based ecosystemic approach adopted in the 1980s in response to crisis, have shaped the evolution of the social economy in Montreal since.

This paper describes the development of the Montreal social economy from 2013 to 2019. It situates this trajectory in the Canadian political system in which the provincial and federal governments play an important role in the implementation of enabling policy for the social economy and in which municipalities have a limited capacity to intervene. In Quebec, municipal charters—which outline the boundaries of their authority—are created and regulated by the National Assembly of Quebec. Therefore, within the nested political structure of Canada and Quebec, municipalities cannot be considered separately from the provincial and federal levels of government. That said, in several areas, the province of Quebec does grant resources and responsibilities to municipal governments, including the mandate to directly support new enterprise development. This context has thus not precluded the creation of significant relationships between the social economy and the Montreal municipal government, particularly on a sectoral basis.

The period covered in this paper begins in 2013 with the adoption of framework legislation on the social economy by the Quebec National Assembly. In its wake, a series of public policies and programmes were maintained or created to support its development. The paper documents the new initiatives that have been adopted at the municipal, provincial and federal levels from 2013-2019 as well as certain setbacks to the ecosystem of support due to policy decisions at the provincial and municipal level.

The period 2013-2019, as in past decades, is characterized by an on-going process of co-construction spearheaded by a diversity of actors. The evolution of the social economy during this period is a clear demonstration of its resilience and its deep roots in many sectors. The paper illustrates the important contribution of social economy enterprises to Montreal's socioeconomic development in key sectors affecting the quality of life, including housing, culture, sports and recreation and food systems.

The final section summarises the major changes during the seven-year period including the development of the social economy in emerging sectors, innovations in traditional sectors, an increased contribution from universities and youth and the intersections with new trends such as the circular economy and the commons. It also draws certain lessons including the importance of adopting and maintaining an integrated, ecosystemic approach, the importance of establishing relations based on partnerships and not on the subordination of the social economy to a political agenda or to public administrations and the importance of integrating the social economy into an overall vision of ecological and social transition in an urban setting.

In conclusion, the period of 2013-2019 underscores the strength and resilience of Montreal's social economy despite setbacks at the policy level. A culture of collaboration and collective action which has spearheaded the growth of the social economy in the city over the past decades remains deeply rooted and as this paper is being written, the mobilisation of civil society actors, and particularly youth, in favour of an ecological and social transition that is transforming the dominant development model, is opening the door to a new growth spurt in Montreal's social economy.

## Introduction

The social economy has been part of the socioeconomic landscape of Montreal for more than a century. Mutual associations were first established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; financial cooperatives emerged early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of *Mouvement Desjardins* and credit unions across Quebec. Cooperatives have played a significant role in key sectors including agriculture, finance, education throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today the social economy includes a diversity of not-for-profit enterprises. Its rapid growth in old and new sectors in the mid 1980's in response to social, environmental and cultural challenges at the time, was the result of citizen mobilisation at the neighbourhood level. This period has shaped the evolution of the social economy since and its integration into a vision of urban development embedding its many constituent enterprises and organizations in a place-based or *ecosystemic* approach.<sup>1</sup> There are currently approximately 2,780 social economy enterprises in Montreal (Institut de la Statistique du Québec, 2019).

In 2013, important changes in public policy, both positive and negative, affected the trajectory of the social economy throughout Quebec, including the city of Montreal. This paper describes the evolution of Montreal's social economy from 2013-2019, documenting its resilience in the face of numerous challenges.

To understand this recent period, it is very important to situate the city of Montreal and all cities across Canada, within the Canadian political system—a division of powers and responsibilities that defines the role of municipalities in all areas, both their obligations and their limitations. This certainly applies to the social economy in Montreal and considerably limits the capacity and potential to design and execute public policy at the municipal level. That said, constitutional or juridical boundaries have not precluded the development of significant relationships between the social economy and municipal government and its support for local social economy initiatives.

The history of the social economy throughout the province of Quebec has been characterised by an ongoing process of co-construction spearheaded by a diversity of actors including practitioners in collective enterprises, social movements, multi-stakeholder place-based organizations and different levels of government. Together, they have contributed to its development and to designing an enabling policy environment (Neamtan, 2019). The social economy has also experienced the consequences of electoral politics and changes in orientation. However, because it is rooted in community, the Montreal social economy has been able to withstand the winds of political change. Moreover, governments at all levels have recognized that it is in their best interest to collaborate with social economy actors and organizations; this collaboration has taken multiple forms.

### ***Division of Power in Canada: Federal, Provincial, Municipal***

There are three levels of government within the Canadian political system: federal, provincial, and municipal. At the federal level, Parliament and the government in power are responsible for issues that affect the entire country such as criminal law, national security, international trade, and immigration, albeit not always exclusively. Provincial

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<sup>1</sup> We speak of the social economy in Montreal and across Quebec. Today, reference internationally is frequently to the social and solidarity economy to include its diversity of legal forms (cooperative and not for profit enterprise or organization). We will use the term social economy for Montreal as it embraces what is known as SSE internationally. When referring to international experiences, we use social and solidarity economy.

governments have authority over matters that are within their jurisdiction, including education and health, labour standards and employment, social services, and housing. Municipal governments—cities, towns, and districts—have a much more limited role compared to their federal and provincial counterparts (Government of Canada, n.d.). Municipalities must follow and enforce provincial law. In Quebec, municipal charters—which outline the boundaries of their authority—are created and regulated by the National Assembly of Quebec.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, within the nested political structure of Canada and Quebec, municipalities cannot be considered separately from the provincial and federal levels of government. That said, in several areas, the province of Quebec does grant resources and responsibilities to municipal governments, including the mandate to directly support new enterprise development. For example, the City of Montreal assumes responsibility for supporting the emergence of and consolidation of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including social and solidarity economy (SSE) enterprises.

With a population of approximately 2 million (2019) and a GDP of over CAD 135 billion, Montreal is Quebec's largest city (City of Montreal, n.d.). The City is divided into 19 administrative boroughs, each with their own borough council and mayor, and are delegated responsibility by the city for local affairs and infrastructure.

Despite institutional limitations, the City of Montreal does have some power over certain areas within their jurisdiction. Municipal governments have the authority to determine their own property taxes, zoning, and various permits and licenses, such as animal permits and business licenses. However, they have very limited capacity for revenue generation. Notwithstanding its greater responsibility for social and economic development, similar to other cities around the world, Montreal's sources of revenue remain relatively fixed. Property taxes represent more than two thirds of revenue. The rest is generated from a combination of user fees, small amounts from government transfers and quota shares from reconstituted municipalities (boroughs). While this severely constrains the ability of the City of Montreal to take a leadership role in promoting and investing in the development of the social economy, there are both old and new opportunities and initiatives in which the City is actively engaged.

For example, significant provincial legislation was passed in 2017, potentially increasing the capacity of the City of Montreal to support the social economy. With the adoption of Bill 121 (*Act to increase the autonomy and powers of Ville de Montreal, the metropolis of Quebec*), the City of Montreal officially became the province's metropolis, with new powers, including control over social housing, operating hours of businesses, and fiscal benefits to businesses in street construction zones without prior consultation with the

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