NBEI

North Belfast Ethical Investment

NBEI-EDT North Working Paper

The social economy and local development: International best practice cases

June 2018

NBEI is a Social Investment Fund (SIF) project funded by the:

Northern Ireland Executive

www.northernireland.gov.uk

DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE

THROUGH THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

Outline of the working paper

The North Belfast Ethical Investment programme has compiled some relevant examples of international best practice to showcase how social enterprise practice is unfolding in alternative regulatory environment based overseas. What is consistent about the cases presented in this working paper is the way in which the SSE has been put together, what networks and relationships give it authority and how they operate within markets and against stripped out capitalist accumulation. It also shows how the sector uses the state to gather resources, gain legitimacy and deliver services. In this sense, the methodology of assemblage brings to life ideas about the right to the city but as a project that needs to be made by human and non-human actors and the liaisons between them in politics, markets and physical spaces.

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Castresana (2013) argues that this process is double-edged in the Basque Country where comparatively weak welfare conditions enabled a strong co-operative sector to emerge that in turn, slowed the progress of marketization and insipient forms of public-private partnership. Similarly, Bakaikoa and Albizu (2011) make the point that, because the Basque state relied so heavily on co-operatives, there were fewer state institutions to marketize in the first place and that services were more likely to remain in community control. They see the co-operative movement as a pragmatic response to economic crises, deindustrialisation and agri-restructuring although it survived a suspicious Franco regime, partly because it was backed by the church. Indeed, Molina (2011, p.14) argues that the roots of the co-operative movement are deeply embedded in 'spiritual economics', a cultural acceptance of sharing and the impact of Basque nationalism that does not always travel easily to different contexts. These cultural rationalities are constantly being reworked as the Catholic co-operativism, critical to start-up, was gradually replaced by more secular business methods, skills and organisational structures (Molina and Miguez, 2008).

Calvário and Kallis (2017) also show that the alternative food movement in the Basque Country is built upon a long history of small farm unions and co-operatives that were always politicised around food sovereignty and the effects of corporate supply chains on local prices. The expansion of the sector required new farmers to come into agroecology and the diversification of produce was supported by stronger financial and business management skills. However, the rapidity with which the market developed was only possible because it built upon anti-austerity sentiment, a desire for simpler and slower forms of production and an acknowledgment that land and food were an integral part of Basque identity.

Moreover, the period of post-war economic autarky also provided protection for domestic and localised markets to grow and for vulnerable enterprise models to incubate more securely (Aranguren et al., 2013). Molina and Walton (2011) point out that there has always been a tension between Catholic theological radicalism and the traditional Basque left, and that, to some extent, the church saw the co-operative movement as a bulwark against the extension of communism, especially in the 1970s and with the rise of ETA. The 1970s also saw a degree of liberalisation which opened the Spanish economy to international trade, foreign investment and mass tourism. Domestic consumption, living standards and salary levels all increased, fuelling demand for household appliances, a key component of the Basque economy. This, in turn, opened the possibility for manufacturing co-operatives to expand, restructure and diversify into new markets, reflected in the particular journey of the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation (MCC).

The Corporation started in 1956 when a local priest helped to establish a technological college, not just to strengthen the supply of labour but to place the values of co-operative working at the heart of business culture (Morgan, 2016). Five graduates from the college (that was reconstituted as the Mondragon University in 1997) led a worker takeover of a failing factory in the small Basque town of 8,500 people in the mid-1950s. Table 1 describes the principles of the Corporation and the emphasis placed on democratic governance structures and systems to include workers in decision-making at different levels and business sectors within the group.

It also describes, in a Polanyian sense, the relationship between land, labour and capital and in particular, the primacy of workers in production processes:

> Labour is the main factor for transforming nature, society and human beings themselves. As a result, the systematic recruitment of salaried workers has been abandoned, full sovereignty is attached to labour, the wealth created is distributed in terms of the labour provided and there is a will to extend the job options available to all members of society … Capital is an instrument subordinate to labour, which is necessary for business development. Therefore, it is understood to be worthy of fair and suitable remuneration, which is limited and not directly linked to the profits obtained, and availability subordinate to the continuity and development of the co-operative. (MCC, 2012, pp.34-35)

Sanchez-Bajo and Roelants (2013) show that by 2009, Mondragon had grown into a huge co-operate conglomerate with assets worth €33bn, €14.78bn in sales and 73 plants in 18 other countries. The Corporation is now organised into four divisions: finance, industry, retail and knowledge. These involve 281 companies in 27 countries and are all underpinned by the financial capital programme. This is centred on the *Caja Laboral* bank, which provides banking, insurance and social security to over 1.2m customers and had an equity fund of €4.5bn in 2011 (MCC, 2012; Mondragon Corporation, 2015). The retail area had gross sales of €8.0bn, the university has around 3,500 students enrolled and the MCC invested €165m on R & D and business innovation in 2011 (MCC, 2012). The company's Governance Council is overseen by a Social Council representing the membership and a Monitoring Commission designed to ensure compliance with social outcomes, as well as financial performance.

Members of Mondragon are legally self-employed but there is a programme of social insurance for members and their families and because they purchase capital in the company, they also receive a share of the profits. Members are elected to the Governing Council and while they can join trades unions, they are restricted by company by-laws in their right to strike. Ridley-Duff (2010) explains that each member buys a stake in their individual co-operative, which can be funded with the help of Caja Laboral. Each co-operative is organised as a sectoral group within a federal structure, which pays between 15% to 40% of their profits towards joint projects (such as marketing research, branding and so on) and a proportion of losses (up to 40%) can be cushioned by group funds. The Mondragon Corporation receives 10% of profits from the sector for high risk projects and the Mondragon Foundation is allocated 2% of sectoral profits for reinvestment in social and educational projects.

For example, the *Fund for Education and Interco-operative Promotion (FEPI)* supports professional training and R & D to raise the technological capacity of co-operatives and the *Central Interco-operation Fund (FCI)* invests in strategic projects with high growth potential, restructuring organisations, supporting innovation and creating synergies between existing and new-start co-operatives. The pooling of resources to cross-subsidise debts, spread risks and share resources is supported via the *Corporate Solidarity Fund (FSC)*, which is especially important in helping to capitalise individual entities experiencing short-term trading problems. Wage control underpins business sustainability by linking the payroll to profit, maintaining equilibrium with the regional salary levels and minimising the difference between the highest to lowest wage.

Figure 1 Principles of the Mondragon Corporation

- Open admission to all members without discrimination against any group or interest
- Democratic organisation by protecting the rights of members to access decision-making systems and structures of the corporation
- The sovereignty of labour
- Instrumental and subordinate nature of capital
- Participatory management by maximising the opportunities for involving members in decision-taking across the corporation
- Payment solidarity by ensuring fair and sufficient pay for work
- Inter-co-operation by strengthening business to business relations internally, regionally, nationally and even globally
- Social transformation by placing social reconstruction economic inclusion and a fairer Basque society
- Universality by strengthening the solidarity economy and its foundational principles of peace justice and development inherent in the international co-operative movement
- Education to promote the capabilities of the person as part of the co-operative tradition

Source: Based on Mondragon Corporation, 2015, pp.34-35.

Mondragon clearly does not occupy a marginal space at the edge of the market but is culturally embedded and politically backed as a central component of the Basque economy, which has one of the lowest Gini coefficients globally (Morgan, 2016). The assemblage of regulations, R & D and the emphasis on innovation, linked to self-generated finance are at the heart of scaling-up and scaling-out strategies. In particular, Markaida (2011) argues that that *Caja Laboral,* is a key source of Mondragon's competitive advantage:

> The co-operatives often faced financial problems that greatly limited their growth, since their members' contributions nor accessible external financing was enough to sustain investment projects that required large amounts of capital. Consequently, having a co-operative credit union has allowed the channelling of domestic savings into the co-operatives in need of financing under preferential conditions. In certain times of crises, Caja Laboral has allowed financing with reduced or no interest rates for certain co-operatives experiencing difficulties and has waived repayment in extreme cases. (Markaida, 2011, p.141)

In other words, the firm's diversification strategy (into new product lines, organisations or countries) is largely sourced by capitalising its *own* wealth and where necessary, reducing costs (including dividends), strengthening intra-company transfers and adopting more flexible work patterns at times of crises (Markaida, 2011). Morandeira et al. (2011) also show that co-operatives in the Basque country have the highest rates of co-operation across business sectors, stressing the reliance on networks, supply chains and inter-firm trading, including with fully commercial companies.

However, Upchurch et al. (2014) argue that co-operatives are subject to the same market pressure to compete as capitalist enterprises, causing them to adopt the same aggressive tendencies of corporations. They point out that there have been strikes in the Mondragon group, outsourcing and lower wages in production sites in developing countries and joint ventures with private companies, where employers are not members of co-operatives. A strike in 1974 was led by a group of lower paid 'proletariat' shareholders who felt exploited by a more powerful 'bourgeois' shareholder class, especially as manufacturing units adopted mass production techniques and efficiency measures. The strike ended with the expulsion of a small group of members but reveals the underlying tensions within the co-operative movement and resulted in the adoption of new rules restricting pay increases and disparities. Mondragon also reorganised its governance systems outside the Basque Country and adopted a code of ethics for its foreign enterprises. As growth and replication implicates social enterprises more deeply in profit and finance, as well as different labour market conditions, their inherent tensions increase, and many lack the analytical skills and strategies to properly evaluate the implications of scaling decisions.

Figure 2 Governance structures of Mondragon

Organisation of the Co-operative
▪ General Assembly: It is the supreme organ of the co-operative, an expression of the social will expressed by all the partners. ▪ Governing Council: It is the organ of representation and government of the co-operative. Its members are elected in the General Assembly. ▪ Social Council: Consultative body, represents the group of partners before the internal instances of the co-operative. ▪ Surveillance Commission: Consultative body, its object is to rule on the correct fulfilment of the accounting aspects and those that require its consideration. ▪ Board of Directors: It is the executive and executive team, made up of the manager and the executive members, corresponding to the executive direction of the co-operative.
Governance structure of the Mondragon Co-operation
▪ Co-operative Congress: Its function is to establish the strategic criteria for which Mondragon will be managed, through the planning and co-ordination of its business units. It is composed of 650 congressmen, delegates by the co-operatives and meets annually. ▪ Divisions: Associations formed in the framework of MONDRAGON among related co-operatives, co-ordinate the management of their co-operatives. ▪ Standing Committee: Governs by delegation of the Co-operative Congress. Its basic function is to promote and control the implementation of the policies and agreements adopted by the Congress, exercising a continuous monitoring of the evolution of Mondragon. ▪ General Council: It is responsible for the development and implementation of corporate strategies and objectives; co-ordinates the policies of the different Divisions and Co-operatives. ▪ Industrial Council: It is a co-ordinating body of the Industry Divisions.

Source: Based on http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/sobre-nosotros/gobernanza/organizacion/ accessed April, 2017.

2 Bristol and the creative commons

Wendy Larner (2014) describes the emergence of a vibrant creative commons in Bristol, consisting of a network of artists, craft groups, health initiatives, local food markets and cheap rental accommodation for clusters of social enterprises. She challenges the idea that they represent a post-political governance but identifies their transformative edge in everyday interactions with beneficiaries in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in a comparatively wealthy city:

> The networked polyvalent political formations that emerge are not the depoliticised post-democratic institutions highlighted in the existing literature

> on post-politics. Instead, they fundamentally question the status quo and actively seek political alternatives. (Larner, 2014, p.191)

Larner evaluates the Coexist Project in Hamilton House, which was a derelict office block in Stokes Croft, one of the most disadvantaged areas in the inner-city. With the property recession biting, the owners invited NGOs to consider developing it as a facility for use by the local community. Coexist was established to create a space in which the, 'community can grow, share, collaborate and learn what it is to live in coexistence with each other' (https://www.hamiltonhouse.org, accessed August, 2017). Hamilton House currently hosts over two hundred users including painters, designers, illustrators, environmental groups, charities and a radio station. They also run a low-cost community kitchen, dance studio, a well-being therapy centre and the Bristol Bike Project. Groups and individuals can also rent studios, or hot desk space. Coexist is structured as a Community Interest Company and has incubated new creative projects and social businesses from conception to sustainability. Larner (2014) distinguishes the initiative from grassroots political movements, or shadow state formations, precisely because it is entrepreneurial, promotes flexible management and comparatively flat structures, has a minimum wage for directors and mobilises volunteer equity. The initiative rejects gentrification and conventional forms of cultural urban branding through, 'A "do it yourself" version of city living that privileges autonomy and anti-authoritarianism and aims to demonstrate that a less commercial and more sustainable inner-city is possible' (Larner, 2014, p.200).

The social enterprise sector in Bristol can be traced to the region's history in the trades union and co-operative movements, a strong green economy and the lead taken by the City Council in response to sustained unemployment in the 1970s and 1980s. The sector now creates innovative community enterprises and scalable social finance, which have a presence in regional, national and international markets. With the growth of the Triodos Bank, the Bristol Pound and a range of ethical finance providers, the city now has the largest social finance sector in the UK, outside London (SEW, 2013). By 2013, the social economy in Bristol included 601 enterprises, with a turnover of £378m per annum and supported 10,333 jobs (SEW, 2013, p.8). North (2014) argues that local currencies have the potential for alternative economic and political expression, especially if they relate to the production for *use* logic of the SSE. The Bristol Pound is a complementary currency backed by Sterling deposits and while more is spent in independent retailers than national chains, Ferreira and Perry (2014) argue that it is less clear how circulation adds value to suppliers in the social economy or the charitable sector. However, they also show that among users, average spending comprises 14% of all weekly expenditure, with 91% using locally owned shops, especially for dining (85%), groceries (66%) and travel (64%) (Ferreira and Perry, 2014, p.5).

Like the Basque Country, the ecosystem in Bristol has evolved over time and its key strengths includes: a strong, inter-sectoral partnership focused on the business needs of enterprises; advanced educational and skills programmes; a strong regional social finance market and intermediaries, well integrated into national capital funds (Vickers et al., 2017). The *Bristol and Bath Social Enterprise Network (BBSEN)* advocates for the sector but also seeks out collaborative market opportunities with local government and the private sector, while Social Enterprise Works (SEW) provides technical support to individual social enterprises. The

Change Cluster, is a joint initiative between national technical support organisations, social finance providers and local universities, to strengthen and broaden higher education support for social entrepreneurship and business start-up, especially in the creative economy, where the sector is particularly strong.

The *Watershed,* which is the leading film, culture and digital media centre in south-west England, is based in a prime commercial site along the regenerated riverfront. The *Pervasive Media Studio* offers incubation space to develop creative arts projects and brings together over 100 artists, digital animators and academics to explore the future of mobile and wireless media. Rent is the main form of income and the building includes: three cinemas, a café/bar, flexible conference and events spaces as well as the media studio. The case demonstrates that elite development sites, especially along the waterfront, which have traditionally outpriced social enterprises, or effectively excluded community interests, can accommodate ethical businesses. It is also served by the *Bristol Community Ferry Boats*, which started in 1977 as a private business but faced liquidation in 2012 (figure 6.1). In early 2013, a group of local people restructured the company as a community benefit society, with around 900 shareholders, the majority of whom are Bristol residents. It is now profitable and operates a regular public ferry service, tourist trips and corporate hire and they plan to extend their fleet and operating routes. Few would deny the exclusive nature of Bristol's waterfront and the uneven, new right ideologies it reflects (Larner, 2014). Neither the state nor the property industry are likely to open the space for alternative land uses but alternative economic rationalities have asserted a degree of influence in this development. The SSE has not restructured the space or even restricted a dominant property model, but it does show how accumulation has enabled more diverse uses, businesses and workers and ideas about who can use the riverfront.

Figure 3 The Bristol social enterprise ferry service

3 Québec and an integrated social economy infrastructure

Chapter in new book on order from the library trace the development of the social economy in Quebec to the anti-state and anti-socialist politics of the 1920s and was largely influenced by the Church and in turn was heavily criticised for its authorities, authority, elitist and conformist character. The cooperative movement, especially linked agriculture and food production gained traction in between the 1930s and 1950s which in part, responded to the depression and questions about the capacity of the state and the market to deliver decent housing, education and social care. The 1960's and the 1970's, was marked by the consolidation and a stronger relationship with an expanding Keynesian ideology taking a stronger role in economic management, the provision of major infrastructure and the provision of public goods. ##### also explains the distance structure and the durability of the value base of the social economy in Quebec to a nationalistic rejection of neoliberal economics, the extent of unionised labour and attempts at a national level to reposition the voluntary sector as a surrogate for welfare. The counter movements that emerged in this period also had a distinctive community economic development politics including Community Economic Development Corporations (CDECs), Community Futures, SADCs (Sociétés d'aide au dévelopment des collectivités) in Québec; as well as social economy enterprises: health services user cooperatives, loan circles and homecare services.

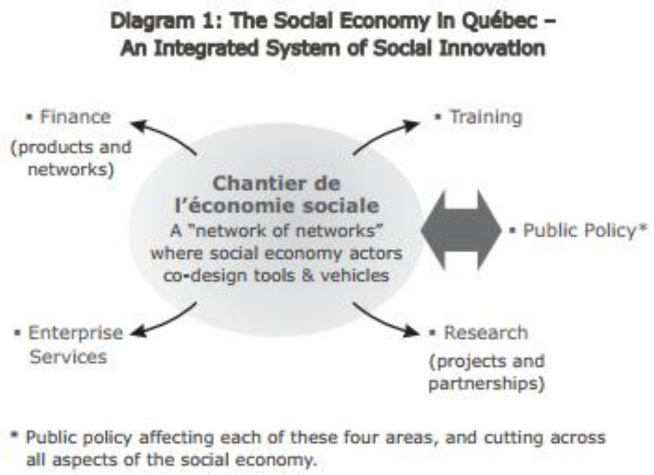
Linked to this, the comparatively strong trades unions took a more direct role in managing the effects of deindustrialisation and structural employment by creating the workers' investment fund. The *Fonds de solidarité (FTQ)* was established in 1983 by Quebec's largest union, the *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)*, which was able to take advantage of federal and regional tax incentives to invest in cooperatives, social enteprises and private businesses with a social mission. The *Fonds* is obliged by law to invest a minimum of 60% in enterprises in Quebec and to prioritise job creation and companies with explicit social and environmental objectives. The *Fonds de solidarité* diversified its investment tools by creating sectoral and territorial or *place-based* funds, two of which now invest in social economy enterprises: *SOLIM*, a real estate fund and a number of *SOLIDEs*, local investment funds. In 2006, it became a financial partner of the *Chantier d'économie sociale Trust,* investing $12 million in a $52.8 million patient capital investment fund established by the *Chantier* in response to the need for long term capital for social economy enterprises.

In Québec, the Chantier de l'economie sociale created a $53.8 million patient capital fund for social enterprises with contributions from federal ($22.8 million), provincial ($10 million), and private ($20 million) sources. The Québec government has also introduced policies to facilitate investment in the Social Economy through tax credits, incentives for co-operative members to invest in their organizations, and extension of loan guarantee to co-operative and non-profit enterprises. As of November 30, 2015, the Fonds held $11.2 billion in net assets, had 613,958 owner-shareholders, and had helped create, maintain and protect 172,000 jobs.[1] The second largest union organization in Quebec, the *Confédération des syndicats nationaux* (CSN) also established Fond*Action*, a development fund which prioritises investment in companies with participatory management structures as well as social enterprises. By 2017, the Fond*Action* had created or maintained 32,000 jobs; had 137,000 shareholders and held $CAD1.7bn of assets (http://www.fondaction.com/a-propos.php accessed July 2017).

The Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) was established by the 1996 Summit on the Economy and Employment, in which a range of interests including the private sector and civil society groups were brought together in the context of the recession, a crises in public sector finances and the needs of particular interests including young people, women and the future of the forestry cooperatives. A cross sectoral Task Force on the Social Economy undertook a needs assessment and established working groups made up of representatives of social economy networks (co-operatives and non-profits), and the community economic development and social movements to propose possible projects in priority fields of activity. The Task Force prioritised the need for a dedicated social finance architecture, training and capacity building, the consolidation of support organisations, and new sectoral policies including the need to comprehensively upgrade legislation to support social enterprises. The task force was also reorganised as the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* to coordinate, simplify and maxmisimes the impact of the sector's voice in government as well as to support the sectors. It is now a significant actor in state governance arrangements and a key intermediary to channel the needs of the social economy to government, financial institutions and a range of sub-regional networks.

Mendell (2010) argues that the Chantier adopted a wide and flexible definition of the social economy in order to create a broadly based coalition, prioritise the value base of the sector at the expense of restrictive legal or organisational forms and encourage innovative grassroots movements. The governance of the organisation is also inclusive with electoral colleges reflecting different organisational types, areas, sectors, interest groups and support intermediates and First Nations. Mendell sets out the structure of the social economy in Quebec as an assembly of different classes of social enterprises; training and skills development; dedicated social finance instruments; research and advocacy centred on the work Chantier.

Figure 4 The social economy in Quebec: An integrated system of social innovation



Source: Mendell, 2010, p.46.

Downing and Charron (2012) point out that Chantier has been critical in coproducing a social economy infrastructure including financing, training, business support and research and development delivered through a structure which ensures interaction between the diverse facets of the social economy. This includes the development of policies to support non-profit delivery of child care, subsidised homecare, especially for older people and specific legislative changes that gave cooperatives competitive advantages of private businesses, making it easier for them to capitalize by permitting them to keep a reserve, and to sell shares to non-member investors. A new legal category of *Solidarity Co-operative* was also established so that they could count community members that use their services as members

Mendell (2010) points out that social investment is not new to the Quebec market and in the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins was established to provide loan capital to social enterprises and cooperatives. However, the market was comprehensively reorganised in the mid-1990s with; a Social Economy Fund (FES) was created for the use of Local Development Centers (CLD), which are non-profit organisations leading local economic development; and investment programmes for private SMES (such as the state run Investissement Québec) were mandated to support non-profits and co-operatives. The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire et autonomne began to provide $20 Million per year to support community and voluntary action. In 1997, the Chantier created the Réseau d'investissment social du Québec (RISQ) drawing on initial capital of $5m from a range of financial institutions, which was match funded by the Québec government. RISQ is a non-profit, $10m venture capital fund which provides social enterprises with non-collateralised loans and loan and margin of credit guarantees of up to $50,000 (Downing and Charron, 2012, p.165).

Chantier also used its core capital, along with new state funding to leverage additional investment from private-sector partners to create *Fiducie du Chantier de l'économie sociale*, a patient capital fund of $52.8 million which provides between $50,000 and $1.5 million of investments exclusively to non-profits and co-operatives with under 200 staff and $100,000 in assets for operational costs and acquisition of capital goods and real estate. Because they are structured as patient capital, the loans guarantee a 15-year moratorium on repayment of capital, are often non-collateralized and the interest rate is fixed but allow flexible repayments without early redemption penalties. By mid-2017, Chantier had: 49M$; amount of authorized and active loans; created or maintained 3,183 jobs in the social economy and number of jobs created and generated investments worth 337M$ (http://fiducieduchantier.qc.ca, accessed July 2017).

RISQ also provides loans for technical assistance for market analysis business plans and feasibility studies and capacity building programmes in general are focused on core competencies and knowledge linked to the structures and performance of the business. This includes support to establish participatory governance, deal with organisational, legal and human resources, managerial capacity and the critical challenge of succession planning. However, it also supports the more explicit political work of the sector and the potential of 'economic militantism' to create pro-poor policies and advance investment to build the infrastructure in order to sustain and grow the social economy across the state (Downing and Charron, 2012, p.167). This is in part enabled by a strong partnership with universities to undertake reflective and critical research on the ethics of the sector, international practices as well as sector specific projects such as housing, tourism and finance. As with the Basque Country, this epistemological and methodological variety of the research and its embedded in the academy is important in normalising the solidarity economy, challenging provided versions of the market and creating a stronger public discourse on the relationship between investment and social outcomes (Bouchard, et al., 2015).

Bouchard et al. (2015) show that these strands were consolidated and reinforced by the *Québec Social Economy Act (2013)*, which was also significant because it gave legislative recognition to the sector, mandated ministries and agencies to integrate with the sector to deliver Departmental outcomes and strengthen reporting, financial transparency and accountability across government. The latest *Plan d'action Gouvernemental en Économie Sociale 2015-2020* (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015) sets out a total investment of more than $CAD100m aims to create or maintain 30,000 jobs and leverage total investments of over $CAD500m by 2020.This includes a $CAD10m investment in Réseau d'investissement social du Québec (RISQ) and a $CAD30m budget to relaunch Investissement Quebec's program to stimulate the capitalization of social economy enterprises. It also involves a programme to support innovation and the development of markets ($CAD3.5m) a significant investment of $CAD29m into grassroots organisations to support the development of social economy enterprises, especially in rural and remote regions.

Trembly (2012) traces the development of the social economy in Québec to anti-state and anti-socialist politics in the 1920s, and in particular, the role of the Catholic Church in community economic development. The co-operative movement in agriculture and food production gained traction in the 1930s and 1950s, which, in part, responded to the Depression as well as the poor quality of education, housing and social care. The 1960s and the 1970s were marked by consolidation and a stronger relationship with the state as social enterprises played a more central role in economic management, major infrastructure and welfare. Gilles et al. (2013) also argue that the social economy in Québec is rooted in a nationalistic rejection of neoliberal economics, the strong tradition of unionised labour and attempts, at a national level, to reposition the voluntary sector as a surrogate for welfare. The counter movements that emerged in this period saw significant developments in social finance, as well as new institutional arrangements as a result of strong sector-political-policy alliances at the local and state levels.

For example, Chantier de l'économie sociale (Chantier) was established by the 1996 *Summit on the Economy and Employment*, which was a response to the continuing effects of the recession on young people, women and First Nations. Mendell (2010) argues that Chantier adopted a flexible definition of the social economy in order to create a broadly based coalition, prioritise solidarity values (at the expense of restrictive legal or organisational forms) and place an emphasis on innovative grassroots movements. Chantier's governance is based on electoral colleges reflecting different organisational types, areas, sectors and interest groups, including First Nations. It is at the centre of a social economy that includes: enterprises, training and skills development, dedicated social finance instruments, research and advocacy. Downing and Charron (2012) claim that its real value is as a social innovator by enabling policies and support systems to be genuinely co-produced, including a new legal category of *Solidarity Co-operative* that includes people who use their services as members, considerably expanding their reach and social impact.

Mendell (2010) also points out that the social finance market in Québec is well developed and highly differentiated with new patient capital products to help un-collateralised social enterprises to access larger equity and venture funds. Major trades unions have created a number of funds, specifically for co-operatives (supported by both federal and regional tax incentives) to strengthen investment in neighbourhood social enterprises, job creation schemes and projects with environmental benefits (Gilles et al., 2013). For example, Desjardins was established to provide loan capital to social enterprises and co-operatives and in 1997, Chantier created the Réseau d'Investissment Social du Québec (RISQ), drawing on initial capital of $5m of private finance, which was match funded by the Québec Government (Downing and Charron, 2012, p.165). RISQ also provide technical assistance loans for business plans and to strengthen governance systems and provide social enterprises without assets with loans and credit guarantees. Downing and Charron (2012, p.167) show they have supported more explicit political work as a form of 'economic militantism' in pursuing pro-co-operative policies and regulatory instruments, especially tax incentives for investment in the social economy.

The *Québec Social Economy Act (2013)* brought many of these strands together, consolidated the enabling environment but also strengthened legislation, mandated state agencies to integrate the sector into investment programmes and developed reporting, financial transparency and accountability (Bouchard et al., 2015). The latest *Plan d'action Gouvernemental en Économie Sociale 2015-2020* (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015) involves spending around $CAD100m in order to create, or maintain, 30,000 jobs and leverage investment of over $CAD500m into the social economy by 2020. This includes a $CAD10m investment in RISQ and a $CAD30m budget to relaunch *Investissement Québec* to stimulate the capitalization of larger social enterprises. It also involves a programme to support the development of new markets ($CAD3.5m) and a significant investment ($CAD29m) into grassroots organisations, especially in rural and remote regions. However, Lévesque (2013) points out that this institutional and legal diversity has created tensions between larger co-operatives, structured as businesses, and small, associative enterprises. Who speaks for the sector and who co-ordinates its political claims and reconciles these internal contradictions are endless processes in growing the social economy. This developmental and advocacy work has been strengthened by a specific programme of funded research on a sub-regional basis, along with universities across Québec. The programme is practical, exploring market research and evaluating impact but is also conceptual, critically reviewing the value base of the social economy and the implications of state and federal policies in its performance.

4 Cooperative integration in Emelia Romagna

Zamagni (2014) shows that the Emilia Romagna region of nearly 4.5m people has one of the densest co-operative economies in the world, with two out of three people members of a co-op and where they produce nearly one third of the region's GDP. The movement is also deeply connected to politics and ideologically rooted in radical communitarianism and the comparatively long history of the Communist Party. In *Red Bologna*, Max Jaggi (1977) described a raft of innovative social programmes produced by the leftist administration in the 1970s, including free public transport, a shift in public health away from state institutions toward community centred delivery, and the delegation of planning and public housing to new area based co-operatives. Bassia et al. (2016) show that this heritage and the acceptance of co-operative business models are also reflected in a progressive policy environment that enables workers to take over failing businesses, exempts social enterprises from Corporation Tax and requires that 3% of profits are reinvested into pooled development funds. Bologna's citizens can also directly support the sector by allocating up to 0.5% of their income tax liability to a social enterprise and since 2007, the City Council has introduced procurement systems that can directly award contracts to accredited co-operatives. It can also sign agreements with social firms to implement specific projects, co-manage pilot initiatives and shape procurement policies across service areas.

Menzani and Zamagni (2010) also show that the movement, centred on the capital Bologna, has developed as a result of the professionalisation of management; mergers and the use of more flexible group structures; access to stock and bond markets; and changes in legislation that facilitated the growth of a new co-operative class. Type A co-operatives deliver social, health and education services, usually on the basis of contracts with the public sector, (comprising 70% of co-operatives in Emilia Romagna); and Type B mainly aim to offer disabled or disadvantaged people training and pathways to employment (Fonte and Cucco, 2017). Some co-operatives combine both types (A + B) and have their own special status by integrating social service functions through labour market intermediaries and neighbourhood regeneration programmes. EUROCITIES (2011, p.7) show that in Bologna alone, there were: 880 associations (570 in social, health cultural and environment); 88 social co-operatives; 63 foundations and 14 NGOs.

Zamagni and Zamagni (2010) point to urban-rural interdependencies in developing co-operatives, especially around traditional agricultural sectors and artisanal production. This has enabled them to remain small scale and dispersed, but with strong co-ordinating infrastructure and well developed market networks. They contrast the monolithic dominance of Mondragon in the Basque Country and all the features of a global conglomerate, with the more diffused and embedded structure of co-operatives across Emilia Romagna. However, Zamagni and Zamagni (2010) emphasise that finance is critical to growth strategies and that legislative changes (especially in the early 1970s) exempted co-operatives from aspects of banking regulation, which allowed them to recycle reserves and raise capital from a large number of mainly, small scale lenders and investors. EUROCITIES (2012) also highlight the integration of social enterprises with the private sector, such as the *Associazione Amici di Piazza Grande*, which provides accommodation, training and legal aid for homeless people in Bologna. Homeless people set up a monthly street magazine, are trained to manage the shelters where they live, provide outreach support and run a bicycle repair shop, which also provides basic education and training linked to a work integration programme. Piazza Grande have also established an association of street lawyers to provide homeless people with legal aid and since it was set up in 2000, it has supported more than 2,000 cases with the initiative now extended to 26 Italian cities.

Menzani and Zamagni (2010, p.103) show that the scale of the co-operative sector and its regional diversity have created co-ordination problems, necessitating a complex, but highly effective, range of networks, legal agreements and formal business clusters. The first are *horizontal networks,* which help to increase market power, rationalise production, offer common services and share risk. This, they argue, was critical in the post-war recovery of the co-operatives after fascist control, and was especially important in the industrial sector to achieve economies of scale. It focused on rationalising marketing, the integration of interdependent production processes and set the context for full mergers throughout the 1960s and 1970s. *Legacoop* is the national co-operative federation and comprises several associations in agriculture, housing and tourism and provides lobbying, as well as technical support, for members. It also negotiates group bids on public services, enabling both a scale of delivery and efficiencies to access higher value contracts. Similarly, agricultural credit unions were traditionally small, had limited capital and mainly served rural communities but throughout the 1970s, they rationalised, merged and created a thicker network to minimise risk and extend credit beyond the agri-sector.

Vertical networks integrate the production and distribution value chain with often small volume farmers selling on to producer groups and through wholesaler networks operating at a global level. The post-war period saw federations investing in new agri-food processing plants in order to challenge conglomerates that had pushed down prices for small farms. In turn, farmers created purchasing co-operatives that removed their dependence on a single (capitalist) buyer as well as reducing transaction costs by cutting out commercial intermediaries. Menzani and Zamagni (2010) argue that *complementary networks* are more recent and enable co-operatives to create synergies and interdependencies while retaining the business integrity of the core unit. They show that the national building co-operative started from smaller Bologna based companies, subcontracting works to specialist co-operatives, which, in turn, created consortia to tender for major contracts that strengthened capacity and spread risk, especially in complex infrastructure projects.

Financial support networks have been pivotal in restructuring the co-operative sector in the supply of credit, temporary and long-term equity and technical assistance on business planning and company consolidation. Menzani and Zamagni (2010) show how a series of mergers created the Ccfs (Financial Co-operative Consortium for Development) for holding equities, supplying loans and acting as a clearinghouse for co-op credits and debts. Unipol is Legacoop's bank-insurance pole and was the first joint stock company controlled by co-operatives to be quoted on the Italian stock exchange. A related network created by the three most important co-operative umbrella organisations (Legacoop, Confco-operative, and Agci) is Cfi (Co-operation, Finance, Enterprise), was established to provide financial support for the conversion of bankrupt private firms into employee-owned co-operatives. Cfi takes equity in newly formed co-ops, co-ordinates investments and provides management expertise to stabilise finances and bring the business to profitability.

The final type of network concerns *advocacy and political support* for the sector by working on, 'new co-operative development, strategic marketing, ethical control of the affiliated firms, circulation of know-how and human resources information, internal conflict resolution and co-ordination of the major strategic decisions, new legislative proposals, and lobbying at the local, national, and European Union level' (Menzani and Zamagni, 2010, p.120). Here, they emphasise the performative importance of 'co-operativism' by creating a brand identity for a significant business sector with a distinct set of ethics, which increasingly resonate in the aftermath of the financial crises. They also stress the flexible and adaptive capacity of these networks, their participatory, bottom-up quality and their global potential, both as a political counter movement, as well as helping to extend the market reach of each sector.

5 Occupation in São Paulo

The sprawling metropolis of São Paulo has, like many South American cities, seen rapid population growth to around 11m people and an intensification of socio-spatial segregation with all the attendant problems of homelessness, poor conditions, over-crowding and poverty (Sengupta et al., 2017). Land and property prices have risen dramatically in the last decade, especially in the city centre, and there is now a need for an estimated 1.49m properties just to meet short-term demand (Earle, 2017). Sengupta et al. (2017) argue that changes in legislation, policy and fiscal instruments created the context for social housing movements to pursue meaningful occupation strategies and create alternative pathways to housing for homeless people with little, or no, credit history.

Valença and Bonates (2010) show how the dismantling of the National Housing Bank (BNH) in 1986, which had raised capital for social housing, led São Paulo state to create a new housing fund based on a 1% increase in Value Added Tax. Left leaning municipalities were able to pursue a mix of new build and rehabilitation schemes and used Article 6 of the Brazilian Constitution (1988), which affirms the 'social right to housing' and Article 21, Clause 20, which requires the federal government to direct urban development to provide the necessary infrastructure to meet housing commitments across the state. The use of rights legislation was supported by the launch of Minha Casa Minha Vida (My Life My Home, MCMV) in 2009, which is a R$180bn investment that aims to provide 4m homes to low income groups across Brazil. Sengupta et al. (2017) point out that most new build schemes under the programme are on cheaper peripheral sites with high transport costs, rather than in central areas where land prices have increased considerably in the last decade. Frustration with the slow pace of change, poor conditions and corruption re-energised the right to the city movement, especially around housing. The Homeless Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto, MTST) originated from the Landless Rural Workers' Movement in the mid-1990s with a focus on occupying empty buildings, initially organised as squats, to reclaim their long-term use for homeless people. A mix of formal and informal tactics were used to target public and private buildings and MTST organised communal cooking and cleaning, often illicit connections to water, sanitation and power, and provided security inside and outside the block. Earle (2017) estimates that there were between 40 to 60 occupied buildings in the city centre involving a range of strategies and tactics to gain access, provide services, organise communal support and generate income (mainly rents) to sustain the occupation.

The Epiringa building was constructed in 1968 for the Federal Labour Court (figure 6.2) in central São Paulo and is currently being converted into social housing with 120, one bedroom and studio units. The total cost of refurbishment is approximately R$11m (US$5.5m). The empty property was occupied by squatters who received legal aid, finance and technical assistance from a range of NGOs, as well as academics from the University of São Paulo. The refurbishment is nearly complete and it is estimated that tenants will pay R$15 (US$7.5) per month, which is about one-tenth of the market rent. Sengupta et al. (2017) point out that the steady expansion of left-wing parties, grassroots organisations, technical support from a range of NGOs and capital investment from MCMV, transformed 'occupy' struggles into a meaningful, political process, capable of transferring assets to community use. The interplay between state (resources and permissions), housing activists and homeless people reveals a more complex, rights-based alignment in which the, 'MCMV has legitimised community firepower and an incremental housing approach, both important pillars of low-income housing delivery' (Sengupta et al., 2017, pp.16-17).

Earle (2017) cautions that it would be wrong to romanticise 'occupy initiatives' and points out that it involves a complex set of relationships in which formal and extra-legal channels comprise an ill-defined right to the city movement. These initiatives are well organised, disciplined, have rules, are intolerant of anti-social behaviours and focus on rent recovery, income generation and building an explicit economic dimension to sustainable occupation. The quality of the occupation itself is constantly renegotiated, as in the Epiringa case, where guerrilla entry, informal rules and securing the site characterised the first phase of the campaign. However, as the occupants and their advocates maintained a presence and put together a political alliance, supported by a financial case, they were able to establish a legal claim to rehabilitate the property and formalised allocation to homeless families. De Souza (2006) also warns against reading social movements in the South from a Northern perspective, as the institutional, legal and cultural context throws open different opportunities, unpredictable alliances and more pragmatic municipal politics:

> In spite of the many problems which can be observed in metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, there are not only problems there, but also solutions which are being proposed and to some extent also implemented both by the state and by social movements (sometimes together with the local state apparatus, sometimes despite the state, sometimes against the state). Probably it is even easier for social movements in countries such as Brazil (at least to some extent) to conceive and implement alternative strategies regarding spatial organization, not only because absence and inefficiency of the state apparatus makes engagement of civil society more necessary than in Europe or the USA, but also because urban law is not so effective or respected as, say, in Germany or the UK - apparent 'chaos' also means bigger room for manoeuvre for the people on the ground. (De Souza, 2006, p.339)

The case also shows the importance of intermediaries and advocates in protest politics and moving occupation beyond spectacle to challenge property relations and also, how important urban assets can be brought under community control. Capacity, skills and knowledge are clearly not the only, or even the most, important dimension to these struggles but they are important. Dubeux (2013) describes the development of university practitioner networks in Brazil since the mid-1990s including the Technological Incubators of Popular Co-operatives (TIPCs) and the Social Economic Incubators (SEI). The incubator concept is rooted in Latin American popular education and leadership programmes and offers technical support, space and access to equipment and financial brokerage to create, '*social technologies*, understood as products, or techniques and/or methodologies that are developed through incubation with residents, and which represent effective solutions for social transformation' (Dubeux, 2013, p.303; italics – author's original). The emphasis has shifted from narrow support for individual enterprises to broader, territorial development that locates the social economy in a more integrated regeneration framework, addressing ecological, social capital and assets as the basis of neighbourhood development and urban planning.

Da Costa (2017) shows how SEIs bring together a mix of disciplines, resources and skills to support Social Enterprise Ventures (SEVs) with a particular emphasis on creating employment, improving income in poor communities and providing basic local services. The principles of the SEI approach include:

- An emphasis on self-management and devolving authority to workers to organise, plan and innovate, in order to build organisational resilience and local accountability.
- A commitment to the design of social technologies that are defined by the community, tailored to their skills levels and which are culturally, as well as functionally, useful.
- A dialectic process in which the multidisciplinary teams of staff and students in economics, finance and technology skill-up community organisation but also draw on their practice as a basis of critical learning and service improvement.

The *pre-incubation* process involves an interactive process of problem identification, clarifying needs and basic training, especially to maintain the self-managed ethic underpinning the approach. This sets the context for the *incubation* phase, involving the preparation of a business plan, designing the technical aspects of the project, including financial projections, governance arrangements, legal structures and accounting systems. Support continues in the *post-incubation* phase to strengthen trust and operating processes, consolidate the project and especially, finances and enables the organisation to work independently. By 2017, there were 100 SEIs in 27 Brazilian cities, engaging around 700 academics and over 1,700 students and technical staff, and more than 20,000 SEVs servicing 1.5m people (Da Costa, 2017). Most incubators also organise politically to advocate, usually with local authorities, to better support the sector and campaign on a range of social, housing and environmental issues specific to each neighbourhood.

6 Conclusions

In some senses, descriptions of social enterprises in different urban contexts fall into the same essentialism that characterises the way in which the sector is often narrowly depicted. The point is not to celebrate isolated examples, but to show that alternative economic spaces exist, thrive, grow and fail. It also identifies the importance of the enabling environment, either created by the state or forced as concessions through effective advocacy. Preferential regulation, more flexible business models, cheap and available credit and capacity building are important leverage for social enterprises to replicate projects and maximise impact. Of course, they are put in place by states who often want to offload functions but there is little evidence that actors are not aware of the compromises they make in the real politic of alternative economics. Instead social enterprises and the entrepreneurs that lead them build functional and cognitive networks, draw resources (and criticism) and make mistakes, fail and learn along the way. It is the very material of resistive politics in which alternatives to narrow forms of urban growth involve the constant reworking of capitalist relations within the state and in particular, the market.

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