



Social Housing – A Key Component of Social Policies in Transformation: The Quebec Experience

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Abstract

This paper is a revised version of a presentation by Yves Vaillancourt to the Symposium on Affordable Housing Policy, organized by the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association in Ottawa on March 24, 2000. The paper reports a number of innovative practices in the social housing field in Quebec over the last ten years, using these as examples of new approaches in social housing policy and practices, notably those affecting vulnerable populations. The context of these new approaches is the reconfiguration of social policy occurring in Quebec and in Canada. The new practices highlight the importance of Quebec's social movements and third-sector actors in the development of effective solutions. The policies and practices discussed help situate social housing as an essential element of a cohesive and integrated social policy.

This paper has five main sections: an outline of some theoretical positions on social policies in transformation; the division of social housing policy in Quebec into developmental phases, comparing these to periods of intervention by the federal state; a review of social housing policies and programs now in effect in Quebec; an examination of new approaches and practices in the province; and a discussion of the major challenges now facing the field of social housing.

Introduction

I am not a specialist in social housing; I am, rather, a specialist in social policy for whom social housing is an essential element of any integrated social policy approach.¹ I am also a researcher who has had the good fortune of working, for a number of years, with other researchers and partners in the field of restructuring in social policy and practice.

My views on social housing are based principally on the knowledge and insights that we have developed at LAREPPS (*Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales*) on the potential role of actors from the third sector in transforming social policy, particularly in the area of human services [Vaillancourt and Favreau 2000]. I should add that many of the ideas set out here evolved from a fascinating team research project that we at LAREPPS conducted between 1996 and 1998. It was designed to evaluate the impact on the quality of life of the clientèle of programs that deliver social housing with community support; the programs were developed in the Montreal region by the *Fédération des OSBL en habitation de Montréal* (FOHM, Montreal Federation of Nonprofit Housing Organizations) [Drolet 1993; Jetté et al. 1998; Thériault et al. 1998, 2000a].

We can state briefly our argument as follows: Social housing policy is an essential and indispensable component of any coherent and integrated social policy. However, in the present-day context of globalization of the economy and crisis in employment and the welfare state, social policy – particularly social housing policy, which is in our view the most relevant – must be set apart from the policies of both neoliberalism, which favour leaving everything to market forces, and of traditional social democracy, which favour a centralist state maintaining control over everything. Our theoretical framework, for social housing as well as for other issues, relies heavily on scenarios of progressive transformation. While the state and public administration would retain major responsibilities for financing and regulation of services, this can be done in a different way by sharing some responsibilities in service provision with what some of us in Quebec and Europe call the 'third sector,' or the social economy² – advocacy groups, community groups, nonprofit organizations and co-operatives, among others [Vaillancourt et al. 2000].

We will attempt in this paper to identify some directions that would help redefine the policies and practices of social housing for the benefit of our most vulnerable citizens, at the same time as social policies are being reshaped in Quebec and the rest of Canada. We will describe solutions developed through innovative social housing practices in Quebec over the past decade.

The paper is divided into five main sections. The first sets out the theoretical components useful for analyzing social policies in transformation, which will serve as the conceptual framework for the entire text. Section II presents the history of Quebec's social housing policies, preceded by an historical overview of the federal government role in social housing throughout Canada. In Section III, we describe current social housing policies and programs in Quebec. Section IV looks more closely at selected social housing practices that we consider innovative. In Section V, we examine challenges that we consider crucial for the development of social housing.

I. Social Housing as Social Policy: Our Theoretical Framework

Our definition of social policy

When I started my career 30 years ago, the task of defining social policy did not seem a particularly daunting one; now I realize just how big a challenge it is! I had to face this challenge again during the winter of 2000, in discussing with my master's students a rich but difficult text by Esping-Andersen [1990 and 1999]. In the past decade, this Danish sociologist has become a central authority in the field of social policy in Europe, even though several authors refer to him only to point out the limitations of his contribution. We have used Esping-Andersen's work as a basis for developing the following definition:

Social policy consists of interventions by the state which contribute to the welfare and the citizenship rights of individuals, of local communities, even of regions, in a way that cannot be reduced to Esping-Andersen's definitions of "commodification" and the "shift to family" [1990: Chapter. 1; 1999: Chaps. 1, 2 and Epilogue].

Here, very briefly, are some elements of our definition:

- Some form of state and government intervention is involved in all social policies, but the state and the government are not the only bodies that can implement them.
- Social policy in the broadest sense of the term must contribute to people's welfare and citizenship rights, if we are to assume that a policy's stated purpose is the same as its real function, which is not always the case.
- Social policy must serve to redistribute income and reinforce active citizenship. Citizenship rights include a gamut of social rights as defined by Thomas Marshall [1950/1996; 1975]. Citizenship rights also imply inclusion, self-determination and the empowerment of people who are all too often seen as mere consumers of social policy [Roehrer Institute 1993].
- Social policy is an antidote to commodification; it is designed to regularize, correct and contain the deleterious effects of the market. Esping-Andersen, following Claus Offe [1984], defines social policy as state intervention designed to "decommodify" (as the English and French translations of Offe [1984] and Esping-Andersen [1990] sometimes put it). Put simply,

social policy tempers the effects of the market economy.

- Social policy consists of interventions intended to promote the welfare and citizenship rights not only of individuals but also of local communities and regions. One example is the revitalization of distressed local communities in urban or rural areas.
- Social policy allows us to counter not only ‘commodification,’ but also ‘familialization,’ which can be defined as the tendency to turn responsibility for managing social problems back onto the family (i.e., mainly women) [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1997: 57; Esping-Andersen 1999: 277-294].

The strength of our definition lies in its contention that social policy is concerned with both welfare and citizenship rights, matters of money and dignity, having and being, redistribution, and participation or empowerment. Social policy begins when the state intervenes to deliver a quality of life to individuals and local communities of which the laws of the marketplace would otherwise deprive them. It ceases when public decision-makers or state administrators, be they at the central, regional or local level, rely solely on the laws of the marketplace to solve social problems or revert responsibilities back to women within the family sphere.

It seems to us that this way of defining social policy can be of great assistance in any analysis of social housing policies. We shall try to apply this definition throughout the balance of the paper.

Different types of state intervention

‘State intervention’ refers not only to the federal or provincial state in Canada, but also to

public authorities at the municipal level. The state can intervene in at least three distinct ways: through *regulation*, through *financing* and through *delivery or provision* of activities and services. Differentiating these three spheres will help us define what we mean when we refer to the state’s withdrawal. Since the state may well continue to dominate one sphere while pulling out of another, it is important to be clear about the type of withdrawal that is referred to. Within our research at LAREPPS on the transformation in human services in the broad sense, we are particularly interested in the changing role of the state and of public organizations in the delivery of services.

State organizations should not be confused with public organizations

Analyses of social policy often use the notions of ‘state’ and ‘public’ interchangeably, with a consequent lack of distinction between state and public organizations. In our analysis, we believe that state organizations should not be confused with public ones, even though public organizations and practices are often imprinted with statism. We agree with some Latin-American specialists in the field of public administration [Bresser Peireira and Cunill Grau 1998; La Serna 2000] that, at the level of analysis and strategy, a distinction should be made between ‘state-public’ (*lo publico estatal*) and ‘non-state-public’ (*lo publico no estatal*). This distinction also should be applied when analyzing public institutions at the regional or local levels.

On the one hand, state-public organizations are like extensions or branch offices of the state apparatus, practising top-down management on behalf of the state which provides their funds. They have no form of independent democratic decision-making that includes sectoral or local civil society representation. Examples

include the federal Human Resource Centres (or regional Employment Insurance offices) and the former *Centres Travail-Québec* or the new local employment centres. These public organizations are state-like because they are directed by the central state and are not accountable to local communities.

On the other hand, non-state-public organizations, even though they receive most or all of their funding from the state, have their own democratic structures. They have boards which allow for the participation and contribution of people representing the local or regional community, particularly in the areas of planning, management and evaluation. The power flows both ways: from the top from where the funds come and from the bottom, from the local communities that participate democratically in these organizations. Among organizations of this type are Quebec's health and social services network created subsequent to the adoption of Bill 65 in the 1970s, and particularly since passage in the 1990s of Bill 120, which gives a greater voice to citizen and user representatives on boards. The new local development centres in Quebec and *Carrefours jeunesse-emploi* are other examples.

The distinction is valid even though the institutions and public organizations that operated in Quebec and Canada during the glory years of the welfare state often engaged in practices that were culturally similar to state-like and state-dependent public institutions, despite having a non-state-public legal structure. But new practices have emerged in the past decade in several areas of social policy, including social housing, that capitalize on the democratic potential inherent in non-state-public organizations. These new practices can be observed in some municipal housing offices that have, in the recent past, behaved more like traditional state-public organizations. We shall return to this subject in Section V where we discuss challenges.

The major sectors in the delivery of social housing services

In our LAREPPS research on the transformations occurring in the field of social policy, we often can distinguish several major sectors of actors (or organizations) that share responsibility for delivery of activities and services [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1997: 57; Vaillancourt et al. 2000; Jetté et al. 2000].

First is the for-profit private sector or the market. This is represented in the housing field by the owners of rental properties, rooming houses and apartment buildings, and by the lending institutions.

Second are the actors associated with the state and to public and parapublic institutions. Public institutions that play a role in social housing include the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ, the housing corporation of Quebec), municipal housing offices (MHOs, *Offices municipaux d'habitation*) and the *Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal* (SHDM, the housing and development corporation of Montreal).

Third are the actors from the 'third sector' or the social economy. For the purposes of analyzing social housing, we can identify four groups that have played an increasingly important role over the past 20 years. These are:

- advocacy groups, such as the many members of Quebec's housing rights organization FRAPRU (*Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain*)
- co-operatives and community or nonprofit organizations which represent a growing number of social housing units, or associated actors who provide services or com-

munity support to vulnerable residents in their own buildings

- technical resource groups that offer services such as setting up a nonprofit organization, helping residents form a co-operative, providing expert advice and skills
- families.

As we analyze the transformations in social policy, it is instructive to examine, in conjunction with the British literature on social housing, the interactions among the first three sectors outlined above: the market, the state and the third sector [Mullins 2000].³ We can see that cooperation often occurs among actors from more than one sector. For example, a municipal housing office may well decide to turn over part of its public housing units to third-sector organizations – co-operative or community – that offer services to people with particular health or welfare problems. This type of mixed delivery is often found in more innovative social housing practices, discussed below.

Housing is a major determinant of health and welfare

It is a well-known fact – although it does not receive enough attention – that housing is a determining factor, along with employment and education, of individual and family health and well-being [Quebec 1992: 159-160]. This fact has been confirmed again by a recent large British study. The longitudinal study, involving several groups of children, concludes that the absence of suitable housing is a highly significant variable in children's health, even after controlling for other social as well as genetic and behavioural indicators [Marsh, Gordon and Pantazis 1999].

Researchers in Canada have reached the same conclusions. Building on Veronica Doyle's work, Pomeroy states that "health and welfare are connected to the presence of support networks, opportunities to participate, controlling the elements that affect one's life and the ability to stay in a stable community. These elements are closely linked to the housing environment" [Pomeroy 1996b: 42]. In its final report, the National Forum on Health [1997] endorsed the conclusions of the best Canadian and international research on the importance of taking social and nonmedical factors into consideration when assessing the state of human health and well-being.

In Quebec, the province's policy on health and welfare (*Politique québécoise de santé et de bien-être*) adopted in 1992, acknowledges the importance of housing. The policy is cross-sectoral – i.e., it cuts across areas within the mandates of several different departments. It thus encourages area-based approach that alleviates the fragmentation of problems and of clientele. We have seen this approach in the experiments undertaken in Quebec by community economic development organizations in local development projects. As Favreau and Lévesque state: "This development strategy allows us to combine and integrate the following fields of action: employment, housing and urban planning, health and social services, reintegration of young offenders into society and professional training of local manpower" [1996: 67].

Definition of a social housing policy

The definition of a social housing policy starts with that used by the CMHC in its *Directory of Federal-Provincial Programs and Activities, 1992-1993*. This definition deals with pro-

grams rather than policy. But in light of the above discussion, we conclude that such programs can be deemed to form part of social policy if they involve some form of state intervention to counteract the negative effects of the market economy.

“Social housing programs are designed to assist households which cannot afford to acquire adequate and suitable housing at affordable prices on the private market. Social housing, which is an important component of the social safety net, includes programs specially adapted to various client groups such as seniors, handicapped persons, native people, victims of family violence, single-parent families and the working poor” [Government of Canada 1993: Section 26, 1].

Historically, two types of social housing program have been pursued by various levels of government. Either the state has invested in the supply of housing through the construction and renovation of affordable units, or it has supported demand through grants or tax breaks for low-income residents, allowing them access to rental accommodation or homeownership at affordable prices.

Some people maintain that there has been no supply problem in Canada for some time now, only a problem of ‘affordability’ – implying that less public money will be needed for construction and renovation of social housing units than in the past. Others respond that the supply is scandalously insufficient, since 800,000 households in Canada – 275,000 in Quebec – “use more than half their income for shelter, which forces them to cut down on essential expenses such as food, medicine and clothing” [Papineau 2000: 28]. Proof of a very real shortage of social housing is demonstrated by the waiting list of the Montreal municipal housing office (OMHM, *Office municipal d’habitation de Montréal*)

which includes 7,000 households, year after year [OMHM 2000: 1]. The same problem is reported throughout Canada.

It also can be strongly argued that housing problems are a function not only of demand but also of supply. The vacancy rate is very low at present, there is a clear need for social housing with community support, public authorities must intervene in the revitalization of distressed neighbourhoods, because the market cannot; and the development of social housing can help lower the costs of housing in general.

Social housing as an alternative to institutionalization and hospitalization

During the period of the welfare state’s strongest expansion – 1945 to 1975 for the federal government and 1960 to 1980 for Quebec⁴ – health and social service approaches tended strongly toward hospitalization, institutionalization, shelters and placement. At that time, social housing was targeted solely to low-income families and individuals.

For people with health or welfare problems, the immediate solution was not seen as social housing or support within their own living environment, but rather it was seen primarily as supervised housing, hospitalization and institutional placement – i.e., services provided to people outside of their normal arrangements, encouraging passivity and dependence. Throughout the rise of the welfare state, health and welfare systems were dominated by what we can term “hospitalocentrism.” In that context, it was easy to ignore the important role that social housing and home care services could play in promoting better health and quality of life for the socially vulnerable [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1999].

For some time now, however, in all the countries that acknowledge both crisis and transformation in the working of the welfare state, deinstitutionalization and community care⁵ are examples of new ways to understand and respond to problems. These new approaches have one thing in common: the goal of social integration of people with various kinds of disabilities. These approaches see vulnerable people as human beings who, contrary to widely held misconceptions, are capable of living at home in decency and dignity instead of being segregated in institutions. This endorsement of the principles of the Independent Living Movement [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1997: Chap. 4; Roeher Institute 1993; Morris 1993] calls for the development of new social housing policies that include community support. Indeed, the policies of deinstitutionalization and noninstitutionalization have had a substantial impact on the demand for this type of social housing. A growing number of initiatives in the housing field are bringing public authorities, researchers and social activists to rediscover the importance of housing as a strategic factor in social policy, especially for people who are excluded or marginalized. In Quebec, as in other provinces, some original and highly effective experiments have been carried out over the past ten years. We shall look at some of these in Section IV.

The importance of including social housing in an integrated social policy approach

In the United Kingdom, social housing assumes a central position in the social policy literature, and a chapter on the issue is almost always included in British publications on social policy, community care and the mixed welfare system [Means and Smith 1998; George and Miller 1994; Morris 1993; Cowen 1999]. This is not an indication that social housing in Britain is perfectly integrated into the prevailing social

policy system. On the contrary, several authors are critical of a tendency among decision-makers and managers to treat social housing as a badly integrated fragment of social policy, especially in the area of community care for persons with disabilities of all kinds [Cowen 1999].

The situation in Quebec and Canada contrasts with that of Britain. People concerned with social housing, whether at the level of action or of research, are often not the same as those involved in social policy generally. Social housing is often ignored in Canadian and Quebec work on social policy. Even the famous Marsh report, published in 1943, which called for an integrated social policy approach contained no chapter on social housing [Marsh 1975]. Perhaps we should look at what happened in the field of social activism at the end of the 1960s in Quebec, when citizens' committees and social groups such as the *Conseil des oeuvres de Montréal* recommended an integrated approach. For a long time, Quebec forgot about this precious legacy. Organizations like FRAPRU and FOHM now seem to want to revive it and build on it, by trying to integrate their social housing demands into proposals for an improved social policy [FRAPRU 1999a, 1999b]. The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's symposium on affordable housing policy that took place on March 24, 2000, and for which this paper originally was written, has presented us with an opportunity to examine the integration of social housing into a larger social policy perspective.

In short, social housing has become the 'poor cousin' of social policy. In the past, the fields of institutionalization and social housing too often have been treated as separate and compartmentalized, "although many areas of interface could have been identified and bridges built between the two fields" [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1997: 192-193]. This is particularly true in the case of mental health, where the processes of

deinstitutionalization and non-institutionalization that began in the 1960s have given rise to all kinds of residential solutions. These alternatives to hospitalization include group homes, supervised apartments, day centres and regular out-patient follow-up. But little has been accomplished so far in the development of appropriate forms of social housing. Some authors believe that “deinstitutionalization has had a considerable impact on the demand for adaptive housing, but the necessary human and material resources have not been transferred to social housing” [Carter et al., cited in Séguin 1994: 76].

In conclusion, researchers have seen a greater willingness over the past few years to integrate housing with other areas of social intervention [Pomeroy 1996a, 1996b; Dorvil et al. 1997; Dorvil and Benoît 1999; Jetté et al. 1998; Thériault et al. 1998, 2000a]. This cross-sectoral approach also has been taken up in a number of government documents. For example, it can be found, although too tentatively expressed, in the Quebec government’s policy on health and welfare [Quebec 1992] as well as in health and social services departmental and regional agency documents concerning mental health, and intellectual and physical disabilities. The integrative approach also can be found in some recent documents from parapublic organizations dedicated to social housing, particularly from the housing corporation of Quebec [1997a] and from the municipal housing agencies of some Quebec cities. However, despite the welcome advances made by ‘horizontality’ into the vocabulary of some researchers, practitioners and managers and even of some political decision-makers, the integrated approach has a long way to go in practice, particularly when it comes to answering the question, who pays for what?

Three scenarios for social housing policy

Our research at LAREPPS shows that the crisis of the welfare state presents a set of opportunities as well as a set of problems. The crisis and transformation of the welfare state need not inevitably lead to the worst-case scenario – the neoliberal one. We believe that the challenge for progressives is to develop a new model for social housing policy, one that differs from both the marketplace model of today’s neoliberals and the state-provider model of yesterday’s reformers, to which some progressives are still strongly committed [Lipietz 1989; Noël 1996; Vaillancourt and Laville 1998; Vaillancourt and Favreau 2000].

In short, there are three conflicting rationales for interpreting current social housing policy and planning future policy: (1) the *neoliberal rationale* (2) the *state-progressive rationale* of the post-World War II era and (3) an *alternative progressive concept of interdependence*, which posits a new partnership between state intervention and civil society actors. The long-term view that interests us and that shapes our conclusions leans toward the third option.

These theoretical distinctions will help us during the discussion that follows to suggest a re-examination of the history of social housing policy in Quebec within the Canadian context, and to present a portrait and assessment of the current situation. Our definition of social policy, which emphasizes citizenship rights and the redistribution of income and access to services, serves especially well to highlight the creativity and central importance of those transformations in social housing policy that lead to the empowerment of those whom it serves.

II. The History of Social Housing in Canada and Quebec

This section examines the major stages of social housing policy in Quebec by comparing them with the major stages in the history of the welfare state – its beginning, crisis and subsequent transformation. We can arrive at a clear understanding of the Quebec case only by setting it against the actions of the federal state. While federal government initiatives in the field of social housing since the end of World War II have structured social housing policy throughout Canada, their impact has not been the same in all regions of Canada; this is particularly true for Quebec [Vaillancourt 1988]. In the two sections that follow, we trace the actions of the federal state and then those of Quebec.

Federal intervention in social housing in Canada

Briefly, the federal government's role in social housing can be divided into three distinct periods. The first coincides with the development of the welfare state in Canada, and the second and third with its crisis and transformation.

The first period (1950-1975): The development of public housing during the rise of the welfare state

With the end of World War II, the federal government engaged in a Keynesian economic strategy. Decision-makers were in agreement that housing as a development tool could stimulate the market (supply) and satisfy demand exacerbated by the war, especially among veterans and the many households which had left the countryside to work in the cities.

The federal government adopted new social policies to support economic activity, par-

ticularly in social housing, seeking to stimulate supply by using the CMHC, which was created in 1946, to build new public housing. A stock of public housing was developed during this period under the CMHC's leadership. The first projects were built in 1949. Progress was slow at first, with 11,624 units completed between 1949 and 1963. However, the pace picked up considerably, with 164,000 public housing units built in Canada between 1964 and 1978 [Morin, Dansereau and Nadeau 1990: 13-14].

The federal government's focus on building new public housing projects started to decline in the 1970s for two reasons. First, decision-makers and public authorities saw the public housing solution as too costly; indeed, public housing subsidies cut into money for new development. Second, by the beginning of the 1970s, the administration of public housing became subject to growing criticism by tenants and advocacy groups. Management was seen as bureaucratic and often anti-tenant; users felt stigmatized; they were treated not as citizens with rights, but rather as clients living off the grace and favour of the state; and the mere fact of living in public housing created a condition of social marginalization. This exclusion provoked criticism from citizens who wished to "take control of their lives and be responsible for their own housing" [Dansereau et al. 1998: 17], an attitude which in Quebec is articulated by popular organizations involved with housing [Pelletier-Baillargeon 1972]. Across Canada, the issue has been taken up by the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHFC).

It was in this context that the federal government began in 1973 to reorient its policies toward encouraging more co-operative and nonprofit housing, instead of public housing units. The National Housing Act (NHA) was amended accordingly to extend housing grants to different types of housing and to more income

levels [Morin, Dansereau and Nadeau 1990: 12 and 80].

The second period (1975-1990): Demise of the public model and the rise of third-sector initiatives

The 1973 NHA amendments allowed much heavier reliance on the co-operative and nonprofit administration of social housing. In 1979, the federal government again amended the law, giving co-operatives and nonprofits greatly increased access to financing. Federal programs for financing co-operatives were widely used (particularly in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia), with 34,000 co-op units allocated in 900 projects between 1979 and 1985 [Selby and Wilson 1989: 10]. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada reports that the high point for co-ops and nonprofits came between 1979 and 1987, peaking in 1985. At the end of the 1980s, “housing units built by co-operatives and nonprofit organizations represented 80 percent of all new social housing” [Morin, Dansereau and Nadeau 1990: 14].

The third period (1990-2000): The federal government withdraws but reserves its right to intervene in specific and well-targeted instances

After several years, the 1979 formula for financing co-op and nonprofit housing units also became costly. Among other factors, rising costs were due to skyrocketing interest rates, which reached levels as high as 20 percent. The “Section 95” (formerly Section 56.1) program ended in 1985 and was replaced by two new programs. The Mortgage Indexation Program encouraged the development of nonprofit social housing, targeted toward low-income households [Selby and Wilson 1989: 10]. The second program encouraged access to the co-operative model for

clients “who can afford to pay.” This change has had the effect of polarizing middle-class and low-income people within co-ops and nonprofits.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) budgets for social housing development started to drop dramatically at the end of the 1980s, until they disappeared in 1993. In 1994, the federal government announced its intention to transfer administrative responsibility to the provinces. By the spring of 2000, six of the ten provinces and two territories had signed agreements to that effect with the federal government. Quebec, Alberta, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia did not sign.

During the 1990s, municipalities were pushed, often with very limited resources, to find ways to look after clientele which were becoming increasingly vulnerable [Hulchanski et al. 1990; SHDM 1999].

Paradoxically, at the end of the 1990s as the CMHC pulled out, the federal government committed itself to a new program for the homeless; this was announced in December 1999, although the rules for distributing funds to the provinces and territories were not clearly defined [Saillant 2000]. It is obviously a highly targeted program which entails reactivation of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) administered by the CMHC. Some \$753 million is to be invested over three years to support community initiatives, assistance for renovation and help for shelters. Quebec seems interested in securing those funds to which it is entitled, although it intends both to contribute its own share and to control the administration of the program within the province.

Table 1 shows the stock of social housing developed in Canada between 1950 and 1997, providing an overview of the legacy of federal social housing policy.

Three major periods in the history of social housing in Quebec

The history of social housing policy in Quebec, as in other regions of Canada, has of course been, and still is, influenced by the interventions of the federal government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation – or indeed by their failure to intervene. But Quebec’s social housing policies have a special character, one that is perhaps due to the particular nature of social movements and the role of the provincial government in the history of social policy. This uniqueness can be seen in the years following World War II before a social housing policy was introduced, and it can still be seen now.

The first period (1945-1968): Contribution from an often forgotten associative movement

Quebec did not keep pace with the development of social housing policy in Canada during the 20 years following World War II, and

used the public housing format favoured by the federal government and CMHC less frequently than other provinces. Even so, there were important developments in social housing in the province; advances were being made by community organizations in the social housing field that merit closer examination by researchers.

We are referring to the initiatives and struggles by Catholic action groups that tackled the housing problem year after year in the post-war period. Consciousness-raising and training activities were carried on by at least two Catholic action movements, the *Ligue ouvrière catholique* (Catholic Workers’ League) and the *Jeunesse ouvrière catholique* (Catholic Youth Workers); both groups had a significant following among Quebec’s lower classes. Long before their time, they practised what could be termed an integrated approach to social policy, in which housing has a central place. They called for the construction and renovation of housing units that met the needs of working people. Their efforts led by example, even though the Duplessis government’s reply was negligible in terms of

Table 1
The stock of social housing units in Canada in 1997

Public housing	205,300
Rent supplement	46,950
Nonprofit housing	167,100
Private rental housing	84,900
Co-operative housing	51,300
Housing on reserves	19,000
Housing for urban Native peoples	10,700
Housing for rural and Native peoples	22,700
Federal housing co-operatives	14,500
Total	623,350

Source: CMHC [1998]. *Annual Report, 1997*: 14.

social policy [Clément 1972; Colin 1996]. *Habitations Jeanne-Mance*, with 788 units and 1,633 tenants in the heart of downtown Montreal, is evidence of the advances made in social housing at the time. These units celebrated their 40th anniversary in 1999. Normand Daoust, executive director of the Montreal Municipal Housing Organization, said: “Jeanne-Mance was the forerunner of a network that would spread to 650 municipalities. In assembling this project, the City of Montreal demonstrated its intention of giving those individuals and families who are the most fragile members of the Montreal population access to a decent quality of life” [*La Corporation d’habitations Jeanne-Mance* 2000: 1-3].

The second period (1968-1980): The rise of public housing during the ascendancy of welfare state policies

While the struggle for social housing in Quebec began at the end of the 1940s, and the provincial government and some municipalities began developing policies in the field starting in the late 1950s, it would be a long time before a significant increase was seen in public housing development in the province. Although CMHC federal programs were available in Quebec as in all provinces from the late 1940s, any priority given to public housing came later in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada. Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, which started in the early 1960s, sparked tremendous reforms in the fields of education, health and welfare. But other fields – housing among them – had to wait longer. The turning point seems to have been 1968, the year when the *Société d’habitation du Québec* was created.

Since then, Quebec has had a welfare state public policy in social housing (see Table 2). A great deal of public housing was built – i.e., units of social housing under public owner-

ship, management and distribution as well as finance and regulation. That was the model of public intervention under Quebec’s Quiet Revolution and the Castonguay reforms in health and social services; the interventionist state and its network of public institutions (CMHC, SHQ, MHOs) play the role of entrepreneur in a hierarchical structure. Third-sector actors are present, but the state and bureaucrats have difficulty recognizing them and accepting their involvement [Bourque 2000; Lévesque, Bourque and Vaillancourt 1999].

In comparison to the public housing stock in other large Canadian urban centres, the stock in Quebec cities consists of more buildings but with fewer units in each project. Quebec’s late entry into public housing construction may be the reason why, several years later, the number of units in Quebec remains lower than the Canadian average. This late adoption of the public housing model also may have led to a more rapid perception of its bureaucratic shortcomings, and consequently to its closer integration into the traditional urban fabric.

The third period (1980-2000): As the welfare state moves into crisis and transformation, the presence of the third sector grows

Just as Quebec entered the welfare state era later than some other Canadian provinces, its experience of the crisis of the welfare state also came later, at the beginning of the 1980s rather than as early as 1976. In social housing, the crisis led to a reconsideration of the efficacy of public housing, and the discovery of the innovative contributions that could be made by co-operatives and nonprofit organizations. At the same time, in the fields of social services and health, a policy of deinstitutionalization was being introduced for non-independent people and those with disabilities of various kinds.

The increase in federal government interest in the contributions of co-operatives and nonprofit organizations in social housing started in 1973. In Quebec, the adoption of the LOGIPOP program, financed partly by federal subsidies, contributed to the strong growth of nonprofit and co-operative housing from 1977 to 1985. LOGIPOP complements the federal program for financing co-op and nonprofit housing projects. It encourages the creation of technical resource groups and provides start-up grants. Quebec co-operatives developed in a unique way between 1977 and 1985. While the other provinces emphasized new construction, most social housing in Quebec developed through purchase-renovation and the recycling of existing buildings [Quebec 1984: 33]. Co-operative projects developed all the more rapidly because community housing societies were set up by some regional federations of the Desjardins movement,⁶ while at the same time regional federations of housing co-operatives came into being [Quebec 1984].

A turning point for the administration of social housing programs in Quebec came in 1986, when the *Société d'habitation du Québec* signed an agreement with the CMHC that made Quebec the sole provider of social housing throughout the province (apart from on Indian reserves). Quebec thus took over several combined programs and private nonprofits, rent supplements, and the Canada-Quebec Rehabilitation Assistance Program (PARCQ). The creation of the private nonprofit *Programme sans but lucratif privé* (PSBLP) coincided almost exactly with the SHQ's first direct initiatives to help the homeless.

The federal government's gradual withdrawal that started in the late 1980s dealt a blow to social housing policy in Quebec as well as the

rest of Canada. At first, there were no Quebec government initiatives to offset the federal move, but Quebec started to react by setting up its own programs and budgets. Although this growth in Quebec's commitment can be seen as limited when compared with the extent of need, it does show a definite intention on the part of the Quebec government to acknowledge the importance of social housing policy, both politically and financially. This acknowledgement was made in the midst of severe budget constraints. Initiatives undertaken in some cities and by some municipal housing organizations helped to partially fill this vacuum; since the end of the 1980s, for example, the City of Montreal has granted loans, land and buildings to community organizations [Morin, Dansereau and Nadeau 1990: 89].

The focus during this later period has been less on the crisis of the welfare state and its policies, and more on the transformations in practice and policy, as discussed below. The transformations that we are now seeing involve experimenting with new relationships between third-sector actors and public institutions badly in need of renewal; far from behaving like two solitudes, the two have come together and worked in harmony.

To conclude this section we refer to Table 2, which shows the development of public housing in Quebec over the past 30 years. Throughout the 1970s, the annual increase in the number of new public housing units was quite significant, even exceeding 4,000 units at the beginning and end of the 1970s. The turning point came in 1980, when the number of new units started to fall. The number fell below 3,000 in 1980 and 1981, below 2,500 in 1982, below 2,000 in the first half of the 1990s and below 1,000 in the second half of the decade, almost disappearing in 1995.

III. A Profile of Quebec's Social Housing Policies at the End of the 1990s

This section examines more closely the state of social housing in Quebec at the end of the 1990s, focussing on the quantity and type of social housing units and on government programs. Section IV will complete the study by examining innovative practices.

A variety of social housing types

Table 3 presents an overview of the number and categories of social housing units that have been added to the stock in the past 30 years. We are, of course, aware that SHQ figures may differ from those of other sources,⁷ but these potential variations do not have a significant effect on the issues at hand.

Quebec has some 124,000 units of social housing, representing about 4.4 percent of all housing units in the province. This stock represents less than 20 percent of all social housing in Canada (see Table 1), although Quebec has 24 percent of Canada's population. But let us look more closely at the distribution of social housing in the province.

As in other provinces, Quebec's current social housing policy is based primarily on support for units that are publicly owned, with support also going to co-operatives and nonprofit organizations.

If we compare the data in Table 3 with the data in Table 1 presenting national figures on social housing units, we see that Quebec has 31.4 percent of all public housing (64,500 units out of a national total of 205,300) and 19.9 percent of all social housing (124,000 units out of 623,350).⁸ We shall comment further on this in

Section V, when we discuss challenges. In this section, we focus on the specifics of public housing units compared to those run by the third sector.

Table 2
The development of public housing units in Quebec, 1969 to 1998

Year	New units	Cumulative total
1969	747	747
1970	4,387	5,134
1971	1,913	7,088
1972	2,532	9,620
1973	3,304	12,924
1974	3,122	16,046
1975	n/a	n/a
1976	n/a	n/a
1977	2,351	21,273
1978	4,202	25,144
1979	5,034	29,886
1980	2,933	35,435
1981	2,975	39,081
1982	2,086	42,600
1983	1,353	44,633
1984	1,792	46,190
1985	2,378	48,305
1986	1,564	50,843
1987	1,262	52,275
1988	1,619	54,442
1989	1,116	55,863
1990	2,352	57,232
1991	1,740	59,117
1992	1,272	60,389
1993	784	61,500
1994	1,168	62,550
1995	315	62,848
1996	(20)	62,828
1997	50	62,906
1998	(4)	62,902

Table 3
The number and type of social housing units in Quebec, 1997

Type of social housing	Number of units
Public housing (reported from 650 MHOs and 14 Inuit villages)	64,500
Co-operatives and nonprofit organizations	47,000
Rent supplement	12,500
TOTAL	124,000

Sources: SHQ [1997a]. *L'action gouvernementale en habitation. Orientations et plan d'action*: 31; and CMHC [1998]. *Annual Report, 1997*.

Public housing: Social housing units run by the public sector

Quebec has approximately 64,500 public housing units. These publicly owned dwellings are administered by 650 municipal housing organizations which are also public institutions. This means that almost half of the province's 1,400 municipalities administer public housing. Of these, 272 municipal housing organizations (MHOs) offer housing for families. At present, 85,000 households live in public housing. The SHQ finances the MHOs by covering their operating deficits – the difference between operating costs of the buildings and income from rents – through grants. These are financed on average as follows: 56 percent contributed by the federal government, 34 percent by the Quebec government and 10 percent by the municipality. According to the 1998 budget forecast, the annual operating deficit for dwellings administered by the MHOs is \$229.2 million, and the average monthly public subsidy per unit required to cover the deficit is \$313 [SHQ 1998: 19].

The City of Montreal has the largest MHO, which administers 20,000 units of public housing out of a total social housing stock of 40,000 units; 13,000 units are run by co-operatives and nonprofit organizations, and 5,000 are

other types of social housing run by the *Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal* [OMHM 1998: 1].⁹

The MHOs in other central cities (such as Verdun, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, Hull, Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi, Valleyfield) obviously administer public housing portfolios, while smaller municipalities may administer only a few units. A total of 30,000 people live in public housing in Montreal [Daoust 1997]. Each year, 15,000 people apply to the Montreal MHO for a housing unit; of these, 7,000 are deemed to be eligible and are added to the waiting list, where they may remain for several years [Daoust 1997; OMHM 2000].

Co-operatives and nonprofits: Social housing units run by the third sector

Some 49,000 co-operative and nonprofit housing units have been created in Quebec since the 1960s. Approximately 37,000 of the total were developed within the framework of federal programs (especially under Sections 55 and 56 of the National Housing Act); of these, some 24,500 units were created under the program known as 56.1. Some 12,000 co-op and nonprofit

units were created under joint federal-provincial programs or exclusively Quebec programs such as LOGIPOP, *AccèsLogis*, PSBLP (nonprofit) and *Achat-rénovation* (purchase-renovation).

In Quebec, assistance to housing co-operatives and nonprofits has mainly taken the form of start-up grants, capital subsidies and grants to cover operating deficits for up to 35 years [SHQ, 1992: 32]. After 1995, as the federal government withdrew from new projects, the Quebec government undertook some new ventures in the social housing field. Between 1995 and 1997, the provincial government first set up the short-lived nonprofit program (PSBLP), which produced only a few hundred new units of social housing. October 1997 saw the creation of the *AccèsLogis* program, which is still in effect. Under this program, 6,000 units are planned between 1997 and 2002, to be operated by co-operatives or nonprofit organizations, and supported by provincial financing of around \$215 million over five years. Almost half the rental households will be eligible for rent-geared-to-income supplementation under which they pay rent equivalent to 25 percent of their income.

Joint participation of the public sector and the third sector

Since the end of the 1980s, the third sector's role has involved not only creating new social housing units but also taking over public housing for people who live on the margins of society. In these new joint ventures, third-sector organizations sign contracts with MHOs under which they assume the administration of the housing and responsibility for developing community support services to fit the needs of their clientele. As the residents of public housing get older and more fragile, the need for these arrangements will increase.

Rent subsidy programs

Public support for social housing is not limited to the development and administration of housing units run by the public sector and the third sector. It also can take the form of programs to give low-income households access to rental housing (or even ownership) through subsidies such as rent supplements and shelter allowances, or tax breaks. According to *Société d'habitation du Québec* figures, shelter allowance programs for seniors (LOGIRENTE) and for people on welfare (*Allocation-logement MSR*) reach 145,500 households, whereas tax breaks reach 732,000 households [SHQ 1997a: 4]. Most of these programs are financed jointly by the federal government (through CMHC), the provincial government (through the SHQ and MHOs) and municipalities.

Rent supplement program

The rent supplement program was set up in 1978 under an agreement between CMHC and the provinces, and was then incorporated into the 1986 Canada-Quebec Agreement on social housing. Financing is split in varying proportions between the federal government, the Quebec government and the municipalities (which deal with the private rental market). Under the program, low-income households and individuals can live in private rental dwellings or in co-ops and nonprofits, paying the same rent as they would in public housing – i.e., not exceeding 25 percent of their income. By December 31, 1998, some 12,520 units were administered by either co-operatives and nonprofit organizations or by MHOs [SHQ 1998].

Shelter allowance program

The shelter allowance program began in 1997. Financed entirely by the government of

Quebec, it provides a monthly allowance to low-income tenants, roomers or owners who spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Those eligible include single persons aged 55 or over, low-income couples of whom at least one is over 55, families with at least one dependent child, employed people and welfare recipients. As of September 30, 1998, 155,414 households were receiving some form of shelter allowance. The average monthly grant is \$55.

At this point, after our brief review of the history and current social housing programs in Quebec, it is useful to take a closer look at some innovative practices that have emerged over the past decade.

IV. Innovative Social Housing Practices

Federal government initiatives in Quebec, as in other parts of Canada, have the effect of limiting what is possible in provincial policy. This is due both to the size of federal financial contributions and the imposition of national conditions and standards in federal programs, whether they are financed jointly or not. Even so, the constraining effects of federal programs have not stopped the provinces and territories from developing social housing policies and practices that respond to their particular local needs. Innovative practices in the social housing field have expanded greatly during the past decade in Quebec. These do not always involve large sums of money, but they frequently call for new approaches to finding sustainable ways to enhance the quality of life of their recipients. These approaches often result from a combination of demands made by social movements and responses given by public decision-makers [Vaillancourt and Favreau 2000]. This can involve input from new third-sector actors and a rethinking of administrative practice on the part

of public organizations. Such new practices fit well into the definition of social policy that we offered in the first section – state action that leads to both a redistribution of income and support for active citizenship.

The crisis of the welfare state has exposed the limits of the social security system set up during “*les trente glorieuses*” – the 30 years that witnessed the development of the welfare state in Quebec – and has forced public and third-sector organizations to find new formulas, especially to respond to the health and social needs of society’s most vulnerable members. In the housing field, 3,200 community organizations offer accommodation, while close to 200 others are dedicated exclusively to housing [*Fonds québécois d’habitation communautaire* 1999: 5]. Innovative practices in social housing that rely on a new kind of partnership between public institutions and third-sector associations, co-operatives and community organizations must be taken seriously. Such partnerships come in a wide variety of forms. They may be active on the political front, such as the *Fonds québécois d’habitation communautaire* (the Quebec community housing fund) or at the organizational level. They require alliances between different sectors such as health, employment, education, public security or housing, and they need a new culture of public administration – one that is open to decentralization and to democratization.

In its 1997 Action Plan on housing, the *Société d’habitation du Québec* welcomed input from community organizations and announced its intention of intensifying collaboration with such bodies [SHQ 1997a: 2]. The examples that follow describe some innovative practices, all of which entail some form of alliance between the third sector and the public sector, at the level either of the state or the municipality.

Innovative practices requiring public and third-sector partnership

At this point, we need to put forward some concrete examples of what we call innovative practices in social housing. While these practices are not always entirely innovative, they represent efforts over the past decade to make better use of input from third-sector actors and also to question the traditional, often self-sufficient culture of public organizations.

A close examination of the record of community action in Montreal's public housing [OMHM 1997] reveals that many community organizations and co-operatives have been working with the Montreal MHO for some years, offering support and personal attention to tenants who are particularly vulnerable, as well as services to other residents. Such practices, calling on the resources of co-operatives and nonprofit organizations, are intended for semi-independent seniors, people with mental disabilities or psychiatric problems, victims of domestic violence, or those who have been in trouble with the law, among others. In Montreal, public housing units are made available rent-free to community organizations. Among the projects emerging from these new forms of cooperation between the public and third sectors are eight group homes for young people, the same number of mental health day centres, collective kitchens and home care services for seniors.

In the first year of its creation in 1987, the FOHM (Federation of Montreal Nonprofit Housing Organizations) was contracted by the Montreal MHO to manage nonprofit rooming houses. The organization now administers 192 social housing locations with community support on behalf of the Montreal municipal housing organization and five nonprofit organizations "which represent delivery of services to nearly 2,000 housing units in Montreal" [Jetté et

al. 1998: 22]. The community support takes the form of on-site janitor/supervisors and follow-up visits by community service workers (intervenants); it is provided for individuals who have problems of vagrancy, substance abuse or mental health, or are HIV-positive.

In 1996-1998, the *Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales* (LAREPPS), in association with the SHQ, the Plateau Mont-Royal CLSC (local health and social services centre) and the Federation of Montreal Nonprofit Housing Organizations undertook an evaluation of the impact of this form of community support on the residents' quality of life. We observed that tenants experienced significant changes in their physical environment (e.g., accommodation, neighbourhood, services), social relations (e.g., friends, family, the general population) and self-esteem (e.g., confidence, self-image). We also saw an increase in tenant satisfaction with their security within their homes.

Overall, we found that social housing with community support allows single low-income people to have a decent home, make their own decisions and assume normal tenant responsibilities, while at the same time receiving flexible and individualized support services [Jetté et al. 1998; Thériault et al. 1998, 2000a]. As we stated in our final report, social housing with community support represents "a viable alternative to institutionalization in a context of the redefinition of the welfare state, provided that the people who are marginalized receive the support they need in order to be integrated into society. This entails not only the adoption of a more cross-sectoral approach, but also a reorientation of financial and human resources from the curative toward the preventive" [Jetté et al. 1998: 187].

The Federation of Montreal Nonprofit Housing Organizations is not the only community organization during the past decade to have worked on social housing practices with community support in Montreal or other municipalities' public housing. Of the 20,000 public housing units run by the Montreal municipal housing organization, some 600 are administered by nonprofit organizations and co-operatives, including 200 by the Federation of Montreal Nonprofit Housing Organizations.¹⁰

Community support provided by nonprofit organizations and co-operatives under contract to municipal housing organizations can be found not only in the Montreal region, but also in several other large cities in Quebec. In Quebec City, for example, the municipal housing organization has concluded a follow-up agreement on behalf of some of its tenants with *l'Archipel de l'entraide*, an agency which helps the homeless. In Trois-Rivières, the municipal housing organization reserves six of its units for clients of the *Havre de Trois-Rivières*, an organization serving people with mental health problems, in exchange for regular community follow-up.

In the Outaouais region, *Logemen'occupe* works in association with the nonprofit housing organization *Mon Chez Nous*. For some years, this community organization has been developing social housing projects with community support inspired by the innovations introduced by the FOHM in the Montreal region. In the spring of 2000, *Logemen'occupe* and *Les Oeuvres du père Isidore Ostiguy*, working closely with the *Société d'habitation du Québec*, set up a \$1.1 million project for 13 social housing units with community support for homeless families or those at risk of being homeless [Roy and Ouimet 2000]. To quote François Roy, one of the social workers involved in the project:

“This project within the social economy involves constructing a new building in Hull for community purposes, with 13 units rented at low prices and offices for providing community support to the residents. The building will also be a unique meeting place of expertise, offering a gamut of specialized services for all low- or moderate-income tenants who live in the Outaouais urban community” [Roy 2000].

But in order for a social housing project with community support to operate and become financially viable, the developers must find financing from some regional entity that agrees to contribute to the costs involved in the community support aspect; this represents some 10 percent of the overall financing. The *Régie régionale de la santé et des services sociaux* (regional health and social services agency) and other organizations have been approached. The project has received support in principle, but so far there has been no financial commitment, an indication of the difficulty of providing the cross-sectoral service that is needed for this form of social housing [Roy 2000; Roy and Ouimet 2000].

The nonprofit organizations that have acquired expertise in social housing, with or without community support, have over the past few years strongly felt the need to join forces in order to work together and promote their cause throughout Quebec.¹¹ The nonprofit housing organizations from several Quebec regions are working to set up a body that will represent them throughout the province, with the purpose of achieving more recognition from public sector decision-makers, more regular financial support, more committed partnerships and better social policies. An important step was taken on September 21, 2000, with the founding meeting of the new Quebec nonprofit housing network

[Goyer and Laramée 2000; *Réseau québécois des OSBL d'habitation*, 2000].

In recent years, the public actors connected with municipal housing organizations and the *Société d'habitation du Québec* have been more active in improving their practices and in developing ways of working with third-sector organizations that respect their autonomy and avoid treating the latter as mere branch offices of the public sector. This cooperation has led to public sector research and experimentation with new ways of supporting and working with the third sector. In 1999, the *Société d'habitation du Québec* approved a \$175,000 budget to support some community projects set up by public housing tenants' committees. Although modest to the point of tokenism, this source of financing indicates a new orientation that is already well entrenched in some public institutions working in the housing field.

On a different but related note, municipal housing organizations have been encouraged for some years to become more democratic by including representatives of tenants' associations on their boards. Since 1998, MHO boards must have at least two members from public housing tenants' associations [FLHLMQ 1998, 1999a, 1999b]. This representation will allow the management of public housing to become more open and relations with tenants to become less bureaucratic. Tenants have long wanted to be treated as full-fledged citizens rather than as clients in passive receipt of public housing.

A written record of these innovative practices and others like them has started to appear [Ducharme 1999a, 1999b, 1999c; Jetté et al. 1998; Ducharme, Dorvil and Brière 2000]. They must be studied in greater depth so that we can obtain more of the information which is essential to thinking about and planning the future of social housing policy.

Community outreach by the Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal (SHDM)

The *Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal* (SHDM) is a paramunicipal nonprofit corporation, created by the City of Montreal in 1988, to purchase and renovate residential dwellings. Its mission is to manage its housing stock in a way that improves tenants' quality of life, especially for those who have low incomes, difficulties with social integration or special needs. SHDM welcomes community groups by allowing them to use space in its buildings and to organize activities that promote social interaction, such as community kitchens and preschool supervision.

The organization encourages community nonprofit groups or housing co-operatives to take over the administration of some buildings. SHDM has now acquired and renovated some 3,500 units, and has transferred the administration of most of them. Market rents are charged, but are affordable even for tenants with modest incomes. Some tenants have their rent reduced according to their income and others are eligible for subsidies [SHDM 1999, 2000; Lebel 2000]. One of SHDM's projects is often cited as a success story. It consists of 200 studio apartments in two buildings on Papineau Street in the Villeray district. These were acquired and renovated in 1993 and the administration was turned over to the *Société d'habitation populaire de l'Est de Montréal* (SHAPEM). According to Marcel Lebel, SHDM program director:

“There were serious problems with criminal behaviour in these buildings, due largely to poor administration. ... Intervention by SHDM and local community groups brought radical change to the tenants' lives, especially at 6869 Papineau, where five community organizations reserved units for their clients, providing

the necessary support services. Hands-on administration through the janitors and the *Centre communautaire d'entraide et de dépannage* fosters interaction between residents. The Centre offers subsidized lunch every day. This kind of structured support is very beneficial for both the tenants and the surrounding neighbourhood" [Lebel 2000: 2].

Francine Dansereau and her colleagues have stressed the key role played by nonprofit organizations in SHDM's social housing: "This kind of housing goes beyond merely providing shelter and allows integration of broader strategies targeting employment, social support and community economic development" [Dansereau et al. 1998: v11].

Political recognition of the third sector: Creation of the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire and introduction of the AccèsLogis program

The *Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire*, created in 1997, "was designed to create co-operative and nonprofit dwellings and ensures that the whole neighbourhood is involved. Board members represent the community, the municipality, the financial sector and government. This representation allows the board to consider all interests and needs involved in social and community housing. The *Société d'habitation du Québec* has the power to implement any government program connected with the *Fonds* and has a right of veto over the way in which government contributions are used" [SHQ 1998].

By creating this fund, the Quebec government has given political recognition to co-operatives, community and other local groups that are active in the field of social housing.

Decision-makers at the *Fonds* have a say in planning and evaluating the *AccèsLogis* program. This is a heavy responsibility, because *AccèsLogis* was designed to create 6,000 co-operative or nonprofit social housing units between 1997 and 2002. The creation of the *Fonds* flows from the widespread recognition of Quebec's social economy that was sparked by the Summit on the Economy and Employment (*le Sommet sur l'économie et l'emploi*) held in the fall of 1996. Based on the collaborative model developed in Quebec, the Summit brought together actors from government, business, labour unions and – for the first time – other civil society groups, particularly community groups. Social housing had a central place in the discussions and *AccèsLogis* and the *Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire* were outcomes of that approach. The launching of the two initiatives is symbolic of the government's acknowledgment of the social and political importance of organizations from the third sector.

V. Challenges

Due to the lack of an exhaustive inventory of innovative practices in social housing, we use the approaches described in previous sections as our reference point for identifying some of the challenges that must be addressed if progress is to continue in social housing in Quebec.

1. The federal government must recommit itself to financial support

In this study, we have stressed the need for third-sector input in the transformation of social housing policy in the province. At this point, we must make clear that we still believe strongly that the state and public authorities have a responsibility to reactivate social hous-

ing policy in Quebec and in Canada. In no way do we argue that the role of the third sector in the transformation of social housing practices in Quebec and Canada should replace that of government and public authorities. On the contrary, our vision requires both commitment – or recommitment – by the state and greater recognition of the contribution of organizations from the third sector.

By ‘commitment of the state and public authorities,’ we mean a recommitment by the federal government, which since the mid-1980s gradually has withdrawn from social housing. But we also require the maintenance and strengthening of the commitment of the Quebec government and that of municipal public bodies whose contributions have varied from one city to another and from one year to the next.

Of greatest importance at the present time is the federal government’s responsibility for funding. The federal government has all the budget room it needs, as well as a history of many decades of commitment to the joint funding of social housing programs in the provinces and territories. This would be a really bad time for the Canadian government to withdraw from its obligations to social housing – in either supply or demand. We share the Quebec point of view as articulated by the *Front d’action populaire en réaménagement urbain* (FRAPRU) [2000b: 9];¹² we do not endorse the views of those Canadian organizations and advocates who call for ‘a national policy’ or ‘national strategy,’ one in which the federal state would centralize control over financing, regulation and delivery of social housing policy in Canada [Suttor 1999; FCM 1999].¹³ We do believe, however, that the federal government and CMHC have clear responsibilities to contribute to the joint funding of social housing initiatives in provinces, territories and municipalities. Federal money must be made available to provinces, territories and

municipalities for the consolidation of existing programs and the development of new social housing. And this must be done without requiring uniformity of policy and practices across the country a condition for receiving funds.

With reference to the development of Quebec’s social housing policies, the federal government has a special debt to pay. It must contribute fairly to the financing of provincial and territorial programs, while accepting that the jurisdictions monitor control over their social housing policies and adapt them to their specific needs. We already have mentioned this (see Section III), by restating an argument often used by the *Front d’action populaire en réaménagement urbain* [1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b]: Quebec, with its urgent need for social housing, is not receiving its fair share of financial and budgetary resources for developing its own social housing policies and programs. With a population of just under 25 percent of the Canadian total, Quebec has only 19 percent of the social housing units in Canada. Moreover, it receives only 19 percent of the \$1.6 billion that the federal government now transfers to the provinces and territories for social housing.¹⁴ It is clear that a readjustment is needed here, and it must be done in a way that allows Quebec to maintain control – i.e., through flexible joint financing without stringent prerequisites.

2. Responsibilities of the Quebec government and the municipalities

While primary responsibility for joint funding of social housing policy and programs lies with the federal government, the involvement of Quebec’s government and municipalities also should be encouraged. Although it has less budget room than the federal government, the Quebec government nevertheless has found some

funds in its March 2000 Budget to allow it to consolidate the efforts made in the spring of 1997, following the 1996 Summit on the Economy and Employment, to implement innovative social housing policies such as *AccèsLogis* and the *Fonds québécois d'habitations communautaires*. Born in the difficult days of zero-deficit budgeting, the 1997 Quebec initiatives were bold and original by Canadian, or even North American, standards. But these initiatives should have been supported and consolidated in the spring 2000 post-zero-deficit budget of Finance Minister Bernard Landry. While the aim of the *AccèsLogis* program is to develop 1,200 new social housing units per year, FRAPRU [2000a, 2000b] argues that 8,000 new units are needed each year. But the Quebec government's 2000-2001 Budget gave the impression that it no longer considers social housing to be a priority; this, signal came, paradoxically, just as the Quebec government was starting to find some budget room after four years of rigorous cutbacks.

As for the municipalities, they clearly have enormous responsibilities in the social housing field. They must contribute financially for local communities to benefit from the *AccèsLogis* program; this program, however, "is far from being fully used" [FRAPRU 2000b: 21-22]. It is obvious that not all municipalities fulfill their responsibilities to the same degree, even when their financial resources and needs are comparable. These performance gaps between municipalities became evident in a recent study on social housing in the Mauricie region. Based on that study, Luc Dufresne compared the distribution of public housing units in the regional municipality of Francheville with that of Centre-Mauricie and concluded:

"While Shawinigan has only 27.2 percent of the Centre-Mauricie population, 43.9 percent of all the region's public housing units are found there. Trois-Rivières has

60.6 percent of the public housing units of Francheville, even though it has only 33.8 percent of the population. The disparity is even greater if we count only the public housing designed for families: In Francheville, 81 percent are in Trois-Rivières. The result is even more striking when we look at the whole of the two agglomerations. The 491 public housing units for families in Trois-Rivières make up 76 percent of the stock in the two regional municipalities, while the population of the regional capital represents only 23 percent of the total. One would think that low-income residents in Trois-Rivières are particularly well-served with respect to social housing. But despite the figures we have cited, needs far outstrip the availability of public housing, not only in Trois-Rivières but also, of course, in the region's other municipalities" [Dufresne 2000].

The unequal distribution of resources between municipalities of similar sizes and needs occurs not only in Mauricie but in many other regions of the province. We do not yet know how this unequal distribution of social housing will be affected by the implementation of Bill 170 governing the amalgamation of municipalities within metropolitan areas. According to Louise Harel, Quebec's minister responsible for housing, such a reconfiguration could be advantageous for social housing "because the cities that do not do [public housing] will have to share with those that do at the metropolitan region level. However, the objective is not to compel towns that have never wanted anything to do with social housing to build it, but rather to make them share the costs with those that do" [quoted in Cardinal 2000]. During the committee hearings on municipal mergers, FRAPRU coordinator François Saillant commented: "It is an important lever to force cities that never wanted to con-

tribute, such as Laval, to pay. This will mean access to housing for low-income families living in Laval, because once Laval has paid for housing, it will want to have some” [quoted in Cardinal 2000]. To illustrate this point, Saillant reportedly added that “a city like Laval was allowed to refuse the 126 housing units over three years that Quebec offered it though the *AccèsLogis* program. Moreover, 13 of the richest municipalities on the Island of Montreal, such as Mount Royal, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Beaconsfield and Baie-d’Urfé, do not spend a single cent on the 20,376 public housing units that have been built within the Montreal Urban Community” [Cardinal 2000]. This is a story to watch!

3. Consolidate and manage the public housing stock in a democratic way

Our emphasis on acknowledging and relying increasingly on the third sector may be seen as a turning away from the public sector. This is not our intention.

With the state in crisis, budgets being cut back and social housing policy transformed, public housing has come under attack in recent years. Existing public housing should not be neglected; this would only lead to a gradual deterioration or even disappearance of Quebec’s stock of 65,000 public housing units. As it now stands, its quality will be gravely compromised over the next few years if decision-makers and public authorities at all levels (federal, provincial and municipal) do not step in to redress the balance. Besides adding new public housing units in some municipalities and metropolitan areas to reduce waiting lists,¹⁵ substantial public investment will be required for the maintenance, upkeep and quality of existing buildings that compose a large part of the social housing stock accumulated over the last 30 years.

But the future condition of public housing goes beyond the commitment of decision-makers and managers to the maintenance and improvement of buildings and their surroundings. New and more open ways are needed for administering the public housing stock. Our concept of ‘democratization’ follows the definition of social policy that we presented at the beginning of this document – i.e., one which fully recognizes that tenants have rights and should be participants. At the height of welfare-statism during the 1960s and 1970s, the management of public housing in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada was often criticized for being too bureaucratic and patronizing to tenants. While public institutions showed many good qualities, they also exhibited all the faults of bureaucracy. Practices turned into uniformity, control, top-down management and contempt for users; public housing tenants often were treated merely as consumers of services and not as citizens who could take responsibility for their own lives.

These days, thanks to the demands and struggles of public housing tenants’ associations and other advocacy groups, tenants’ rights are more widely acknowledged. For two years now, Quebec has had legislation calling for tenants’ associations to be represented on the boards of municipal housing organizations. This awareness of new values encourages public institutions active in housing – like the *Société d’habitation du Québec* and Quebec’s 650 municipal housing organizations – to reform their practices, letting power flow upward from the grassroots as well as downward from the top. This new sharing of power leads public authorities to treat associates, especially those from the third sector, as partners rather than subordinates. The change has happened in some of Quebec’s municipal housing organizations over the past decade, the Montreal MHO among them, and even in some of the SHQ’s bodies. It must be consolidated and go further.

4. Acknowledge and bolster third-sector input

In Section IV on innovative social housing practices, we highlighted the remarkable input over the past 15 years of actors from the third sector, often working in collaboration with the public sphere. Among them, we singled out several groups: co-operatives, nonprofit or community organizations, technical resource groups and advocacy groups. In social housing as in other fields, third-sector actors today seek better recognition, greater financial support and more respectful treatment by representatives of the state and the public sector. This is true for the community organizations and co-operatives that offer support services to socially vulnerable people in public housing. It is also true for advocacy groups like the 70 members of *Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain* who, rather than being relegated to merely delivering services, are engaged in education in the broad sense and are in a position to identify gaps in public policy.

Instead of hierarchical relationships, we need more partnerships in which third-sector actors are respected, given room to manoeuvre and can participate in setting the rules which affect them. As Taylor and Bassi [1998] point out in an interesting article on the evolution of relations between the state and the third sector in Italy and England, public authorities cannot regard third sector actors as merely 'agents.' They should be treated as 'partners' of the state and public organizations in the broadest sense of the word, meaning that they have a say in planning and evaluation. Although third-sector organizations often depend primarily on the state for financing, they should retain the autonomy which allows them to preserve their identity. Recognition of this autonomy – which does not negate the need for accountability to the public authorities that finance them – contributes to the democratic enrichment of society, as Jane Lewis [1999] argues strongly in an article on the cur-

rent debates over relations between the state and the third sector in England.

As Lorraine Guay [1999: 75] puts it so well, community organizations, while calling for a degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the state, are still 'public interest' organizations in that they contribute to the general interest of society. Further reflection on this theme points to the potential that community, co-operatives and other third-sector actors hold for social democratic practices. An interesting link can be made between the quality of services and the level of democratic practice of a social organization, especially if this involves interaction between those who deliver the services (or activities) and those who use them. In short, the degree of democracy within the organization implementing social policy has an impact on the quality of such policy. Its activities affect the welfare and citizenship rights of the individuals and local communities concerned. This is the essential contribution of third-sector organizations to the quality of services.

This comparative advantage of social economy actors is seen clearly in our examination of innovative social housing practices in Section IV. For social housing with community support from third-sector organizations, the fact that both users and producers of services participate democratically in the organization does have an impact on the democratic delivery of welfare services [La Serna 2000]. Here, the *Fonds québécois sur l'habitation communautaire* represents a unique model.

Democratic functioning can improve the quality of service delivery not only when dealing with third-sector actors but also in dealing with public sector organizations, especially the non-state-public organizations (*publico no estatal*) as described by Bresser Pereira and Cunill Grau [1988], and discussed in Section I. But in social housing as in other social policy

fields, the democratic potential of the third sector should not be viewed in opposition to the public sector model. Rather, any democratization of social practice in the public sector should be as welcome as that in the third sector, and we should acknowledge the extent to which third-sector practices can help put onto the public agenda the need to democratize public sector practices. Organizations in the public sector can become more democratic by adapting the democratic practices of third-sector organizations. Thus, by approaching the latter and establishing non-hierarchical relationships with them, the public sector would help itself as well as third-sector organizations. The latter often show the way to the public sector when it comes to democratic practices which include users and lead to revitalization of neighbourhoods, the empowerment of new cultural communities and so on.

Should the democratization of decision-making in social housing be a prerequisite for introducing partnership-type collaboration between third-sector actors and those of the public sector? We believe so, because the democratization of public organizations, especially at the regional and local levels as policy becomes decentralized, leads to power being shared with the grassroots, not merely flowing down from the state. So long as public institutions feel no accountability to the grassroots, they will treat third-sector actors with which they deal as subordinate. Public institutions' notion of top-down management then becomes a rationale for refusing to deal with grassroots organizations as partners.

5. Training competent social housing managers

Formerly regarded as merely managers of social housing, directors of municipal housing organizations are now encouraged to become true social managers who see public housing ten-

ants as citizens with rights and an active role to play in improving their quality of life. Furthermore, decision-makers and public administrators in the social housing field are discovering the limitations of the old ways of relating to third-sector organizations, imbued as they were with paternalism and technocracy. At the same time, this new style of manager is discovering the advantages of cooperative ways of doing business. There are risks, of course, because these new social management practices involve some abandonment of former privileges, including income and power sharing – and this is precisely where the top-down culture tends to reassert itself over partnership in its broadest sense.

In the same vein, administrators and service providers from third-sector organizations now have to keep their training up to date, in order to combine the social and economic goals of their work. The challenge lies in reconciling two kinds of expertise that are often opposed: in real-estate management and in social development. The social intervention approaches of the 1970s cannot be applied directly to the social housing field as we enter the 21st century. Instead, administrators must adjust to new realities with a positive approach to the 'conflictual cooperation' resulting from partnership relations between third-sector organizations and those of the public sector, especially when the public institutions are 'state-public' rather than 'non-state-public.'

6. Putting cross-sectoral theory into practice

We must continue to impress on the public at large and decision-makers in particular that housing is one of the three determining factors, along with employment and education in the health and welfare of individuals and families [Quebec 1992: 159-160]. At the theoretical level, this new approach that recognizes the

importance of social or non-medical factors to health and welfare has made some important inroads in Quebec as it has in the rest of Canada [Quebec 1992; Renaud and Bouchard 1994; National Forum on Health 1997]. But it has yet to make a significant breakthrough among the general public and many decision-makers; in practice, support – especially at the administrative and budgetary levels – remains weak.

Cross-sector communication among health, welfare, employment and housing is more important than ever for decision-makers, service providers and administrators.¹⁶ During the ascendant years of the welfare state in Quebec, until the early 1980s, the health and social service bias tended strongly toward hospitalization, institutionalization and placement. It was still possible then to ignore the importance of social housing in improving the health and welfare of vulnerable people. Now, however, in all societies undergoing crisis and transformation in the welfare state, deinstitutionalization and community care are leading to new ways of perceiving and dealing with problems [Hoyes and Means 1993; Bramley 1993; Means and Smith 1998; Lewis and Glennerster 1996; Dorvil et al. 1997; CSBE 1996].

Neoliberal measures that rely exclusively on the market, and traditional progressive remedies that rely exclusively on the state, are not helpful here. To the greatest extent possible, people with disabilities and social vulnerability of all kinds should be allowed to live in their own homes with decency and dignity, rather than being placed in institutions. This endorsement of the principles of the Independent Living Movement [Vaillancourt and Jetté 1997: Chap. 4; Roeher Institute 1993; Morris 1993; Means 1996; Jetté et al. 1998] will require new social housing policies in our societies, ones that include personal attendance or community support. In the past decade, some unique and inspiring pilot

projects have been set up in this field in Quebec as well as in other provinces. But we have to move from theory into practice in more regions, and move from pilot projects to systematic implementation throughout Quebec. Otherwise, only a few fortunate communities will be able to benefit from these winning formulas, while the rest will remain excluded and at a disadvantage.

7. Finding ways to attract and engage the private sector

This paper barely touches on the responsibilities of the various actors from the private sector, let alone their potential for contributing to the transformation of social housing policy. Indeed, we have treated housing as if the only actors who should be concerned with it and work in the field are from the public and the third sectors, never from the private sector.

This failure to address a role for the private sector does not mean that we should expect nothing from that sector. While we probably lack the knowledge to make a solid determination of how the private sector could contribute and what conditions that contribution would require, we do have enough information to make three brief comments.

First, we believe that a realistic social housing policy for today must draw heavily on contributions from the public sector, from the third sector and from social movements, creating an environment that attracts private sector actors, and demonstrating how they can participate. Private enterprise will promote social housing only when it is forced to, because the state imposes standards or because of pressure from public sector and third-sector actors. The private sector will do more in future with increased pressure.

There are lessons to be learned for social housing from the successes and failures in developing the former Canadian Pacific Angus railyards in northeast Montreal. During the first phase of the project, in the 1980s, public pressure helped to win some social housing gains from the private sector [Fontan, Bordeleau and Desrochers 1995: 13]. The second phase, in the 1990s, led to gains in employment because a certain number of jobs had to be reserved for local manpower. However, this second phase did not help the local population much in terms of social housing; while some new units were developed, they owed more to the market-value model than that of the social economy and, as a result, the new housing is available only for middle- or high-income households.

Second, the private sector will contribute more when more decision-makers, managers and intervenors from the public and the third sectors can use persuasion – rather than coercion – to consider the social dimensions of housing. To be sure, public decision-makers must sometimes define norms and impose rules that lead to certain levels of conformity. But to sensitize private entrepreneurs of all kinds (owners of rental buildings, entrepreneurs in construction and renovation, heads of financial institutions and others) to the social dimensions of public housing, something more than a purely bureaucratic formula is needed.

Third, representatives of the private sector will question their market-value practices only if arguments are put forward that are not based purely on morality. Private entrepreneurs are accustomed to selling their products and services for a profit. They will become interested in social housing only when they can see a link between social value and economic value, as was the case immediately following World War II. Social housing managers and others who work in the public and third sectors should not lose

sight of this profit issue; rather, they should organize projects and formulas that can attract private sector actors to do more to promote social housing because it coincides with their interests. Incentives such as those that give nonprofit organizations access to subsidies for reducing costs, and the provision of financing that meets standards of return acceptable to financial institutions are two examples. There could be laws and regulations similar to those in the United States that encourage banks to invest in distressed neighbourhoods and regions, and there also could be fiscal policies to encourage the development of social housing.

Conclusion

We have stated from the outset that we are interested in “progressive scenarios for transforming” social policy in general and social housing policy in particular. We have hypothesized that the social housing policies seem most promising can be distinguished from both neoliberal policies relying solely on the market and the classic type of postwar progressive policies in which the state controls everything. Our objective of an open examination of scenarios of progressive transformation contains a two-pronged message. First, our vision of future social housing policies cannot be linked to the policies of the welfare state’s glory days in Quebec and Canada; and second, our vision of the future does not match the neoliberal agenda. This is the context for our focus on the possibilities arising from third-sector involvement in the development of alternative progressive scenarios that could contribute to the renewal of social housing practices and policies in Quebec. This context is the underlying thread of this document.

We have presented our argument in five sections. In the first, we set the framework,

focussing chiefly on a definition of social policy which sets the bar high for the role of social policy in enhancing the quality of life and civic rights of the people it affects. This framework laid the foundation for the sections that followed.

In Section II, we reviewed the major stages of social housing policy in Canada and in Quebec, being careful to define the duration and characteristics of the welfare state ('providentialist') period with its positive and negative aspects, as well as the timing and characteristics of the crisis and transformation of welfare statism in Canada and Quebec.

In Section III, we sketched the social housing policies and programs prevalent in Quebec today. In Section IV, we described some innovative practices in social housing that have emerged in Quebec in the years from 1985 to 2000, set against the crisis and transformation of welfare-statism. We highlighted initiatives by social organizations and actors from the third sector and the social economy that have produced some changes – albeit small ones – among public decision-makers and institutions.

In Section V, we considered some challenges involved in institutionalizing innovative practices, which leads us to the conclusion that financial commitments will be needed from all levels of government – especially the federal – if these practices are to become permanent fixtures. We also saw that innovation cannot flourish without real partnerships between actors from the public sector and those of the third sector.

Finally, we argued that third-sector input must be acknowledged if innovative practices are to develop further; that consideration also must be given both to the democratization of public sector organizations and to bringing the private-for-profit sector into the field of social housing from which it has been notably absent.

What does the future hold for social housing practice and policy in Quebec? At present, these practices and policies represent a blend of three rationales and scenarios that we defined at the end of Section I, rather than any single one of them. Contrary to what is often suggested, there has been a refusal to reduce Quebec policy to neoliberal ideology. On the other hand, in spite of the Bouchard government's statements in favour of a renewed solidarity-based model of social development, we cannot say that the Quebec government's social policies in general and its social housing policies, in particular, flow from a comprehensive and coherent vision based on renewed social democracy [Morel 2000].¹⁷ In our opinion, of course, Quebec remains a very interesting laboratory for studying innovative policy and practice in the social housing field. But here, as in other fields, there is no coherent overview [Bourque, Lévesque and Vaillancourt 2000]. Although this is better than a neoliberal perspective, we are still far from attaining a coherent set of progressive policies.

The innovative practices described in this paper do not represent an exhaustive list of transformations occurring in the social housing field. We would need far more research to inventory the innovative practices in social housing in Montreal and other regions of Quebec, as well as a more thorough analysis of their success. A better understanding of what these innovations have to offer could help decision-makers and leaders in the field of social housing to capture the most interesting of the experiments and apply them more generally – in other words, to move from the experimental stage to that of institutionalization [Lévesque and Vaillancourt 1998]. We at *Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales* (LAREPPS) will continue to contribute to the research in this area.

Endnotes

1. Note that the use of the first person singular in this paper denotes the personal opinion of the lead author, Professor Yves Vaillancourt, while the use of the first-person plural denotes the opinions of both the authors and their associates.
2. Organizations are part of the third sector (or the social economy) when they belong neither to the market (for-profit) sector nor to the public (state) sector [Thériault et al. 2000b: Note 2].
3. In any analysis of other specific fields of services to people, such as home care services, it is important to take into consideration the contributions made by family members, often referred to as ‘natural helpers.’
4. Welfare state social policies did not peak in each region of Canada at the same time. The ‘providentialist’ period occurred between 1943 and 1976 for the federal government and *avant-garde* provinces, such as Saskatchewan. In Quebec, both the start and the end of welfare-statism occurred later.
5. We have been using the concept of community care in our research for some time. It is used frequently in the United Kingdom [Means and Smith 1998; Lewis and Glennerster 1996], and strikes us as a more positive term than that of deinstitutionalization or non-institutionalization. It entails different kinds of social support for vulnerable people within their community or living environment. Social housing with community support is a part of community care policy and practice.
6. *Caisse populaire*, similar to a credit union.
7. A recent article in *La Gazette des femmes* listed a total of 120,000 social units in Quebec and provided a complete breakdown, including 80,000 public housing units, 20,000 units run by housing co-operatives and 20,000 by nonprofit organizations [Papineau 2000: 28].
8. Again, we acknowledge that figures can differ from one source to another. By taking figures from both a 1998 CMHC document and a 1997 SHQ document, however, we should arrive at reliable information.
9. To arrive at the total of 40,000 social housing units in the City of Montreal, the Montreal MHO document [OMHM, 1998a] also includes 2,000 rooms which were renovated with public subsidies.
10. We received this information on April 5, 2000, from Mr. Robert Mackrous of the Montreal MHO.
11. The third-sector organizations that are involved in social housing with community support are mainly non-profit organizations, although some co-operatives are also active in the field. Unlike co-operatives, the nonprofit housing organizations have had no federation to represent them across Quebec. That is why a network – the *Réseau québécois des OSBL d’habitation* – is needed.
12. In the background papers for its 20th Congress in June 2000, FRAPRU stated: “Our last point of divergence is with Canadian groups’ demand for a ‘national housing strategy.’ FRAPRU does not seek a ‘national strategy,’ nor a housing program that can apply from one ocean to another, merely money” [FRAPRU 2000: 9].
13. We do, however, acknowledge that not all definitions of a ‘national housing strategy’ entail exclusive control by the federal state. Robert Cohen, President of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, wrote in an editorial in *Canadian Housing*: “A national strategy is not expected to be a federal strategy, but it does require the federal fiscal levers to be unlocked along with the regulatory and financial mechanisms at the disposal of the provincial/territorial and municipal governments. A national strategy leads to the setting of minimal national standards, but it also respects the autonomy of provinces which already offer programs, such as Quebec and British Columbia” [Cohen 2000: 4].
14. Louise Harel, Quebec’s Minister responsible for housing, decried this situation once again at a press conference on September 14, 2000: “This \$289 million [which the federal government intends to transfer to Quebec for social housing] represents 18.7 percent of the federal contribution to the provinces and does not begin to meet the needs of the Quebec population, which represents about one-quarter of the total in Canada” [Hébert 2000].
15. The Montreal MHO’s waiting list stands consistently at 7,000 per year [OMHM 2000].
16. One recent initiative is indicative of the progress made by the cross-sectoral approach: The SHQ and the *Comité de santé mentale du Québec* held a joint conference on “housing and mental health support services” on November 16 and 17, 2000 [Ducharme, Dorvil and Brière 2000].

17. See, for example, the position taken by Pauline Marois, Minister of Health and Social Services, interviewed regarding Quebec's position at an international conference on social development organized by the United Nations in Geneva in June 2000.

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