

The Role of Public–Third Sector Relationships in Solving Social Issues: the Case of One-Stop-Shop Service for the Promotion of Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Montreal

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This exploratory paper specifically examines a case of public–third sector relationships, Montreal’s CEMFII, within the most consolidated relation types to highlight what characteristics match with it and what do not match.

Research Design & Methods: An extensive review of the literature on the relationship between the State and the third sector was performed in order to develop a model of such relationships and stress their principal characteristics.

Findings: It is suggested that the development of a One-Stop-Shop service could remedy some of the difficulties female immigrants face when attempting to develop businesses. The paper also argues that the CEMFII, as a product of the ‘State – third sector’ interactions, has been risky and complicated.

Implications & Recommendations: It might be useful that the third sector organisations acquire a financial autonomy to diminish their dependency on the public funds, which is subject to political leadership changes, and to guarantee the sustainability of the project.

Contribution & Value Added: The uniqueness of this work lies in applying general frameworks of ‘public – third sector’ relations to a specific case within a specific urban socioeconomic context, where the effects of political leadership changes can be clearly viewed.

Article type: research paper

Keywords: non-profit Institutions; contracting out; government owned; third sector; state; female immigrant entrepreneurship; Montreal

JEL codes: L30, L31, L32, L33

Received: 30 May 2015

Revised: 12 September 2015

Accepted: 15 September 2015

Suggested citation:

Paré, S., & Maloumy-Baka, R.C. (2015). The Role of Public–Third Sector Relationships in Solving Social Issues: the Case of One-Stop-Shop Service for the Promotion of Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Montreal. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 3(3), 123-141. doi: 10.15678/EBER.2015.030307

INTRODUCTION

As part of the continuing process of global urbanisation (Sassen, 1991, 2006), the proportion of immigrants continues to increase in industrialised countries of the OECD area. Their presence in cities, where they choose to settle for the opportunities available in urban areas (Bernard, 2008; Waldinger, 1989), leads to new challenges for cities, which daily deal with issues related to immigrants' socioeconomic integration (Ambrosini & Bacagni, 2015). One of the ways through which immigrants integrate in their host country is entrepreneurship, generally implemented with the financial and social resources to which they have access through their ethnic networks (Butler & Greene, 1997; Paré, 2008). The created enterprises, be they ethnic, i.e. when products traded are characterized by a significant ethno-cultural traits, or not ethnic, i.e. when products traded do not have such characteristics (Chrysostome & Arcand, 2009; Greene & Owen, 2004; Pécout, 2010; Waldinger et al., 1990; Zhou, 2007), are then the result of the interaction that takes place between, on the one hand, socio-cultural characteristics of immigrants and, on the other hand, opportunity structures that involve social, cultural, economic and political institutions – mixed embeddedness¹ – and spheres of their host society (Kloosterman & Rath, 2001; Kloosterman, Van der Leun & Rath, 1999; Waldinger et al., 1990).

Since immigrants exercise no control on such opportunity structures, which may be more determinant than their socio-cultural characteristics in their decision to run a business (Rath, 2000), it is crucial that public policies implemented to support immigrant entrepreneurs be efficient, especially when those entrepreneurs are women. Indeed, evidence has shown that the intersection between their immigrant origin and their gender² make female immigrant entrepreneurs generally more disadvantaged than male immigrant entrepreneurs (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Paré, 2008). It is often when they start up a business that they have difficult access to funding and reduced start-up capital (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Baycan-Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2003; Heilman & Chen, 2003). In such context, many cities, including Montreal, are still searching for a set of policies and procedures to adequately respond to the needs of immigrants, in general, and female immigrants, in particular, who desire to start a business. Building and implementing such policies and procedures has become even more crucial, as research has documented existence of opportunity for the creation of enterprises by female immigrants along with the many obstacles which women face in planning, starting-up and following-through of the business development process (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Baycan-Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2003, 2009; Paré, 2008).

To respond to such shortcomings, over the past several years in the Province of Quebec, some 'State – third sector' relations have arisen to provide a better socioeconomic integration of immigrants. In particular, in Montreal, most of those 'State –

¹ For more details about the concept of mixed embeddedness, see Kloosterman and Rath (2001) and Kloosterman, Van der Leun and Rath (1999).

² In social sciences, and in the feminist studies, in particular, this is defined within the concept of *intersectionality*. Generally speaking, the *intersectionality* refers to how multiple social constructions, such as gender, education, social class, race, immigrant or citizen status, religion, etc., influences human (Collins, 1986, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

third sector' relations have been made within the Montreal Region Action Plan on immigration, integration and intercultural relations (PARMI).³ Initiated in 2006 by the Government of Quebec through a special administrative and governance body, i.e. the *Regional Conference of Representatives* (CRÉ),⁴ this ambitious multi-year framework aimed to implement actions to promote the integration of immigrants and support ethno-cultural diversity in Montreal Region (CRÉ de Montréal, 2012). Projects of the PARMi on integration through entrepreneurship, with no specific emphasis on women immigrants, include 'Entreprendre ici'. This is an action launched in 2013 for a 3-year period (2014–2016) which involves a partnership of 22 public and third sector actors that work together to provide services to current and would-be entrepreneurs to identify business projects, provide the necessary technical support and help raise funding for start-up capital and growth (Ville de Montréal, 2015). In addition, projects that specifically support the integration of female immigrants through entrepreneurship are 'Coopérative entreprise partagée' and the *Montreal Coordinating Committee for Female Immigrant Entrepreneurs* (CEMFII).⁵ 'Coopérative entreprise partagée', launched in 2012 for a 3-year period by the CRÉ, the Quebec's Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities, and the Cooperative of Regional Development Montreal-Laval (CDRML),⁶ aimed to make female immigrant entrepreneurs share their experience within the framework of a common 'shared cooperative enterprise'. That is, by adhering to that cooperative model, entrepreneurs would have access to professional services, such as marketing, accounting, legal services, that they would not have access to otherwise (CRÉ de Montreal, 2011).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This exploratory paper deals with the CEMFII, a network of six entrepreneurial support organisations launched in the autumn of 2011 by the Government of Quebec through the CRÉ, with the objective to create a One-Stop-Shop service specifically for female immigrants willing to start a business. The project is part of the administrative agreement between the Quebec's Ministry of Culture, Communications and the Condition of Women (MCCCF)⁷ and the CRÉ with respect to the economic equality between women and men in Montreal Region (CRÉ) and is of particular interest for two main reasons. Firstly, on the contrary of the PARMi's actions just cited, it is the only that pursued specifically the promotion of female immigrant entrepreneurship. Secondly, to reach its scope, it has involved only specialised agencies in the management of immigration and diversity, the promotion of the female, and the fight against poverty and exclusion (CRÉ de Montréal, 2011), and which has developed their expertise by working in the field for up-to 30 years. These reasons make the CEMFII a valuable case to explore. This paper

³ Plan d'action de la région en matière d'immigration, d'intégration et des relations interculturelles (PARMI).

⁴ The Regional Conference of Representatives (*Conférence régionale des élus – CRÉ*) is an administrative unit in the Quebec province governance. They primarily act as advisor to the Government of Quebec on the development of their respective regions and implement specific projects assigned by the government. To do so, they work with several political and socioeconomic partners of the regions that they cover. The Quebec Province is divided into 21 CRÉs, as follows: one by administrative region, except for Montérégie and Nord-du-Québec, which have three each.

⁵ Continuum entrepreneuriat Montréal pour femmes issues de l'immigration (CEMFII).

⁶ Coopérative de développement régional Montréal-Laval (CDRML).

⁷ Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine (MCCCF).

addresses the question of the effectiveness of this coordinating committee and suggests that the development of a One-Stop-Shop service could remedy some of the difficulties female immigrants face when attempting to develop businesses. Indeed, in the framework of developing new organisational know-how to guarantee entrepreneurs' success, the objectives of the CEMFII were to favour their access to - conventional and alternative - start-up capital, to favour their access to services tailored to their immigration characteristics, to offer network activities where they may share expertise and business opportunities, and to offer personalised mentoring to entrepreneurs (CRÉ de Montréal, 2011). However, it argues that, just like any 'public – no public' relation, the creation and development of the CEMFII, as a product of the 'State – third sector' interactions, has been both risky and complicated (Cairns & Harris, 2011; Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Jones, 2007; Salamon, 2002; Van Slyke, 2007), because of its top-down approach and the crucial role of the state in financing it. These factors may hamper its mission and make it unable to reach its objectives effectively. In this paper, we first review the main literature on the relationship between the State and the third sector, to model such relations and highlight their characteristics, as well as review the literature on female immigrant entrepreneurship. We then make an effort to place the CEMFII, the One-Stop-Shop for female immigrants willing to start business enterprises, within the more consolidated relation forms to see how their pros and cons apply.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Relations Between the State and the third Sector

The relations between the State and the third sector organisations have been explored by a number of recent studies (Brown & Troutt, 2004; Proulx, Bourque, & Savard, 2007; Salamon, 2010; Seitadini & Lindgreen, 2010). This is in part due to the increasingly important role played by the third sector in the developing global economy. For example, a recent survey by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project on 40 countries revealed that the third sector represents a 2.2 trillion USD industry (Salamon, 2010). In 2007, in Canada the third sector contribution was estimated at 35.6 billion USD, i.e. 2.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). On the funding side, Canadian government grants are the second most important source of funding for third-sector organizations (15.3 billion CAD in 2007), surpassed only by income generated by the sales of commodities and services (Statistique Canada, 2009).

The financial participation of the State in third sector activities contributes to create, amongst others, complex relations between the State and the third sector (Salamon, 1987). Such relations are both complicated and risky (Cairns & Harris, 2011; Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Jones, 2007), especially when they become more formal, for example through specific contractual agreements (Hassel, 1997; Salamon, 2002; Smith & Lipsky, 1993; Takahashi & Smutni, 2002; Van Slyke, 2007). Indeed, since public funds are granted for the organizations to carry out ad-hoc mandates, the State usually requires third sector grantees to monitor the use of such resources and provide a high level of accountability. Such requirements inevitably make the relationship progressively more intense and complex amongst the actors involved (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Banting, 2000;

Boris, Kingston & Steuerle, 2006; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002; Salamon, 2010; Steinberg & Powell, 2006).

On the one hand, some third-sector organisations see the intensification of their relations with the State as a source of frustration and of possible threat to their autonomy (Salamon, 1987). According to the author, these organisations may drift toward becoming agencies of the State because their existence largely depends on the public funds. This puts them in a subordinate position that may hamper their role of catalyst for social innovation and transformations. Such relations may even denaturalize third-sector organisations, as, in order to receive the necessary funds to their continued existence, they are frequently compelled to accept conditions imposed by the State which may move them away from their original mission. Moreover, relations between third-sector organisations and the State may engender both the bureaucratization of the business enterprise and the administrative burden required in order to satisfy the performance and evaluation requirements imposed by the State, such as the production of progress and final reports (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Shaw, 2003; Van Slyke, 2007; Walden, 2006). Likewise, a sustainability issue may arise when, because of the limited time frame for which the funds are granted, for example one year or two years, many organisations are unable to implement middle to long range planning, leading to short term activities which may prove dysfunctional in the longer run. The uncertainty of the availability of future funding, for example in case of changes in political leadership, may further complicate any longer term forecast (Salamon, 2006; Smith & Lipsky, 1993).

On the other hand, the State also faces difficulties when dealing with third-sector organizations (Salamon, 1987). First, the State's demand for the highest ethical standards, transparency and accountability by the third-sector organisations in their management of State-provided funds is often difficult to measure and apply. This watchdog behaviour by the State, to avoid any fraud, waste and abuse or diversion of public funds into private interests, causes conflicts with the third-sector organisations, which may experience a certain lack of freedom in the carrying out of their activities (Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Hassel, 1997; Van Slyke, 2007). This may have the long-term effect of discouraging third-sector organisations from collaborating with the State, as they may no longer see such activity as sufficiently advantageous (Gidron, Kramer & Salamon, 1992; Salamon, 2006). The issue of the control by the State versus the need for autonomy of third-sector organisations impedes the possibility of an effective partnership between the actors (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Another issue is the very short time frame within which the State implements public policies and programmes, for example when funding or mandates are hastily granted on the basis of incomplete information or without the overall review of each potential service provider. To resolve such issues, third-sector organisations may expect to take part into the development of public policies. Unfortunately, public agencies are rarely prepared for such requests and even less prepared to accept them (Smith, 2010). As a result, the relations between the State and third-sector organisations are generally characterised by mutual mistrust and misunderstanding (Gazley & Brudney, 2007).

The 'State - third sector' relations have also a positive side. Indeed, in the context of neoliberal policies characterized, amongst others, by reduced public interventions and thus by a progressive shift of the control of the economy from the State to the private

sector (Cohen, 2007), justified by the rationale that this will provide more efficient products and improve the economy (Prasad, 2006), partnerships between the State and third sector organisations and amongst third sector organisations are even promoted both by supra-national institutions, i.e. the European Union, and by single countries (OECD, 2006; 2012; Osborne, 2008). Moreover, because of its deep knowledge of the field, third sector may be more effective than the State to deal with some social issues.

Those relationships may take several forms or approach. For example, according to the *government failure* thesis (Weisbrod, 1997), within the economic and political approaches, the third-sector organisations intervene to respond to the needs of individuals which the State does not address, largely due to highly diversified (economic) individual preferences. In other words, because the demand function of some people is above the average level of needs supplied by the State, a group of individuals take action to make available the commodities and services that the public supply does not cover (Young, 2006). There is then complementarity between the State and organised groups of individuals (for example, Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002), within which the former makes available financial resources with which the latter produce public services. The relations between the State and third-sector organisations may be arranged within the framework of contracts (Austin, 2003). That is, the State outsources the production of public services to be offered to the population or to a specific portion of the population, generally under specific contractual agreements (funding, results and accountability conditions, contract length, etc.). Therefore, questions regarding which services may be outsourced, which partners to involve and how services are contracted out are crucial. The cross-sectorial framework approaches (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002) theorize that the social, economic and political changes produced by globalization have transformed the relations between the State, the private market and civil society (Evers & Laville, 2004; Favreau, 2008; Laville & Roustang, 1999; Lévesque, 2001; Vaillancourt, 2007). These approaches, derived from the New Economic Sociology (See Lévesque, 2001), conceptualize relationships as the result of social tensions between the State and the rest of the society (Anheier, 2009; Evers & Laville, 2004). The interaction style approaches state that the types of interactions that occur amongst actors determine their relationships. For instance, Gidron, Kramer and Salamon (1992), suggested four types of relations, depending on which actors fund and which ones produce the goods and services. There may be dominant, dualism or collaboration relationships.⁸ Lastly, the collaboration and partnership approaches state that collaboration occurs when several organisations work together to solve a social issue (Bryson, Crosby & Middleton Stone, 2006; Gazley, 2010; Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Seitadini & Lindgreen 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005, 2010). This usually involves cross-sector collaborations, that is, amongst organisations which belong to different sectors, for example, the private, the public and the third sectors. These cross-sector relations may unfold in four possible types of collaboration: private-public, pri-

⁸ There is a *dominant-government* situation when the government is in charge of both providing funds and producing goods and services. On the contrary, a *dominant-third sector* situation occurs when it is third sector organisations that provide funds and produce goods and services. Between the two extremes, there are intermediate situations: there may be *dualism* (supplementary approach) when both actors take action to provide funds and produce goods and services, or *collaboration*, when one actor (usually the State) provides funds and the other (usually third-sector organisations) executes or produces goods and services (Gidron, Kramer & Salamon, 1992).

vate-third sector, public-third sector and private-public-third sector (Austin 2003; Bryson, Crosby & Middleton Stone, 2006; Seitadini & Lindgreen, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005).

Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship

Studies on female immigrant entrepreneurship are less diffused than those on immigrant entrepreneurship and on female entrepreneurship (Essers & Benschop, 2007; Halkias & Caracatsanis, 2011). Usually, the existing studies analyse the opportunities and obstacles of the female immigrant entrepreneurs when setting up their businesses and they do so mainly by looking at the effects of the intersection between gender and ethnic/immigrant (Crenshaw, 1991) on the creation and the management of their enterprises (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Paré, 2008; Paré & Thérasmé, 2010).

Conceptually speaking, female immigrant entrepreneurship is the combination of immigrant entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurship. As such, it seems logical to expect that female immigrant entrepreneurs will share both opportunities and obstacles of the two categories they are formed of and that have numerous parallels (Light, 2007; Wang, 2008). As a result, one of the most recurrent questions in literature is whether female immigrant entrepreneurs have more the characteristics of female entrepreneurs or those of immigrant entrepreneurs (Baycan-Levent, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2003; Piperopoulos, 2012). Evidence has shown that they will emphasise either the traits of female entrepreneurs, or the traits of immigrant entrepreneurs or both, depending on circumstances and contexts.

For some authors, the gender dimension is more important than the ethnic origin dimension. For instance, Baycan-Levent, Masurel and Nijkamp (2003) showed the existence of similarities between female Turkish entrepreneurs and female Dutch entrepreneurs in Amsterdam, both regarding their personal characteristics and regarding their decision to become entrepreneurs. This led the authors to conclude that female Turkish entrepreneurs in Amsterdam are more similar to female entrepreneurs than to immigrant entrepreneurs. Paré and Thérasmé (2010) reached quite similar results in their study on the presence of female immigrant entrepreneurs in the IT sector in Montreal. The researchers stated that, apart from the predominance of female French Canadians working in the subsector of the knowledge production itself, the sector of the new economy as a whole does not show significant differences amongst female immigrants, female French Canadians and English Canadians. The authors concluded that, while the role of gender on the presence of women in such a sector is clear, as women working in it are very few (12% only, according to data), the role of the immigrant status is far less clear.

Although we ought to be careful before generalizing on characteristics of female immigrant entrepreneurs, a heterogeneous population, namely in terms of their individual skills, their cultural origins, their entrepreneurial experience or even in terms of their decision to become entrepreneurs (Baycan-Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003), some general common traits may be pointed out. These are, for example, the dimensions of their enterprises, usually smaller in terms of number of employees and of start-up capital than businesses run by men (Heilbrunn, 2004; Loscocco et al., 1991; Smith-Hunter & Engelhardt, 2004; Verheul et al., 2001); the sectors they work in, usually services with lower return on investment (Baycan-Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003; Paré & Thérasmé, 2010), and the obstacles they face when starting up their business (difficult access to

start-up capital, administrative barriers, discrimination, etc.) and their firm's reduced growth perspectives (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Baycan-Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003; Heilman & Chen, 2003).

From a policy point of view, female immigrant entrepreneurs are not recipients of specific public support, probably because they are made, to a certain extent, of both markers of identity (female and immigrant entrepreneurs). There are numerous studies that analyse the support provided to female and immigrant entrepreneurs (Collins, 2003; Lerner & Khavul, 2003; Pearce, 2005; Toussaint-Comeau, 2005) and the implementation of support policies contributes to the increase of minority-owned businesses (Pearce, 2005). Indeed, it has been recognized that public support enables women – and – immigrant entrepreneurs to obtain funds (Collins, 2003; Lerner & Khavul, 2003; Lerner, Menahem & Hisrich, 2005), and the access to funding for start-up capital is one of the main treats encountered by those entrepreneurs (Collins, 2003; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007; Kloosterman & Rath, 2002; Pearce, 2005). While Kloosterman and Rath (2002) recommend that such support policies focus on the supply side (resources of the immigrant entrepreneurs), the demand side (the opportunity structures) and on the matching of both, most of the existing policies focus generally on supply side to increase resources availability (Kushnirovich, 2009). To promote effectively female and immigrant entrepreneurship, minority business public policies, besides making opportunity structures provide services to entrepreneurs and making such services match entrepreneurs' needs, should be known by potential beneficiaries. Information about what supports exist and how entrepreneurs may benefit from them must be easily accessible, to avoid the risk women and immigrant business projects being hampered (Kushnirovich, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to improve communication between immigrants and government agencies, as this is of paramount importance for policy supporting minority entrepreneurship to take place effectively (Collins, 2003). While, the CEMFII can be credited to have focused on making resources available to beneficiaries (supply side), on building up a platform that gives access to those resources (demand side), and on making both sides match, there is no evidence on its diffused knowledge amongst female immigrant entrepreneurs. However, what makes CEMFII unique in its kind, as mentioned earlier, is its specific role of promoting female immigrant entrepreneurship, on the contrary of the most diffused and known support policy instruments that focus generally either strictly on women entrepreneurs or on immigrant entrepreneurs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper was to look at the effectiveness of the CEMFII, a 'public – third sector' network composed of six entrepreneurial support organisations created thanks to the financial support of the Government of Quebec through the CRÉ, in its objective to provide general assistance to female immigrants willing to develop businesses. The case of the CEMFII was relevant to explore the 'State – third sector' relationships within this study, because it is the only PARMIS (public) project that has involved specialised (third-sector) agencies with long-lasting experience in the field of immigration management, diversity promotion and female entrepreneurship support. As such, it feeds the discussion and reflexion on building up public urban policies that adequately respond to the

need of female immigrants willing to become entrepreneurs, and, consequently, contributes to the general topic of immigrants’ integration.

In light of the previous review, this paper argues that the relationships between the State, represented by the CRÉ, and the third sector, represented by third sector organisations that form the CEMFII, is both quite *complex*, as they may be included into more than one relation types, and also *risky*, as the mission of this network may be obstructed by the political changing context and the related financial issues. This confirms the hybrid nature of such relations.

‘CRÉ – CEMFII’ Relations

The CEMFII is a product of a ‘*public – no profit’ collaboration and partnership*, modelled in Figure 1 and motivated by the need to better promote the economic integration of female immigrants. This can be put within the framework of organisational theory, according to which relationships take place around societal issues (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Seitadini & Lindgreen, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2010). This relation is undertaken under a *complementary scheme* (for example, Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002), in the framework of collective action theory (Olson, 1971), or under specific *contractual agreements* (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011), where the State, i.e. Government of Quebec through the CRÉ, provides funds to the third-sector, which through the entrepreneurial support organisations, supply corresponding services to prospective female immigrant entrepreneurs. Given the strong involvement of the third sector in immigrant

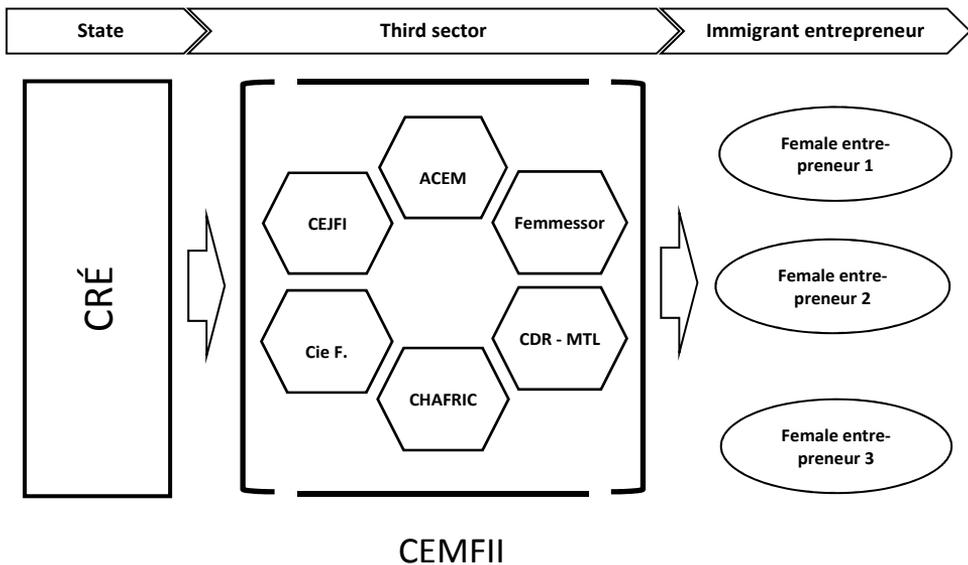


Figure 1. Illustration of the relations between the State (CRÉ) and the Third Sector (CEMFII), within the continuum of services to female immigrant entrepreneurs

Source: elaboration based on CEMFII materials (Paré)

issues (Olson, 1971), we see that, although the Government of Quebec might be the most appropriate financial sponsor, the third sector organisations involved in the project

have proved to be the most suitable suppliers of CEMFII's services for the long-lasting experience (up-to almost 30 years) in the field of immigration management, diversity promotion and female entrepreneurship promotion.

These services consist of reinforcing existing organizational tools and developing new ones to guarantee the future success of new entrepreneurs. In practice, this means offering services and products tailored to female immigrants, who because of both their gender and their immigrant status (Collins, 1986, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) may be limited in the creation and development of their enterprises (Abu-Asbah & Heilbrunn, 2011; Baycan-Levent, Masurel & Nijkamp, 2003, 2009; Paré, 2008; Paré & Thérasme, 2010). Thus, these services include promoting both traditional and alternative ways of raising funds, implementing networks to share expertise and business opportunities, and offering personalised mentoring support services (CRÉ de Montréal, 2011).

Top-down Logic, Political Leadership Change and Financial Issues

Moreover, the CEMFII follows a top-down logic, which might prove workable within a certain set of conditions, including a refined knowledge of the female immigrant needs, taking into account the specificities of each case; sufficient financial and human resources, to respond adequately to any demand; and adapted services for special requests, which might rise from the intersection between gender and the immigrant status of women.

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that these outcomes have been achieved, considering the modest financial contribution of the government in 2011, i.e. 230 000 CAD, to initiate such a network of regional not-for-profit organisations to favour female immigrant entrepreneurship. Some of the money was used for technical and functioning purposes, i.e. to establish a common IT workplace platform (<http://www.cemfii.com>) to permit entrepreneurial actors to share know-how and manage projects (Government of Quebec, 2011). This platform has allowed different organisations in the CEMFII to have access to elementary information on their "clients", that is, prospective female immigrant entrepreneurs. This first funding was followed by the renewal of the agreement in 2012, which was associated with a new public funding of 1.2 million CAD to help 520 existing female entrepreneurs and help 130 female immigrants start new enterprises (CRÉ de Montréal, 2012). Although it must be acknowledged that the Government of Quebec has guaranteed a certain amount of money to support the network's activities, this may still remain an exceedingly minimal investment compared to the real market needs, pictured by the current market dynamics. Indeed, with an entrepreneurial intention⁹ rate in the entire Quebec of 32%, compared to only 18% of natives, immigrants contribute very positively to the rate of entrepreneurial intentions and of administrative procedures started to implement a business in Montreal and Laval, the most dynamic Quebec's regional poles in terms of entrepreneurial intentions (Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat, 2015). The socio-demographical factor, as 33% of the population in Montreal and almost 25% of the population in Laval are immigrants, explains this. Also, in Canada, in general, it is worth adding that immigrants have had higher propensity to

⁹ The entrepreneurial intention is related to the fact a person is willing to start a business. It may be measured by individual traits of the would-be entrepreneur and by the economic, political and cultural context that person has lived (Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat, 2015).

become entrepreneurs than natives, i.e. 0.35% compared 0.20%, according to data of 2011 (Banque du développement du Canada, 2012). Although all these data do not divide immigrants by sex, it may be assumed that female immigrant entrepreneurs follow this general positive trend.

Moreover, the fact that all funding comes from a single, public source has not only fettered any long-term forecast of the CEMFII, but it has also increased the uncertainty of the entire project for the future. While it does not appear that third sector organisations have developed a subordinate position in relationship to the CRÉ, this may derive from the fact that the former have a specific expertise that the latter does not have and this somehow helps the actors to build balanced interactions. Neither are there signs of the denaturalisation of the third sector organisations, given that CEMFII was constructed upon their original missions. This being acknowledged, recent changes in political leadership in Quebec (Parti Québécois Party to Liberal Party) has brought back the issue of the uncertainty of the availability of future funding (Salamon 2006; Smith & Lipsky 1993), particularly in view of the austerity programme introduced by the new government to eliminate recurrent budget deficits. In fact, the intention of the Liberal Government to abolish the CRÉ in order to create greater efficiency in the production of public services and, correspondingly, to save money (Radio Canada, 2014) came to effect in early 2015. Indeed, from April 2015 the CRÉ officially disappeared and were replaced by a transitional committee to complete all the CRÉ's actions previously started (Government of Quebec, 2015). Unless the government decides to keep funding through other channels, the disappearance of the CRÉ might cause the end of CEMFII, with important negative consequences on the development of female immigrant entrepreneurship, which has been recognized to be able to contribute to the integration of female immigrants (Paré, Chabant & Lavallière, 2010). Indeed, the disappearance of a structure, which creation is the result of over twenty years of recurring discussions by local actors and which mandate was specifically to address the consequences of the intersectionality between gender and immigrant status, will deprive entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs of crucial services provider. This raises the important question of the financial autonomy third sector organisations need to diminish their dependency on public funds and for their long-term sustainability.

Dynamicity Versus Stability of Relations, Conversations Amongst Actors, and Entrepreneurs In The CEMFII

One common characteristic of the approaches that were reviewed is the fact that they conceptualize relationships as a static object (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011; Cho & Gillespie, 2006; Selsky & Parker, 2010). However, in reality relationships are more often dynamic, resulting from interactions between dynamic actors within changing social structures (Gazley, 2010; Saidel, 1991; Smith & Grønberg, 2006; Vurro, Dacin & Perrini, 2010; Young, 2000). In particular, in the framework of organisational theory, this paper suggests that the relationship between the State, represented by the CRÉ, and the third sector, represented by the CEMFII takes the form of on-going and varied conversations on a specific social issue (Camus, 2012), i.e. the economic integration of female immigrants in Montreal. Such conversations cover, for example, funding activities by the CRÉ, the choice of the activities to be delivered by the CEMFII, the agreement of the CEMFII to deliver the specified services and to define the organisational field within which the rela-

tions occur (Hoffman, 1999). Also, given the stable and regular involvement of the CRÉ and the CEMFII, it makes sense to claim that those relations take place within *cross-sector social partnerships* (Selsky & Parker, 2010) and within contractual approaches.

Female immigrant entrepreneurs in Montreal have lacked unified structures that may mentor and guide them on issues related to the business start-up, for example writing a business plan, having access to funding, networking, etc. The CEMFII was aimed to provide such services in one single place, i.e. through its platform that gathered 6 Montreal's specialised organisations in migration management, female entrepreneurship and diversity promotion, and whose combination offered support to the women immigrants willing to start a business. As such, the CEMFII is quite unique. Unfortunately, with the end of the CRÉ and the uncertain future of the CEMFII, neither data, nor documentation to help understand how women immigrants had access to services of the One-stop-shops are currently available. When the future of the project is better defined and documents available, further empirical research will be carried out.

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this paper was to review the most relevant literature on the relations between the State and the third sector and to apply the results, when applicable, to position a specific 'public – third sector' relationship, i.e. the CEMFII, within the various ideal types of such relationships. The characteristics of the CEMFII, reveal that it has been risky, complex and complicated, just like any other 'public – no public' relation (Cairns & Harris, 2011; Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Jones, 2007; Salamon, 2002; Van Slyke, 2007). In particular, because of its hybrid nature, it does not refer to a single and specific predefined type of relationship. The CEMFII experiences interaction dynamics of the 'public – third sector' relations.

Within the *economic and political relation approaches*, and in particular in the framework of collective action theory (Olson, 1971) and the *free riding* approach, the roles that the main actors assume in the project, i.e. the State financing the activities and the third sector organisations supplying them, given their distinct expertise, put in place more a complementary relation (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002) than a mistrustful one (Gazley & Brudney, 2007). Their distinct expertise gives definitely birth to a collaboration relation, either within the *interaction style approaches*, where the State provides funds and the third-sector organisations produces goods and services, or within the *collaboration and partnership approaches*, where cross-sector collaborations occur to solve the issue of the economic integration of female immigrants. Moreover, the State – third sector organisations relationship, which takes the form of on-going conversations on several topics such as the funding by the CRÉ, the choice of the activities to be delivered by the CEMFII, the agreement of the CEMFII to deliver the specified services and to define the organisational field within which the relations occur (Hoffman, 1999), is to be included within the *contractual approaches* and within *cross-sector social partnerships* (Selsky & Parker, 2010).

While the effectiveness of the CEMFII to solve some difficulties of female immigrant entrepreneurs may be generally acknowledged, this should be numerically ascertained in future research. Indeed, it will be crucial to address the question of the results of CEMFII's activity and the extent to which its services have reached the needs of women in

different ethnic and cultural groups. To more fully explore the relationship that occurred between CEMFII and the CRÉ, it might be useful to collect data from at least three sources: governmental and official documents; in-depth interviews with former representatives of the CRÉ and representatives of each of the six component organisations of CEMFII; together with in-depth interviews with a sample of female immigrant entrepreneurs. In doing so, we will attempt to answer empirically to the following research question: has the One-Stop-Shop service for female immigrant entrepreneurs in Montreal been able to offer the services that match the needs of female immigrant entrepreneurs? This will help to further understand in what particular areas the CEMFII has been more successful and in which ones it has been least. This will, in turn, give sound information to make recommendations that would lead to more effective policies and practices in the future.

Moreover, just before its disappearance, the CRÉ began to examine the differences between its objectives, those of CEMFII and of the immigrant female-owned organisations, as a result of the increasingly apparent gap between perceptions, expectations and achievements. Given the context of Montreal's constant changing economy, it will be interesting to evaluate and measure the effects of those major structural changes. Lastly, given the importance of international migration for all of Canada, a comparison of CEMFII with similar organisations and mechanisms set in the other two major Canadian migration cities would be useful. That is, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Business Immigrant Integration Support (BIIS) program, in Vancouver, BC, and the Global Business Centre (GBC) at the New Centre of Peel (NCP), in the Greater Toronto Area, ON, even though neither of these programmes were specifically tailored for migrant women. Such a comparison has become even more important after the disappearance of the CRÉ, as the result of change in social policies of the Liberal Government of Quebec. So, while there is no evidence that the CEMFII's dependency on the public funds constitutes a threat to the mission and autonomy of the not-for-profit organisations involved (Salamon, 1987), there clearly exists a sustainability issue linked to political leadership changes (Salamon, 2006; Smith & Lipsky, 1993). This contingency leads to a secondary research question to explore in the future: to what extent are social issues, such as economic integration of female immigrants, strong determinants to a public – third sector organisations collaborative and partnership relationship?

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Acknowledgements and Financial Disclosure

The authors would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for supporting our research and Villes Régions Monde (VRM) for their financial assistance.

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