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Beyond the « Quebec model »: how institutions in specific public sector had long-term effects on the forms of protest

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Abstract
Literature on the Quebec model emphasizes that the national stake in Quebec society regarding the political status of Quebec in Canada has contributed to building a citizenship regime distinct from what exists in the rest of the country. One of the most important specificities of this regime concerns the way relationships between civil society actors and the Quebec state are organized and deployed through times. If we agree with this analysis, we argue in this paper that the national question has also been translated into specific institutions that had direct and indirect impacts on the ways protest has developed in the society. The analysis is based on the cases of housing struggles and post-secondary education struggles since the 1970s with interviews with main social movement leaders in both cases and documentary analysis of main social groups. We also rely on interviews with the main political leaders present when turning point politics were adopted (1983 law in education and 1997 programs in the housing sector).

Introduction

Béland and Lecours research have shown that nationalist movement affects the structure of the welfare state (2006). In the case of Quebec, they convincingly show how the subnational state searches for organizing solidarity on the subnational territory, especially since the 1995 referendum and thus has adopted distinct social policies (and subnational configuration) which have put pressure on the federal government and other provinces. Dufour and Traisnel (2008) have reached similar conclusion, showing how the Quebec nationalist movement has durably framed the political dynamics and development of Quebec society. Many other scholars in Quebec argue more generally that the question of the political status of Quebec in the Canadian federation resulted in the emergence of a "Quebec model", or Quebec way to do politics, distinct from what existed elsewhere in Canada (Jetté 2008; Rigaud *et al*. 2010; White 2012a).

In the majority of these work, the "national question" - as a political issue not resolved in Quebec society- is supposed to have a constant and uniform impact on policy development, being a fact out there –either as anchored in social and political forces, or as a collective (dominant) identity or as a global mechanism that influences the type of political dynamics at work.

In this paper, we propose to unpack the role played by the “national question” in Quebec policy regime, by tracking it through time (1970 – 2015) in two sectors of public intervention (housing and post-secondary education). By considering mid-term processes, we are able to show that the “national question” is not only having effect on global political decisions, the type of the welfare-state or political dynamics among political parties, but these punctual effects have also mid-term influences on future developments, and especially on the forms and types of social protest in each sector.

Pursuing a research line open by Jenson and Phillips (1996) with the “citizenship regime”, we show that we should go beyond the national question and specific events in Quebec history to consider how this stake has been translated into specific institutional arrangements in each sector and how these arrangements shaped, in return, the way social protest is organized.

For the purpose of the paper, we used secondary sources in housing and post-secondary education policy sectors, informative interviews with key political leaders in each sector, interviews with key actors of protest in each sector and documents from main collective actors involved in protest during the period (see appendix). This research is part of a larger research project, funded by the SSRHC, on the institutional foundations of protest in three societies: Quebec, France and Spain.

In the first part of the paper, we come back to the literature on the Quebec model, highlighting the specific aspects we need to unpack. The second and third parts of the paper go back to these aspects in post-secondary education and housing sector showing how they have translated in some specific forms of protest.

1. About the Quebec model and beyond

The Quebec model literature insists on three dimensions that distinguish the way “politics” is done in Quebec compared with the rest of Canada.
In brief, we can summarize as:

- *The Quebec Inc.:* the progressive constitution of a francophone bourgeoisie attached to the defence of Quebec's economic interests vis-à-vis the rest of Canada and which have specific links with the Parti Québécois (Bourque 2000; Bélanger 1994);
- The presence of political cleavage concerning the political status of Quebec inside or outside the Canadian federation: this cleavage is carried on by social and political forces that has prevented the right/left cleavage to be dominant (at least between 1960 and 2006 when the left party Quebec Solidaire (QS) was created (Dufour, 2009). The traditional bi-partism has been organized around the national question, opposing sovereignists to federalists in the provinces (Nadeau, 1992). In each camp, coexist more and less progressive tendencies (Chouinard, 2017). Part of the work done on the Parti Québécois consider it as a leftist nationalist party (Béland and Lecours, 2011). Nevertheless, conservative trends have always existed in the PQ and, it is more the balance of power between the two trends that have decided the general orientation of the party; always in the necessity to build compromise in order to maintain the coalition (Montigny, 2012).
- Some ways of doing politics that looks like a kind of “neo-corporatism”. In some sectors (health, education, work relationships and professional training), consultation and

concertation with social actors (including the *Quebec Inc.* just described) is more used by the Quebec state than elsewhere in Canada (Côté and Simard, 2013). Thus, unions and business representative have been usually associated to “large orientations” of the state. We can mention few examples of this association: the two socio-economic Summit of 1996 by Lucien Bouchard (PQ); the Summit on youth organized by François Legault in 2000 (PQ); the Summit on education of the minority government of Pauline Marois in 2013 (PQ); the Summit on food policy of the Couillard government in 2017 (PLQ). In some sectors, this concertation is codified and formalized (like on professional training) while in other sectors, it relies on the political will and practice of the politicians in power (Dufour, 2007). That is why we cannot speak about a formal neo-corporatism, like in Germany or Sweden.

To these three dimensions, we can add some specific mode of collective representation, in which some groups of civil society participate in the elaboration and implementation of public policies. Jenson has demonstrated this particularity in the case of children's daycare (Jenson, 1998), but others have shown the same thing for healthcare centre, mental health or women services (Dufour, 2019). In this specific architecture, community and advocacy groups are recognized as “partners” of the state, they have access to some financing (White 2012b; Jetté 2008), concertation spaces (Laforest 2000 and 2011) and are associated quite frequently to policy design (for example, see Bourgeois, 2016). They are also recognized as “experts” in their domain of intervention.

This Quebec citizenship regime is thus anchored in specific institutional arrangements that we are able to analyse. We propose to do that for post-secondary education and housing. In the next two parts, we will address the following questions for each case: what is the path the public sector has followed since 1960; how the national question was part of the story and what are the effects of that on the way contestation developed in this sector?
It is not just the question of how groups position themselves on the national question and the PQ (it is part of the story, but not all the story). We will show that the national question has played as cement among groups and the provincial government vis-à-vis the federal in the housing sector; as an exchange money for students to obtain some institutional arrangements they consider in their interests; as a political opportunity at the moment of the first and second referendums in both sectors. The decisions and institutional arrangements, linked at the time with the national question, have still some effects on the trajectory of the movements and their dynamics today.

This analysis pursues the Canadian neo-institutionalist tradition of research, looking at the relationships among social and political actors, and how they translate into specific institutional arrangements. Nevertheless, we propose to “push” the questioning beyond the border of the state, which is usually done in the literature, by looking at the retro feedback of these arrangements on social movement actors and their dynamics. Besides, we compare two sectors of public intervention, not considering a priori that the same processes happened in each sector but opening the possibilities of differentiation between sectors.

2. The Higher Education Regime, the Student Movement and the National Question

The Higher Education Regime and the National Question

While the origins of the higher education system in Quebec come from a long tradition of institutions controlled mainly by clergy (Audet, 1971), its current form was directly shaped by the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education in the Province of Quebec (the Parent Commission), held between 1963 and 1966. According to the recommendations of this Commission chaired by Bishop Alphonse Marie Parent, the primary goal of a reform in education was to quickly make up for the delay accumulated by the francophone population regarding the rate of schooling and graduation. For the Parent Commission, only the democratization of education could make it possible. Four aspects were mentioned for this purpose: the question of the accessibility to education, ie "the right of everyone to an education in accordance with his aptitudes and gifts, regardless of the wealth situation of his family" (op.cit ., t.1, p.39); the democratization of authority in education, the democratization of local school administrations and finally, the democratization of financial and material resources between the different institutions of the school system (Rocher, 2004). Most of the institutions currently active in university governance in Quebec come from these proposals: the Department of Education and Higher Education, Cégeps, Financial Aid for Education and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.

These institutions managed to quickly reduce Quebec's historical backwardness in education. Statistics show that in 1960, 3% of young French Canadians aged between 20 to 24 attend university, while English-speaking universities such as McGill, Bishop and Sir George Williams (now Concordia) host 11% of young Anglophones of the same age group. At that time, girls had an even tougher access to university than their male counterparts and were not accepted in all programs. In the early 1960s, they represented only 14% of Quebec's university population (Corbo, 2008 and 2004). In 2016, 34% of the Quebec population aged between 25 to 64 had a university degree, only 2% less than the Canadian average (MEES, 2018).

This transformative mission could not be accomplished without an unprecedented centralization of educational responsibilities in the province. This mission was facilitated by the fact that education is under quasi-exclusive provincial jurisdiction, thus avoiding conflicts with the federal government over the form and contents of these reforms. Discussions between these two levels of government focused on the level of transfers to finance Quebec's education system. The budgetary efforts required to completely transform the education system was substantial. The Ministry of education thus became the second largest portfolio after the health portfolio. Symbolically, the creation of this ministry was accompanied by strong expectations on the part of the Quebec population who rapidly conceived it as a key tool for cultural and national development.

The Quebec postsecondary education regime is also characterised by a formal recognition and financing of students associations. In 1983, the *Loi sur l'accréditation et le financement des associations d'élèves ou d'étudiants* (or Bill 32) has been adopted. This legislative tool introduces three mechanisms very important for our demonstration: 1) the formal recognition of one student association by post-secondary establishment; 2) the exclusivity of representation given to this association; 3) inspired by unions financing arrangements

(RAND formula), the law requires the school institutions to collect from the student bill the contributions allowing the association to finance itself. This is an automatic deduction, at source, but not mandatory, to the extent that a student can apply for withdrawal of his contribution. Amounts are determined by the association itself.

The student associations thus recognized by the 1983 Law certainly have power in the universities, both within the official bodies and in their informal discussions with the leaders of the university. Nevertheless, this law does not provide for any national representation of university students. However, since university funding is primarily public, it becomes imperative for students to build organizations to represent them vis-à-vis the government. National student associations play this role. Although they are not officially recognized by the state, they are funded by local student associations. From 1976 to 2012, these associations were generally divided on the question of their more or less democratic internal organization and on the means of action to be favored in order to influence the government. Thus, the national associations organized in federations preferred the path of lobbying and electoral influence, whereas the more combative associations generally favored the use of strikes and direct action (Dufour and Savoie, 2014). The institutional mode of financing, that put local associations in competition for formal recognition has helped perpetuated the divide among the two branches of the movement.

Since the provincial government does not recognize national student associations, their discussions generally do not take place in a formal context. However, from time to time, the Minister of education sets up a broad consultation and invites representatives from national student associations to participate. However, history has taught students to be wary of these summits that have often served to endorse decisions made in advance by the government. Student associations called "combative" systematically refused to take part in these summits, instead organizing demonstrations denouncing these "public relations exercises" (ASSÉ, 2013).

Thus, the system of post-secondary student representation has given a significant relative weight to the student movement, which has a high potential for mobilization and has established itself as a key political interlocutor over the course of conflicts. The strength of resilience in Quebec university governance is undoubtedly linked to the ever-renewed vigor of the student movement, which has maintained a certain accessibility to higher education. In particular, the 2005 and 2012 conflicts halted reforms aimed at restricting the number of scholarships offered to the most needy students (2005) and increasing university fees (2012).

The National Question, the Parti Québécois and the Student Movement

The Quebec student movement has a complex history that is somewhat difficult to synthetize without losing either its sociological context or its intrinsic diversity. This is even more true when one tries to take into account its links with the national question. Despite these difficulties, we will distinguish three distinct era that marked important changes in this regard: 1960 to 1967, 1968 to 1976 and 1976 to 2012.

The 1960-1967 period was marked by the creation of a student movement organised around the principle of unionism. This period was also characterized by a collaboration between the students' associations and the liberal party in support to the nationalists politics part of the

quiet revolution (Theurillat-Cloutier, 2017). The victory of the Liberals in the 1960 election, with their slogan *C'est le temps que ça change* (it's time time for a change) announced the beginning of the quiet revolution and students wanted to take part to it (Gagnon, 1971). With the emergence of an independentist movement, centered around the creation of the *Rassemblement pour une indépendance nationale* (RIN) in 1961, the national question became central in the political and intellectual agenda of that era.

The nationalist agenda in the student movement at that time was revolving around a few organisations: the general student associations of the three french universities, and two student newspapers *Presse étudiante nationale* (PEN) and *Quartier latin*. In order to gain in cohesiveness, the Union Générale des étudiants du Québec (UGEQ) was founded by Bernard Landry in late-1963. Their main claim was a fee free education, which was also an electoral promise made by the liberals in the 1960 election. Among the many political struggles led by Jean Lesage and supported by students, we can note the reform of education contained in the Parent report, the nationalization of hydroelectricity and the increase of federal transfers to Quebec.

The collaboration with the newly elected Union National (UN) government in 1966 was good at first with the creation of a tripartite committee (government, unions and UGEQ) to think about the accessibility of studies (Leduc, 2010 : 122). In spite of this committee and although the promise of the UN to establish free education in its electoral campaign, this promise never realized itself and the students became much more confrontational with the government (Theurillat-Cloutier, 2017).

The 1968-1976 era saw a clear radicalization in the ideology of the student movement and a general mistrust towards government. At that time, the movement leaders became more clearly in favor of the independence of Quebec (Gagnon, 1971). This era started with the fall 1968 student strike that happened in many cegeps. Their principal claim was for the increase of the number of places in french universities in the province. Even though UGEQ was officially in favor of the protest, the executives often demonstrated what was perceived as a paternalistic attitude towards the younger Cégep students. The hiring of Bernard Landry by the Ministry of education to negotiate with the students was very badly perceived by the students engaged in the struggle. This episode is one that has greatly contributed to the future split in the student movement.

From 1976 to 2012 the student movement became divided into two distinct groups: the concertationist branch, generally aligned with the Parti Québécois, was willing to work with the provincial government in place in order to negotiate, and the combative branch that was more in a conflictual position towards government. This set-up has broken after the huge 2012 mobilization, but has persisted for almost 40 years.

During this period of time, the "national question" has played several roles in the trajectory of the student movement. The most known effect is the involvement of students (mainly as leaders) in national association that has served as a launchpad for future political career in the PQ, some of them becoming ministers of the province (Bernard Landry, Claude Charron, Louise Harel, François Rebello, André Boisclair). Yet, the non-expected longer term effect of the post-secondary education regime on student social movement trajectory is less known.

We come back to this, by revisiting the context of the 1983 Law that has (and still) shaped the dynamics of the movement.

As with the housing sector, it is interesting to revisit the context of the adoption of Bill 32, which is intrinsically linked to the construction of a community of interests and identity around the national question[1].

At the time, the student movement was separated between ANEQ and the Reunion of University Student Associations (RAEU). The RAEU was initially a university caucus within the ANEQ, which will eventually separate from it and become a rival student group (in 1981). It was during the national strike of 1978 about loans and bursaries that the division appeared strongly. For part of the ANEQ, the PQ should be the main target of struggle because it has been in power since 1976 (this tendency was also very closed to the extreme-left and more confrontational in its privileged tactics), while for others, the PQ was the main carrier of the national project, and could not not be an enemy. It was necessary to work in consultation with it. This tendency will become the RAEU and will sustained the PQ in the referendum campaign in 1980. The referendum question was less consensual for the other tendency in the ANEQ. As in other community groups, the society project proposed by the PQ was seen as “bourgeois” by the extreme-left activists who were not supporting it.

Beaudoin, permanent of the ANEQ at the time precises:
" RAU members were people who had organized a lot politically at the time of the 1980 referendum in an organization called the Student Movement for Yes (MÉOUI), which campaigned for Yes in the referendum.

In 1981, a Colloquium was organized at the University of Montreal by the RAEU (with the presence of Camille Laurin and the financing of the education minister) which was supposed to lay the foundations of a Charter that will focus on the rights and responsibilities of the student associations. Finally, the RAEU changes its mind, there will be no Charter, but the Secretary General of the RAEU, Jean Baillargeon, will be part of a committee of the MEQ and CREPUQ to discuss / settle the issue of recognition of student associations. This committee will lead to the 1983 law. Bill 32 was literally proposed by the RAEU to the Minister of education, Camille Laurin. It was largely written by its Secretary General, who worked in the same offices that civil servants whose mandate was to draft a bill (interview Baillargeon). More generally, several RAEU leaders were also activists in the PQ at that time and the links between the two associations were closed.

For RAEU leaders, the formalization of the recognition of student associations in a law was seen as a progress for students to the extent that a certain stability would be ensured by it. It was also perceived as a way to get rid of the ANEQ and the marxist-leninist tendency, because they thought that the mechanisms of recognition establishment by establishment will favor concertationnist associations.

[1] For this section, we rely mainly on interviews with past leaders of the student movement and archives analysis. The secondary literature on this episode is very rare.

Jean Baillargeon, who was Secretary General of the RAEU in 1983, said that
"The central idea was to dedicate self-financing to a law to avoid cuts to student association funds after a strike or a pressure tactic, for example."

For the ANEQ leaders, Bill 32 was seen as a way for the State and the institutions to control the student movement and prevent recognition of the social strength of the student associations. As one of our interviewed said (Beaudoin): “so we replace the fight on the ground to be recognized by a law that is managed from the top”. They considered also that it was dangerous to be told by the State how to organize and how to act. Even if ANEQ presented itself as a student union, it was very aware of the legislative framework of unions which was perceived as a way of removing power from unionist, especially by regulating the right to strike (interview Corriveau, Central Council, and archival documents).

For the Ministry of education, Bill 32 relies both on the conviction that it was a good decision that facilitates the integration of students into the management of universities, which gives an official status and a voice to student associations, but it was also a way to map their place and to ensure a relative social peace on campuses. Finally, it was a way to offer something to the RAEU in the context of the strong links between the PQ and the ANEQ.

According to former ANEQ representative (Beaudoin, permanent worker, ANEQ):
"Bill 32 could ensure that student associations were less militant, less likely to make wildcat strikes or uncontrolled or spontaneous actions and place their action more in the institutional representation, the representation on the board of directors of the institution through more institutionalized negotiating channels ".

The law was adopted and implemented quickly, with no real opposition from the ANEQ (Corriveau interview), which knew at that time significant internal difficulties that had a direct impact on its ability to mobilize.

To understand these rationales, it is important to consider the moment of the decision. Before Bill 32, student associations were *de facto* recognized at the local level and negotiated their funding with each local institutions. The agreement was not very stable in the long term, but in practice, except in certain cases where recognition could be an issue between the students and the administration, or if student associations competed with each other to obtain the monopoly of representation, the practices of de facto recognition was quite well implemented.

Beaudoin, permanent worker at the ANEQ at the time, said:
"There was an agreement where the student association was recognized by the institution, it had the monopoly of representation and then the institution collected the student dues set by the student association. But there were some cases where student associations were not recognized, or who had difficulty reaching the recognition, at UQAM in particular it was the case. But in general, it was a flexible mode of functioning that was based on a de facto recognition of the constitution of associations, because there had been battles, struggles, general meetings. It was the actual strength of association that was recognized ".

In other words, if a local association controlled a territory locally, then it would negotiate its recognition and funding.

Interestingly (and unexpectedly) Bill 32 did not lead to the disappearance of the fighting branch of student movement; it could even be said that it allows the movement to reproduce its two branches whose relative weight varies according to the period considered and which are in a relationship of balance of forces. Because national associations are not formally recognized, there is still an element of "struggles" for existence, not regulated by law, which obliges national associations and federations to maintain a link with their local associations, notably by mobilizations. In addition, Bill 32 institutionalized, in a way, the competition between (local) associations for accreditation (and thus the recognition of the monopoly of representation). Indeed, and this was a great fear of the ANEQ at the time (ANEQ Central Council, National Congress, June 1983), it is possible through the mechanisms of the law for a group of students who feel that they are not represented by their (local) association to request that a new consultation be held, creating a potentially conflictual and unstable situation. And this is what happened between 2005 and 2012 when many local associations have disaffiliated the concertationist branch to join the more combative branch (Dufour and Savoie 2014).

As we can see, Bill 32 has shaped the Quebec student movement since its adoption in 1983, by freezing not the organizations themselves (which was what was expected by the RAEU in favor of the law and the government in place) but the conflictual dynamics between the two branches of the movement. At the heart of the law proposal and adoption, the national question has served as a cement to build (quite stable) community of identities and interests. A similar pattern is noticeable in the housing struggle dynamics.

3. Housing regime, housing struggles and the national question

Housing is a complex area of intervention where all levels of government are involved and where, as Banting points out (1990:131), social housing has historically been used as “a weapon in the struggle for hegemony among the governments of Canada.” The issue of sharing responsibilities between the various levels is therefore at the heart of the regime changes in this sector.

The housing regime and the Quebec model

There is no explicit reference to the division of responsibilities for housing in the Canadian Constitution. Although this jurisdiction generally belongs to the provinces, the federal government has maintained a presence in this area since the Second World War, particularly with constructive interventions in the mortgage market through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). In terms of social housing, the federal government has also made extensive use of its spending power and was the main government leader until withdrawing from this field in the mid-1990s (Suttor 2016). The announcement of its return in 2017 with the National Housing Strategy demonstrates that housing remains a grey area of Canadian federalism and that intergovernmental relations on this issue are still evolving. In accordance with its welfare state regime classification, the Canadian government opted for a liberal or dualist housing model, based on the development of an effective and efficient housing market and residual support for low-income households unable to find adequate housing on the market (Pomeroy and Falco 2013; Divay, Séguin and Sénécal 2005; Hulchanski 2004).

Following in the footsteps of the other provinces, the Quebec government established its own housing corporation, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ), in 1967 to enable municipalities to take advantage of federal urban renewal programs and create low-income housing programs (Bendaoud 2016). From then until the federal government withdrew funding for new social housing units in 1994, the nature of the Quebec government's intervention differed little from that of the other provinces and focused mainly on cost-sharing programs with the federal government (Arsenault 2018). Under the first two PQ governments from 1976 to 1985, the province also established a ministry of housing and, in 1980, created the Régie du logement, a permanent administrative tribunal dealing exclusively with disputes between landlords and tenants. In this area, the Quebec government has demonstrated stability over time, enshrining certain tenant rights in its civil code and promoting a so-called balance-of-interests approach based on the publication of annual rent increase indices (Thibodeau 2001).

The 1990s truly represent a critical juncture in the evolution of social housing policies in Canada (Suttor 2016). Quebec is one of only two provinces, along with British Columbia, that quickly implemented a new funding program for social housing after the federal government withdrew. In 1997, after holding two major economic and employment summits, the Government of Quebec announced the implementation of AccèsLogis, a program dedicated to funding cooperatives and non-profit housing organizations, and the development of the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire, administered in partnership with civil society groups (tenant associations, housing cooperative associations, etc.) and designed to provide longer-term funding in this area. According to the latest available figures, AccèsLogis has developed 38,524 social housing units in Quebec over a period of 20 years, mainly in the form of cooperatives and non-profit housing organizations (SHQ 2019)[2]. In the context of the implementation of AccèsLogis, the PQ government also announced specific funding for groups promoting social housing and helping to form application committees for future projects. Commonly referred to as the "contribution to the sector," this measure was set at 1% of annual investments made through AccèsLogis. A complex calculation was used to allocate funding equally among the various provincial groups involved in social housing (FRAPRU, AGRTQ and CQCH) and their member groups[3]. There have been no major changes to this system since 1997, and these measures continue to be a cornerstone of the public housing intervention regime
in Quebec.

[2] Since 2002, municipal housing authorities, responsible for public housing, can also benefit from the program, but account for only 4% of completed housing units (Vaillancourt et al. 2017). It should be noted that despite these investments, the social housing stock in the province remains insignificant and accounts for only 4.1% of the total residential housing stock, slightly higher than the current Canadian average of 3.7% (CMHC 2017). Meanwhile, Quebec continues to have a much lower homeownership rate (61.3%) than the Canadian average (69.3%) (SHQ 2019), which may explain in part its stronger inclination to recognize tenant rights.

[3] When the funding measure was adopted, the non-profit housing community did not yet have a province-wide association. When the Réseau québécois des OSBL d'habitation (RQOH) was created in 2000, the subsidy was shared equally with that community. According to the latest available figures, the FRAPRU, the CQCH, the RQOH and the AGRTQ each received 9% of the annual funding related to the measure. The members of the first three associations mentioned shared just over 19% of the funds (White, Dufour and Goyer 2007: 9).

Given the active role played by some groups in developing and implementing these policies, several authors have interpreted these new institutional arrangements as a manifestation of the Quebec model (Vaillancourt et al. 2017; Bouchard, Frohn and Morin 2010) and therefore of the national question, as indicated in the first part. Arsenault (2018), on the other hand, relying on the theory of power resources, attributes the adoption of these institutional arrangements to the 1994 arrival of a more interventionist PQ and to the pressure exerted by community groups, primarily the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) and the Association des groupes de ressources techniques du Québec (AGRTQ). These two explanations are not mutually exclusive and may very well be complementary. Nevertheless, we argue that the national issue has been the glue binding political actors (PQ) and social actors, enabling institutional arrangements to take shape.

Forms of protest in the housing sector and the national question

The organizational configurations of the right to housing movement in Quebec have been particularly stable since the 1970s (Dufour and Ancelovici 2018). The movement is made up of two categories of actors: advocacy groups and community housing groups (Bergeron-Gaudin 2017). The FRAPRU and the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ), both founded in 1978, belong to the first category and are the two main organizations involved in contentious politics at the Quebec level. The former has mainly fought for the protection and development of social housing, and the latter, for more rent control and better access to justice for tenants. These two groups are made up of a network of approximately 50 housing committees[4] that work at the local level, providing legal advice to tenants and conducting community organization work (Breault 2017). Public housing tenants are also represented by a provincial organization, the Front des locataires d'habitations à loyer modique du Québec (FLHLMQ), but its mission is primarily focused on the internal management of housing. The second category of community housing actors[5] includes housing cooperatives, non-profit housing organizations and technical resource groups, which provide support to citizens wishing to carry out new social housing projects. Each of these networks is structured at the Quebec level through a collective (Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation, Réseau québécois des OSBL d'habitation and Association des groupes de ressources techniques du Québec) that defends the interests of its members with the provincial government and acts more like a lobby group.

There has been relatively little debate on the national issue per se in the history of the movement. Not surprisingly, the issue was mostly discussed during the referendum periods. The 1990s remain the most interesting period for our discussion. As mentioned, this decade is characterized by an initial sectoral process tied to the withdrawal of federal funding for social housing in 1994. Simultaneously, a second process of a societal nature took place through the constitutional debate created by the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and led to the second referendum in 1995. This pair of processes had an impact on the positioning game played by the PQ and some organizations in the housing rights movement, particularly the FRAPRU, and helped pave the way for the 1997 institutional arrangements.

[4] Several housing committees are members of both groups. All 52 members of the RCLALQ are housing committees, while the FRAPRU has 148 members, many of whom are community groups or women's groups that are not directly involved in the housing sector.
[5] In Quebec, the term "community housing" (habitation communautaire) is often used to distinguish cooperatives and non-profit housing from low-income social housing (see Bouchard and Hudon 2008).

From the beginning of the 1990s, the FRAPRU highlighted in its representations to the federal government Quebec's specific social housing needs and the imbalance in the distribution of funding among the provinces[6]. Also, the announcement of social housing funding cuts by the federal government led the FRAPRU to launch a campaign in 1991 that would run until the federal government completely withdrew in 1994. For example, on April 22, 1992, the FRAPRU organized a major protest for the survival of social housing in Montréal, which was attended by a number of federal, provincial and municipal elected officials.

Alongside this struggle against the federal government, the FRAPRU was also one of the most active community groups in the constitutional debate in Quebec, declaring itself openly in favour of independence. On November 14, 1990, at the opening of the Bélanger-Campeau Commission on the political future of Quebec, the group organized a picket line with other community groups and students in front of the hotel where the consultations were being held to denounce the absence of organizations representing the interests of the popular classes among the invited groups[7]. The FRAPRU was one of the only community groups that was able to participate in the Commission. It defended the position that Quebec society was a nation that was held in a position of inferiority and oppression within Canada. "The fact that the Canadian Constitution has repeatedly not been able to be overhauled in depth, and the fact that English Canada stubbornly refused to recognize the Quebec nation's right to self-determination, made it impossible not to vote for the independence of Quebec. [translation]"[8] In the 1992 referendum on the Charlottetown Accord, the FRAPRU also actively campaigned in a none partisan No coalition, which maintained that the agreement merely reproduced the dynamics of oppression against Quebec and that sovereignty, combined with a progressive project, remained the best option.

In 1994, a few months before the provincial election was called in Quebec, the group changed its strategy by trying to get the then-opposition PQ to make commitments in favour of social housing. On April 26, 1994, it organized a demonstration in front of the party's offices in Montréal. This strategy quickly yielded results: in the summer, in the middle of the election campaign, the PQ promised to invest $35 million in a program to buy and renovate social housing[9]. After the PQ came to power in September, the FRAPRU continued to exert pressure, including organizing a camp and a protest before the National Assembly during the new government's inaugural speech on November 28, 1994. A new program, the Programme d'achat-rénovation des coopératives et des OSBL d'habitation (PARCO), was adopted at the end of the year, but provided for only 1,200 units during the government's entire term. In 1995, the FRAPRU decided to form the Coalition pour le logement social with

[6] FRAPRU archives, news release entitled "Logement social : les mal-logé-e-s du Québec privés de 300 000 000 $" (Social housing: under-housed residents of Quebec robbed of $300,000,000), June 5, 1990 (available in French only).
[7] FRAPRU archives, news release entitled "Pas de Québec sans nous" (No Quebec without us), November 14, 1990 (available in French only).
[8] FRAPRU archives, summary of the brief that was submitted to the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, 1991.
[9] Résolution Montréal is the direct result of a proposal for a housing program developed by the Association des groupes de recherche techniques du Québec (AGRTQ) and the Confédération québécoise des coopératives d'habitation (CQCH) when the federal government announced its withdrawal in 1993 (Arsenault 2018:160-161).

community housing stakeholders (AGRTQ and CQCH) and public housing tenants (FLHLMQ) in order to force the PQ government to make the program permanent and to invest more.

During this period, which coincided with the holding of the second referendum on Quebec independence, the FRAPRU openly reiterated its support for the sovereignty project[10]. In its March 1995 brief submitted to the Commission sur l'avenir du Québec, it defended a progressive vision of independence and emphasized the negative effects of Canadian federalism: [TRANSLATION] "Poverty, unemployment and poor housing conditions are not the monopoly of the Quebec nation… But the concentration and extent of these problems among the people of Quebec are part of a common history, of an organization of society that has systematically maintained this situation of inferiority." As it had done in the past, the group joined a popular Yes coalition, independent of the official committee, including political parties. Along with other grassroots groups and activists and the voluntary sector, it signed a progressive declaration on sovereignty entitled "La souveraineté… pour réinventer la solidarité : rien de moins!" (Sovereignty… to reinvent solidarity: nothing less!)[11]. On October 24, 1995, during the referendum campaign, the FRAPRU also organized a public meeting in Montréal on social housing and sovereignty in the presence of two PQ ministers, Louise Harel and Guy Chevrette. More than 130 housing rights activists attended[12].

After reinforcing the FRAPRU's opposition to the federal government at the beginning of the decade, the national question became an important political opportunity for its consolidation during the second referendum by creating a "community of interests and identities" with the PQ government. Also, former FRAPRU coordinator François Saillant reviewed the process that led to the adoption of the sector contribution measure—along with AccèsLogis—and noted that the previous program, PARCO, already included a similar form of funding:

> We succeeded in those years, which were prior to the referendum, it must be said, and years when the PQ was looking to consult with everyone, our brief [on sovereignty] had been well received, Guy Chevrette had reacted well, and then we started to work on it [a funding measure]. It was quite quick, because there were already announcements in 1996. [translation]

Although it still depended on the level of investment in social housing, the new funding measure through AccèsLogis could represent a significant amount for the groups. In the year of its adoption, for example, it allowed the FRAPRU and 20 of its members to receive a total grant of $462,000[13], concretely resulting in the hiring of employees by tenant associations to promote social housing, in particular through protest actions.

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[10] FRAPRU archives, brief submitted to the Commission sur l'avenir du Québec, entitled "Pour une indépendance progressiste. Contre le statu quo constitutionnel et social" (For a progressive independence, against the constitutional and social status quo), March 1995 (available in French only).
[11] FRAPRU archives, "La souveraineté… pour réinventer la solidarité : rien de moins!" (Sovereignty… to reinvent solidarity: nothing less!), 1995 (available in French only).
[12] FRAPRU archives, meeting attendance list, October 24, 1995.
[13] FRAPRU archives, letter, November 13, 1996.

During our interview, Rémy Trudel, then-Minister responsible for housing, explained that adopting the "contribution to the sector" was mostly a pragmatic decision, emphasizing that the government through the SHQ did not have the expertise necessary to develop projects in the field: "I finally realized that the program would not work if there was no support. In the government … we did not have the experience, we did not have the field expertise, we did not have the ability to provide support. At that moment, the decision was fairly quick." The Minister added that he was aware from the outset that the measure would not diminish the FRAPRU's contentious nature: "I told my colleagues, let's not expect that this would put an end to any kind of protest or request on the part of the FRAPRU, that is not the nature of the organization. They're going to continue because you can't solve everything all at once." During our interview, the minister reminded us on a number of occasions how his meetings with the FRAPRU and community housing stakeholders were crucial in setting up AccèsLogis and the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire.

Although the period following the defeat of the referendum, with the departure of Prime Minister Jacques Parizeau, and the arrival of Lucien Bouchard at the head of the PQ government, in many ways represents a breaking point in the "community of interests and identities" between community groups and the PQ, the reforms and policies put in place in the housing sector in 1997 undisputedly benefited from the past construction of these privileged relationships and from the decisions previously taken.

In 1996, Lucien Bouchard's government actually invited the main representatives of business, labour and civil society to two socio-economic summits (in March and October) in order to resolve the public finance crisis and gain support for his project. As has already been discussed in detail (see Arsenault 2018), the creation of a funding program for social housing was one of the proposals put forward by the Groupe de travail sur l'économie sociale, a civil society body very close to the community housing stakeholders (CQCH and AGRTQ) that had a considerable influence on the decisions made at the summits. However, while participating in the exercise as a representative of a coalition of community groups (Solidarité populaire Québec), FRAPRU coordinator François Saillant walked out of the second summit with other civil society spokespersons to protest the government's refusal to adopt a zero-impoverishment clause in exchange for its zero deficit objective[14]. In early 1997, the FRAPRU launched a very active campaign, including the organization of several camps, to force the government to honour its commitment and implement a social housing program, which was done in the following March budget that provided $215 million over five years for AccèsLogis.

The program was entirely consistent with the previous one (PARCO), in that it relied exclusively on community housing stakeholders (cooperatives, NPOs and technical resource groups) to deliver the new units, in addition to adopting an approach based on target groups[15]. Arsenault (2018) emphasizes the importance of the FRAPRU's pressure and the involvement of technical resource groups in the development of the program. This pressure and proposal dynamic within the movement was confirmed during an interview wtih Louise Harel, then-Minister of Employment under the PQ government, who said: "The FRAPRU, for

[14] The government finally agreed to adopt a zero-impoverishment clause.
[15] To this day, the program has three components: one for families, singles and seniors living independently; a second for seniors with a slight loss of independence; and a third for persons with special housing needs (homeless persons, women victims of domestic violence, etc.).

years and decades, has always wanted to be more … upright in demonstrating than seated at the table. Negotiating involves compromise. The FRAPRU has always considered itself to have an advocacy role and ultimately left the GRT the proposal role. [translation]" The creation of the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire at the same time as the creation of AccèsLogis was also the result of a proposal made by community housing stakeholders.

The adoption of these institutional arrangements in 1997 marks the culmination of the right to housing movement's struggle since the federal government withdrew from social housing. The convergence of the constitutional debate with the federal government's withdrawal from the housing sector during the same period had an impact on the relations between the PQ and certain organizations of the movement, mainly the FRAPRU, by promoting closer ties at the time of the referendum, which led the PQ government to adopt measures that directly served the groups leading the housing fight.

It is important to point out that the FRAPRU, and community groups in Quebec in general, remain very committed to their non-partisan nature, as evidenced by the association's involvement in coalitions outside political parties during referendum campaigns. Nevertheless, the national issue has gone beyond partisan issues and has had a broader impact on the configuration of political forces and their relationships. The continuation of institutional arrangements since that time, including access to funding[16], as in the case of the student movement, shows that the national issue, which has resulted in institutions, continues to influence the dynamics of protest in the housing sector.

The "contribution to sector" continues to be a significant subsidy for a number of local housing committees as well as the FRAPRU, enabling them to pay a significant percentage of a community organizer's annual salary. Since this funding is conditional on promoting social housing, including by participating in protests on this issue, this particular institutional arrangement may also partly explain the greater concern for and visibility of this theme[17]. In order to receive their grant, local groups must demonstrate to the other members of the FRAPRU that they organize a minimum of activities annually to ensure the development of social housing in their territory so that the group recommends to the government that their funding be renewed. Although very few groups have lost their subsidy related to the "contribution to sector" in history, this measure that gives the FRAPRU some power in funding has at times been a source of tension within the movement. Finally, the fact that the measure is set at a percentage (1%) of the amount invested by the Government of Quebec through AccèsLogis has created strong positive feedback for the program over time. In addition to having directly contributed to its adoption, housing groups at different levels within the territory and the FRAPRU depend in part on its maintenance for access to resources.

[16] In addition to the "contribution to the sector," the vast majority of tenant associations receive funding from the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonomie et aux initiatives sociales (SACAIS) as rights advocacy groups under the Policy on the Recognition and Support of Community Action adopted in 2001. This body remains their main funder and provides funding for the mission. Community housing stakeholders are funded by the SHQ.

[17] An analysis of the protest events recorded in newspaper (*La Presse*) between 2005 and 2016 showed that more than 50% of the events organized by the right to housing movement concerned social housing.

Conclusion

In summary, the national question did not have a single regular and constant effect on political life in Quebec, but varied effects, including on the patterns of protest. By unpacking this crucial element and tracking down in two sectors of public intervention, we have been able to show that the national question has served to build a community of interests and identities between the main sovereignist party, the PQ, and some civil society groups which, together, have negotiated particular institutional arrangements at certain points in history that still affect social mobilizations today. In the fields of post-secondary education and housing, we have observed the gradual adoption of modes of recognition and funding that guarantee the sustainability of organizations (even if they change as in education); the possibility for movements to be present throughout the national territory at different scales; the presence of actors in institutional spaces, formal or not, of representation; the possibility also to mobilize resources in a protest register to oppose certain state decisions or to put issues on the agenda by a « bottom up » process. The fact the two institutional arrangements studied more in detail in the two sectors are related to funding is particularly relevant and partly explain the ability of movements to reproduce over time. The national question is at the heart of these institutionalization trajectories of protest in Quebec.

These institutional arrangements have also served as « guardians » for social movements in times of treat when governments questioning their legitimacy: no Minister of Education has yet attempted to amend Bill 32, by revoking it, or even by constricting it. Unlike the trade union milieu where special laws have increasingly forced the right to strike (Petitclerc and Martin 2018), this has not happened in the case of post-secondary education. For housing, the contribution to sector is still there, such as the policy of recognition and support for autonomous community action. This second arrangement is however more fragile because it is not a law. With the recent announcement by the new provincial government more conservative (CAQ) to respect the financial engagements already made in AccèsLogis without investing new sums, the future of this institutional arrangement is more uncertain and will very probably continue to generate mobilization to ensure its continuity.

In a more analytical perspective, it is valuable to look more closely at the institutional effect of the “Quebec model” or Quebec way of doing politics, in order how it affects and shaped all political dynamics, including social protest.

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Appendix - List of interviews for historical aspects of public intervention regimes

Education (Bill 1983):
Jean Baillargeon, General Secretary, RAEU, 1983-1984
Stephan Corriveau, delegate of the Montreal region to the Central Council, ANEQ, 1983-1984.
Jacques Beaudoin, Permanent, ANEQ, 1983-1984
André Querry (for personal archives:

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Housing (Programs 1997):
Rémy Trudel, Minister of Municipal Affairs (responsible for housing), PQ, 1996-1998
Louise Harel, Minister of Municipal Affairs (responsible for housing), PQ, 1998-2002
François Saillant, FRAPRU coordinator, 1979-2016