# The Evolution of City-Region Food Governance in Montreal
## Food Politics, Policy and Planning Under Quebec's Neoliberal Turn

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Abstract

Municipal Food policy councils (FPC) are emerging across Canada. They are innovative governance models that fill an institutional gap by activating policy and engagement at the municipal level. Territorial, or city-region, food systems are the systems of innovation, which combine the goals of quality, health, ecology, fairness and participative democracy. Multi-level and cross-sectorial partnerships can help re-adjust the institutional context to enable, facilitate and champion the emergence of social innovations carried by civic food networks (CFNs). The process of creating an FPC opens a window on the food politics of a place, its actors, and history. This thesis illustrates some of the challenges city-regions may face by providing an in-depth case study of Montreal, Quebec. This thesis explores the influence of the provincial "neoliberal turn" on food planners and CFNs since early 2000. I highlight how neoliberalism has interacted with the institutional legacy of the "Quebec model". In turn, I follow the social formation of groups and coalitions that shape the regional policy networks from 1986 to 2016 and their interactions with public sector organizations. This work adopts a multi-method approach to analyze the negotiations and arrangements within the 2014-2016 Montreal Food Systems Action Plan. Specifically, this thesis uses an assessment tool built on the premises of Actor-Network Theory to evaluate whether the action plan meets the conditions for an effective partnership. I identify the territorial, technical and political dynamic inside and outside this hybrid public sector-civil society partnership to explain its eventual transition into a municipally mandated Food policy council.

Key words: social innovation, municipal food policy councils, city-region food systems, civic food networks, actor-network theory.

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List of tables and diagrams:

List of acronyms:

ANT: Actor Network Theory

BICIM: Bio-Food Council of the Island of Montreal

CC: Coordination Committee

CDC: Community Development Corporations

CEDC: Community Economic Development Corporations

CFN: Civic Food Networks

CREO: Conference of Regional Elected Officials

CRFS: City Region Food Systems

CSO: Civil Society Organization

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FPC: Food policy council

LDC: Local Development Centres

MAFF: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Quebec

MASH: Municipal Agencies, Schools and Hospital Sectors

MHSS: Ministry of Health and Social Services

MPA: Montréal physiquement actif

MUFP: Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

PC: Partners' Committee

RRHL: Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles

RPHA: Regional Public Healthy Agency

RFP: Request for Proposal

SAM: Système alimentaire montréalais, Plan d'action du système alimentaire équitable et durable de la collectivité montréalaise

TFS: Territorial Food Systems

TT: Technical Team

UA: Urban Agriculture

UAWG: Urban Agriculture Working Group

UPA: Union des producteurs agricoles.

QEF: Québec en Forme

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

The techno-productivist and neoliberal paradigm that has underpinned the global food regime is in crisis. The challenges ahead are significant: food insecurity prevails, disproportionally affecting the most vulnerable communities even in the world's wealthiest countries; the planet's natural resources are under mounting pressure; rural communities are being devitalized and multinational corporations are consolidating their hold on how people procure their food and what they eat.

The political economy of the dominant food system, and its underlying principles, has been thoroughly critiqued and challenged across the world. At the end of Olivier de Schutter's mandate[1], the UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food spoke of the imperative of democratizing and diversifying food systems[2]. This leaves us with the task of identifying opportunities to shift power to civic food networks and re-invent the institutions of the state and the market. As policy analysts have shown, an institutional void persists at national levels: "whole-of-government" (MacRae, 2011), and "whole-of-society" (Addy et al, 2014) approaches are needed to enable the emergence of more sustainable, just and healthy food systems.

Cities now host more than half of the global population but food has not traditionally been conceived of as an explicit part of municipal jurisdiction. They now, however, have an important responsibility to champion the re-localization of food systems that integrate the principles of fairness and sustainability. In 2015, the city of Milan launched the Urban Food Policy Pact to advocate for "an international protocol, engaging the largest number of world cities for the development of food systems, based on the principles of sustainability and social justice."[3] (MUFP, 2015). Hundreds of cities have responded to this call for action, including the city of Montreal, Quebec.

City-regions are implementing strategies and instituting models of governance to improve urban food systems (Chapter 2). These models, referred to as local or municipal food policy councils, have been conceptualized as a continuum, varying in the degree of institutional commitment and the role of the local government (MacRae and Donahue, 2013). Food policy councils are receiving increasing attention as they adopt comprehensive approaches to food systems planning, open spaces for reflective

1 United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, 2008-2014 Retrieved from http://www.srfood.org/

2 It is worth noting that the UN Rapporteur was critical of Canada's lack of commitment to domestic food

2 It is worth noting that the UN Rapporteur was critical of Canada's lack of commitment to domestic food security (De Schutter, 2012).

3 An initiative of the Mayor: The road to Milan's Food Policy <http://www.foodpolicymilano.org/en/urban-food-policy-pact-2/>

policy making and integrate the experiments and concerns carried out by civic food networks (Lang, 2005; Renting et al., 2012; Vivero Pol, 2013). As such, they are likely to have an increasing impact on the institutional landscape and urban food systems. New systems of governance that are participatory, cross-sectorial and empowered to activate municipal and regional policies represent the overarching condition to territorialize food systems.

In Montreal, QC, actors in the field of food systems planning have built, for almost three decades, new systems of governance (Chapter 4.2). In the process, community coalitions have flourished, disbanded, re-organized and institutionalized to address food-related issues, such as hunger and poverty urban agriculture and neighbourhood markets. The process of creating a food policy council has been "long and tedious"[4], according to one long-time practitioner, and has faced a number of roadblocks, manifested through political and institutional inertia. Indeed, food systems have been compartmentalized in policy spaces at different levels of government. Since 2011, however, a hybrid public-private-collective partnership, the *Plan d'action du système alimentaire équitable et durable de la collectivité montréalaise* (SAM)[5], has been brought together to fill this institutional void and is now transitioning into Montreal's upcoming, municipally mandated Food Policy Council.

While municipalities are bound to play a greater role in food governance, they do not have independent jurisdiction and, in Canada, are largely dependent on provincial governments[6]. Canada is a federalized system where provincial governments have a great degree of autonomy in areas of social, health and agricultural spending. Among the provinces, Quebec is one of the most distinct culturally, linguistically and historically[7] and has been sternly independent from the federal government. One of the purposes of this thesis is therefore to introduce English-speaking audiences to food policy and governance in Quebec (Chapter 4.1). Quebec has also been a front-runner in terms of food policies[8],

4 Informal interview (2015)

5 SAM stands for *Système alimentaire montréalais*. In English: an action plan for a sustainable and fair food system of the Montreal community.

6 Constitutionally, Canada has a relatively decentralized decision making structure. Since the end of the Canadian Assistance Plan (1996), provinces have even more discretionary power in terms of health, education and social spending. The main agricultural policy instrument, the *Growing Forward* program, also decentralizes decision making to provinces, although the federal government's trade agenda provides an overarching neoliberal and productivist orientation. (De Schutteur, 2012).

7 I do not ignore that other provinces or territories, such as Nunavut, have also a unique trajectory in terms of integrating a distinct cultural community into the construction of the Canadian nation-state. Observers will note, however, that the Indigenous lens is absent from this thesis, although Quebec has made significant advancements in terms of co-governance.

8 This is particularly true in the domains of sustainable agriculture (e.g., land preservation legislation, support for new farmers, environmental cross-compliance mechanisms, agricultural extension services, organic sector programming), and local food economy (labeling schemes, land use planning, rural development), but is perhaps less evident in terms of nutrition policy.

the social and solidarity economy, and participatory governance. Yet since the early 2000s, Quebec has taken a decisive neoliberal turn (Lévesque, 2004; Vaillancourt, 2017), resulting in even greater institutional complexity. The shift towards public-private partnerships and the reform and eventual dissolution of regional agencies illustrate the effects provincial policy on city-region food planning efforts. Bouchard et al. (2005) speak of the reduction of public intervention and a greater orientation towards the business sector and individual citizens rather than social actors as a reflection of neo-liberal governance. City-region food politics represent an arena of both resistance and reproduction of these neo-liberal dynamics by civic food networks and planners.

The SAM 2014-2016 action plan and the creation of the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council in Montreal are central to this thesis. In order to understand how they came about, it is key, in my view, to analyze previous experiences that have shaped food systems planning and governance, as well as the evolution of the provincial context. What influence has the provincial regulatory landscape had on city-region food governance? How have policy networks evolved over the past three decades in Montreal? What issues have they tried to address, and what barriers have they faced? How have these negotiations shaped Montreal's current food strategy and governance? Finally, was the SAM partnership model successful, and if not, what were its limits?

After introducing the reader to the Quebec context (Chapter 4.1), I provide an overview of food systems planning efforts and group formation over a twenty-five year period (Chapter 4.2). This serves to introduce the arrangements between public sector bodies and civil society actors behind the SAM at a time of great institutional uncertainty and provincial neoliberal reform. These multi-level dynamics are summarized in a timeline, available in annex 1 of this thesis (provincial, city-region, local)[9]. I then dive into the activation and implementation of the 2014-2016 SAM action plan (Chapter 5), the core case study behind this thesis. I combine formal and informal interviews with survey results and participant observation (Chapter 3) to give the reader an in-depth, descriptive analysis of the partnerships, policy instruments and governance infrastructure behind the action plan. Further, I look at the negotiation between and within public sector organizations and civil society stakeholders (Chapter 5) to identify priority actions and project leaders. I highlight the territorial dimensions of the SAM, and show their effects on the city-region food system and the political landscape. The triangulation of the data generated across these different sources was helpful to capture different perspectives on the SAM partnership. These layers of analysis enable me in "narrowing down possible perspectives" (Mills,

9 The timeline is separated into three levels, from top to bottom: provincial, city-region and civic food networks. The latter two are distinguished to separate the institutional and municipal bodies with community-based interventions and coalitions. In the narration of this thesis, I combine the two lower layers by focusing on their interactions and negotiations.

2004) on the transformations that are operating in the SAM policy network.

The main theoretical framework that guides my methodology and analysis is Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Chapter 3). I have yet to find an analysis in the English food studies literature that adopts such a lens to articulate city-region food governance. Instead, I build on the previous theoretical contributions, evaluation and field research of public health researcher Angèle Bilodeau, PhD, who studied stakeholder engagement and programming of the regional public health agency of Montreal in the field of social development and food security in 1998 and 2006. The transition of the SAM into a food policy council provides a suitable opportunity to assess twenty-five years of social learning, grassroots innovation and challenges in the policy making process. I also expand the field of food security to the notion of territorial, or city-region, food systems, which practitioners and organizations have been using more readily over the years. I have found ANT useful to engage with the messiness, complexity and dynamism of regional food governance, and it has also provided me with a robust partnership assessment tool that signals where the SAM may be facing unexpected challenges.

This thesis, as comprehensive as I hope it to be, is one of the deliverables of my graduate research work. I have also completed a fifty-page evaluation report – in French – as part of my work with the SAM. A few introductory words on my positionality may be helpful to provide some background on this research.

With a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science degree I graduated from McGill University in 2013, about a year after students had poured into the streets of Montreal demanding greater public investment in higher education and to resist so-called austerity measures. Far from being disenchanting, this wave of youth-led mobilization was energizing. After an internship in international development, I shifted my focus to local issues. I co-founded with several peers (emerging scholars, activists, volunteers, entrepreneurs, etc.) a food justice research-based working group, *Justice alimentaire Montréal* (JAM). Initially aimed at building a bilingual bridge between university campuses (research, curriculum, resources) and community groups, the JAM progressively broadened its mission as a hub for information sharing, building common ground and launching new initiatives with the idea "connect, converge, co-create". In the span of a year, we organized a public forum (Oct. 5$^{th}$, 2013 at Université du Québec à Montréal), a conference (Nov. 11$^{th}$ at *Hautes Études Commerciales* Montréal) and a panel discussion (Mar. 13$^{th,}$ 2014 at the Sustainable Development House, Montreal). The last event was explicitly exploring ways in which food was a municipal issue and asked panellists to discuss opportunities to get the City involved. During this time period, I was actively meeting community groups, including several of the coalitions and organizations that I feature in this thesis. In the hours

preceding my graduation ceremony from McGIll University, I was busy filming[10] an interview with the SAM coordinator.

We received a first round of funding from the Office of Sustainability at McGill University, for a part-time coordinator position, which I occupied, but were unsuccessful in receiving support from a para-municipal agency[11]. I decided instead to pursue a masters degree to continue researching food-related issues in Montreal and build greater competency in facilitating collective action[12]. After exploring different platforms[13], I inquired to the SAM coordinator whether they were willing to bring me in to assist in the evaluation of the action plan. The timing of my degree fitted with the SAM Action Plan 2014-2016 and my request was accepted. In summary, my role developed from being an activist and organizer to being a student and researcher, and finally to being hired as an external, part-time evaluator and consultant. More often than not, I have played all three roles simultaneously.

To make my masters even thornier, I was hired during the 2015 federal elections by a national food sovereignty coalition, Food Secure Canada[14], to make food an electoral issue in Quebec, the Maritimes and Canada's North[15]. We believe the Eat, Think, Vote campaign was successful as the new prime minister listed in the open mandate letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food the task of developing a food policy. The following year, I was tasked, as a research assistant to the Food: Locally Embedded, Globally Engaged (FLEdGE) research network, with conducting a federal and inter-provincial food policy scan. As a result of this yearlong contract, I drafted several discussion papers, a dozen policy maps and a food and farming summary matrix[16]. These were finally presented in a workshop on the "Nitty Gritty of National Food Policy" with Rod MacRae, PhD, during Food Secure

10 Some of the film material is available on the JAM Youtube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPmdm0lnCMYCBdL2sqvATpA

11 In 2013, funding for youth-related programming was managed by the Conference of Regional Elected Officials (CREO), a regional agency that has since been dismantled and merged into the City of Montreal's administration. The CREO was also the institutional anchor of the Feeding Montreal committee (2005-2010) and the SAM (2011-…), and funding the JAM may have possibly appeared redundant.

12 I pursued an inter-departmental degree because Concordia University has a distinguished Department in Applied Human Sciences, which I combined with Community & Public Affairs (Marguerite Mendell, PhD) and Sociology & Anthropology (Satoshi Ikeda, PhD).

13 These included: Justice alimentaire Montréal, two food cooperatives – one rural/farming, the other urban/low-income consumers - and an open source tech start-up. Available on an online Prezi https://prezi.com/1-a1b4xb7kuw/building-the-food-commons

14 Food Secure Canada is a civil society-based alliance of individuals and organizations aiming towards zero hunger, healthy and safe food, and sustainable food systems. foodsecurecanada.org

15 Environmental justice journalist Derek Leahy was in charge of organizing in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia.

16 The FLEdGE network is based out of Wilfrid Laurier University's Center for Sustainable Food Systems. The results of the research are available on the FLEdGE website: https://fledgeresearch.ca/resources-results/mapping-the-food-policy-landscape-in-canada/

Canada's 9th Assembly in Toronto (2016). While this research was not directly related to the evaluation of the SAM, it provided me with an invaluable piece of the provincial and national context that I would otherwise be missing, and which I have made available in this thesis.

As these experiences suggest, my general approach to research is informed by my engagement with civil society. Far from being uncritical of the social institutions that shape civil society, and especially of the ways in which they reproduce exclusionary practices or neoliberal dogmas, I draw on them to generate knowledge that is relevant and useful to advance food policy. Similarly, I wish to bridge some of the existing gaps, most notably between my Anglophone peers and my Francophone colleagues in food planning in Montreal and Quebec. The concluding chapter (Chapter 6) of this thesis highlights my personal learning outcomes of navigating a process of institutionalization. This self-ethnographic piece reveals my personal construction of knowledge as an actor-network and my experience in undertaking the evaluation process.

# Chapter 2. Key concepts, approaches and research issues

My thesis borrows from food studies literature in the disciplines of geography, sociology, political science and public policy. I introduce a number of concepts, including territorial or city-region food systems, urban food governance, and municipal food policy councils. Before I turn to this, I highlight some of the key authors that have introduced me to Quebec's unique institutional trajectory.

## 2.1. Social innovation and institutional change in Quebec

Social innovations are defined as an "intervention initiated by social actors to respond to an aspiration, to satisfy a need, to bring a solution or benefit from an opportunity of action to change social relationships, to transform the frame of action or to propose new cultural orientations." (Bouchard and Lévesque, 2012, p.133). The concept of innovation as both a process and a system was first applied to the spheres of science and technology, to economic development, to research and public policies (ibid, p. 131). Since then, the sociology of social innovation has emerged as the multi-faceted study of regulatory, institutional and organizational change. In the context of Quebec, the sociology of social innovation has rooted itself in a distinct cultural project and the renewal of the social and solidarity economy (Mendell and Neamtan, 2010, Bouchard and Lévesque, 2012).

Social innovation occurs when the macro-economic, regulatory model (state, market, civil society) enters a process of instability and reconfiguration. It is intimately tied to the lifecycle of the dominant regulatory system at play, emerging in times of crisis when social exclusion intensifies. The nebulous 'third sector', or so-called civil society, functions as a fertile ground for social innovation to respond to needs or aspirations that are either unmet, or exacerbated, by the institutions of the state and the market. In Quebec, the multiple facets of social innovation have been thoroughly studied by the Research Center on Social Innovation (Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales, CRISES), which acts as a provincial network of academics from the disciplines of public policy, social work, geography and sociology (Mendell and Neamtan, 2010; Lévesque, Fontan and Klein, 2014). In this thesis, I draw from the sociology of social innovation to explore the heterogeneity of Quebec's institutional landscape as it moves from a partnership-based model in the 1980s-1990s to a neo-liberal[17] model from the 2000s onwards (Bouchard et al., 2005; Vaillancourt 2017). Indeed, while the culture of deliberation and co-construction between social actors (often referred to as *concertation* in Quebec's community sector)

17 "Broadly defined, neoliberalism is a global project of capital accumulation through dispossession by a dominant economic elite (Harvey 2005) – an economic and political ideology that eschews government intervention, and privileges economic rationalities, free trade, and market-based responses to environmental and social problems (Heynan et al .2007 )." (Andrée, Ballamingie and Brynne Sinclair-Waters, 2014, p.1)

and partnership between state and civil society has somewhat persisted, they have also been re-configured and combined by neo-liberal reform, resulting in a complex institutional landscape (Bouchard et al., 2005; Vaillancourt, 2017). The originality of this component of the thesis lies in combining Quebec's historical regulatory configurations with food policy as a cross-sectorial domain of study (agriculture; nutrition; local, rural and sustainable development) (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

To assess a social innovation is to study its capacity to transform its institutional landscape: "In order to diffuse themselves in different contexts and in time, social innovations necessarily need to engage the institutional system in which they emerge from. The institutional environment may be more or less favourable or fearful to these new experimentations, especially when they question the outcomes and performance of different components of the institutional field." (Bouchard and Lévesque, 2012, p.131). There are different trajectories for social innovations: they may be interrupted or contained, or result in meaningful partnership that extends the reach of innovation into the fabric of market and the state. Social innovations operate within larger historical cycles that result, on the one hand, in an institutionalization of the experimentation, and on the other, in new partnerships between public and social actors (Lévesque et. al. 2014). We can assess the transformative reach of social innovations in their capacity to democratize the institutional landscape (Lévesque et. al., 2014). While innovations may coexist and be complementary with public programs or policies, institutions may remain un-thwarted in their "path dependency", a term which refers to the inertia, status quo and commitment to continuity that is typical of the hierarchical aspect of government. I draw from the sociology of social innovation to qualify the institutionalization of new practices in the field of food security and how they are negotiated and contested in new models of governance, partnerships and inter-organizational relationships (Chapter 3).

## 2.2. Territorial and city-region food systems

A territorial food system (TFS) is comprised of a "set of agri-food supply chains that integrate sustainable development, that are localized on a regional geographic scope and that are coordinated by a territorial system of governance" (Rastoin, 2015, p. 1157). Inspired by the work of agro-economist Louis Malassis (1918-2007), Rastoin argues for TFS as an opportunity for rupture with the dominant logic of global agri-food systems. In contrast, "The actors of territorialized food systems are capitalized, multi-functional family-owned businesses and networked sets of small and very small agri-food businesses" (Rastoin, 2015). A TFS, as a theoretical 'ideal-type', is pluri-dimensional in scope and is driven by values of ethics, equity, ecology, economy and participative governance. In this thesis,

I use the terms 'local' or 'alternative' food systems interchangeably with the notion of TFS.

There are multiple, inter-dependent goals associated with TFS depending on the typologies used. For Rastoin (2015), these include: improving the nutritional and organoleptic quality of food; developing proximity-based supply chains; privileging family-based, very small, small and medium businesses; inventing new models of production that respect the health of consumers and responsibly manage natural resources; and finally, reducing waste across the supply chain.

In his contributions with other authors, the benefits of TFS are structured around four types of positive externalities, which are social, environmental, cultural and pedagogical (Parent et al., 2016). Environmental externalities include sustainable farming practices and the conservation of biodiversity, as well as the "de-carbonization" of the supply chain. The novelty of a TFS approach is that it also promotes cultural diversity by maintaining traditional and region-specific agricultural and culinary techniques[18]. It highlights the importance of public education, or 'food literacy', especially for youth.

The social benefits of TFS are also important. They include creating or maintaining employment, reinforcing social cohesion, improving health and supporting socio-professional reinsertion (Parent et al., 2016). In one review of the literature, social externalities are differentiated based on their outcomes on farmer wellbeing, local development or community wellbeing (Mundler and Laughrea, 2016, p. 34). In this case, farmer wellbeing includes both social and economic benefits, such as skill building, social recognition, women's empowerment and the revenues and added value generated by farmers' activities. Community wellbeing relates to the accessibility of healthful foods and the creation of new solidarities between farmers and consumers.

I address these inter-related components of TFS during my thesis. The context of the study, which takes place in an urban setting, brings me to emphasize the aspect of community wellbeing. Specifically, I borrow from the literature on community food security (CFS), a concept whose prime goal is "to end hunger and food insecurity" by building "communities' capacity to meet their own food needs" (Winne, 2011, p.1). CFS, however, has been criticized for over-emphasizing self-help and community empowerment over the need for appropriate sources of income and social safety nets (Tarasuk, 2001; Emery et al., 2013).

With this issue in mind, one author proposes to view food security as an operational continuum whereby the determinants of food security are associated with different types of interventions (Parent, 2015, p. 34). On one end of the spectrum, we find food aid (e.g., food banks) and participatory-based interventions (e.g., collective kitchens, community gardens). In the middle of the continuum, the author

18 Regional designation and labels can be legally binding to protect specificity of agri-food products and locality and social cohesion that produce them.

identifies food access (e.g., combination of community services) and food provisioning practices such as zoning and short supply chains. Finally, macro-level determinants are linked with policy interventions on the dominant agri-food system and on economic and social determinants especially income. I address the full continuum of these interventions in Chapters 3 and 4.

Territorial food systems are inter-disciplinary in scope. Geographers apply the notion of 'proximity' to describe TFS as encapsulating both geographic and socio-economic dimensions. Initially developed by Andre Torre, proximity may relate to a geographic distance between food related activities (production, processing, distribution) and consumption (Mundler and Rouchier, 2016, p.19). Depending on the authors, geographic distance may be conceived as ranging between 80 to 200 kilometers (Boutry and Ferru, 2016, p.63). However, scholars have pointed out the limit of conceiving food systems in this fashion: "the most important component of the notion of distance may be in its symbolic and normative nature." (Audet, et al., 2015, p.17). This is echoed in Canadian food studies scholar Phil Mount who looks at the values behind the 'buy local' movement not as one defined by geographic distance, but rather one that strives to reconnect producers with consumers through direct exchange along common goals (Mount, 2012, p. 14).

Organized proximities, on the other hand, emphasize the coordination of a set of actors. This consideration may be understood as taking place vertically along the food supply chains. It is important to highlight that, while the ideal-type of TFS may represent an alternative scenario to global food systems, territorial supply chains are, in reality, hybrid, meaning that their degree of rupture with conventional food system varies a great deal (Margetic, 2016; Bloom and Hinrichs, 2011). For instance, it is not uncommon to see organically certified farmers market their products both directly to the consumer and via retailers (Lerman, 2012). The hybridity of the supply chains hints at the challenge of achieving social justice, environmental stewardship and economic viability. This tension has brought some to argue that the social innovative potential of neighbourhood solidarity markets in Montreal rests in achieving these various goals (Audet et al., 2015).

In this thesis, I emphasize the horizontal dimension of organized proximities, whereby actors coordinate on the basis of their belonging to the same community and territory. The challenge for TFS is that they emerge in a decentralized and often fragmented way, lack recognition in traditional policy frameworks and therefore suffer from a coordination and institutional gap. Horizontal coordination, or the development of new systems of governance, stands out as a critical variable in the development of TFS. My work provides an overview, over a twenty to thirty year period, of how social actors and public sector bodies moved from working on isolated issues in the food system (food insecurity, agricultural land use planning, urban agriculture, neighbourhood markets) to an integrated approach

built around the development of TFS.

Several international bodies have adopted the lens of TFS. TFS was underscored as a priority of the United Regions, an infra-state body that mirrors the United Nations with regional governments. One key promoter of TFS is the UNESCO Chair on World Food, which has conducted surveys of innovative TFS initiatives in France, the Mediterranean region, Costa Rica and Quebec (Parent et al., 2016). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) adapted the TFS approach by emphasizing the context of urbanization and the diverse demographic, geographic and economic realities of cities. This approach is particularly promoted in the context of the United Nations' Urban Agenda and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

A city-region food system (CRFS) embeds the notion of TFS within an urban setting and its peri-urban and rural surroundings, and situates it in relation to the social functions of cities (Dubbeling et al., 2016). It refers not only to food systems in megacities, but also to those in small and medium-size towns: "City region food systems (CRFS) encompass the complex network of actors, processes and relations to do with food production, processing, marketing and consumption that exist in a given geographical region that includes a more or less concentrated urban center and its surrounding peri-urban and rural hinterland; a regional landscape across which flows of people, goods and ecosystem services are managed"[19].

As in a TFS, a CRFS is a theoretical ideal-type that is sustainable and resilient, meaning that is able to respond and adapt to shocks. A CRFS provides a normative framework that cities should be striving towards. The Urban Food Policy Pact, signed by hundreds of cities across the world, is structured around six areas of action: an enabling environment for action (governance), sustainable diets and nutrition, socio-economic equity, production, supply and distribution, and waste management. As with TFS, governance appears as a determining factor that can both enable or restrict action in other domains, justifying it as my lens and analytical priority in this thesis. Before I turn to city-region food governance, I highlight some of the steps cities can take to address the five other policy areas.

On the side of consumption, cities can improve diets by creating a healthier eating environment. Zoning by-laws can create requirements for food retailers: they can both limit the number of fast food outlets near schools (ASPQ, 2013), and also license permits for fresh food stands in public spaces (Mah et al., 2016). Several cities have piloted 'healthy corner stores' projects and programs to provide healthier food options in low-income neighbourhoods (e.g., Philadelphia[20]). Fiscal instruments can also

19 http://cityregionfoodsystems.org/

20 Over 630 stores were participating in this program in 2012. http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/healthy-corner-store-overview.original.pdf

be applied to tax sugar-sweetened beverages, and the revenues pooled and earmarked to subsidize mobile markets and fresh fruit and vegetables stands (Mah et al., 2016). In regards to socio-economic equity, cities can promote social solidarity and grassroots activities, participatory research, and fair wages (MUFP, 2015).

On the supply side, cities can "protect and enable secure access to land" in and outside the city, which may require greater coherence with municipalities in its vicinity (MUFP, 2015, p. 4). Local governments can also implement "development impact fees" "to require landowners to pay for any impact their land use has on natural capital (and on other public goods and services)" (Olewiler, 2008, p.3). In more urbanized settings, cities can also provide long term leasing options over unoccupied land, reduce permitting fees, plant edible landscapes[21] (trees, orchards, walls) (Harper et al., 2009, Cockrall-King 2016) and issue ordinances to allow sales (Mansfield and Mendez, 2013). In Boston, the city has made amendments to its existing regulations, specifying conditions to allow all types of farming, including animal husbandry (bees, hens, fish), as well as ground level and roof-level greenhouses (Article 89).

In regards to food distribution, municipal agencies, schools and hospitals (the MASH sector) can leverage their purchasing power to prioritize foods that respond to social, environmental and health criteria. The MASH sector can do so by contracting accredited, small and medium size businesses with social missions in their requests for proposals. Toronto, for instance, has adopted a local food procurement policy that requires 51% of all products purchased to be to be grown in Ontario (City of Toronto, 2013). Cities can also invest in critical food distribution and processing infrastructure, and "provide policy and programme support for municipal food markets." (MUFP, 2015, p.5). A city can also promote and raise awareness around food waste minimization by adopting a 'food waste hierarchy' that prioritizes human and animal consumption, before using waste as energy and compost, or sending it to the landfills (Prosperi et al., 2015).

I noticed that the literature puts less emphasis on stand-alone city-region interventions than on fostering an enabling environment by exercising moral leadership, adopting a food systems lens in planning, and developing coordination mechanisms (Potchukuchi and Kaufman, 1998, Harper at al. 2009, Freedgood and Royce, 2012, Hatfield et al. 2012, MUFP, 2015). A recurring theme is the capacity for previously isolated civil service functions and political leaders to coordinate with a range of organizations, businesses and other intermediaries to design and implement such policies. "A food policy council is one model that may fill the persistent institutional void in the municipal political

21 Vancouver, off the coast of British Columbia, aims to have all of its municipal installations grow 25% of edible plants in their green landscaping.

space, given that food-related issues span public health, sustainable development, social economy, the food processing industry and parks and green spaces" (Audet et al., 2015, p.18). Municipalities, however, are embedded in larger systems of governance, ranging from county or metropolitan authorities, to provincial and national governments (Mansfield and Mendez, 2013). In Canada, municipalities remain, in large part, "instruments of the provinces, [and] do not have independent jurisdiction" (MacRae and Winfield, 2016, p.164), a fact which drives us to discuss Quebec's particular institutional landscape in Chapter 3.

## 2.3. City-region food governance

One condition for the development of TFS/CRFS is the institutionalization of coordination mechanisms. Before I delve into what food policy councils (FPCs) look like, I apply the notion of a food governance triangle to identify the actors involved in city-region food governance. Initially applied on global, national or provincial scales, the food governance triangle model is comprised of the state, including local and regional governments; the market, that is all the actors within the supply chain; and civil society, or civic food networks (Lang, 2005; Renting et al., 2012; Vivero Pol, 2013). It can also include professional bodies, "who may be based within the state (environmental health officials) or be independent of the state (food scientists) or sit in both (nutritionists and doctors)" (Lang et al., 2009, p.77). This model has been used to look at "food policy as a contested space" (Seed et al., 2012, p. 458), where structural tensions arise from the interactions between actors. Is can also be applied to find pathways of transition, in which case the relationships between different spheres are adjusted and re-oriented towards the multiple goals of TFS/CRFS (Renting et al., 2012; Vivero Pol, 2013).

Food governance problematizes the power asymmetries that now structure the food system, and the loss of people's power over what they eat (Marsden 2000, Lang 2005). The term 'governance' represents a shift away from governing and top down policy implementation by the state. It is a problematic term, however, because it is tied to the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant political and economic ideology: the state is no longer the promoter of the public interest, devolving instead to market interests (Cobb et al., 2011, Lang et al., 2009). This is also known as the state-market duopoly (Bollier and Helfrich, 2012). The trend towards self-regulation, co-regulation, third party and business-to-business certifications are representative of the failure of the prescriptive "command and control" and of the greater influence of dominant market players, especially in the retail sector (Havinga, 2009; Fuchs et al., 2009).

Food governance has also shifted from the national-level to the continental and global level, in particular since the signing of free trade agreements (Havinga, 2009). The state's capacity to intervene has therefore come to increasingly rely on the market and civil society. "Governance in the food sector can [also] occur in the absence of direct state involvement when private and societal interests seek to exert forms of control within the market economy" (Lang et al., 2009, p.77). While governance implies the empowerment of civil society, it also insinuates a greater role for the global market and the disengagement of the state from its public responsibilities.

Territorial food governance implies a shift of power from global market players and the national state, towards civic food networks, municipal and regional governments and a host of family owned and small- and medium-size businesses (producers, regional distributors, etc.) (Renting et al., 2012; Vivero Pol, 2013). "In a context of profound crises of market and state governance, civil society-based initiatives become an important source of innovation through social learning, the building of new capacities and by creating 'space to manoeuvre' for organizing food production, distribution and consumption differently" (Renting et al., 2012, p.298). Civic food networks may also formally or informally organize on a geographic or thematic basis. While geographic network are place-based (e.g., neighbourhood-level), thematic networks are developed on a municipal or regional basis to share experiences around common issues, such as student nutrition, urban agriculture and other community interventions models (e.g. food box programs) (MacRae and Welsh, 1998).

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)[22] and Civic Food Networks (CFNs) vary in size, mission and organizational structure, but are generally the ones that deal first hand with vulnerable communities and have, since the 1980s, been the most vocal on these issues. In a study on Canadian municipalities, Bissardon and Boulianne (2016) point out that individual consumer-citizens are involved only infrequently in food systems planning, highlighting instead the role of community intermediaries and coalitions in circulating these concerns. The emergence of recognizable and credible community spokespeople in "new political spaces for food justice" (Wekerle, 2004, p.381) might therefore appear as one variable in territorial food governance. The literature also provides a rich critique of alternative food networks and their advocates, questioning how they embody exclusionary and neoliberal practices (McCullagh and Santo, 2014, Caharer and Dowler, 2014, Andrée et al., 2014).

Traditional policy frameworks generally do not recognize the activities and goals of TFS/CRFS (Carter-Whitney, 2008) and CFNs, suggesting a need to form new policy networks and agri-food governance mechanisms. This is critical for CSOs to extend their reach and build greater room for

22 Koc et al. (2008) define the civil society organizations (CSOs) as primarily "community-based not-for-profit organizations working for the public interest independently of governments and the market place" (p. 125)

manoeuvre. As Cohen and Reynold's study (2014) of urban agriculture in New York demonstrates, "new political spaces" emerge to address unresolved issues. In this context, CSOs and city planners may formally or informally come together to negotiate policy solutions. Mount explores the notion of alternative as a source of identify and democratic legitimacy that is constantly being reshaped through a "negotiation of accommodations" (2012, p.27). Wekerle, who has closely studied Toronto food politics, uses the example of the Food and Hunger Action Committee to indicate that, "A key feature of these initiatives is the fluid, amorphous networked characteristic of this movement that comes together for a particular purpose, makes recommendations, disbands, or reconfigures under another name" (2004, p.384).

CFNs and CSOs may be dismissed and policy change can be contained (Lang et al., 2009). As one study on Montreal's neighbourhood solidarity markets concludes, civic food innovations that attempt to reconcile contradictory goals (e.g. ensuring both a fair and affordable price to the farmer and the consumer respectively) face both financial and political "institutional lock-ins", thereby limiting the full expression of these innovations (Audet et al., 2015). At the same time, city planners and policy makers face constraints, which can be made visible through research. In contrast with issues such as crime, transportation or housing, food has largely been invisible to urban planners and policy makers (Potchukuchi and Kaufman, 1998). After all, farming has been delimited to the countryside, and "the technology of transportation, refrigeration, and processing together with abundant and cheap energy made up for the loss of local agricultural land as cities grew" (p.216).

Fesenfeld (2016), who has studied institutional procurement policies in Europe, suggests that high electoral safety is one condition for elected officials to take policy risks. Furthermore, the author indicates that high executive institutional capacity is also a condition to develop long-term policies. Institutional capacity refers here to the ability of policy makers to work with their counterparts across departmental siloes, to mobilize the necessary financial and human resources and to access policy networks that reside outside of their local government (Fesenfeld, 2016). Such undertaking may thus require bridging the gap between the administrative and political functions of a municipality. Institutional capacity is therefore understood as a set of hybrid mechanisms that reach both internally (cross-departmental, or political-administrative) and externally (various stakeholders). The development of these hybrid mechanisms is the focal point of our thesis.

Furthermore, municipalities face fiscal pressure to address a number of issues related to poor health, poverty and rapid urban development. While CRFS can help planners deliver on city's wider socio-economic and environmental goals, food policy is fragmented among different decision-making bodies of local governments. Macrae and Winfield indicate to some of the jurisdictional responsibilities of

municipal governments as "public health, parks and recreation, planning, economic development, social services, (…) licensing, inspections and traditional public health nutrition" (2014, p. 33).

The shift of power to civic food networks and local governments also entails rethinking the role of market actors: "For the civil society–market axis, CFNs provide examples of innovations by alternative systems of food provisioning, especially short food supply chains or forms of social or solidarity economy (…), in which material and financial exchanges in markets are increasingly subject to value-based, ethical considerations." (Renting et al., 2012, p.298). In Quebec, which has a strong tradition around the social economy, these alternative systems of food provisioning have more recently taken the shape of community support agriculture (the *Equiterre* CSA farmer's network) and farmers' markets.

The role of market players is important, because TFS initiatives often face logistical issues incurred by their small volume and buying power (Dubbeling, 2016), which researchers have called a "socio-technical lock-in" (Audet et al., 2015, p.9). There are many examples of social economic food ventures that have failed due to a lack of capacity, financial insecurity and over-reliance on government funding, notably in public health programming (Mah et al., 2016). Supply chain operations and provisioning practices require human resources with knowledge, skills and a network of relationships that the community sector lacks. Due to the seasonality of production in Nordic regions, providing a uniform, year-round supply is also a challenge (Dubbeling, 2016). These elements raise critical issues in a region's ability to respond, on a long-term basis, to the demands of its market.

The role of market-based agents is generally least understood and studied in territorial food governance. Actually, TFS practitioners hold negative assumptions on food distributors (Billon et al., 2016), due to the power asymmetry of dominant retailers in the food system. In reality, food distributors may also include small and medium size wholesalers and suppliers specialized in the commercialization of regional agri-foods (Billon et al., 2016; Dubbeling, 2016). The authors point out that, while the daily operations and practices of food distributors are poorly known, TFS professionals recognize that distributors hold a position in the supply chain and an expertise that is "essential" to the development of TFS (Billon et al., 2016, p. 354). In North America, the term "regional food hub[23]" is used to encompass the role of the "missing middle" between producers and consumers, thereby "acting as an intermediary that offers to put the produce of many suppliers, growers, farmers and processors into the hands of retailers, food service firms, public sector buyers and procurement consortia, and/or direct to the final consumer." (Morley et al., 2008, p.3).

23 Not to be confused with the term "community food hub" which I use in this thesis to refer to a grassroots community organization that provides a range of complementary services, such as food skilling workshops (gardening, cooking, after-school program), advocacy and mobilization, markets, a food bank, etc. I do not use the term community food centers, which refers to an incorporated organization. See: https://cfccanada.ca/

A recent study on the role of the private sector in CRFS highlights the diversity of actors engaged in economic and entrepreneurial activities. In the agri-food sector, businesses of different size and ownership models produce and provision specialized goods and services at all stages, may they be producers, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, caterers or involved in waste management. Interestingly, Dubbeling highlights the role of private entities in non-food-related activities: "More recently, players from (urban-based) non-food sectors such as water and energy companies, technological companies, private funds and landowners, social housing corporations and real estate are playing an increasingly important role." (2016, p.8)

## 2.4. Municipal food councils and plans

The impetus of civic food networks to change institutions that regulate the food systems has been constrained by the limited responsibilities of municipal governments. The work of Kaufman and Potchukuchi (1998) was a stepping-stone for the American Planning Association to develop tools and provide resources on how to integrate food into the cities' policies. A team of the University of Buffalo researchers developed a local food policy database that illustrates the range of instruments that are available, including "local laws, ordinances, resolutions, motions, orders, and directives, as well as plans, standards, guidelines, tax exemptions and other public financing policies."[24] What does it take to apply the appropriate mix of policy instruments in a coherent and integrated way? As mentioned, the literature puts less emphasis on "stand alone" food policies than the ability to coordinate policy makers with policy networks, and creating an enabling environment.

One theme that is systematically mentioned is the development of municipal food policy councils (FPC). In their most basic sense, food policy councils are deliberative policy spaces where stakeholders from different sectors come together to address issues related to the food system. "FPCs are ideal institutions to integrate the environmental justice and food justice movements, not only because they share concerns for the ecological and health consequences of the industrial food system, but also because they are localized forums with a great capacity for democratic participation and equitable social change." (Purifoy, 2014, p.376). FPCs may conduct assessments, engage in stakeholder dialogue, develop joint actions and program or provide advice for policy change. Harper and colleagues speak of the core functions of FPCs as: "1. Serve as a forum for food systems issues, 2. Foster coordination between sectors, 3. Evaluate or influence policy and 4. Launch or support programs" (2009, p.19).

24 http://growingfoodconnections.org/tools-resources/policy-database/

In Canada, the City of Toronto adopted the first food policy council as early as 1990. Speaking of the advocacy from community groups, environmentalists and public health officials, Welsh and MacRae (1998) review the institutionalization of the council:

> "It was decided that the TFPC should be administered as a sub-committee of the city's Board of Health, a standing committee of city council. This relationship provides immediate access to both the political machinery and preventive health care knowledge and apparatus of the City. The three staff persons are attached to the Department of Public Health, and their salaries and other TFPC expenses are paid by city council." (p. 251).

The number of food policy councils has steadily increased in the past three decades. Since the Toronto initiative was launched, multiple models of food policy councils have emerged. One later study by MacRae and Donahue (2013) surveyed 64 municipalities across Canada and assessed the strengths and limits of different models. They evaluate food policy councils based on the institutional arrangements with the municipality. They review six potential models, ranging from councils mainly situated in the community sector with no financial support or other ties with the municipality, to councils piloted from within the municipal administration. A range of hybrid models exist in between, depending on whether they have direct or indirect links to the city or to a secondary agency and to what degree the municipality assumes responsibility over their financial stability (2013). The spectrum of institutional arrangements is interesting because it raises the questions of how a FPC's relationship to the municipal structure changes over time to build greater capacity and leverage resources. The case study in Chapter 5 illustrates well this dynamic because it provides an overview of the transition from a stakeholder-led food systems planning initiative to a municipal-sponsored food policy council.

The authors emphasize here that skills and predictable, sustained funding are both requirements for FPCs: "The ideal appears to be a food policy organization whose staff and members have extensive knowledge of and expertise in food systems, a sophisticated approach to food system change, with funding that is stable and sufficient for at least a lean organizational effort." (2013, p. 26). In another article, MacRae and Winfield (2016) add: "Skill levels and resources vary tremendously from one municipality to another. Those municipalities with the most advanced local food policy work also typically have sophisticated CSOs participating." This is echoed in the work of Clayton, who has interviewed twelve FPCs in the United State at local, regional and state levels: "partnerships with high-level leaders (such as policy makers and researchers) add credibility (…) increases policymaker awareness and FPC legitimacy – specifically with regards to engaging in food systems policy advocacy" (2015, p.12,). These individuals may help "tailor the efforts to the (…) local political context", provide focus on priorities and goals, increase visibility and generate buy-in (2015, p.12,).

Hatfield and colleagues, who led a research partnership with thirteen cities across the US and

Canada, state: "The location of a food policy program within a city's organizational structure has a material impact on a program's priorities and its effectiveness. While an increasing number of programs operate under the umbrella of sustainability departments, many also benefit from close ties with the Mayor's Office: such ties can increase the authority behind a program and facilitate interactions with other city departments" (2012, p. 2). The authors mention both the administrative and political branch as playing a critical role in food policy councils. FPCs are subject to the shifting dynamics within the municipality and to electoral changes.

Harper and colleagues admit that FPCs face a number of challenges, including receiving adequate funding and "working in complex political climates" (2012, p. 37). Members of FPCs can be perceived, for instance, as threatening the authority of elected officials or civil servants if they provide "unwelcome advice" (p. 38). In the context of municipal elections, an incoming local government may associate FPCs with the previous administration and consider it as irrelevant and ignore their proposals. Further, the participation of certain sectors over others can obscure important issues in the food system. While community food security groups are often active in the development of food strategies, food businesses, and distributors in particular, are absent, despite being critical intermediaries in the supply chain (Harper et al., 2012, Dubbeling et al., 2016). These assessments reveal several conditions for planning and food policy councils, such as expertise, funding, location within municipal structures and political support, as a backdrop from which to assess an experience of an individual municipality.

There are other municipal models that exist outside of FPCs. Municipal food strategies are also a useful starting point to recognize the inter-linkages between food systems activities and the range of actors to engage with. Mansfield and Mendez (2013) propose the following definition:

> "A municipal food strategy is an official plan or road map that helps city governments integrate a full spectrum of urban food system issues within a single policy framework that includes food production (typically referred to as urban agriculture (UA)), food processing, food distribution, food access and food waste management. A food strategy builds upon the work already underway to improve urban food systems, creates links between policies, integrates new ideas, addresses gaps, and creates a vision for the future" (p. 38)

In order to analyze municipal food strategies, the authors identify structural and procedural factors. Structural variables (Mansfield and Mendez, 2013, p. 46) include: where the mandate to create a food strategy came from, who is the lead department or agency responsible for its implementation, what staffing support it receives, and how the food strategy is integrated into municipal policy or regulatory frameworks. Procedural factors include joint-actor partnerships and citizen participation mechanisms. In summary, they reveal who is involved, at what point in the process, and where does one's input fit in (Mansfield and Mendez, 2013, p. 48). Cohen and Reynolds, whose focus is on urban agriculture in

New York, highlight the "significant overlap among individuals involved in both government and stakeholder-led policy making" (2014, p. 224). Bissardon and Boulianne explain how Canadian territorial governance is characterized by *concertation*, meaning ongoing stakeholder dialogue.

Generally speaking, planning for a municipal food strategy entails the engagement of a range of stakeholders from the civil service, public health, community groups, universities and the private sector. Several community food assessment and regional planning tools and resources exist to guide such a process. Depending on the context, these planning exercises assess what is already taking place, both at the community and municipal level. They identify both the actors involved and the existing assets in the territory. These assets include existing programs and policies, as well as the social networks and physical infrastructure. The planning process might span several months or years and involve workshops, forums, panels, surveys and in-person meetings. It helps create a better understanding of the baseline situation, including the needs, obstacles and gaps. It may also generate a common vision, also known as a "food charter", and identify short and long-term goals (Bissardon and Boulianne, 2016, p.335).

## 2.5. Research problems and research questions

This chapter introduced a number of keys concepts that guide this thesis. The focus of this research is how social innovations in the field of territorial/city-region food systems lead to the creation of new political spaces and governance mechanisms that take the shape of food policy councils or strategies. Specifically, I raise the question of how networks coordinate, deliberate and ultimately negotiate these arrangements in order to foster institutional change. In doing so, actors may combine their resources (expertise, financial, social capital) to drive socially innovative processes. However, these negotiations take place in a hybrid arena between top down policy-making and bottom up experimentation, and bring together actors with different institutional logics, roles and perspectives. The negotiation and resolution of the tensions that arise from partnership building and deliberation is an essential part of social innovation.

City-regions are playing an increasing role in food governance. However, they remain, in large part, "instruments of the provinces, [and] do not have independent jurisdiction" (MacRae and Winfield, 2016, p.164). Indeed, municipalities are "embedded" in larger systems of governance, ranging from counties or metropolis, to provinces, federal and global systems of governance (Mansfield and Mendez, 2013). The absence of a whole-of-government approach to food at a provincial and national level (i.e., "joined-up" food policy) means that combine health, agriculture, rural and social policy operate in

siloes. This institutional void makes us appreciate once more why and how new forms of urban food governance are emerging. This is relevant in the context of the "Quebec Model," particularly in the light of its unique historical trajectory and in the context of globalization and neo-liberalism.

In conclusion, the following research questions capture a number of threads that I wish to investigate in the rest of this thesis:

- What influence has Quebec's provincial regulatory landscape had on city-region food governance?
- How have policy networks evolved over the past three decades in Montreal? What issues have they tried to address, and what barriers have they faced? How have previous group formation and institutional arrangements shaped Montreal's food strategy and governance?
- How do actors negotiate their roles and relationships in the development and implementation of the action plan? Was the SAM partnership model successful, and if not, what were its limits? How did the SAM partnership evolve into a municipally mandated food policy council?

# Chapter 3. Methodology and data

## 3.1. Introduction to Actor-Network Theory

In order to study the development of new political spaces, the emergence of urban food governance mechanisms and the institutionalization of a food policy council, our research draws from the case study of the Montreal Food Action Plan 2014-2016, situated in the city of Montreal, Quebec. The data was generated from participant observations, interviews and surveys with a hybrid public-private-collective partnership of thirty-five organizations working towards the development of sustainable, healthy and just food systems in the Montreal region. Specifically, I draw from my experience in evaluating the governance and partnership model of the 2014-2016 Montreal Food Action Plan (SAM), which eventually transitioned into a municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council.

I draw from Actor Network Theory (ANT), also known as the theory of translation, to inform my methodology. ANT has been spearheaded by sociologists Michel Callon (1986), Bruno Latour (1987) and their colleagues, and was initially applied to the study of technological innovations and scientific research (Cressman, 2009). It has since built bridges with organizational sociology (Amblard et al., 1996), strategic analysis (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977) and cross-sectorial partnerships (Bilodeau, 2000). ANT has reached a large social science audience by questioning the conventions of the discipline: "The choice is thus clear: either we follow social theorists and begin our travel by setting up at the start which kind of group and level of analysis we will focus on, or we follow the actors' own ways and begin our travels by the traces left behind by their activity of forming and dismantling groups" (Latour, 2005, p.29).

An actor-network is heterogeneous from the outset because it refers to both human and non-human entities and the relationships they form: "Reducible neither to an actor alone nor to a network…An actor-network is simultaneously an actor whose activity is networking heterogeneous elements and a network that is able to redefine and transform what it is made of" (Callon, 1987, p.93, cited in Cressman, 2009, p.3). People, groups, and organizations all shape networks as much as textual reports and legislation, information and communication technologies, buildings, a bag of apples and the truck that transports it. The collection of these heterogeneous entities forms a sociotechnical network, or a dynamic system of action. As Latour (2005, p.8) suggests, "Sociologists should travel wherever new heterogeneous associations are made. They believed the social to be always there at their disposal, whereas the social is not a type of thing either visible or to be postulated. It is visible only by the *traces* it leaves (under trials) when a *new* associations being produced between elements which themselves are

in no way 'social" (2005, p.8).

Bilodeau and colleagues' (2008) application of ANT to cross-sectorial public health and social development partnerships in Montreal, Quebec, provided a roadmap to apply ANT as both methodology and theory:

> "The theory of translation conceives situations as networks where actors and resources that participate are connected. The notion of translation refers to the continuous re-interpretation that actors operate in terms of their roles and the innovation they produce, starting from their respective interests and powers relationships, and leading to the construction of compromises. The theory argues that a controversy always precedes the emergence of an innovation, of a change, with the process of construction as the resolution of these controversies. Resolving a controversy is orienting actors towards a solution, a compromise that enables them to cooperate whilst still responding, at least partially, to their interests" (Bilodeau et al., 2002, p.6).

Collective action is both a process and a result of identifying spokespeople, and of attracting new and existing actors, knowledge and financial resources. The mobilization of these different components prompts a new distribution of roles. These collective solutions are temporary compromises that respect, at least partially, the missions and mandates of the different actors. The combination of concurrent ideas and the distribution of new roles, however, raise differences and non-alignments between actors, encapsulated in the term "controversy", or the confrontation of actors' problem-frame (e.g., tensions, disagreements, etc.)

The notion of translation "involves creating convergences and homologies by relating things that were previously different" (Callon 1981, p.211). In other words, translation refers to the process of building bridges, associations, equivalencies or shared understandings. "From the different languages, the historical genealogy of the word 'social' is construed first as following someone, then enrolling and allying, and, lastly, having something in common." (Latour, 2005, p.6). Translation is a key step to resolve controversies and orient stakeholders towards collective solutions while considering their interests, position and power. Unlike an intermediary, which "transports meaning or force without transformation", "mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour, 2005, p.39). Mediators therefore can be sought after as potential translators and puzzle-solvers.

Based on the previous work of Bilodeau et al. (2000, 2002, 2008), I applied a ready-to-use tool to assess the quality and efficacy of a given partnership between the public sector and civil society organizations. Indeed, as a hybrid network and coalition built around common goals, the SAM fits well within the framework of Actor-Network Theory. I combined the assessment tool with social network modelling into a survey that was communicated to the SAM partners, with a response rate of 48.5% (33 responses). Further, I immersed myself in the SAM coalition as an evaluator and in the course of 2015-

2016 I attended dozens of meetings, forums and activities addressing the different goals and levels of engagement. Finally, I conducted formal and informal interviews with the most active stakeholders, as well as actors involved in previous regional food planning experiences.

## 3.2. Survey-based research

### 3.2.1. The six conditions for effective partnership

The main research tool that was used was survey-based. I applied an existing assessment tool that was developed by public health researchers Dr. Bilodeau and colleagues (2008, 2011) in the context of their study of cross-sectorial partnership in Montreal, QC. The survey aims to assess whether a given public-civil society partnership meets six conditions for an effective partnership. An effective partnership can be assessed based on the dynamics of the process on the one hand (conditions 1-4), and the partnership's arrangements on the other (conditions 5-6). The conditions are summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of the conditions for effective partnerships[25]

| Conditions for effective partnership | Description of the condition | Number of items |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Problem-framing** | All the actors concerned with a common issue introduce their interests, perspective and position. | 2 |
| **2. Interest-raising** | Actors are interested in strategic decisions early in the process, and in playing a role in the partnership. | 1 |
| **3. Enrolling** | Actors are brought into a position of negotiation and influence in the decision making process and accept temporary and negotiated roles. | 1 |
| **4. Mobilizing** | Actors reach a sufficient critical mass that the project is credible and they are committed to bring in resources. | 4 |
| **5. Levelling power relations** | Actors develop mechanisms and structures to reduce structural inequities. | 4 |
| **6. Co-constructing** | Actors resolve controversies that divide them and integrate their work around collective solutions. | 6 |

25 The items for each condition are available in annex 2. To see the full results of each item and conditions, see the appendix.

Each condition is divided into a number of statements. One descriptive statement is associated with conditions 2 and 3, two statements with condition 1, four statements with condition 4, and 5, and six statements for condition 6. In total, the six conditions for an effective partnership are presented into 18 items, which are presented in annex 2 of this thesis. These items are not presented as questions, but as statements. For each of these statements, respondents can choose from three formulations that best describe their experience, each formulation corresponding to a degree of fulfillment (fully, partially or not at all).

The survey was sent out in French. Once the responses were received, I compiled each of the 18 items based on their degree of accomplishment. I then compiled the degree of accomplishment of each item into the six summary conditions and classified the items and conditions based on whether they were completely fulfilled, partially fulfilled or not at all.

Based on previous studies, I judged that an item or condition was fulfilled if more than 70% of respondents identified them as such. On the other hand, we considered an item or condition was partially fulfilled if half of the respondents considered them so.

I classified items that received fewer answers, indicating which items respondents were unable to formulate an opinion on. For the conditions that were not fully met, I conducted a sectorial breakdown based on whether respondents were from civil society, government agencies or others. I met with Dr. Bilodeau, one of the key authors behind this tool, on two occasions to discuss and analyze the results.

### 3.2.2. Modeling the partnership network

Actor-Network Theory echoes network analysis and visualization pertaining to the discipline of Social Network Analysis (SNA). “Social network analysis provides a means with which to identify and assess the health of strategically important networks within an organization. By making visible these otherwise “invisible” patterns of interaction, it becomes possible to work with important groups to facilitate effective collaboration.” (Cross et al., 2002, p. 41). In the context of the SAM 2014-2016 action plan, I wished to capture the changes in the network in the SAM 2014-2016 by modelling a “before” and an “after” the launch of the action plan.

The second section of the survey consisted of a grid-based response tool where respondents could identify whether they collaborate with others actors in the network, and if so since when. Respondents could choose from a series of options that were designed based on two axes, one vertical and one horizontal. The vertical axis indicates the name of each member of the SAM partner committee (n=36). The horizontal axis presents longitudinal options with the SAM action plan (2014-2016) as a reference point, a before (pre-2014) and after (2017-2020). For the 2014-2016, respondents could choose from

two options, that is, whether they started collaborating with another actor thanks to ("via") the SAM, or outside of the SAM ("without").

In contrast with the conditions for an effective partnership, which was developed by Bilodeau and colleagues (2008), I designed the section of the network modelling section of the survey. I ran into a methodological dilemma that is worth presenting here. In its original formulation, the survey was designed in such a way as to capture the dynamic of the social relationships, ranging from information sharing to working on one or more projects together. Bilodeau and colleagues have previously used a typology in the shape of a continuum, ranging from information exchange and project conception, to planning and execution. However, being in an evaluation context with a focus on showing results, subsequently led me to look at whether the SAM partnership facilitated new relationships. This led me to privilege a four-period longitudinal analysis.

In order to visualize the network, I first had to organize the data in such a way that the *Gephi* open source software, a social network visualization tool, could process it. The first step was to create a spreadsheet that would eventually identify the "nodes" in the subsequent network graphs. I assigned to each organization, an identification number as well as two sectorial attributes (a) social, environmental, economic, and (b) public network, civil society, philanthropic, public-community, private. I merged respondents originating from the same organization, which would eventually create a bias, as organizations with one or more staff involved in the SAM partnership appear more central in the network.

Once I had an identification number for each organization, I developed a series of spreadsheets with the "edges" (or connections) based on each corresponding time period (before 2014, 2014-2016, after 2017). All the connections identified by each respondent were then compiled and organized under two columns, one designated as "source" and the other as "target", before being modeled in the software. In the case of the 2014-2016 database, each connection was associated with one of the two following attributes based on the survey answers ("via" the SAM, "without" the SAM). This characterization was meant to make observation whether partners recognized the Action Plan as contributing in creating new connections in the network.

Once these initial steps were completed, the spreadsheets were imported into the software. In order to read the graphs, we formatted the layout (Force Atlas, Repulsion Strength), and ranked nodes according to social network metrics, such as between-ness and degree centrality[26]. In the end, we designed twelve network graphs based on time period and on sectorial attributes, available in Annexes

26 Betweenness centrality measure the centrality of a node. Degree centrality measures the number of connections of a given node.

3 to 7. I generated other network metrics available through the software (connected components, graph density, average path length) (Annex 10).

### 3.2.3. Sampling and responses to the survey

The survey was sent to 68 of the partners on the mailing list of the SAM partners committee (Annex 9) in mid-March 2016. Three general reminders and individual reminders were sent. The online survey was left active for six weeks, until early May. The survey was self-administered and filled out online by participants. The survey introduction included instructions for its completion, the estimated time required to fill it out (20 min.) and the protocol on ethics[27].

The final version of the survey included 33 questions, grouped in the following sections:

1. Introduction (8 questions)
2. Graphs of the partner networks (social network analysis) and of the impact of the SAM on the development of the network (2 questions)
3. Assessment of the six conditions for an effective partnership (18 questions)
4. Open questions (5 questions)

The sample was made up of the SAM coordination email list to the SAM partner committee, which is made up of thirty-six organizations. The selection criteria for this mailing list were therefore developed beforehand by the SAM, and correspond to the partner committee members, project leaders or project participant-experts. In order to capture the information connections and the professional aspect of the SAM network, I designed the survey in such a way that it was answered individually, rather than at the organizational level.

In this sample, 33 answered for a response rate of 48.5%.

Respondents' participation levels in the SAM:

- Coordination committee (18.7%)
- Partner committee (59.4%)
- Participants (25%) (i.e., respondents that are not officially members of either committee)

Respondents' activity sector

- Public sector (40.6%)
- Civil society authority or organization (40.6%)
- Public-community authority; philanthropists or public-private partnerships; universities and research settings (6.3% each)

Level of respondents' involvement:

27 https://goo.gl/1bqhqR

- Neighbourhood or borough (17.6%)
- Municipality (23.5%)
- Agglomeration (61.8%)
- Metropolitan community of Montreal (11.8%)
- Province of Quebec (26.5%)
- Other (8.8%)

The sample is considered to be sufficiently representative of the partners' different levels, scales and sectors of involvement. One major cause of bias in the social network graphs was that several respondents belonged to the same organization. Further, because I provided the respondent with a limited number of actors to identify, and given the large scope of interpretation of what it means to "collaborate" with a partner organization, a high number of ties were recorded and the network graphs are extremely dense. This makes the network graphs difficult to interpret and analyze. I extracted a complementary graph from the evaluation report I authored: this network graph, available in Annex 11, was developed as part of a survey to project leaders, asking them to identify the three most involved partners in the actions funded in the SAM Action Plan.

## 3.3. Participant observation and interviews

The instruments in this social science toolbox – the survey –would be of limited use if I didn't "follow the connections, 'follow the actors themselves'" (Latour, 2005, p. 179).

As I show in the next chapter, the SAM is a rather complex, public-private partnership and a multi-level initiative with different levels and degrees of stakeholder engagement. At the strategic level, the Regional Roundtable on Health Lifestyles (RRHL), which allocated funds from a public-private partnership, was comprised of a technical team (RRHL TT) and a partner committee (RRHL PC). Further, the SAM is comprised of both a coordination committee (SAM CC) and a partners' committee (SAM PC). In the context of the 2014-2016 Action Plan, the SAM also had an operational dimension, structured around four objectives with their respective clusters of partners (working groups, committees, technical teams).

1. Goal 1: Build regional capacity (coordination, mobilization, networking, representation)
2. Goal 2: Enable physical access to healthy food – provide regional support to community food security initiatives
3. Goal 3: Develop and organize supply and demand for public institutions – develop a regional procurement strategy for 2025 according to/based on the specific needs of public institutions.
4. Goal 4: Support the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture – contribute to the respective regional action plans

During the research project, I navigated within strategic and operational levels and across a number of

the action plan goals, each with different capacities, tasks and roles. In order to cover a large scope of dynamics and key actors to focus on, I participated in a number of working groups and events, and held both informal conversations and formal interviews with staff, project leaders and funders.

There are three main overlapping but distinct moments in the SAM partnership: the building blocks of the Action Plan (Chapter 5.2.), its design and implementation (5.3), and the transition into a new governance structure as it received the FPC mandate from the City (5.4). In the first stage, a number of spaces opened up through the mobilization of SAM stakeholders. Then, a number of projects were funded, including pilots, events, trainings and knowledge generation (focus groups, reports, etc.). The third phase is more strategic, as it involves the public consultations and the transition of the SAM governance structure into the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council.

In order to analyze the data generated from the interviews, the working group meetings, the forums and the public consultations, I completed a matrix that outlined the interests, roles and influence of individual SAM stakeholders.

### 3.3.1. Interviews

Once the Ethics Review Boards validated the interview guide, I interviewed (November 2015-January 2016) seven members of the SAM coordination committee, three of which were also sitting on the RRHL partner committee. These exploratory, scoping interviews were meant to (a) document the history of stakeholder dialogue in Montreal, (b) assess regional coordination mechanisms and (c) identify good practices and strategies. In retrospect, these interviews were largely introductory, provided background information on the SAM Action Plan and the roles and history of the main actors involved.

I also held informal interviews with five other food systems practitioners. Three of these practitioners had been involved in institutional bodies as coordinators of previous experiments in regional multi-stakeholder dialogue. This includes the public health agency (1998-2003), the Conference of Regional Elected Officials (CREO) (2005-2010) and *Québec en Forme* (2008-2013). I conducted two other informal interviews with community leaders involved in Goals 2 (food access) and 4 (urban agriculture), which I focus on in part 5.3.2.

### 3.3.2. Public consultation and events

During the fall of 2015, the City of Montreal launched a public consultation on the feasibility of a food policy council. These consultations, which took place in City Hall, were launched in September and took place over the span of two months. These consultations provided input in the research process as

memoires were drafted by over thirty organizations, which were invited to present their recommendations in front of the Commission on social development and diversity. I participated, in the context of this course, in drafting a memoire, and attended two of the four auditions held by the commission. All the memoires and auditions are available on the commission website, which provided a unique source of information.

Observations were also generated in the context of events, forums and colloquiums. In Goal 2, for example, the SAM organized two forums, one in June 2015 and the other in November 2016, in the national library and a public health research centre respectively. These forums featured panelists, including community organizers, public health officials, city councillors and funders. In Goal 3, the conference "Changing the menu" (November 2015) brought together 400 experts from across the country, as well as Quebec's Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research. I also volunteered at one of the four urban agriculture gatherings that took place in 2015-2016, an event that was also funded in the context of the SAM.

Finally, the SAM held four lunch-conferences on the topics of: urban agriculture, healthy corner stores, food waste reduction, and food systems innovations. For the first two conferences, the SAM invited keynote speakers from Boston and Philadelphia. I attended all of these conferences.

### 3.3.3. Working groups on food supply and distribution

I followed two parallel working groups that were funded through the SAM action plan to conduct assessments on food supply and distribution and develop strategies in the community (Goal 2: Food access) and the MASH[28] sector (Goal 3: Institutional procurement). This provided me with the opportunity to develop greater proximity with project leaders and their partners. In this context, I was invited to contribute and participate in the discussions and in the assessment of methodologies.

The "Report on alternative food procurement" (Goal 2), for instance, illustrates my contribution to the process. It mentions my role in supporting the drafting and revision of the report. I quote from the introductory paragraph, "Moreover, I would like to highlight the contributions of three individuals that contributed much throughout the process. Hugo Martorell, Emory Shaw and Caroline Marier: although your respective mandates obliged you to contribute one way or another, your contributions easily exceeded our expectations." (RUI St Pierre, 2016, iii). On the other hand, the Report on institutional procurement (Goal 3) mentions my name as an observer and the coordinator of *Justice alimentaire*

28 "MASH" stands for Municipal Agencies, Schools and Hospital sector. In this thesis I use the term institutional (or public) procurement interchangeably.

*Montréal.* In total, I participated in nine work meetings related to Goals 2 and 3. My participation in the urban and peri-urban agriculture streams (Goals 4-A and 4-B) during the 2014-2016 Action Plan was more limited (e.g. project level, events). I was, however, invited, in May 2017, to co-facilitate a meeting in Goal 4 to find consensus on funding arrangements for the 2017-2019 SAM action plan.

I had initially wished to compare the two working groups on food provisioning in my thesis (Goal 2 and 3). I eventually decided to focus on the issues where civil society was most involved and where consensus was perhaps more difficult to reach. In the section "Negotiating the agenda: identifying priority actions" (Chapter 5.3.2), I look specifically at food access (Goal 2) and urban agriculture (Goal 4-A). The reader may weight some of the tensions inherent in collective action and innovation in the context of food planning in Montreal.

### 3.3.4. Meetings on RRHL governance

The provincial public-private partnership that funded the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan planned to be dissolved in 2017. This provided the impetuous to launch a task force within the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles (RRHL) on its future governance model, fundraising strategy and communications plan. In total, I participated to five working meetings on the governance within the RRHL. Unfortunately, each health promotion partnerships (the SAM in healthy eating and the MPA in physical activity) conducted their own evaluation, instead of coordinating it via the RRHL.

## 4. Summary table of participant observation

The summary table features a number of moments and spaces where I encountered different stakeholders in the SAM Action Plan. My participation was often dependent on an invitation and whether a space was opened to have a researcher-observer-participant in the room. As the table shows, I was the least exposed to the spaces of SAM Coordination Committee (CC) and Goal 4 (urban and peri-urban agriculture). The first of these is of particular interest because it comprises the core decision-making body of the SAM.

Table 2: Summary table of participant observation

| SAM Functions and Goals | | | Interviews | Meetings | Events and forums | Food policy council consultations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic level** | RRHL | TC | n/a | 2 | 2 | 2 audiences |
| | | PC | 3 | 5 | n/a | |
| | SAM | CC | 7 | 2 | n/a | |
| | | PC | 2 | 4 | 4 events | |
| **Operational level** | Goal 2 | | 1 | 6 meetings, incl. 3 focus groups | 2 events | |
| | Goal 3 | | 0 | 3 meetings | 1 event | |
| | Goal 4 | | 1 | 1 meeting | 1 event | |
| **Previous regional roundtables** | | | 3 | | n/a | |
| **Total** | | | 11 interviews | 23 meetings | 10 events | 2 consultations |

# Chapter 4. Context of emergence of territorial food governance in Montreal, Quebec

City-region food systems (CRFS) crosscut provincial and municipal sectorial policies in the domains of health, education, sustainable development, regional socio-economic development, urban planning and agriculture and agri-food. In this chapter, I outline a multi-level analysis of food policy and governance in the city-region of Montreal. In order to contextualize the emergence of city-region food governance mechanisms, I look at the context of neoliberalism in Quebec and the changes in the institutional landscape. The respective legacies of Fordism (1960s-1980s), economic pluralism (1980s-2000s) and neoliberalism (2000s-2010s) (Bouchard et al., 2005) and eventual combination result in a complex institutional context that regional food systems planners and civic food networks have to negotiate. Specifically, neoliberal-inspired public policy reform since the 2000s, and more intensely in 2014-2015, had significant effects on food systems governance.

After discussing macro-level policy change, I turn, in the second section, to a discussion of group formation (Latour, 2005) involved in the CRFS of Montreal. By group formation, I mean both "new political spaces" (Wekerle, 2004; Cohen and Reynolds, 2014) as well as spaces of cooperation and deliberation[29]. I conduct an overview of stakeholder deliberation in Montreal over the 1986-2012 period to introduce the reader to the municipal food policy and governance landscape (timeline in annex 1). To begin, I examine how food insecurity emerged as a grassroots concern facing vulnerable populations following the economic downturn in the 1980s, and how the anti-hunger agenda progressively led to a greater involvement of the regional public health agency as an institutional anchor of stakeholder dialogue.

Since the late 1990s, the integration of sustainable development has led to novel models of urban-rural short supply chains, such as farmers markets and community supported agriculture, as well as a diversification of urban agricultural practices (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). From a governance perspective, I document the shift of leadership over regional stakeholder dialogue from the public health agency to a para-municipal body, the Conference of Regional Elected Officials (CREO), which would eventually pilot the Montreal Food Systems Plan. Finally, in the field of agriculture, I look at the grassroots mobilization in the late 2000s, the launch of a public consultation in 2011 and the creation of a municipal urban agriculture committee (Mailhot-Leduc, 2014).

29 In the context of the SAM, I speak of the previous experiments of regional food councils when the Regional public health (1998-2003) and Conference of Regional Elected Officials (2005-2010) acted as institutional anchors.

## 4.1. Context and history of the provincial institutional landscape

### 4.1.1. The Fordist model and agricultural exceptionalism (1960s-70s)

In contrast with the rapid economic development that took place in the Western world following the Second World War, it was not until the 1960s that the province of Quebec overhauled and modernized its public institutions. The Quiet Revolution resulted in the secularization of the state, but also the nationalization of key segments of economic life by the francophone population (e.g. hydro-electricity). The Quebec variant of Fordism was built around a social contract committed to raising incomes and consumption, as well as a high degree of state intervention and the representation of unions (Lévesque, 2007). Top down governance and a centralized state characterize this period.

The modernization of the Quebec state was particularly felt in farming communities. The state legislated a suite of measures from the 1950s to the 1970s that coupled productivism with corporatism (Skogstad, 2012). A productivist policy paradigm is one that solely focuses on the economic outputs of agriculture and neglects rural development, community wellbeing and environmental stewardship (Skogstad, 2012). Legislation meant to protect farmland and farmers, for instance, were designed in this spirit. While farmland protection law in Quebec is one of the strongest in Canada (Connell et al., 2016), its restrictive interpretation meant that fragmentation of land ownership was prohibited, which ended up accommodating large farming operations[30] (CAAAQ, 2008). Corporatism on the other hand refers to the "organizational strength of those who produce food", which "gave them considerable influence over officials in agricultural ministries" (Skogstad, 2012, p. 20). "Right to farm" legislation is one example, whereby producers were made legally immune from nuisance lawsuits brought by neighbours who were adversely affected by farming operations (noise, smell, pollution, etc.) (McCormally, 2007, Rajsic et al., 2012).

The main policy pillars include the Act on the marketing of agricultural products (1956) which allows "producers to collectively negotiate a production and marketing contract with buyers – called a joint plan" (Ashraf and Konforti, 2010, p. 9). As also occurred in other provinces, four of these joint plans (milk, poultry, consumer eggs and hatching eggs) were organized under supply management, a system based on strict controls (quotas), regulated pricing and high border protection (Skogstad 2012). In

30 For a more comprehensive critique of the Act to protect the agricultural territory (1978), I refer to Bernard Vachon (2011, p.27): "The Act (…) was welcomed for its fundamental merits, but quickly became the object of a severe and recurring critique for its permissive application in the fertile region of Montreal on the one hand and, on the other hand, for its insistence to protect farmland with weak agricultural potential, in areas that were often deserted due to agriculture and were communities suffered from under-developed."

1972, the main professional body, the *Union des producteurs agricoles* (UPA), became the sole voice of farmers recognized by the government, consolidating its influence and allowing the professional body to collect fees from any registered farmer (Act on agricultural producers). The UPA is organized as a federation for each agricultural sector (e.g. dairy, poultry, etc.) and administrative region and remains a professional union with political clout at the provincial level.

Agriculture was uniquely positioned during the modernization of Quebec's institutions, which provided strong state support to farmers willing to mechanize and increase their production (e.g. Farm Income Stabilization Program[31]). These arrangements, however, were questioned from the 1980s forward, albeit by different forces. Pressures on farming organizations from globalization and trade liberalization increased[32]. This was reflected in a split between farming organizations: agricultural cooperatives were willing to extend their reach as a global competitor, whereas the farmers' union advocated for strong border protection (Lévesque, 2014). On the other hand, proponents of multi-functional agriculture[33] made repeated calls for environmental and rural from the 1990s onwards. These reforms were facilitated, but also contained, by farming organizations (Montpetit and Coleman, 1999; Benoit, 2015).

### 4.1.2. The emergence of a partner state (1980s-1990s)

In response to the financial and economic downturn of the early 1980s, social movements (organized labour, citizen, women) questioned and contested the centralized, technocratic and top down provision of public services by the Quebec state. Popular mobilization had already gone through several waves of contestation successively shaped by citizen committees (1963-1969), popular groups, also known as autonomous service groups (1968-1973) and, from the 1980s onwards, community organizations (Bélanger and Lévesque, 2014). The state and community sector developed a number of arrangements that led to the institutionalization of health clinics, childcare services and local and regional social economic development intermediaries.

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31 In 2004, the FISP, with other farm insurance programs, represented 69% of direct payments to farmers, approximately $500 millions (CAAAQ, 2008, p.53). These programs, aimed at reducing the effects of price fluctuation, remain by far the main instrument in Quebec and Canadian agricultural policy (CAPI, 2011).

32 The Agreement on Agriculture of the Uruguay Round (1983-1986) of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, now enforced by the World Trade Organization, "limited, but did not eliminate, the ability of governments to intervene in agricultural markets and to treat agriculture as an exceptional sector." (Skogstad 2012, p.20)

33 "Multi-functionality is an intrinsic quality of agriculture" (Mundler and Ruiz, 2015, p. 7). In other words, agriculture does not only produce economic outputs, but also rural, environment and social outputs. However, the market under-produces these other outputs, thereby justifying public intervention to reward farmers who do produce them, possibly beyond regulatory requirements.

#### *4.1.2.1. Social and solidarity economy*

The economic crisis of the 1980s, in combination with other factors, resulted in the collapse of many cooperatives in traditional sectors, such as fisheries and food purchasing cooperatives (Lévesque, 2014). It is in the domain of community economic development, however, that the Quebec partnership model is most salient (Lévesque et al., 2016). A number of community-based experiments were institutionalized. The successive *Picotte* (1992) and *Chevrette* (1997) reforms solicited a greater participation of social actors in regional development (Doucet, 2010; Lévesque, 2014). These reforms recognized the civil society-led Regional Development Councils (RDC) as the provincial government's privileged partners in regional development.[34] (Côté et al., 2005). This period features the creation of a number of community economic development intermediaries[35].

The field of childcare services[36] is another example of an arena in which social economy and public intervention went hand in hand. The government launched, under the leadership of the nationalist party of Pauline Marois, a public payment scheme meant to increase access to not-for-profit childcare services to a reduced daily cost of $5 (286). This policy was the result of a decades long process of mobilization and experimentation (1968-78) and the incremental institutionalization of community-based child care services (1979-95) (Lévesque, 2014).

In the 1990s, the economic downturn contributed to the mobilization of social movements. Civil society organizations were convened to contribute to the Summit on the Economy and Employment (1995), which represented a turning point for the social and solidarity economy in Quebec. The community sector, labour unions and cooperatives coalesced to spearhead job creation and social finance in the province in a variety of sectors (i.e., social re-insertion, social housing, services to the elderly, etc.). "What distinguishes the social economy in Quebec, however, is its broad reach that extends beyond these collective enterprises to include social movements and territorial intermediaries

34 In Montreal, the Regional Development Councils (RDC) changed into the Conference of Regional Elected Officials in 2004-2005 and into Concertation Montréal in 2014-15. Historically, the process of regionalization of Quebec policy started in 1966, when the government created both the RDC and the Regional Administrative Conferences (RAC). The RAC are regional administrative units situated between regional municipal counties and the provincial government. However, at the time, regional and rural development remained largely top down, centralized, and in the hands of government technocrats (Lévesque, 2014).

35 These include the Community development corporations (CEC), Community economic development corporations (CEDC) and Local development centres (LDC). These intermediaries played a critical role in Quebec's system of innovation.

36 I highlight childcare services because (1) education is a social determinant of health, and therefore of food security, (2) healthy promotion programs, which include nutrition education (2007-2007) target young children, (3) school food procurement is a variable in territorial/city-region food systems.

that identify themselves as part of the social economy" (Mendell and Neamtan, 2008, p.1). The social economy had deep roots in Quebec history, but was recognized and rejuvenated during this critical period of the 1980s and 1990s, a period where neo-liberalism as the predominant economic and political ideology that was growing globally.

#### *4.1.2.2. Nutrition and food security*

Despite the growing recognition of the social and solidarity economy and increased funding to community groups (Lévesque, 2014), poverty remained acute after the economic downturn of the 1980s. "Between 1973 and 1986 (…) child poverty in Quebec increased from 16% to 30%"[37]. The urgency of this situation was voiced by anti-hunger organizations in Montreal. In response, the government launched the *Plan Pagé* (1992), which remains a targeted subsidy for school meals in low-income neighbourhoods in urban areas. In Montreal, this subsidy represented the bulk of the school board's annual food service budget (46%) (Raymont Chabot, 2006). From this moment onwards, the school board worked with a consortium of a dozen social economic enterprises[38]. Over the years, a relationship was negotiated between the school boards and the community sector. The latter, however, have more recently advocated for nutrition programs in schools that is universal in scope, meaning that it is in capacity to reaches all pupils.

Anti-poverty efforts continued throughout the 1990s with the organization of historical demonstrations, such as *Du pain et des roses* in 1995 and the signing of the the Manifesto to End Poverty in 2000. Community groups and public health officials succeeded in convincing legislators to integrate food security into the Act on fighting poverty and social exclusion (2001). This resulted in the government funding provincial food security organizations and prioritizing food access in its public health plan (2003-2012) (Hamelin et al., 2002). This represented a shift away from a charity-based model to an autonomy-based model for food security interventions. Given its implication on food politics in Montreal, I dedicate some space to describing program implementation later in this chapter. A critical assessment of the unfolding of the provincial food security program highlights that it was mandated to, and contained within, public health authorities (Bilodeau, 2006). Further, macro-level interventions (e.g., income, allocations, tax distribution) were not sufficient to eradicate hunger. Finally, the change of government from a nationalist to a liberal party in 2003 changed the political

37 Bulletin de la Table de concertation sur la faim et le développement social du Montréal Métropolitain (2009) *À table, 10,* 3.

38 This consortium is the *Collectif de la table des écoliers*, which would eventually become one of the key partners of the Montreal Food Systems action plan 2014-2016.

basis for government intervention

#### *4.1.2.3. Agriculture, rural development and environmental sustainability*

The 1990s were also characterized by the partial accommodation of rural and environmental concerns into agriculture policy. A number of farming and rural organizations came together during the *États généraux du monde rural* (1991) and created a coalition to revitalize the countryside (Vachon, 2011)[39]. "Since 1997, this organization [*Solidarité Rurale*] is recognized as an advisory body to the government of Quebec with regards to rural development" (Doddrige and Senechal, 2014, p.5). Further, the government supported the creation of agri-food roundtables[40], which "are mandated to bring together all actors in the food industry within a specific region" (Ashraf and Konforti 2010, p. 12). Other major reforms include the creation of agri-environmental research and advisory services[41], in co-management with the *UPA* (Benoit, 2015). The design of agri-environmental clubs is novel and the most extensive in Canada: they are associated with an increase in the adoption of integrated pest management techniques and the development of large expanses of windbreaks to protect waterways (MacRae et al., 2004).

In regards to governance, researchers diverge on whether agricultural corporatism facilitated or inhibited the integration of environmental concerns into agriculture. When comparing Quebec's agri-environmental policy networks with Ontario and North Carolina, Montpetit (1999) concludes that Quebec has a relatively stronger environmental performance, highlighting that "far from being anachronistic, Quebec corporatism still enjoys a good deal of success." Others, however, suggest that farming organizations have limited the adoption of significant agri-environmental reform. For instance, Benoit argues, "the farming profession will constitute an intermediary that filters pressures for reform (…) and that does not question its productivist standpoint" (2015, p. 331).

39 Bernard Vachon's book *Le Québec rural dans tous ses états* (1991) provides an overview of the economic and demographic de-vitalization of rural areas in Quebec.

40 In contrast with other regions in the province, the agri-food roundtable in Montreal is dedicated to small and medium size businesses in the agri-food processing sector.

41 This externalization resulted in the creation of the *Réseau Agriconseils* and the *Institut de recherche et de developpement en agroenvironnement.* Benoit (2015) observes that this externalization was meant to encourage greater financial participation from the farmers' union.

### 4.1.3. The neoliberal turn, a rupture of the Quebec model? (2000s-2010s)

During the 2000s and 2010s, a number of institutional arrangements that emerged from the previous decade were by the neoliberal logic embodied by the Quebec's Liberal party. Social science scholars have even raised the question of whether the Quebec model has come to an end (Lévesque, 2004). In the context of Quebec, observers have noticed three types of changes: the reduction of public intervention, more authoritarian policies with greater influence from the business community, and the consultation of individual citizens instead of deliberation with larger social actors (Bouchard et al., 2005). In this section, I focus on the pressure of fiscal reform on municipalities, cut backs and organizational changes in health (health care and prevention) and the stalled attempts of reforming agri-food governance.

#### *4.1.3.1. Municipal and fiscal affairs*

The provincial government has a long history of negotiation with the City of Montreal around the creation of the metropolitan region (Douay, 2007). Previous efforts had been largely stalled due to conflicts between the central municipal administration and the suburbs over the equitable contribution of public services and fiscal responsibility (Douay, 2007). The provincial government's fiscal pact (2000) triggered the creation of the metropolitan region (Douay, 2007). The goal was to gain efficiency over public services and harmonize regional policies dealing with land-use planning, public transportation, economic development, social housing and tax-base sharing (Wolfe, 2003). This resulted in a three-level governance system: "To respond to the double challenge of competitivity and solidarity, the government will go beyond territorial fragmentation and propose a new institutional landscape on three levels: the creation of a metropolitan entity, the creation of two large cities following municipal mergers and finally the creation of boroughs within these new cities." (Douay 2007, p. 183).

The merging of nine boroughs and seventeen suburbs into a 'one island-one city' (Wolfe 2003) led to immediate resistance to what was perceived as a loss of local government control (Tomàs and Collin, 2005). Top down traditional metropolitan planning became secondary (Douay, 2007; Wolfe, 2003). When the Liberal party came into power (2003), the government adopted a referendum to reconsider the merger, resulting in the reconstitution of 16 municipalities on the island of Montreal in 2006, albeit with less power. "In Montreal, those that were former suburbs have less power than previously, but those that were former arrondissements are assuming responsibilities that they did not have before and this latter has involved an interesting decentralization of manpower from City Hall to the newly created

borough offices." (Wolfe 2003, p.7). Simultaneously, the reforms recognized the power of the administrative city-center, with both the Urban Agglomeration of Montreal and the Metropolitan Community of Montreal presided over by the city-center's Mayor.

In 2004, the government reviewed the governance of civil society-led regional development agencies. Thee Regional Development Councils (CDR), which had been re-vamped from the 1997 reform were replaced with the Regional Conference of Elected Officials (CREO) (Act 34). This policy allocated more power to elected officials at the expense of civil society[42] (Doucet, 2010) and cause a re-orientation towards the business community (Lévesque, 2004). A decade later, the provincial government officially abolished the CREO (Act 28, 2014), halving the budget and allocating it instead to municipal administration (or counties, in rural areas) (Vaillancourt, 2017). This had implications on the legacy of the partner state: the budgetary allocation to the Local Development Centers and Community Economic Development Corporations were cut in half[43] (Vaillancourt, 2017)

The renegotiation of the fiscal pact between the Ministry of Territories and Municipal Affairs increased the overall responsibilities of municipalities, but diminished the financial resources at their disposal (Vaillancourt, 2017). In contrast with other regions, the CREO did not totally disappear in Montreal, but was integrated into the City's administration as *Concertation Montreal*. These changes were notable given that the CREO was tasked with coordinating regional stakeholder dialogue around food systems planning (2005-2010) and the later visioning process for the Montreal Food Strategy (2011-2013).

#### *4.1.3.2. Health promotion and healthy eating*

One early indicator of the neoliberal turn in the early 2000s was in the domain of health prevention, which is where healthy eating interventions are situated[44]. "The then governing party [*Parti Québecois*] (…) loss in elections held in 2003 precipitated an audit, which indicated budget deficits, resulting in budget cuts to the health sector, and leaving the implementation of the public health policy underfunded" (Addy et. al., 2014, p.220). The budgetary constraints led to a number of public-private partnerships between the government and the Fondation Lucie and André Chagnon[45] on the issue of health promotion (*Québec en Forme,* 2002-2017*)*, early child development (*Avenir d'enfant*, 2009-

42 For Lévesque, this change also resulted in less participation from young people and women.
43 The 18 LCD and CEDC were previously allocated a $14M budget. They were replaced by the "PME Montreal", which are now fewer (6) and span larger territories.
44 Intervention in healthy living is generally conceived as healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco use.
45 The FLAC was created by the founders of Vidéotron (multimedia distribution) in 1964 after the company was bought by Quebecor Media in 2000.

2019) and student achievement (*Réunir Reussir,* 2009-2015): "The inability of government actors to develop coherent public health policies that were adequately resourced and implemented led to the formal engagement of private sector and civil society in partnership to promote public health" (Addy et al 2014, p. 220).

Changes in the health care and social services network were also noticeable. A first wave of reforms[46] in the mid-2000s abolished regional public health boards (creating instead regional public health agencies), merged front line services into central services and increased provincial authority and oversight in governing bodies (Vaillancourt, 2017). The *Barette* reform (Act 10) in 2014-2015 intensified this trend with the end of regional health agencies and the fusion of public health institutions into larger, centralized bodies[47] (Vaillancourt, 2017). The abolition of the public health agencies, which were responsible over matters regarding health prevention, illustrates a dual process of de-regionalization and centralization (Vaillancourt, 2017). This is significant to Montreal; the regional public health authority remains one of the strongest institutional proponents of moving towards a municipal Food Policy Council and a driver in urban food governance through the committee on food security (1998-2004), *Nourrir Montréal* (2005-2010) and the Montreal Food Strategy (2010s).

#### *4.1.3.3. Agriculture, rural development and environmental sustainability*

In the agriculture and agri-food sector, the 'neoliberal turn' plays out in three major ways. First, despite the creation of new programs and novel approaches embodying the principles of territorialized food systems and multifunctional agriculture (Doucet, 2010; Doyon et al., 2016; Doddridge and Sénéchal, 2013, Benoit, 2015), only marginal funding was actually allocated to these programs (Benoit, 2015). These programs hit a 'financial lock-in', notably due to the institutional commitment to existing farming insurance programs (MacRae, 2016). This will introduce our second point, which is the inability of the successive governments to reform agricultural policy instruments. Finally, the launch of the most recent consultation, the Food Summit illustrates a third way the neoliberal turn in Quebec impacts agri-food governance.

The government launched the Commission on the future of agriculture and agri-food (2005) under the

46 The prime minister of Quebec (2014-…), Phillipe Couillard, was the minister of health and social servies at the time (2003-2008)

47 These new institutions are known as the *Centres intégrés universitaires de santé et de services sociaux* (CIUSSS) et des *Centres intégrés de santé et de services sociaux* (CISSS). Arguably, the centralization of community health services and public health authorities results in greater emphasis of curative health and a technocratic, top down logic at the expense of preventive health and control of health services by users and communities.

leadership of Jean Pronovost. This consultation involved wide segments of Quebec society to discuss agri-food policy. The final report outlines a twenty-year vision for the agriculture and agri-food sector, addressing the major issues of environmental stewardship, rural development and community well-being. The Pronovost Report problematized the main governing body, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries: "Participants critiqued the erosion of the leadership of the ministry of agriculture over the past years, its loss of expertise, its thin budgets and levers, and disproportionate attention on the economic aspect of its mandate" (CAAAQ, 2008, p. 30).

For Doucet (2010), this consultation empowered the agricultural administration to diversify its interventions and become an active player in territorializing food systems functions and activities. The civil service also started playing a greater role in agri-environmental policy, by soliciting farmers to improve their farming practices beyond minimum regulatory requirements (Benoit, 2015). Further, the main governing body of agriculture launched programs in regional and provincial food labeling schemes[48], agri-food marketing and organic sector development. In the context of the SAM Action Plan, two main provincial interventions are relevant: agriculture land use planning and institutional local food procurement[49]. While the instruments are novel from an inter-provincial standpoint, these various programs face expenditure constraints and, overall, remain quite marginal[50] relative to total public spending in agriculture (Benoit, 2015)

The events after the launch of the Pronovost Report continued to leave an institutional void due to a combination of party politics and the corporatist status quo. Once the Liberal government was re-elected, it abandoned the nationalist party's 'food sovereignty' policy[51], which the *Parti Québécois* had launched during its short stay in power (2012-2014). More paradoxically, the Liberal party never followed through on its pre-2012 'vision' for the agri-food sector, which had resulted from a round of discussions within the national assembly (i.e., provincial parliament). The process has been criticized

48 Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of 'local food' labelling schemes in Quebec: registered designation of origins (product-specific and/or based on traditional knowledge or its cultural value), "Aliments du Quebec" (products produced or processed in the province) and regional designations (region-specific promotion programs implemented by the regional agri-food roundtable).

49 The 'strategy for positioning "Aliments du Québec" on the institutional market' (SPAQMI) was launched in 2013-2014.

50 Benoit notes that the organic sector development strategy and the 'multifunctionality program' respectively represent 0,025% and 0,05% of total budgets of the ministry of agriculture.

51 Desmarais and Wittman (2014) study the use of the term food sovereignty in Canada, a concept initially developed by peasant-led grassroots coalition from the Global South. In contrast, in the context of the *Parti québécois'* agricultural policy, the term subscribes to a nationalist, *sovereignist* discourse and a signal of opposition to the federal government's liberal trade agenda. The two antagonistic farmers unions, the *Union des producteurs agricoles* and the *Union Paysanne*, have also competed over the use of the term.

as being disjointed from the recommendations issued by the Pronovost Commission[52]. The Liberal government also abandoned the provincial rural policy and de-funded the coalition *Solidarité Rurale*[53] (2015) (Vaillancourt, 2017), which came to a surprise given that it "is one of the most advanced policy approached to promote rural development in the OECD area" (OECD, 2010, p.17)

Furthermore, Benoit explains (2015) that the attempt to reform one of the main policy instruments, the farm insurance support program (FISP) under the *St Pierre Commission* (2011) was met with staunch opposition from the *Union des Producteurs Agricoles*[54]. The farmers' union mobilized its political allies across the aisle to curtail policy changes and delegitimize the report. The final changes made to the FISP were minimal and were revoked during the *Parti Québécois*'s short stay in power (2012-2014). The professional farming body came under increasing pressure for public accountability. Most pressing, however, was the signing of free trade agreements (e.g. the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement is the most recent landmark) and the continued concentration of the market power of retailers. This dynamic illustrates the increasing tension between the corporatist, state assistance status quo and neoliberalism.

A third episode in Quebec agri-food governance illustrates the neo-liberal turn in Quebec. In 2016, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Pierre Paradis, launched a new round of consultation: the Quebec Food Summit[55], which should technically result with an agri-food policy in 2018. In contrast with the Commission on the future of agriculture and agri-food a decade before, the Food Summit is segmented into three sectors: consumers, supply chain operators, and agricultural producers. Some critiques have questioned the legitimacy, as well as the sectorial focus of this consultation. One community representative is quoted in a press release, "I fear that citizens participating in good faith are taking part, without their knowledge, to a large marketing study whose results will be informing agri-food businesses operators (...)" (RCCQ, 2017). On the other hand, the main agricultural organization was weary of the government's attempt to mobilize consumers as a counter balance to farmers' influence. As we saw with Bouchard and colleagues, consulting with individual consumers,

52 The *Livre Vert* (2011) provides an overview of the government's vision for the sector, but was criticized by some social actors (e.g.,Nature Québec, Coalition SOS-Pronovost, Solidarité Rurale) for its delays, it's lack of orientation towards concrete action, and it's inadequate proposals for implementation.

53 Solidarité rurale was negotiating with the Parti Québécois to renew a convention, but the agreement was not signed before the party lost in the elections of 2014.

54 Dupont and Laplante (2010), two researchers from a research institute that aligns with the UPA, argued that the Pronovost Report embodied a "partial diagnostic, a truncated analysis" that failed to appreciate the need for a united farming organization in the context of market concentration in the food retail and processing sectors.

55 The Quebec Food Summit webpage presents a pedagogical web interface and invites consumers to comment on the issues of topics of healthy eating, organic foods, certification, food waste and labeling https://sommetalimqc.gouv.qc.ca/

instead of deliberating with social actors, is characteristic of the neo-liberal governance in Quebec. (Bouchard et al., 2005).

### 4.1.4. Conclusion

The institutional configurations of the "Quebec Model" have gone through significant changes since the 1960s, especially with the neoliberal turn in the 2000s forward. These dynamics directly affected some of the core stakeholders in the Montreal Food Systems Action Plan (2014-2016). In the health care sector for example, we referred to a dual process of de-regionalization of public health agencies and centralization of front line services (Vaillancourt, 2017). Further, the *Quebec en Forme* public-private partnership (2006-2017) dictated the time horizon of the Montreal Food Systems Action Plan, as well as the resources available. Meanwhile, in agriculture and rural development, the call for reform by the Pronovost Report remained largely contained due to budgetary constraints, a corporatist status quo, and the individualization of consultative mechanisms in a context of globalization of food governance.

In the case of municipal affairs, the negotiation of the fiscal pact was a key driver of the negotiation between Montreal, its suburbs and the provincial government to create the metropolitan region (Douay, 2007). The reform embodied a traditional approach to metropolitan planning from the top and, following the mergers and de-fusions of boroughs and suburbs, lead to a decentralization of responsibilities to boroughs (Wolfe, 2003). More recently, the institutional anchor of the Montreal Food Systems Action Plan and other community economic development intermediaries saw budgets cut in half, leading again to a number of mergers.

Actors in the field of city-region food systems planning in Montreal negotiate with the institutional and policy legacy of Fordism, economic pluralism and neoliberalism and the sectorial and top down delivery of provincial priorities. There are, however, a number of dynamics that contribute to cross-sectorial action and territorial food systems planning. The public health agencies took the lead to deliver healthy food access programs with community groups, while the public private partnership *Québec en Forme*[56] built momentum in promoting healthy eating. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) has also diversified its interventions in agriculture, and particularly in

56 The entrepreneurial, network-oriented dimension of QEF's work provided a more dynamic approach the bureaucratic logic of government policy. Further, Addy (2014, p.225), notes: "interviews of local partnership groups in Quebec suggest (…) an initial ambivalence towards the Chagnon Foundation and Quebec en Forme, as private funding sources, has improved, given positive experiences that some communities have experienced through repeated interactions with these funding sources over years".

agricultural land use planning (Doyon et al. 2016), which appear to embody a territorial food systems approach and contribute to understanding the food policy context of Montreal.

## 4.2. The evolution of city-region food governance

The neoliberalisation of Quebec's regulatory model provides the backdrop from which we can analyze the emergence of spaces of regional cooperation in food in Montreal, QC. The negotiation around the creation of a food policy council is the result of thirty years of regional coordination between civil society organizations and civic food networks, public health authorities and various municipal and para-municipal agencies. These spaces, often politicized, are intimately tied to the culture of stakeholder deliberation (i.e., concertation), and have taken the shape of roundtables, committees and coalitions, which eventually played out as key intermediaries (or "spokespeople" in the language of Actor-Network Theory) in the Montreal Food Systems Action Plan. I highlight that, despite the emergence of these political and cooperation spaces, the municipality's involvement remains partial and an "institutional void" has persisted over time (Audet et al., 2015, p.18).

In the context of this thesis, I start with mobilization of civic food networks around an anti-hunger and anti-poverty agenda in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The provincial anti-poverty plan (2001) led to a greater involvement of public health authorities, but also a delegation of municipal responsibilities to boroughs. In 2005, the mandate for regional coordination was transferred from the public health agency to the Conference of Regional Elected Officials (CREO) (Bertrand and Thérien, 2004), a hybrid para-municipal organization. This change of role did not result, however, in a greater involvement of municipal representatives. In parallel, political spaces continued to diversify to integrate concerns of sustainable development into urban planning and socio-economic development.

### 4.2.1. From food insecurity to community empowerment

#### *4.2.1.1. The emergence of an anti-hunger agenda*

In the 1980s, community food relief services multiplied in response to the economic downturn and marginalization of large segment of Quebec society (e.g., manufacturing sector). Food relief had, until then, been limited exclusively to religious institutions. Food banks quickly organized the regional distribution of food donations through a network of regional hubs (the *Moissons*), which served more than 900 community groups by 1996 (Échette, 2000). Community organizers and religious groups planned a number of forums to share good practices that went beyond charity by empowering users as

political actors[57]. In 1991, anti-hunger and anti-poverty groups coalesced around the Taskforce on Hunger for Metropolitan Montreal to advocate for a greater social safety net and the adoption of food security policies by pubic authorities (Bilodeau, 2000; Vansintjan, 2015). This roundtable became a hub and promoter of community empowerment models throughout the 1990s, such as school meal programs, collective kitchens and consumers buyers clubs[58]. These initiatives generally emphasize self-help, mutual support and food skills (e.g., professional insertion.) The Taskforce's orientation towards public policy became more pronounced a decade later (e.g. Act on poverty and social inclusion in 2001; Pronovost Commission in 2006-08, etc.)

In 1990, the municipality of Montreal incubated the *Nourrir Montréal* (Feeding Montreal) committee as part of its 'healthy cities'[59] initiative. During the next five years, community groups continued to extend their advocacy in this committee. From the perspective of community organizations, the work was largely stalled by the public institution's reluctance to recognize the contribution and expertise developed through their respective community coalitions. The Taskforce on Hunger argued that it played a unique role in coordinating community organizations, sharing best practices, providing training opportunities to community workers and empowering food bank users, and advocated that public authorities should support it.[60]

From the perspective of regional public health practitioners, poverty was so acute that the food emergency agenda dominated the space of stakeholder dialogue (Bertrand and Thérien, 2004). Organizations that provided food relief activities expected and solicited more support: human resources, equipment or funding; in short, anything to alleviate the growing issue of hunger (Harper et al., 2009). However, the members of the roundtable, which apparently included unions, the municipality, and food distributors, were either unable or unwilling to meet this need (Bertrand and Thérien, 2004). The *Nourrir Montréal* committee progressive dissolved, "In the absence of dedicated programs, organizations withdrew little by little" (Bertrand and Thérien 2004).

In contrast with Toronto, where the municipality was involved (via the public health agency) in the early developments of a food policy council, the focus of the City of Montreal remained project-

57 One of the first spokesperson of the coalition was a vocal Jesuit that drew from liberation theology and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970).

58 These various interventions organized on a regional and provincial level, e.g., *Collectif de la Table des écoliers* (school meals), *Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec* (collective kitchens), and the *Regroupement des magasins partage de l'île de Montréal* (holiday-season food baskets)

59 "Healthy cities" has been promoted as part of the *Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion* (1986) as a prism for local governments to create healthier and more active urban environments. In 1990, Montreal joined the *Réseau québécois des ville et villages en santé* (Mailhot-Leduc, 2014).

60 http://faim-developpement.ca/organisation/historique/ Since the 1990s, the Taskforce on Hunger published regularly through newsletters.

based[61]. For example, the *Magasins Partage*[62] received support from the city through funding, space and annual donation campaigns. "After working on school food programs, it was the *Magasins partage.* The Taskforce organized the first three campaigns; we went to get the support of the Montreal Mayor to do that. We went to get Mayor Doré, the Table asked him to get involved, and through the Mayor Doré we went to get the support of the city"[63]. In 1994, members of the *Nourrir Montréal* committee started reorienting their efforts towards the development of a municipal food security policy, but the committee was dissolved after the election of a new municipal administration. "The committee stopped simply because it wasn't in the city's priorities. It was a priority of the former administration, so the new one was against it. It's as simple as that…"[64].

During this first period (1986-1995), the volunteer and community sectors raised the alarm on the increasing role of food relief services. Community groups coalesced in neighbourhood roundtables (Longtin and Rochman, 2015), as well as in regional and provincial organizations (Bilodeau, 2006). The Taskforce on Hunger played a critical role in bringing together civic food networks at the regional level and addressing the differences between food charity- and food autonomy-based initiatives. Two spaces persisted until 1994-95: one was solely community-driven (the Taskforce), and the other served as the interface with public sector bodies (*Nourrir Montreal*). While this pattern persisted with time, new mechanisms for community consultation were developed. These include various types of municipal consultations, as well as neighbourhood roundtables. As public health became the institutional anchor on food security, it created its own intermediary spaces (committees, roundtables, etc.) to coordinate with the education, social services and community sectors at a regional, agglomeration level.

Although the City had technically initiated *Nourrir Montreal* committee, the latter was situated at an arms-length of the local government. To my knowledge, no other policies, with the exception of small grants and the promotion of donation-drives, were enacted as a result of its work. As one informant says, "Institutions didn't have the room for manoeuvre; they don't have political manoeuvre. There were civil servants that could support initiatives, but they couldn't go much further than that. (…) That's why the Taskforce was important. We supported networking, but obviously the institutions have funding, and we don't, which very quickly made them key actors. That said, they also have limits. It's

61 In contrast with Toronto, public health in Montreal is not embedded within the municipal administration.

62 The bulk of their activities are two donation drives; one at the beginning of the school year and another during the end-of-year holidays. Users pay a subsidized, symbolic cost and can 'shop' in ad hoc stores situated in community centres.

63 Interview, coordination committee (2015).

64 Ibid.

normal, we can't expect it to be like the Taskforce with its advocacy agenda. We work under certain parameters"[65].

#### *4.2.1.2. The positioning of public health authorities*

The dissolution of the *Nourrir Montreal* committee left a coordination void that the regional public health agency would come to fill over the following decade. In 1997, the agency received pilot funding from the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MHSS) to lead regional planning and convene community groups, researchers, school boards and the city, under the umbrella of the Committee of partners for the development of food security[66]. Bilodeau and colleagues (2002, p.13) indicate:

> "Having reached out to a large span of actors in the field around a regional [food security] policy that still had to be defined, the RPHA [Regional public health agency] endorsed its role as a mobilizer. The actors concerned by the issue were convened and the theoretical, ideological and political issues put on the table. The demonstration of the differences favoured the emergence of zones of convergence. The actors, whatever their position, managed to insert themselves in a continuum of local and regional action in favour of food security[67]. By convening this significant mass of actors, including some of them most progressive in the field, the RPHA reinforced its credibility as a mediator, despite, or maybe thanks to, its weak experience in the field."

The collaboration instilled in the committee provided additional credibility and influence to the RPHA, which joined the community coalition to promote food autonomy activities and local networks and raise awareness around the limits of food banks (Bilodeau, 2006). The shift of the RPHA "corresponded with a change from a medical approach to food focused on behavioural problems to a social development discourse looking at health inequities"[68]. The membership of the committee, however, remained largely circumscribed to community actors on one hand, and funders[69] on the other.

The involvement of the regional public agency in the field of food security caught the attention of senior officials in the MHSS, eventually leading to greater investment in projects and research. New knowledge was generated on the impacts, and limits of community food interventions (Rouffignat et al., 1996; 2001) and the scope of food insecurity in the province (ISQ, 2000)[70] As the anti-poverty movement grew in the late 1990s, Hamelin and Bolduc (2003) used Kingdon's theory on policy

65 Ibid.
66 *Comité des partenaires pour le développement de la sécuité alimentaire.*
67 The development of a local-regional continuum of intervention in the field of food security echoes André-Anne Parents' (2015) model introduced in the conceptual chapter. This model features, in ascending order: food charity-based interventions; food autonomy; food access; food provisioning; the agri-food system; social determinants of health.
68 Informal interview (2015)
69 Funders include both public sector organization and private charities.
70 Questions addressing food insecurity are included in public health surveys in 1998

windows[71] to explain how community and public health policy entrepreneurs (people with time, resource and influence to change policy), advocated the integration of food security into the Act on poverty and social inclusion. It was finally included in the second draft of the legislative proposal (Hamelin and Bolduc, 2003). "I invited Wayne Robert, an influential person in the Toronto Food Policy Council, to interview him on CBC. Several of us undertook actions to influence the Ministry of Health and Social Services."[72]

After this law had passed[73], a one-time envelope of $10 million was transferred to regional public health authorities to fund food autonomy activities (75%) and the core mission of food charity groups (25%) (MSSS, 2008). This consolidated the role of Montreal's regional public healthy authority as a funder, producing a tension that was highlighted by one informant: "Public health became a funder at the beginning of the 2000s. There was resistance from the community sector, which needed funding for its core mission, not projects. We defined specific objectives in the health sector, and we would tell them [the community sector] that they could design the process. Even with that, the community sector saw it as top down."[74]

The evaluation of this program indicated the limited participation of community groups in provincial planning and the containment of food security within the public health sector[75] (Bilodeau, 2006). Observers also noted misalignments in funding conditions: the program required projects to be developed by community roundtables, but funding could only be allocated to and managed by individual community groups registered with the Ministry Health and Social Service. This had the effect of giving undue influence to particular groups at the local level and therefore feeding a sense of competition over funding (Bilodeau, 2006). The prioritization of community planning over service delivery was also a source tension. The community sector argued that community organizers of health clinics were already tasked with the coordination of neighbourhood roundtables, proposing instead that additional funding should be channelled to respond to the chronic shortage of resources for activities on the ground (Bilodeau, 2006). Disagreements over funding in food security in Montreal have continued

71 MacRae and Winfield (2016) also highlight this approach, which argues that policy opportunities open once there is an alignment between three 'policy streams': the problem stream, the policy/ solution stream, and the political stream.

72 Informal interview (2015)

73 The government also partnered with two provincial food security organizations with both core and project funding: the association of food banks and the association of collective kitchens.

74 Ibid.

75 In British Columbia, where the impetus for policy change was framed from a health perspective, and not an anti-poverty standpoint, food security programming was integrated as a core program of the Health Ministry, as well as in the Ministry of Agriculture (School fruit and vegetable snack program; Farmers market nutrition and coupon program) and the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (Food skills for families program) (Seed et al., 2012).

since (Audet et al., 2015), being emblematic of the community sector's relationship to the state.

#### *4.1.2.3. The emergence of the neighbourhood intermediaries.*

In the early 2000s, the City of Montreal became a new decision maker in fighting poverty and social exclusion. This had the effect of progressively institutionalizing a social development[76] policy agenda. This is the policy domain where food security will come to be situated. Once the Act on poverty and social inclusion (2001) was passed and the Montreal Summit of 2002 took place, the city reached an eight-year agreement with the province to allocate funding to boroughs to support community groups. The city also launched an integrated urban revitalization initiative (*Revitalisation urbaine integé*), which represents yet another attempt to build local capacity for community economic development.

Moreover, a tri-partite funding partnership was reached between the City of Montreal, the regional public health agency and a community foundation (Centraide/United Way) to ensure core funding to neighbourhood roundtables, or *Tables de quartier*[77]. This is still regarded as one of the strongest institutional innovations in the domain of social development in Montreal (Longtin and Rochman, 2015) as it has provided place-based forums in twenty-nine neighbourhoods to plan, coordinate and execute cross-sectorial actions. Over the years, these neighbourhood-level roundtables have built capacity for groups and public institutions to coordinate around different facets of food systems planning (greening, food security, urban planning).

There is a degree of heterogeneity between local social development networks depending on the context and history of each neighbourhood, but also on funding arrangements. Some components and systems continue operating in siloes (Longtin and Rochman, 2015). Despite the creation of cross-sectorial, neighbourhood roundtables, autonomous thematic and issue-specific committees also operate. For instance, food security committees were created to apply for public health funding and in some cases worked independently from the *table de quartier*[78]. A similar dynamic took place with healthy eating programming, where local partners' committees were convened by *Quebec en Forme* in 2007 onwards (Addy et al., 2014). With these reservations in mind, neighbourhood roundtables act as cross-sectorial forums and represent a fertile ground to locally integrate food systems planning.

76 The seven domains of social development are community life, education, urban planning, economic development, food security, transport and housing.

77 These local roundtables converge regionally through a coalition, *la Coalition des Tables de quartier*, which would eventually sign onto the SAM 2025 vision for a sustainable and just food system.

78 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

#### *4.1.2.4. Conclusion*

From the late 1990s onwards, food security was partially integrated into provincial public health programming and in the municipal social inclusion agenda. Both programs privileged a food autonomy and community development approach to food security over food charity. Although more support was leveraged, a number of challenges emerged. For Bilodeau and colleagues (2003), two controversies persisted. First, food charity initiatives competed with community empowerment-based models around political attention and private funding. Second, community groups argued that the Taskforce on Hunger should be supported instead of forming a new space for stakeholder deliberation driven by the public health agenda (2006). The public health agency, which became the institutional anchor of a regional food security agenda, consolidated its role as a funder, resulting in greater institutional commitment over programming that to municipal or provincial policy change. In the early 2000s, municipal reforms resulted in a decentralization of manpower to boroughs, including in social development.

### 4.2.2. Socio-economic development and short supply chains

Food systems planning underwent new developments in 2005 onwards. The institutional anchor was transferred from the public health agency to the newly created Conference of Regional Elected Officers (CREO). The CREO, now responsible for regional development, invested itself in the value-added agri-food processing sector. The re-convening of the *Nourrir Montreal* committee (2005-2010) and launch of another round of stakeholder consultations provided room for new experiments and pilots to grow, such as in the fields of urban agriculture and neighbourhood solidarity markets, but also revealed disagreements within the community sector.

#### *4.2.2.1. The weight of the agri-food processing sector*

In 2005, the CREO became a new driver in food systems planning. I mentioned in the first section of this chapter that the emergence of the CREO is somewhat controversial and indicative of neo-liberalism. As its name indicates, it leaves less room for civil society than its predecessor, the Regional Development Council (RDC). The CREO adopted a hybrid governance structure, which increased the role of elected officials in regional development, while re-orienting itself towards the business community. The CREO acted as the 'privileged interlocutor' of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Regions and Land Occupancy (MARLO) in regional development.

The CREO brokered a number of institutional partnerships, which contributed to the diversification of

the institutional landscape[79]. The most relevant arrangement, in view of the Montreal Food Systems planning process (2010-2017), is the creation of an agri-food processing roundtable. Indeed, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) had started supporting regional agri-food roundtables in the late 1990s. In the case of Montreal, the Biofood Industry Council of the Island of Montreal (BICIM)[80] focused on supporting small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) specializing in value-added, food processing activities[81] (CRÉ 2014). The BICIM remained the MAFF's privileged partner in terms of allocating provincial funds to support the agri-food sector, and became a noticeable partner in food systems planning as a project leader on institutional procurement (SAM Action Plan 2014-2016).

The launch of the BICIM underscores the attempts of the MAFF to harness opportunities for the agri-food sector in the province's largest pool of consumers. Over 2005-2013, the regional office of the MAFF tried to activate an "agri-food cluster" at the metropolitan level. As part of its economic development agenda (2005-2010 plan), the Montreal Metropolitan Community launched an office responsible for innovation clusters[82] in order to facilitate technological transfer, job creation, skill development and financial investment. A research institute was tasked with conducting a metropolitan-wide assessment to activate the agri-food cluster (CMM, 2004).

The report provided a strategic orientation towards fostering research and development, training and education and strategic investments in the organic food and farming sector (CMM, 2004). Furthermore, the institute recommended that the metropolitan region put in place an agri-food council that would draw on the contribution of "champions" from both the mainstream and alternative food system. The agri-food cluster was, however, never activated and neglected in favour of culture and tourism, cutting-edge technologies and competitive industrial clusters, such as aerospace.

#### *4.2.2.2. The shift of institutional anchor stakeholder dialogue*

The Conference of Regional Elected Officials[83] re-instigated the *Nourrir Montréal* committee to

79 For instance, the CREO brokered a partnership with the Taskforce on the social economy, creating the Social economy committee of the island of Montreal

80 *Conseil des industries bioalimentaire de l'île de Montréal* (CIBIM)

81 In other regions, agri-food roundtables bring together actors from across the supply chain to harness regional agri-food marketing opportunities (e.g., public markets, agri-tourism, collective distribution).

82 Metropolitan innovation clusters website: http://cmm.qc.ca/champs-intervention/developpement-economique/dossiers-en-developpement-economique/grappes-metropolitaines/

83 The CREO is a regional body that fosters coordinators on issues such as youth leadership, social economy, digital arts and food security. It was created in 2004 and represented a shift towards representative democracy over deliberative democracy (Vaillancourt, 2017) and the business community over the non-profit sector. As the privileged interlocutor of the provincial ministries, the CREO also made call for project

convene stakeholders in regional food planning. As the CREO does not have experience in the field of food security[84], it conducted a number of sectorial assessments in agriculture, health, education and the community sector (2005-2008). Further, the committee participated in the provincial consultation of the agriculture and agri-food sector (the so-called Pronovost Commission), where it recommended increased support for urban agriculture and local public food procurement, and the promotion of local food. It also recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture broaden its economic mandate to integrate social development (e.g., community wellbeing), and to act as a mediator between the public and an increasingly conglomerated retail sector (CRÉ, 2007).

The work of *Nourrir Montreal*, however, appeared to have been stalled. One issue was the challenge of working with a diversity of stakeholders. The *NM* committee was originally created to be cross-sectorial in scope and to involve multiple networks. However, when assessing this experience, the main initiators of the SAM (2010) indicated: "after five years [of work], those around the table were mainly from the health, education and community sectors. Others became disinterested or didn't benefit from it". The missing actors might refer to some of institutional players (the City, MAFF, QEF, funders), but perhaps also the business community. Paradoxically, the reorientation of the CREO towards the private sector did not re-translate into an active participation of the business community in working towards public health goals. Coordinators of the committee did, however, promote the work in urban agriculture undertaken by community groups (community gardens, collective gardens) and universities (institutional gardens). At the time, this might have signalled a greater degree of institutional recognition of urban agriculture, and possibly encouraged groups to mobilize towards the 2011 municipal consultation.

One critique raised on the committee was that it was too oriented towards community-based anti-hunger efforts. "Before the SAM, it was *Nourrir Montreal,* and at some point *Nourrir Montréal* was not going anywhere, it wasn't about feeding Montreal, but instead about feeding poverty. The discourse there was about poverty: there always needed to be more money to provide core funding to all the community organizations that had trouble making ends meet at the end of the month."[85] This echoes the work of Harper and colleagues (2009) on food councils in the United States: "FPCs have also been criticized for being one-sided in their outlook. FPCs tend to come from the anti-hunger/poverty world, and stay isolated in that world." They point to the challenge of being "single-issue" focused and neglecting other food systems activities and levers of intervention. In Montreal, the division between

proposals, and therefore as a funder in the food planning network.

84 Chantal Doucet (2010) shows that the CREO largely support a multi-functional paradigm to agriculture. This social learning, however, is not assumed when the CREO were created in 2004-2005.

85 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

hunger alleviation on the one hand, and food access on the other, concentrated the discussion. As the quote suggests, regional negotiation is in deep tension, and contradiction, with the structural dynamics of public spending and the relationship between government and civil society.

We can draw a third lesson from the *Nourrir Montréal* experience with regards to influencing policy and how power was negotiated. Although the *Nourrir Montréal* committee was designed in the spirit of a food policy council, it had only a weak advisory mandate to the CREO, limited funding and no advocacy or decision-making power. As one interviewee mentioned, "Community groups wanted to communicate to city councillors that food insecurity should be a priority of the city, but they [city councillors] didn't want to hear any of it."[86] As a secondary agency, the CREO traditionally had an ambiguous relationship with civil society and with the municipality. Provincial reforms had reduced the influence of civil society, increased the role of elected officials and reoriented the CREO towards the business community (e.g., agri-food processing sector). For Lévèsque (2005), this likely resulted in less representation from women and youth in the institution, as these groups are less likely to be represented in office-holding positions. This shift in governance is seen as leading to a greater emphasis on representative democracy over deliberative democracy, and was an early indicator of the neoliberal reform of public institutions.

Furthermore, the CREO represented elected officials from several municipal parties, as well as from multiple municipalities in the agglomeration of Montreal. There were also representatives from the province, which was perceived by some as meant to limit the influence of the City of Montreal. One respondent reveals how the hybrid governance of the CREO resulted in an ambiguous relationship with the municipality:

> "[The CREO] is a decision making space that was created by the government of Quebec a decade ago. It adds on to the existing structures, that's the city's opinion, right? We are sometimes under the impression that its duplicating the work, we have elected officials on both sides, but at the same time, some of them are selected to sit on the CREO, which also comes down to power (…) The city thinks its essential to have a broad space for deliberation and mobilization that isn't political. I think this was first and foremost the role of the CREO, but the CREO realized that in order to accomplish things, it needed [political] leaders. That's when we felt duplication of mandates."[87]

The round of stakeholder deliberation 2005-2010 illustrates not only the tensions between community groups and government agencies, but also within the public sector. Further, the CREO was new to the

86 Informal interview, coordination committee (2015)
87 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

field of food security and therefore had to undertake its own social learning (through assessments, in-person meetings, etc.). That said, the experience of the *Nourrir Montreal* committee encouraged new innovations to emerge, notably in the field of urban agriculture and, as we show in the next section, in food access.

#### *4.2.2.3. The experiment of neighbourhood solidarity markets*

In 2006, the Montreal regional public health authority generated a study that represented a steppingstone in the agency's intervention framework on food environments, built around the notion of food deserts. The study mapped physical proximity to stores, specifically fresh fruit and vegetable stalls[88,] and revealed that 40% of the population did not have adequate access. The health agency identified a number of micro-sectors (n=16) in low incomes communities with low rates of motorization and no stores within walking distance. (DSP, 2006) This study (repeated in 2013) reoriented the regional public health authority to improve access to fruits and vegetables (F&V) (DSP, 2012).

Groups were seeking new food provisioning options that fit with their criteria of equity and sustainability[89]. The *Marché Central*, the main food terminal in Montreal, was a hub to build relationships directly with farmers. The newly re-vamped public health program provided funding to community-based initiatives (17 initiatives in 2008-2012 and 14 in 2013-2018) (DSP, 2012). Funding was also provided by the CREO, MAFF, the city and some boroughs and allocated to neighbourhood solidarity markets. These markets were seen as a solution to provide new markets to farmers, and greater access to low-income consumers (CRÉ, 2009). However, these market were seasonal, had a limited clientele, and organizations remained fragile. Markets took place on a very local, ad-hoc basis with few opportunities to mutualize resources. In this context, some institutional partners and funders reconsidered the use of their limited financial resources and withdrew from the project.

The lack of sufficient funding and the withdrawal of the main funders raised a second criticism of the *Nourrir Montréal* committee (2005-2010). Funding was provided, in partnership with other regional and municipal public institutions, to pilot neighbourhood solidarity markets and temporary, seasonal

88 The authors define food access based on the surface of the fruit and vegetable stalls. They also account for distance, 500 for pedestrians, and 3 km for automobiles. The geomatic study uses the motorization rate of different sectors, the automobile being the main vehicle for consumers to buy groceries.

89 The organic-certified vegetable baskets delivered through community-supported agriculture (organized by Equiterre, an environmental organization) were judged to be too expensive for low-income consumers. A cheaper option, the good food box program (*Bonne Boite Bonne Bouffe*), was first piloted locally in Notre-Dame-de-Grace and then scaled up regionally by the food bank network, but this system did not provide options for consumers to choose the products they wished to buy (Audet et al., 2015). In this context, community food security organizations sought other options.

food stalls. However, the short-term outcomes of this experience didn't appear convincing enough for public sector bodies. Further, this pilot took place towards the end of the *Nourrir Montréal* committee's five-year mandate, in 2008 and 2009. When the CREO announced it would not prioritize food security in its following five-year plan (2010-2015), other funders withdrew.

The challenge of economic viability drove some of the more robust of these organizations, approximately fifteen in total, to create the *Neighbourhood Markets Coalition*. The markets pooled their logistics and buying power to supply individual members by partnering with local farmers in Montreal's main food terminal, notably thanks to a new round of funding, this time originating from the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles[90] (RRHL). The project was piloted during the summer of 2012, but was aborted in early 2013. One analysis provides the reasoning behind the end of the project:

> "The rapid growth of the activities of Tera Ter and the food supply pooling project meant that they lacked solid foundations. (…) The fact that all the procurement was centralized in one organization that was in "competition" with private suppliers, but lacked the financial and technical resources, as well as the necessary volumes to negotiate, meant that the organization was unable to put money aside and have enough financial maneuver. Finally, the seasonality of the activities of Tera Ter, the structure and the logistics were fragile and hinged on too few resources. The lack of local anchoring among partner organizations, the decision making process and shared liabilities did not leave enough room to local partners and contributed to the weakening and eventual closure of the organization." (RUI St Pierre, 2016, p.8).

After the project ended, the *Neighbourhood Markets Coalition* developed a community-university partnership to reflect on their experiences and the obstacles they faced (Audet et al., 2014). The results of the study highlighted that local community groups were unable to organize a cost-efficient system of distribution and transport due to logistical and financial issues. They encapsulate this obstacle to collective food provisioning in fresh fruits and vegetables as a "socio-technical lock-in" (Audet et al., 2015; RUI St Pierre, 2016).

This experience, however, contributed to social learning and networks in food systems planning in Montreal. The municipality had broken away from what had been a public responsibility over main public markets in 1992 (Jean Talon, Atwater, Maisonneuve, etc.). The main markets incorporated into

90 The RRHL was set up in every region of Quebec by *Quebec en Forme* and public health agencies (Addy et al., 2014). As I show in the next chapter, the RRHL was dissolved in 2013 and re-convened to support the actions plans of the Montreal Food System (SAM) and Montreal Physically Active (MPA), two regional coalitions in health promotion.

the association of public markets of Montreal[91] for the purpose of promotion and space rentals. Public markets played a historical function in the urban setting. "[A public market] was a mandatory place to buy food products, it provided a meeting point between people from the city and rural areas, it is a place where people stroll and learn about the latest municipal ordinances, participate to exhibition or cultural events. However, the market is more than a place to meet and exchange: it is the heart of the town, the center of a many activities." (St Onge 2011, p. 16)

Historically, the city had actually used its limited authority to prevent food-related activities in public spaces. For example, the #926 regulation, instituted in 1947, prevented selling food in public spaces on the basis of hygiene (i.e., food borne diseases), traffic, competition and cleanliness, acting as a significant constraint on farmers who wished to market their products. I can also mention the regulation passed in the wake of the Expo 67, which prohibited "slaughtering, raising, fattening, keeping and ultimately selling poultry or game in urban areas" (Duchemin and Vermette 2016, p.285), which was a common practice in the public markets.

The progressive regulation over public markets, and eventual municipal disengagement showed how food falls into a City's jurisdiction over the management of public space. This responsibility was then decentralized to boroughs. For example, on the issue of food trucks, the city underwent a consultation in 2012 only once the boroughs of Ville Marie (2002) and Verdun (2003) had considered and experimented with such options.[92]

### 4.2.3. From peri-urban farmland to urban agriculture

#### *4.2.3.1. Agriculture land use planning*

Agricultural zoning in the metropolitan region is the result of successive land preservation reforms. Between the 1980s and 1990s, the provincial land use commission revised agricultural zoning in consultation with municipalities and the main farmers' professional body (UPA) to ensure greater harmony between agricultural zoning and municipal urban development plans (Act on planning and urbanism, 1979). This resulted in a greater participation of municipalities in land use planning and preservation (CMM 2016). In the wake of the design of the Greater Montreal Region in 2000, agricultural land use zoning and protection was well recognized in the urban planning profession.

The pressure of urban development on farmland and the rise of the cost of land (including due to

91 The *Corporation des marches publics de Montréal* would eventually become a key stakeholder in the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan.

92 Commission permanente sur le développement économique et urbain et l'habitation (2012) La cuisine de rue à Montréal : enjeux et réflexions. *Consultation publique.*

speculation) stand out as the main issues of conflict and concern for public authorities. In order to deal with the challenges, the metropolitan region set up a consultative committee on agriculture. In contrast with the permanent commissions tasked with metropolitan jurisdictions (urban planning, environment, economic development and finances, housing and transport), the consultative committee allocated half of the seats to farming representatives[93].

In 2012, elected officials of the municipalities in the metropolitan region validated the *Urban metropolitan plan*. The document provides an overview of agricultural zoning and expresses the goal to increase the proportion of cultivated farmland by 6% by 2031, an ambitious goal of an estimated thirteen thousand hectares. The documents aligns with agricultural land development plans at the regional county or city level that would eventually be developed under the guidance of the ministry of agriculture[94], a process suppose to involve a range of actors, including municipalities, several departments of the City, the professional farming body, the CREO, landowners and community groups.

In the agglomeration of Montreal (the island), zoned farmland is relatively marginal, representing 4% of the total surface of the island for a total of 2044 Ha (Ville de Montréal, 2015), which is exclusively located in the western municipalities. Because of its immediate proximity to the urban area, agricultural land in West Island has an important social, recreational and educational orientation, as well as environmental conservation (e.g.,nature-park, zoo eco-museum, ecological farms) (Ville de Montréal, 2015). Innovative examples include, in terms of production, the D3 Pierre farm, which acts as a social insertion platform and the Bord-du-Lac farm, a farming incubator with a cohort of new and emerging businesses. In terms of food distribution, the Santropol farm supplies a volunteer-run, meal delivery service to seniors in the city, and the Macdonald Campus farm supplies the university's cafeteria. There are a number of conservation initiatives and educational outlets, not to mention the Macdonald Campus of McGill University, which is one of the two agricultural campuses in the province.

Agriculture and food are an important part of local identity in municipalities in the West Island. However, urban development projects are a continuous source of tension between city councilours, environmental organizations, private developers, landowners and residents. The agricultural land use development plan provided an opportunity for provincial agricultural institutions to raise awareness among elected municipal representatives, and also to foster relationships and joint-planning between local and regional actors (Doyon et al. 2016; Chahine, 2011). This includes the four central municipal services participated in the technical committee that drafted the farmland development plan: urban

93 http://cmm.qc.ca/a-propos/commissions-et-comite-consultatif-agricole/membres-des-commissions/

94 Plan de développement de la zone agricole (PDZA). Agricultural zoning is a responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Quebec.

planning, parks and greening, sustainable and social development (Ville de Montréal, 2015).

#### *4.2.3.2. The institutionalization of the community gardening program*

Urban agriculture has a long history in Montreal that predates agricultural zoning policies. During the earlier half of the XX$^{th}$ century, community gardening was generally promoted as an activity in times of hardship. The city allocated vacant plots to the Community Garden League of Montreal[95] and the *Ligue ouvrière catholique* (the Catholic workers' league) following the 1929 financial crisis. These were the same organizations that would later assume the responsibility of the 'Victory Gardens' in the wake of the Second World War (St-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014). Civic food networks and the city have since built the largest contemporary municipal community gardening program, which comprises of 8,000 individual parcels in 97 community gardens spread across 18 city boroughs (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). The program underwent three phases: an initial self-institutionalization, followed by a full institutionalization as a municipal responsibility, eventually leading to decentralization to the borough level (St-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014).

In the preliminary phase (1970s), neighbourhood committees negotiated access to vacant land from the city. In this stage, gardens were completely self-managed (membership, conflict resolution) and minimal guidelines were negotiated with the city. The Botanical Garden, an entity under the responsibility of the municipality, acted as an intermediary and facilitated the process by planning gardening space on its own land, requesting more funding from the City's executive committee, providing technical services to gardeners and communicating their concerns (St-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014).

The full institutionalization of the program took place in the second half of the 1980s. The city council moved towards a uniform framework with more parameters to respond to the growth of community gardens and to supervise the adoption of municipal regulations (St-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014). From this point forward, community gardens were defined as an extension of the municipality's mandate and as a public service, which lead to a centralization of responsibility for allocating parcels and designing internal management rules. In 1990, the municipality's executive committee delegated the responsibilities to the Department of leisure of boroughs, a decision that was reaffirmed during the municipal reorganization of 2002 (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016).

#### *4.2.3.3. The diversification of urban agriculture*

95 This organization was created in 1931 to create "community gardens for the unemployed" (St-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014, p. 23)

The issue of environmental sustainability also made its way into the municipal institutioanl landscape, in parallel with poverty reduction efforts. In 1995, the municipality launched an environmental education program (*EcoQuartiers*), with community centers to provide resources on waste reduction and recycling, energy efficiency and gardening and greening activities. This program was also delegated to individual boroughs. Environmental sustainability was further institutionalized at the central level when the regional health agency and the municipal sustainable development department partnered to launch the *Quartier 21* program[96].

Urban agriculture practices significantly diversified during the 2000s. Collective gardens emerged as an alternative to community gardens[97] in Notre-Dâme-de-Grace. In this formula, gardens are organized by community organizations, schools or housing cooperatives. In contrast with municipal community gardens, which are divided into individual lots, collective gardens are managed as a group. There are now 85 collective gardens of 2000 to 2500 gardeners (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). Since then, private businesses, urban developers and institutions have also started integrating urban agriculture onto their façades or rooftops, often with the accompaniment of universities or local groups. Beekeeping and fruit tree harvesting collectives have also sprouted up in different corners of the city, and new business models are taking shape in mushroom and micro-green production, greenhouse rooftop production and edible landscaping (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). Animal husbandry (e.g., the re-introduction of chicken) has been somewhat more divisive and remains at a pilot stage.[98]

Some municipal boroughs played a more active role than others in the field of urban agriculture. In the borough of Rosemont La Petite Patrice, the administration encourages citizens to initiate edible landscaping projects in public spaces, such as at the base of trees along streets curbs (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). The municipality of Côte St Luc, an affiliated town on the island of Montreal, was an early promoter of urban agriculture, being the first municipality in the province to adopt a 'food charter', which is a declaration of principles that identifies goals in consultation community members (Boulianne and Bissardon, 2016), and includes issues related to community wellbeing, food security and food waste.

#### *4.2.3.4. The consultative episode*

Despite having created a community gardening program, urban planning documents did not recognize

96 This program is a municipal response to the United Nation Agenda 21 launched during the conference on the environment and sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro (1992)

97 The success of the program meant that individuals were wait-listed.

98 Although environmental groups appeared to be favourable, animal welfare advocates have argued against the re-introduction of chicken. e.g., https://pasdepoulesamontreal.jimdo.com

urban agriculture as a land use activity outside of agriculture zones, until the most recent documents were published in 2015-2016. Urban agriculture businesses, for example, do not receive the same benefits as farmers producing on land zoned for agricultural activities (OCPM, 2012). The various zoning requirements (commercial, residential and industrial) leave little room for the full deployment of urban agricultural activities. Furthermore, the city was criticized because of its lack of leadership and promotion of urban agriculture, and for not setting common goals across departments and boroughs[99]. Community groups also called for increased recognition as full-fledged partners, and requested more financial and material resources (OCPM, 2012).

Community groups seized the opportunity of the Right to initiate public consultations, instituted under the previous municipal administration[100], to request a public consultation on urban agriculture. This initiative, triggered by the Urban Agriculture Working Group[101] (UAWG) resulted in a large democratic exercise. However, its institutionalization became problematic (Abergel and Mailhot-Leduc, 2013). In the span of three months, the coalition collected 29 068 signatures to initiate a consultation. 103 memoires were presented and 1500 people participated to the activities of the consultation, displaying a certain enthusiasm around the issue.

As a result of the consultation, the Permanent committee on urban agriculture (PCUA) was launched in September 2013 to support urban agriculture practices across the City of Montreal in collaboration with relevant municipal departments. The Office of Sustainable Development was tasked with coordinating the PCUA, in collaboration with the Direction on Social Diversity, Large Parks and Greening, Urbanism and Economic Development, the Botanical Garden, as well as a city councilor from the City's executive committee. It also includes a number of community groups and experts, including the UAWG, and the Urban Agriculture Lab.

The scope of the new committee was negotiated within the City. On the administrative side, it appeared that narrowing the scope would be more realistic and easier to operationalize. On the political side, the lack of electoral safety appeared as a barrier for committing to policy change. The following exchange illustrates the ambiguity of the process:

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99 For example, the Department of large parks and greening does not plant edible varieties in its action plan to plant trees;

100 The Tremblay administration (2005-2012) was the object of a number of corruption scandals. It is likely that the creation of a new consultative process was seen as a way to receive favorable public opinion.

101 The *Groupe de travail en agriculture urbaine* (GTAU) represented community organizations with mandates specific to food security (n=4), urban agriculture (n=2) and urban planning (n=3), student-run groups, including Cégeps (n=7), environmental organizations (n=3), social businesses (n=6), collective and community gardens and networks (n=6), Ecoquartiers (n=10), coalitions (n=2) and others (urban designers, green architecture, etc.) (n=8). The UAWG/GTAU is coordinated by Alternatives, an international solidarity organization, which has spearheaded urban agriculture projects in Montreal (e.g. on rooftops).

"CC: The MOPC [the Montreal Office of Public Consultation] report included the mention of a food council. We in the administration wished there would be a Permanent committee on urban agriculture [Changes topic]

HM: You were saying the MOPC was already talking about a food policy council?

CC: Yes, because the same groups have made repeated calls for years [Repeats]. It wasn't considered a jurisdiction of the city. On the issue of jurisdiction, it is quite modest in terms of food. We can work on what employees eat, we can work on regulation, you know for zoning, maybe for certain activities. That was the city's perspective at the time. We don't know how it's going to change, with the new administration. That [the PCAU] was a decision of the elected officials. [Hesitation] Here, we are on the administrative side, and then there is the political level. [Hesitation] At this time, it was a completely different political administration. It was during the last year of the Tremblay administration. We are in quite a different situation now…"[102]

Pressures for reform were eventually met with the accommodation of the status quo: the committee achieved slow progress, and had to await the settling of the new mayoral administration of Denis Coderre[103] (2013-…). One observer noted: "The real impact of the consultations remains uncertain, since there are no clear indications that participants in the consultations might play a role in shaping Montreal's urban planning and food politics." (Abergel and Mailhot-Leduc, 2013). Despite a cross-sectorial representation at the municipal level, the main community coalition (Urban Agriculture Working Group) was not invited to participate: "Participation in the elaboration of urban policies is mediated by unequal access to pre-established networks and the hierarchy between types of actors based on their recognition by public entities" (Mailhot-Leduc, 2014). One coalition member indicated: "The invitation was sent to the directors [of CSOs], so there were only few people with expertise in the room."[104] This highlighted that few skills (technical, community engagement) were actionable in the context of the committee.

### 4.2.4. Conclusion

In this section, I provided a historical overview of the formation of community groups involved in food politics in Montreal, such as the Taskforce on Hunger (1991), the Neighbourhood Markets Coalition (2010) and the Working Group on Urban Agriculture (2011). Initially driven by an anti-poverty and anti-hunger agenda, civil society increasingly experimented with integrating environmental values and bringing attention to urban planning and food provisioning. Further, the creation of neighbourhood-based roundtables provided more capacity for joint planning at a local level.

Simultaneously, I explored the negotiation with public sector-led, multi-stakeholder roundtables,

102 Interview, coordination committee (2015)
103 Previously, Denis Coderre (1997-2013) was a Member of Parliament for the Liberal Party of Canada.
104 Informal interview (2015)

especially with regards to funding arrangements and the recognition of civil society spaces and expertise. Whereas the city of Montreal was initially the institutional anchor (1990-1995), the responsibility for coordination shifted to the public health agency (1995-2005) and then to a hybrid para-municipal organization, the CREO (2005-2010). In this context, I highlight the creation of the Biofood Industry Council of the Island of Montreal (BICIM) as an instance of private-public institutional arrangement. All the actors became key intermediaries in the development of the Montreal Food Systems Plan.

The municipality remained reluctant to adopt new responsibilities in food systems planning - other than its 'traditional' jurisdiction over agriculture land use - in the context of a relatively decentralized public administration, as demonstrated by its programing (community gardens, poverty reduction, *Écoquartiers*) and public space by-laws. In some cases, the central municipal administration pulled away from its existing responsibilities, as when it stopped managing the public markets (1993). Furthermore, a food security policy built around a local-regional continuum (1998) and a metropolitan agri-food cluster (2005-2010) failed to be activated. Not only were the institutionalization of food truck licenses and of the Permanent urban agriculture committee revealed to be overly narrow or restrictive, but also these measures constituted as 'stand alone' approaches to food policy. In this context, I echoed the importance of electoral safety, political champions and expertise (Clayton, 2015; Fesenfeld, 2016).

## 4.3. Conclusion

The analysis of the institutional landscape that was provided highlights that there is a persistent institutional void in terms of food policy at the provincial level. Despite some novel interventions in health promotion and agriculture, the neo-liberal turn in the 2000s has led to significant institutional changes, including the end of the regional public health authority and its centralization within health care services. Budgetary constraints have led to funding cuts in rural policy and regional socio-economic development, a lock-in in agriculture expenses and a turn towards private charities in health promotion. The evolution of these discrete components of food policy – healthy eating, community well-being, multi-functional agriculture – highlights the need for a whole-of-government, joined-up food policy, as well as the importance of a solid social safety net to address hunger in the province.

In this context, municipalities face the difficult task of trying to do more, with less, and to navigate the delivery of top down policies across sectorial, administrative and political siloes. The portrait, between 1986 and 2012, reveals that roundtables and institutional arrangement (ex. programs, partnerships, funding) have multiplied, bringing new interests and actors into the field of food systems

planning, but also adding complexity. Regional public sector organizations face further uncertainty: the two successive institutional anchors of public sector-led roundtables, the public health agency (1995-2005) and CREO (2005-2010, 2010-2014), have both been merged into larger institutional bodies and seen their budgets and capacity reduced.

This chapter is critical for us to understand the launch of a new round of stakeholder engagement to develop Montreal Food Systems 2025 Vision and the launch of the 2014-2016 Action Plan and eventual transition into a municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council.

# 5. Chapter 5: A case study of the Montreal Food Systems 2014-2016 Action Plan

## 5.1. Overview of case study

### 5.1.1. Introduction to the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan

There have been multiple attempts to improve the coordination in Montreal, QC around city-region food systems over the past three decades, but these have largely remained in policy siloes. Ideas, interests and institutions have diversified, with civic food networks acting as a fertile ground for social innovations. These experiments have developed a multitude of arrangements with municipal and governmental programs and strategies. The successive experiences in food politics have indicated the challenges of working across sectors, and also of activating policy change from within the City and across boroughs. In this chapter, I focus on the case study of the Montreal Food Systems, the *Système alimentaire montréalais* (SAM) Action Plan between 2014 and 2016. This chapter analyzes several key and overlapping phases in the design and implementation of the action plan, and the progressive transition of the SAM into a municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council.

In the first stage, regional public sector organizations launched a food systems planning process and coalition-building exercise (2010-2013). This process resulted with the SAM 2025 vision, providing a common vision around which to organize and, hopefully, plan future policies and programs. Following this initial planning phase, public sector bodies re-convened the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles (stage 2) and mobilized resources from a public-private partnership in health promotion (stage 3), thereby triggering the 2014-2016 action plan. The action plan was articulated around new and pre-existing institutional arrangements and policy instruments (stage 4), which eventually informed the governance infrastructure, the priorities of the coalition, and also the intermediaries and civil society groups involved (stage 5).

The convening of public sector bodies and intermediaries in order to plan the 2014-2016 Action Plan provided a forum where actors' could bring propose actions to be funded. The fifth stage consisted of the mobilization of intermediaries as project leaders. I provide an overview of the action plan by looking at the mobilization of some actors in the field, especially the most politicized ones, and assess

their capacity to create new proximities, embody different roles and transform the relationships within the network (stage 6). The final section looks at the launch of the public consultation on the feasibility of a food policy council (stage 7), the positioning of the SAM coalition (stage 8) and its eventual transition into a municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council (stage 9).

### 5.1.2. Overview of the conditions for an effective partnership

The negotiation of a multi-level, cross-sectorial action plan among a range of organizations is complex, and not without challenges. The survey responses compiled for assessing the effectiveness of the partnership, combined with the results from my observations and interviews, are informative in this regard. In this section, I indicate whether the conditions were fully, or only partially met, and suggest some possible explanations, available in summary tables. Depending on the items, respondents agreeing whether the conditions were fully met ranged from just under half (45.5%) to three-quarters (75%) of the total answers. The conditions 1 to 4 looked at the mobilization and engagement of partners, whereas condition 5 and 6 highlight the dynamic of the partnership (see annex 2).

The results of Condition 1 (problem-framing) indicate that the main sectors involved in food systems planning introduced their interests, perspectives and positions, but that the participation of other actors would have helped design more appropriate solutions. Participants noticed a weak involvement of elected municipal representatives and the lack of a stronger municipal mandate for regional food planning, specifying instead that it was the civil service of various public sector bodies that were leading the partnership. Despite an extensive consultation process (2011-2013) and the involvement of the association of public markets[105], respondents highlighted the absence of food distributors, wholesalers and supply chain actors[106]. It is telling for example, that one fruit and vegetable industry body[107] had been convened to join the SAM partners' committee, but decided not to step into that role.

105 Until the SAM Vision 2025 and Action Plan 2014-2016, the association had not been involved in multi-stakeholder regional food planning. https://www.marchespublics-mtl.com/en/

106 The main retail actors in Quebec were represented in the SAM through *Commerce canadien du commerce de detail),* but their participation was limited, potentially due to a lack of interest, time or relevance.

107 Association Québécoise des Fruits et Légumes (AQDFL)

| Condition 1 – Problem-Framing | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| All the actors concerned by a common issue introduce their interests, perspective and position | 50.15% of responses indicate it is either partially met, or not met at all. | • Extensive cross-sector consultation before 2014-2016 action plan (5.2.1.) to determine common vision.<br>• Weak involvement of elected municipal representatives and the Mayor's office (5.4)<br>• Community sector is traditionally more involved that the private sector (e.g., the fruits and vegetable sector and food distributors)<br>• Community groups (local/regional, social/environmental) involved at different levels.<br>• Process to determine actions vary from goal to goal, with some more inclusive than others. |

Condition 2 (interest-raising) shows slightly more positive results than Condition 1. It was noticed, however, that the initial strategic decisions – aligning with the health promotion agenda – came down to the discretion of public sector bodies alone. The availability of funding was viewed as an opportunity to implement new actions, but was conditional on a formal alignment with a sister partnership engaged in physical activity and recreation. My analysis of the partnerships and goals of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan reveals that the goals mirrored the priorities of existing public sector programs. This might indicate that input from civil society in initial strategic decisions was limited.

| Condition 2 – Interest-Raising | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| Actors are interested in strategic decisions early in the process and in playing a role in the partnership | 37.5% of responses indicate it is partially met<br>62.5% indicate it fully is met | • The availability of funding triggers a "domino effect" among public sector bodies in reaching the initial strategic decisions to launch action plan. (5.2.3)<br>• Existing public sector programs determine the main priorities of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan. (5.3.1) |

Condition 3 (enrolling) shows the most positive results in the survey. This means that the planning process was perceived as being inclusive, since civil society actors enjoyed as much, and perhaps even more, influence over decisions than institutional members and funders. The availability of funding stimulated community groups[108] to voice their interest at both a strategic and operational levels. At a

108 In the previous chapter on history and context, I introduced community coalitions such as the Taskforce on Hunger and Social Development, the Coalition of Neighbourhood Roundtables, the Urban Agriculture Working Group and the Coalition of Neighbourhood Markets.

strategic level, two community coalitions from the social and environmental sectors joined the coordination committee (see annex 8), and many more were convened to join talks within the different SAM 2014-2016 priorities[109] to determine projects and actions to be implemented. Furthermore, participants leveraged their roles in different organizations, their expertise, their alliances and level of institutional recognition to influence the outcomes of funding allocation. The analysis of institutional arrangements illustrates the ways in which pre-existing relationships between civil society groups and public sector organizations determined which projects would eventually be funded, how much they would receive, and who would implement them (III.2)

| Condition 3 – Enrolling | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| Actors are brought into a position of negotiation and influence in the decision making process and accept temporary and negotiated roles | 75% of responses indicate it is fully met | - Two organizations from the community sector (environmental and social) participate in the coordination committee level. Both organizations were created in the 1990s and enjoyed institutional recognition (5.2.4)<br>- Broad appeal to the SAM partner committee to reach consensus on priority projects, but pre-existing relationships with specific civil society groups determine who gets involved in the negotiation around funding allocation (5.3.2) |

The fourth phase (mobilizing) echoes a certain degree of uncertainty behind the funding arrangements, as the main funder, *Québec en Forme*, was expected to disappear from the provincial institutional landscape in 2017. The issue of funding was therefore recurrent in a context of cuts to public and public-community institutions (health services, community economic development, regional development, education, etc.). Despite the involvement of a range of public sector bodies, several respondents from public institutions argued that more resources (funding, human resources) should be committed, especially by the City of Montreal, to support the SAM both functionally (coordination) and operationally (projects). One example which was mentioned to me on multiple occasion was with the fact that the City did not appear to prioritize its own agricultural land use development plan (Goal 4-B), leaving the SAM as the only funding source available to implement collective actions in the West Island[110]. Civil society members also indicated that not enough funding was available for the range and number of actions being undertaken. It was a challenge to mobilize other funding sources in the short

109 There are 4 priorities that we are concerned with here: food access (Goal 2), public procurement (Goal 3), urban agriculture (Goal 4.a) and peri-urban agricultural land use planning (Goal 4.b)

110 The allocation of health promotion funding to agricultural land use planning appears, in some way, as a paradoxical outcome.

period of time allocated to planning. Actually, one private foundation partially withdrew from the SAM, and another did not respond to the invitation to join the partners' committee. The Montreal school board and the City's office of sustainability, which also fund community food interventions, also partially withdrew from the partnership.

Despite these unforeseen challenges, transformation within the network did happen. Certain community actors were particularly successful in mobilizing the network in which they work in. This was particularly evident from the social network graphs (annex 3-6 and 11) with certain actors getting closer to the core nodes after the launch of the action plan. The transformation operates in both the center and the periphery of the partnership, with actors leveraging formal and informal relationships. For example, the same community food hub was involved in scaling up two food access interventions from the local to the regional level[111]. In this context, that actor built relationships with new partners (e.g., the transit authority), while helping broaden the interventions of other organizations (e.g., the MAFF, the association of public markets). Most importantly, the same actor emerged as a policy entrepreneur, eventually mobilizing its political connections outside of the SAM partnership, thereby launching a consultation on the feasibility of a municipally mandated food policy council. This eventually provided a policy window (Kingdon, 1995) around which the SAM partnership could position itself to further integrate food planning into the institutional fabric of the City of Montreal.

| Condition 4 – Mobilizing | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| Actors reach a sufficient critical mass that is credible and committed to bring in resources | 48.7% of responses indicate it is either partially met, or not met at all | - The SAM Action Plan (2014-2016) is mostly funded by one provincial public-private partnership that is expected to dissolve in 2017, resulting in a high level of uncertainty (5.2.3)<br>- As action plan is implemented, certain actors disengage (private foundation, education sector, municipal office of sustainability)<br>- Transformation of the network and policy entrepreneurship in the center and periphery of the SAM partnership (5.3.3; 5.4) |

The last two conditions - Condition 5 (levelling of power) and Condition 6 (co-construction) - assess the dynamic of the partnership. They also point to certain challenges. Civil society seemed to have influence over decisions and partners were generally treated equally in discussions. However, one

111 The project led to the installation of fresh fruit and vegetable stalls in corner stores and outside subway stations. These would end up being the two flag-ship projects of the SAM (Goal 2). In this case, scaling up simply means developing a given intervention in multiple neighbourhoods at once.

respondent regretted that some voices tended to be disregarded when consensus over funding allocation was more difficult to reach (Goal 2 and Goal 4-A). In that regard, it was up to individual public sector bodies, the ones responsible for leading the different priorities, to determine a decision making process. This lead to variability and, in some cases a lack of transparency, from one goal to the next. Further, while certain actors were particularly successful in mobilizing resources, all partners did not see a shared distribution of benefits. The territorial dynamic behind the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan is illustrative, because it shows which neighbourhood managed to leverage the regional partnership. Some respondents also indicated that, in some cases, funding was allocated for the activities of one organization, which would not be working with multiple partners and sectors.

| Condition 5 – Leveling of power | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| Actors develop mechanisms and structures to reduce structural inequities | 54.3% of responses indicate it is either partially met, or not met at all | - Civil society organizations present in coordination committee are not necessarily the ones driving change (5.2.4; 5.3.3)<br>- Local groups and neighbourhood roundtables are mostly absent from the SAM partner committee (5.3.2)<br>- Civil society organizations are absent from the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles. (5.2.4)<br>- There are no clear, transparent mechanisms for reaching decisions over funding allocation. Some community voices were sidelined. |

From the point of view of governance, the decision making infrastructure was designed in such a way that civil society was selectively engaged at the strategic level (coordination committee) and was absent from the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles[112]. Instead, funding arrangements determined both the timeline and accountability mechanisms – such as the evaluation itself - of the action plan. Further, the lack of consultation of community innovators at these levels meant that the RRHL and SAM partnership were perceived as a funder-driven, public sector initiative. This lack of trust was visible when the RRHL – rebranded as "Montreal, healthy metropolis" – presented its new governance model and fundraising plan in late 2016 during a meeting.

The SAM partnership was mainly driven by a health promotion agenda, but developed mechanisms to balance regional food planning with environmental and economic concerns. The involvement of the

112 The RRHL acted as the umbrella roundtable that would funnel funding to the two health promotion partnerships: *Système alimentaire montréalais* and *Montréal physiquement actif.*

MAFF was particularly noticeable as it was an actor whose involvement, until 2014, had been limited to land use planning and value-added, food processing activities. After a five full years of planning, organizations in the SAM partnership were better able to identify their differences, discuss them openly and, in some cases, to change their position around compromises. The combination of institutional arrangements between public sector bodies (programs, strategies) has created some synergies and raised awareness to further elaborate integrated solutions.

Regional food planning continued to face a number of obstacles, including: the reproduction of siloes, provincial funding mechanisms that applied in a top down and sectorial fashion, institutional commitment to pre-existing relationships, and the reluctance of the City of Montreal to assume political leadership. Although the 2014-2016 action plan streamlined different food-related policy instruments, the best indicator of integration is perhaps the transition of the SAM partnership into a full-fledged Food Policy Council. For the 2017-2020 plan, a paradox remains noticeable: while funding arrangements with other public sector bodies were expanded, funding in absolute terms diminished.

| Condition 6 – Co-constructing | Responses | Possible explanations |
|---|---|---|
| Actors resolve controversies that divide them and integrate their work around collective solutions. | 55.5% of responses indicate it is either partially met, or not met at all | - Health promotion agenda drives SAM Action Plan, with a partial balancing of action plan through the leadership of regional office of agricultural ministry (5.2.2; 5.2.3; 5.3.1)<br>- Consensus is more difficult around politicized issues and where civil society is most involved: food access (Goal 2) and urban agriculture (Goal 4.a.) Consensus is easier to reach with food procurement (Goal 3) and agricultural land use planning (Goal 4.b.) (5.3.2).<br>- Integrated solutions remain limited by provincial sectorial funding mechanisms and institutional commitments to pre-existing relationships. (5.2.3; 5.3.1)<br>- Despite uncertain political landscape and neoliberal reform, SAM transitions into the SAM0-Food Policy Council and expands/ reduces funding arrangements (5.4). |

## 5.2. The building blocks of the Montreal Food Systems Plan.

### 5.2.1. Designing a vision for food systems planning

Once again, a new round of consultation was launched, but this time to develop a coherent vision for a sustainable food system for Montreal (2012-2013). According to the planning document, this round of stakeholder consultation was launched after drawing lessons from the *Nourrir Montreal* experience, which had been piloted by the CREO (2005-2010): "Following a strategic review in the context of the work of the *Nourrir Montréal* committee (2010-2011), the CREO initiated, with its partners, a process to design a plan for a sustainable and just food system for Montreal's communities in December 2011."[113]

In reality, there was discontinuity between the SAM 2025 Vision and the *Nourrir Montréal* committee. The *Nourrir Montréal* committee had been deactivated since the CREO had not prioritized food security in its 2010-2015 plan. It is more accurate to say that the Vision 2025 was born out of an ad hoc committee comprised mainly of public sector bodies and funders. The four actors were: the school board, the public health agency, the CREO and the city of Montreal's branch in charge of combating poverty and homelessness[114].

As I've shown in the previous chapter, the experience of the *Nourrir Montréal* committee revealed a number of challenges around stakeholder coordination and policy making. These include: the lack of diversity in membership, the conflict between food access and anti-poverty discourses, the lack of financial resources to consolidate pilot projects, a weak advisory mandate and ambiguous decision making processes, as well as the absence of electoral safety and political champions.

In response to these challenges, public sector bodies argued for the need to renew a process that would embody food systems thinking into a planning tool[115]. Such policy framework would provide a reference point for future municipal policies, public sector programs and community interventions. Informed by the City's own experience in stakeholder engagement around sustainable development (Sustainable Montreal Plan 2010-2015), the ad-hoc committee envisioned a multi-level governance

113 Internal documents

114 This is one of the three departments of the Service on social diversity and sports of the City of Montreal.

115 The American Planning Association's Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning was one of the core documents that framed the work of the SAM 2025 vision. https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm

model with a steering committee and a partner's committee.

In order to activate the planning process, the four organizations pooled resources together. The CREO and public health agency contributed 2/3 of the budget, and the school board and city of Montreal the last 1/3. The engagement of the school board is particularly note worthy, as they have a seat on the board of the CREO and therefore a position of influence.

As one informant indicates:

> "At one point, it [NM committee] wasn't going anywhere. That's when we had the idea to open the mandate of *Nourrir Montréal* as a food systems mandate. The idea of the food policy council of Toronto was also there. Lise Bertrand had written a policy brief in 2004[116]. We had to resolve this deadlock; we had to take a sustainable development lens to the food system. We convinced Mrs. De Courcy, who was a member of the executive committee of the CREO. She was interested in developing a planning process around the food system that would include all the public, private, institutional, socio-economic, environmental partners (…) She said she believed in the project"[117].

Having secured these resources, the ad hoc committee hired a professional with an urban planning background to activate a new round of stakeholder dialogue. 88 organizations from across the field of food systems were engaged in a number of activities from 2012-2013. Furthermore, a steering committee was formed of 22 civil society and governmental bodies at the regional level. It included community coalitions, departments of the city, the public health agency and school board and other socio-economic development agencies.

This collective visioning process aimed to build a "common vision" and a "shared language" around food systems, summed in the following commitment statement: "SAM 2025: Innovating to grow together - In 2025, all Montrealers have access to healthy, diverse and affordable food that is sustainably sourced." (2013, p.10). To achieve this, the SAM 2025 vision underscores the current gap in regional food governance: the "absence of strong cross-sectorial food dialogue (…) the scattering of small local initiatives, the multiplication of actions in siloes and the fragmentation of interventions (…) lead to a duplication of human and financial regional resources." The SAM 2025 Vision identifies five orientations, each divided into a number of axes of interventions and action items (2013, 10):

1) Diversify the food supply
2) Reduce the ecological footprint of the food system,
3) Encourage access to healthy food,
4) Promote healthy food
5) Reinforce regional coordination

116 Bertrand, L., Thérien, F. (2004). Vers un Conseil de politique alimentaire à Montréal. *Des gestes plus grands que la panse,* Dossier 10.

117 Interview, coordination committee (2015).

The planning document provides an overview of the main actors and policy instruments, which I presented in the previous chapter. These include: the metropolitan and agricultural land use zoning plans, the public healthy agency's food access program and the recently created city-sponsored urban agriculture committee. It also identifies provincial-level initiatives and programs, such as *Québec en Forme*, the provincial public private partnership in health promotion, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF).

Institutional support for the SAM was not guaranteed in the early stages of the process, as the search for political champions continued. Only a few months after the planning process was launched, Mme De Courcy left the school board and CREO to present her candidature to the provincial elections, leaving the SAM without a valuable promoter. One informant indicated, "When we do a planning process, there is always a councilor responsible or a senior official to show the engagement of the city. It wasn't the case with the SAM. They were on their own. For me, that's a signal of their approach."[118] This quote reveals that a lack of strong municipal mandate and political commitment may have affected the legitimacy of the SAM planning process. In the final stages of the planning process, the SAM found a new councilor, who signed onto the SAM 2025 vision: "It was picked up by Mr. Miele, municipal councilor for the borough of St Laurent. He became the elected councilor for the SAM."[119] As I later show, the involvement of the city councillor, however, appeared to be temporary.

The consultation on urban agriculture took place at the same time as the SAM visioning process, adding complexity to the planning process. As one respondent articulated, "I remember going to the first meeting of the committee on urban agriculture (…) The SAM was presented to Mr. Ménard[120], who noticed there was some redundancy. At the time, the SAM was not well known by the city, it was barely emerging."[121] This dynamic revealed two main gaps. There were two departments of the city involved in the SAM, but that was not a sufficient condition to create synergies and reduce the "duplication of human and financial regional resources." (SAM, 2013, p.10). Indeed, while the SAM was situated at the agglomeration, island-wide, level, the PCUA was instituted through a motion at the City level.

### 5.2.2. The mediation of stakeholder priorities

Earlier, I raised the issue of mediation when discussing previous experiences in food systems planning.

118 Interview, monittee (2015)
119 Interview, coordination committee (2015)
120 M. Réal Ménard was responsible for sustainable development, environment, parks and green spaces at the executive committee of the City of Montreal
121 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

Since the beginning of the development of the SAM 2025 Vision, planners envisioned the development of three food systems clusters based on whether they were from the social, environmental or economic sectors.

The division of the SAM into the three sectors was meant to balance within and between sectors. Under the SAM coalition umbrella, the traditional influence of the regional anti-hunger coalition and the public health agency fell under the "social cluster". This served to 'contain', in some sense, these dominant voices and ensure that priorities over community empowerment and food access did not monopolize all of the partnerships energies and resources, as it may have been previously been the case. In the environmental field, one could find the actors involved in urban agriculture, as well as the more institutional stakeholders in agricultural land use planning.

The growth of the SAM 2025 partnership committee in view of its 2014-2016 action plan (from 22 to 35 partners) fell under the same lines. In the spirit of Actor Network Theory, assigning a sector to each actor a sector serves a stabilization function. One delegate of each sector was assigned a seat at the coordination committee level. These seats are assumed by recognizable civil society coalitions, the Taskforce on Hunger for the social cluster, and the *Regroupement des écoquartier* on the environmental side. The regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture, on the other hand, assumed the responsibility for representing the economic dimension[122].

I've spoken of the Taskforce on Hunger in the previous chapter, and its experience representing front line food security (both charity-based and autonomy-based) organizations since the early 19990s. There are several elements of rationale behind the enrolment of the *Regroupement* that are worth making explicit[123]. First, as a municipal-community partnership, the *Regroupement* enjoys a degree of institutional recognition, in contrast with more politicized actors in the field of urban agriculture. Second, the representative of the *Regroupement* was also involved in food systems planning in the neighbourhood of Lachine[124]:

> "The SAM had an impact on the implementation of the *Système alimentaire lachinois* [SAL]. In fact, we were several people working on food, and that had heard about the SAM. We went to the official launch, and when we got back to Lachine, we told ourselves that we were also at a stage that we could do food system planning. We felt some momentum from the youth

122 In contrast with the Taskforce and the *Regroupement*, the MAFF is not a civil society-based. This illustrates a lack of coherence in the role of civil society in decision making within SAM.

123 Initially, the environmental cluster was represented by Equiterre, which had, since the late 1990s, championed the community-supported agriculture scheme. Over time, Équiterre invested its efforts in farm-to-school projects. It stepped off the SAM coordination committee due to a lack of time.

124 The Écoquartier of Lachine, known as GRAME, was responsible for coordinating the Collective Garden Network of Lachine and invited to sit on the Lachine Working Group on Food Security.

> roundtable[125], which didn't see where healthy eating activities were situated and felt more and more pressure from *Quebec en Forme*. So the youth roundtable came to the assembly and said they were interested in promoting the action and issues that we have in food. From this point forward, we had two roundtables working together to develop the SAL. We would not have had the reflex to do so without the SAM."

The *Regroupement* was therefore not only selected because of its regional reach, but also because of the territorial dynamic its representative was involved in. Local actors in Lachine used the SAM as a blueprint to integrate the various aspects of a food system into their planning (i.e., the *Système alimentaire lachinois*) and had a pre-established relationship with the main funder of SAM (QEF). The local-regional dynamic can be termed as one of *recognition* of local efforts by regional actors.

### 5.2.3. Aligning with health promotion funding

The development of a collection position around the SAM 2025 Vision activated a number of successive institutional arrangements that resulted in the development of the 2014-2016 action plan.

The first of these arrangements is the alignment between the SAM coalition and a funding source, *Quebec en Forme*. QEF is the first of the three province-wide public-private health promotion initiatives (*Avenir d'Enfant, Réunir Réussir*). The alignment between SAM and QEF was mediated by an intermediary structure, the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles (RRHL)[126]. A roundtable was created in each of Quebec's seventeen regions under the leadership of the regional public health agencies and QEF. They were designed as a springboard to engage and support the municipal, health and education sectors in implementing policies that foster healthier environments and encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyles by the population.

The RRHL was re-convened the year following its dissolution in 2013. There were multiple reasons why its work was discontinued. The main actors involved in the first edition of the RRHL were almost exclusively from the regional ministerial offices involved in the provincial health promotion plan. This top down approach left the RRHL without territorial anchoring and provided little room for new ideas and approaches.

In terms of implementation, financial resources (QEF) were allocated to nine projects through a call

125 The youth roundtable, or *table jeunesse*, is an example of a population-specific roundtable that received funding from *Quebec en Forme* to work on health prevention, including healthy eating, drug abuse, school enrolment, disabilities, etc.

126 *Table intersectorielle régionale sur les saines habitudes de vie* (TIR SHV) would eventually be re-branded as "Montreal, healthy metropolis" (MHC), or *Montréal, métropole en santé* (MMS).

out for proposals[127]. One respondent stated, "There was no follow up and relationship between these initiatives. There was no evaluation, no accountability and no durability in the approach."[128] The interviewee signalled there was a broader issue of organizational culture, whereby the regional public healthy agency would traditionally fund and organize the community sector instead of influencing the municipality in adopting new policies.

Finally, the RRHL had focused primarily on coordinating information sessions and organizing trainings. When the provincial government issued new orientations[129], members of the RRHL felt they did not have the capacity to fulfill its new mandate. In this context, the main funder, QEF, 'pulled the plug' and announced it would not fund the roundtable in its current format.

The RRHL was re-convened a year later when QEF raised interest in two parallel coalition-building exercises (SAM and *Montréal Physiquement Actif*). I described, in the previous section, the emergence of the SAM through a series of workshops, the development of the SAM 2025 Vision and the formalization of a steering committee. Moreover, QEF was already partnering with the municipal administration in a parallel initiative (MPA) at the time it was reconsidering its funding allocation strategy.

The focus of this parallel partnership was on fostering physical activity and active mobility as strategies to tackle sedentary behaviours. The City had signed unto the International Charter of Toronto for Physical Activity, which served to promote the resolution that, "actions aimed at increasing population-wide participation in physical activity should be planned and implemented through partnerships and collaborations involving different sectors, and communities themselves, at national, regional and local levels." (MPA, 2014, p.5). In this context, the city developed an umbrella initiative, *Montreal Physiquement Actif* (MPA) and launched, in partnership with QEF, a summit to engage organizations in the field of youth fitness, sports, leisure and outdoor activities.

The simultaneous and parallel emergence of the SAM and MPA in 2013-2014 triggered an opening by QEF to support these mobilizations and re-convene the RRHL. With the end of its provincial mandate in sight in 2017, QEF saw these two partnerships as an opportunity to strategically invest the remaining regional funds ($1.8M). Both the SAM and the MPA were seen as complementary health promotion coalitions, one focused on healthy diets, and the other on physical activity.

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127 One of these projects was the attempt to pool together the logistics and buying power of neighbourhood solidarity markets

128 Informal interview (2015)

129 (1) Support stakeholder training, continuing education and networking; (2) Promote policies that foster healthy living habits; (3) Mobilize regional actors and professional resources in various sectors; (4) Support the assessment to foster decision-making in local communities; (5) identify promising or exemplary practices or initiatives; (6) Foster networking to ensure connection between the various levels of intervention.

The proposal was initially met with skepticism from the regional public health agency. This opening, however, quickly led to a 'domino effect' when the municipality, which had been minimally involved in the RRHL in the past, decided to take on additional leadership. Specifically, this commitment came from the director of the Service on social diversity and sports, Mrs. Johanne Derome. This convinced the director of the regional public health agency, Dr. Richard Massé, to signal his institutional commitment. Both assumed the position of co-president of the RRHL, bringing on board their respective staff and re-convening the sectors of education, health, municipal and the regional office of the agricultural ministry in the RRHL.

These arrangements resulted in a closer connection between three health-promotion institutions: QEF, the public health agency and the municipal department on sports and social diversity. The framing of SAM and MPA through the health promotion lens is not negligible. Boroughs and municipalities more readily exercise their jurisdiction over recreational spaces than over food systems, which was seen as a benefit for SAM. An alliance with a partnership in physical activity could theoretically provide a springboard for municipalities to turn their attention towards healthy diets and food systems. Furthermore, the commitment of the Service of sports and social diversity reaffirmed the role of its sub-department (the Department to combat poverty and homelessness) to continue as a core SAM partner.

The alignment between SAM, MPA and the RRHL provided the necessary financial conditions for the SAM to design an action plan. Several informants highlighted that this funding was a cornerstone of the SAM Action Plan. Without such funding, its actors were unsure where the SAM would have gone: "*Quebec en Forme* arrived and told us they were ready to invest $900,000 before disappearing in 2017. If they hadn't been there …[sign]"[130]. Another interviewee adds:

> "What was interesting is that, at one point, we created a link with *Quebec en Forme* and healthy lifestyles. The fact that there was funding… it was an advantage… and that *Quebec en Forme* accepted to create that linkage with healthy lifestyles and physical activity… you know, because they are mainly focused on physical activity, but they accepted to open their approach to consider that food, the food system, contributed [to health promotion]. (…) I think it also forced the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles, that had been interrupted by the public health authorities and government people, to create stronger relationships between food, healthy lifestyles and physical activity."[131]

One inconvenience in terms of the general framing of the RRHL is that the field of action of the SAM

130Interview, coordination committee (2015)
131Interview, coordination committee (2015)

is broader that healthy eating per se, as it includes multiple dimensions of the territorial food system. The framing of RRHL therefore does not necessarily resonate with the discourse and actions of actors in the field of food systems planning. Furthermore, these new arrangements resulted in adjustments in governance.

### 5.2.4. Temporary governance and decision making functions

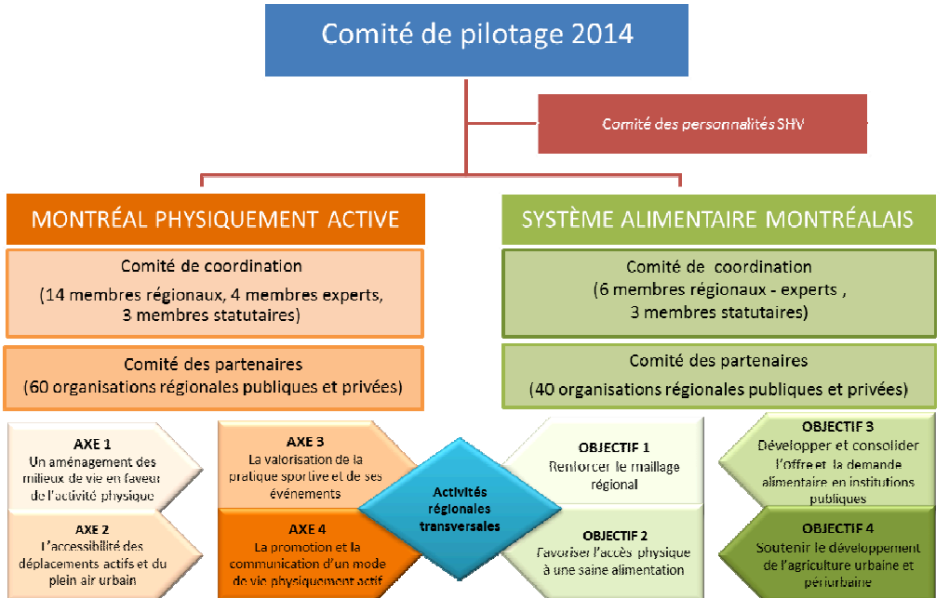
The combination of SAM, MPA and the RRHL formalized a temporary regional institutional infrastructure. Funding allocation was conditional on providing an action plan, which included actions where both partnerships had to coordinate with one another. As *Quebec en Forme* planned to end in 2017, the RRHL projected to raise funds to ensure the continuity of both SAM and MPA partnerships, provide training, support evaluation and reach out to actors with influence.

The folding of the SAM into a health promotion framework resulted in the creation of an additional layer of governance above the SAM and MPA, and a greater influence of public health actors over the initiative. As shown in the network models we designed, the representation of the Regional public health agency and QEF show a high degree of centrality of these two organizations (annex 3 to 7). In sum, health promotion became the core institutional arrangement of the SAM coalition. This is echoed by one survey respondent, who notes "the weight of *QEF* and the public health agency in the decision making process."[132]

The assessment of the efficiency of the partnership does reveal the process was inclusive, since civil society actors had as much or more influence over decisions as institutional members or funders (Condition 3). This can be explained by the vocal participation of some community coalitions, the presence of two civil society groups in the coordination committee and the role of civil society intermediaries in the delivery of the action plan. However, the participation of civil society remains selective within the coordination committee. Indeed, although the actors enjoy a high degree of institutional recognition, consensus among civil society is not fully reached on who should participate at the strategic level. Further, the creation of an additional layer of coordination (the RRHL), wherein civil society actors are absent, means that opportunities for feedback and influence are limited at a higher level. In the following model, we clearly see the RRHL, represented in blue as the *comité de pilotage*, supplanting both cross-sectorial mobilizations (SAM and MPA).

132Survey response (2016)

Governance structure of SAM, MPA and RRHL




The added institutional complexity – described as "institutional acrobatics"[133] by one peer – has meant that that power is negotiated on several levels and that decision-making is not always clearly visible and demarcated. On the one hand, regional planners have to negotiate with provincial institutions, may they be sectorial programs or regional offices of provincial ministries. *Quebec en Forme*, as somewhat at being somewhat at arms length from the provincial government and embodying the entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector, appeared to have adopted a more dynamic approach to planning than government bureaucracies by brokering relationships with regional planners. On the other hand, power is also negotiated between the core institutional arrangement of public sector bodies and the extended network of civil society organizations, which I turn to in the following section.

## 5.3. The Action Plan and the evolution of the policy network

The institutionalization of the SAM into a municipal-sponsored food policy council is the guiding thread of this thesis. The first priority of the SAM Action Plan was to strengthen regional coordination. The creation of the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council of Montreal is the first item on the action plan, encapsulated as "contributing to the work of a regional food agency"[134]. Before I address this in the next section, I first want to articulate two dynamics. First, I show how the SAM coordinated across

133Informal interview (2015)
134SAM Action Plan 2014-2016

public sector and municipal bodies to set the agenda for the action plan (Goal 2, 3 and 4). Second, I describe the mobilization of civil society bodies as part of the action plan.

### 5.3.1. Setting the agenda: the combination of policy instruments

The SAM Action Plan was mainly designed around the goal of mobilizing of public sector organizations and pre-existing institutional arrangements. Indeed, the results of the second condition for an effective partnership[135] illustrates how public programs are the ones that identify and frame the problems that would need to be addressed.

The four SAM 2014-2016 objectives were:

- Goal 1 - Build regional capacity through coordination, mobilization, networking and representation
- Goal 2 - Enable physical access to healthy food by providing regional support to community food security initiatives
- Goal 3 - Develop and organize supply and demand of public institutions by designing a regional procurement strategy for 2025 based on the specific needs of public institutions
- Goal 4 - Support the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture by contributing to the respective regional action plans[136]
- Goal 5 - Regional cross-sector actions between SAM and MPA.

In order to illustrate the ramifications of the SAM decision-making process, I summarized, in table 3 (p.92), the relationships between public sector bodies and partner organizations. Specifically, I focus on the goals 2, 3 and 4 of the action plan as emerging from the priorities of existing policy initiatives. In some cases, I provide additional details on the role and function of the public sector organization. These institutional arrangements are listed below.

- In Goal 2, the first institutional arrangement is structured around the City's department of social diversity, which recognized the role and contributions of two regional community food security coalitions that emerged in early the 1990s. For example, it has directly funded these organizations, participated in their annual donation drives or subsidized their office space at different points since the mid or late 1990s. The City has also acquainted itself with these organizations through the Forum on social development, a planning process leading to the department to the creation of a Policy on social development. The second arrangement in Goal 2 is based on the public health agency's food security programming which aimed at improving access to fresh foods in food

135 Raising the interest of actors in strategic decisions early in the process and in playing a role in the partnership

136 Goal 4 is ramified as urban agriculture (Goal 4.a) and peri-urban agriculture (Goal 4.b)

deserts by providing grants to fourteen community food security organizations. In the context of the SAM Action Plan, two new partnerships were developed, one with an urban planning non-profit and the other with the association of public markets.

**Table 3: Institutional arrangements of the Goal 2 of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan**

| Goal of 2014-2016 Plan | Core public sector organization | Institutional arrangements | Non-governmental project leader | Activities funded by the action plan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goal 2 Enable physical access to healthy food | City of Montreal - Service on social diversity and sports: Department to combat poverty and homelessness | • Convenes the Social Development Forum of Montreal<br>• Partners with food security groups since 1994 in the context of *Nourrir Montréal* | 1 regional anti-hunger coalition | Trained staff of food security groups around citizen empowerment |
| | | | 1 intervention-based coalition | Accessed farmland to improve nutritional quality of annual holiday food baskets |
| | Regional public health agency: Department of urban environment and health. | • Five year programming (2007-2012, 2013-2018) with 14 community groups to fight against urban food deserts. | 2 community food hubs (Lachine and Ville-Marie) | Conducted an assessment on food procurement practices in community sector |
| | | | | Launched pilot fruits and vegetables stalls in corner stores |
| | | | 1 representative of the association of public markets | Built neighbourhood solidarity markets near subway stations |
| | | | 1 provincial urban planning organization | Organized two regional forums on food security |

- In Goal 3, the institutional arrangements are built with the same public sector organization, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF). The MAFF applied two different policy instruments, one being a strategy specifically oriented at the MASH sector (municipal agencies, schools and healthcare) and the other a grant-based program for regional agri-food marketing. These different sources of funding were combined to fund the projects of the Bio-Food Industry Council of the Island of Montreal and Équiterre.

**Table 4: Institutional arrangements of the Goal 3 of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan**

| Goal of 2014-2016 Plan | Core public sector organization | Institutional arrangements | Non-governmental project leader | Activities funded by the action plan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goal 3 Develop supply and demand of public institutions | Region office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) | • Agreement between MAFF and CREO to support the BICIM<br>• Provincial strategy to increase Quebec-made agri-foods in the municipal agencies, school and hospital sector | • 1 agri-food roundtable specialized in value-added (BICIM)<br>• *Concertation Montreal* (previously CREO) | Conducted an assessment on food procurement in MASH sector |
| | | • Supports and assesses funding proposals for direct marketing program (*Proximité* Program) | 1 environmental organization | Plans national conference on school food<br>Piloted fresh food school fundraising projects |

- In Goal 4, the first institutional arrangement originates from a city-level roundtable convened by the Office of Sustainable Development. The Permanent committee on urban agriculture emerged following a citizen-led public consultation aimed at increasing the role of the city in the field of urban agriculture.

- The second arrangement in goal 4 originates from the municipality's historical jurisdiction over agricultural land preservation. The Office of urban planning implements the agricultural land use development plan with the MAFF and other institutional stakeholders, including the farmers' union.

**Table 5: Institutional arrangements of the Goal 4 of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan**

| Goal of 2014-2016 Plan | Core public sector organization | Institutional arrangements | Non-governmental project leader | Activities funded by the action plan |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goal 4 Support the development of urban (UA) and peri-urban (PU) agriculture | Office of Sustainable Development – City of Montreal (UA/4.a) | • Convenes the Permanent urban agriculture committee (since the 2011 citizen-initiated public consultation) | 1 representative of urban agriculture coalition | Organized urban agriculture markets in the Spring; Provided training to urban farmers. |
| | | | 1 university | Provided training in school gardening and urban agriculture entrepreneurship |
| | Office of urban planning – City of Montreal. (PU/4.b) | • Designs agriculture land use plans with MAFF in West Island<br>• Embedded in metropolitan and provincial farmland planning mechanisms | 1 farming organization | Provides training for peri-urban farmers |
| | | | 1 university | Assesses the productive potential of West Island farmland |

These institutional arrangements reflect the scope of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan. In total, six policy instruments (plans, strategies, programs) come into play (column 3: institutional arrangements). The table illustrates the complexity of working across departmental siloes and public sector organizations. The successive institutional arrangements help us to identifying decision makers within each of the 2014-2016 SAM objectives. These decision makers mainly convened civil society stakeholders to identify priority actions. In some cases, new partners joined in. Projects, and project leaders, are identified through multilateral negotiations.

The majority of project leaders are from civil society (n=8). There are also university-based (n=2) actors, and private organizations (one farming organization, one agri-food-processing roundtable). Finally, there is also *Concertation Montreal*, a new municipal body created after the CREO was abolished as part of the renegotiation of the fiscal pact between provincial government and municipalities.

Moreover, the summary table indicates how the health promotion agenda, which was initially the core institutional arrangements linking the SAM Action Plan to its funder (the RRHL), is broken down and bundled with other goals. In Goal 2, the public health agencies' program is combined with municipal poverty reduction efforts. In Goal 3, the public health's agency goals, to improve to food environments in education, health and municipal settings, align with the goals of the MAFF.

A second alignment is also emerging built around the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture,

Food and Fisheries. Indeed, the social networks graphs illustrate a clear shift after the launch of the action plan of the MAFF as a central node of the network. The MAFF participated not only into Goal 3, as the table indicates, but was also an active stakeholder in Goal 4. Both objectives correspond to a broader agenda of territorial revitalization through agriculture development. This is important, because it corresponds to a partial balancing of the health promotion agenda.

### 5.3.2. Negotiating the agenda: identifying priority actions

The SAM became an arena of negotiation between two dozens organizations at the during the period when funding was distributed. Partners were faced with the difficult task of building consensus around priority actions while balancing their personal and organizational objectives. I noticed that the decision-making processes varied from one goal to another depending on the strategy and leadership of each public sector organization, the number of partners to deliberate with and the historical dynamic, which is unique to each issue. In the field of urban agriculture, for example, the City of Montreal only consulted with two groups, whereas the public health agency held meetings with dozens of local initiatives and regional coalitions. The nature of negotiations also varied according to the backgrounds, expertise, institutional recognition and resources available to each actor.

The process of prioritizing actions is a key phase in the decision-making process. The prioritization of actions and funding allocation for Goal 3 and Goal 4b was relatively fluid compared to physical access (Goal 2) and urban agriculture (Objective 4A). In the latter cases, which I will look at in more detail, there were more hesitations and debate in regards to how to prioritize actions, the choice of project leaders, the scope of projects and decision-making mechanisms.

Both the degree to which civil society was involved in the process, and how politicized the issues were, stand out as noteworthy variables to articulate the multilateral negotiations that took place in the SAM Action Plan. Indeed, civil society organizations represent the majority of project leaders, but as I've indicated in the previous chapter, some areas in food systems planning have historically been more politicized than others. This is the case with food access (Goal 2) and urban agriculture (Goal 4.a), where civic food networks had to negotiate the institutionalization of programs and consultation mechanisms with public sector bodies. For this reason, I narrow in on these two streams of the SAM. These contrasts well with the areas of public purchasing in the MASH sector (Goal 3) and farmland development in West Island (Goal 4.b), where actors are more institutionalized.

#### *5.3.2.1. Case 1 of stakeholder dialogue: food access (Goal 2)*

In the field of food accessibility, the negotiations were framed around two generations of community food security organizations. In the 1990s, groups with an anti-hunger agenda and an empowerment-based approach coalesced and received attention in the context of the City's growing role in poverty reduction. Since then, the neighbourhood-level roundtables have been institutionalized, anchoring groups to coordinate around a number of issues (greening, food security, urban revitalization). Meanwhile, community organizations, which had come to work with the public health agency, invested in their social economic mandate to provide greater fresh food access in low-income neighbourhoods. While the decades-old Taskforce on Hunger had previously played a strong role in promoting and incubating new community interventions (e.g., school meals, collective kitchens, *Magasins Partage,* etc…), local organizations with a social and economic mandate were reluctant to align with its politics and discourse. As a result of this negotiation, the Taskforce was not taken seriously: it was a province-wide, urban planning non-profit[137] which was tasked with organizing regional food security forums. Further, the Taskforce's project was planned and implemented independently from others in Goal 2.

The decision-making process within the social economic cluster of Goal 2 embodied an important territorial dimension that was the subject of much stakeholder dialogue. The SAM negotiations were activated by two local dynamics. The first dynamic, situated in the neighbourhood of Ville Marie, is what I would term "contagious*"*. A community food hub had piloted food stalls in corners stores and installed a semi-permanent market outside of the Frontenac metro. Over time, its staff built capacity (i.e., funding, volunteers), expertise and credibility among its peers from its experiences in fresh food provisioning and links with academia (Audet al al., 2015). Based on its social learning, the community food hub proposed to continue working with the public health agency (F&V stalls in corner stores) and the association of public markets (F&V stalls outside metro stations). This dynamic is said to be contagious because it originated in one territory and these two flagship projects became models for diversifying fresh food access in other neighbourhoods. As I indicate later, the contagion of food innovations does not stop here, as they also had implications on the political landscape.

The second territorial dynamic in Goal 2 is situated in the southwest neighbourhoods of Montreal, where a community food hub in Lachine had also spearheaded the collectivization of food-provisioning activities (RUI St Pierre, 2016), which I introduced in the previous chapter. Community groups proposed to pursue stakeholder dialogue regionally, but were uncertain that this level of intervention would be appropriate given the local specificities and anchoring of each community-run food market

137Vivre en Ville https://vivreenville.org/

and stores. Further, a number of tensions of 'coop-petition' (cooperation/ competition) appeared to persist from previous attempts at pooling market power. In order to work around these issues, funders suggested that groups conduct an assessment on community food provisioning and an action plan. Groups were reluctant to add another mandate to the association of public markets (who was already involved in the two flagship projects) and instead delegated the task to the Lachine community food hub. These territorial dynamics echo a process mentioned earlier, that is one of recognition of local activities by regional level institutions and the SAM as a whole.[138]

#### *5.3.2.2. Case 2 of stakeholder dialogue: urban agriculture (Goal 4.A)*

In the late 2000s, the field of urban agriculture became an increasingly politicized municipal issue, eventually resulting in the launch of the public consultation in 2011 (Mailhot-Leduc, 2014; Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). However, the aspirations that had spurred the process were met with institutional inertia and electoral politics: neither the Office of Sustainable Development nor city councilors became the champions community groups had wished for to recognize, facilitate and promote urban agriculture. In this context, the SAM Action Plan provided an opportunity for the City to invite committee members to submit projects and partially fill a gap in the consultation process: "It was in the continuity [with the action plan] because we saw this source of funding as a potential for urban agriculture groups (…) it was an opportunity to pursue their actions."[139] Two groups were convened: the representative of an urban agriculture coalition and a university-based center.

Building consensus was particularly challenging:

> "It was tricky between them (…) we asked them to agree with each other, they were not so many of them but… If weyou asked me today how to redistribute funds, I would definitely work like with [the program] *Quartier 21*. (…) I don't really know why they couldn't agree with each other, ultimately it was a question of funding, but I also saw it in a different way, their roles were different in [the field of] urban agriculture. What I mean is that some are more oriented towards the grassroots, you know, helping groups on the ground, and then there are others who approach it as playing an advisory in urban agriculture. It's not the same, that's why I'm saying they have different values and conception of their roles."[140]

This quote highlights the different roles and values of the groups involved. For the community

138 A third territorial dynamic was present in Montreal-North, where SAM partners attempted to convince a neighbourhood food security coalition to join the dialogue. Interestingly, the coalition aligned with the Taskforce on Hunger, instead of the SAM.

139 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

140 Interview, coordination committee (2015)

coalition, the development of urban agriculture was stalled by the lack of appropriate coordination mechanisms, such as the membership, mandate and institutional setting. As documented by one of the spokespersons of the UAWG, the recognition of its experience, network and knowledge was at the heart of the issue: "Although the roundtable [PCUA[141]] brought together several important players, the majority of committee members do not have a thorough knowledge of the sector. *Alternatives*, which represents the Urban Agriculture Working Group within the Permanent Committee on Urban Agriculture, continues to coordinate biannual meetings. However, this consultation is not taking place in the best of conditions, because it is neither funded nor recognized by the City. We believe that the PCUA should be dissolved and replaced by an innovation roundtable focused on action and that would be able to respond to the needs of the sector by resorting to experienced advisors." (Alternatives, 2016)

The voice of the UAWG had traditionally been sidelined in the PCUA. For example, after the consultation (2011-2012) had ended, the community coalition initially did not receive a seat at the city-sponsored roundtable. Furthermore, the citizen-led advocacy work of the community coalition meant that institutional actors perceived it as limited in other fields (technical, commercial, jurisdictional). One civil servant pointed out to me, "Here, in Montreal, I tell you, urban agriculture is badly interpreted by the public administration. Urban agriculture, for the Montreal public administration, its citizen, it's communitarian… You know what I had to say to urban planners? I had to speak of urban agriculture as 'farming activities outside agricultural zoning!'"[142] In contrast, institutional actors were more willing to recognize the expertise held by a university-based research center[143], which was able to make policy proposals by inviting outside experts in the field of urban agriculture[144]. In this context, the idea of involving the UAWG to act as an innovation roundtable was rejected, and funding was allocated to both groups (UAWG and research center) for their respective activities.

### 5.3.3. Mobilizing intermediaries, activating change

Once the negotiations to allocate funding took place, the action plan activated a number of project leaders. Activities included organizing regional or national events, generating technical knowledge, facilitating stakeholder dialogue and piloting projects. During the short span of the action plan, the

141 Permanent committee on urban agriculture
142 Interview, coordination committee (2015)
143 The *Laboratoire d'agriculture urbaine* (Université du Québec à Montréal)
144 One of the lunch-conference of the SAM was on urban agriculture. The research center brought in the Boston Food Policy Office.

mobilization of intermediaries within the objectives 2, 3 and 4 lead to a partial distribution of roles and the mobilization of new partners and expertise, summarized in table 2. These resulted in some noteworthy changes in the SAM network. I specifically narrow in on one of the most influential territorial dynamics in the partnership.

The most visible change documented was around Goal 2, where the two flag ship projects[145], originating from social learning in Ville Marie, were piloted at a regional level to be implemented in other neighbourhoods. The actual installation of new fresh food stalls (in corner stores, near metro stations) is both an organizational and technical intervention. In other words, this mobilization distinguishes itself from other activities (i.e., capacity building, promotion, training, events) by building new provisioning channels to residents and strengthening community-based food distribution supply chains.

At the organizational level, the project leader was a mediator between local community food organizations installing the new food stalls, and institutional actors and funders. Further, the cross-sectorial scope of these projects involved the urban transit agency, in the sector of transport, as well as economic development agencies[146]. Finally, these projects also became platforms to explore opportunities with other private sector actors, such as Ultramar, a gas retail company, to make available healthier food options available.

One effect of scaling up the solidary market model was to add a social and solidarity dimension to the mission of the public markets' association. This is novel, because its mission, dating back to when it was incorporated in 1993, was solely economic in scope (i.e., promotion, renting out its kiosques, etc.). With the SAM Action Plan, the association developed a new role in institutionalizing neighbourhood food markets. The mobilization of knowledge in food supply and distribution is noticeable, which was previously lacking in regional stakeholder dialogue. The network graphs developed illustrate how both the community food hub and market association became more central actors in the network and built institutional proximity with public sector organizations (annex 3 to 7, annex 11). This place-based dynamic of institutional entrepreneurship is one of the key findings of this research.

The contribution of project leaders, notably in Ville Marie, spilled over beyond Goal 2 and the SAM Action Plan. In the field of urban agriculture, the professional and geographic proximity with the research center provided a fertile terrain to support small-scale urban agriculture businesses and launch greenhouse projects (e.g., near the Frontenac station, on the *Palais des Congrès*). The research center also provided advice to the City over municipal regulation of urban bee populations and was consulted

145The installations of F&V stalls in corner stores and outside metro stations.
146City's Division of economic development and intermediaries, the Committee on social economy of Montreal

on the new urban agriculture program of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF)[147]. The latter illustrates how the agricultural ministry means to diversify its interventions (Doddridge and Sénéchal, 2013), a trend that was covered in the previous chapter. The benefits of the participation of the ministry at the regional level can be highlighted as one that legitimizes urban agriculture in they eyes of the municipal administration, positioning it as an opportunity for job creation to the municipal administration.

The noticeable territorial dynamic in the SAM originating from Ville-Marie continued to spread and transform the network, serving as a model to for connecting urban agriculture, distribution, marketing and food recovery activities (preparation, compost) at a neighbourhood scale. The diversification and integration of local interventions (through forums, joint-planning and borough policy) provided a fertile model for other territories and was promoted in the SAM forums[148]. In this context, the coalition of neighbourhood roundtables[149] may become a key channel for community groups to promote territorial food systems, and signal a potential shift away from the anti-hunger discourse of the Taskforce on Hunger.

Finally, the Ville- Marie borough was the only sector in Montreal that developed an integrated borough food strategy: "The borough's inquiry was supported by the *Carrefour alimentaire Centre-Sud,* which made an initial food strategy proposal. The borough wished to commit and contribute, in the limits of its jurisdiction and with the resources at its disposal, to work towards food security and promote healthy eating" (2016, p.2). In contrast with stand-alone policies in other boroughs, such as Côte St Luc's urban agriculture charter, or zoning by-laws limiting fast food outlets in Côte-des-Neiges, the Ville- Marie food strategy provided a more comprehensive and integrated approach.

147 In the context of this program, the MAFF officially partnered with the Urban Agriculture Lab of the *Université de Québec à Montréal* to create an urban agriculture research and knowledge transfer hub. https://www.actualites.uqam.ca/2017/nouveau-partenariat-agriculture-urbaine

148 This mobilization contributed to the impact of the SAM Forum in June 2015, which was co-organized by *Vivre en Ville*. The event attracted 180 participants, and showcased the experience of organizations from 12 different neighbourhoods to build regional momentum.

149 The representative of the coalition is the *Corporation de Développement Communautaire* of Centre Sud, from the borough of Ville Marie.

## 5.4. Transition: from partnership to policy council

### 5.4.1. The opening of a policy window

The SAM coalition emerged out to fill a coordination gap. Despite having issue-focused and neighbourhood-level roundtables and coalitions, there was no overarching food systems planning approach before the SAM 2025 Vision and action plan. The alignment with the health promotion agenda provided the coalition with the resources to invest, as a "financial leverage", into projects, outreach and training activities. The SAM, however, operated in a context of high uncertainty and short planning horizons, has always had in sight the end of the provincial mandate of *Québec en Forme,* its main funder, in 2017.

In this context, an institutional void persisted. Despite the involvement of some of the key municipal departments and regional governmental offices, the SAM coalition had no mandate to influence city councillors, provide advice on future programs, or to recommend the adoption of new regulations and by-laws in boroughs. In this context, actions to influence the city officials remained limited.[150] In the same vein, elected officials were insufficiently engaged in the development of the SAM. The SAM lacked political capital. One city councilor had signed onto the SAM 2025 vision and contributed to having the SAM Action Plan endorsed by the City. However, one actor indicates, "It should be noted that, despite all the efforts, that the SAM was not in capacity to embody such a model [hybrid model of governance of food policy council], in particular because of the too little involvement of city councilors on the SAM's partner committee." (MPM, 2016, p.3)

Ensuring the continuity of the SAM meant gaining greater influence and authority on municipal issues and facing the established "political lock-in" documented by Audet and colleagues (2015). Some critical groundwork was completed: on April 28th 2014, the municipal council "adhered" to the SAM 2025 vision and partners[151]. The proposal was made by city councilor Monique Vallée, from Lasalle, a councilor that promoted the work of food security organizations, such as participating in the annual donation drives of food banks and *magasins partage*. This proposal received support across party lines: the proposal was supported by city councilors from the Saint Laurent, Mr. Miele, and Villeray-Saint Michel-Park Extension, from the Mayor's party, and from the former opposition party leader.

150 The Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles promoted a "healthy living challenge" in which the Mayor participated (Défi Santé); the SAM granted a small financial prize to the borough of Côte-des-Neiges for its new zoning; the SAM also worked, with MPA on a municipal healthy eating procurement policy for public events.

151 Municipal council (2014) p. 14

As planned, the city council recognized the SAM. However, this was not sufficient to determine a clear role for the city and move the food policy council agenda forward. In an unexpected turn of events, borough councilor of Ville Marie, Valérie Plante (opposition party), proposed a motion to further "affirm the role of the city of Montreal in food" (Aug. 2014). In turn, city councilor Monique Vallée, from across the aisle, proposed to task the Commission on diversity and social development, which she was responsible for, to conduct a consultation on "the feasibility of a food policy council." This process officially launched a parallel consultation process to the SAM, the second one if we include the urban agriculture consultation in 2011.

During my research, I asked SAM stakeholders on multiple occasions whether this motion was part of the SAM attempt to influence political decision makers. It wasn't. Political influence appeared to reside outside of the capacity of the SAM, as a coalition largely comprised of public sector organizations and the civil service. Speaking of the previous, *Nourrir Montreal* initiative, one advocate pointed out, "The institutions [funders] don't have much room for manoeuvre with the political [branch]. They are civil servants, they can support initiatives, but they can't go much further than that."[152]

Besides the historical political alignment between the city councillor from LaSalle and anti-hunger groups, a new type of political leadership, originating from Ville Marie this time, emerged. This new champion likely built on their experience in designing an integrated, borough-level food strategy. Further, the territorial dynamic coincides with the contagious effect of the community food hub in SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan. This coincidence, or trace, signals an insider/outsider game by policy entrepreneurs. By officially studying the feasibility of a Food policy council, the City of Montreal would politically commit to play a new role in the future.

### 5.4.2. The positioning of the SAM partnership

The announcement of the consultation came as a surprise to the SAM coordination committee who were unaware that attempts were made to directly influence city councillors. It's important for us to highlight this coordination gap, as it reveals that trust building between the SAM coordination and its partners cannot be taken for granted. That said, the SAM as a coalition played a notable role in the work of the Commission on diversity and social development. It took part in preparatory sessions held

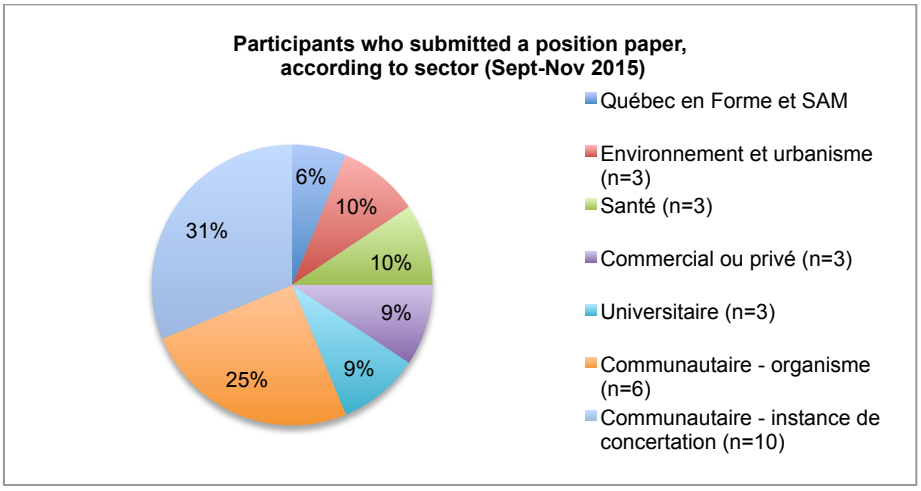
152Interview, coordination committee (2015)

prior to the public consultations. Furthermore, the commission met with individual members, including the Taskforce on Hunger and the regional public health agency.

The coordination committee members wrote and co-signed a position paper, which received external letters of support from two organizations in the health sector, an environmental group (a former committee member) and a neighbourhood roundtable (from Mercier-Est). Several members of the coordination committee also wrote position papers and, in certain cases, leveraged their positions in other consultative bodies or organizations, to present a second position paper. In all, the coordination committee members generated seven position papers in the span of a month with the goal of communicating a common message: that the future, the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council should directly build on the groundwork laid out by the SAM.

A mobilizing effect was observed, despite the little amount of time allotted to producing these papers. In total, 23 out of the 43 interventions made to the Commission were from active members and project leaders in the SAM, with actors in Goal 2 leading the way.

**Diagram 1: Sectors that have submitted a position paper to food policy consultation.**




The Commission on diversity and social development generated fifteen recommendations to inform the creation of a food policy council to both the municipal and agglomeration councils. The municipal executive committee was then responsible for issuing its opinion on whether to validate, reject or change the recommendations. Before it did so however, SAM coordinators were convened with the Service on social diversity and sports to plan a workshop and assist the city in responding to these recommendations. SAM coordinators invited the ood policy councils of Baltimore, Toronto and Ottawa

to discuss their respective models.

### 5.4.3. The transition of the SAM to a food policy council

The Commission was in favour of the creation of a food policy council. The fifteen recommendations it issued launched a negotiated back and forth between official and nonofficial city channels. Unfortunately, there is a lack of detail, in both the commission's report and city council's response, about the financial commitments of the city, which city councillor should be the official channel and where the food policy council should be embedded. I do map, however, some of the changes that resulted from the negotiation between the Department tasked to combat poverty and homelessness, the executive municipal council and SAM planners.

In terms of governance, the commission proposed a "hybrid governance model" in order for council members to have both access to city councillors and organizational networks outside the reach of the municipality. The Commission proposed to merge the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council with the Permanent committee on urban agriculture convened by the Office on Sustainable Development. However, the Commission remained ambiguous in terms of keeping the SAM as it was while still creating a new food policy council. During a later workshop, SAM coordinators expressed the need to have one and only structure and merge the SAM into the municipal-sponsored FPC. We see this in the response of the executive council to the commission:

> "The collaborative linkages between the Food Policy Council and the SAM partnership. Recommendaiton-12: Plan to have a seat on the FPC reserved to the SAM partners. Response to R-12: The executive committee cannot align with this recommendation, considering that the existence of the SAM in parallel to a FPC would create redundancy and eventually disengage actors. The current SAM actors informed the city that a fusion of their agency with a FPC (…) would be possible. In consequence, the executive committee invites all of the SAM actors to adhere to a future FPC in order to participate in the works."

The city tasked the main public sector partners of the SAM to propose a model of governance, but also asked them to renew their financial commitments before it could take an official position. This was somewhat unsatisfactory for some, who wished for the city's executive council to sit directly at the table and take greater leadership.

This process of back-and-forth between municipal agencies and the SAM is important because it clarified the roles of the food policy council. The Commission and the executive council proposed that the future FPC would adopt two roles, one being advisory and the other to stimulate regional

cooperation. Since, SAM partners proposed two additional roles: acting as a financial leverage and project incubator (which it was already doing) and policy advocacy. In the latter case, this is a new role for the SAM, and goes beyond the recommendations issued by the Commission. These four roles (cooperation, advisory, advocacy and incubation) of the new Food Policy Council illustrate the embedding of new norms into municipal institutions.

| Roles of SAM Food Policy Council (2017) |
| --- |
| 1. Provide a forum for cooperation and local-regional linkages<br>2. Advocate for policies and sustainable and just food systems<br>3. Act as an advisor to partners and public and municipal institutions<br>4. Incubates structural initiatives by acting as a regional financial leverage (matching funds, seed money) |

At the time I was finalizing this thesis, the SAM coalition was undergoing a transition into the municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council. On the side of public sector organizations, funding arrangements are renewed. Actually, the mandate of *Quebec en Forme* was extended two additional years, providing additional space for planning. On the side of SAM coalition members, they were consulted to come together into taskforces on the issues of (1) urban agricultures, which include both urban and peri-urban farming, (2) distribution and procurement, (3) food security and (4) waste reduction. Further, partner organizations proposed to create a broader network of individual and organisational members, which would extend beyond an official partners' committee.

### 5.4.4. Between policy adjustments and policy gaps

The parallel deployment of the SAM Action Plan and the FPC consultation ended up being timely. As the SAM Action Plan ended, it received a mandate to create a municipal-sponsored FPC. Interestingly, several changes within official city policies are also noticeable, with a greater integration of food systems into official policy documentation. The new Policy on social development mentions the upcoming FPC, further committing the city to continue participating in its development.

The Office of Sustainable Development, whose work had been circumscribed to urban agriculture and waste management, started to embed health and nutrition in its 2016-2020 plan. The integration of healthy eating is seen as an "improvement of the social dimension aspects of the municipal

administration's sustainable development action plan 2016-2020: In connection with Action 12, to make urban agriculture and healthy lifestyles part of the neighbourhoods' DNA and, related to the financial backing of community organizations, to support projects that will promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles, in particular by making healthful food and physical activity accessible to everyone." Under this heading, the strategy will help "consolidate the actions of *Montréal, métropole en santé"*, the re-branded Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles (RRHL).

The Office of urban planning also announced the farmland development plan (2015), which mentions farming activities outside of areas expressively zoned for farming, i.e., urban agriculture. This is important because it aligns with the goals expressed by urban agriculture initiatives, which had advocated that UA be recognized into official planning documents. The forth orientation of the plan states, "To integrate the development of commercial agricultural activities in industrial and commercial sectors in the urban zone". The plan also wishes to develop "innovative agricultural production projects within the urban zone". The commercial aspect includes both private and social economy (coop, non-profit) and expands the scope of urban agriculture beyond the bias of some public sector bodies as only a social activity. However, some partners have expressed reserved in terms of the implementation the farmland development plan (it is not an "action plan") due to the absence of political capital. Indeed, in 2014-2016, actions were operationalized through the funding allocated by the SAM[153], and hence not directly through the City itself.

However, policy gaps persist. This was the case with the surprising announcement of the Policy on Children (Ville de Montréal, 2016). Specifically, the policy plans to invest $2.3 M per year to provide meals in schools. However, this policy did not consult with SAM actors, neither core public sector organizations nor stakeholders involved in institutional procurement (Goal 3). Indeed, SAM stakeholders had made the education sector a priority to improve institutional buying practices. Despite having conducted a report, organized a national event and piloted new projects, the municipality and the SAM actors were unaware of one another. Instead, the Policy on Children was targeted towards non-profits that distribute donated foods from the agri-food industry to school breakfast programs. An alternative policy option would have to strengthen project funding of the food policy council and earmark funds for the education sector, or to have built on previous efforts of the consortium of social economy enterprises that has been working with school boards since 1991[154]. In this sense, the Policy

153 This included farmer-led training activities and delivering assessments on municipal-owned land: (1) its agro-economic potential and (2) species and habitats at risk.

154 The *Collectif de la table des écoliers* was engaged in Goal 3. However, the timing of the action plan did not align with its readiness to propose a universal school food program, instead of the current targeted program which reaches 1 in 9 chilren.

on Children (2016) represents a missed opportunity for the upcoming Food Policy Council and stakeholders involved in the SAM, but most importantly the population as a whole.

## 5.5. Conclusions: institutionalizing innovation, influencing policy

The SAM Action Plan 2014-2016 provides an interesting case to illustrate how urban food planners have to negotiate provincial, municipal and community dynamics. This chapter revealed the long, multi-faceted process of institutionalizing food innovations.

First, the launch of the SAM Action Plan revealed a combination of several institutional arrangements to secure funding and streamline policy instruments. At this stage, I showed the impact this had on the governance structure and the limited input of civil society. Funding allocation, on the other hand, was the result of a negotiation between intermediaries around specific goals. I explored the most politicized spaces where civil society was most present, and revealed the difficulties of building consensus and the sidelining of certain voices. Finally, I narrowed down my analysis to highlight the territorial dynamic behind two flagship projects, and the institutionalization of neighbourhood food markets.

The territorial dynamic that I made visible in this chapter also played out, unexpectedly, at the political level. Despite the SAM Action Plan, the coalition lacked sufficient political capital and a clear strategy to pursue its work beyond 2017. As a result, an insider/outsider game, which coincided with a territorial dynamic, lead to the launch of a parallel consultation on a food policy council. As a result, the SAM coalition mobilized around that "policy window" and was able to influence the executive committee, via the Department on Poverty, to merge into a hybrid food policy council with political buy-in. While there are still elements that remain to be finalized[155], I covered the foundations of Montreal's upcoming SAM-Food Policy Council.

In the future, the SAM-Food Policy Council will be faced with the difficult task of solving policy gaps. I mentioned, for example how new official city documents are increasingly inclusive of the issues of health and nutrition and the diversity of urban farming practices. However, others policy gaps remain, as illustrated by the Policy on Children, where no communication channels were set up between policy makers and the SAM policy networks. Further, the FPC will also have to negotiate across stakeholder priorities and agendas while recognizing the contributions of emerging community leaders and coalitions.

155Not least the financial commitment of the city, the institutional anchor of the FPC and which city councillor are going to be delegated as an official representative and potential champion

# 6. Chapter 6: Conclusion and discussion

City-regions are emerging as leading arenas to coordinate and facilitate the emergence of territorial food systems, notably through the creation of food policy councils (MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Harper et al., 2012; Boulianne and Bissardon, 2016). This thesis provided a detailed overview of how multiple spaces were crafted to address food-related issues in Montreal, Quebec (1986-2012). In the context of the shifting terrain of provincial neoliberal reform (2000s-2010s), the successive multiple attempts to create a regional coordinating body eventually succeeded in transforming a stakeholder-led coalition into a hybrid, municipal-sponsored Food Policy Council (2014-2017). However, the institutionalization of socially innovative experiments, carried out by civic food networks, reveals a number of tensions, challenges and policy gaps in city-region food governance.

Before I conclude this thesis, let me recall the core questions of my research:

- What influence has Quebec's provincial regulatory landscape had on city-region food governance?
- How have policy networks evolved over the past three decades in Montreal? What issues have they tried to address, and what barriers have they faced? How have previous group formation and institutional arrangements shaped Montreal's current food strategy and governance?
- How do actors negotiate their roles and relationships in the development and implementation of the action plan? Was the SAM partnership model successful, and if not, what were its limits? How did the SAM partnership evolve into the municipally mandated Food Policy Council?

This final chapter is divided into five discussions. First, I address the research questions from the perspective of food policy and food planning: I summarize the provincial and municipal food policy landscape in the context of neoliberalism. In part two and three, I reintroduce the vocabulary of Actor-Network Theory (translation, controversy, mediator) in my analysis of the case study, and reflect on its use as a methodology. In the last section, I look at opportunities for the municipal Food Policy Council to engage across levels of government, and finally conclude with the notion of commoning in food policy.

## 6.1. City-region food governance: top down and bottom up

In this thesis, I indicated a number of dynamics that had an influence on city-region food governance. My field research and the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan took place when there was a high degree of institutional uncertainty. As Marsden (2000) suggests, it is important to contextualize Actor-Network

Theory in food studies within its given political economy. At a regulatory level, the neoliberal turn of the Quebec model led to a succession of reforms that have significantly reoriented health care and health prevention, education and childcare services, as well as regional, rural and community economic development (Bouachard and Lévesque, 2005; Vaillancourt, 2017). These fields are relevant for city-region food systems planners, given that some have been either institutional anchors for previous food councils, or key participants at least. Budgetary constraints are also a recurrent issue. The uncertainties surrounding the continuation of the public-private partnership *Quebec en Forme* illustrates the effects of provincial institutional arrangements on the time horizon of food systems planning in Montreal. Perhaps more dramatically, several of the SAM partners and professionals – in the school board, the public health authority and community economic development agencies – simply lost their employment due to budgetary cuts and organization restructuring.

From a food and nutrition policy standpoint, I explained that, despite significant achievements in the field of the social and solidarity economy in the 1980s and 1990s, nutrition policies, and school meal programs in particular, remained targeted initiatives with limited reach, and never fully extended on a universal basis throughout the education sector. Further, anti-poverty legislation that passed in 2001 neither recognized food as a human right nor provided a social safety net that was solid enough to curtail food insecurity in the province. While the law helped recognize empowerment-based and collective food security interventions over charity-based solutions, food security programming has remained sectorial in scope and been contained within public health (Bilodeau, 2006).

In terms of agricultural governance, the consultations that took place in the 2000s demonstrated the effects of political in-fighting and the lack of commitment to long term policy change. Although the main governing body, the MAFF, has diversified its interventions and played a firmer role in agri-environmental policy (Doddridge and Senechal, 2013; Doyon et al, 2016; Benoit, 2015) the investment in new programs[156] has hit a financial lock-in (Benoit, 2015), cross-compliance[157] mechanisms have applied to narrow criteria (Mundler and Ruiz, 2015) and its mandate continues to be defined on economic performance alone. Moreover, the corporatist legacy of the 1960s has both enabled, but also contained, pressures for reform: the main farming body has largely retracted into a defensive position in view of the dominant trade agenda, the consolidation of market power by processors and retailers and the participation of new environmental, social and rural organizations.

156 Since 2008, the MAFF has developed programs in the organic sector, local food promotion and certification, institutional purchasing, (semi-)direct agri-food marketing, multifunctional agriculture, agricultural land use planning, urban agriculture

157 Cross compliance is a mechanism whereby farmers are eligible for government support under the condition of their compliance to environmental regulations.

This brief overview shows that an institutional void persists at the provincial level, leaving municipalities with the task of combining previously isolated mandates (social inclusion, economic development, agricultural zoning, greening, waste management, etc.), of working across levels of municipal governments and engaging an increasingly diverse set of interests. I explained that, administratively, the city is relatively decentralized at the borough-level, where most programming decisions are made, and unlike other cities, neither education nor public health are under the municipal jurisdiction. Moreover, the city had traditionally provided support for the main public markets, but pulled out in 1992, and, historically, has used its limited powers to restrict animal husbandry and selling food in public spaces (Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). I also mentioned some of the regional discussions that took place regarding a food security policy (1998) and a metropolitan agri-food cluster (2005-2010), and how neither were activated.

There have been successive efforts to create a regional roundtable on food systems in Montreal. There were a combination of factors that caused these efforts to be stalled or discontinued, but those that appeared the most visible to me were the following: in 1994, efforts were stalled by electoral change; in 2004, the commitment of public health authorities on programming appeared to have sidelined municipal policy change, while the creation of the CREO appeared as an opportunity to gain proximity with the city (Bertrand and Thérien, 2004); finally, in 2010, the committee lacked a clear advisory mandate and, in the end, was oriented towards pilot projects rather than policy change. Previous experiences were criticized as lacking diversity and being mainly framed around hunger, poverty and an under-funded community sector. Simultaneously, public health orientations towards access to fruit and vegetables were criticized for not addressing the root causes of food insecurity, and imposing on community groups to invest into their economic mandate (Audet et al., 2015).

At the departmental level, progress has been slow. The department responsible of social development and poverty reduction was the first municipal interlocutor on the issue of food security. In the 2000s, urban agriculture became the object of a large-scale consultation, and it was the department of sustainable development that was tasked with convening a working group. For a number of reasons - including a lack of electoral safety and administrative capacity, and a weak connection with practitioners and their networks - the work of the committee was stalled. Eventually, the mandate of the SAM-Food Policy Council was a given to the first of the two (Commission de la diversité et du développement social, 2017).

In many ways, Montreal has also been at the avant-guard in food policy. For example, in the 1990s, the municipality created one of the world's most large-scale community gardening programs (Saint-Hilaire-Gravel, 2014; Mailhot-Leduc, 2014; Duchemin and Vermette, 2016). Later, in the 2000s, the

city reached a tri-partite agreement with the public health agency and a public foundation to support cross-sectorial neighbourhood roundtables (Longtin and Rochman, 2015), which would eventually play a key role in community food security planning. Agricultural land use plans are now instituted in all municipal counties and cities in the metropolitan region and are a rare example of multi-level coordination in food systems governance (Doyon et al, 2016; CMM, 2016).

Civic food networks and civil society organizations have increasingly diversified over time. Initially understood as either charity- or empowerment-based, community groups have since been analyzed based on their activities in production, meal preparation, sale, as well as food recovery and waste reduction. I could have spoken in more detail of the food bank distribution network, which I've heard is the largest in North America, or the collective kitchen movement, which has grown to include thousands of groups in the province during the 1990s. In this thesis, I decided to focus on three types of coalitions that have respectively organized around hunger (Bilodeau et al., 2002), urban agriculture (Mailhot-Leduc, 2014) and neighbourhood solidarity markets (Audet et al., 2015). I was interested in their political and social dimension and the role they played in the configuration of the SAM network.

I articulated some of the negotiations and compromises that took place, but also the differences between status and influence, highlighting the need to bridge the gap between poverty and social economy, and between civic and commercial urban agriculture. I looked at Goal 2 (food access) and Goal 4.A (urban agriculture) as the two arenas where civil society was most visible and consensus harder to reach. In the end, I narrowed my analysis to focus on two interventions funded through the SAM Action Plan (Goal 2) and to indicate its technical, territorial and political aspects. Multiple data points (social network models, informal interviews, observations, policy documentation) point to the opening of a "policy window", to borrow from Kingdon (1995), around which the SAM could position itself as a hybrid public-collective coalition.

## 6.2. Actor-networks and regional food planning

This thesis uses the explanatory power of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to shine light on the multiple institutional arrangements and informal relationships across organizations, sectors and levels behind city-region food planning. In my research, I applied ANT in my methodology and analysis.

One evident way I applied ANT was to use the partnership assessment tool developed by public health researchers Bilodeau and colleagues (2008). The survey focused on the different stages of engagement of public sector and civil society organizations. The tool also raised questions related to power and integrating the roles of multiple actors. Specifically, the results indicate that the conditions

were partially met, therefore suggesting that the SAM 2014-2016 was partially successful. To understand this, let's go back to the different stages of engagement.

There were several levels and moments when the partnership successively mobilized actor-networks. After being disbanded in 2013, the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyles was reconvened to support two "bottom up" regional partnerships[158], which included the SAM partner committee behind the 2025 vision. The SAM then mobilized a number of non-governmental intermediaries[159] (community food hubs, environmental organizations, professors, roundtables/coalitions, etc…), which in return activated their respective resources (matching funds, partnerships, knowledge). Parts of the mobilization resulted in visible outcomes. Other than the direct outcomes of installing fresh food stalls in areas with limited access, I document the passing of a motion at city council to assess the feasibility of a municipal Food Policy Council. I propose to see it, as suggested by MacRae and Winfield (2013), as a "policy window" (Kingdon, 1995) activated by policy entrepreneurs[160], or "mediators" in ANT vocabulary, both inside and outside of the SAM partnership.

ANT hypothesizes that innovations are the result of actors resolving controversies[161]. This coincides with the process of translation[162], which results in new compromises between actor-networks seeking solutions to a problem. In the case of the SAM Action Plan 2014-2016, the compromise settled around a two-year funding arrangement with non-governmental organizations in the arena of health promotion[163]. Multi-level governance (2014-2016) led to an absence of civil society participants at the Regional Roundtable on Healthy Lifestyle, which was perceived as a funder-driven, public sector initiative. Further, civil society actors driving change at the operational level were not necessarily welcomed in the SAM coordination committee, therefore containing some valuable energies. In retrospect, emphasis should have perhaps been put on expertise and the capacity to engage other partners.

Another compromise, however, unpredictably came forth, which positively politicized food in the

158 The *Système alimentaire montréalais* and *Montréal physiquement actif*

159 The intermediaries are mobilized through individual pubic sector bodies and their respective programs (e.g., food access and community development, value-added food processing, public procurement, agricultural land use planning, urban agriculture)

160 A policy window occurs when three streams are combined: a problem stream, a policy stream and a political stream.

161 The theory argues that a controversy always precedes the emergence of an innovation, of a change, with the process of construction as the resolution of these controversies." (Bilodeau et al., 2002, p.6).

162 "The notion of translation refers to the continuous re-interpretation that actors operate in terms of their roles and the innovation they produce, starting from their respective interest and powers relationships, and leading to the construction of compromises." (Bilodeau et al., 2002, p.6).

163 The emphasis on healthy eating, over hunger, as a policy discourse is noteworthy, creating a gap with community groups raising their core issues (e.g., food insecurity, empowerment).

municipal arena. The City of Montreal came to institutionalize a new form of governance mechanism, a Food Policy Council. The public consultation, led by a municipal commission comprised of elected officials, likely raised the profile of food as a municipal issue. Furthermore, it was a platform for civil society, and neighbourhood food roundtables in particular, to engage directly on the issue, and raise the profile of "local communities" in "regional" issues.

During the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan, the compromises led to some visible changes in actors' conception of their roles[164] in the realm of territorial food systems. For example, Montreal's independent association of public markets extended its economic mandate to a social one by integrating neighbourhood solidarity markets as part of its work. The council representing small scale, value added food processors (BICIM) developed new know-how in institutional procurement and greater competency in food systems issues. Finally, the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries also started seeking opportunities in commercial urban agriculture, reaching out to businesses and researchers as advisors. Some of the changes in roles include temporary contributions or partial withdrawals. The City of Montreal's changing role is in the making, as policy adjustments and gaps remain.

## 6.3. Evaluation as actor-network

The assessment of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan would not be complete without a review of the evaluation process itself. I generated a host of non-human actor-networks - graphs, charts and reports - and presented the evaluation to the SAM stakeholders. In this section, I draw here directly from my experience as a participant observer and evaluator, to point to some of the noteworthy crossroads and limits to the study.

After two years of active involvement in a local food justice network that I had helped create, *Justice alimentaire Montréal*, I was enrolled into the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan as a graduate student interested in assessing progress in city-region food governance. My role moved from being an activist and organizer to being a student and researcher, and finally to my being hired as an external, part-time evaluator and consultant. I would also accept contracts from non-governmental organizations. In other words, my role was not limited to observation alone. The SAM partnership empowered me to take actions in the periphery of the SAM Action Plan. For example, at one point I convened a regional meeting on social finance, as a result of which one community group was able to connect with the

164My own shift in positionality as a student and evaluator, as well as an advocate on provincial and national food policy issues, is one such example.

necessary investments for its semi-permanent market infrastructure outside of its local subway station. In general, however, I would negotiate multiple roles at once, which may have led to possible confusion in the context of the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan.

The development of the evaluation methodology over the course of six to eight months revealed the difficult task of assessing the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan. There were many actors involved with the different goals, and multiple projects being implemented each with their respective audiences. There were additional constraints: the short time span of the action plan; the limited capacity for evaluation; and the diversity of projects (e.g., skill building, knowledge generation, promotion). The coordinators of the SAM signaled an interest in social network analysis and hoped to capture its effectiveness as a coordinating body through modeling software. After finding a partnership assessment tool (Bilodeau et al., 2008) with a reliable framework that did not shy away from issues related to funding, power and participation, I turned to Actor-Network Theory. ANT provided a theoretical bridge between two methods: social network models and the six conditions for an effective partnership.

There were some obvious limits. In terms of the Social Network Analysis, coordinators put greater emphasis on demonstrating the breadth of the network, than the quality of the relationships. I had to choose whether to generate data on the relationships evolving through time, and whether the SAM partnership made any difference, or to capture the depth of the relationships themselves. In the context of evaluation, I chose the former. The result, however, was not entirely satisfactory. As one can see in the annex, network graphs form one dense, connected component. Indeed, the survey featured the name of all the organizations in the SAM partner committee and tended to be self-containing. In reality, I found the network graph extracted from the evaluation report (Annex 11) to be more informative and easier to design. The data was generated based on project leaders' (n=13) indication of who were their partners, and who were the three they considered "the most involved."

The partnership assessment tool also presented some challenges. The survey was sent in the spring of 2016, when there was little indication that the SAM partnership would transition into a municipally mandated Food Policy Council. Moreover, the SAM partnership was multi-layered, and it might have been unclear which level in the partnership participants had in mind when responding to the survey (e.g., within their specific goal or the SAM partnership as a whole). Furthermore, while the tools worked well to explain the tensions between the public sector and civil society, I had to generate complementary observations on how power was navigated by non-governmental actors. Finally, the different stages of the SAM partnership[165] did not necessarily coincide with the "moments" of the

165(1) The development of the 2025 vision, (2) the opening of a funding opportunity, (3) the re-convening of the

assessment tool[166], which rendered the narrative aspect of the analysis a challenge.

Actor-Network Theory not only informed the tools I was using, but the research process itself. My initial interest in the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan was to participate in the working groups of food supply and distribution[167]. This focus changed along the way because I noticed that the working group working on institutional procurement was better resourced than the one on community provisioning. While both groups conducted valuable assessments and built relationships, I found that they were not necessarily the centerpieces of the mobilization taking place between 2014 and 2016. Instead, my thesis focused on two flag ship projects that embodied a technical (i.e., installing food stalls) and territorial (i.e., piloted in one neighbourhood and replicated elsewhere) dimension. This shift is a clear illustration of my choice to "follow the connections, 'follow the actors themselves'" (Latour, 2005, p. 179).

From my experience, nowhere was institutionalization more challenging than in the process of conducting evaluation. Unfortunately, neither the coordination committee nor project leaders were officially asked to provide their input in the initial phase of the project. The lack of consultation of these key stakeholders limited the ability to develop appropriate evaluation tools and metrics, but most importantly to understand the goals and audiences of the evaluation. Instead, there was greater emphasis on externalizing evaluation to an ad hoc committee comprised of researchers and practitioners in evaluations from funders, and eventually to contract a masters student.

Despite having regular access to a number of stakeholders and spaces (working groups, events, etc.) interviews were only scheduled with individual members of the coordination committee, instead of projects leaders or organizations that were less engaged in the process or that withdrew. Moreover, the coordination committee remained relatively closed to the researcher. The evaluation was not prioritized as a collective endeavour of learning and planning and, as a result, not appropriately communicated to SAM partners. Instead, it proved to be difficult to change the parameters of the evaluation once it had been accepted. While the evaluation noted shortfalls in the governance and engagement process, it was not given sufficient time to address these issues collectively with stakeholders in planning sessions.

The ambiguity of institutionalization can illustrate the margin of manoeuvre available to partners. As I've shown, intermediary spaces (taskforces, committees, roundtables, networks, coalitions, etc.) are a key avenue for a regional coordinating body to address specific issues. In the context of the SAM

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RRHL, (3) the engagement of public sector bodies, (4) the engagement of non-governmental intermediaries, (5) the activation of their networks, (6) the transformation of the SAM network, (7) the opening of a policy window, (8) the positioning of the SAM, (9) the transition to a Food policy council.

166 (1) Problem-framing, (2) interest-raising, (3) enrolling, (4) mobilizing

167 There were two working groups, one focused on provisioning practices in the community sector of quality, fresh food (Goal 2), and the other on food procurement in municipal agencies, schools and hospitals (Goal 3).

Action Plan, previously informal relationships were encouraged to formally incorporate. Three new venues were formalized to facilitate stakeholder collaboration: an inter-university network, a community food distribution network and a waste reduction coalition. One of the initial goals of *Justice alimentaire Montréal* (JAM) was to facilitate university-community collaborations. However, in the context of the SAM Action Plan, greater emphasis was put on the academic component. It is revealing that, out of these three spaces, only the waste reduction coalition managed to raise enough interest, capacity and momentum to continue its work as a full-fledge taskforce in the upcoming Food Policy Council.

## 6.4. Multi-scalar strategies to institutionalize territorial food systems

This thesis underscored some of the multi-level dynamics at play, whereby cities are embedded in larger systems of political and economic governance. Municipalities, like other public sector and public-civil society organizations engaged in territorial food systems, are affected by the provincial and national policy agenda. In this context, the creation of a municipal-sponsored FPC may provide new opportunities to strengthen the emergence of TFS, from a local to national scale.

In the urban setting, a first layer of governance that needs to be addressed is at the local (neighbourhood) and supra-local (borough, adjacent neighbourhoods) level. In two of the flagship projects, a model experimented in one neighbourhood leveraged regional resources to build capacity and multiply into other areas of the city. The Montreal neighbourhood roundtables provided a fertile ground for food networks to coordinate their activities and foster civic engagement. Further, the neighbourhood is the immediate arena for citizen engagement. The vision of 'Good food neighbourhoods', or *Quartier nourricier*, "is a plural response to the numerous economic, social and environmental problems in the Centre-Sud of Montreal."[168] The project aims to diversify food production capacity in public spaces and create synergies with food preparation and commercialization infrastructure. It also includes educational and community outreach through workshops and forums. In other areas, such as Lachine and Montreal North, community stakeholders have also come together around a common vision for their neighbourhood.

I also documented synergies between neighbourhood-level food systems planning and borough food strategies, highlighting the potential for combining policy instruments. The Ville-Marie food strategy provides an overview of actions under its jurisdiction. In the context of the Food Policy Council

168 Presentation by Carrefour alimentaire Centre Sud Retrieved from: http://www.cdccentresud.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Présentation-Carrefour-alimentaire-projet-Q21.pdf

consultation[169], the city proposed that one elected councillor in each borough be mandated to bring food into policy-making decisions. Based on social learning in Ville Marie, it is important to emphasize the connection between previously isolated departments and policies (zoning, by-laws, funding, real estate, events) and develop leadership and trust with neighbourhood roundtables, community groups and citizens. An annual overview of neighbourhood food policies, actions and challenges could serve as a reporting mechanism.

The Food Policy Council became instituted at the agglomeration, island-wide level, but its accomplishments are likely to depend on the activation of the central City's creativity and boldness, both administratively and politically. The city will have to build buy-in across services to identify which departments will be taking leadership on each portfolio. For example, the Office of sustainable development is already covering community-based urban agriculture and composting, while the Department of Economic Development is positioning itself to support commercial urban agriculture and social enterprises. This would also help to identify gaps, around municipal food procurement for example, and models to work from[170]. The city should also have to think beyond its departmental scope. There is groundwork to integrate programming and funding (greening, urban revitalization, anti-poverty) at the central level to reduce redundancy for boroughs, making it potentially easier to strengthen 'good food neighbourhoods'. Communications, research and staff training are also cross departmental in scope, and could be mobilized to promote food to the public and across municipal offices.

The moral leadership of the city is also required to effect change at higher levels of governance. At the metropolitan level, the launch of the agricultural land use development plan can act as an observatory for the promotion of models across municipalities and be leveraged to build awareness of strategic opportunities. To better align with health and environmental outcomes, the current territorial approach focused on farmland could be combined with a sectorial intervention. Specific value chains should be prioritized based on health and environmental outcomes, such as the fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes sectors, as well as organic food and farming (Desjardins 2014). In the spirit of the metropolitan 'agri-food' cluster, priority investments should be assessed and promoted by economic development agencies.

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169"It asks that each borrow and linked municipality designate a city councillor responsible for the food portfolio. The designated individuals would have occasionally assist in the FPC [Food policy council] For the City of Montreal, the mandated councillors can be the same as those responsible of the social development portfolio in the boroughs."

170In terms of public food procurement for example, the SAM has developed a model to increase healthy food options in municipal-sponsored events.

Municipal political champions can also address provincial and national issues and promote the adoption of food policies and a stronger social safety net. As we've seen, the implementation of top down, sectorial government policies and programs constrains cross-sectorial coordination. An institutional void persists at the provincial and national levels, where policy is mainly oriented around productivity and exports. Further, the roll-back in public services under neoliberal reform threatens access to health, education and other services that are social determinants of health. The upcoming agri-food policies in Quebec and Canada in 2018, currently under consultation, may provide an opportunity for city-regions to have their word and advocate for a greater legal recognition of food as a human right.

In the context of Quebec, it is important that the experience of Montreal does not remain contained at the urban level. In rural areas, the CREO and regional public health authorities, which have now largely disappeared, previously coordinated, funded and participated in roundtables focusing on agricultural land use planning, the agri-food sector, food security and health promotion. As the case of Montreal shows, a food policy council can help combine these goals, experiences and resources to strengthen TFS regionally.

## 6.5. The commoning of food governance

In this thesis, I introduced the reader to the changing political economy of Quebec and the formation of some of the key social and public sector organizations in Montreal. I then analyzed the regional food planning community through the lens of Actor-Network Theory. I explain that actors in the field of regional food planning mobilized in different ways around the SAM 2014-2016 Action Plan, which eventually transformed into a Food Policy Council. I raise critical issues and gaps to conclude that the SAM remains a fragile partnership that is in transition. Finally, I name a few possible ways to coordinate food policy at different levels of government.

One of the goals of this thesis was to share three decades of experience in food planning in Montreal, and the multiple attempts to build a food policy council. The experience of Montreal is interesting because it operates in a different linguistic and cultural context than the majority of North America. The political economy of Quebec also contrasts in many ways with that of other provinces or states (e.g., the social and solidarity economy), and I indicated ways in which the neoliberal turn of Quebec, dominant since the 2000s, created stress on regional food planners and communities.

City-region food planning will continue to be an arena where top down policy and bottom up innovations meet and negotiate compromises. Although municipalities are likely to gain new

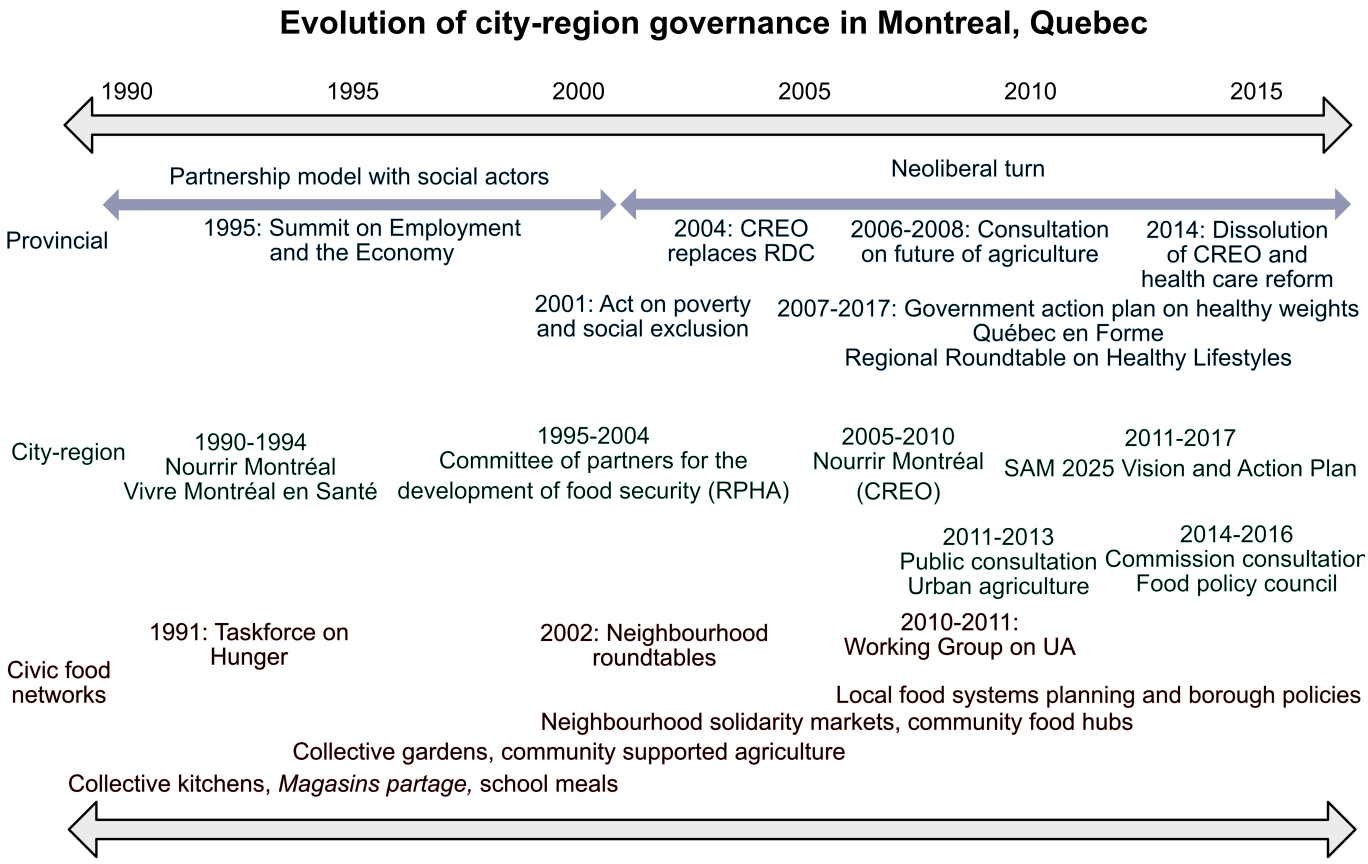
competencies and weight in global governance, the excessive commodification of food (and society in general) will likely make them more vulnerable to economic and climatic shocks.

A deeper socio-cultural shift will therefore need to operate on the way people value food. Canadian philosopher John McMurtry (1998, p. 24`) adopts the term "civil commons" to refer to "society's organized and community-funded capacity of universally accessible resources to provide for the life preservation and growth of society's members and their environmental life-host". Ugo Mattei articulates a related idea, "They [the commons] express a qualitative relation. It would be reductive to say that we *have* a common good. We should rather see to what extent we *are* the commons, in as much as we are part of an environment, an urban or rural ecosystem." (Bollier, p. 164).

The commons are core to people's valuation of food as a social construct: food should not only be considered as a commodity, but a basic need, a human right, a renewable resource, a commons (Vivero Pol, 2013). In this spirit, an underlying goal of this research was to learn from my practice of commoning in food policy.

# Annex

## Annex 1: Timeline of city-region food governance in Montreal, Quebec



# Annex 2: Conditions for an effective partnership

Condition 1

- Item 1 : Dans le partenariat, les acteurs concernés par les enjeux sont mobilisés
- Item 2 : Dans le partenariat, les populations ou organismes qui desservent participent activement à notre partenariat

Condition 2

- Item 1 : Les partenaires sont activement impliqués dans l'analyse des enjeux et non seulement dans l'exécution.

Condition 3

- Item 1: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires issus de la société civile ont une influence sur les decisions

Condition 4

- Item 1: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires ont la capacité de prendre des décisions et d'engager des ressources nécessaires
- Item 2 : Dans le partenariat, les organismes partenaires maintiennent leur collaboration pour la durée des projets
- Item 3: Dans le partenariat, les ressources (humaines, financières, de compétences) sont mobilisées pour réaliser les actions
- Item 4: Le partenariat réussit à rallier les nouveaux acteurs dont il a besoin pour faire avancer les actions

Condition 5

- Item 1: Dans le partenariat, tous les partenaires sont traités de façon égales dans la discussion et dans la prise de decision
- Item 2: Dans le partenariat, la contribution de chacun à la réalisation des projets est reconnue
- Item 3: Dans le partenariat, les avantages découlant du partenariat sont répartis équitablement parmi les partenaires
- Item 4: Dans le partenariat, les critères et mécanismes de reddition de comptes (à qui, quand et sur quoi rendre compte) entre les partenaires et les bailleurs de fonds sont négociés

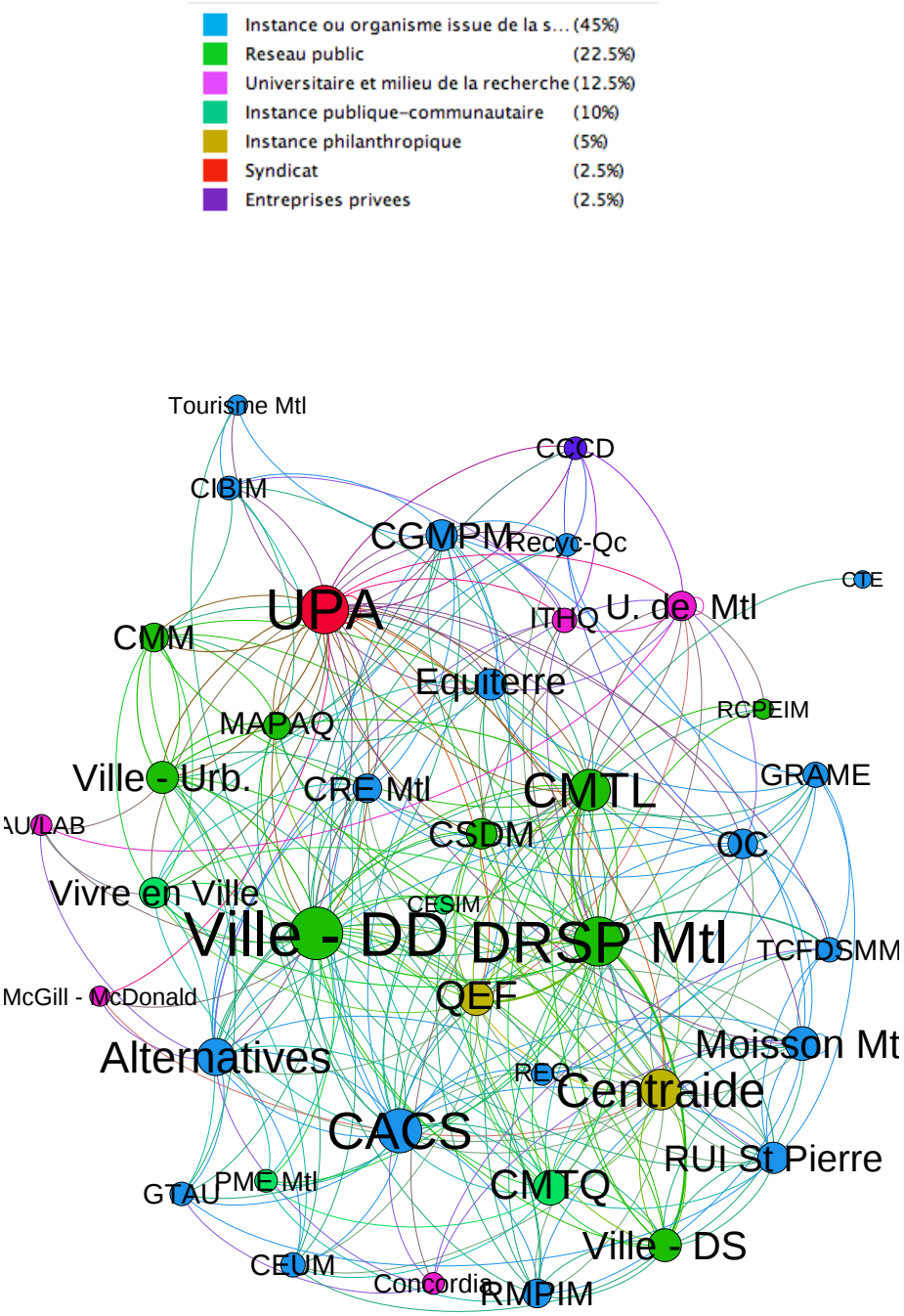
Condition 6:

- Item 1: Dans le partenariat, la formulation d'une diversité de points de vue élargit les possibilités d'action
- Item 2: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires sont aptes à identifier leurs divergences et d'en discuter
- Item 3: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires parviennent à résoudre leurs divergences
- Item 4: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires parviennent à dépasser leurs intérêts propres pour converger vers l'intérêt des populations qu'ils ont à desservir
- Item 5: Dans le partenariat, les partenaires parviennent à se mobiliser autour de solutions

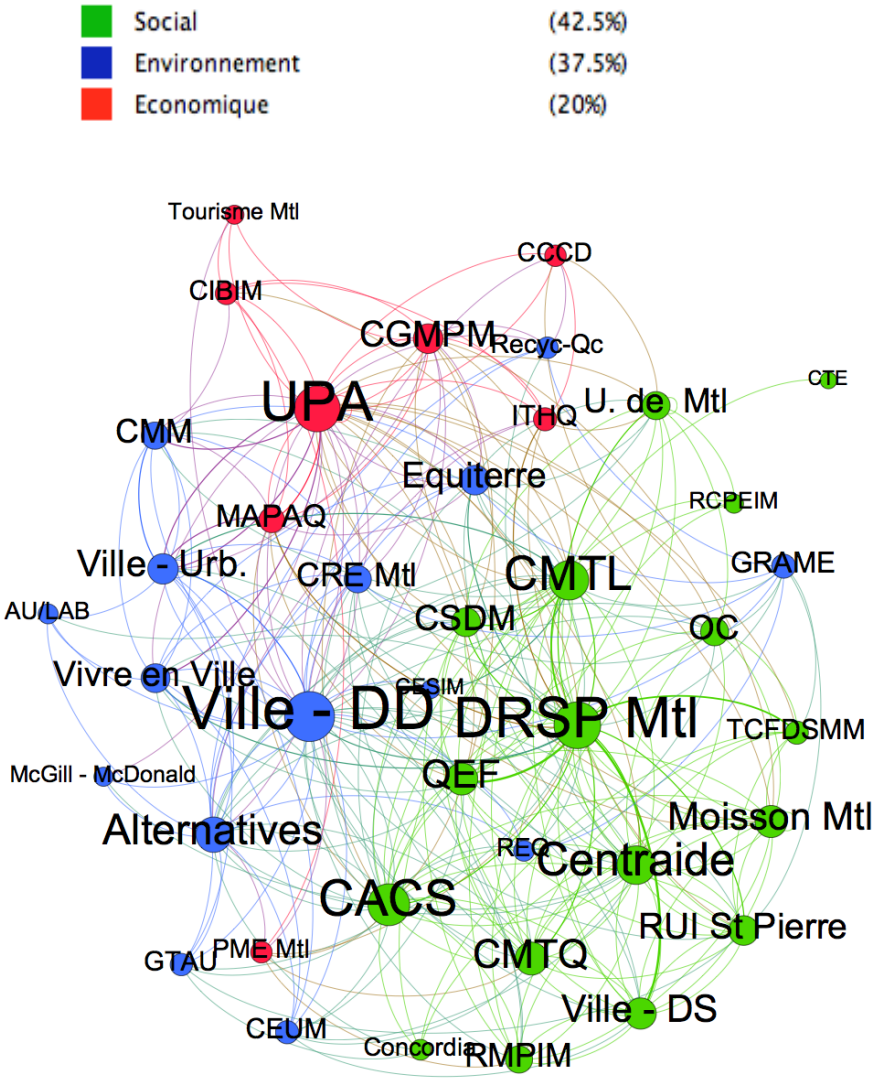
intégrées qui dépassent la seule coordination des actions de chacun

- Item 6: les partenaires modifient leur rôle (ce qu'ils faisaient déjà) pour réaliser des solutions nouvelles

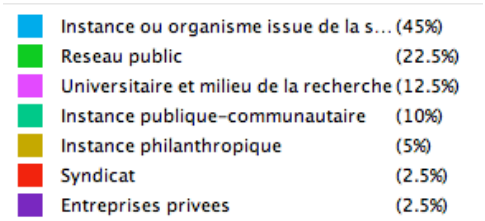
## Annex 3: Social network graph A: Before 2014

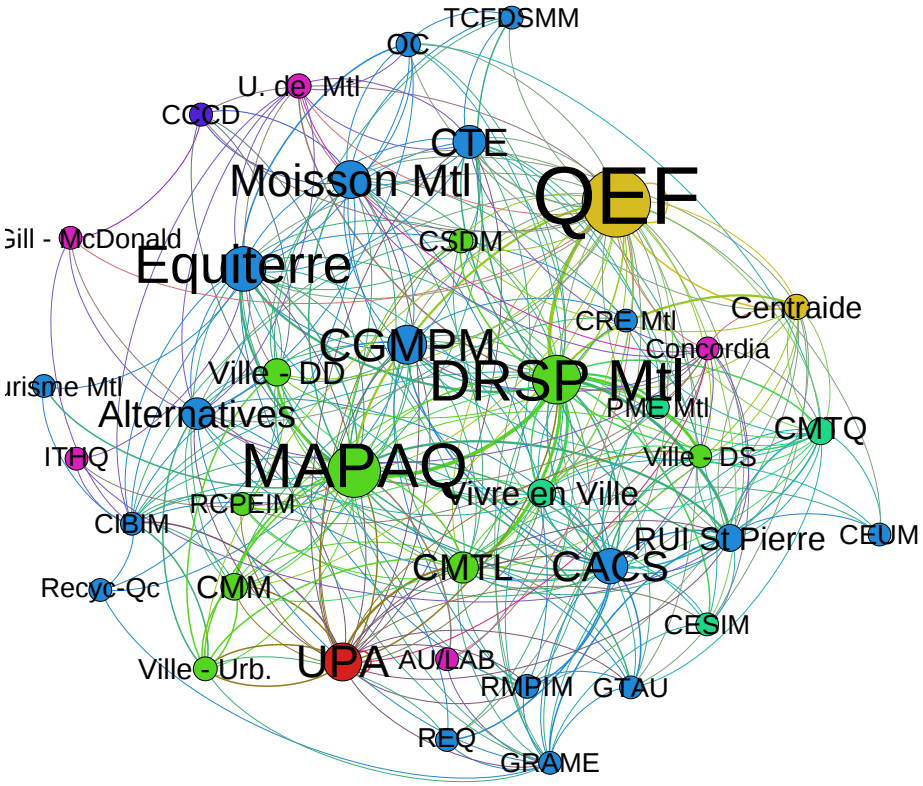


## Annex 4: Social network graph B: Before 2014

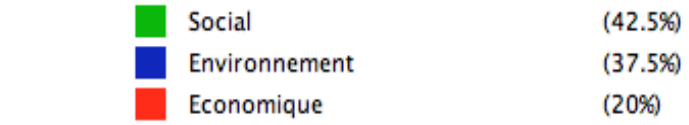


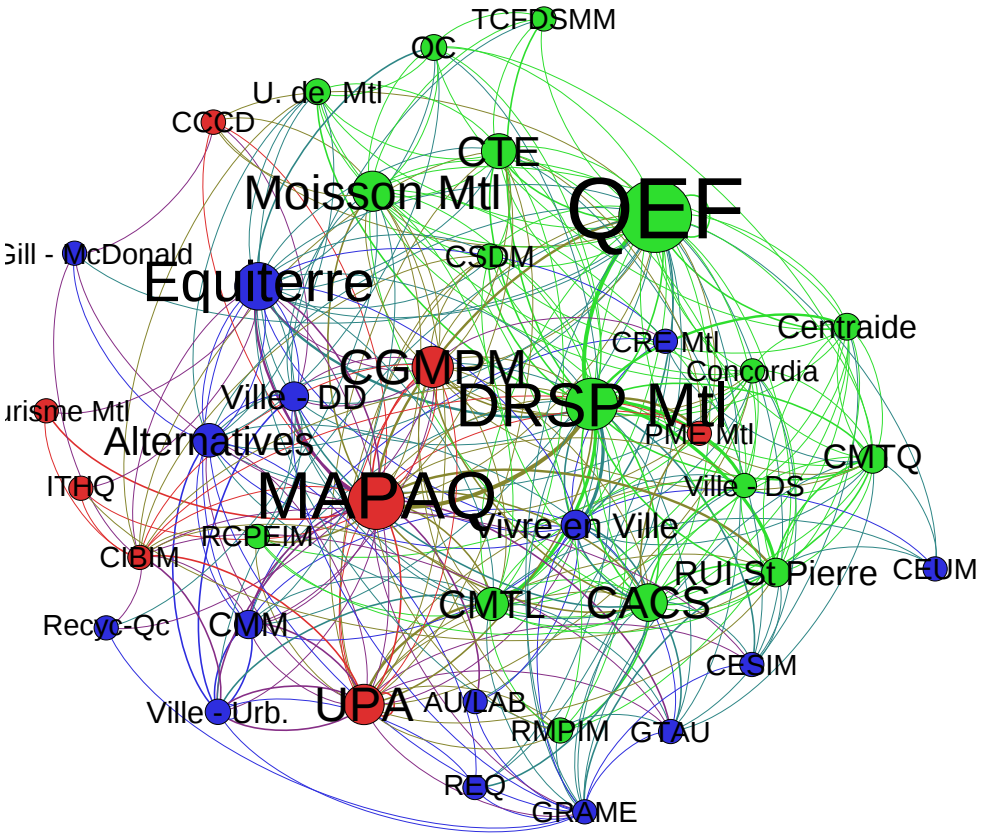
## Annex 5: Social network graph A: After 2014



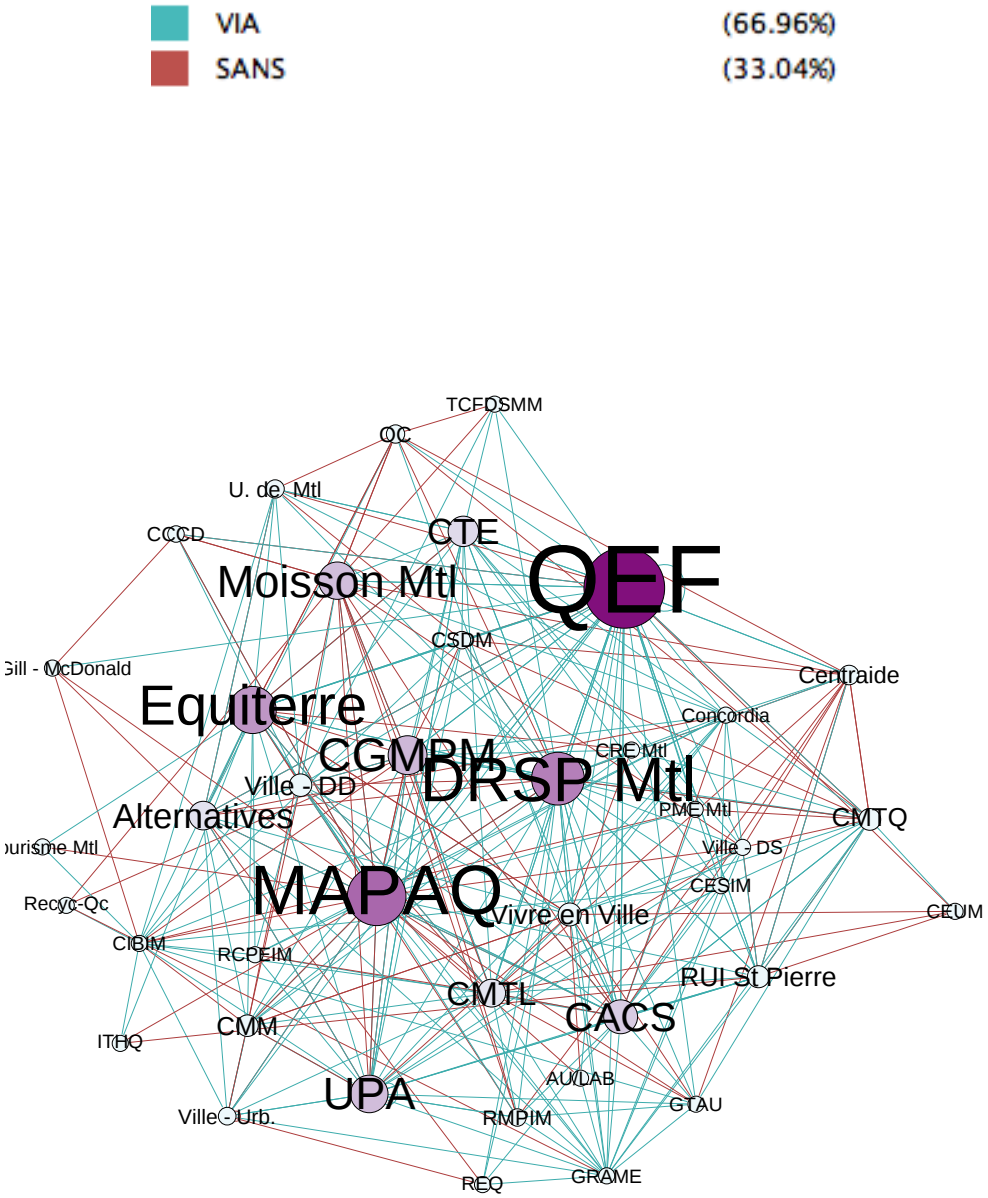



## Annex 6: Social network graph B: After 2014



## Annex 7: Social network graph after 2014: SAM as mediator




## Annex 8: Members of SAM-CC 2014-2016

- Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (previously Direction de la santé publique)
- Ville de Montréal
  - Service de la diversité sociale et des sports, Division de lutte à la pauvreté et à l'itinérance
  - Direction du développement durable

- Direction régionale du Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (economic)
- Concertation Montréal (previously Conférence régionale des élus)
- Québec en Forme
- Regroupement des éco-quartier (environmental) (replaced Équiterre Jan. 2015)
- Table sur la Faim et le Développement Social du Montréal Métropolitain (social)

# Annex 9: Members of SAM-CP 2014-2016

Social
- Regroupement des Magasins-Partage de l'île de Montréal
- Centraide
- Table sur la Faim et le Développement Social du Montréal Métropolitain
- Coalition montréalaise des tables de quartiers
- Collectif de la Table des écoliers
- Ville de Montréal, Service de la diversité sociale et des sports, Division de lutte à la pauvreté et à l'itinérance
- Université de Montéal, Département de Nutrition
- Commission scolaire de Montréal
- Moisson Montréal
- Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (*previously* Direction régionale de la santé publique)
- Québec en Forme
- Conférence régionale des élus

Environmental :
- Équiterre
- Groupe de travail en agriculture urbaine
- Conseil régional de l'environnement
- Regroupement des éco-quartier
- Centre d'écologie urbaine
- Marché Frontenac (Carrefour alimentaire Centre-Sud)
- Ville de Montréal
    - Direction du développement durable
    - Bureau du plan d'aménagement
- Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal
- Union des producteurs agricoles
- Recyc-Québec

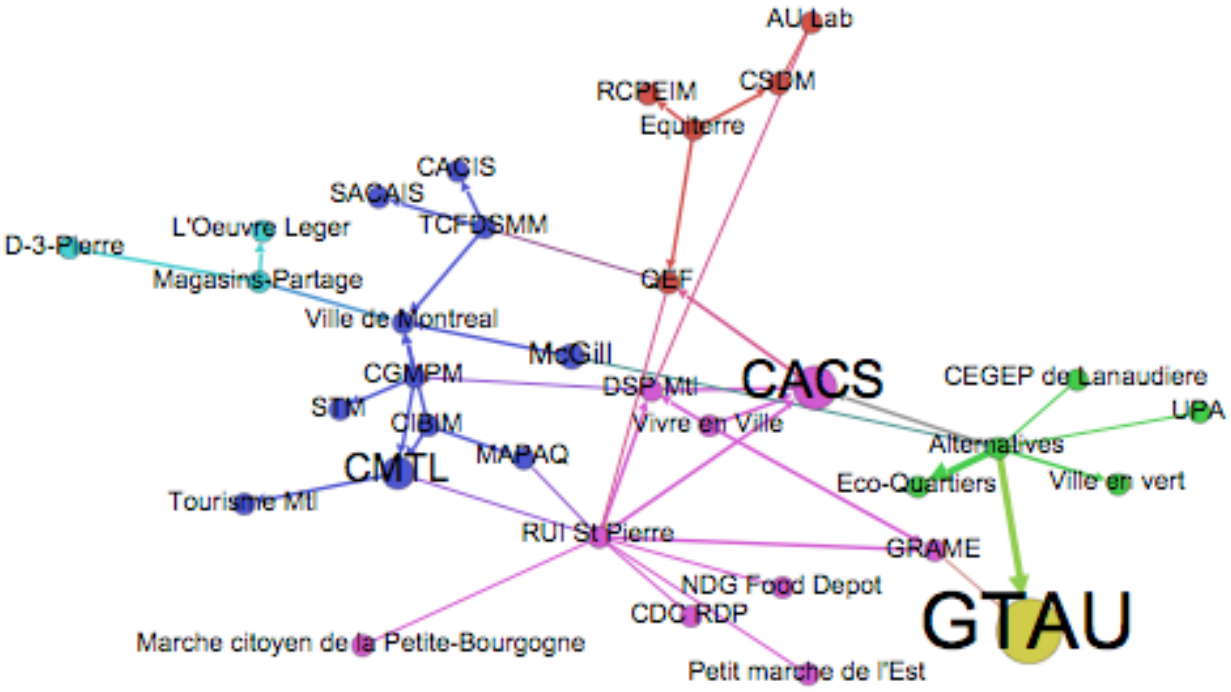
Economic:
- Direction régionale de la transformation alimentaire et des marchés
- Conseil des industries bioalimentaire de l'île de Montréal
- Inter-Corporation de développement économique communautaire (changed into PME Montreal)
- Comité sur l'économie sociale de l'île de Montréal
- Institut Tourisme et Hotellerie du Québec

- Conseil canadien du commerce de detail
- Corporation de gestion des marches publics de Montréal
- Tourisme Montréal
- Option Consommateurs

## Annex 10: Social network indicators

| Indicateurs | Avant 2014 | 2014-2016 | 2017-2020 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nombre de liens | 334 | 428 (245 VIA, 183 SANS) | 389 |
| Average Degree | 7.525 | 8.4 | 9.125 |
| Average Weighted Degree | 8.35 | 10.7 | 9.725 |
| Network Diameter | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Graph Density | 0.193 | 0.215 | 0.234 |
| Modularity | 0.173 | 0.141 | 0.123 |
| Connected Components | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Average Clustering Coefficient | 0.388 | 0.422 | 0.414 |
| Average Path Length | 1.759 | 1.705 | 1.641 |

## Annex 11: Social network extracted from SAM evaluation report



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