

# **The “Neoliberal Turn” in Provincial Cultural Policy and Administration in Québec and Ontario: The Emergence of ‘Quasi-Neoliberal’ Approaches**

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**ABSTRACT** *This article examines the influence of neoliberalism on cultural policy in Québec and Ontario. It explores the origins and specificities of government intervention in the cultural sector in each province and then analyzes the extent of the “neoliberal turn” and its impacts on cultural policy since the 1980s. The authors argue that while both provinces have been influenced by neoliberalism, neither has rejected the traditional cultural and social objectives of its policies in favour of solely economic imperatives. Rather, they have progressively grafted economic market-based objectives onto their existing policy frameworks, in what the authors characterize as ‘quasi-neoliberal’ approaches.*

**KEYWORDS** *Provincial cultural policy; Provincial cultural administration; Arts, culture and heritage policy; Cultural industries; Neoliberalism; Ontario; Québec*

**RÉSUMÉ** *Cet article met au jour l’influence du néolibéralisme sur les politiques culturelles du Québec et de l’Ontario. Il présente les origines et les spécificités des interventions publiques en ce domaine dans chaque province, puis il fait état du « virage néolibéral » amorcé dans les années 1980 et de ses impacts sur les politiques culturelles. Les auteures soutiennent que bien que ces provinces aient été influencées par le néolibéralisme, ni l’une ni l’autre n’ont mis de côté les objectifs culturels et sociaux traditionnels de leurs politiques en faveur des seuls impératifs économiques. Ce faisant, et même si elles ont progressivement introduit dans leur cadre d’actions des objectifs économiques fondées sur le marché, le Québec et l’Ontario ont plutôt privilégié une approche que les auteures qualifient de « quasi-néolibérale ».*

**MOTS-CLÉS** *Politique culturelle provinciale; Administration culturelle provinciale; Politique sur les arts, la culture et le patrimoine; Les industries culturelles; Néolibéralisme; Ontario; Québec*

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When examining cultural policy, three key factors must be kept in mind (see Autissier, 2006; Saint-Pierre, 2003, 2004). First, the very perception and conception of “culture” and “cultural policy,” and the attendant rationales, objectives, and targets of government intervention, vary significantly from one jurisdiction to another. Second, cultural policy has the general objective of administering in some respects (e.g., supporting, protecting, and conserving) the intellectual and artistic production of a society, nation, or country. As such, the measures and provisions enacted to pursue this objective are directly related to the (cultural) public administration of the state or government in question and are reflected in the cultural powers of the state, including the role of main organizations and local and regional governments, and choices regarding financial support for the arts and culture. Third, most Western countries have pursued relatively similar cultural policy objectives and experienced similar tendencies in cultural policy since the middle of the twentieth century: the democratization of culture followed by the emergence of cultural democracy (1950-1980), the professionalization of the cultural sector and the growth of cultural industries and new information and communications technologies (1980-1990), and finally, the growing role and influence of the private sector, local governments, and international and supranational organizations in the design and delivery of cultural policy (since the 1990s).

This article focuses on the post-1980 period, examining the influence of neoliberalism on cultural policy and administration in the provinces of Québec and Ontario. Neoliberalism, as explained further on in this text, emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, and refers to an ideological approach to the state’s role in economy and society characterized by small government, reliance on market forces to address policy issues and administer government programs, monetarist fiscal policies, debt and deficit reduction, and individualism. In keeping with the first two factors noted above, the text explores the influence of neoliberalism on the following: 1) the perception and conception of “culture” and “cultural policy,” and the attendant rationales, objectives, and targets of government intervention in Québec and Ontario; and 2) the public administration of cultural policy in these provinces, including the cultural powers of the state, the role of main organizations and lower orders of government, and choices regarding financial support of the arts and culture. The analysis seeks to discern the characteristics of the “neoliberal turn” in cultural policy and administration in each jurisdiction, including the extent to which

- the concepts of culture, cultural policy, and economy come to be linked;
- economic imperatives emerge or come to dominate cultural policy rationales, objectives, and targets;
- government intervention is reduced or reoriented; and
- cultural responsibilities are decentralized or devolved to lower levels of government or non-government actors.

As we shall show, both Québec and Ontario adopted many neoliberal principles at the level of provincial governance writ large, but within the cultural sector, the “neoliberal turn” is characterized by the adoption of what we term “quasi-neoliberal”

approaches. Such approaches combine the main tenets of neoliberalism—emphases on the economic dimension of culture and the cultural industries, greater involvement of the private sector and civil society in program and service delivery, adoption of private-sector approaches to public management, et cetera—with social and cultural concerns, e.g., social contribution of the arts and culture, recognition of cultural diversity in policy and programming, pursuit of cultural objectives as an end in and of themselves, et cetera (see Gattinger, in press).

Through this analysis, this article aims to contribute to the literature exploring the rise of economic imperatives, neoliberalism, the cultural industries, and the instrumentalization of culture in cultural policy and politics (see, for example, Dorland, 1996; Hesmondhalgh & Toynbee, 2008; Lewis & Miller, 2003; Yúdice, 2003). In contrast to these studies, however, this research focuses on the provincial level of analysis, exploring the dialectic between neoliberalism and cultural policy writ large (i.e., across the arts, heritage, cultural industries, libraries, et cetera), rather than analyzing these dynamics on the narrower subject of the cultural or media industries. Cultural policy research in Canada, as John Meisel (1979) noted in the late 1970s, is a relatively underdeveloped domain of policy research. And although the past few decades have witnessed greater research interest in certain sectors or periods of federal cultural policy intervention (e.g., the cultural industries, communications, copyright, and the history of cultural policy leading up to and in the decades following the federal Massey-Lévesque Commission of 1951, e.g., Tippett, 1990) as well as interest in cultural policy at the municipal level (e.g., de la Durantaye & Duxbury, 2005; Garrett-Petts, 2004; Straw & Tallack, 2009), very little attention has been paid to provincial cultural policy (Harvey, 1998) or to the influence of neoliberalism on cultural policy *in toto*. The article also aims to contribute to comparative policy analysis in Canada, another underdeveloped field of inquiry in policy studies at both the national and provincial levels (Bennett, 1996; Imbeau, Landry, Milner, Pétry, Créte, Forest & Lemieux, 2000).

To allow comparative analysis across the two jurisdictions, this article briefly sketches out the origins and evolution of cultural policy and administration in each province. Up until the 1970s, Québec tended to approximate a French cultural policy approach (fusion of the concept of culture with state/nation, the state as *maitre d'œuvre* of culture, a strong cultural ministry, et cetera), while in Ontario, cultural policy approximated a British approach (culture as a “private affair” with significant involvement of the private sector and individual philanthropists, independence between the government of the day and cultural decision-making, the state as *patron state*, an arts council as the main cultural organization, et cetera). Over time, both jurisdictions have come to resemble a “hybrid approach” to cultural policy and administration, maintaining vestiges of their early French and British arrangements but adopting characteristics that meld these two approaches. This article seeks to draw out the extent to which neoliberalism contributed to this “hybridization,” by, for example, producing common challenges, opportunities, and/or orientations toward government and governance, thereby leading to some level of convergence in cultural policy and administration across the two jurisdictions.

After sketching the origin and evolution of provincial cultural policy in each jurisdiction prior to 1980, this article focuses on the post-1980 period, exploring the emergence of neoliberalism in each jurisdiction, and the evolution of provincial cultural policy and administration in Québec and Ontario. The final section examines the extent to which the shifts in both jurisdictions toward a hybrid approach may be attributed to the “neoliberal turn” in cultural policy and administration in these two provinces.

### **The provincial cases: Québec and Ontario**

Québec and Ontario are Canada’s largest provinces in terms of geography, population, and economy, and both provinces are host to relatively large official language minority communities. Ontario consists of an Anglophone majority population and is very multicultural. In provincial politics, Conservative governments dominated in the period from 1943 to 1985, and governments since this time have mainly alternated between the Liberal and Conservative parties. These features stand in contrast to Québec, comprised of a majority Francophone population, a much more concentrated multiculturalism (notably in Montréal), and a population that has a relatively greater affinity for social democracy—at least until the election of the Liberal Party in 2003. Political life in Québec has been heavily marked by Québec nationalism, a factor that has influenced government intervention in the cultural sector since the 1960s, independent of the political party in power (Saint-Pierre, 2003, 2004). Since the 1960s, Québec has often been in conflict with the federal government, calling for, as was the case in the early 1990s, repatriation of federal competencies and funds dedicated to culture. Ontario, for its part, has tended to have much smoother relations with the federal government in the cultural policy domain, in part because the political interests and identity of Ontarians have often been closely aligned with those of the federal government.

The main advantages of choosing Québec and Ontario for this analysis are twofold. First, because they are Canada’s two largest provinces, the choice minimizes diversity between the two cases in terms of independent variables related to size (population, economy, and geography). Second, as the analysis below attests, the origins and evolution of cultural policy in these two jurisdictions vary substantially, not only in terms of their conception of, approach to, and spending on culture,<sup>1</sup> but also in their response to federal intervention in the cultural domain. The main limitations of choosing these provinces for study are also twofold. First, as both are central Canadian provinces, this does not allow us to discern the influence of neoliberalism on provincial cultural policy development in jurisdictions outside of central Canada. Second, federal spending accounts for roughly half of cultural expenditures in both provinces. Although this similarity enables comparisons across two provinces where federal spending is relatively high, it also might mask from view important factors shaping neoliberalism’s influence in jurisdictions where domestic provincial spending constitutes the bulk of expenditures.

Neoliberalism, often associated with Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States, emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At its core, it refers to an ideology or an approach to the state’s role in economy and society characterized by small government (in terms of size, level, and nature of state inter-

vention), monetarist (as opposed to Keynesian) economic and fiscal policies, reliance on market forces and the market economy to resolve policy issues, and individualism. Government measures flowing from neoliberal approaches include deregulation, privatization, devolution and contracting out of government services, tax cuts, debt and deficit reduction, balanced budgets, social policy approaches emphasizing individual responsibility, trade liberalization, and reductions in the size of the public service.

In Canada, the adoption of neoliberalism followed upon its appearance internationally, and it is often associated with the federal government of Brian Mulroney (who undertook vast deregulation and privatization initiatives as well as public-sector layoffs) and the provincial governments of Ralph Klein (Alberta) and Mike Harris (Ontario). As MacDermid and Albo state, “The market triumphalism that has spread across the advanced capitalist countries since the early 1980s has found, after some delay, a secure presence in Canada’s state institutions. Governments of varied political complexion, at both the national and sub-national levels, have either boldly trumpeted or quietly embraced neo-liberalism” (MacDermid & Albo, 2001, p. 163). In Québec and Ontario, both jurisdictions have been influenced by neoliberalism, although, as shown below, the “neoliberal turn” has played out in different and unique ways in each jurisdiction, with corresponding differences for cultural policy. What these jurisdictions share, however, is the adoption of quasi-neoliberal approaches in the cultural sector, combining the main principles of neoliberalism with a continued emphasis on broader social and cultural objectives.

### **The origin and evolution of cultural policy and administration in Québec**

#### *Cultural policy and administration in the pre-1980 period*

Three main approaches have structured the relationship between the state and culture in Québec prior to the 1980s, flowing from evolving conceptions of the concept of culture (Saint-Pierre, 2004; in press). First, the *humanistic approach*, embodying the positivist modernist spirit of the nineteenth century, led the Québec government, notably politicians and senior public servants, to intervene in the area of high culture (*culte du beau*). In this period, government initiatives were based on one major objective: protecting, increasing, and transmitting, for purposes of prestige and philanthropy, Québec’s national heritage in all of its forms.

Second, the *liberal approach* associated culture with fine arts in a context where the concepts of cultural rights and democratization of culture increasingly infused Western governments’ interventions. The establishment of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Québec in 1961 and the desire of its first minister, George-Émile Lapalme, to extend the *bienfaits de la culture* to the greatest number of people, were mainly inspired by the emerging French approach and were directly related to this liberal approach or tradition. Lapalme drew on the policy initiated by the French cultural minister (André Malraux), which created the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in France, to create a similar organization in Québec two years later (see Saint-Pierre & Thuriot, 2006). The 1960s stand out as a period during which a broad range of cultural organizations were created, often with nationalist objectives: Office de la langue française in 1961, Délégation générale du Québec in Paris in 1962, Service du Canada français d’outre frontières in 1963, Direction générale de l’immigration in 1966, and finally, Radio Québec in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

This openness of the Québec government to the international domain is founded on the principle elaborated by the Liberal minister Paul-Gérin Lajoie on the extension of provincial constitutional competencies into the international milieu.

In the 1970s, an *approach focusing on the national identity of Quebecers* came to characterize cultural policy. The Québec government presented itself as *maître d'œuvre* of cultural development and the protector of French Canadian culture, which, in the meantime, had transformed into Québec culture. The concept of culture broadened to extend beyond the domain of fine arts and was conceived of in a more anthropological sense. This approach draws on the symbols, ideas, and values of Québec society and focuses on the concept of “popular culture,” understood as the cultural production of the Québec people, associated particularly with crafts, folklore, and built heritage (historic buildings, structures, monuments, et cetera). The 1970s was also a period of substantial conflicts over linguistic rights, culminating in 1977 in the adoption of the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101).

Québec began with a classic French approach to cultural policy—fusion of the concept of culture with state/nation, the state as *maître d'œuvre* of culture, a strong cultural ministry—but beginning in the late 1970s, the province's approach began to resemble a set of hybrid arrangements. The province undertook to delegate responsibilities to crown corporations and to relatively autonomous funding organizations (the arm's-length principle, hallmark of the British approach) while maintaining a central role for the ministry of culture, with direct powers to disburse government subsidies as in France.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see below, while cultural intervention focused on the general population (democratization of culture), by the mid-1980s, particularly because of economic imperatives, different actors came to the fore, such as artists, creators, cultural industries, cultural institutions, and cultural communities (cultural democracy). Emerging economic liberalism, wherein the state is called upon to play a more restrained role, was also present in Québec, and all political parties since the early 1980s have adopted neoliberal ideas to some extent. A major event that symbolizes this change was the summit on Québec cultural industries in 1978.

Despite the resounding success of the film industry and major developments in the book publishing and music sectors, Québec's cultural industries in general suffered from serious underfunding and inadequate access to loans, credit margins, and investment capital. To solve the problem, the Québec government passed a law that led to the creation of the Société québécoise de développement des industries culturelles (SODIC). Adopted in December 1978, this law is directly linked to the economic project put forward by the Parti québécois (PQ) elected two years earlier. Taking its inspiration from the private sector, the objectives of the SODIC are clear: “maintain Québec control of cultural firms that are at risk of falling into foreign hands; repatriate to Québec to the greatest extent possible industries that produce and distribute cultural products; encourage the development of Québec cultural businesses of international stature; and finally, promote the creation of new firms in Québec” (authors' translation of Fournier, Bélanger, & Painchaud, 1978, p. 15).

#### *The post-1980 period*

In the 1980s, Québec entered the fourth period of its cultural policy development,

when a *quasi-neoliberal approach* to cultural policy and administration began to emerge. During this period and in a very tangible way, ‘cultural development policy’ became a field of growth. Cultural policies were steered toward high-tech sectors (satellite television, the information highway, broadcasting systems, and new technologies), competitive sectors in the context of economic globalization and the opening of new markets, profit-seeking and job creation. Moreover, the first government reorganization initiatives were undertaken when Robert Bourassa’s Liberal party came to power in 1985. The publication of the Scowen, Fortier, and Gobeil reports<sup>4</sup> in 1986 signalled the first privatization and deregulation measures. It was also at this time that Québec lent its support to the free-trade agreements being discussed and to the Mulroney Conservative government’s negotiation of the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA, 1988) and then of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1992).

Furthermore, while pressure increased in other sensitive sectors of state intervention (health care, social services, education), funds allocated to the Ministère des Affaires culturelles (MAC) grew from \$108.8 million in 1981-82 to \$288.7 million in 1990-1991 (expressed in current dollars). Moreover, taking into account the budgets of other ministries (education, communications, sports, et cetera), organizations and crown corporations that supported cultural and artistic activities such as the training of artists, public radio and television, popular festivals, and recreational science (*loisirs scientifiques*), public spending devoted to the arts and culture in Québec stood at around \$900 million in 1990 (Coupet, 1990). According to Statistics Canada data, the Québec government’s cultural expenditures over the quasi-neoliberal period grew considerably, from \$521.1 million in 1985-86 to \$602.2 million in 2003-04 (constant dollars), an increase of 15.6% (Statistics Canada, 1987, 2005). Total spending by all levels of government in Québec over the neoliberal period grew at a much faster pace than provincial expenditures, rising from \$1.5 billion to \$1.9 billion between 1985-86 and 2003-04 (constant dollars), a growth of 30.0% (1987, 2005). In 2003-04, the distribution of expenditures across the three levels of government was as follows (constant dollars): 50.4% for the federal government (\$460 million of the total of \$970.3 million were allocated to broadcasting), 31.2% for the government of Québec, and 18.4% for municipal governments (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Despite these noticeable increases, a general outcry began to be heard in cultural circles during the last half of the 1980s. These complaints centred on the government’s choice to invest in and encourage one sector of cultural activity over another. Other reasons were the new rationalization directives and increased governmental control in the management of public spending. Although cultural industries and major museums were particularly well treated—in the 1980s, capital property spending rose in the museum and public library sectors—the state applied economic criteria based on profitability and self-financing while being very discriminating with available resources.

This new way of conceiving of cultural development provoked reactions and interest group activity within the cultural milieu. The arts and cultural sector formed strategic alliances such as the coalition of the arts (Coalition du monde des arts) in the mid-1980s, which requested that 1% of total government spending be devoted to cul-

ture. Moreover, while major budgetary cutbacks were being undertaken by the federal government, the artistic and cultural milieu in Québec began to organize and mobilize to take a united stand. In reaction to these demands, the government of Québec adopted two new pieces of legislation that recognized the professional status of artists and their contracts, delegating to various corporations and associations the means of controlling their profession. The cultural sector, finding it had politicians' ears, obtained legislation on copyright and cultural industries, and demanded the establishment of cultural organizations and budget increases. Other laws were passed (books, archives, theatre, dance, museums) or underwent major revisions (e.g., legislation on cultural property and cinema), and in 1988, the Société de développement des industries de la culture et des communications (SODICC) was merged with the Société générale du cinéma (SGC) to become the Société générale des industries culturelles (SOGIC).

To take stock of the situation, the Liberal minister of cultural affairs, Lucienne Robillard, ordered a study by the consulting firm Samson Bélair/Deloitte & Touche in April 1990 (Coupet, 1990). The firm was given the mandate to study the question of arts and culture funding in Québec and to propose new ways of doing things in the field.<sup>5</sup> Still confronted by the problem of how to fund artists, producers, and the cultural industries, the new minister of culture, Liza Frulla, established an advisory council in February 1991 to obtain independent expertise on the state's responsibility. Once completed, the Arpin report put forth 113 recommendations that served as a basis for the work of a parliamentary commission on culture in the fall of 1991 and for the development of Québec's cultural policy, the *Politique culturelle du Québec*.

Adopted in December 1992, the policy had three main objectives: "promote the assertion of Québec's cultural identity" by encouraging the French language and cultural heritage and by reinforcing dialogue between cultures; "encourage artistic creation" through improvements in the living conditions of artists and creators and by ensuring the vitality of artistic organizations; and finally, "stimulate public access to and participation in cultural activities" by reinforcing cultural and artistic education and by encouraging mass participation in artistic and cultural endeavors (authors' translation of Québec, MAC, 1992). Furthermore, this policy transformed the traditional role of the cultural ministry—based up to that point on management by sectors and disciplines—into a ministry responsible for the main cultural orientations of the state, thus establishing a horizontal approach for the Québec government in its cultural interventions. The ministry's mandate was enlarged to encourage some 20 ministries, public agencies, and their partners to invest in the cultural domain in their sphere of responsibility. While inspired by practices prevailing in France and previously attempted in the province with the establishment of a secretary of state for cultural development (1978-82), this departure was a major strategic reorientation for the newly named *Ministère de la Culture*. The new policy also included functional decentralization of support for the arts through the creation of the provincial arts council, the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec* (CALQ), an autonomous arm's-length organization that brought artists and creators closer to the decisions that governed their professional lives. Lastly, the policy set up new partnerships at the regional and municipal levels (Saint-Pierre, 2003). Two years later, in the wake of this policy and as

a replacement for the Société générale des industries culturelles (SOGIC), the Québec National Assembly adopted the Loi sur la Société de développement des entreprises culturelles, which created a new crown corporation, the SODEC, which brought together under one roof all state intervention in cultural enterprises. The year 1994, however, signified a new turning point in the cultural orientation of the Québec state.

With the return to power of the Parti Québécois under Lucien Bouchard’s leadership—a development that could have signalled a re-examination of the neoliberal dynamic given that this party is traditionally viewed as social democratic—the referendum process commenced, culminating in the population of Québec voting on sovereignty (provincial separation was rejected by 50.58% of the vote). The 1995 referendum completed, a summit on the economy and employment took place in 1996. With the support of its partners in organized labour and business, the PQ government launched a program of budgetary cutbacks in order to attain a “zero deficit” for the year 2000—with public services, notably health care, education, and social services, paying the price. Nonetheless, the PQ government did not abandon the cultural sector, still considered a central mission of the Québec state. Rather, government intervention came to focus on a search for new sources of funding as well as an appraisal of the situation in Montréal, where the vast majority of cultural and communications industries and organizations are concentrated.

Thus, in addition to providing funding through the SODEC in the form of project investments, grants, or loans and evaluating the accessibility of cultural businesses to different taxation measures (tax credits for labour costs incurred in the design and production of cultural and artistic creations), the PQ government established the Fonds d’investissement de la culture et des communications (FICC) in 1997. Funded by the Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs du Québec (FTQ) and by the SODEC, this venture capital fund served as financial partner for Québec’s cultural businesses involved in creation, production, distribution, and broadcasting. Following this, the Financière des entreprises culturelles (FIDEC) was created in 1999. With the FIDEC, a mixed public- and private-sector limited partnership, cultural enterprises disposed of some \$45 million of capital. Finally, this period also saw government efforts to stimulate Montréal’s economy through the creation of two major projects: the establishment in 1998 of the Cité du Multimédia and the creation the following year of the Cité des arts du cirque. With the former, the goal was to “position Montréal at the *avant-garde* of the development of the new knowledge and information technology economy” (Poitras, 2002).

The project used grants and labour tax credits to attract cutting-edge firms to *le Faubourg des Récollets*, a former industrial area being revitalized. As for the latter (the “Tohu,” see <http://www.tohu.ca/en/TOHU/>), it sought to make Montréal an international capital of the circus arts and got underway in 1999 through the initiative of En Piste (the circus arts national network), the National Circus School and Cirque du Soleil. It is located on the site of a former limestone quarry and landfill, which have been revitalized into an urban park. In the wake of these major projects came the creation in June 2003 of an entertainment district (Quartier des spectacles), a partnership formed following a 2002 Montréal summit that brought together numerous

political, economic, social, and cultural participants as well as community and citizen groups. Besides these major public and private cultural initiatives and investments, the late 1990s was also a period rich in public reports on various fields within the cultural and communications industries: the film dubbing industry (1997), song (1998), film and television productions (1999), bookstores (1999), and book publishing (2000).

With the slow economic recovery in the 1990s and the upheavals resulting from the government's pursuit of a zero deficit goal, one would imagine that the cultural domain, like so many other areas of government intervention, would have suffered a serious setback. However, according to data compiled by Statistics Canada, public spending by the government of Québec on the cultural industries rose from \$536.4 million in 1991-92 to some \$726.8 million in 2003-04 (current dollars), an increase of over 35% (Statistics Canada, 1993, 2005). In the latter year, the figure represented 33% of total public cultural spending by all Canadian provinces and territories (Statistics Canada, 2005).

The election of Jean Charest's Liberal government in 2003 constitutes another turning point in neoliberal discourse in Québec, with the new government's project to re-engineer the Québec state (reducing its size, budget, and role). This ambitious modernization plan emphasized four main priorities: structural streamlining, human resources planning, re-evaluation of existing programs, and improvement in ways of doing things. The reasons behind such an important reform were linked to the need of the Québec state to adapt to its new social and economic context: continuing the public spending control initiated by the Parti Québécois in 1996, reducing taxes and the public debt (among the highest in Canada), adapting to changing demographics (ageing of the population), and finding new ways to deliver public services. The establishment in 2004 of an agency for public-private partnerships, the Agence des partenariats public-privé du Québec (APPPQ), is, according to the government, an example of initiatives that seek to renew public infrastructure (transportation, health care, culture) and improve the quality of services provided to the population. Currently, this agency's responsibilities are undertaken by Infrastructure Québec.

As the document *Pouvoir la culture ensemble—Cahier de propositions* (2005) points out, in the arts and culture sector, the government is considering several avenues to “increase private sector sponsorship, improve access to financial capital, favour an increase in demand, reinforce the arts and culture sector [as well as] the cultural industries sector, consolidate relations between the state, business, the local community and the cultural milieu” (authors' translation of Québec, MCCQ, 2005, p. 11). Thus, the Liberal government created Placement Culture in 2005 and the Fonds sur le patrimoine culturel du Québec in 2006.<sup>6</sup>

The first initiative, a program of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine (MCCCF) (the last responsibility was added in April 2007) and administered by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, seeks to encourage the growth of private-sector investment and to ensure that cultural and communications organizations, especially smaller ones, maintain a degree of financial security through difficult periods. The main objective of the second initiative is to ensure the

growth and maintenance of grants destined for the heritage sector. In accordance with this project aimed at the decentralization and regionalization of responsibilities, the government also established in 2003 regional groups of elected officials (Conférences régionales des élus or CRÉs), groups that have since become key participants in the field of cultural development. Since their creation, the MCCCf has undertaken analyzes and portraits of each region (see <http://www.mcccfc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=2386>). In certain regions, strategic plans for culture and communications have been developed. In addition, a statistical portrait of the culture and communications sector in each administrative region has been completed (see <http://www.mcccfc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=2384>). Lastly, and in accordance with the objective of re-evaluating existing programs, various reports and studies have been produced, e.g., on the quality of language in the media (2003), on community media and Télé-Québec (2005), on the Montréal film festivals (Vaugeois Report, 2006), on the Québec film scene (Macerola Report, 2007), and more recently, on the film dubbing sector (Heenan Report, April 2008), on the establishment of a private investment fund for the Québec film industry, and on the growth in Canadian and international contributions to the funding of filmmaking in Québec (also in April 2008) (see MCCCf, *Publications*: <http://www.mcccfc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=20>). These reports, as can be noted, all focus on the media industries, in keeping with the rise of economic imperatives in the cultural sector during the neoliberal period.

### **The origin and evolution of cultural policy and administration in Ontario**

#### *Cultural policy and administration in the pre-1980s period*

Three periods characterize the origin and evolution of cultural policy in Ontario prior to the 1980s. First, prior to the 1950s, Ontario, with its “weak tradition of state support for culture” (Files, 1989, p. 18), was a *reluctant partner* in the cultural sphere. Similar to the British approach to cultural policy, in Ontario arts and culture were regarded as private affairs, with many cultural institutions and early programming across the sector originating in and delivered by non-governmental actors.<sup>7</sup> Public intervention was mainly reactive, with the government responding to periodic demands from civil society to provide financial support or to “adopt” existing institutions created largely through private initiative. The provincial government conceived of these initiatives in *educational* rather than cultural terms, and those advocating government support were most successful when the initiative was educational in nature. When the government responded favourably, its actions were undertaken mainly through the education ministry. It is perhaps not surprising then that *access* and *education* were key objectives during this period. This reactive, bottom-up pattern characterized Ontario’s cultural policy interventions up until the 1950s. A conscious government effort to develop and implement cultural policy in Ontario began to emerge only in the postwar years in response to an increasingly affluent, educated, and leisure-conscious population demanding public intervention in the sector (Files, 1989).

This ushered in the second period of cultural policy development in the province, during which the government slowly began to emerge as a *patron state*. In the 1950s, the province began to take some tentative steps, including the first grants to community museums and to major cultural organizations in the province (e.g., the Toronto

Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company, and the National Ballet of Canada). In the 1960s, boosted by a context of healthy government finances, the government began to intervene in a much more direct fashion, creating a large number of cultural agencies, including, most notably, the Ontario Arts Council (1963).<sup>8</sup> During this period, the government continued its focus on access (democratization of culture), but while it began to emerge as a *patron state*, it continued to conceive of culture in primarily educational terms.<sup>9</sup>

The conception of *culture as a separate and identifiable sphere of government activity* was only to emerge in the third period, beginning in the 1970s. In 1974, the government created the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, the first ministry in the province dedicated to culture, thus marking the shift in Ontario from an arm's-length British approach to a hybrid approach incorporating the use of a cultural ministry, as in France. Virtually all cultural agencies and programs were transferred to the new ministry from the Ministry of Education, and in the coming decade, the government undertook major capital and program investments in the cultural sector, buoyed by dedicated provincial lottery revenues. At the same time, the concept of culture itself was shifting in line with demographic and political shifts in society, in particular, growing ethnocultural diversity in the province and increasing recognition of Francophone linguistic minority communities. The government's response to this evolving environment was to build on democratization of culture (access and equality) by adopting cultural democracy (inclusiveness and equity), all the while retaining a focus on excellence. As in Québec, it was not until the 1980s that economic imperatives emerged as important considerations in Ontario's cultural policy, thus ushering in, as described in the following section, the "neoliberal turn" in Ontario's cultural policy.

Ontario has traditionally been home to an important share of Canada's cultural industries (publishing, audiovisual, sound recording, et cetera), but prior to the 1980s, the cultural industries did not figure prominently in provincial cultural policy intervention. Indeed, the mandate of the first cultural ministry (the Ministry of Culture and Recreation), created in 1974 by the Progressive Conservative government of Bill Davis, made no mention of cultural industries. It focused instead on "advanc[ing] and encourage[ing] responsible citizenship through the process of cultural and recreational development," including preserving cultural heritage, supporting access to Ontario culture and recreation, and promoting cultural expression and excellence (Ontario, Ministry of Culture and Recreation Act, 1974). The department did include a cultural industries branch, but it formed part of the Arts Division—cultural industries did not seem to be conceived of as a separate sphere from the arts.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1970s, the branch's activities included support for the film, recording, book publishing, and periodical industries in Ontario, including the Wintario HALF BACK program, whereby holders of provincial lottery tickets could obtain price reductions on films and music when presenting the tickets to retailers. The branch also worked with the Ontario Development Corporation to secure loan guarantees and interest subsidies for book publishers.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout Davis' tenure (1971 to 1985), there were as yet very few signs of neoliberalism in provincial cultural policy or indeed in provincial politics writ large. Davis'

early policies focused on environmentalist, nationalist, and youth-oriented issues, including the provision of \$1 million to the publishing house McClelland & Stewart to avert an American takeover (Dyck, 1995). In the late 1970s, weaknesses in the provincial economy, including dependence on tariffs, branch plant manufacturing, and the Auto Pact of 1965 with the United States, became increasingly pressing in the context of global economic restructuring, international trade liberalization, and increased international competition, but Davis, “no neo-liberal like Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan,” intervened through expenditures to assist industry and workers—close to 100,000 of whom had been laid off between 1974 and 1979—with the restructuring process (MacDermid & Albo, 2001, p. 176).

*The post-1980 period*

In Ontario, the “neoliberal turn” took place very haltingly—and indeed was implicitly resisted throughout the 1980s and into the first half of the 1990s. Ontario was in some ways dragged into neoliberalism during these years due to a deteriorating economic and fiscal situation. The veritable neoliberal turn in Ontario—in the sense of proactively embracing neoliberal policy prescriptions—did not occur until the mid-1990s, with the election of the Mike Harris Progressive Conservative government. Nonetheless, some traces of neoliberalism and its influence on cultural policy and administration can be discerned before 1995. As such, it is fair to say that it was during the 1980s that Ontario entered the fourth period of its cultural policy development, as governments increasingly adopted a *quasi-neoliberal conception of culture*.

In the early 1980s, there were few signs of neoliberalism. The Davis government changed the name of the cultural ministry to the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, but the new ministry’s mandate still made no mention of the cultural industries, and its first annual report stated that the ministry had been established “as a means of enriching the quality of life for Ontario’s eight and a half million residents” and “to allow closer co-operation between members of the multicultural and artistic communities and [to] enrich the quality of citizenship and the arts” (Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, 1983, pp. 2, 4). Nonetheless, incremental steps toward greater recognition of the cultural industries and the economic contribution of culture could be gleaned: the Wintario HALF BACK program was extended to books and arts education, the Ministry’s priorities included building the tourism value of culture, and the criteria for Wintario program grants were revised to focus on buying Canadian goods and services, travel in Ontario, and social and economic impacts (e.g., job creation). The new ministry also completed a number of studies of the cultural sector, including a profile of the cultural industries in Ontario and an economic impact study of the cultural sector (employment and tourism impacts).

Other characteristics of neoliberalism, such as reliance on the market and decentralization to non-government actors, also began to emerge: the ministry aimed to increase the cultural sector’s financial stability and self-reliance, including building capacity in the non-profit sector; it established the Community Museum Policy in 1981, which required majority local financial support as a condition of provincial funding, and it created the Wintario Arts Challenge Fund, a matching funds program for non-profit arts groups. (This focus on self-reliance can be traced as far back as a 1973

set of guidelines for cultural policy development, which included the guideline that government should promote initiative and avoid becoming the focus of decision-making in the cultural sector.)

Davis retired in 1985 and was succeeded by Frank Miller, whose “political views were decidedly right-wing and neo-liberal” (MacDermid & Albo, 2001, p. 176), including opposition to government involvement in business and strong support for cut-backs to social spending. Although the Miller Conservatives were awarded a minority government in the election, the Liberals and NDP signed a two-year agreement to enable the Liberals to govern and voted against the Conservatives’ throne speech. Miller stepped aside and the Liberal David Peterson became premier. Once in power, the new minority government pursued a path that would be difficult to describe as neoliberal: over the course of the two-year agreement with the NDP, it initiated a host of new measures, including a ceiling on rent increases; legislation on pay equity, job security and farm financing; and increases in funding to universities and hospitals (Dyck, 1995). After the agreement with the NDP expired, Peterson called an election and was rewarded with a majority government.

Despite Peterson’s left-leaning policies, during his five-year term (1985-90), a number of neoliberal characteristics began to emerge in cultural policy and administration. First, the government changed the name of the ministry to the Ministry of Culture and Communications in 1987 and stated in the ministry’s first annual report: “The culture and communications sectors give Canadians the means to create, preserve and share ideals, values and a distinctive view of the world. Broadcasting, telecommunications, the arts, cultural industries, heritage and libraries are the unifying bonds that tie the nation together in the emerging Information Age, just as surely as railroads did in the industrial era” (Ontario, Ministry of Culture and Communications, 1988, p. 8).

Second, the economic contribution of the cultural sector was highlighted: “[The various components of the cultural sector are] powerful engines of economic growth in an economy shifting in emphasis to knowledge and services from natural resources and mass production” (p. 8). During this period, the provincial government focused in greater earnest on the cultural industries and their economic potential, including a four-year \$50-million federal-provincial agreement to support the cultural industries and cultural institutions (the Canada-Ontario Cultural Development Agreement of 1986), creation of the Ontario Film Development Corporation in 1986 to administer tax credits and funding programs (the OFDC became the Ontario Media Development Corporation in 2001), and a new grant in 1987 for trade groups in the cultural industries.

Third, further initiatives toward decentralization were also undertaken, including the 1987 Community Project Grants program to improve management efficiency in cultural organizations and help them serve their clients, providing support for voluntarism through the Volunteer Service Awards & Outstanding Achievement Awards and matching funds to non-profit arts groups to become more financially self-reliant through the 1986 Investment in the Arts program.

With an economic recession on the horizon and a number of high-profile financial scandals dogging his government, Peterson called an early election in 1990 (Dyck, 1995). The Liberals lost at the polls to Bob Rae’s NDP party, marking the first time the

NDP gained power in the province. Like the Peterson government before it, the NDP platform was far from neoliberal, advocating such measures as an increase in corporate taxes, succession duties on the wealthy, increased funding for education, and exemption of the poor from income taxes. Unfortunately for the Rae government, however, it was forced to reverse many policy positions due to a rapidly deteriorating provincial economic and fiscal situation. NDP measures, which proved to be very unpopular with voters, included raising taxes by an unprecedented \$2 billion, tightening spending with a \$4-billion cut to program spending, and the now infamous “Social Contract,” a \$2-billion three-year salary freeze for public-sector workers (MacDermid & Albo, 2001; Dyck, 1995).

In the cultural sector, despite the economic and fiscal situation, the NDP government was supportive of the arts and sought to use the cultural ministry for socially progressive purposes, notably greater recognition of multiculturalism and marginalized communities (e.g., Aboriginals, Franco-Ontarians, northern Ontarians) in arts policy decision-making and funding, and an emphasis on community development (Richards, 1996). Nonetheless, subtle evidence of shifts toward neoliberalism can be detected during this period. First, given the climate of fiscal austerity, the government made a number of high-profile funding cutbacks, including cancelling former premier Peterson’s \$55-million commitment to a new ballet-opera house in Toronto and reducing funding to the Art Gallery of Ontario (Richards, 1996). Second, the intensifying focus on the cultural sector as an economic contributor and business was reflected in the creation of a new Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation in 1992-93 “to encourage and nurture an environment in which the business of culture, tourism and recreation can grow and flourish,” with the rationale that “[c]onsolidating culture, tourism and recreation under one umbrella provides increased opportunities for economic growth, job creation and community development in the province” (Ontario, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, 1993, pp. 1, 4).

Third, the growing focus on cultural industries continued, with the creation of the Ontario Publishing Centre in the early 1990s to strengthen the domestic and international competitiveness of Ontario’s book and magazine publishing industry, and establishment of the Advisory Committee on a Cultural Industries Sectoral Strategy, whose 1994 report, *The Business of Culture: A Strategy for Ontario’s Cultural Industries*, focused squarely on the industrial and economic—rather than cultural—value of the sector. Finally, the government moved toward decentralization of the provincial role in the sector by “making a strategic shift from the role of ‘doer’ to that of ‘enabler’” (Ontario, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, 1993, p. 3) and by creating new funding models such as the Ontario Arts Foundation (OAF), a non-government organization created by the province in 1991 to stimulate private donations to the arts. (The OAF administers more than 275 endowments created by the private, foundation, and voluntary sectors, its assets exceed \$47 million, and it distributes some \$2.5 million annually to the arts in Ontario, according to the Foundation website.)

By the time the 1995 election arrived, the NDP government’s image had taken a severe beating. In the meantime, the Progressive Conservative’s 1990 defeat made its leader, Mike Harris, “more determined to rebuild the party around neo-liberal princi-

ples” (MacDermid & Albo, 2001, p. 188). Harris undertook this process in earnest and the result was the 1995 PC Party platform, *The Common Sense Revolution* (CSR). Grounded firmly in neoliberalism, it included such measures as eliminating the deficit in five years, cutting 13,000 public-sector jobs, reducing government expenditures by 20%, and establishing mandatory “workfare” and “learnfare” (Dyck, 1995, p. 361) for welfare recipients. As election day approached, an electorate disenchanted with Bob Rae and not acquainted with Lyn McLeod, the new Liberal leader, came to support the CSR and the Mike Harris Conservatives, awarding them a majority government (MacDermid & Albo, 2001). The new premier proceeded immediately to enact his election platform and imposed dramatic funding reductions to universities (\$400 million) and municipalities (\$650 million); downloaded, contracted out, or privatized many government services; and instilled private-sector approaches in the public service, requiring ministries to behave as businesses (MacDermid & Albo, 2001).

Throughout the tenure of the Progressive Conservatism (1995 to 2002 for Mike Harris, followed by 2002 to 2003 for incoming leader Ernie Eves), the province took a sharp turn to the right and followed neoliberal prescriptions scrupulously. The cultural sector was not spared from budget cuts. In its fall 1995 budget, the new government slashed \$6.3 billion from overall government spending over three years; completely cut government funding to CJRT (government funding represented 40% of the educational radio broadcaster’s budget); reduced funding to museums, galleries, and the Ontario Arts Council; and indicated it was considering privatizing TVOntario (Kaihla, 1995). By 1996-97, the cultural ministry had reduced spending by 17% and cut its workforce by 32% (Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, 1997). The organization’s operation was also transformed to a more businesslike approach, focusing on “client needs,” “helping people help themselves,” requiring cultural agencies to operate in a “more entrepreneurial manner,” and shifting from direct service provision to policy and standards development (Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, 1996, p. 1, p. 2, p. 6). The government focused squarely on the economic contribution of the cultural sector through such means as creating the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, to foster investment and create jobs in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors; holding meetings for industry leaders to develop means of stimulating job creation; and creating the Ontario Media Development Corporation, a renamed Ontario Film Development Corporation with responsibilities across a variety of media sectors.

The decentralization thrust was unmistakable during this period, as successive cultural ministry annual reports focused on such priorities as ensuring that community organizations provided services where possible, encouraging volunteering and self-reliance in the cultural sector, providing municipalities with greater ability to respond to community needs in the library sector, and collaborating with public and private partners on such issues as cultural tourism and library services. The Harris Conservatives also shifted from direct to indirect funding means, including the introduction of tax credits in the film, book publishing, computer animation, and television sectors, and they put in place many alternative funding mechanisms, including 10 new crown foundations to encourage fundraising by cultural organizations; the

\$10-million Ontario Heritage Challenge Fund to provide matching donations; and the Cultural Strategic Development Fund to assist arts, heritage, and cultural industries organizations to form new partnerships and identify new sources of funding.

According to Statistics Canada data, the Ontario government’s cultural expenditures over the quasi-neoliberal period grew modestly, from \$480 million in 1985-86 to \$500.2 million in 2003-04 (constant dollars), an increase of 4.2%, far lower than the 15.6% increase in Québec (Statistics Canada, 1987, 2005). In Ontario, as in Québec, spending by other levels of government comprises the majority of cultural expenditures in the province (21.2% provincial government, 49.3% federal government, 30.5% municipal government in 2003-04), and total spending by all levels of government over the quasi-neoliberal period grew at a much greater rate than provincial expenditures, rising from \$2.0 billion to \$2.4 billion between 1985-86 and 2003-04, a growth of 21.3%, somewhat lower than Québec’s 30.0% (Statistics Canada, 1987, 2005). Federal expenditures did not decline in Ontario as they did in some provinces, growing by close to 10% over this period, although this figure needs to be interpreted cautiously because it includes spending on national cultural institutions and organizations (e.g., the CBC, national museums, non-government organizations with national mandates located in Ontario).

Provincial government spending on the cultural industries (film and video, broadcasting, and sound recording) increased from \$62.9 million in 1985-86 to \$68.3 million in 2003-04 (Statistics Canada, 1987, 2005), a figure that masks the true level of spending on the cultural industries in Ontario because it does not include tax expenditures, the main source of support for the cultural industries. The value of cultural industries tax credits is substantial, worth an estimated \$153 million in 2006-07 (Ontario, Ministry of Culture, 2007).

In October 2003, Ontarians returned to the polls. After some eight years of the Progressive Conservatives’ neoliberal policies, the electorate was ready for a change and brought Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal party to power. The Liberal government has not made any radical changes to cultural policy or administration in the province, largely continuing the quasi-neoliberal approach that has emerged over the past number of decades. One major area of difference with the past, however, is the government’s positioning of the cultural sector as a source of provincial economic growth.

In the wake of continued weaknesses in the manufacturing sector, long the economic engine of the province, the McGuinty government has identified the entertainment and creative industries—an economic sector creating jobs at more than twice the pace of the overall economy between 1999 and 2007 (Ontario, Ministry of Culture, 2008)—as an emerging driver of economic growth, competitiveness, and innovation. It has substantially increased, expanded, and renewed cultural industries tax credits and put in place new funding to support the sector. The government has also continued Ontario’s path toward decentralization, through such initiatives as the 2005 Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership (a partnership between provincial and federal ministries and agencies, municipalities, cultural organizations, associations and networks, and universities to encourage and support municipalities to adopt cultural planning). It has also continued to employ alternative funding models, such as the

2006 Arts Education Partnership Initiative, a matching funds program administered by the Ontario Arts Foundation. In addition, it has significantly increased funding to the cultural sector. Between 2003 and 2009, the budget of the Ontario Arts Council was more than doubled (from \$25 million to an unprecedented \$60 million), the province initiated a \$50.5-million “cultural renaissance” capital expansion project for Ontario’s cultural agencies, community museums funding was increased by 85%, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation’s budget was expanded from \$100 million to \$120 million.

### **In the hybridization of Québec and Ontario cultural policy approaches: Was neoliberalism a driving factor?**

It is clear that many characteristics of neoliberalism are reflected in provincial cultural policy and administration in Québec and Ontario. In Québec, the “neoliberal turn” seems to have been marked by a much greater focus on the economic contribution of the cultural sector and on cultural industries since the end of the 1970s, by the decentralization of cultural powers to newly created arm’s-length organizations, and through the adoption of private-sector approaches to funding the cultural industries.

In Ontario, meanwhile, although the province also came to focus on the economic contribution of the cultural sector and on cultural industries in the post-1980 period, its “neoliberal turn” appears to have taken place somewhat more slowly, and was not as heavily marked by the creation of arm’s-length organizations, as seen above. Rather, it seems to be characterized by decentralization of cultural powers to non-government actors through the creation of multiple foundations, a major focus on capacity building in the cultural sector, and heavy reliance on alternative funding models, including matching funds and a conscious shift toward indirect methods of funding, e.g., tax credits. (Indirect funding methods are also present in Québec, although not adopted as early nor used as widely as they have been in Ontario.) What is clear in both jurisdictions, however, is that neoliberalism was not “swallowed whole” in the cultural sector; rather, some of its key principles came to be grafted onto existing policy arrangements emphasizing the social contribution of culture. As such, the “neo-liberal turn” in Québec and Ontario is characterized by the emergence of quasi-neoliberal approaches, which combine many of the main tenets of neoliberalism with traditional and new social and cultural concerns.

It is clear that both provinces have come to resemble hybrid approaches to cultural policy and administration. Québec moved from its early French approach—a conception of culture linking culture and nation/state and a strong centralized cultural ministry—to the adoption of British characteristics, particularly the creation and use of arm’s-length organizations in many sectors, including culture, since the 1960s (e.g., Radio Québec, today the Société de télédiffusion du Québec or Télé-Québec). Ontario, for its part, shifted from a British cultural policy approach—culture as a “private affair” largely administered through arm’s-length organizations—to the adoption of a cultural ministry, characteristic of the French approach. Nonetheless, culture is still viewed as linked to nation and state in Québec, while it continues to be viewed as a largely private affair in Ontario. But to what extent can these changes be attributed to the influence of neoliberalism? This analysis would suggest that in some

respects neoliberalism appears to have generated some level of convergence in provincial cultural policy and administration. In others, it is doubtful. Starting with the latter, the adoption of a cultural ministry in Ontario in 1974, for example, predates the emergence of neoliberalism in the province, thus precluding neoliberalism as a factor driving this administrative change. Likewise, in Québec, the creation of the provincial arts council in 1992 followed an earlier attempt to create such an organization in the 1960s (although this earlier organization played mainly a consultative role to the minister of culture of the time), and the use of other arm’s-length cultural organizations predates the neoliberal period.

Moving to the former (convergence), here, neoliberalism does seem to have generated some level of similarity between Québec and Ontario provincial cultural policy and administration. While social and cultural objectives continue to be emphasized in both jurisdictions, they have also come to place significant priority on the economic contribution of the cultural sector and on cultural industries, although their particular objectives, programs, and administrative approaches can vary substantially. Québec places greater emphasis on the role of the state and on cultural industries as promoters, protectors, and guarantors of Québec culture (and of the French language, which is also a central concern for the province) through such organizations as SOGIC (today the SODEC). Québec cultural policy is firmly rooted in securing its place in the Canadian federation and projecting its culture nationally and internationally. The province often seeks to counter federal cultural measures and intervention in the province and has frequently been in conflict with the federal government going back as far as the 1920s disputes over broadcasting policy and, more recently, calls for repatriation of federal competencies and funds dedicated to culture in the early 1990s.

Ontario’s focus, meanwhile, tends to be rooted in the economic—as opposed to cultural—contribution of the cultural industries. The province places significant value on cultural tourism and the entertainment and creative industries as economic engines. Ontario has tended to have much smoother relations with the federal government in the cultural policy domain, in part because Ontarians’ political interests are often in line with those of the federal government. In keeping with Québec’s greater focus on the role of the state, periodic funding cutbacks to the cultural sector were generally not as evident in this province as they were in Ontario in the mid-1990s, for example. In Québec, although the rate of provincial expenditure growth softened in some periods, over the long term, there were little in the way of funding cuts, and funding increases even took place in some periods and in some sectors. And while the government of Ontario’s cultural expenditures increased 4.2% between 1985-86 and 2003-04, this growth pales in comparison to the 15.6% increase in provincial spending in Québec over this same period. The Québec government’s per capita cultural expenditures are consistently among the highest across all Canadian provinces. Moreover, the Québec government sees a much stronger role for its cultural ministry, according it responsibility to serve as a horizontal ministry coordinating the cultural measures of other government ministries and cultural agencies. In Ontario, meanwhile, this pan-ministry coordinating function is largely absent, and per capita provincial cultural expenditures are among the lowest in Canada.

Similarly, while both provinces have pursued greater decentralization in the cultural sector, they have done so in different ways. In Québec, cultural decentralization to municipalities was only recently undertaken, particularly in the wake of economic imperatives, but is much less extensive than is the case in France, for example (Saint-Pierre & Thuriot, 2007). In addition, the government has created incentives and adopted measures to encourage municipalities to play a larger role in the cultural domain. In Ontario, meanwhile, the provincial government generally does not prohibit nor require municipalities to intervene in the cultural sector, although it has encouraged them to do so through such initiatives as the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership. The level of decentralization to non-government actors also varies between Québec and Ontario, with Ontario featuring much greater levels of this form of decentralization, in keeping perhaps with its view of culture as a private affair. In Ontario, voluntarism, partnerships with non-government actors, and the use of alternative funding models such as foundations, matching grant programs, capacity building initiatives, and a focus on building self-sufficiency and self-reliance in the cultural sector are much more pronounced. In Québec, decentralization is characterized in greater measure by funding partnerships and relationship-building between the state and the private sector. Initiatives to encourage private sponsorship and increase cultural industries' access to capital are much more recent undertakings, emerging only in the mid-2000s (although as early as the end of the 1990s, SODEC's role seems to have shifted away from managing public funds, possibly because of an increased supply of funding from the private sector).

In sum, this analysis suggests that the provinces of Québec and Ontario are each characterized by a unique "neoliberal turn" in provincial cultural policy in the post-1980 period. Although both provinces have been subject to the influence of neoliberalism and have adopted quasi-neoliberal approaches in the cultural sector, they have responded in different ways, conditioned by their historical conceptions of culture and approaches to cultural policy and administration. Nonetheless, neoliberalism appears to have prompted a certain degree of convergence in cultural approach across these two jurisdictions, suggesting that common challenges or external factors may indeed propel cultural policy and administrative convergence.

This analysis remains preliminary. Subsequent research will be required to analyze more closely the link between neoliberalism and provincial cultural policy and administration. While governments in both provinces certainly adopted neoliberal principles at the level of provincial governance *in toto*, the causal link between this development and changes to cultural policy and administration needs to be established more clearly. Subsequent research would also do well to query the influence of federal cultural policy and expenditure changes on provincial cultural intervention to untangle the influence of neoliberalism vis-à-vis other common factors shaping provincial cultural policy. Such factors could also include growing ethnocultural diversity, technological change, globalization, the rise in municipal cultural initiatives, and shifting cultural policy approaches at the international level, each of which may drive policy and administrative convergence or condition provincial application of neoliberal principles to the cultural sector.

## Notes

1. While total provincial cultural spending in Québec and Ontario in 2003-04 was far greater than that of the other provinces, on a per capita basis, expenditures (current dollars) in Québec were close to double those of Ontario: \$96.36 (the highest of all provinces) as compared to \$50.69 (the lowest) (Statistics Canada, 2005).
2. The creation of Radio Québec flowed from a 1945 law creating the Office de la radio du Québec, which was charged with developing a provincial public radio broadcasting system. The system was not put in place until 1968.
3. Crown corporations assumed an important place in Québec from the outset of the 1960s, particularly with the nationalization of hydroelectricity and the growing role of Hydro-Québec, established in 1944. The first half of the 1960s was very active on this front: Société générale de financement (1962), Société de Sidérurgie du Québec (1964), Société québécoise d'exploitation minière, Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec, and Régie des rentes du Québec (all established in 1965). Successive Québec governments used crown corporations to diversify the provincial economy and to protect jobs or specific sectors, including, for example, forestry and asbestos.
4. The Scowen report (*Réglementer moins et mieux*, 1986) examined the field of labour. The Fortier report (*De la Révolution tranquille ... à l'an deux mille*, 1986) urged the privatization of public companies that competed with the private sector and suggested a review of public monopolies. Finally, the Gobeil report (*Rapport du Groupe de travail sur la révision des fonctions et organisations gouvernementales*, 1986), the most disparaged of all, recommended the outright abolition of 86 state-run organizations, the privatization of Radio Québec and certain hospital complexes, and the end to some development grants (Gow, 1992).
5. In this period, the state innovated by introducing a new tax credit measure for film and television producers that replaced tax shelters, which were seen as inefficient. Since that time, the program has been extended to publishing (2001), the recording industry, and the performing arts (2003) (Québec, MCCQ, 2005).
6. As pointed out in *Pouvoir la culture ensemble—Cahier de propositions*, corporate and individual patronage in Québec is “well behind the rest of Canada. Donations from Quebecers represent a mere 0.23% of GDP compared to the Canadian average that is double this figure at 0.46%. Less than 1.5% of these donations are directed to culture” (authors' translation of Québec, MCCQ, 2005, p. 9).
7. Many provincial cultural institutions and much cultural infrastructure originated in donations by private individuals, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and Hart House at the University of Toronto. In the library sector, 111 of the 125 Carnegie libraries established in Canada in the early twentieth century through the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie are located in the province of Ontario (see Beckman, Langmead, & Black, 1984).
8. In addition to the Ontario Arts Council (1963), these agencies include the McMichael Canadian Art Collection (1965), Ontario Educational Television (1965), the John Graves Simcoe Memorial Foundation (1965), the Ontario Art Gallery (1966), the Ontario Heritage Foundation (1967), and the Ontario Science Centre (1969).
9. While cultural policy developments in Québec in the 1960s influenced federal cultural policy (see Pal, 1993; Saint-Pierre, in press), in Ontario, federal cultural policy and economic, demographic, and political factors internal to the province were the primary factors driving cultural policy change in this period (see Gattinger, in press).
10. Interestingly, the activities of the branch included assisting the development of private funding for the cultural industries, although the focus on decentralization to the private sector was not to intensify until the post-1980 period.

11. Other cultural industries policy measures prior to the 1980s included the creation of the Ontario Board of Censors in 1911 (now the Ontario Film Review Board), the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau in 1917 (shut down in 1934), Ontario Educational Television in 1965, the Ontario Educational Communications Authority in 1970 to supervise educational television in the province (the authority created the TVOntario network), the 1970 Ontario Royal Commission on Book Publishing, a licensing system for periodical and mass market paperback distributors in 1971, the 1972 Book Publishing Development Program (to provide loans, loan guarantees, and interest subsidies), and a provincial agreement to fund 60% of CJRT-FM, an educational radio broadcaster previously operated by Ryerson University.

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