Community development and social actor theories: a case study in Montréal (Canada)

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Abstract

Research focusing on community development processes is increasingly making use of the notion of actor. The actor is engaged in a system of actions. A range of sociological theories has given rise to the various types of social actors, including the theatrical actor, the strategic actor, the actor-network or the reflexive actor. We review these theories in an attempt to define an analytical framework, by employing what we call a tinkering methodology. The aim is to gain insight on the interactions that bind together the various stakeholders by function (acting and the actors’ roles) on the fields of action (the scenes of interaction and real interventions) and on effects (the results of these actions). We then propose to apply our analytical framework to a case study on the process of developing an action plan in the Villeray district of Montréal (Québec, Canada).

1 Introduction

The notion of social actor refers to all stakeholders, individuals or groups, within civil society or public institutions involved in processes and carrying out initiatives in support of community development or urban revitalization. The actor metaphor has inspired many sociologists, starting with Simmel (1908) and especially Goffman (1959, 1974) who borrows from the world of theatre the concepts of acting, interaction and the scene. Its use is justified by its contribution to the “actionalist” (theory of action) and “interactionalist” (microsociology) paradigms. The metaphor is also based on the ideas of scenes (the places and scales of action) and acting or role playing (the social interactions). At the core of the sociology of organizations and of recent schools of planning theory, at least the ones advocating for public participation, the metaphor does not draw on a unified theory incorporated into a well-established methodology. The theoretical field of collective action and social actors can be subdivided into several approaches, some of which provide a narrow definition of the term actor, while others do not. They can
refer indiscriminately to an association or an individual engaged in action. Actors are placed into conventional categories such as the organization or the group, an individual or even a social movement. Action can be set at different scales, such as society as a whole (to address social change), the metropolitan area, the local community or social networks. Even if territorially based, for example, at the neighbourhood level, it cannot refer however to any particular political space such as the struggle for social equality or for women’s rights.

At first, actor theories aim to understand how social processes are set up to defend a specific goal, such as social development or urban revitalization. It throws light on the way organizations operate, sometimes consolidated, and often run in partnership. It is also useful for the study of forms of exchange between people. Social actors accomplish what Simmel theorizes as reciprocal actions (Simmel, 1922). In this paper, several approaches or paradigms are considered in order to distinguish the participatory processes existing within the action, acting, and the interactions involved in the mechanisms of collective action. We maintain that a certain level of ambiguity surrounds collective action and several theoretical advances may therefore be necessary to understand its many facets. For this reason, we intend to re-examine these theories with the purpose of proposing an analytical model, which in certain regards is based on a do-it-yourself method, following the current trend in research, and not on a unified comprehensive theory. Moreover, this model will be applied to a particular case of community development. Both the strategies that actors adopt and the interactions that get them to compete and collaborate are evaluated using an analytical framework divided by function (of the actor), field (action scenes), and effects (results).

2 Social actors and community development

Social actor theories present a very wide perspective for understanding the processes that relate directly to community development. The main hypothesis behind these theories is that social actors try to leave their mark on the social or political system within
a given space, notably by promoting the ideals of justice, development or democracy. Here, an actor’s contribution is not limited to interventions in municipal or metropolitan level policy debates. It is rooted in everyday life and scenes of interactions taking place at the micro level. In short, each actor can hold several positions, which means that they act in several types of situations. Our goal is to combine these various perspectives in an analytical framework aimed at providing insight into the situations that arise in community development by drawing on the various types of actors who can be identified as strategic, theatrical, actor-network, communicational, historical and reflexive (Table 1). Actors can engage in community development processes and are associated to some form of action: negotiate, bargain, communicate, oppose, hold dialogues, make alliances, etc. Power struggles and role negotiations occur in particular places and at various scales of community life in response to processes of urban renewal or when micro-level controversies ignite. In these situations, an actor takes a defensive stand to protect the quality of surroundings, neighbourhood development, access to public services and amenities, the right to engage and influence decisions. Geography lies at the heart of the notion of social actor. Indeed, social actors are often represented as territorial actors.

The term actor, to be sure, remains vague. Despite being the focus of analysis, it is seldom clearly defined though it provides the impulse to action, the basis for processes and the driving force of change. The origin of the term actor comes certainly from Parsons and his sociology of action (1968), which theoretically grounds what is known today as collective action. Already in 1937, Parsons views collective action as interventions aimed at development or social change, i.e. as an association of individuals interacting with each other in a given situation to advance a goal or a purpose. Actors pursue actions based on values, interests, the material conditions in which they find themselves and the social norms and values that derive from the social organization itself and, in doing so, must face dynamic social relations (Parsons, 1968). These forms of theorization have undergone revisions, most notably with the addition of the organizational theory that has broadened the way in which the role of the actor is conceptually
framed. From this standpoint, therefore, we can agree on the following proposal: actions taken by a group or by individuals in a given situation to influence group-based processes or to ask that changes be made regarding community life are the major accomplishments of social actors. These groups define reality in a particular way, which in this case encompasses the neighbourhood, and which causes a kind of identity to come into existence (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Individuals, groups or organizations involved in collective action can be described as officers, activists, militants and even partners. More recently, the term actor has expanded in studies concerned with decision-making and power relations in organizations. In their famous organizational theory, Crozier and Friedberg (1980) define collective action as a game between actors who seek, in a context of uncertainty, to enjoy a margin of freedom with which to defend a cause. These authors place collective action within organizations, specifically in the power relations formed around commonly experienced problems that require strategy and cooperative input from everyone. It is argued that the “results of collective action are the opposite of what individual actors wished. It is never merely because of the properties of the problem, it is always also the result of the human structuration of the field of action” (Crozier and Friedberg, 1980: 4). Therefore, actors are primarily members of an organization facing other actors and subjected to power relations seeking to intervene in the hope of finding a shared solution to a given problem. That being said, “everybody is an actor as soon as he acts in a field of action, that is, contributes by this behaviour to the historical structuring of this field of action” (Crozier and Friedberg, 1995: 75). Whether at the societal or organizational scale, the actor is characterized by the capacity or the role played in a system. Becoming integrated into collective actions that involve shared goals and forms of cooperation that go beyond the individual level, the actor must continuously negotiate and bargain in order to reach agreements and compromises.

The term actor is also used to portray close-range interactions occurring on the scenes of everyday life. The theatrical metaphor, which Goffman helped popularized, conceives of actors differently. To be considered as such, one must be part of
a group “whose members are supposed to be together” (Goffman, 1973, p. 34). As at the theatre, actions unfold on scenes where the actor communicates and interacts with others (Goffman, 1959, 1967). These scenes progress in real places where actions are grounded, such as a public space, a park or a dance hall (Goffman, 1974). Goffman claims that places are in fact scenes where grounded relationships are established. He considers that the environment, through its set rules and shared codes, has an influence on the course of the action (Goffman, 1974). At varying degrees and depending on the situation, such ritualized scenes shape social interactions and allow individual actors to assert an identity (ibid.). Those actors situated on the scenes of everyday life are, in a way, united in action while practicing a ritual whose rules are more or less accepted and through which exchanges are accomplished (sharing ordinary things, ideas, values, standards, representations) and can lead to a change in the situation (Goffman, 1974). It ensues that community development can be understood as a space of interaction where actors perform on two scales: the organization and the scenes of everyday life. The subtlety of direct interaction or in small groups is a preferred form of symbolic exchange, and thus through behaviour and speech special meanings given to the community are passed on.

This particular action addresses community life and is implemented on various scenes at the local level, where issues of urban planning, social development or poverty reduction are debated. A parallel can be drawn between the strategic actor and the actor engaged in community development and indeed involved in networks and organizations that discuss conflict situations. This view is akin to the actor-network theory, which posits that all elements in a given situation are equally relevant (Callon, 1986). The network is constructed in response to controversies arising in debates on land use planning and the urban environment. Actors face the challenge of having to interact with each other to reach common solutions that contribute to the common good. In the actor-network theory, actors form themselves into communities, such as the fishermen, scientists and scallops in Michel Callon’s famous paper (1986). Non-human actors are equally important in defining the issues surrounding the controversy. Callon
employs a multi-step process: problem-identification, which links the issues raised by the various actors; the interests-at-stake (finding the common interest); the enrolment (casting of roles for each actor); and mobilization (broadcasting the issue and the possible solutions to the entire society) (Callon, 1986). The actor-network forms into a group intended to address a controversy, which bring together heterogeneous actors committed to furthering a cause (Latour, 2005). Facing a technically complex situation, whether the focus of the debate is on locating a nuclear facility or a transport infrastructure, the group comprises both professional and lay experts. The citizen appears as a central figure in the situation and is called upon to respond through skills and knowledge. Under conditions of environmental uncertainty, the actor-network enters the debate using skills and knowledge with the hope of finding a common interest. These discussion and problem-identification processes are described as hybrid forums. This exploration phase facilitates the shaping of an intense public debate, is open to differing opinions and can lead to well-founded solutions (Callon et al., 2009). Another point should be made regarding non-human actors, namely that they form an integral part of what is commonly known as scientific uncertainty. Without going further into this theoretical controversy, all debates that invoke non-human agency (animals, rock formations, etc.) have great difficulty in understanding how the “facts of nature” shape the social context.

This search for a social consensus by actors with various backgrounds and interests is reminiscent of the theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1987). The actor advocates for standards and values in the hope of enhancing adherence. The search occurs on a society-wide scale amid the public debates that are comprised within it. Habermas conceives these venues for deliberation and media coverage as the public sphere. The problems of the experienced world are broadcasted in the social and political systems (Habermas, 1991). The actor engaged in the public sphere can be defined as a communicating and deliberating subject seeking the common good and defending the public interest. This function is to foster discussions and work towards the emergence of a social consensus. Furthermore, proponents of communicative
planning theories have applied this function of deliberating by subscribing to the idea of an open debate and participation by all without the distorting hierarchical power relations that irreversibly hinder the search for shared solutions (Healy, 1997). For many authors, the equality of all who partake in debates could not be assumed or indeed be possible (Fraser, 1992; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Based on the criticism made of the communicative turn in planning, it is argued that actors assert values, interests and visions that are brought into play in a given context, which depend on the social conditions and economic and political structures surrounding the process of deliberation (Fainstein, 2005). It is also argued that even in contexts where access to debates contrasts widely since not everyone is endowed with the same communication skills and has equal access to decision-making, it is found that the participatory process generates interactions and leads to reframing issues and projects. For other authors, interactions occurring between unequal actors through debates on social and community development give rise to conflict situations and help towards finding potential solutions. This does not rule out the possibility that actors with fewer resources and limited access to power can be forced to agree to an unsuitable and imposed solution or even be excluded from the solution.

The very idea of being involved in a conflict and in networks raises the question of status. The actor may be a protestor seeking to amend a decision bounded in time and space and which affects him or her directly. Involvement can also mean struggling for social change. In the latter case, the actor can embody what Alain Touraine (1978) refers to as a new social movement. Labour or national liberation movements are no longer the bearers of change. Alternative lifestyle movements and those advocating for environmental quality have replaced them. New social movements differ from the former ones in that they alter the relationship existing between individuals and their immediate environment, following the example of feminist or ecological critique. They enter into the public sphere by seeking to claim their own identity and greater participation in democratic life. On urban issues, new social movements embody what Touraine calls the utopian community, a project in which personal identity and community belonging
are merged. Their existence is sparked by local conflicts and inspires protest engagement in protest activities directed towards “issues of privacy” related to ecological and cultural matters (Touraine, 2006). Collective mobilization requires continued monitoring of the intentional meaning of the action, what Giddens calls the “reflexive monitoring of action” (Giddens, 1994). Examining the way social actors coordinate their actions is based on rationalizations that correspond, in Giddens’ view, to an assessment of contexts, needs, constraints, and capacity to act. From this perspective, actors are brought to analyze the results of the actions undertaken. Such a reflexive actor exists on the scenes of critical debate in which comprehensive reviews are conducted and possible adjustments considered.

By drawing on existing theories or paradigms, often united only by the term actor, and developed by opposite or unrelated schools of thought, we aim to develop a classification of the various types of actors to provide a deeper understanding of all facets of local action systems. We also aim to take into account both the actors operating within major organizations of social and political life, including local and public institutions, and those operating in the interstices of power in such community-based networks. Actors are thus examined at all scales and in all situations or possible organizational structures, including those found in barely institutionalized organizations i.e. the grassroots. Besides, this perspective includes individual, autonomous actors operating in an informal way. These types of actors are conspicuous in decision-making mechanisms (the planning process, public policy coordination, cost sharing, etc.). They intervene in these political arrangements to influence decisions, by negotiating and bargaining, while seeking to establish their position in power relations shaped by the impediments and capabilities of each. The three notions of network, coalition, and social movement comply in certain respects to provide the actor with an unprecedented place in the construction of scenes of community deliberation, even if they cannot be fully integrated or even defined along similar epistemological lines and made to oppose each other.

The purpose of considering different approaches was to relate the categories of actors both to practices of deliberation and to scenes where policy debates on the
future of the community occur. These practices of collective action point to the strategic aspects of negotiation and to a reflexive assessment undertaken by the group on the conditions of action. Given that practices unfolding on numerous scenes emerge from the six types or categories of actors, the course of a process like collaborative planning can be investigated.

3 Tinkering with the types of actors and community development

Today, tinkering is a recognized methodological concept. Lévi-Strauss employed it to show the ethnologist the importance of using all available materials, which vary according to content and nature and are drawn chiefly from the literature, observations or discourses recorded during interviews. The work involves processing and arranging the materials to produce, for example, categories of practices or narratives (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). In addition to facilitating the combination of various materials, tinkering provides an intuitive understanding to determine possible associations and make comparisons. For the actor theories, the commonalities and overlaps across the six types described briefly in Table 1 are essential, such as the fact that different theories ascribe the same functions to actors. A conceptual synthesis of the actors’ functions is proposed that does not take account of differences between the various schools of thought. By identifying existing community development processes in terms of the functions, we can speculate on their possible effects (Table 2). It follows that urban conflicts yield direct exchanges and give rise to committees or relatively public places of exchange.

For social actors, the purpose of joining a group is to extend their influence, contact other networks and engage in the public sphere (through public opinion, media, Internet). Debates can then be pursued through public consultation mechanisms. At the neighbourhood level, actors can select a multitude of representational forms. They adopt a strategic approach when working in planning and decision-making organizations. On the planning and local dialogue scenes, they use negotiation and bargaining to address the issues of community development. Specifically, the preferred scene is
the voluntary sector as well as the many coalitions that emerge haphazardly from the various situations. If invited to enter partnerships, often with public institution officials, grassroots actors’ margin of freedom is reduced but their ability to influence decisions is increased. In each situation, the key is to maintain direct relationships between institutionalized actors (the insiders) and with individuals with little or no institutional connections (the outsiders). Together, they consider their interests and values. The efficiency of this symbolic exchange depends on the shared vision of community life and the sense of belonging it conveys. Whether mired by conflict or strengthened by mutual collaboration, each actor must reconstruct the narrative order of interventions in terms of their effects and results. Although scenes of collective action can stimulate reflexivity, the fact remains that reverting to a small committee is the favoured course of action for actors, especially to think critically about issues. At this level, redrafting the original plan and drastically redesigning its content become feasible.

This piece-meal tinkering approach is based on the work by the authors mentioned in Table 1 (Crozier and Friedberg, Goffman, Callon, Habermas, Touraine, and Giddens). It serves as a tool to monitor issues under negotiation over time (conflict resolution, urban planning, social and community development). It combines the various types of actors, scenes, processes and their effects as well as the reflexive narratives generated by the actions. We now apply this observation and analytical tool to a particular situation: the strategic planning process in the Villeray district.

4 The Villeray Forum Social: an urban planning and community development effort

The Villeray district, north of the City of Montréal (Québec, Canada), faces many social problems related to poverty, poor housing and environmental stresses such as heavy motor vehicle traffic. However, it has a very dense network of community groups that promote social rights, provide care services, and specialize in planning and intervention. Several organizations form active partnerships with public institutions such
as municipal departments or the Government of Québec’s Health and Social Services Centers. These organizations join what is known as a “Table de concertation” (an inter-sectoral discussion forum), where social and urban issues are addressed, and which allow various sectors of intervention (including youth, seniors, food security, housing, and urban planning) to join unto one scene. These working groups receive a grant from the Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local (tripartite funding scheme sponsored by the City of Montréal, the Department of Public Health of Montréal and the United Way). Their mandate is to draw up action plans and to intervene in debates around community development, social development and urban planning and land-use management (Sénécal et al., 2008). Cash-strapped, it is in effect limited to consultation and the start-up of projects completed by others.

The “Table de concertation” is a collective of community and public actors. Participating members must agree to follow the two principles of autonomy and sharing. Members can equally work with other authorities or convene to debate and make decisions by joining a “Table sectorielle” (a sectoral discussion forum). For example, actors concerned by housing issues, or the city council (the authority for the borough’s elected officials to meet and deliberate) can constitute such forums. Some actors engage in local battles in defiance of public sector partners, by challenging, for instance, the rise in public service user fees. They actively take part in local street parties, social housing protests, or during public consultations held on current affairs. In addition, they make their presence felt on the very local level scenes, such as a primary school board where they discuss traffic safety around the school building.

Likewise, actors can get involved in national debates on the struggle against poverty or in metropolitan level debates being held on the transportation plan. To voice their concerns, most must rely on the media. At all scales and on all scenes, each actor tries to find the most fitting position. Despite their differences, what brings actors together is the pooling of resources and the capacity for action that is provided by the Table intersectorielle. In many respects, the principle of sharing offers an explanation regarding the motivations of autonomous actors to invest in partnerships and join coalitions,
even though such bodies of actors are composed of community groups and government representatives. Nothing prevents the same actors who join forces in one case to oppose each other in another. Each actor can be present on several scenes at a time and even take on various positions. One can alternate between strategic, communicational, theatrical, etc. types or categories. Finally, among the factors of adherence towards the Table intersectorielle is the shared sense of neighbourhood belonging with the community’s territory.

4.1 Organization of the Forum Social

In the fall of 2006, the Table du quartier Villeray began working on an action plan. The process, called Forum Social (FS) sought to mobilize the entire independent community movement and local authorities and bodies. This process of creating a district-wide partnership went through several phases: information gathering, consulting and discussing, organizing a public assembly meeting, drafting the plan, holding reflection and review sessions with the committee and the public at large.

The community sector spearheaded the Forum Social, but appointed Health and Social Services Centre professionals and borough officials were also directly involved. Many lead committees overseeing the process. The approach was originally intended to cover the canonical themes of social development (poverty reduction, government support, access to public services and facilities). Although limited in scope, there was a clear intention right from the start that the FS approach should be participatory and democratic.

The action plan’s progress

At the onset, citizen participation was referred to as a way to ensure and support the involvement of community groups and public institutions to contribute to a shared vision (Forum Social, 2006). Participation by outsiders (citizens and barely institutionalized actors) therefore became more widespread. Between the February 2007 launch of
the FS and the spring of 2011, the process brought together a wide range of actors who helped broaden the range of concerns. The first step was to organize walks in the neighbourhood (Forum Social, Guides des visites, unpublished data) and focus groups to gather public input (Forum Social, 2007d). Typical questions of social development were raised, while others supplemented them as a result of their involvement in the process. With outsiders, often just ordinary residents, new issues emerged on the agenda, including the quality of the built environment, green design, and pedestrian safety particularly around schools. The group in charge of the FS presented shortly after its launch (fall 2007) fifty propositions for discussion, addressing every issue ranging from the more traditional community demands (access to social housing, increased social assistance, free transit services, etc.) to resident demands (green design, pedestrian and school children safety, a bicycle path, a community-run health clinic). Following the FS, the proposals for action at the regional and national levels, which often spark strong political demands (higher minimum wage and social assistance, reduced transit fares, increased funding and construction of social housing, etc.) were reproduced and published in a manifesto broadcasted in the media (Forum Social, 2007a, b, c, d, 2008). In the end however, it was banned from distribution because the public agency partners refused to endorse it. Five priority action areas were targeted, including the development of active transportation and traffic calming near schools.

The process is depicted in chronological order according to events and publications in Table 3 below. Three basic points stand out. First, the common approach to social development based on assisting the poor is pursued, but an accompanying environmental approach brings a shared focus on green development and active transport. Second, the outsiders (the barely institutionalized residents and groups) have advanced the themes being discussed in the public sphere in Montréal for several years, namely increasing participatory democracy at the neighbourhood level, preserving high quality living environments, and advocating against car-friendly urban development projects. Thirdly, priority projects defined by the Forum Social are to be carried out
by combining the forces of civil society organizations and public institutions. Among the five priority projects, two are worth mentioning. The community-run health clinic will be implemented through a partnership between qualified community organization actors and officials from the Health and Social Services Centre. In the other case, two organizations specializing in the urban environment will lead, in the wake of the FS, a flagship project on traffic calming near schools. A city grant (programme Quartier 21) will enable them to develop traffic calming plans for each school located in the borough.

5 Discussion and final remarks

Using the types of social actors analytical framework, we have explained how the functions served by different actors on the scenes or fields of action produced observable effects. A series of policy reports, prepared during the Villeray Forum Social process, help coordinate interventions and broaden the scope of actions. On the one hand, community actors seek to widen their networks and expand their planning capacity. They conduct outreach activities across all community sectors in Villeray. Whether by means of committees or public meetings, the partnership approach between community organizations and public institutions has helped foster a consensus regarding the action plan. On the other hand, the increased network extended to outsiders, the barely institutionalized actors and citizen residents who have placed environmental and urban design issues at the heart of the process. Action was finally conducted on the active transportation and traffic calming near schools initiative. In this case, a larger coalition was formed, composed by environmental groups promoting active transportation and opposing the domination of the car. Two conclusions can be drawn in the wake of the FS: the failure to distribute the manifesto shows the limits of partnership with professionals and officials in public institutions. Therefore, the Quartier 21 project is fashioned as an actor-network searching for measures to improve traffic calming and the walking and cycling conditions in the city. Active transportation and traffic calming issues now occupy the public media sphere at the metropolitan level. Does this
represent a new social movement serving as a vehicle for change of the material living conditions, the dawning of a new way of urban live? It is too early to tell, but it may be seen as a harbinger of a utopian community social movement applied to the city.

On a personal interaction level, in committee or in informal discussions, adjustments were repeatedly made to the process. Reflexivity was also an important part of the FS process. In short, participants in the Villeray Forum Social reproduced, alternatively, the various types of actors defined in our analytical framework. They have thus demonstrated an ability to adapt to different contexts and, often with limited resources, to implement significant actions. Specific to each context, actors embody one aspect or another of the various types or categories of actors identified in the course of our work. We thus can refer to them as multi-type actors. They are also territorial actors, because they identify themselves according to their allegiance to the neighbourhood and act on multiple scenes (places, scales, territories) of community life.

References


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### Table 1. Actor categories and community scenes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor Categories</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Community scenes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Actor</td>
<td>Power relations formed by organizations</td>
<td>Social and community development planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical Actor</td>
<td>Patterns of exchange in daily life</td>
<td>Direct meetings occurring during the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Actor</td>
<td>Networks and hybrid forums</td>
<td>Dealing with conflicts in public consultations and local dialogue forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicational Actor</td>
<td>Deliberation on land-use planning issues and their media coverage</td>
<td>Practices of participatory democracy and building a democratic consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Actor</td>
<td>New social movements focused on the urban environment</td>
<td>Civil society promoting societal change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive Actor</td>
<td>Assessment of practices and results of actions</td>
<td>Committees responsible for giving a critical account of the situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Tinkering with the functions of actors and social processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Action settings</th>
<th>Effects of processes</th>
<th>Data and documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan, resolve issues, coordinated decision-making</td>
<td>The community or neighbourhood organizations and networks</td>
<td>Actions implemented, decisions and new policies taken</td>
<td>Summary reports of the public exchanges on the action plan and decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold dialogues and get involved</td>
<td>The scenes of interaction between participants, the insiders and the outsiders</td>
<td>Passing on values and sharing of collective identities</td>
<td>Identity discourses and narratives on matters of interest and significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest a change and join the rest of the community</td>
<td>The public and media spheres</td>
<td>Broadcasting the project for social change</td>
<td>Content of exchanges in the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationalize and exert control over the action</td>
<td>The committees in charge of coordination</td>
<td>Redrafting the action program</td>
<td>Critical discourse on actions and on effects developed in the new plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. The scenes of the Villeray Forum Social process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Approaches followed and types of actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2006–2007      | Record of meeting activities                | Preferred approach: community development and citizen participation  
|                |                                              | Actors in attendance: community organization leaders and public institution officials                    |
| March 2007     | The Villeray FS  
|                | *C'est chez nous* progress report           | Orientations: themes focus on participation, housing, income, safety, adult training and education, health, leisure and culture  
|                |                                              | Actors in attendance: community organization leaders and public institution officials                    |
| March–April 2007| Neighbourhood walks and Focus Groups        | Orientations: initial themes on social development are supplemented by environmental themes on transit and active transport, green design and a bike path.  
|                |                                              | Other actors in attendance: citizens and local stakeholders.                                            |
| May 2007       | The public Forum's participant handbook     | Orientations: initial themes on social and environmental development are supplemented by social rights and the sense of pride of being from Villeray.  
|                |                                              | Actors in attendance: event coordinated by neighbourhood citizens, community organizations and public institutions. |
| June 2007      | Proceedings of the Forum Social process 2006–2007 | Themes identified in the March 2007 progress report are addressed and supplemented by those addressing quality of life (sanitary housing conditions, public space cleanliness), local employment, access to shops, and environmental concerns (greening, active transportation, walkability, safety around schools, bike paths, composting), improved access to leisure and cultural activities. |
| November 2008  | Launch of the action plan                   | The action plan is released and includes the 50 proposals defined in the March 2007 report together with those on the urban environment and approved by the public assembly.  
|                |                                              | Actors in attendance: community and institutional actors form alliances or coalitions to commit to priority projects. |
| Spring 2009–Spring 2011 | The Quartier 21 project | *Quartier 21* presents plans for securing areas around local schools, which are implemented by the borough.  
|                |                                              | Actors in attendance: a coalition of community associations and public institutions.                     |