

Université de Montréal

**Intersectionality in Practice: The Politics of Inclusion in the Québécois Women's
Movement**

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RÉSUMÉ

En tant qu'acteur important de la vie politique québécoise, le mouvement des femmes a réussi à garantir de nouveaux droits pour les femmes et a fortement contribué à améliorer leurs conditions de vie. Cependant, son incapacité à reconnaître et à prendre en compte les expériences particulières des femmes qui vivent de multiples discriminations a été critiquée entre autres par les femmes autochtones, les femmes de couleur, les femmes immigrantes, les lesbiennes et les femmes handicapées. Par exemple, dans les 40 dernières années, un nombre croissant de femmes immigrantes et racisées se sont organisées en parallèle au mouvement pour défendre leurs intérêts spécifiques. Dans ce mémoire, je me penche sur la façon dont le mouvement des femmes québécois a répondu à leurs demandes de reconnaissance et adapté ses pratiques pour inclure les femmes de groupes ethniques et raciaux minoritaires.

Bien que la littérature sur l'intersectionnalité ait fourni de nombreuses critiques des tentatives des mouvements sociaux d'inclure la diversité, seulement quelques recherches se sont penchées sur la façon dont les organisations tiennent compte, dans leurs pratiques et discours, des identités et intérêts particuliers des groupes qui sont intersectionnellement marginalisés. En me basant sur la littérature sur l'intersectionnalité et les mouvements sociaux, j'analyse un corpus de 24 entretiens effectués auprès d'activistes travaillant dans des associations de femmes au Québec afin d'observer comment elles comprennent et conceptualisent les différences ethniques et raciales et comment cela influence en retour leurs stratégies d'inclusion. Je constate que la façon dont les activistes conceptualisent l'interconnexion des rapports de genre et de race/ethnicité en tant qu'axes d'oppression des femmes a un impact sur les plateformes politiques des organisations, sur les stratégies qu'elles mettent de l'avant pour favoriser l'inclusion et l'intégration des femmes immigrantes et racisées et sur leur capacité à travailler en coalition.

Mots-clés : Mouvement des femmes, mouvement féministe, intersectionnalité, mouvements sociaux, féminisme, diversité, inclusion, genre, race/ethnicité, antiracisme, Québec.

ABSTRACT

As an important actor in Québécois political life, the women's movement has been successful at obtaining new rights for women and ameliorating their life conditions. However, its inability to recognize and take into account the particular experiences of women who are discriminated on more than one basis has been criticized by Aboriginal women, women of color, immigrant women, lesbians and women with disabilities, among others. For instance, in the last decades, an increasing number of immigrant and racialized women have organized separately to defend their specific interests. In this thesis, I explore the way in which the Québécois women's movement has responded to their struggles for recognition and adapted its practices to include women from ethnic and racial minority groups.

Although intersectionality theory has provided numerous critiques of social movements' attempts at being inclusive of diversity, only a few researches have examined how organizations take into account the specific identities and interests of intersectionally marginalized groups in their practices and discourses. Drawing on intersectionality theory and social movements literature, I analyze a set of 24 interviews conducted with activists working in women's organizations in Quebec to look at how they understand and conceptualize ethnic and racial differences and how this shapes their strategies for inclusion. I find that the way in which activists conceptualize the interconnected character of gender and race/ethnicity as axes that create women's experiences of oppression shapes organizations' political platforms, the strategies they put forth to foster the inclusion and integration of immigrant and racialized women and their capacity to engage in coalition work.

Keywords : Women's movement, feminist movement, intersectionality, social movements, feminism, diversity, inclusion, gender, race/ethnicity, antiracism, Quebec.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFCC	Comité des femmes des communautés culturelles
FFQ	Fédération des femmes du Québec
WMW	World March of Women

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INTRODUCTION

DEFINING WOMEN, WOMEN'S NEEDS AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

Women's movements have been a consistent and enduring feature of the social movement's landscape for over a hundred years. In many cases, they have been successful at improving women's life conditions and increasing their participation in the political arena. But their impact goes far beyond the realm of women's rights; as Myra Marx Ferree and Carol McClurg Mueller have argued: "mobilizations by and for women have shaped what we think of as modernity." (2004, 576)

In Quebec (and Canada more generally), the women's movement is an important actor of the political life that works inside as well as outside of conventional political structures and that has acquired over the years a certain degree of political and public recognition (Findlay 1987; Adamson, Briskin and McPhail 1988; O'Neil 1993; Chappell 2002; Dobrowolsky 2008). Since the 1970s, the women's movement has prompted many policy reforms, put new issues on the political agenda and shaped the Canadian political discourse by promoting new conceptions of equality and social justice (Briskin and Eliasson 1999). However, just as other identity-based social movements, it has often been the scene of legitimacy quarrels and recognition struggles.

In Canada and in Quebec, the women's movement has been, from its inception, organized and divided in terms of nations (Canadian, Québécois and Aboriginals) (Rankin 1996), which has led to disagreements and conflicts between women's groups on many issues. Some have also argued that the movement is diversified in terms of regions (Rankin 1996) and urban and rural/agrarian movements. (Carbert 1995; Wiebe 1995) Women have also organized behind different feminist ideologies: liberal, socialist, radical, anti-colonial, post-structuralist, anti-racist, intersectional, lesbian/queer and disability, among others.

Another characteristic of the women's movement that is worth examining is the fact that it has been increasingly organized along ethnic and cultural lines. In fact, women from different ethnic and cultural groups have organized separately on a large scale since the 1970s-1980s to defend their specific interests. They have criticized the inability of mainstream feminists to recognize their particular experiences and have denounced their tendency to

support political platforms that benefit mainly advantaged women (Agnew 1996). However, the need for the women's movement as a whole to include these women and support their struggles has only recently been recognized as one of their main goals by mainstream feminists.

Because feminist movements have been somehow successful at obtaining new rights for women and ameliorating their life conditions, the ways in which women's movements describe women's needs and take into account particular categories of social differentiation in their discourses and in the way they conceive their political platforms might have important consequences for the future of different women's groups and the place they occupy in the economic and political spheres. Thus, understanding how diversity is talked about in the Québécois women's movement and how some categories of oppression that used to be invisible came to be recognized as fundamental for a woman's social experience is of great importance.

As Sehgal has argued, equating 'women's movement' with mainstream Western feminism (in Quebec or elsewhere) obscures the struggles for recognition of women who are marginalized on more than one basis and the power relations in which they are entangled (See Meera Sehgal 2002 on women's movements in India) and the fact that our understanding of women's needs derives directly from our conceptions of who women are. These conceptions also carry ideas about who has the legitimacy to speak for women and to define their needs as a group. (Fraser 1987) For this reason, immigrant and racialized women in Quebec have engaged in important identity-work by debating the ways in which women, as a group, should be defined and which issues should be considered as "belonging" to feminism.

In this research, which is divided in three parts, I will explore the ways in which the Québécois women's movement responded to these demands for inclusion and came to recognize the necessity to be inclusive of ethnic and racial diversity and how women's organizations include the specific identities and interests of minority women in their discourses, analyses, activities, intervention practices and political platforms.

In the first part of this thesis, I present a review of the literature and detail my methodology. In chapter 1, I review the concept of collective identity as it is used in social movements literature and discuss how scholars have described the identity-work involved in building solidarity among a diverse group. Then, I turn to intersectionality literature and to the

way in which scholars have criticized the tendency of social movements to construct social identities that are exclusive of intersectional groups' experiences and interests. Next, I focus on the problems of exclusion in women's movements specifically and describe the power struggles involved in defining who women are as a group. Finally, I draw on intersectionality literature to explain how exclusive practices and concerns with collective identities have led to the marginalization of minority women's interests inside women's movements. I argue that even though intersectionality theory has provided a multiplicity of critiques of the inability of feminist movements to be inclusive of diversity, only a few researches examine how social movements and organizations attempt to represent intersectionally marginalized groups and to take into account their specific identities and interests. I present these studies and contend that because they usually rely on a restrictive definition of "inclusion" and focus on a particular type of organizations and specific activities, they might not draw the whole picture of how activists practice intersectionality. In chapter 2, I describe how I collected the data for this research and explain why I believe the Québécois case to be of particular interest and why I chose to focus on race/ethnicity among other axes of social differentiation.

In the third chapter, I trace the process by which race, ethnicity and immigration became relevant categories of analysis for the Québécois women's movement, outlining how new immigration patterns, theoretical developments and public policies, and changes in Canadian political and ideological discourses and legal framework as well as in the social movements landscape, affected feminist discourses and prompted the creation of racial- and ethnic-based women's organizations. In chapter four, I review different characteristics of Québécois women's organizations that I believe to be related to the way in which they practice "inclusion".

The third part of my thesis contains the bulk of the analysis. In chapter 5, I examine the different strategies mobilized by women's organizations to take into account race and ethnicity in their discourses and activities. More specifically, I look at the way in which they understand and conceptualize racial and ethnic "specificities" and how it shapes their strategies for inclusion. In chapter 6, I describe how Québécois feminists have incorporated the language of intersectionality into their analyses of diversity, paying particular attention to the difficulties that they encounter while trying to describe how sexism and racism, as axes of oppression, relate to one another. I examine the tendency of women's organizations to describe minority

women's experiences in terms of gender oppression and to translate their political demands into the language of gender equality. Then, I argue that these tendencies foster conflicts of prioritization and push women's organizations to avoid issues that are perceived as pitting religious rights against women's rights.

Chapter 7 of my thesis is devoted to the analysis of women's organizations' political platforms. Examining the way in which women's organizations choose and frame the demands that they support, I contend that their commitment to the inclusion of minority women hasn't pushed them to reexamine their traditional feminist platforms, although they now include some demands targeted specifically at minority women. I also outline the strategic concerns and different perspectives on racism that shape the composition of feminist agendas. Finally, in chapter 8, I attempt to explain why a commitment to intersectionality on the part of women's organizations isn't necessarily accompanied by a belief in the benefits of representation for minority women. I also describe the struggle of ethnic- and racial-based women's organizations to gain recognition and be considered as "real" feminist organizations. To conclude, I acknowledge certain limitations of this thesis and suggest future avenues for research.

PART I: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

INTERSECTIONALITY AS A CHALLENGE TO COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The collective identity that unites a certain political constituency with specific interests is usually considered as being a "pivotal" concept in social movements literature. (Snow and McAdam 2000) According to Scott A. Hunt and Robert D. Benford, collective identity is: "either a central concept or a residual category for nearly every theoretical perspective and empirical question associated with contemporary studies of social movements" (2004, 433) and it is therefore not surprising that a lot of literature has been devoted to it. (for reviews see Polletta and Jasper 2001; Snow 2001) Considered to be a fundamental feature that plays a role at all stages of a movement (Poletta and Jasper 2001), collective identity is a necessary pre-condition as well as a product of collective action. (Hunt and Benford 2004, 433) Hence, it has been said to explain movement's emergence (Melucci 1989), organizational form (Clemens 1996), success and decline (Einwohner 1999) and activists' initial participation (Gamson 1992; Polletta 1998), commitment (Taylor 1989; Nepstad 2004), strategies (Bernstein 1997; Gotham 1999) and framing choices (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994).

Although individuals were first believed by social movement scholars to have common purposes or political interests associated to their belonging to a particular group, namely in resource mobilization theory (Jenkins 1993), scholars have long moved from that perspective and now argue that common purposes don't naturally relate to social identities or positions. In fact, the very identities to which these interests are related are the product of a work of construction. They are not static characteristics of individuals, but dynamic forces constructed, reconstructed and negotiated through individual interactions. (Gamson 1992; Melucci 1989; Snow 2001; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Snow and McAdam 2000) Hence, social movements don't mobilize individuals with a pre-existing collective identity, but must work to construct it. As Barbara Ryan puts it, mobilization of people is not sufficient; social movements also need to mobilize sustaining ideas. (1992)

For the scholars of new social movements, "the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formulation" (Johnston et al. 1994: 10) and it is directly related to a movement's outcomes. In fact, the ability to develop a credible and consistent discourse is a major determinant of a social movement's success, impacting its capacity to mobilize, to sustain activists' commitment and to present political leaders with clear demands. (Benford and Snow 2000) At the individual level, the strength and salience of a collective identity for an individual impact the likeness of its participation in a movement on behalf of the political constituency with which it is associated (Klandermans 2004), its degree of commitment and attachment to an organization, a movement, or a collectivity (440) and its perception of the structure of opportunities. (Melucci 1988: 433)

The process by which solidarity is built among members of a movement is complex and very often a source of tensions and controversy. (Einwohner, Reger and Myers 2008) The development of a collective identity often requires a lot of "identity work." (Snow and Anderson 1987; Snow and McAdam 2000) This work is highly strategic; activists not only develop an identity that will foster their participation in the movement, but must also decide how to present themselves to key actors outside of it. (Meyer 2002) Thus, they: "construct and present themselves with an eye towards the potential reactions of external audiences and also respond to the demands of the broader institutional environment and structure of political opportunities." (Einwohner, Reger and Myers 2008)

Because social movements tend to build unity around shared identities and interests, bringing together a diverse group has proven to be a very difficult task. (Ferree and Martin 1995; Poster 1995; Reger 2002; Staggenborg 2002; Strolovitch 2006; 2007; Einwohner, Reger and Myers 2008; Ward 2008) Hence, the development of a strong collective identity becomes problematic when a movement isn't associated with an easily identifiable base, but with a group whose members have multiple and intersecting salient identities. (Dobrowolsky 2008) But for most social movements, the issue of inclusivity cannot be avoided. Because their failure to recognize different sources of oppression inevitably fosters crises of legitimacy, single-identity movements are usually ineffective in the long run. (hooks 1981; Combahee River Collective 1983; King 1988; Robnett 1996; Fraser 1996; Collins 1998; Kurtz 2002; Weldon 2006a; 2006b).

The creation of a strong common identity usually derives from the adoption of common frames for action (Gamson 1992; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Rupp and Taylor 1999; Benford and Snow 2000) and from the development of a feeling of shared fate, loyalty (Benford and Hunt 1992; Gamson 1992; Taylor and Whittier 1992) and belonging to the same social group. (Melucci 1996, 23) Forging a collective identity implies boundary making (defining who belongs to a particular social group and who doesn't) and hence, exclusion. For this reason, defining a movement, who belongs to it, and hence, who its constituents are, is, in itself, a political process (Bacchi 1999) as well as a "militant act" (Atkinson 1984).

Because their success relies on the consistency of their collective identity, social movements tend to describe themselves as representing a homogenous community, which is also reflected in the literature. This tendency is not limited to the women's movements literature, but characterizes many social movements studies in which scholars construct: "ideal-typical movements" with "ideal-typical constituents" (Ferree and Roth 1998) Thus, "the worker's movements are imagined as organizations of and for white men, nationalist movements as of and for indigenous men, feminist movements as of and for white middle-class women." (Ferree and Mueller 2004, 578) Hence, although social movements usually pretend to speak for a large and diverse base, they tend to carry discourses that describe the experiences and interests of only a fraction of their constituency (usually the most privileged members). As will be argued in the following section, this tendency has been an enduring (and very criticized) shortcoming of feminist theory.

1.1 Defining women's movements - Problems of exclusion

As other social movements, women's movements have often been pictured as composed of a homogenous constituency. However, women have multiple, fluid and intersecting identities in terms of class, race, ethnicity, religion, political status and ability, and carry a broad range of beliefs, ideologies and political visions. For this reason, and even though social movements scholars have taken a great interest in them, women's movements have remained difficult to conceptualize at the analytical level. In many cases, the "women's movement" has been equated with organized feminism as it exists in Western countries, i.e. as a movement "informed by feminist theory, beliefs and practices" (Ferree and Mueller 2004,

577) and aimed at challenging gender subordination. However, historically, women have organized as women in all parts of the world to challenge different relationships of domination and have mobilized around a very broad variety of issues such as peace, antiracism, social and economic justice and anti-colonialism. In some cases, those mobilizations were informed by feminist theory and understood by activists as an inherent part of a larger fight against patriarchal domination and towards gender equality. In others, gender relationships weren't conceived as central or even relevant to the issues at stake while class, race or North/South inequalities were emphasized. Still, in other cases, a gender analysis was developed over time to reinforce the understanding of issues that were not previously considered as gender-related, while movements and organizations that identified at first as mainly feminist expanded their analyses and goals and changed the language they used to describe themselves.

The way in which activists and women's organizations self-identify also reflects the cultural context in which they act and how feminism is understood and defined in this particular context, no matter their goals and the issues they support. It might also stem from strategic choices shaped by the political opportunity structure of a larger social context more or less favorable to feminism. Thus, similar organizations supporting similar goals might be considered as being feminist by scholars and the public in different contexts and these denominations may change over time as the contexts evolve or as the organizations' focus shifts.

Relationships of power inside women's movements might also be at stake. Historically, racial minorities have often been excluded from "mainstream" women's movements (hooks 1981). Different women's groups have also been excluded because they focused on demands that were not considered as "belonging" to feminism. Hence, several subgroups have engaged in important identity-work by debating the ways in which women, as a group, should be defined. These different struggles for recognition are visible in the numerous visions and perspectives carried by feminism; liberal, socialist, radical, anti-colonial, post-structuralist, antiracist, intersectional, lesbian/queer, disability, etc.

However, at the theoretical and militant levels, constructing women as a homogenous political group united by a common oppression that translates into common political interests, and mobilizing them under a single feminist project, has for a long time been a priority of the Western feminist movement. (Descaries 1998) However, waves of critiques have denounced

attempts at describing a “universal condition” for women and uniting them under a single theory, and have exposed the culturally and politically situated characters of supposedly universal feminist concepts.

In fact, Black feminist (hooks 1981; Collins 1990; Carby 1998), post-colonial (Mohanty 1988) and intersectionality scholars (Crenshaw 1989; Yuval-Davis 2006; Bannerji 1996; 2000; Razack 1998; 4 Townsend-Bell 2011; Weldon 2006a; 2006b) have all critiqued this inability of feminist movements to take into account the diverse character of their constituencies. They have described how feminist theory doesn't take into account the specific experiences of race/class minorities (Simons 1979; Davis 1981; Joseph 1981; Joseph and Lewis 1981; Thornton Dill 1983; hooks 1984; Nakano Glenn 1985; Sen and Grown 1992) or sexual minorities (Wittig 1980; Chamberland 1989; Phelan 1989; Franklin and Stacey 1991; Holmlund 1991)

Scholars have shown that the difficulty of feminist theorists and activists to develop a collective identity that takes into account the variety of women's experiences hasn't had consequences only in terms of solidarity at the symbolic level. In fact, the collective identity challenge has often translated into the marginalization of intersectional groups' political interests and led advocacy organizations unable to fill the existent gap in representation for them. For example, critical race feminists have explained how feminists' legal mobilization strategy for protecting women victims of violence, sexual assault or employment discrimination hasn't taken into consideration the limits faced by women of color in legal systems based on a unitary approach. (Crenshaw 1991a; 1991b; Rivera 1997)

More than a body of critiques, intersectionality theory carries a political project: to “demarginalize” the interests of intersectional groups. As it was elaborated by Crenshaw, it acts as a conceptual tool used to: "create the very social identity and political interests [of Black Women] it supposedly describes." (Lépinard 2011, 4) However, even if intersectionality research was developed with the goal of "inspiring political action and policy development" (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006; 189), it has yet offered only partial solutions to the problem of exclusion in social movements. As I discuss in the next section, only a few scholars have studied how activists attend to preserve unity and solidarity in a movement while recognizing a variety of identities and potentially conflicting interests and how successful they are at

representing intersectionally marginalized groups. (Smith 1995; Weldon 2006b; Strolovitch 2006; 2007; Cole 2008; Townsend-Bell 2011).

1.2 Intersectionality - Including political interests

Scholars that have studied the issue of intersectionality in social movements have identified some factors that make the inclusion of intersectional individuals' interests difficult for organizations representing a diverse membership or for those who attempt to form coalitions with organizations representing marginalized subgroups. In many cases, debates over the relative importance of various categories of social differentiation are what preclude the formation of coalitions within movements that represent individuals with diverse and potentially conflicting identities, such as the feminist movement. (Weldon 2006a; 2006b; Townsend-Bell 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006a; Fraser 1996) In these cases, the possibility of coalition-building relies on the capacity to build a common identity and consistent frames (Gamson 1992; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Rupp and Taylor 1999; Benford and Snow 2000). Often, the main problem for activists is to show their constituencies how the widest group is impacted by the issues they want to address. (Hula 1995; Zald and McCarthy 1980; Ferree and Roth 1998; Van Dyke 2003; Strolovitch 2007) For example, Fraser has explained how conflicts have emerged between feminist organizations when some groups wanted to prioritize issues affecting racial or class minorities. (Fraser 1996) The conceptual legacy of a movement, i.e. the way in which it has defined oppression in the past, might also render the inclusion of new categories of analysis particularly difficult. (Lépinard 2007)

Only a few scholars have looked at successes and identified the factors that might bolster the representation of marginalized subgroups in social movements organizations and coalitions. Retracing the history of the Southeast Women's Employment Coalition, a labor feminine organization, Barbara Ellen Smith describes its attempt at unifying working-class women from different racial groups. She describes how women were able, for a period of eight years, to cooperate across the divide of race on different issues, although they never succeeded in agreeing on a common political platform. Smith concludes that commonalities based on gender are not sufficient to build solidarity among a diverse group of women, and

attributes the relative success of the coalition to practices that encouraged the analysis of every issue through the perspective of intersectionally marginalized women. (1995)

Analyzing interviews from ten American feminist activists involved in coalition-work with diverse organizations, Cole describes how an intersectional discourse can work as a tool to build solidarity among a diverse group. She argues that solidarity can be maintained not by referring to a single identity, but by recognizing diversity in seemingly homogenous groups and by acknowledging and addressing the existence of power differentials between members. (2008)

In her study of the movement against gender violence, Weldon discusses how transnational coalitions built between groups representing different minorities were successful at addressing issues affecting only some members of their constituency. She explains these successes by the presence of certain organizational features: descriptive representation, separate organizations for disadvantaged subgroups and practices of institutionalized dissent. (2006b) She shows that by emphasizing differences rather than commonalities between women, these practices necessarily foster conflicts, tensions and recrimination, but also provide movements with clashing identities with: "a way of maintaining solidarity and improving policy influence without denying or sublimating the differences and conflicts among activists." (2006b, 56) Weldon also argues that institutional support and a favorable political opportunity structure facilitate the inclusion of intersectional claims on political platforms.

Looking at Uruguayan feminist associations, Townsend-Bell shows that their success at coalition-building has relied on their capacity to resolve ideological disputes over the relevance of different axes of domination (race, class and gender). She also argues that the inclusion of a particular category in an organization's analysis will be more likely if its relevance is recognized at the state level and if this category can be efficiently used as an identity criteria to spark mobilization. (2011)

In a large-scale study of interest groups, Strolovitch looks at the representation practices of feminist, labor, economic justice, public interest, civil rights and ethnic/racial/immigrant organizations. She shows that although many organizations claim to pay special attention to the particular needs of the most disadvantaged members of their constituency, they tend to allocate more resources to issues that benefit mainly their most

advantaged constituents. However, she identifies a set of practices, that she names "affirmative advocacy", that allows organizations to better take into account the concerns of marginalized subgroups. She argues that it is more likely that the disadvantaged will be equitably represented when organizations promote descriptive representation, adopt decision rules that prioritize issues affecting disadvantaged minorities, work in collaboration with local groups and cultivate a sense of "linked fate" between their members. (Strolovitch 2006; 2007)

The very limited number of studies that investigate the factors that might allow organizations or coalitions to take into account the interests of marginalized members of their constituency calls for more research on this topic. Moreover, the very specific ways in which these studies have defined inclusion and representation and the cases they have chosen to look at don't allow for a complete picture of the factors that might favor or impede the inclusion of intersectional minorities to be drawn. First, most of these studies measure the extent to which organizations are "inclusive" by looking at their political platforms. However, and as I will argue in this thesis, there are other ways in which organizations might understand what it means to be "inclusive". For example, organizations might pay particular attention to the needs of their disadvantaged constituents by providing particular services to them or developing antiracist practices inside organizations, practices that can be overlooked when only political platforms are considered. But most importantly, the choices of which issues will be included on organizations' political platforms might be shaped by other inclusion practices. In fact, as I will show, the adoption of particular inclusion practices inside organizations sometimes makes it difficult for them to take a stand on certain issues affecting some of their disadvantaged members. It is therefore important to consider the different ways in which organizations put into practice their commitment at being inclusive of diversity. A similar point also needs to be made for studies that focus on coalition-work. In fact, the inability of organizations to create or sustain a coalition is very often associated with their failure to agree on a political agenda. However, as I will discuss in chapter 8, concerns of inclusivity might also render coalition-work difficult between organizations that support the same demands.

Second, most studies on intersectionality practices look at coalitions or organizations whose main activity is advocacy, which also explains the tendency to focus on their political agendas. But organizations that engage in other types of activities such as service provision might have different concerns related to inclusion. For example, an important majority of

women's organizations in Quebec are of a "hybrid form", which means that they engage in advocacy-work as well as in service provision. This renders organizations' work very complicated because they need to represent women as a large group and to foster a sense of collective identity among their members, while responding to the particular needs of their clients (which are, in many cases, minority women) in terms of services and meeting the requirements established by their funding agencies. This particularity makes the Québécois case very interesting because the diversity of activities that women's organizations engage in and the particular concerns associated with them have fostered the development of a variety of "inclusion practices".

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This research relies on a set of semi-directive interviews (n=24) that were conducted in 2010 and 2011 with women working in different women's organizations, most of which are situated in Montreal. Documents produced by these organizations such as declarations of principles, annual reports, information booklets and statistics were also analyzed.

I chose to base this research on interviews because I believe, following Dorothy Smith, that feminist research can gain from being done from the "standpoint of women" and through their everyday experiences. (1987) Moreover, as Strolovitch has argued, looking at organizations' political platforms and official statements is not sufficient to analyze the extent to which they represent the specific interests of marginalized members of their constituencies. In fact, these organizations' practices might not necessarily reflect their stated goals and commitments. (2007) Thus, by conducting interviews, I could observe directly the different ways in which women understand intersectional issues and take into account "difference" in particular contexts. Finally, following West and Fenstermaker, I consider gender and race as "routine, methodical and ongoing accomplishments" that emerge in social situations. (1995, 9) Thus, I believe that looking at how women take differences into account in their everyday practices inside women's organizations might help understanding how power relations and inequalities are maintained inside the women's movement.

2.1 Sample

In choosing which organizations were to be included in this research, I defined the "women's movement" following Ferree and Mueller as: "all organizing of women explicitly as women to make any sort of social change (...) regardless of the specific targets of their change efforts at any particular time" (2004, 577) and whether or not they consider gender oppression as their main battlefield. This broad definition reflects what I will refer to as the "women's movement" throughout this research and is meant to acknowledge the diversity of views and perspectives from which it is composed. Hence, all the organizations included represent

women as a constituency, but they may or may not self-identify as feminist. However, in every case, they consider themselves to belong to some extent to a broader "women's movement".

Most organizations included in this research were found through the Conseil du statut de la femme's *Répertoire des groupes de femmes du Québec* (2011) or through the FFQ's *Répertoire des organismes des femmes des communautés culturelles* (2006). Others were also found through contacts provided by women during interviews. The organizations were chosen to reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the Québécois women's movement. Thus, a third of the sample is composed of general "mainstream" women's organizations, another of organizations targeting immigrants or racialized women in a general manner and the last third includes organizations representing a specific ethnic, racial or cultural group.

The women that I interviewed are either activists or workers (paid or volunteer) for the organizations chosen. Some of them engage mainly in advocacy-work, in more traditional protest activities or in service provision and many engage to some extent in all three types of activities. In no cases were the women interviewed clients, i.e. women who frequent these organizations as service-receivers. However, some of them had been clients in the past. While some of the women interviewed self-identified as feminists, others used different words to describe their engagement towards women. Women from mainstream organizations tended to be white and middle- or low-class, while women from ethnic- or racial-based organizations tended to be low-class and from immigrant origin, but this was not necessarily the case.

2.2 Defining "diversity"

For the purpose of this research, I decided to analyze women's organizations' inclusion of diversity by focussing on ethnic, racial and cultural diversity. Of course, "women" as a group is diversified in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in terms of class, sexual orientation and disability, all categories that I could have included in my analysis. However, I decided to focus on race and ethnicity because I considered these categories to be particularly relevant to the Québécois case.

In fact, many scholars have described race and ethnicity as fundamental categories of differentiation that strongly impact an individual's social experience in Canadian society. (Agnew 1996; Bannerji 1996; 2000; Dhamoon 2009; Razack 2004; 2007) Moreover, the

recognition of cultural difference plays an important role in Canadian politics and is often considered to be an important part of Canadian's national identity. (Bloemraad 2006; Taylor 1992; Kymlicka 1998) Finally, the inclusion of minority groups is also an important concern for Canadian political actors and institutions. In fact, as McAll, Tremblay and Legoff have argued, the Canadian policy of multiculturalism has fostered a culture of "rethinking society according to cultural differences and institutions according to these same differences." (1997, 22)

To study how race and ethnicity are taken into account in the women's movement is also of great interest because Canadian scholars and political actors alike have debated the idea that the recognition of minority rights might threaten the prominence of the principle of gender equality. In fact, many scholars have discussed the possible existence of an inherent contradiction between feminism and minority rights associated with multiculturalism. (Okin 1999; Honig 1999; Kymlicka 1999; Volpp 2000; Phillips 2007) In the last years, women's organizations were often divided in debates over issues in which gender equality and minority rights were seemingly in contradiction. For example, a proposition of law forbidding employees as well as service-receivers to wear religious symbols inside public institutions (bill 94) received intense media coverage. While some feminists were in favor of the law because they saw in it the possibility of banning the Muslim veil, which they believed to be a symbol of gender oppression, others denounced the fact that it would limit women's liberty of religion and foster the social exclusion of Muslim women. (Baines 2010; Conseil du statut de la femme 2010) In 2005, an intense conflict broke out between feminists over what the Media had erroneously named "the Sharia court issue", prompting the creation of an international coalition denouncing the possibility of allowing religious arbitration tribunals to take a stand on issues of family law in Ontario. (Macklin 2005; Bakht 2007; Razack 2007; Emon 2008; Lepinard 2010)

Scholars have also written about other issues that have divided feminists, even though they haven't attracted as much media attention. For example, Vijay Agnew and Rashmee Singh have described the difficulty of feminist groups to agree on the necessity of increased police intervention to fight against domestic violence. On this issue, feminists were usually divided along ethnic and racial lines. In fact, while native women and women of colour emphasized the negative consequences associated with police intervention inside their

communities, white women argued that it had proven to be efficient at reducing domestic violence. (Agnew 1996; Singh 2010)

These examples reflect the fact that the potential existence of tensions between gender equality and minority rights and the difficulties faced by organizations working simultaneously on issues of sexism and racism are very important concerns for feminists, which makes the recognition of diversity inside the women's movement a very actual topic.

2.3 Interviews

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours, with an average of one hour, and were coded using QDA miner. The majority of them took place inside the organizations where the women worked. Finally, most interviews were conducted in French, and some of them in English.

The interview questions covered a broad range of topics, including the organizations' history, mission, decision-making structures, services, advocacy and collective action activities, coalition-work, financing, plans for the future, and relations with other associations, the different levels of government and public agencies. I also asked the interviewees to talk about their own history, intervention practices and opinions related to recent events concerning diversity and women's and minority rights issues, and made them discuss what they consider to be women's needs, how they perceive the relationship between sexism and racism and how these issues arise in their work with women. New questions inspired by previous interviews were also added throughout the process. Although I used an interview protocol, the interviews were open-ended and allowed women to discuss topics that were of particular interest to them and that were not covered by my initial list of questions.

PART II: THE RELEVANCE OF RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE HISTORY OF THE QUÉBÉCOIS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

CHAPTER 3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The recognition of the relevance of a particular social category for a social movement is not as much a direct consequence of a group's social condition as it is the result of an important work of construction. Categories that are relevant at the analytical level can remain unrecognized for a long time in the work of social movements, and groups need to fight to make them visible. (Townsend-Bell 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006b) In fact, debates over the relative importance of various categories of social differentiation are often what preclude the formation of coalitions within movements that represent individuals with diverse and potentially conflicting identities, such as the feminist movement. (Weldon 2006a; 2006b; Townsend-Bell 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006a; Fraser 1996) Thus, even if race, gender and class are usually considered to be the main categories of relevance in most contexts (Yuval-Davis 2006a; García Bedolla 2007; Hancock 2007; Dhamoon 2009), and have always been analytically relevant in Quebec, race and ethnicity weren't recognized as categories that should be taken into account by the women's movement until recently.

In Quebec, while the first feminist groupings appeared at the end of the 19th century, and the fight against poverty and economical exclusion has always been considered to be a priority (Tibert 1986; Goulet 1996), the specific demands and contributions of immigrant and racialized women have gone unrecognized for a long time. For many, the very idea of recognizing the specificity of a woman's experience related to her race or ethnicity was seen as contradictory to universal feminist values. (Belleau 1996) The inclusion of immigrant and racialized women's needs as a priority of the Fédération des femmes du Québec was only made official in 1992 by the organization of the *Forum pour un Québec féminin pluriel*. The Fédération's president, Françoise David, proclaimed on that day that:

"The [feminist] movement will no longer ignore the issue of cultural pluralism. We must achieve a real articulation between the feminist movement and women from ethnocultural communities."

However, the "fight against racism and discriminations specific to minority women" (Fédération des femmes du Québec 2003) only became part of the FFQ's declaration of principles, and an official priority, in 2003.

Of course, the fact that race and ethnicity were not "taken into account" by the feminist movement does not mean that immigrant and racialized women's organizing was nonexistent or that these women were absent from mainstream feminist organizations, but only that their specific demands (such as demands that aim at fighting racial inequalities) were not supported by the mainstream women's movement because they were not considered to "belong" to Québécois feminism.

In this section, I argue that in the last decades, Québécois feminists' perceptions of which issues belong to feminism and what it means to be a feminist in Quebec have widened to include the recognition of ethnic and racial diversity. As Lépinard has argued, women's movements' conceptual legacy, i.e. the ways in which they have historically defined oppression, shapes the ability of feminists to include categories other than gender in their analyses. (2007) Therefore, understanding how and when race and ethnicity became identities that must be taken into account by the Québécois women's movement might help explain how activists conceptualize intersectionality today. Although different scholars have discussed the changes that the feminist movement has undergone during this period, none of them has presented a single explanation for the recent recognition of race and ethnicity as important categories of analysis and for the development of ethnic- and racial-based organizations. Thus, I will outline different factors that might explain why the women's movement has widened its scope to become more inclusive of racial and ethnic diversity.

3.1 Ethnic- and racial-based women's organizing

In the last thirty years, the Québécois women's movement has been increasingly organized along ethnic and cultural lines. Working in parallel with mainstream organizations, many associations and groups represent women from a specific country or geographic region

or of a particular religion (the Afghan Women's Association, the South Asian Women's Community Center and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, for example). In Montreal only, the FFQ has listed 76 women organizations devoted to representing ethnic and cultural minorities. (Fédération des femmes du Québec 2006) However, the movement hasn't always been organized in that manner. Even though Canada has been an immigration receiving country for a long time, immigrant and racialized women started organizing on a large scale in the 1980s. Indeed, in 1982, the year of the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 32 new immigrant women's associations appeared in Montreal only and in the next three years, 70 followed. (Barbot 1993) In the same period, ethnic organizations representing immigrant women also appeared in the rest of Canada. (Seydegart and Spears 1985)

Rapidly, these new ethnic- and racial-based organizations denounced the lack of recognition of their specific experiences by mainstream feminists, which pushed them to modify their discourses and mention racism in their analyses. In this way, the situation in Quebec was similar to that of other Western societies with strong women's movements. In fact, as Agnew has argued, it became a habit, in the 1980s, for mainstream Western feminists to recognize the bias present in feminist theories and practices that had been erasing the ways in which racism and economic injustice impacted the lives of many women, creating a specific experience of oppression. (1996) However, in many cases, minority women affirmed that: "attempts to deal with the problems stopped at the point of acknowledging the biases." (3) Thus, the pressure from ethnic- and racial-based organizations isn't sufficient to explain the will to give them more space within the feminist movement, which was also a response to governmental incentives and to a changing political environment.

3.2 Canadian Multiculturalism and the legitimization of ethnic mobilization

As previously mentioned, the Canadian women's movement has from the start been divided in terms of nations (Canadian, Québécois and Aboriginals) (Rankin 1996) and for this reason, the recurring conflicts around constitutional issues have taken a lot of place in feminist debates. In many cases, this made the inclusion of other ethnic and racial identities difficult. For example, English-Canadian, Québécois and Aboriginal feminists were strongly divided around the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, two series of proposed amendments to

the Canadian Constitution aimed at persuading Quebec to ratify the Canadian Act of 1992, and mainly the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (Roberts 1988; Simeon 1988; Dobrowolsky 2003) These accords proposed to constitutionally recognize the distinct character of the Québécois society and the principle of an Aboriginal self-government, amendments that were supported by many Québécois and Aboriginal feminists. However, other minority groups wanted the constitution to include sections that would protect gender equality rights from these clauses. But no matter their possible impacts on other ethnic minorities, issues such as the Meech Lake Accord have usually been framed in terms of conflicts between nations, rendering other ethnic and racial identities invisible.

A major factor in the recognition of racial and ethnic identities, and of racism as a feminist concern, was the rise of ethnocultural mobilization that was legitimized and fostered by the symbolic recognition of diversity provided by the policy of multiculturalism. (Breton 1986; Bloemraad 2006a; 2006b; Kobayashi 2008) (and reinforced by the increase in the size and diversity of the immigrant population that followed the adoption of a new immigration policy in the 1960s (Knowles 1997) and by the new pre-eminence of human rights discourses propagated by the student and civil rights movements and soon adopted by ethnic groups (Kobayashi 2008; Ku 2009).) In fact, there were only a few instances of ethnocultural mobilization in Canada before the end of the 1970s and it became an important feature of Canadian political life only with the adoption of the official policy of multiculturalism in 1971, and its subsequent entrenchment into the constitution in 1988.

With the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, the policy of multiculturalism became the official ideology through which rights and liberties ought to be interpreted in Canada. Section 27 of the Charter, which stipulates that: "the Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians" is often considered as one of the most progressive liberal responses for the protection of minority rights. (Bloemraad 2006a; 2006b) By encouraging immigrants to retain their ethnic characteristics, multiculturalism has created cultural communities whose members have the right to be recognized as such. (Bannerji 1996; Taylor 1992) These cultural communities are now recognized as having a status equal to that of the "founding people" of the Canadian nation (English, French and Natives) (Breton 1986; Abu-Laban and Stasiulis 1992) In fact, scholars have argued that multiculturalism affirms at the same time the

right of individuals to be *different* (to preserve their culture and traditions) and to be *the same* (to be treated equally). (Elliott and Fleras 1990, 65)

The 1988 Multiculturalism Act did not only provide minority groups with a symbolic recognition of their culture; it also gave them the right to demand programs and policies designed to fight discrimination and inequalities related to their historical disadvantage. In fact, supporting ethnic organizations is also part of the policy of multiculturalism. Thus, even though ethnic and racial minority groups did not often appeal to the rights that are granted to them by the Charter in the courts, they organized to defend the specific interests of newly established communities and to gain leverage in their relationships with the government. (Agnew 1996, 144-5) In 1980, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council was formed and became the main umbrella organization for advocacy associations and interest groups representing ethnic and racial minorities. It was soon followed by the creation of the Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society. From their inception, both organizations have enjoyed good levels of governmental funding. (Kobayashi 2000) Bloemraad has described this process by which ethnic communities have organized in response to the financial and symbolic recognition of diversity provided by the Multiculturalism policy as "structured mobilization". (Bloemraad 2006a; 2006b)

Through the policy of multiculturalism, and even before that, the Canadian government also encouraged the mobilization of minority women specifically. In fact, the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Society, the 1984 House of Commons Special Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society and the 1984 report on the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment all affirmed the necessity to encourage the creation and maintenance of immigrant and racialized women's grassroots organizations. The state also recognized the specific oppression of immigrant women by sponsoring the 1981 National Conference on Immigrant Women.

3.3 Pressures from inside the women's movement

The rise of ethnic mobilization in the 1980s and 1990s certainly pushed the women's movement to include the ethnic- and racial-based women's organizations. In fact, the multiculturalism ideology has not only provided feminists with certain symbolic, political and

legal tools to fight against discriminations based on categories other than gender, but more importantly, it has also legitimized the discourse of minority women criticizing the mainstream women's movement for picturing women in a way that describes best its largely white, middle-class and straight leadership, discourses that were also strongly influenced by the development of Black and post-colonial feminisms. Hence, starting in the 1980s, the legitimacy of the Canadian mainstream feminist movement was challenged by Aboriginal women, women of color, immigrant women, lesbians and women with disabilities, all of whom criticized it for downplaying the diversified character of women's identities. (Lachapelle 1982; Driedger 1996; Agnew 1996; Stone 1997)

These critiques were echoed in feminist scholars' analyses. In 1992, Arun Mukherjee, professor of English at York University, affirmed that: "the need to include race as a variable [in feminist analyses] had become quite noticeable." (1992) In fact, taking plurality into account became the center of post-modern feminists' modes of analysis, which in return influenced women's organizations' practices on the ground. (Stimpson 1988) According to Belleau, the emergence of these new theoretical debates around the issue of inequalities between women and power relations within feminist movements derived from the acquisition of the legal recognition of gender equality in Canada, but also in other Western countries, which encouraged feminists to focus on other power relations. (Belleau 2006)

3.4 Contracting political opportunity structures and the shift towards service provision

In Canada and Quebec, the commitment of feminist organizations to respond to the specific needs of immigrant and racialized women was also an unplanned consequence of the 1980s-90s governmental backlash against feminism (Faludi 1992; Brodie 1995; Bashevkin 1998; 2002) and of the major cuts in the federal government's funding to women's organizations (Cossman and Fudge 2002; Dobrowolsky 2004; 2008). As the feminist movement's relationship with the state became increasingly tensed (Rankin and Vickers 2001), many women's organizations started to put aside advocacy activities and to focus more on service provision in order to compensate for the negative impacts of neoliberal policies and the reduction of the welfare state on women's socioeconomic conditions (Dobrowolsky 2008) Today, a majority of women's community organizations are multi-task; they provide services

and engage in advocacy-work and in more traditional types of collective action.

These changes in the broader political environment fostered the development of "hybrid" community organizations whose strategies towards social change combine advocacy and service provision. For activists from these organizations, the provision of services is considered to be a "political" activity because it aims at reducing inequalities by improving the socioeconomic status of marginalized groups, favoring their integration in society and responding to needs that are inadequately addressed by public institutions. Engaging in service provision as well as in advocacy activities has several advantages for women's organizations: it gives them access to more generous and stable funding, fosters their legitimacy as state partners and indispensable actors in the field of social services, makes them less vulnerable to shifts in political power, protects them from the delegitimation of their movement and allows them to attract bigger memberships. (Minkoff 2002)

However, receiving funding from the state also comes at a cost: it shapes and limits women's organizations discourses on inclusion and diversity. By playing an increasingly important role in different fields of public policy, women's organizations that provide services have become "para-state actors" or part of the "shadow state" (Wolch 1990). As Lipsky has argued, this means that their work has become a form of "policy delivery". (Lipsky 1980; see also Bhuyan 2012) Hence, women's organizations need to respect the requirements of their funding agencies and doing otherwise might lead them to lose the funding that assures their organizational survival. (Breton 1986) This limits their possibilities of resisting to policy directives and challenging the system of power relations that marginalize their constituents. Moreover, in the last years, the state has reinforced its control over the activities of community organizations. Many advocacy groups have condemned this shift from a partnership with the state during the years following the adoption of the Charter, to an accountability relationship in the neoliberal era. (Phillips and Graham 2000; Brock 2002; Smith 2005; Kobayashi 2008) Finally, the existence of numerous community and identity-based organizations that provide services might encourage the state to support this type of organization instead of those who engage in work that is seen as being more "political". (Minkoff 2002)

The fact that an important number of women's organizations have started providing services in addition to their advocacy activities has encouraged them to take into account the specific needs of immigrant women for two main reasons. First, because immigrant women

are often economically disadvantaged and have specific needs in terms of integration, they became the main clientele of many women's organizations. (Dobrowolsky 2008) Second, women's organizations have also become state partners in the application of the policy of multiculturalism. In fact, they have become important actors in the field of immigrant integration and the governmental funding that they receive for the provision of integration services is, in many cases, their main source of income.

Transnationalism and the World March of Women

The lack of resources associated with the cuts in women's organizations' funding and the degradation of its relationship with the state also pushed the women's movement to build inter-movements and transnational alliances, which contributed to broadening its scope to non-gender issues. (Rankin and Vickers 2001) The best example of this is the participation of Québécois women's organizations in the World March of Women. In fact, several authors have acknowledged the impact of this March on women's movements, saying that it has "diffused and deepened feminism, modifying its themes and practices." (Dufour and Giraud 2010) Some authors have described how the March has revitalized national feminist movements; broadened feminist demands (Dufour and Giraud 2007; 2010); targeted new actors, such as corporations and religious institutions, (Dufour and Goyer 2009) and made transnational feminist practices a main tool of feminist movements. (Desai 2005)

In 2000, more than 600 women's groups formed a coalition united behind a common political platform that was carried through a series of demonstrations around the world between March 8th and October 17th. This first World March of Women was so successful that in 2003, a central international committee was created and the Coordination of the WMW became a permanent organization composed of more than 6,000 groups. (Dufour and Giraud 2005) In Quebec, a national chapter was created by the FFQ. However, it was not limited to FFQ's members and it became the widest and more diverse feminist coalition in the history of the women's movement, including women's groups that don't usually collaborate with the FFQ. In 2000, the coalition adopted a common political platform that included 21 official demands, including demands specific to immigrant and racialized women. This was the first time that a wide coalition representing very diverse women's groups was able to unite behind a

single political platform. It was also the first time that the FFQ, which is often considered to represent the mainstream feminist movement, supported demands targeted directly at these women. The same year, the FFQ created the *Comité des femmes des communautés culturelles*, a sub-committee in charge of representing the interests of women from cultural communities and in 2003, the fight against racism became a part of the FFQ's declaration of principles.

Different factors might explain why the WMW was able to attract such a diversity of groups at the international as well as at the local levels. First, the will to bring the highest possible number of groups into the coalition was part of a visibility strategy. In Quebec, feminists knew that one of the reasons that their 1995 *Marche du pain et des roses* had been so successful was because strategic innovation (walking 200 kilometres to the parliament) had earned them a lot of media attention. In order for the WMW to have the same impact, it had to attract the highest number of supporters possible. More importantly, the need to include a wide variety of organizations stemmed from legitimacy concerns. Because of the transnational character of the coalition, no single organization could pretend to speak for every woman. In national contexts, some organizations, especially those with older and more established ties to the governments, might usually be considered as “the voice” of feminist movements and not necessarily feel a pressure to include every organization with feminist claims in their activities. For example, in Quebec, the FFQ is often considered to be the “legitimate” representative of the feminist movement, especially by the media and governmental institutions. But in the context of the March, Western feminist movements had to respond to the critiques of Third-World Women that denounced their claims to represent all women.

Legitimacy concerns also pushed movements at the local level to cooperate with groups that might usually be ignored. In Quebec, the FFQ and other mainstream organizations collaborated, in many cases for the first time, with ethnic- and racial-based women's groups. This was in part due to the fact that these local groups (and their demands) were supported by feminist organizations in other countries. In fact, because they are very often composed of immigrant women who are also concerned about the situation in their countries of origin, many ethnic-based organizations had international alliances prior to their involvement in the World March of Women. Some of these organizations were first mobilized to participate to the WMW through their international networks rather than through the Québécois chapter.

These groups also played a very important role in widening the mobilization potential of the movement by mobilizing their international and civil society networks.

But the most important impact of the WMW on the Québécois women's movement was certainly the fact that it widened its analyses to new perspectives that include relationships of power other than gender. From the very beginning of the negotiations aimed at determining the WMW's political platform, a global perspective that highlighted the impact and interactions of gender, class and race was adopted, making possible the formation of a very wide and diverse feminist coalition. This came from the perspectives of Third-World women who insisted on bringing back the conceptual link between Third-World Women's oppression and Western Women's privilege, making visible the intertwined character of gender, race and class. As a result, an anti-colonial and anti-capitalist analysis was adopted. In the end, the political platform contained themes that were not traditional feminist claims or that might not even be considered priorities in the light of a gender-first perspective such as the protection of natural resources, the redistribution of wealth between developed and Third-World countries and the elimination of tax havens. In Quebec, this whole process was facilitated by the fact that some local women's organizations, particularly ethnic-based organizations that tend to work in parallel with the feminist movement, already carried a more global, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist perspective. The existence of these groups made it easier for Québécois feminists to develop new perspectives on local issues because they had already developed a global analysis of Québécois issues. In fact, many of the demands pertaining to minority women's rights that were supported by the coalition in the context of the WMW were demands that had been carried by these organizations for many years.

Some activists would certainly argue that the impact of the WMW on Québécois feminists was limited because they quickly went back to the more traditional spheres of feminism. However, their participation in the March did increase organizations' awareness and openness towards different feminist analyses. It also pushed them to develop new ties with a variety of civil society actors, such as the *Confederation of National Trade Unions*, the Common Front of Welfare Recipients and the Collective for a Poverty-Free Quebec and the *Québec Association of International Cooperation Organizations*, which has also contributed in widening their analyses. Finally, new collaboration practices were developed. For example, the FFQ, which has always worked with a general assembly that includes individual and

collective members (organizations) where decisions are taken following a majority rule now allows for active (becoming members) or more informal, as well as frequent or less frequent participation by organizations. This allows for the formation of punctual coalitions with organizations, such as some racial- and ethnic-based organizations, that work on feminist issues but prefer not to become members of the FFQ. As I will show later, many activists consider that the WMW was a fundamental event in the history of the movement and affirm that it was the moment when they started adopting the language of intersectionality to describe their commitment at including minority women and to add race and ethnicity to their traditional feminist analyses.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS TODAY

As previously mentioned, my sample is equally divided between three types of organizations; general "mainstream" organizations, organizations targeting immigrants or minority women in a general manner and organizations representing a specific ethnic, racial or cultural group. Some organizations work at the national or municipal level, but most of them are grassroots organizations that target mainly the population of a particular neighborhood. Because they are situated in Montreal where almost a fifth of the population is foreign-born (Canada 2005), all of these organizations have a diverse membership. While immigrant and ethnic-based organizations tend to have a staff that reflects the ethnic composition of their membership, this is not necessarily the case for mainstream organizations. Finally, mainstream women's organizations tend to be older and more established and to have a bigger membership and more financial resources than the others. In this section, I will review some characteristics of the organizations included in my sample and of Québécois women's organizations more generally.

4.1 Activities

The organizations included in my sample reflect the variety of activities that women's organizations in Quebec engage in. In fact, as previously mentioned, a large number of women's organizations engage to some extent in advocacy work as well as in some kind of service provision. From the 24 organizations selected, 21 do advocacy work on a regular basis, 16 engage in collective action such as demonstrations and disruptive protests, 21 have popular education programs and 19 provide services, including integration services for 18 of them. The services provided are very diverse and include psycho-social intervention, language courses, legal aid, interpreter services, social activities, computer classes, day care, employment and accommodation research support, free meals, health information, referrals services, citizenship training and intercultural activities.

4.2 Coalition-work

Coalition-work has been an important feature of the women's movement since its inception. In many cases, it followed a need to share very scarce resources and information among organizations involved in different fields of action, a need that increased with the shift towards service provision. Coalition building also stems from legitimacy concerns and from the need to present a united front towards the government, especially when political opportunity structures are contracting. Most (but not all) women's organizations today are members of the FFQ or take part to some extent in its activities. Organizations also form short-term coalitions to work on particular issues or to participate in events such as *les États Généraux de l'action et de l'analyse féministes* or the World March of Women (at the international, national or local level).

Most of the organizations in my sample are members of the *Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal* and many of them are members of the *R des centres de femmes du Québec* and the *Table régionale des centres de femmes*. They also participate to different steering committees to work on particular issues such as domestic violence (ex.: Table de concertation en violence conjugale de Montréal), health (ex.: Réseau d'action pour la santé des femmes - RAFSSS), immigration (ex.: through the women committee of the *TCRI*), employability (ex.: Regroupement québécois des organismes de développement de l'employabilité) and sexual violence (ex.: c.a.l.a.c.s. - Regroupement des centres d'aides et de lutte contre les agressions sexuelles). Many organizations are also involved in the *Milieu communautaire* (ex.: RIOCM - Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal) and in their neighborhoods on committees that work on topics such as youth and childhood, immigration, civil rights, poverty, etc.

4.3 Funding

Many women's community organizations in Quebec (and most organizations in my sample) receive funding from the three levels of government for the provision of integration services. (Beyene et al 1996; Richmond 1996; Richmond and Shields 2005). As part of the

Milieu communautaire, they also receive funding from the provincial government through the *Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome*. This program funds grassroots organizations devoted to protecting the rights of excluded groups, including women and ethnic minorities. In 2000, it provided them with an average annual subvention of 20 000\$ (White 2001) and during the fiscal year 2011-2012, the provincial government spent \$882,9 millions in funding to different types of community organizations through eight different government agencies. (Québec 2012) For a majority of the organizations in my sample, the funding from these two sources represented the biggest part of their total income. The rest of their funding usually came from one or several of the following sources: le Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux du Québec, le Secrétariat à la condition féminine pour l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes du Québec, Condition féminine Canada, le Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, le Ministère de la famille du Québec, la Ville de Montréal (or directly from municipal deputies), la Conférence religieuse canadienne - région du Québec, Emploi Québec and Centraide. Finally, some organizations also collect membership fees, receive donations or organize fund-raising activities.

4.4 Cultural / Political ethnic- and racial-based organizing

As previously mentioned, many ethnic- and racial-based organizations were created in the last thirty years in response to a perceived "need in the community", with the goal of providing services that are culturally-adapted to the needs of immigrant women. The creation of these organizations did not necessarily, as we could be tempted to think, rely on a belief in the necessity of defending a particular political constituency composed of women from an ethnic or racial minority group with specific interests. In other words, the idea behind their creation wasn't to challenge the political discourse of the mainstream movement or to carry different demands that would be considered as specific to minority women.

Among ethnic- and racial-based organizations, only a small number adopts this discourse on the necessity of recognizing the specific political interests of minority groups. These organizations, which tend to emphasize race and class struggles in their discourses, to adopt an anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist perspective and to denounce the power relations inside the women's movement, differ from other organizations in their political platforms. In

fact, most of them focus on issues that are not supported by the mainstream movement or that are not perceived as being "gender issues". For instance, they will take a stand on issues such as the Israel/Palestine conflict or the Iraq war. They also work at a different level; most of them tend to have very limited contacts with government officials and public agencies and only limited ones with broad feminist coalitions. However, they often participate in transnational coalitions, something that other women's organizations only seldom do. Many of them also have frequent contacts with women's organizations in the countries of origin of their constituents. For this reason, they tend to be very active on issues related to immigration and integration.

PART III: ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 5

DEFINING INCLUSION

The process, by which race and ethnicity became important categories of analysis for the women's movement and the inclusion of minority women, a priority, has stretched over a long period. But when talking to activists from women's organizations today, it becomes clear that an overwhelming majority considers race, ethnicity or immigration, terms that they tend to use interchangeably, as identity categories that should be taken into account in their interactions with women inside organizations. However, as some scholars have argued, a normative commitment to intersectionality might, in practice, take several forms. (Lépinard 2011; Townsend-Bell 2011) In this chapter, I argue that these forms are strongly determined by the way in which feminists conceptualize "race" and "ethnicity".

Activists' particular understandings of racial and ethnic differences often derive from the type of activities that they engage in and from their organizations' relationships with the state, and these conceptions shape the way in which they choose to address the different problems faced by immigrant women. For instance, I will argue that when differences are conceived as mainly "cultural" and "individual", difficulties faced by immigrant and racialized women (such as discrimination in the labor market or difficulties to access public services and resources) are believed to be the result of cultural incomprehension, a problem that can be dealt with at the individual level. In this case, activists will attempt to "adapt" their work to these differences instead of challenging the power structures that create and maintain them.

5.1 The necessity to be "inclusive"

Even though Québécois feminists might not agree on the ways in which race and ethnicity should be taken into account, their relevance for feminist analysis and discourse isn't an issue of debate anymore in the women's movement. Thus, the idea that feminists should focus only on gender, for the sake of unity, is no longer shared by a majority of activists. For

example, an activist from the FFQ explains how the acknowledgment of the non-homogeneous character of the "women" category has strongly impacted the work of her association:

"It is clear that the way in which we work with diversity has influenced the way we see things. Our solidarity declaration with Aboriginal women, it also reflects a new way to work...now we believe that it is possible that not every feminist identifies with the Fédération [FFQ]. (...) We work in solidarity with Aboriginal women, we support them, but we don't pretend to represent them." (09)¹

The inclusion of minority women and the consideration of their specific needs has become more than a somewhat important issue; most activists, whether they work in mainstream, multicultural or racial- and ethnic-based organizations, mention it when discussing what they believe to be the priorities of the women's movement today.

For example, the same activist from the FFQ explains that feminists have:

"To be able to look into specificities, because it isn't true that being a Black woman who was born in Quebec, to be a woman with a precarious status, to be a temporary worker...is the same thing. And that it's the same thing than being a lesbian woman, a disabled woman, or all of this at the same time." (09)

Similarly, the director of a women's center for immigrant and racialized women explains that its mission is:

"To support socio-economically disadvantaged women of diverse origins. That's our main goal. There are three aspects: the intercultural aspect, the defense of women's rights, and the aspect of socio-economic disadvantage. (...) I follow the approach that goes at the roots of the problems. I believe that at the roots of the problems, there is a question of race, of course. There is a question of oppression at that level. There is an issue of gender oppression,

¹ The numbers in parantheses that follow quotations in chapter 5 to 9 identify the interviews from which they were taken. See appendix for details on the characteristics of the interviewees and of the organizations to which they are attached.

and there is the issue of capitalism. And it is certain that we defend women's rights, but also the rights of women of diverse origins." (O18)

These activists' comments certainly reflect their belief that women constitute a diverse group and that specificities, and not just commonalities, must be highlighted to foster inclusion. And the way in which activists understand and conceptualize these "specificities" that they perceive as being important identity characteristics for women strongly determines their strategies for inclusion.

5.2 Difference as "cultural"

As previously explained, most organizations in my sample started providing services (or were created) in the 1980s or 1990s following the degradation of the feminist movement's relationship with the government and the reduction in welfare spending and when funding became available through integration, multiculturalism, and Community action programs. Hence, as service providers situated in Montreal, where 20.6 % of the population is foreign-born (Statistique Canada 2006) and where racialized and immigrant women constitute 50 % of the female population (Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal 2010), they have to welcome a very diverse constituency. Moreover, since an important part of the immigrant population faces a socioeconomic disadvantage, immigrants are, in many areas, the main beneficiaries of community services. In response to this diversity, most women's organizations have developed, in the last thirty years, new programs and services targeted specifically at immigrant women. For example, Julie, coordinator of an organization working in the domain of domestic violence, explains that:

"In Montreal, of course, we are situated in a multicultural milieu, so one of our first priorities is the question of screening and adapting intervention to the realities of ethno-cultural communities." (O7)

Camilla, the coordinator of an immigrant women's center, tells a similar story:

"We have around 70% of immigrant women in our neighbourhood. Our center reflects our neighbourhood, our society. We have a lot of immigrant women. (...) So we have to adapt to the women's profile, particularly to the

women who come in frequently. We try to adapt our activities. For immigrant women, we have certain services.” (O14)

Attending to the needs of an increasingly diverse population by adapting services and assuring their accessibility has become the seemingly logical way of "including". This particular response to diversity certainly reflects a change in mentalities. In fact, women's organizations used to favor a color-blind approach, even though Montréal has been an important immigration-receiving city for a long time. The fact that these practices seem to be the "logical response" to diversity reveals the status conferred to ethnic or racial differences; they are believed to be important identity categories that translate into specific needs. However, as I will argue later, this doesn't mean that activists consider that minority women as a group have specific political interests that are different from those of majority women. Instead, those needs are often associated with individual characteristics that constitute women's "specificities". As Jane Ku has argued, this "culturalization" of services and policies tends to depoliticize antiracist and anticolonial struggles by situating difference in individuals rather than in historical and transnational relations of power. (2009) Interestingly, this approach to diversity is also found in many ethnic- and racial-based organizations, especially when they were created to provide services to women from a particular origin, but not with the goal of defending their "specific" interests.

Activists' responses to a question about the consequences for their organization of having a diverse membership are very revealing of the way in which ethnic and racial differences are conceived of. In many cases, responses focus on cultural traditions and the fact that women enjoy sharing them. For example, discussing the membership of her organization, the coordinator of a women's center for Black women explains that:

“I would prefer to say that diversity is better because if it's just all from the same [origin], you don't learn as much. (...) I think that diversity is really great because...like when we prepare our meal...We have somebody from Bangladesh who is gonna prepare a chicken in a different way than somebody from the West-Indies would prepare a chicken. And they use a different kind of spice... ‘What kind of spice is that? Where do you get this? How do you know?’ They might buy a vegetable and prepare it this way as opposed to this and it's interesting what you learn.” (O5)

Similarly, an activist from a center for immigrant and racialized women describes the benefits of diversity:

“It really helps you to see that beliefs don't exist only in one culture and it helps to see the things that are weird in your own culture (...) Interculturality is a wealth. There are no tensions; it's all about sharing and discoveries.”
(O18)

In intersectionality literature, differences are highly politicized and are described as the result of a situation of oppression. For instance, Crenshaw explains how Black women's specific interests have been marginalized within the American women's movement and within the Civil Rights Movement. She argues that this reality reflects the race and gender power dynamics that exist within society, but also inside social movements. (1989; 1991a) The perspective here, which is found in a majority of mainstream and immigrant organizations, is slightly different: difference is understood mostly in terms of culture and not as a social construct reflecting and reinforcing domination structures. In other words: “diversity is seen as a condition of human existence rather than as the effect of an enunciation of difference that constitutes hierarchies and asymmetries of power.” (Scott 1995)

In this case, racial or ethnic differences are perceived as fundamental givens and not as categories constructed around a shared experience of domination. Hence, they shouldn't be put into question or "deconstructed", but recognized and valorized. This reflects the Canadian ideology of multiculturalism in which cultural diversity is valorized and considered to be a major component of Canadian identity. (Kymlicka 1998; Bloemraad 2006a; 2006b) In this context, including minority women means accepting them as they are and respecting their differences, which are believed to constitute an important aspect of their identity. And because cultural differences are perceived as being natural, it is also seen as natural that they would lead to incomprehension and apprehension. In this context, the discomfort or tensions that might arise between women of different origins are perceived as the natural reactions of people who encounter "difference".

This particular conception of difference, as something mainly cultural, also shapes the way in which activists conceptualize the different difficulties that immigrant women face in the public sphere. (Ku 2009) For example, when asked if immigrant women might face discrimination in the labor market, two social workers that work respectively for an Italian women's center and for an employability organization for recent immigrants responded:

"No. Not necessarily. That's not the first concern. And the employer, in fact, he is just afraid to deal with a newcomer because... Will he arrive on time? Will he need to pray five times a day inside the firm? Will he ask for holidays when he has religious celebrations?" (O4)

"Well we are all like that, you know... We have experiences... If you have a Moroccan boyfriend and it didn't end well, you're gonna have stereotypes on them, you know. Firms... it's the same thing. So if it goes well, they want more people from this nationality. If it doesn't go well, they don't ever want to hear about it again. So we just need to relativize." (O13)

In these cases, racism is perceived as reflecting personal problems of comprehension, something natural that should be dealt with at the individual level, rather than something institutional. When describing the difficulty of immigrant women to find a job, the caseworker from the employability organization explains that:

"At some point, the employer also needs to be open towards this labor force that he will not have the choice to hire. And he needs to understand that cultural codes are different, and that both sides need to adjust to that." (O13)

The same type of explanations (and solutions) are suggested when tensions occur between members of an organization for immigrant and racialized women...

"Of course there are diverging opinions, and we work to deconstruct prejudices about women of diverse origins, not necessarily Québécois women. For example, there were South American women that had prejudices towards Arab women. The issue of "them" and "us." That is something that we work on. There is a lot of work to do to develop women's awareness." (O18)

or when a caseworker from a multicultural women's center disagrees with the woman she is trying to help:

"Do we take into account cultural differences? We have to...for the food, the time at which the activities begin, but also ideas about the way to raise children, the place of women in society...They tell us what they think and how it works in their communities. (...) Are there frictions sometimes? Yes. We are not perfect. Sometimes we say something and then realize: oops... we made a mistake. But I think that's all part of the job." (O12)

Thus, immigrant or racialized women are not necessarily believed to be marginalized on account of their race or ethnicity, but to be individuals that fundamentally think, behave and communicate differently, a reality that explains their difficulty to understand (and be understood by) other women. And it is the inability of women's organizations to take these differences into account that is believed to have prevented them from "including" immigrant and racialized women in the past.

5.3 Cultural differences, cultural needs

Because it is believed that immigrant and racialized women's exclusion from the women's movement derived from their cultural differences, and the reactions of incomprehension or individual racism that they fostered, their "needs" are often described in terms of recognition. Thus, they are considered as having specific needs that are different from that of majority women, but these needs are not understood as they usually are in intersectionality literature.

First, these particular needs are of a cultural nature. In most cases, there is a sense that services provided by women's organizations need to be "culturally adapted" and that they are not inclusive when they don't take into account cultural specificities. In fact, as previously explained, it is this understanding of the nature of minority women's needs (rather than a belief in shared political interests) that was, in many cases, the impetus for the creation of new organizations.

When asked why she believes that there is a need for organizations targeted specifically at the Muslim community, the coordinator of an organization that works in the field of domestic violence explains:

“I see that there are many organizations that offer something for all immigrants and it is not something specific, even though domestic violence, parent-children relations...they are very specific issues, culturally speaking.” (O16)

Similarly, explaining the creation of an organization devoted to women from South-Asia, a social worker states:

“The organization was founded in 1981. There were many women who came to Canada at the time that were very isolated. So they started a sisterhood. (...) Because of the languages and the cultures, people can come and talk and if there is anything they need to know... so the language and the culture play a large role in our services.” (O21)

The main idea here is that immigrant women should be provided services that are culturally sensitive and specific, which should foster their inclusion in the women's movement, but also in society in general. These practices certainly reflect the way in which feminists conceive of racial and ethnic differences, but also women's organizations' relationship with the state. In fact, in the last 20 to 30 years, women's organizations have become important actors in the field of immigrant integration, along with other state and private institutions with which they share similar practices. Because they are financed by the state, women's organizations are constrained in the way they define problems and design solutions and the services they provide can be considered as a type of "policy delivery." (Lipsky 1980; Wolch 1990; Bhuyan 2012)

Providing services that are "culturally adapted" is far from being an original feature of the women's movement. In fact, it has become a major concern of public institutions, and subsequently of private agencies and third-sector organizations, following the adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy. (McAll, Tremblay and LeGoff 1997) In many fields of public policy such as health, social services and education, approaches that are sensitive to cultural differences and diversity management practices have been developed and adopted (Gagnon 2011; Roy, Legault and Rachédi 2008) and researches were done to assess the accessibility of health (Bibeau 1987; McAll, Tremblay and Le Goff 1997; Battaglini et al 2007), mental health (Boulanger and Baubnan 2007; Cohen-Émérique 1993), familial mediation services

(Blanchard 1999), youth centers (Chiasson-Lavoie and Roc 2000) and women's shelters (Bhuyan 2012), among others.

In some cases, ethnic or racial women's organizations in Quebec were created so that women from a particular community could receive services provided by women from the same community. In fact, many activists believe that women who belong to the same community will naturally understand each other, which is reflected in the way in which they describe the benefits of cultural proximity in intervention work. For example, two workers (who work respectively for an Italian and a Muslim organization) believe that:

“There is a certain comprehension of how it works...the traditions in the family...how they work. We understand how...We understand the culture. We understand how it happens in our families. When you explain something to someone who has the same culture, who has the same beliefs, who has a family with the same practices...I think you feel like you are not being judged. I think that’s what it is...” (O4)

“When it comes to newcomers, I believe that if the person is from the same culture, it’s gonna be easier. They trust you more easily. They are more open. (...) If a person describes a situation to me... describes the degree of gravity... the understanding of what she is going through... that is something that I can decode. But an intervention worker that is not from the same culture (...) sometimes there are messages that she can’t understand.” (O16)

In these cases, workers from a particular community are believed to be able to act as a bridge between their community and the host society (Spivak 1988; Wood 2001), providing services that are not culturally biased (Reitz 1995; Beyene et al 1996; Das Gupta 1999; Weinfeld 1999) and "translating" these women's particular needs to other caseworkers and institutions. (Narayan 1988; Lemercier 2009)

Again, the creation of these racial- or ethnic-based organizations did not rely on a belief that their constituents shared political interests. In fact, what women from the same community are believed to share are not political interests or a common experience of oppression, but cultural values, ways of living and worldviews. In this context, "difference" does not necessarily imply specific political interests.

5.4 Culture, integration and individual needs

In these organizations that adopt a "culturalized" perspective of race and ethnicity, immigrants' needs are conceived not only as cultural, but also as individual (as opposed to group needs / interests). In some cases, they will be associated to an individual characteristic related to a woman's culture. For example, describing the difficulties encountered by non-Jewish social workers that intervene in the Orthodox Jewish community, Mélanie explains:

“Well one reason, for sure... These communities are very, very... it is very particular what their beliefs are...their identity (...) So it is not in their nature to come share their problems with other people. And also, they are not people who are going to mix with others who are not from their community.”
(O2)

Cassandra, the coordinator of an organization providing services to Black women who are mothers of young children describes a similar situation:

“So when it was originally formed, the reason for that was because... at the beginning it was through the CLSC...the nurses observing that...a lot of young Black mothers were having children, but they were not taking advantage of the resources that were there. So they felt that they were in isolation. So how to get them out of isolation? They figured that if we started a program and may be if the person who talks has the same origin, may be it will be easier for them to relate, to feel more comfortable.” (O5)

Both these workers described how their particular values and cultural practices render women from particular communities uncomfortable in mainstream services. Here, the inclusivity of those services is not questioned, and the feeling of exclusion is not related to a system of power relations that could exist inside those services or more generally, in Québécois society. Instead, it is associated to a personality trait deriving from their belonging to a cultural group. And the difference that is perceived is described in an essentialist way, as something natural.

The needs of immigrant or racialized women can also be associated to a difficulty of integrating into the Québécois society. In these cases, they are not related to their belonging to a particular minority group, but to the experience of immigration. For example, when asked if

immigrants have specific needs in terms of employment, the caseworker of an employability association responded:

“Of course...because they are new to the Québécois society. What should he buy for a winter coat? Where should he buy it? How should he address an employer? Is he being unpleasant or not? Does he arrive on time? So these are all things that are very important, but they are invisible or impalpable for a newcomer...so our duty is to inform them. (...) And there might also be a crisis where they question the host society... So there is a crisis of self-esteem...of acceptance of the Québécois society. So they need to re-equilibrate.” (O13)

To conclude, these "specific needs" of immigrant and racialized women are very often conceived as cultural or immigration-related needs that should be addressed at the individual level by providing services adapted to these populations, and resources that are accessible to them. However, as I will argue in the subsequent chapters, ethnic- and racial-based organizations that were created to defend the rights of women from a particular origin might offer an alternative to this cultural perspective.

No matter the way in which race and ethnicity are understood, because organizations inscribe their activities in the women's movement, they have to describe how these specificities that affect the conditions of minority women relate to their situation as women. As I will argue in the next chapter, the way in which race and ethnicity are conceived in the women's movement often makes it difficult for women's organizations to conceptualize the interconnected impacts of gender and race/ethnicity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCEPTUALIZING INTERSECTIONALITY

With their commitment to the inclusion of immigrant and racialized women, Québécois women's organizations had to find a way to describe the combined effect of gender and race / ethnicity in a way that would allow for a more inclusive movement to develop, and at the same time, for solidarity to be preserved. In this section, I will describe the difficulties faced by certain activists as they attempt to integrate the language of intersectionality into their traditional feminist analyses. I will argue that a tendency to conceptualize sexism as a structural or systemic phenomenon, and racism as mainly the product of individual interactions, leads to the development of an "additive" perspective on discrimination. I will show that while this type of perspective allows feminists to preserve the idea of a universal "woman experience", it tends to depoliticize racial and ethnic relations. This necessarily fosters tensions with feminists that consider race or ethnicity as fundamental aspects of their identity.

6.1 Adopting the language of intersectionality

Western feminist projects have relied since a long time on the construction of a homogenous "Women" category and on a conception of gender as being the most fundamental social relation. (see Lépinard 2005; 2007 on the French context) Because of this "conceptual legacy", and of the fact that recognizing the heterogeneity of the Women category would highlight the existence of conflicting interests among different groups of women, adding race and ethnicity to the feminist analysis isn't easy and requires the development of new conceptual tools.

In Quebec, it seems that in the last few years, the FFQ has appropriated the language of intersectionality to describe its commitment at including immigrant and racialized women, but also Aboriginal, disabled, lesbian and socioeconomically disadvantaged women. This followed the adoption of the "fight against racism and discrimination specific to women from cultural communities and visible minorities" as part of the Fédération's official declaration of

principles in 2003 (Fédération des femmes du Québec 2003). It was also prompted by the creation, in January 2000, of the *Comité des femmes des communautés culturelles* (CFCC), following the FFQ's participation in the World March of Women. This subcommittee of the FFQ, which is composed mostly of immigrant and racialized women, was formed at first to address the issue of immigrant women's organizations' funding. Its mandate, which was later widened, is to:

"defend the rights and interests of women from ethnocultural communities as a marginalized group, by fostering the openness of the women's movement to cultural diversity and national and international solidarity and reinforcing the relationship between women from cultural communities and visible minorities and women from the majority." (Fédération des femmes du Québec 2007)

As a member of the CFCC recalls:

"We have had this committee for ten years now, since the World March of Women in 2000. This March is an important moment in our reflection process. We have decided to widen our perspective to consider multiple discriminations and also to think in terms of and to apply the intersectional analysis. (...) We wanted this fight against discriminations to be totally integrated into the Fédération's work." (O9)

This commitment to the adoption of intersectional analyses and practices by the FFQ was also reiterated in 2012, during the organization of *Les États généraux*, a long process of reflection that is planned to last for a year and a half. The main goal of this forum, organized by the FFQ, is to reassemble the highest number of feminist groups possible, including organizations that are or are not formal members or partners of the FFQ, in order to establish a list of priorities for the women's movement. In the summer of 2012, a working group was created to determine the topics on which feminists should focus during the process. They have established seven main themes, one of them being "intersections of oppression and alliances." The goal that has been set is:

"To promote the development of anti-oppression and anti-racist feminist practices concerned about power relations and the intersections of oppressions and privileges. This will aim at reflecting and guaranteeing a respect of diversity and the inclusion of every woman in the feminist movement and in society by developing spaces of dialogue, formation and privileges deconstruction. This will be done by paying special attention to marginalized women in order to make the participation and recognition of every feminist, in all their diversity, efficient." (États généraux de l'action et de l'analyse féministes 2012)

Most women in my sample have also mentioned using intersectionality in their intervention work or knowing other women in their organizations who do so. Hence, it seems that intersectional reasoning has also penetrated women's grassroots organizations, whether they are members of the FFQ or not. However, even though many feminists in Québec might use the language of intersectionality, this doesn't mean that their analyses reflect the concept of intersectionality as it was developed in the feminist literature and so, that it had the impact that should be intended on their practices, political platforms and capacity to engage in coalition work. However, intersectionality has certainly provided feminists with new tools to define and practice inclusion.

For Québécois feminists, using intersectional analyses should mean to consider racism (and the fight against other discriminations) not just as a side issue, but as something that should be considered all the time in their feminist analysis, in its interaction with gender. Hence, it means that anti-racism or equality between women should become a fundamental element of the feminist project, along with gender equality. As this activist from the FFQ explains:

"The basis of the women's movement is to work on common things. But we also need to have this double transversal perspective to be capable to look at specificities. (...) We want this fight against discriminations to be totally integrated into our work. We really want this axis to be transversal in our work. It is important that we considerer racism, but also other discriminations, to take into account all discriminations together according to the intersectional perspective." (O9)

Similarly, an intervention worker from a women's center explains:

"Of course, in every issue that we approach, we always want to consider these themes of immigration and racism... always consider these themes that have to do with women's diversity... so we make sure that we consider that at every level. Transversal, as we say." (O23)

Even if there is a will to describe gender and race relations as two forces that have an interactive impact on women, the way in which these categories are conceptualized makes it difficult for feminists to describe how they relate to each other.

6.2 Structural Sexism / Individual Racism

Intersectionality theory was developed as a critique of the "identity politics" approach, which posits that the possibility for collective action relies on a logic of group solidarity related to a shared experience of oppression. (Hancock 2007) The assumption that intersectionality debunks is that of the homogeneity of these groups (Women, Afro-American, workers, etc.) and of their interests. For intersectionality scholars, an analysis that relies on the study of gender, race or class relations alone is flawed because it denies the fact that at the intersection of these axes lie subcategories with specific social experiences and hence, political interests. Intersectionality theory also denounces the practical consequences of identity politics for intersectional subgroups (i.e. the marginalization of their political interests inside single-identity based movements.)

The main assumption on which relies intersectionality theory is that of the interactional character of relations of gender, race and class (and other intersecting axes) that constitute the "matrix of domination". (Crenshaw 1989; 1991a; Collins 1990; Hancock 2004; 2007; Simien 2006; Weldon 2006a; Kantola and Nousianen 2009) Hence, the relationship between these categories, which remains an open empirical question, is at the heart of intersectionality research. For example, gender and race are assumed to interact to create a particular social experience that can't be reduced to the simple addition of these categories. Even though intersectionality scholars haven't described the exact nature of this "interactive" impact (which means that the effects of race and gender can't be isolated or considered as

being more or less important), this assumption relies on the idea that gender and race are systems of oppression that function in similar ways. Gender and race interact because their impact on individuals is similar: they create a particular experience of oppression/privilege. In fact, many feminist scholars have relied on comparisons with racism and classism to develop their analyses of sexism (Spelman 1988, 115) and critical race scholars have adopted a similar approach to explain the creation of "difference". (Dhamoon 2009)

What makes it difficult for Québécois feminists (and particularly for activists from older and more established feminist organizations) to conceptualize the interactive character of race and gender is the fact that they conceive of sexism and racism as very different objects. Very often, they describe sexism as being structural or systemic, but racism as something that happens at the individual level. In this case, women are described in a similar way that in the identity politics approach, as a group that shares a somewhat universal experience (even if women have some specificities) and political interests. As a feminist from a publicly funded organization that advises the government on issues pertaining to the status of women explains:

"Patriarchy is the system on which the Québécois society is constructed, like every other society in the world. It is very anchored so of course, we don't change cultures that exist since a thousand years at least. The group "women" is marginalized because of gender and we haven't gotten out of systemic inequalities." (O15)

On the opposite, race and ethnicity, as explained in the precedent chapter, are often culturalized and related to individual identity characteristics and not to a shared social experience. In other words, for these activists, while racism is about incomprehension and apprehension and can be fought at the individual level by fostering inclusive and tolerant behavior, sexism is a type of systemic discrimination that calls for structural changes. By describing in such different ways the impact of gender and race, feminists isolate the experience of sexism, which then makes it difficult for them to conceptualize its relationship with racism.

6.3 Additive intersectionality

While intersectionality theory emphasizes the interactive character of gender and race, activists from women's organizations in Québec, even when they use the language of intersectionality, often describe oppression and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, race or class in a way that reflects an "additive" perspective. In other words, they consider that discrimination is "exacerbated" or "worst" for minority women than it is for privileged (usually white) women. They often describe this idea by referring to "multiple oppressions," "double" (or triple) discriminations or an "extra layer" of discrimination. Hence, feminist organizations haven't developed a perspective that truly steps away from the additive understanding of discrimination and addresses its interactive character. In this case, both categories of difference (race/ethnicity and gender) are recognized as relevant, but not as co-extensive. For example, two activists explain:

"For immigrant women, the need is very regular in the forms of discriminations that they might encounter, not only because they are women, but also immigrant women, which means that they are discriminated twice as much. (...)"

"The first and main problem is the patriarchal society that has always dominated women... And before being a Black, disabled, Muslim or Catholic woman, you are a woman first. (...) Of course, if you look at the impact on immigrant women or disabled women, the impact might be stronger or exacerbated. Or if you look, you see that Black women are more discriminated against than white women...But it is women who are discriminated."

This difficulty of some feminist organizations to conceptualize issues of gender, race and class as being interconnected also stems from their conceptual legacy. (West and Fenstermaker 1995 ; Lépinard 2007 ; 2013) In fact, this additive perspective that allows organizations to focus consecutively on one category of oppression also reflects a more individualist conception of women's emancipation that can be traced back to the development of radical feminism. In the 1970s, many Western feminists parted from communist and socialist perspectives that they believed prioritized class over gender issues. In order to affirm the autonomy of the feminist movement and to prioritize the fight against patriarchy, feminist

movements had to conceptualize women as a homogenous group defined by a common oppression. This new conception of gender oppression delegitimized analyses that linked it to other axes of oppression. (Giraud 2001; Lépinard 2005) This didn't mean that feminists couldn't recognize the importance of class or race issues, but rather that it rendered the conceptual interconnectedness invisible.

In Canada, this individualist perspective has been further reinforced by legal definitions of discrimination. In fact, many feminist organizations have, very often successfully, concentrated their activism on the legal arena. Feminists and other minority groups have made important gains through the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This document provides minorities with an important tool to fight against different sources of oppression, but the focus is on individual rights, using a language that makes the recognition of discrimination on more than one basis very difficult. (Lépinard 2010) This reality was also denounced by Crenshaw in the American context. (1989; 1991a)

This "additive" intersectional perspective that is adopted by many Québécois women's organizations means that activists believe that racism, for example, adds an extra burden on a universal sexism experience that can be isolated to act as a unifying factor for all women, but also as a problem that can be analyzed and worked on separately. Hence, it causes conflicts of prioritization, a problem that also arises at the theoretical level. Although intersectionality scholars have argued that the salience of different categories of oppression varies over time and in different contexts (West and Fenstermaker 1995; Choo and Ferree 2010; Townsend-Bell 2011) when sexism and racism are considered separately, activists may not agree on which axes to consider in a particular context or if they should be considered as equally important. (Knapp 2005; Hancock 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006a; 2006b; García Bedolla 2007) And as I argue in the next section, this might prove even more problematic at the practical level.

6.4 Gender equality as the magic bullet

Conceptualizing intersectionality in an additive manner allows women's organizations to preserve the idea of a universal "woman experience", which would be challenged by the belief that sexism and racism interact to create a very specific experience for some minority

women. An example that very well reflects this is the way in which feminists describe how their condition as women, something universal, makes different experiences of oppression such as violence or poverty similar for every woman. For example, three workers that provide intervention work in women's centers explain:

"We have all this education aspect that attends to different needs of collectivizing women's problems that we sometimes believe are individual...collectivizing them to realize that in the end, our condition as women leads us to live certain things and in the end, we realize that because we are women, we go through the same thing." (O23)

"And violence... whether it is a Black woman that is victim of violence, or an Arab woman that is victim of violence... for me, it doesn't make a difference. Violence remains violence. The thing that we have in common is that we are women." (O22)

"We have women from 58 countries. In order: Canada, Morocco, Mexico, Haiti, Algeria, Egypt and the others. Last year, it was 57. How do we deal with that? Well as a basis, they are women... they have children or not, they want to live...and they want to find a job. They are women." (O12)

In these cases, gender transcends other power relations to create a common experience for every woman; race doesn't make the experience of violence, (or class, that of having difficulties finding a job) different. In fact, by positing a common experience of gender for all women, activists also make gender oppression more fundamental for women's experience and more salient for political explanation. In fact, patriarchy is described as being the main cause of women's problems (even if race might add an extra burden), an explanation that "fits" all organizations' members uniformly. This perspective allows activists to frame all issues as being mainly "gender issues" and to describe all their demands as being beneficial to every woman, which means that they should be supported by all women's groups. Hence, organizations tend to have political platforms with what they describe as being "universal" or "wide" issues.

Similarly, when activists describe the different and specific difficulties that immigrant and racialized women might encounter, they tend to focus on the impact of gender and make sense of them by inserting them into a more global analysis of patriarchy. For example, an

activist from a mainstream women's organization describes her understanding of discrimination in employment:

"In employment, immigrant women are very much discriminated against. If we look at the debate on the issue of domestic workers...The fact that they are women, especially from Black immigrant origin, they are in a field that is devalued socioeconomically... this adds up to the discrimination. But the first cause of discrimination is because they are women...before anything else. And after you add up, but if they were men, they would not live this discrimination in the first place. The proof is that immigrant men have a lower unemployment rate than immigrant women." (O15)

When activists mention "taking into account" race in their analysis and describe for which issues this arises, they usually focus on how women are more discriminated against than men within an ethnic, racial or immigrant group rather than focussing on how ethnic minorities are disadvantaged among women. In other words, they focus on how women are oppressed by sexism in a racial context. This allows them to describe minority women's needs in terms of gender oppression and men/women equality and also to render invisible the privileged situation of majority (white) women. As Spelman has argued, when other forms of oppression are simply added to sexism, the race and class identities (usually white and middle-class) of those who are labeled "women" are disguised. (1988) In this case, the emphasis is on patriarchy and apart from the fact that it doesn't affect every woman, the nature of the impact of racism in a situation of discrimination becomes unclear. Hence, immigrant and racialized women are considered as having quantitatively, but not qualitatively, different needs. In other words, gender is politicized while race or ethnicity isn't. Interestingly, the analysis is very similar when it comes to class issues. For example, when activists discuss women's poverty, it will very often be in terms of paid equity, economic autonomy and the fact that women are the main caretakers of children and the elderly, which limits their employment possibilities. Hence, economic disadvantage is described as something that affects all women, including middle class women, which are the ones that benefit the most from paid equity.

The framing of minority women's needs in terms of gender oppression might cause tensions with some activists from racial or ethnic minority groups whose condition as immigrants and workers is an important part of their identity and who have adopted a

discourse on the necessity of recognizing the specific political interests of minority groups. Two activists that work in organizations defending the rights of women from Third-World countries describe their perspective:

"Our objectives are really not only to look at women's issues from the gender perspective, but really to bring the analysis of the capitalist impact on women. Then it's not only looking up at patriarchy and gender equality, but at what are the processes whereby this works up...Violence against women is aggravated through the system that is in place or how it's also an interplay between the systems that are in place...capitalism and patriarchy. So it also means that we also include men to be part of the liberation of women. Ultimately, women can't be liberated without society being free. And of course, society includes men." (O8)

"We are feminists... but it's another idea about feminism. Our condition as women...we fight to change it. But the condition doesn't come only from gender exploitation, but also from our social condition, our race, our class. But we also fight...we want men of our class and from our social condition to support us. Because if we divide people, we can't progress... We can't progress if we don't invite men to fight with and for us." (O6)

As their comments show, these activists, who have a politicized understanding of race/ethnicity and class relations, might be reluctant to adopt a feminist identity that they perceive as being exclusive or incompatible with their feeling of solidarity towards men from their community.

6.5 Women's rights vs. religious rights issues

The additive perspective on intersectionality that prioritizes gender experience over race or ethnicity preserves solidarity between feminist organizations that do not have a politicized understanding of race/ethnicity and makes it easy for many feminists defending different groups of women to agree on important issues for women. However, there are certain topics that, for different reasons, including the way in which they are usually framed in the media, are harder to insert into a larger analysis of patriarchy that emphasizes the shared interests of women. These are the issues that seemingly pit gender rights against minority rights (very often religious rights) or the issues for which there is a sense that defending the

rights of minority women can only be done by making some sort of compromise with gender equality. Because there is a need to preserve the "We, Women" as a group that shares common rather than conflicting interests, women's organizations are reluctant to address these topics that can be divisive. And since the analysis of these issues is harder to make, organizations tend to avoid discussing them altogether.

Very often, these topics will be avoided by referring to the need to render the women's movement more inclusive and to the necessity of representing "every woman". In this case, the rhetoric highlights individual differences instead of diverging / conflicting political interests. An argument that will often be put forward is that cultural practices are individual choices and that every woman should be respected and recognized no matter what her personal choices are. In this context, taking a stand on these issues would risk alienating women who are members of women's organizations and hence, would be considered as akin to a type of racism. For example, even though the issue of bill 94 (a project of law prohibiting religious symbols in public institutions, for employees as well as service-receivers) was a very mediatized topic that fostered vehement debates in the public sphere, many women's organizations refrained from taking a public stand on it. When asked about it, the coordinator of a center for women of diverse origins explains:

"When you said: Wearing religious symbols...I just thought: 'Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!' Have we heard about it? Yes. Did we take a stand? No. Why not? Because it is very, very complicated. It's the topic...When we start on these topics, everybody becomes a little exasperated. It is not easy...and we have women who come here wearing the veil. (...) We haven't taken up a position. Because it's difficult...Because we have women who come from everywhere... The women's commentaries... the opinions are on both extremes. (...) Why the hell are they coming back on that topic?" (O12)

Since cultural differences are considered as individual traits before anything else, many organizations representing a particular ethnic or cultural group will also hesitate to take a stand on these controversial issues. Discussing her organization's choice not to take a stand on bill 94, the coordinator of a women's center for the Muslim community explains:

"We just don't believe that it is our place to have a political opinion about it. It's not part of our mandate. (...) The veil is something that is

religious. So for the same reason, even between us three who work here, we have so varied opinions about it... The clients that come in here have very different opinions about it. It doesn't make sense to ask to come out with one opinion and that's it. It doesn't exist, it doesn't exist in the Muslim world and it doesn't exist here. People come here and say that every woman should wear a hijab...Ok that's what your belief is and I won't challenge it. We have people coming and saying: Nobody should wear a hijab. Again, we won't challenge it. We respect everyone's belief, so that's why we are not gonna take a stand on it." (O3)

This prudent attitude towards "cultural" issues has been described by many scholars as a consequence of an understanding of diversity associated with multiculturalism that: "discourages people from naming and addressing intergroup tensions." (Kim 2004) What is interesting here is that, although communities are often described as very homogenous and as having static characteristics, there seems to be a consensus that on this kind of topics, the opinions are very diverse. For organizations that refuse to take stands on issues such as bill 94, the simple idea of doing so would be considered as a sign of close-mindedness or a form of racism. This carefulness with cultural issues certainly shows that minority rights are understood differently than women's rights. While the latter target a particular group, the former aim at protecting individual choices.

Although they are avoided by many organizations, these divisive issues might be important to some activists representing ethnic and racial minorities who sometimes resent the way in which they are framed by mainstream organizations. Thus, these activists often denounce this approach that describes taking a stand as a sign of close-mindedness. As an activist from an organization defending immigrant women's rights explains:

"A majority of immigrant women are completely furious about the way in which the feminist movement dealt with this issue. Why? Because they believe that this is treason. There are a lot of women in the world that fight against the veil!" (O24)

The more general problem that these activists decry is that women from their community are described as sharing interests with the larger "women" group, which denies the fact that they can also form a political constituency with particular interests. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this conflict also arises when organizations try to agree on common political platform.

CHAPTER 7

INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS, MULTIPLE OPPRESSIONS PLATFORMS

In intersectionality literature, inclusion is very often equated with whether or not claims of marginalized subgroups get included on the political agenda of an organization or coalition (Smith 1995; Weldon 2006b; Strolovitch 2006; 2007; Cole 2008; Townsend-Bell 2011). For this reason, it would seem logical that the adoption of the language of intersectionality by Québécois organizations would be accompanied by the inclusion of new claims specifically target at them on the organizations' agendas. However, a majority of these organizations have instead developed practices of inclusion that don't necessarily relate to their political platforms. In fact, even after the inclusion of minority women became a priority of the FFQ, a few years passed before it officially supported demands specific to immigrant and racialized women. As an activist who used to work at the FFQ and who is now very active in both feminist and immigrant organizations recalls:

"I would say that in 1992...with the Forum Pour un Québec féminin pluriel, the feminist movement said for the first time that it would no longer ignore the issue of cultural pluralism. But it remained an empty word. It is only later, very much later...It was with the World March of Women that we really started to see some changes." (O24)

For many feminists, the fact that the women's movement was able to carry specific demands for minority women during the World March of Women of 2000, although it was facilitated by the particular context in which the coalition was formed, was an indication that the wind had turned. For this to be possible, women's organizations had to acknowledge the relevance of race, ethnicity or immigration for feminist analysis. However, this alone would not necessarily suffice for minority women's specific interests to be taken into account in the future. The same activist describes her deception:

"For me, it never became concrete. The problem with the feminist movement since these years is that it has started to consider that [racism and discriminations], but it doesn't do it within its own ranks. If I wanna fight

against racism and discrimination within society, I need to see first how it happens in my home. But this was never done." (O24)

The way in which organizations conceptualize intersectionality has encouraged them to support certain particular claims that are directly targeted at minority women, but it hasn't pushed them, as this activist denounces, to re-evaluate their traditional feminist agendas. And the fact that some demands for minority women are being carried does not mean that activists don't disagree on which demands should put on the agenda. In fact, a commitment to intersectionality might explain that some demands for minority women are supported, but the particular way in which difference and intersectionality are understood and conceptualized in Québécois women's organizations (and the enduring concern with not fragmenting the movement) explains which particular types of demands can be supported and how they should be framed.

In this section, I will argue that the tendency to understand racism and sexism as being two separate issues, and the fact that they are addressed through different committees, often pushes organizations to favor "gender demands" that are believed to benefit every woman and "racism demands" aimed at helping immigrant and racialized women to achieve gender equality inside their communities. I show that this separation of the two issues fosters conflicts of prioritization and disagreements over framing and makes it difficult for organizations to support demands aimed at fighting racial and ethnic inequalities.

7.1 Subcommittees - Gender demands / Race demands

For Weldon, self-organization and descriptive representation, i.e. the existence of separate committees and organizations composed of minority women, and whose mandate is to defend their specific interests, is a fundamental factor in enabling feminist organizations to take into account intersectionality. In fact, she argues that descriptive representation is: "the most effective way to ensure that marginalized subgroups or 'internal minorities' have the opportunity to develop and voice their distinctive perspectives" (2006b, 56) because it allows them to set the agenda, to develop new concepts and ideas, to speak as a group and to be on equal footing with the majority.

However, I argue that there is a downfall to having separate communities for immigrant and racialized women, especially if their creation is not accompanied by the development of new norms of inclusivity. As I previously explained, many feminists tend to conceptualize sexism and racism as being two separate issues, a perspective that is also reflected at the organizational level by the fact that issues of race and ethnicity are usually addressed through separate sub-committees, which are often composed exclusively of minority women. And the existence of these separate committees further reinforces this idea of two separate phenomena, sexism being the responsibility of mainstream organizations and racism, that of racial-based organizations or committees created to work specifically on this issue. This comment from an FFQ activist reflects this situation:

"One of the mandates of the committee (responsible for minority women issues) was to make sure that within women's organizations in Québec, there would be a better knowledge of what immigrant and racialized organizations are doing so that they can develop a certain solidarity, a certain knowledge of the issues, with the goal of defending the rights of every woman." (O9)

Similarly, the organization of *Les États Généraux* has created seven separate committees to work on the seven priorities that were identified at the beginning of the process. Five of them work on more traditional feminist topics: the amelioration of women's work and life conditions, welfare, the commodification of women's bodies, men and women equality and the image of the feminist movement. Two of them work instead on "racial" questions: diversity and inclusion inside the women's movement and the oppression of Aboriginal women. (États généraux de l'action et de l'analyse féministes 2012)

In this context, immigrant or racialized women are often perceived as being the "specialists" of race or ethnic issues, but they will not necessarily be listened to when they challenge particular understandings of gender issues. An activist from a Muslim women's center denounces this situation:

"Because it is publicly known that we are a centre for Muslim women, very often we get calls from the radio and the press and all they want... (...) Every time they are calling us to have our opinions, Islam comes into it!"

Later in the interview, she describes how members from her organization struggle to work with social services and women's organizations when they are not needed for "cultural interpretation." This situation reflects the conclusions of a study from the Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal on the place of immigrant women in the women's movement, and in which it was stated that an important part of the immigrant and racialized women that are employed in the women's movement occupy diversity management positions or are responsible of "diversity issues". (Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal 2010)

The organizational structure of women's organizations also creates a kind of hierarchy in which issues that are studied by sub-committees risk being considered less important. Not only does this structure makes it difficult for organizations to develop antiracist practices because the committees that work on these issues are themselves segregated by race (Roth 2008), but it also doesn't push them to re-examine their feminist agendas. Hence, organizations address minority women's needs by having separate demands especially for them and they are considered "inclusive" as long as they carry some demands for minority groups. For this reason, they will often carry two sets of demands; "gender demands" (i.e.: typical feminist claims such as childcare, pay equity and sexual rights) and "race demands" (for example, demands concerning immigration and integration policies). Thus, many of them will have a very typical feminist agenda with a certain number of demands targeted at immigrant and racialized women added to the list. This is not to say that the women's movement haven't made an effort to support demands that are important to these women. As I will explain in the next section, important progresses have been made in this area since the World March of Women of 2000. Instead, my aim is to explain why certain types of demands tend to be prioritized over others.

Because organizations need to preserve a certain sense of solidarity, which they fear might be difficult with their increasingly diverse memberships, and because they tend to conceptualize patriarchy as the main variable impacting women's lives, they will tend to favor "gender demands" which are believed to have a positive impact on all women rather than demands that have to do with racism and other side issues. Thus, when asked about the priorities for the feminist movement, the more frequent answers of activists were childcare, education, economic autonomy, welfare and sexual rights i.e. traditional feminist claims.

For activists, this might still reflect a commitment to intersectionality since they believe that these demands will advance the situation of their entire constituency. As previously mentioned, the additive perspective on intersectionality that is adopted by many activists, and the framing of all demands in terms of gender oppression and men/women equality, render invisible the fact that in certain cases, women might have conflicting interests and that some traditional feminist demands might actually widen inequalities between them. Instead, because it is believed that racism tends to exacerbate gender discrimination, it is also argued that immigrant and racialized women will benefit even more from any policy that ameliorates women's condition. However, Strolovitch has discussed how this approach risks favoring privileged women, despite a belief to the contrary. (2006; 2007) And because discussions around race issues happen in sub-committees, women have a difficulty to challenge this hierarchy of women's interests, especially since these committees aren't considered as responsible to discuss "gender issues".

7.2 Gendering race demands

Even though organizations have a tendency to favor gender demands, they have carried, especially in the last years, some demands targeted specifically at minority women. In 2000, in the context of the WMW, the Québécois coalition adopted the first common political platform that included demands directed solely at minority women. For example, the "anti-discriminations" demands included the adoption of laws protecting the rights of lesbians, Aboriginal women, women from cultural communities and disabled women and the instauration of programs aimed at making sure that public services are accessible to them. The platform also included demands targeted at immigrant women such as the protection of women working as domestic workers, the diminution of the sponsorship time during which immigrant women are dependant of their spouses and the accessibility of language courses. Feminists also demanded that the government provides funding for minority women's organizations. In 2005, the coalition demanded the adoption of laws protecting victims of human trafficking and immigrant women victims of domestic violence. In 2010, feminists pressured the Canadian government to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Interestingly, although organizations have defended and still defend today demands targeted at immigrant and racialized women, these are not necessarily demands that aim at fighting racial or ethnic discrimination and inequalities. As previously explained, feminists often focus on how sexism affects women from a racial or ethnic minority group (instead of how racism affects them as compared to other women) and this is reflected in the demands that they choose to support. In fact, most of the time, these demands are issues that are particularly important for / have a bigger impact on minority women, but that are framed in terms of gender equality. For example, organizations carry demands that aim at reducing the particular difficulties faced by women to acquire Canadian permanent residency, ameliorating the difficult work and life conditions of women refugees and temporary workers and protecting women with an unstable immigration status from domestic violence. They have also often supported demands aimed at redressing the sexist treatment of Aboriginal women in the Canadian Indian Act. And the more common responses to the question of what are the priorities for immigrant women and what should be advocated for them were usually the same than for women in general, i.e. childcare, education accessibility and social welfare provisions.

Even when asked what should be prioritized to improve the condition of immigrant and racialized women specifically, activists seldom mentioned discrimination based on race, ethnicity or religion. Of the 24 women interviewed, only one mentioned racism in employment when specifically asked if she thought immigrant women were facing discrimination, even if statistics have consistently showed that immigrants and visible minorities in Québec and Canada face more barriers to their entry on the labor market, independently of their level of education and language proficiency. (Ornstein 2000, Li 2003, Shields 2003, Teelucksingh & Galabuzi 2005) However, when discussing immigrant women's condition in the workplace, a few activists talked about sexual harassment, i.e. discrimination based on gender. In many cases, the solutions that were proposed to advance the condition of minority women seemed to rely of the idea that minority women do face more barriers than privileged women, but that the difference would disappear if they were given more resources.

The tendency to focus on men/women inequalities inside minority groups (instead of focussing on racial/ethnic inequalities among women) also reflects strategic concerns. For example, there are some feminist activists who are hesitant to prioritize issues that would be

framed as related to racism over issues framed in terms of gender (in)equality, which has always been the basis of the movement's unity. The concern is often that the issue of gender inequality might get diluted in the discourse if too much attention is given to other issues. These organizations consider that when addressing politicians, feminist organizations need to send a clear message that gender equality is a priority that can't be subsumed under the fight against racism. Myriam, member of a feminist organization that keeps important ties with government agencies and produces recommendations on many issues pertaining to women's rights explains:

"So this intersectionality that you are talking about, I see it. I agree with intersectionality as long as the postulate is that we are women first. I believe that we have serious systemic discrimination against women. It is exacerbated if women are immigrant and that preoccupies us a lot. Particularly in employment... immigrant women are strongly discriminated against. (...) Besides ethnic origin...racialized women. Because women that were born here and that are Black are more strongly discriminated against than women who were not born here and are not Black. (...) But the first cause of discrimination... It's because they are women...Before anything else. And after that we add other layers, but if they were men, they wouldn't encounter this discrimination in the first place." (O15)

Similarly, some activists are hesitant to carry demands that are very important to groups that include men and consider that these demands, because they can't be framed in terms of gender inequality, don't "belong" to feminism. Hence, when organizations actually do defend issues that can not be "gendered" and that attend to the needs of immigrants, men and women, they will often be seen as "not feminist". An activist that coordinates an organization defending immigrant women's rights denounces this situation:

"If you don't mention gender oppression, nothing's right. There it is. I think I said everything. But I am interested in colonial or neo-colonial oppression because it is fundamental in the situation in which immigrant and racialized women are today. But as soon as we don't talk about gender oppression...Feminist analysis never opened itself to other types of analysis." (O24)

7.3 Conflicts over framing - Emphasizing Common Struggles vs. Privilege Deconstruction

The inability of organizations to agree on demands for minority women often reflects two conceptions of the fight against racism and its place in feminist discourse and strategy. In fact, for some feminists, racism has to be addressed in order to make the women's movement more inclusive. Thus, it is mostly an issue of solidarity and collective identity. For others, often minority women, the fight against racism is an end in itself, and sometimes their main goal, before gender equality. In this context, feminists with different conceptions might have a hard time emphasizing common struggles.

When feminist organizations, whether they represent a wide constituency or minority women in particular, agree on certain political demands, they nonetheless still might disagree on the way in which they ought to be framed. For some feminists, who see the demands in themselves as what really matters, this might be of little importance. However, for others who see the process of analyzing and framing issues as a political act, this might be a fundamental issue. This is true for feminists who believe that privilege deconstruction is in itself a fundamental part of their fight against racism, and that privileged women need to acknowledge their particular status. Finally, the need to frame particular issues in certain ways might also come from a need to build and maintain solidarities with non-feminist groups.

Here, the example of childcare is particularly illustrative. In fact, childcare is one of the most traditional claims of Western feminist movements, and it is widely believed to be one of women's main tools for achieving economic autonomy and gender equality. Thus, most feminists will agree that a public and accessible childcare system will be beneficial to every woman, although probably for different reasons and with disproportionate impacts on certain groups. However, some feminists in Quebec disagree on the way in which this issue should be presented. An activist who works on immigration-related issues explains:

"Québécois feminists often told me that this issue [affordable childcare] doesn't concern only immigrant women. So I told them that it is true that it doesn't concern only immigrant women, but what we need not forget is that for immigrant women, it [the inaccessibility of childcare] is added to another set of obstacles that they face. (...) We recognize that it is also a problem for Québécois women, but the analysis is not the same. So we can't

work together on this issue because our analysis is completely different. The analysis that we do is way more global."

For her, it is fundamental that feminists recognize that the inaccessibility of affordable childcare has a disadvantageous impact on immigrant women that is much bigger than the one it has on Québécois women. As she explains later in the interview, the absence of childcare services is what stops many immigrant women from attending language classes and integration activities, which further limits their choices in terms of employment. Hence, the provision of childcare services should take into account immigrant women's particular needs, especially in terms of accessibility. But most importantly, she emphasizes the need for feminists to highlight how childcare is also a site of inequalities between women. As she explains:

"I think that the Québécois feminist movement needs to have a critical look on itself...to recognize its power and domination. It's a dominating movement that dominates immigrant women. (...) In France, a few years ago, there were French feminists who had the courage to say that if they are surgeons, judges and lawyers, it's because they had nannies from African countries who were there to take care of their families and their children. In Quebec, this acknowledgement was never done. It was never done. We never heard something like that. So, the big problem here is that in the feminist movement, we don't recognize inequalities between women. We don't want to see them. And as long as it is gonna be this way, it won't be possible to work together. And it won't be possible to do something together."

We can easily see from this example that for this activist, what matters is not only that the mainstream feminist movement carries demands that are important to minority women, but also the discourses around these demands. For her, discussing the way in which demands ought to be framed is not only a question of political strategy, but it is also a way to develop anti-racist practices inside the women's movement.

This type of conflict can also arise around class issues. For example, an activist explains how the issue of economic autonomy cannot be analyzed only through a gender-lens, because it might lead to prioritize demands that are more important to middle-class women, such as pay equity. That might even widen inequalities between women on a class line. She

also expresses a concern that women who are the most disadvantaged are also marginalized inside the women's movement because their demands are not being carried. As she explains:

"Yes. [Our organization is] at the margins of society because this is what happens when you just look at the gender issue, when you are not looking at the class issue. When there is a dispute about the minimum wage, for example, it's not about pay equity anymore. Class interests are in question. That's why we are together now, in our groups talking about that...about what happens to women who are in sectors that are marginalized. (...) I think that since we started, there is more awareness, but then again, there is also the question of which women do you represent. And the issues that we want to bring out. So then, that's still very much a long way to work together " (O8)

Interestingly, the conflicts over the ways in which certain demands and problems affecting women should be framed also arise in intervention work. In fact, for certain workers, when it comes to intervention, the analysis doesn't really matter. Moreover, some minority women see the imposition of a particular frame to describe women's experiences as a form of oppression and denounce approaches that don't take into account women's specific experience. An intervention worker from a center for women victims of violence explains:

"When you work with the intersectional approach, of course you need to place the woman at the center... it is the woman herself that has to define what is more oppressing for her. And what I find really irritating with all that theory and that women are never allowed to say: 'I, in my every day life... I believe that THIS is my oppression. This is what is oppressing me. And stop telling me that I am oppressed because I am Black or because I am poor... No! The oppression that I live, is this. And with the intersectional approach, we tend to take women's voices out. (...) Of course women live a variety of oppressions, but here, we don't work with a theoretical discourse. We work with concrete things, we work on the field. When women arrive here, we couldn't care less about the theory that we should use! We try to respond to these women's needs by letting them identify their own needs and giving them as many options as we can." (O11)

An activist for immigrant women's rights also denounces how immigrant women as a group are often not able to decide for themselves which oppressions matter to them:

"It makes me totally crazy to see that for many, the intersectional analysis is an alignment of discriminations while the context is not taken into account and that when we speak about multiple discriminations, we are not allowed to take into consideration, for example, one intersection or two, because they are the ones that are predominant for us. For example, if I look at the case of immigrant women, I consider that when it comes to intersectional analysis, considering the context in Quebec today (...) I am interested in racism and neo-colonial oppression. (...) Let's take care of these two aspects and we'll see later that there are other aspects, other intersections or other variables that we should also consider. But for now, this is our fight." (O24)

Her perception of the conflict also reflects a recurrent problem in intersectionality literature; the fact that many scholars have remained silent on the issue of who can or should be the ones to determine or decide what matters and what are the interests of particular groups in particular cases. (Ludvig 2006; Hancock 2007) If this question remains unanswered, how can scholars or activists make sure that the promoted analysis doesn't reflect only the perspective of the most privileged, prioritizing issues that are more relevant to them?

The main problem with these approaches that focus either on gender equality or racial equality as the one solution to improve a group's condition is that it has encouraged, in the words of Martinez, an "Oppression Olympics" where different groups compete for political attention instead of challenging the oppression system that divides them in the first place. (1993) As will be discussed in the next chapter, the difficulty of feminists to agree on the way in which immigrant and racialized women's interests should be represented inside the feminist movement often renders coalition-work difficult between mainstream and ethnic/racial women's organizations.

CHAPTER 8

INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION

Historically, advocacy organizations representing groups such as women, racial minorities or the working-class have been working to fill the gap of representation between marginalized groups and those who are advantaged by formal political representation. Although they are not legally accountable to their constituencies, their power and legitimacy derive from their claim to represent broad disadvantaged social groups. Because they usually claim to represent the entirety of the social group "women", women's and feminist organizations posit themselves, by extension, as the legitimate representatives of women who are members of ethnic and racial minority groups. Moreover, as has been previously explained, women's organizations in Quebec today usually specify the diverse character of their constituencies and claim to defend and represent women who are discriminated against one more than one basis. However, as intersectionality scholars have repeatedly shown, minority women's interests tend to get marginalized in mainstream women's organizations, despite claims to the contrary (Crenshaw 1989; 1991a; 1991b; Collins 1990; 1998; Fraser 1996; Strolovitch 2006; 2007).

Since the concept of representation has always been fundamental to feminists (ex: gender parity in decisional instances is often perceived as one of the most efficient ways to achieve gender equality), we could be tempted to think that representation would be considered as a fundamental component of any strategy that aims at improving the condition of disadvantaged women. However, this is not necessarily the case. In fact, in the Québécois women's movement, a commitment to intersectionality does not necessarily translate into a commitment to improve the representation for minority women through separate organizations for them.

The debate on the necessity of formal representation for minority women tends to be raised when women's organizations in Quebec need to work together, and as it has been mentioned, most organizations engage in a lot of coalition work inside the women's movement, but also with exterior allies. Hence, most organizations in my sample often find themselves working together on different coalitions and steering committees. As

intersectionality scholars have contended, coalition-work, because it forces organizations to address issues of legitimacy and representation, might be the activity through which organizations have the best chances to adopt intersectional discourses and practices. (Weldon 2006b; Strolovitch 2007)

However, as I will show in this chapter, coalitions might also be a site of exclusion. In fact, even though intersectionality literature has repeatedly shown the benefits of representation for intersectional subgroups, certain Québécois feminists tend to have a negative perception of the presence of ethnic- and racial-based organizations in the women's movement. In many cases, this leads these organizations to remain excluded or to choose to stay out of an important part of the coalition-work. I will argue that this difficulty of mainstream and ethnic/racial women's organizations to work together derives from tensions between different visions of "inclusion" and "integration". More precisely, I will explain that while some activists believe that "inclusion" should happen at the level of organizations through the integration and recognition of minority women, others believe that immigrant and racialized women should be recognized as a political constituency at the level of the women's movement. For the former, the elimination of racism should naturally follow the adoption of inclusion practices, but for the latter, minority women need to organize separately to fight against racism inside the women's movement before being able to be "included".

8.1 Representation and coalition-work in Quebec

Most Québécois feminists today, even though they recognize the difficulties that it involves, seem to consider coalition-work as one of the most important features of the women's movement. As the coordinator of an organization that works in the field of domestic violence explains:

"Of course we work with a lot of other organizations. We don't have the choice. Grassroots organizations... if you don't work with others, it doesn't work. (...) What I wanna say is that we try not to only look inwards. We participate to steering committees so discussion and reflection are a big part of our work. Our work is inscribed in a feminist movement, in a grassroots movement. We don't work in a vacuum." (O17)

An activist from a women's center makes a similar statement:

"In the history of women centers, there were always disparities in visions and also in values, so of course it creates a challenge when it comes to unit cohesion. But it's a type of work that we put forward because we consider that it is really important to debate, to talk, to discuss... this makes us evolve. If we stick to our guns without talking to each other, it won't lead to anything... So it's important to share our positions as much as possible so that we can evolve on certain topics. There are debates that we feel will be eternal... but we still have to do it." (O23)

When they describe the problems that they encounter as they try to build coalitions and to agree on political platforms and feminist practices, activists very often mention the necessity and benefits of taking into account the "different perspectives" of minority women. Two activists from domestic violence resources explain:

"I believe that collaboration is very important and to me, the feminist orientation does not mean only fighting for women's empowerment and all of this. Most of all, it means being careful with our power and with diversity and with the fact that there are tones of different issues in the histories and lives of women. So everyone brings is own perspective... it can be cultural, sexual orientation or anything else. It's very important to look at what others are doing." (O2)

"So there is this effort at integration. Of course, dialogue is not always easy. We want to be sensible to the realities of everyone, but there are times where it is very difficult to take into account all these realities." (O17)

Interestingly, although activists mention this need to take into account the perspectives of minority women in their coalition-work and talk about the necessity for the women's movement to be "representative", they don't necessarily believe that this should be done through *formal representation*, i.e. that ethnic or racial minorities should have their own organizations. In many cases, the rationale beyond this exclusion is that if mainstream women's organizations have developed practices to include immigrant and racialized women in their services and activities, and work to represent the rights and interests of every woman, organizations representing women from a particular racial or ethnic group would be useless. This would be particularly true if all women are believed to have shared rather than

potentially conflictual political interests. In other words, an efficient "inclusion" (which should lead to the *substantive representation* of minority women's specific interests) renders *formal representation* non-necessary.

8.2 Inclusivity...

As the testimonies of many activists reflect, the "inclusive" character of the Québécois women's movement is seen as an incredibly important success and it has become a major part of what it means for them to be feminist, i.e. part of their feminist identity. And even when they don't agree on the extent of this success, most activists believe that an important effort has been made. Julie, a long-time activist in the *FFQ* explains:

"For sure, there has been a lot of efforts in the last years on the issue of the representativeness of women within the feminist movement; women from cultural communities, women with non-traditional jobs, lesbians, disabled women, young women... So there has been this effort. There has been so much progress...I can't say that we are still at the same level than ten years ago." (O10)

Similarly, Clara, a member of an organization for women of diverse origins, explains:

"I can tell you that in Quebec, we work very hard for this [including women of diverse origins] and I am very impressed by the work that has been done and that is being done now. I believe that we have a very important capacity to auto-analyse and an important willingness to do things better, to work better with women of other origins." (O11)

Interestingly, this "inclusive" character of the movement is often measured in terms of its capacity to attract women with different ethnic and racial backgrounds. In these cases, this "representativeness" of the movement doesn't refer to the existence of organizations representing immigrant or racialized women, but to the fact that these women constitute an increasing part of all women's organizations' membership. In fact, in 2010, the *Table des groups de femmes de Montréal* ordered a study to assess the extent to which immigrant and racialized women were represented in the women's movement. The study concluded that

although they were becoming an increasing part of women's organizations' memberships, immigrant and racialized women were very poorly represented in women's organizations' staff and often relegated to "diversity" jobs. (Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal 2010) Following the publication of this study, the hiring of immigrant and racialized women became a concern for many women's organizations. The coordinator of a multicultural women's center explains that her organization, along with other women's centers, has been trying to hire more immigrant women, which they believe should attract a diverse membership:

"I think that in Montreal... with at least 50% of the population that is of immigrant origin...I think that women's centers have a lot of work to do to be representative of this population. (...) We have started a little bit here... we try to hire...to recruit, to do some activities. It needs to show. " (O23)

A point that is worth noting here, is that for this activist, it is important that the inclusive character of the movement be "visible". In this context, the presence of immigrant and racialized women inside mainstream organizations becomes the proof that the movement has developed inclusive practices. Similarly, the existence of racial- or ethnic-based organizations might be perceived as a failure, because it would indicate that minority women did not wish to join mainstream organizations. Hence, some feminists believe that when immigrant women organize separately, they do it as a response to exclusion by the women's movement. The idea is that if mainstream organizations would be inclusive, minority women would feel comfortable and wouldn't need to join ethnic- or racial-based organizations. As an activist explains:

"Well there could be organizations specifically targeted at immigrant women... But if the feminist movement was inclusive, I don't see why we would need to have this kind of organizations. But of course it is better to have organizations that include all women...if the movement is inclusive. (...) Even now, there are organizations that still haven't changed anything to their practices even if they receive immigrant women. And for this reason, immigrant women don't go. We shouldn't believe that there are no efforts that are done by immigrant women to go towards that kind of structures." (O24)

Thus, while the increase in the number of immigrant women in mainstream organizations' memberships is perceived as a proof that the women's movement has become more inclusive and that racism has faded, the existence of immigrant and ethnic women's organizations is seen as a symptom of racist and non-inclusive practices inside the mainstream movement.

8.3 ...or Invisibility

However, not every feminist shares this belief that the existence of ethnic or racial organizations means that immigrant women are not comfortable in mainstream organizations because of their racist or exclusive practices. In fact, women that work in ethnic- or racial-based organizations don't necessarily describe their need to organize as a response to the inaccessibility of women's organizations for immigrant and racialized women. Instead, they believe in the necessity of formal representation for their constituency. Thus, they associate their feeling of exclusion from the women's movement to the fact that the work of their organizations is not respected. They don't believe that the main need of their constituency is one of individual inclusion and recognition inside women's organizations, but that the difference of their condition and the fact that they have different interests than other women should be recognized at the level of the movement. For this reason, they often choose to work "in parallel" with the mainstream women's movement. In fact, because they believe that their ethnic or racial origin comes with specific political interests, being "included" in a group that is presented as being homogeneous (all women) would render them invisible. An activist from a Filipino women's organization explains:

"Yes. The idea is to have...to be visible. For our groups to be visible. And then, on the International Women's Day, we were kind of invited...So you sit on the chair and you never hear us. So that's the main objectives, to provide an alternative during the International Women's Day. (...) I think that since we started, there is more awareness, but then again, there is also the question of which women do you represent. And the issues that we want to bring out. So then, that's still very much a long way to work together. " (O8)

Later in the interview, she explains that even though her organization sometimes works in collaboration with the FFQ on certain issues, the members have chosen not to become members and to remain independent. Even when her organization agrees on a particular platform or on a stand that the FFQ takes on a certain issue, she believes that it is important for them to present how a certain issue or demand is important for their group specifically. An activist for immigrant women's rights also argues for the necessity for immigrant women to have their own voice:

"I believe that it is not a priority for the FFQ to posit itself on the issue of religious symbols... For us [immigrant women], what matters is economic integration and the end of discriminations...these are the real issues for immigrant women. I call this paternalism...wanting to know, to decide what are the priorities for us when we haven't given our consent..." (O24)

She explains that even when they agree with mainstream organizations on different issues, immigrant women should speak for themselves and that having mainstream organizations "representing" them reinforces their marginalization.

Because these ethnic or racial-based organizations exist to defend the interests of a particular group, interests that they believe to be different from that of majority women, the activities that they organize and the political actions they engage in are also different from that of mainstream organizations. In many cases, this creates tensions, and this is especially true in the case of women's centers. In fact, women's centers in Quebec are united under the *R des centres de femmes de Montréal*, which means that they have to adhere to a common basis of unity. This basis of unity relies on a "feminist orientation". Of course, women's centers can choose not to adhere, but they do it at a cost: not being able to receive the governmental funding that is automatically given to women's centers or to take part in debates and coalition-work. A women's center coordinator explains the tensions that arise between organizations when they don't agree on what constitutes the "feminist approach":

"Of course everything that we do in women's centers, because we are members of the "R des centres de femmes"... We have meetings every month on different issues and sometimes you tell them: Listen... go reread what the feminist approach is about and what you are supposed to do in your intervention work. Listen... I didn't invent it. As a women's center, you adhere

to this basis of unity. If you adhere to this basis of unity, you adhere to the feminist approach. If you adhere to the feminist approach, you should know what to do in your center." (O22)

An activist for immigrant women's rights denounces how this basis of unity prevents women's centers from responding to the needs of their constituents and causes them to be marginalized in the movement:

"If we take the case of women's centers...They have a political basis of unity. There is, through this political basis of unity, almost no way to do activities that are of interest to immigrant women. Of course... their needs are completely different! (...) So many women's centers, if they receive immigrant women, they are not considered like real women's centers because they don't necessarily respect this basis of political unity." (O24)

In this case, by limiting the possibilities for alternative approaches, coalition-work seems to impede rather than further intersectional practice.

8.4 Cultural Integration...

The approach to representation and inclusion that women's organizations adopt is strongly related to the role that they play in the field of immigrant integration. In fact, many women's organizations have become important actors in this field, taking over or working in collaboration with social services, and receive governmental funding for this specific activity. Hence, they often consider that one of the main priorities for immigrant women and the best way to ameliorate their condition is to encourage their integration into Québécois society. The concept of integration that they put forward usually reflects that of the ministry of immigration: becoming proficient in French, getting to know the culture, finding a job, developing a social network outside of the community of origin, etc. It is also related to a need for recognition of cultural differences that should render integration easier. Moreover, it is often believed that integration happens through contact between women from different communities, which also favors tolerance of cultural differences.

In this context, ethnic- and racial-based organizations might be considered as impeding immigrant integration by favouring ostracism and ghettoization. In fact, because activists understand "inclusion" as recognizing and valorizing cultural differences and attending to the particular needs that are associated with them, they believe that immigrant and racialized women should join mainstream or so-called "multicultural" organizations. The idea is that because women do not have conflictual interests, they should be able to get along, and having separate organizations might be a sign of closeness of mind. For this reason, some feminists even position themselves against the idea of having separate organizations for minority women. The coordinators of two multicultural women's organizations state:

"I personally don't believe that it is a good thing to serve only one community because it means manifesting closed-mindedness towards other cultures... When you arrive in Canada (...) theoretically, it's your country and it is a multicultural welcoming country. (...) It shouldn't be a ghetto, with Arabs serving Arabs and Africans serving Africans and Portuguese serving Portuguese. Not at all." (O7)

"Here in Quebec, we talk a lot about integration...So why do we encourage everything that is ethnic? Why is it that the government finances ethnic and religious community organizations? Why? To keep them in ghettos? (...) How will she integrate? We shouldn't let her in her own community...We are only creating ghettos." (O14)

For those who believe in the need to include immigrant women inside mainstream/multicultural organizations, the existence of ethnic-based organizations might also be seen as a direct threat to their work by reducing their possible constituency. This might happen when different organizations exist in the same neighbourhood. Stéphanie, the coordinator of a very diverse center, shares her frustration:

" I will give you an example... Here, in our neighbourhood, there is an Italian women's center, a Greek women's center and an Armenian women's center. So here, we have 50 nationalities, but almost no Italians, Greeks and Armenians. Only a few. When they have their own center... why would they come here?" (O14)

As she later explains, she believes that individual changes in women's attitudes towards issues of racism would render representation for disadvantaged groups unnecessary and that since segregation might have negative impacts on the movement, such as fostering cultural ghettoization or privileging ethnic groups with more resources, it is better for feminist organizations to focus on eliminating racism within their organizations. _ What is interesting here, is that this position that might cause the exclusion of minority women who choose to organize inside their communities is the result of a commitment to the inclusion and integration of these same women.

...or Political Integration

Activists from organizations that tend to politicize race and ethnicity have a very different conception of "integration". When asked if their organization works for immigrant integration, a caseworker from an immigrant workers' center says:

"No...and yes. In a way... because our work has to do with work and immigration ...because they are so related...In a way, in our minds, it becomes about integration because you help them [immigrant women] through the system...But the way in which immigration or health ministeries define immigration is different from how we see it. So we don't have funding for immigration." (O8)

She explains later how "integrating" must be accompanied by a "deconstruction work" and denounces the approach that encourages women to integrate blindly to an unequal society. She believes that integration through the valorization of cultural difference reinforces the marginalization of immigrant women in the new society and discourages them from challenging the system that made them immigrate in the first place. She also explains how women from a particular country might need to organize separately to be able to discuss and challenge the situation in their country of origin:

"We are talking about our problems here, but we would not have problems here if we were back in our countries and the situations there were ok. We might be visitors, but we would still go back and live there and have a

different life...With problems may be, but not the problems that we are encountering now." (O8)

For her, organizing separately is not a form of ghettoization, but it allows minority women to do the identity work that is necessary to be able to challenge the power relations in their new society. An activist from a Filipino women's center describes a similar kind of identity work:

"Why does [our organization] exist? Why have we immigrated from another country and why are we here? (...) Our condition in the Philippines, we tend to believe that it is the culture of our country... that it has to be like that. We accept this condition. We have a tendency to accept and to think that the condition we have is normal. Be here we want to change how women think...it's not the correct idea. We have to change that idea. We need to study the condition of the society and have the correct analysis and why we become like this to be able to change, to make a change. Because if we don't have that in our minds...if we don't consider that... the bigger picture...we won't be able to change. We always have to think and to take that into consideration...the history of our country, political, economic and social, cultural. We need to study that to be able to understand why we are like this." (O6)

In these cases, "integration" is seen as something political that concerns an entire group or community rather than as something cultural that happens at the individual level.

These different visions of integration and the particular strategies that they call for can also be related to two different visions of the way in which minority women's integration inside the women's movement should be fostered. In fact, while some feminists believe that women should reassemble first to be able to develop antiracist practices, others think that minority women need to work separately first in order to challenge power relations inside the women's movement with the goal of working together eventually. As two activists explain:

"If the feminist movement was more inclusive, I wouldn't see the necessity to have separate organizations, but that's a question of power. It's a question of sharing the power. Having the power also means deciding the political agenda. It's deciding the means and the objectives. And unfortunately, for now, everything is decided by the same people and very often, these are not demands that are of interest to immigrant women." (O24)

"There are some groups that distance themselves and believe that they need to work on their specificities before being able to work concretely on common fights with the majority. And this also provides us with new perspectives." (O9)

According to intersectionality scholars (Weldon 2006b; Strolovitch 2006; 2007), coalitions between organizations that are committed to the inclusion of marginalized subgroups should be the best site for the development of intersectional practices. But the case of the Québécois movement contradicts this assumption. In fact, activists' different conceptions of inclusion and integration, the strategies that they put forth to achieve it and the way in which it affects their conception of representation tends to foster the marginalization of organizations representing a particular ethnic or racial group. Hence, to be able to work together, Québécois feminists would need to find a way to conceptualize inclusion and integration that would allow them to reconcile strategies for individual and group inclusion.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis was to develop a better knowledge of Québécois women's organizations' discourses and practices with respect to intersectionality, and more specifically, of the ways in which they understand and include racial and ethnic differences. To begin the analysis, I have retraced the history of the movement and the emergence of ethnic-and racial-based organizations and argued that the rise of ethnocultural mobilization, the recognition of diversity provided by the policy of multiculturalism, a shift towards service provision, feminists' involvement in transnational coalitions such as the World March of Women, new theoretical developments in feminist theory and legitimacy claims from newly created women's organizations, were all factors that pushed the women's movement to commit to the inclusion of immigrant and racialized women.

In chapter 5, I have described how activists often conceive of immigrant women's needs as deriving from individual characteristics associated with their culture. I have contended that these particular understandings of racial and ethnic differences shape women's organizations' strategies for inclusion such as providing culturally-adapted services and dealing with racism at the individual level.

In chapter 6, I have explored activists' attempts to conceptualize the interconnected character of gender and race/ethnicity as axes that shape women's experiences of oppression. I have shown how they resolve the difficulties they encounter by describing women's interests mainly in terms of gender oppression and explained how this practice causes conflicts of prioritization. I also discussed how translating minority women's needs in terms of gender equality makes it difficult for activists to make sense of issues pertaining to minority rights (and especially religious rights).

In chapter 7, I have analyzed the different factors that shape women's organizations' political platforms. I have described activists' concerns with presenting gender equality as their main priority and racism as a part of this broader goal. I argued that this concern often pushes activists to add to their political platforms the specific demands of immigrant and racialized women that have to do mainly with gender equality inside minority groups rather than those that aim at fighting against racism inside women's organizations. I also showed that decisions

on how to decide what matters for minority women and how their demands ought to be framed often foster conflicts between activists that consider that feminists should fight racism inside the women's movement as a way to preserve solidarity and collective identity and those who believe the fight against racism in society to be a priority for immigrant and racialized women.

Finally, in chapter 8, I have discussed activists' positions on the benefits of formal representation for minority women. I argued that a commitment to making mainstream organizations inclusive has led to the marginalization of ethnic- and racial-based organizations that are considered as impeding that goal by making the women's movement appear fragmented and non-inclusive, fostering cultural ghettoization and hindering immigrant integration. I explained how this fosters feelings of exclusion that make coalition-work difficult between ethnic- and racial-based organizations that believe in the necessity of representation for minority women who have interests that are different from those of majority women, and mainstream organizations who focus on cultural recognition and integration and think that inclusion should render formal representation useless.

Research limitations

First, the size of the sample (24 organizations) on which this research is based necessarily calls for carefulness in the analysis of the data. For this reason, I acknowledge that in a research of this scope, it was impossible for me to give an accurate account of the multiplicity of perspectives and practices that are found in the Québécois women's movement. I recognize that the picture that I have drawn of women's organizations is incomplete and although I have presented some patterns, I have tried to stay away from overgeneralizations.

Second, there might have been a certain bias in my sample due to the difficulty of reaching certain women's organizations and to the fact that it did not allow for random sampling. In fact, because they tend to have fewer resources than mainstream associations, racial- and ethnic-based organizations were usually harder to reach. They also tend to produce less documentation, which meant that I had less data to analyze. Moreover, differences in the ways in which activists express themselves during interviews, often associated with their level of language proficiency, sometimes complicated the analysis. The type of work that women usually engage in might also have had an impact on their discourses. In fact, activists who

spend most of their time doing advocacy work and who are used to engage in dialogue with different political actors with an eye towards their reaction might have arguments readily available to them on the issues they work on. This would not necessarily be the case for workers specialized in service provision.

Finally, although I have discussed the potential impact of the broader political context on women's organizations' practices, I recognize that its extent is very difficult to evaluate. I believe that the political context can't be considered to be the main explanatory factor in this case because organizations often disagree in their understandings of race and ethnicity and carry very diverse discourses on diversity and inclusion.

A point of a more normative nature also needs to be made. One might argue that by analyzing the inclusion practices of feminist organizations, criticizing their difficulty to live up to their commitment to intersectionality and exposing certain divisions and conflicts that arise among activists, one risks providing arguments to the numerous adversaries of the women's movement. In a context where anti-feminist discourses abound while political opportunities for women's advocacy are limited, and where many young women are reluctant to call themselves feminists or believe that gender equality has already been achieved, this is a valid concern. However, I believe that scholars and activists can both benefit from engaging in a dialogue with the goals of strengthening the movement and furthering the development of inclusive feminist theories. Moreover, even though my analysis of women's organizations practices might seem very critical, I need to mention that over the course of my research, I have developed a tremendous respect for the women working in community organizations that I have met and for the work that they accomplish. I am also very grateful for the way in which they have welcomed me in their organizations and for the enthusiasm with which they have accepted to participate to this research.

Directions for future research

As I have explained in the first chapter of this thesis, only a few scholars have studied the ways in which organizations practice intersectionality on the ground, i.e. how they respond to the challenge of representing the diverse interests of every member of their constituencies. Hence, this remains a mostly unexplored topic. I have also argued that studies that look at

intersectionality practices should not be limited to the evaluation of organizations' or movements' official claims or discourses and political platforms. As I explained, organizations might "practice" inclusion in different ways and a commitment to intersectionality can be observed through their intervention practices, the activities and services they offer or their organizational features, for example. Other characteristics of organizations that should be looked at to measure inclusion could be identified and scholars should be attentive to the different forms that inclusion can take. This should also allow for the analysis of the different practices that foster the persistence of structural inequalities in social movement organizations even when inclusive commitments are made.

Other researches on intersectionality practices could also be based on other types of organizations or focus on all the different types of activities in which they engage. Comparisons between different national contexts would also allow for a better evaluation of the impact of the broader political context. Also, an important majority of the researches that have been made have looked at women's organizations, coalitions or movements and it would thus be interesting to compare intersectionality practices in other movements.

Case studies like this research are very useful to begin the study of underexplored topics. However, they should be seen as complementary to other larger studies that rely on important sets of empirical data, such as that of Strolovitch, which represents the first large-scale study of intersectionality in social movement organizations. (2007) Finally, I have argued in this thesis that the inclusion practices of the Québécois women's movement have been at some degree influenced by the developments of intersectionality theory. Because intersectionality is still an emergent field of research, studies on the way in which theoretical developments impact intersectionality discourses and practices on the ground, and vice-versa, would be of particular interest.

No matter the directions of future researches, scholars need to remember that intersectionality theory carries a political project: to foster the representation of the underprivileged groups whose interests have been marginalized. For women's and social movements, to respond to demands for inclusion and critiques of legitimacy from these groups is enough of a good reason to find ways to foster cooperation between members of their diverse constituencies. And I believe that scholars have a role to play in identifying the practices that can best foster this goal. On a more strategic level, because it allows for a wide

mobilization, facilitates coalition-building (Wilson 1995) and enhances their legitimacy in the eyes of political actors (Cohen 1999; Kurtz 2002), the development of truly inclusive practices might also be the most efficient way for movements to address pressing issues. (Reagon 1983) Moreover, the social status and economic conditions of marginalized subgroups are very often good indicators of the more general state of social justice in society. (Strolovitch 2007) Hence, the exclusion of their interests from national policy is a threat to social justice overall, while the amelioration of their conditions brings about benefits for everyone. Also, the feeling of exclusion that stems from the marginalization of subgroups' interests in social movements fosters division among groups that could gain important political leverage by working in solidarity. Finally, it might also represent the only way of fighting against oppression because, as Cole argues: "the divisiveness engendered by the differential intersections of race, class, and gender is a central factor enabling the perpetuation of all oppressive social relationships." (Cole 2008)

The multiplication of organizations defending marginalized groups has brought unprecedented levels of representation in Western countries, but also concerns about the reproduction of patterns of inequalities inside these organizations. Unfortunately, it seems that a commitment to inclusion, representation and fairness on the part of these organizations that fight for the underprivileged isn't sufficient to reverse historical patterns of misrepresentation. Hence, there is an important need for more research that aims at identifying practices that allow organizations to better take into account the specific needs of the disadvantaged members of their constituencies.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEWEES' AND ORGANIZATIONS' CHARACTERISTICS

	ORGANIZATIONS			INTERVIEWEES								
	ACTIVITIES			MAIN ACTIVITY		TYPE OF WORKER		POSITION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION		ORIGIN / RACE		
	ADV	SP	CA	ADV	SP	VOL	PD	STF	MNG	IM/RC	NB/W	
O1	x	X			x	x			x		x	
O2	x	X			x		x	x			x	
O3		X			x		x	x			x	
O4	X	X	X	x			x		x		x	
O5	x	X	x		x		x		x		x	
O6	X	X	X	x		x		x			x	
O7	X			x			x		x		x	
O8	X		X	x		x		x			x	
O9	X		x	x			x		x		x	
O10	x	X	x		x		x	x			x	
O11	x	X	x		x		x	x			x	
O12	X	X	X	x			x		x		x	
O13	x	X			x		x	x			x	
O14	X	X	x	x			x		x		x	
O15	X			x			x		x		x	
O16		X			x		x	x			x	
O17	x	X	x		x		x	x			x	
O18	X	X	X	x			x	x			x	
O19		X		x			x		x		x	
O20	X	X	X		x		x		x		x	
O21	x	X	x	x		x			x		x	
O22	X	X	X		x		x		x		x	
O23	X	X	X		x		x	x			x	
O24	X		x	x		x			x		x	

*In the column titled "activities", the capital Xs indicate the organizations' main activities, while the small xs indicate activities that constitute a less important part of their work.

LEGEND

ADV: Advocacy
 SP: Service provision
 CA: Collective action/protests
 VOL: Volunteer
 PD: Paid worker
 STF: Staff
 MNG: Management
 IM/RC: Immigrant/racialized
 NB/W: Native-born/white